

Nigerian Conservation Foundation

PLANNING AND PROCESS IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

MODULE 7



NCF



**V. C. Uchendu
F. H. Anijah-Obi Idem
S. O. Jaja, F. B. Obi
M. E. Inyang-Abia**

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Companies and representatives throughout the world

For

NIGERIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Km 19, Lekki - Epe Express Way, Lekki, Lagos

P. O. Box 74638

Victoria Island

Lagos

e-mail: info@ncfnigeria.org

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II

Teamwork in Environmental Management

11.1 Introduction

Human beings live, work and function in groups. They are social beings. Usually they like working together with one another for various reasons including the desire to satisfy the basic human need of belongingness (Maslow; 1954), to provide partnership, eliminate dissonance, produce sufficient personalised contact for survival, reduce redundancy and establish a future through relationships. But because of personality and other differences, conflicts usually arise. However amicable solution of such conflicts bring about various improvements. No wonder then that team dynamics continues to attract attention among psychologists, educators, environmentalists and others who are interested in teamwork.

When people work, play or act in any form together for a common purpose, a corporate image manifests. A team image is the projection of the team personality which is usually completely different from the personality of any single entity or member of the team but which reflects the modal image of the members and more. Such corporate image formation may be influenced by individual and sub-group perception, motivation, group goals, the organisational structure, team interactional level and its general dynamics among others. Since successful environmental management projects and

programmes depend to a great extent, upon human co-operation with nature and fellow humans, teamwork and its dynamics become an area of major interest to all concerned. This is particularly important because the quality of the present and future environment should be of major concern to everyone irrespective of race, religion, gender or nationality. This chapter on teamwork in environmental management therefore examines not only some major relevant theories associated with its definition and functional dynamics but more importantly desires to use some experimental exercises to sensitise and encourage the much needed team spirit and functional co-operation.

11.2 Objectives

During and after an effective interaction with this chapter, you should be able to:

- (i) define the team and teamwork in terms of any three viewpoints;
- (ii) compare any two theoretical positions of team dynamics;
- (iii) justify the role of facilitators of team productivity in relation to environmental teamwork sessions;
- (iv) specify the characteristics of effective feedback in environmental teamwork;
- (v) compare some positive with negative roles of environmental teamwork members;
- (vi) establish a feasible observational checklist for an environmental teamwork;
- (vii) analyse the characteristics of task-oriented environmental team;
- (viii) evaluate the need to establish the entry behaviour for and to get acquainted with environmental team at the early stage;
- (ix) assess the need to any environmental team you are working with;
- (x) justify the need for positive perception and objective evaluation of team members on environmental projects;
- (xi) examine carefully how shared responsibility can be enhanced in teamwork on the environment; and
- (xii) use the qualities of good team working relationship to run and evaluate teams working on any environmental project.

11.3 Definition

The terms “team” and “group” are often used inter-changeably because they are perceived as synonymous. Essentially however they can be differentiated in terms of structure, process, level of unity and purpose among other characteristics. However, “togetherness” is one vital element for both team and group existence. The family, class or congregation of worshippers may be seen as three different groups because each exists together. That groupness gives each of them a separate identity and structure where headship (leadership), follower-ship and goals or objectives may be easily differentiated. The same members of the family can also constitute a team when there is a need and major specialized task to be performed. Teams of engineers, medical doctors, inspectors, environmentalists, among others are made up of specialised professionals. From these teams, one team of, say, footballers could be constituted. Although the semantic differences between team and group should not be unduly orchestrated. It is pertinent to emphasise that the word “team” connotes more urgency, specialisation and singleness of purpose than ‘group” which could be used more as a generic term.

11.3.1 Definitions According to Viewpoints

The definitions of team could be done in terms of various overlapping psychological view points among which the following are briefly discussed to reflect some classic authorities.

- (i) **Perception:** People with identical perception of definite purpose can form and operate a team. Smith (1945) defines it as a social group or unit made up of many separate organisms with “collective perception of their unity” so that their “ability to act... in a unitary manner on the environment” becomes obvious. This definition emphasises membership based on unitary perception of both relationship and functions. This singleness of perception results from unity of desire and purpose and ability to act collectively for a definite purpose.

A team could also be seen as people engaging in “eye-ball to

eye-ball” interaction with one another and which perceive the other members as being distinct personalities who can question, react in some way or simply recall the existence of others. Bales (1950) emphasises distinctive personal perception of other members in the team. This view not only appreciates the importance of direct face-to-face interaction but also the value of individuality and reactions.

- (ii) **Motivation:** Teams can also be defined in terms of the stimulus which energises people to form and belong to teams. In other words, the motivational perspective argues that people belong to teams to satisfy some social, economic, spiritual or other needs or to fulfill a burning desire to improve society. Perhaps that is the reason why Cattell (1951) sees a team as a collection of organisms which provides inter-relationships as the basis for satisfying some needs. That means such a collection is rewarding to the individuals in the team. Bass (1960) agrees with the motivational views. Obviously if the original motivation is no more, the team disintegrates unless it is substituted with other motivators which are perceived as equally, if not better, satisfying.
- (iii) **Goals:** The purpose of the team can also be a major determinant for its attraction and formation. Every team has a target either determined by the team members or their sponsors or are imposed on the team by the society or its agencies. Mills (1967) agrees that a team forms when two or more persons come into meaningful contact for a purpose. However, it is indisputable that goal satisfaction itself is motivating and can therefore be intrinsically rewarding to team members. For example, the various environmental Non-Governmental Organisations(NGOs)working as environmental teams have different goals with sustainable development as the underlying theme. This can be more motivating when their activities express the desire of the avowed goals.

- (iv) **Organisation:** This viewpoint as a perspective of the definition of team emphasises unitary functionality, interrelated team components and some regulatory mechanism. According to McDonald and Harari (1968) a team can be viewed from the organisational systems perspective which emphasises functional relationship, role differentiation and regulatory norms that guide both the team functioning and the roles of the members.

The implication here is that the team is accepted to be interdependently functional as a holistic human structure made up of complex definite elements which purpose is to achieve specific and predetermined goals or objectives common to all team members. However, existence of effective power relationship in team functioning should be recognised.

- (v) **Interdependence:** The dynamics and interdependence as a basis of team functioning seems to be the focus of modern studies of team behaviour. In the light of this Fiedler (1967: 6) sees team as a combination of individuals who share a common fate and "are interdependent in the sense that an event which affects one member is likely to affect all". This viewpoint emphasises groupness and mutual relationship. Cartright and Zander (1953) had earlier accepted this position. They see the team as a class of interdependent social activities with a common goal.

Without interaction there can be no interdependence. Consequently, teams provide a basis for open interaction whereby individual actions contribute to both structural organisation and successive interactions of co-equal effect upon team identity.

The five viewpoints briefly surveyed above are not mutually exclusive. Essentially therefore, an environmental management team should express functional co-existence of two or more persons who interact in such a way that they mutually influence themselves, the environment, their environmental related goals and their personality.

Still related to environmental management goals, sustainability of the earth and the biospheric diversity should be two major green goals that bring people with identical ideas together and which should positively influence all environmentally related behaviours expressed by a team.

11.4 Team Dynamics

Approaches to analysis of team behaviours, stability, goal formation and execution along with changes in roles, components, the organisational structures and strategies as well as all the driving forces instrumental to the growth or social change in a team constitute its dynamics. It has many theoretical basis some of which are briefly reviewed below.

- (i) **Field Theory:** This gestaltist theory emphasises that the whole team is greater than the mere combination of the individual members. Its major goal is effectiveness and efficiency through organisation. Related to teamwork in environmental management emphasis is on holistic sustainability of the total environment (land, water and air) for the benefit of man presently and in future. The reason is that if any part of the biosphere is degraded the whole environment and all that depend on it suffers because of the existing intricate relationship. Teamwork emphasises that all must co-operate to achieve the sustainability target. If all individuals are actively involved in environmental sustainability, thinking globally and acting locally; and are committed personally towards reversing the environmental problems, then the human-induced environmental disasters shall have been overcome.
- (ii) **Interaction Theory:** Activity, interaction and sentiments are three key emphases here. For example, activities provide the basis for interpersonal relationship among people and interaction with the environment. In the course of carrying out the activities one cannot resist interacting. Consequently, some sentiments, emotions or feelings and attitudes are naturally generated in that process. Positive affectivity can unite the team towards environmental sustainability through a wide variety of activities directed to energise relevant interactions. This can however be affected by the personality characteristics and abilities of team members and the size of the team.

- (iii) **Systems Theory:** This emphasises interlocking elements, positions, roles, among other factors which facilitate team spirit and productivity. The focus is on input-process- output. For example, membership in conservation clubs, their goals and resources (inputs) if properly managed, well co-ordinated and integrated (process) can lead to stability and goal achievement as related to environmental sustainability (outputs).
- (iv) **The Psychoanalytic Theory:** Emphasis here stems from the Freudian psychology which focuses on motivational and defensive processes. They include repressed instinctual urges, deep unconscious fixations, and weak self-esteem all of which can find solution in team functioning. For example, an effective management team should give opportunities for individuals to overcome weak self-esteem, develop communicative abilities, leadership qualities and self-assertion.
- (v) **The Reinforcement Theory:** This theoretical viewpoint emphasises essentially the reinforcing nature of team functioning where need for leadership, followership and belongingness can be easily satisfied and thus reinforced. Personal satisfaction for protecting the environment or for initiating sustainable activities can by itself be reinforcing, especially if such activities were part of the team expectations.
- (vi) **Firo:** Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientations (FIRO) is a theory formulated by Schutz (1958). It has a psycho-analytical basis. This three-dimensional theory of inter-personal behaviour explains team orientations in terms of certain characteristic patterns which Schutz called inclusion, control and affection. Inclusion, according to him, refers to the need for togetherness and association.
This need can be exhibited by team members by friendliness, possessiveness or attempts to punish team-mates who try to establish deep affiliation with others. Control refers to a decision-making process in a team. It is exhibited as a need to

dominate others through power and authority or its reverse: need to be controlled. Affection, the third important factor, is expressed through love or hatred as a mark of close or hostile personal feelings between or among team members. It is obvious that these theories share a lot of ideas in common. All of them try to explain the basis for team formation and functioning dynamics especially when such teams are voluntarily originated. As related to environmental management, one thing is obvious: best results are achieved through team rather than individual functioning.

11.5 Facilitators of Team Productivity

The theoretical bases discussed above notwithstanding, productive teams associated with the environment require effective communication, dynamic leadership, critical goal setting, judicious resources management and proper orientation for team members.

Effective communication among team members can facilitate clarification of doubts. It intimates team members of direction, purpose and other details. It engenders belongingness and better commitment. Dynamic leadership is necessary to direct, motivate and co-ordinate the activities of the team members towards goal achievement. Critical goal setting is an important pre-requisite in environmental management teams because it determines the direction, selects suitable resources and proposes the acceptable criteria for evaluating success level of the proposed team goals. Without judicious management of various non-human resources, the team cannot achieve the desired environmentally related goals. Ideas, time, space, funds, materials and equipment are some of the necessary resources other than the human. Their recruitment, orientation and modification, deployment and maximum utilisation are important for team goal achievement. The team also requires adequate and proper orientation as to the team goals, available resources, expertise, attitude, the individual expectations and role definition as related to the team task at hand.

Effective communication among management team members may often require work meetings to actualise team goals. No matter the

nature and brevity, work meetings are a crucial, powerful team development strategy which need efficiency and dynamic management. Three teamwork meeting types have been identified by Mahoney (1982:46): basic work sessions, action sessions and critique sessions. To these three, feedback is added. Each of them provides opportunities for both team leaders and members to suggest inputs towards effective teamwork.

- (i) **Basic Work Sessions:** According to Mahoney (1982:46) the basic work session involves two key elements: problem solving and planning process. It encourages a two-way communication process. It encourages a two-way communication outline which involves the need to:
- (a) specify objectives and goals clearly;
 - (b) evaluate current status in relation to expected goals/objectives;
 - (c) identify and define problems as specifically as possible;
 - (d) establish factual antecedent causes against opinions and assumptions;
 - (e) select best alternative solutions;
 - (f) implement;
 - (g) observe contradictions and deficiencies in the implemented solutions; and
 - (h) review and recycle.

The emphasis at the basic work session is on joint contribution especially because some team members could have widely varied possible and feasible alternatives to the team problems. Moreover the expressed attitudes to the resources and leadership and team mates can facilitate teamwork where there is an effective and guarded communication among team members. Environmental management team leaders should therefore sharpen their focus on feasible alternatives and possible implementation steps suggested by the team members without losing control of the team. They must also provide factual inputs to team members as related to goals and objectives, operations, equipment, priorities and schedules and facts unknown to team members. On the other hand, members

have to provide inputs to leaders in terms of additional facts, possible alternatives and preferred solution.

It is instructive to emphasise that apart from their number and variety team members may also have more direct contacts with the wider world and may have first hand operational and field knowledge which the team leader may not. Their contribution to effective basic work sessions should therefore not be taken for granted.

- (ii) **Action Session:** This involves effective participation of all team members on actual problem solving. Leadership and team management may have to be decentralised because of the need for several smaller work teams to focus on specific aspects of the problem. The most important roles of sub-team leaders and the overall leadership are to encourage interaction, cohesion and team spirit through free and innovative thinking (as in brainstorming), effective conflict management and consensus. Each of these is briefly discussed below.
- (iii) **Freedom of Thought and Brainstorming:** Free and innovative thinking is the end-result of effective brainstorming exercise. Brainstorming demands that team members be encouraged to generate ideas, solve problems, suggest alternatives and originate plans, no matter how wild and unrelated initially, without criticism, hindrance or restraint. Later on the potentials, merits and feasibility of such ideas, plans and alternatives are evaluated, hitch-hiked and ordered for implementation.
- (iv) **Conflict Management:** Effective conflict management focuses on how to constructively handle disagreements arising from the interaction of team members. Disagreements in any teamwork should not be seen as being completely bad; they can sometimes result in constructive innovations when properly resolved; they can also provide a litmus test for acceptability of ideas.

Conflicts in teamwork may arise as a result of communication

gap, disagreements or when "two or more desiderata require mutually incompatible actions in the same situation" (Landauer, 1972:76). When team members are not getting on well, think they may suffer or are actually suffering some psychological, physical, social or personal disadvantages; some disagreements and consequently conflicts may arise. In teamwork constructive rather than destructive conflicts should be pursued.

To effectively manage conflicts before they degenerate into crises, their causes should be nipped in the bud. But most often and in actual practice this neither happens easily nor early enough. Generally therefore, reactions to disagreements can take any or a combination of five strategies: evasion, confrontation, force, compromise, integration. Conflict management or resolution strategies in teamwork usually focus on areas of disagreement.

Evasion as a conflict management strategy involves dodging or avoidance of situations that breed open disagreements or even avoiding the offended party and claiming ignorance thus maintaining perceptual constancy. But when serious disagreements arise they cannot always be easily dodged, especially when deep-rooted socio-cultural practices come face-to-face with modern thinking. For example, when team members are challenged by sustainable environmental practices against socio-cultural, family or religious practices which encourage high population growth rate. Such types of approach-avoidance conflicts are usually difficult to resolve, so choices based on value systems have to be resorted to.

Confrontation and use of force are two ends of the domination continuum as conflict resolution strategy. For example, confrontation can be used by the team members to gain temporary victory over the team leadership, so also can the leadership use force, to get the team members to temporarily succumb. Both confrontation and force are domination strategies. They involve the victory of one side over the other. They are also the easiest and the quickest but the least successful method of dealing with conflicts. They are not usually effective.

Compromise, the most commonly used conflict management strategy, involves each side moderating its demands and neither side obtaining all its demands. It calls for give-and-take "in order to

have peace". But it may not always produce the best and lasting solution to conflicts, because it may involve abandoning the objectives or substituting something inferior. Mahoney (1982:52) points out that "confronting disagreement and working through to a consensus position is usually the best route to follow even though a tough one."

Perhaps that is what Morphet, Johns and Reller (1974) call integration. They agree that the highest level of conflict management occurs "when ideas of both sides are integrated into a solution that encompasses the desires of both side" (Morphet et al 1974). This conflict management and resolution strategy is highly recommended for environmental team workers because what is best from each party is considered for the good of all. For example, in some national park communities the integration strategy rather than compromise is used. By this is meant that instead of hunting and cultivating into the reserved forest, improved intensive cultivation systems and animal husbandry are encouraged in addition to limiting hunting to the peripheral forest region of the support zone. The village liaison officers and the forest guards are used to create environmental awareness and to enforce the practice in the national park areas. It is obvious that while feasible alternatives are provided for the traditional occupations and means of livelihood, adequate care is also taken to create the necessary environmental awareness so that with time the villagers living around the support zones will become protectors rather than exploiters of the national parks.

However conflict management and resolution process usually involve interrelated steps and demand the following:

- (a) define the problem clearly;
- (b) generate possible solution no matter how wild or commonplace;
- (c) evaluate the solutions through objective open discussion; select the best alternative solutions;
- (d) determine implementation strategies and criteria;
- (e) adopt the selected alternatives and strategies;
- (f) assess the solution effectiveness; and
- (g) recycle.

228 *Planning and Process in Environmental Management*

- (v) **Consensus:** When the final decision represents and reflects the best of everyone's contribution there is an agreement. A consensus has been reached. In order to do this the team members and the leader must:
 - (a) be flexible;
 - (b) develop a basis for decision-making, for example, establish standard criteria as guide;
 - (c) explore facts, screen opinions and assumptions and use the decision criteria effectively;
 - (d) encourage clarification and hitch-hiking or ideas;
 - (e) summarise discussion regularly and pull the points together;
 - (f) avoid heated arguments, artificial harmony, easy-way-outs, short-cuts and quick decisions without adequate data and factual basis; and
 - (g) settle for win-win or compromise position.

Occasions may arise where consensus cannot be arrived at, and the basic disagreements and conflicts cannot be resolved. Such situations call for deferred actions to permit further analysis, discussion and study of the problem. Occasions may also arise where immediate action may also be necessary although the existing disagreements cannot be resolved. Such situations also call for temporary action to be taken with open caution that they can be reviewed when new facts leading to final conflict resolution have emerged.

Essentially therefore, team action sessions require that members make inputs to leaders' related to innovative alternatives, recommended decisions and relevant implementational steps. The team leaders on the other hand have to manage conflict, summarise final decision and intimate team of acceptable implementation plans, among other such functions.

- (vi) **Team Critique and Diagnostic Sessions:** These sessions are usually designed to evaluate the overall team behaviour and performance vis-a-vis the objectives of the team. The focus therefore should be sharpened on:

- (a) level of performance of the team in relation to the objectives;
- (b) causes of non-performance of certain aspects;
- (c) team improvement strategies;
- (d) general attitude of team members towards leadership, tasks, members and resources among other team components;
- (e) side effects of teamwork on individual behaviour.

Basic Work Session (problem-solving or planning process)	Team Action Variation	Team Critique Variation
Group leader input to employees: Nature of problem/ opportunity.	Team input to group leaders: Innovative alternatives	Team's Critique of team's performance.
Operations issues. Equipment issues Priority/scheduling issues.	Recommended decision(s) or position(s) Implementation steps.	
Goals/objectives issues Facts not known to employees.	Group leader input to team: Conflict management.	
Employee input to group leader:	Final decision.	
Additional facts Alternatives Preferred solution(s)	Implement plan(s).	

Source: Mahoney (1982, 46)

Figure 9.1: Teamwork Sessions

(vii) **Feedback:** Team members and leaders require some feedback from one another. This is the process of communicating the observations, response and feelings to the originator of communication process in order to reassure and regulate performance. It enables the person receiving the feedback to recognise new information, data and behaviour inputs about the original communication thus facilitating some relevant improvement. To be effective in teamwork situation feedback has to be:

- (a) descriptive rather than prescriptive or evaluative;
- (b) specific rather than general, e.g. by citing a particular behaviour affecting the environment rather than the general behavioural pattern;
- (c) usable by directing it to a specific behaviour that the team members can do something about;
- (d) concerned about the needs of both the team and particular members;
- (e) timely-given: as soon as possible after the incident of the particular behaviour;
- (f) clear and easily understandable to the receiver; and
- (g) accurate by communicating exactly what it intends to.

Feedback should be given in such a way as to help improve the performance of the team and its members and thus improve goal achievement and team effectiveness. Readiness to receive and utilise feedback is also important. Both positive and negative feedback can be equally useful because team members need to know not only about what they have done well but also the areas that they have been very effective. However, such factors as socio-cultural background, fear and knowledge level can limit feedback, giving and manipulation, in teamwork. For example, certain cultures have norms which are against expressing personal feelings to others especially if they are older. At other times, fear of being misunderstood, of losing friendship or suffering in the hands of a vindictive senior team member or leader can stifle the urge to give a feedback. Receivers of feedback also react to it differently. Sometimes too, the giver of

feedback can be attacked, especially if such a feedback is perceived as criticism. Feedback givers should realise that rationalisation, denial, doubt or selective reception can be adopted by unwilling receivers as an attempt to block the level of feedback effectiveness. They should therefore attempt to package feedback neatly using attractive terms and making them constructively presented.

Box 11.1: Twenty-one Roles in Teamwork

Watch your team mates to determine which of the following roles they play. Do you consider those roles as negative or positive?

Aggressor	— boasts, criticizes, sees self above others and deflates the personality of team mates.
Analyst	— encourages comparison by specifying similarities between ideas, situation or discussions.
Blocker	— interferes with team progress, negates progressive ideas and suggestions.
Chair	— provides social and intellectual leadership, has calm, self-confident and commanding personality and guides the team towards its objectives but could be domineering.
Clarifier	— asks relevant incisive questions, interpretes ideas, clears confusion and exemplifies meaningfully.
Compromiser	— accepts errors and easily opens up to ideas and keeps team together easily.
Copier	— lacks proper preparation and original ideas.
Dominator	— interpretes, is over-assertive and takes too much of team time seeking attention.
Encourager	— is warm, responsive, democratic and accepts suggestions while prodding others on.

Energizer	— easily moves team through use of fun and jokes towards the team goals and decisions and redirects without rigidity.
Evaluator	— appraises team proposals and monitors team progress with prudence, analytical mind, dispassionate outlook and objectivity.
Finisher	— ensures that the team delivers as expected, meeting its obligations compulsively on deadlines and perfectly.
Harmoniser	— settles disputes among team mates, reduces tension and encourages constructive discussion.
Informant	— gives facts, data and opinion which can be very helpful to the team progress.
Initiator	— proposes alternatives, suggests concretely, is full of ideas and leads group out of impasse.
Innovator	— through original independent and imaginative thinking provides vital new ideas to the team but can be oversensitive to criticism.
Leader	— takes responsibilities, organises, interprets, initiates decisions and provides direction.
Listener	— shows keen interest but does not contribute to the progress of the team.
Organiser	— methodically and practically translates plans into organised manageable tasks, is loyal and true to the team but could be inflexible.
Resources	— is a relaxed opportunist who brings ideas into the group from outside and often works under pressure ensuring that working tools are available for the team.

Shaper — provides energy and drive for the team ideas to be implemented through active sociability and dynamism though could be impatient.

Source: McGregor (1960)

Box 11.2 Observational Checklist for Teamwork

When observing team interaction and dynamics the following checklist can be useful to determine how well the team is getting on course, derailing or blocked.

A Start:

- How long does it take to get the team started?
- Who provides the initial stimulus?
- How well prepared is the team in terms of both human and material resources?
- Are the members conversant with the team goals?

B Participation:

- Is everyone actively participating in teamwork?
- Is the teamwork dominated by a few members?
- Do they focus on the team goals?
- What distractions are obvious?
- Has any team member provided some comic relief?

C Resources:

- Are the material and time resources in short supply?
- Any efforts to increase or maximise their use?
- How are available time and materials utilised?
- Are team members adequately skilled in use of the resources?

D Communication:

- How well do team members-communicate?
- Do you notice any non-verbal communication?
- If so by whom "What kind? How often?"
- Do some members suppress their desire to communicate?
- If so, who? How often? Any obvious reason for that?
- Do periods of silence occur? If so how often?
- What happened? How was it terminated? By whom?

E Roles:

- What negative roles have been exhibited and observed?
- Who exhibited it? How often?
- What was the reaction? What positive roles have been exhibited? By whom? How often?
- How did others react?
- Does leadership emerge naturally according to situational changes?

F General:

- Was the team able to achieve its objectives effectively?
- Did a clique emerge?
- Was the team goal achieved at minimal cost in time and energy?
- How often did conflicts arise?
- How were the conflicts arise?
- How were the conflicts resolved?
- Were team members satisfied with the resolutions?

Source: McGregor (1960)

11.6 Task-Oriented Teams

An effective team is task-rather than leader-oriented. When the goal for which a team was constituted can be maximally achieved then such a team can be accepted as being successful. Team efficiency occurs when the maximum goal achievement is done within least possible cost in terms of time and other resources. Effectiveness and efficiency are therefore the functions of maximum goal achievement at minimal cost. Task-oriented teams are well functioning, effective and efficient. They exhibit among others the following characteristics some of which are proposed by McGregor (1960).

- (i) **Comfort:** The atmosphere is informal, relaxed and comfortable. It is tension-free and non-boring. The level of anxiety among team members is just high enough to keep the team at maximum performance.
- (ii) **Relevant Activities:** There is active participation of all team members in discussion and other activities which are goal-oriented.
- (iii) **Goal Orientation:** Team members understand their tasks and goals and how to get about achieving them.
- (iv) **Active Listening:** Members active-listen mutually and sympathetically to discussions. They integrate both the verbal and non-verbal communication to effectively achieve the team goals.
- (v) **Disagreements:** Disagreements and conflicts are not ruled out. But they are resolved passionately with both sides having and being given a fair hearing. Domination and hostility are completely ruled out in conflict resolution. Suppressed disagreements are minimal. Integration as conflict management and resolution strategy is always actively pursued.
- (vi) **Consensus Decision:** Consensus is easily reached quickly without formal voting.
- (vii) **Constructive Criticism:** Positive criticism aimed at co-operative functioning and maximum goal achievement for the team is accepted without a fuss.

- (viii) **Effective Communications:** Team members exchange ideas, emotions, knowledge and information openly and effectively as related to the team goals and objectives.
- (ix) **Situational Leadership:** Leadership is not vested only on any single individual. Rather it is situationally determined according to task-related knowledge, experience and expertise of the team members. Emphasis is not on "who leads" but on how well the team task is performed.
- (x) **Self-Criticism:** Task-oriented teams are self-critical as a measure of formative evaluation. Members periodically examine how well they have been operating, how suitable their "modus operandi" have been and the individual contributions in relation to the team goals.

11.7 Entry and Getting-Acquainted Behaviours

All exhibitable, measurable and observable capabilities and behaviours that an individual has in relation to the needs of a team and which can enable the team to function maximally constitute the individual's entry behaviour into the team. Intelligence, specific abilities, general abilities, skills and personality characteristics of the team members are therefore important personal entry basis for team membership.

It is most likely that the more intelligent individuals could be more active in a team than the less intelligent ones. But they could also be less conforming. Leadership tendencies may also most often be associated with the more than the less intelligent team members, although other factors also count.

Moreover, team members that have and can adequately exhibit specific task-related abilities, that are relevant to the team goals and objectives are likely to contribute more to the success of the team in that direction. Consequently, such team members can be more influential on the team decisions than their other counterparts. Most often if they lead, the team's performance in the related task can improve because of two reasons. Firstly is the cooperation they are likely to elicit easily from the team mates as a result of their superior abilities which tended to endear them to the open-minded members. Secondly, such team members with specific task-related

abilities can easily lead the team in successful performance of the task at hand. These facts underscore the reason why effective team leadership in environmental matters should be situationally determined. It seems that the more general the task-related abilities people have the more likely they are to meaningfully contribute to effective team functioning in relation to the task at hand and the more effectively they are likely to influence the team.

As related to the individual characteristics it is obvious that the personality of the members and the leader affect the team behaviour. While team task processes can be highly influenced by the personality characteristics of the leader, those of the team members can facilitate or inhibit such processes. For example, well-adjusted team members can exercise positive influence on team effectiveness, cohesiveness and morale. Consequently, members who come into the team with positive attributes, either as leaders or not, can have significant positive influence on the general team effectiveness.

To get acquainted with the team requires opening up. Team members need to know themselves fairly well, know their individual strengths and possible weaknesses, be fairly acquainted with the team goals and objectives, the tasks (their complexity, environment and demands), and available resources in relation to the objectives. Apart from gradually acquainting themselves with the team members and tasks, the initial team induction should provide ample opportunities for opening-up exercises. Self-introduction which is limited to personal credentials (name, title, address, occupation, qualification) cannot provide adequate opening-up information. An expanded self-introduction should be a verbal curriculum vitae; it should include briefs on personal experiences in relation to team goals; it should however not be a self-praise session. Opportunities for team members to be familiar with majority of names of the members can provide a very gainful experience.

Receiving the team agenda or programme of activities can also provide opportunities for members to open-up and adequately verbalise their understanding. Opening activities available for team use can only be limited by the creativity of the leaders and the curiosity of the members.

11.8 Team Needs Assessment

Effective teamwork requires that their felt needs be comprehensively assessed. This activity calls for an objective weighing of the current against the ideal situation to establish the difference. For example, if the team has to tackle the problem of urban pollution, it has to assess the time, human and non-human resources available to it, determine the characteristics of the team members and the urban people involved, analyse the task clearly to produce the sub-tasks and their complexity, among other needs assessment.

The reasons for comprehensive needs assessment for the team are obvious. By establishing such needs clearly the team can better focus its attention on the most crucial activities, identify and utilise its resources judiciously, take cognisance of its constraints bearing in mind its strengths and weaknesses.

It is also obvious that team mates have a wide variety of needs such as those for kindness, belongingness, security, recognition, mutual knowledge about members, new experiences, leadership, self actualisation among others. As a team, the need for achieving the objectives of the set task is paramount. But all these have to be realised vis-a-vis the other competing personal needs. Needs compatibility can reinforce team members, enhance motivation and rejuvenate 'esprit de corps' and efforts of the individuals and sub-team members. Compatible personality attributes can also predispose team members to congenial relaxed working atmosphere which are also needed by the team for effective functioning.

Assessing the credentials of the members, use of interviews, questionnaires and open discussions can be very reliable sources of information on personal data of team members, which when made available to the relevant persons can facilitate goal attainment and improve interpersonal relationship. However, personal confidentiality, anonymity and human personal rights should not be infiltrated. Effective environment teamwork requires openness, non-judgemental approach, acceptance, freedom and personal commitment to the team. All these needs must be critically assessed.

Needs assessment for environmental management team therefore is four-fold: assessment of the team members, the task, the

resources and the task environment. When well assessed and feedback, these variables can provide unmistakable data and information for effective execution of team tasks. Opportunities for detecting the constraints germane to the team task can then be better articulated and well utilised while optimally funded alternatives can be pursued more directly.

11.9 Perception and Evaluation of Team Members

Perception involves the process of meaning creation based on the interaction of external stimuli with internally stored experience. As a basis for attention, awareness and knowledge perception is crucial to various human behaviour. In relation to teamwork, the process of perception determines, firstly whether or not to belong to a team. When members have a collective perception of themselves as a team then they are more likely to work together. That means team members must first positively perceive the need for or actual existence of the team. Its goals, objectives, structure and the organisation of the team must also be positively perceived, probably in relation to their perceived personal needs and aspirations. Perceptual compatibility among people in terms of groupness, motivations associated with the team and the team goals can make them decide to remain together partly because it is tension-relieving. Moreso when different perception of goals for the same team is held by the team members, ineffectiveness could result. Ability to resolve such perceptual differences leads to effective goal attainment.

As a team the different personalities are supposed to be perceived similarly, especially when they are in close proximity. Therefore, the degree of "teamness" may vary according to individual perception.

But since the only basis of the reality or corporate existence of the team derives from its perception then it is obvious that the team remains so to the extent that it is so perceived by both its members and the non-members.

How the team members are perceived affects how the team is evaluated. It says much about the values attached to members and to the team's corporate existence. The capability to maintain an unshakably high credibility, transparent honesty and unalloyed

commitment to the goals and objectives of the team if seen and valued as such, can be a great booster to both individual members and the corporate team. But objective evaluation of the members can only be made when adequate data and information are obtained either directly or unobtrusively. The use of anecdotal records, questionnaires, interviews, discussions, checklists can be very revealing in terms of team member evaluation.

11.10 Shared Responsibility

Among some unique aspects of individual personality expressed through responsible dependable behaviour are self-esteem, self-reliance, will-control and self-blame according to Shaw (1976). Ability to share responsibility begins from capability in personal responsibility and dependability. Self-esteem as an aspect of personal responsibility is an expression of the degree that individuals respect themselves as humans. On the other hand, self-blame expresses the level that individuals are capable of blaming themselves when things do not go right. High self-esteem can lead to acceptable level of self-blame which in turn promotes responsible and dependable behaviour. Individuals that accept responsibility readily may also score high in self-blame. By mere extension therefore it is obvious that acceptance of responsibility for unfavourable outcome and acceptance of positive criticism are by-products of high degree of self-blame. Consequently, team members who are high in both self-blame and self-esteem are not only likely to be seriously involved in teamwork but also to share responsibility. Usually they are seen as being very dependable, popular, active and attractive to other team members. When position of team leadership reverts to people who are seen as being more responsible than others the probability of their helping the group to effectively achieve its goals can rise sharply especially if superior knowledge and ability are also available in that direction.

Personal responsibility obviously precedes shared responsibility as indicated above. More so just like problems shared becomes lighter so does responsibility shared. But the negative consequences of teamwork should not be overlooked because "madness is an

exception in individuals but the rule in group" (Nietzsche). Shared responsibility can be enhanced under the following conditions:

- (i) **Democratic Leadership:** Team morality, team performance, personal satisfaction and shared responsibility can be enhanced under democratic leadership style. Autocratic leadership, on the other hand, increase individual responsibility and group productivity.
- (ii) **Team Goal Setting:** When team members are agreed on the team goals they take greater responsibility for achieving such goals.
- (iii) **Individual Territorial Rights:** When individual physical environment such as individual space or territorial rights, spatial positions and status are recognised and respected more effective, participation and shared responsibility can be enhanced.
- (iv) **Social Sensitivity:** When majority of team members are socially sensitive there may be greater shared responsibility in team than if otherwise.
- (v) **Heterogeneity:** The effectiveness of teamwork may, to a great extent, depend upon the interaction of the characteristics of the team members. When team members are encouraged to fully explore available abilities including minority opinions, shared responsibility can be enhanced.
- (vi) **Team Tasks:** Team tasks may vary considerably but effective team membership is always responsive to their demands. Thorough knowledge of the team tasks and ability to adjust according to the task demands can facilitate shared responsibility.

It is however important to be mindful of the fact that shared responsibility is usually preferred to the individual responsibility. This may be so probably because of some major reasons, four of which are that:

- (i) some tasks are more team-oriented than others;
- (ii) result of teamwork may be superior to that of the individual especially when accuracy rather than speed is required;

- (iii) team decisions are more readily acceptable for implementation than individual decisions because of the perception that it is more valid; and
- (iv) team work is more economical than individual work.

11.11 Good Team working Relationship

Teamwork requires, among other things, excellent interpersonal relationship. This should engender some basic qualities which are both necessary and sufficient to promote personal growth and team spirit. These qualities are briefly explained below:

- (i) **Empathy:** This involves the relationship which is so deep that members develop the ability to literally enter into the other member's personality, body, soul and spirit and consequently imaginatively, physically and emotionally experience exactly what and how the other person feels. It involves understanding and feeling how the other person feels. "When the shoe pinches as if you were personally wearing the shoe". Empathy is especially important in matters related to personal welfare. For this to occur it must be accepted that individual welfare is important for team goal attainment.
- (ii) **Regard for others:** Positive regard for other team members indicates a position whereby members see their colleagues as important full-fledged capable personalities with integrity. This ego-boosting attitude enhances high morality while cementing good interpersonal relationship.
- (iii) **Unconditional Acceptance:** This situation does not place any "price" on the acceptability of team membership. Rather every member is regarded highly without bias as to his sex, ethnic or religious affinity, past or capability.
- (iv) **Congruence:** When team members are candid, straightforward and consistent in their thinking and action, a high level credibility is established. This encourages mutual trust and dependability which in turn enhance team cohesiveness.

- (v) **Effective Communication:** Attitude similarity, value congruence and similarity in personality characteristics, to a large extent, influence attraction of team members among themselves. Consequently, they provide a strong determinant of good teamwork relationship. Contact and interaction as factors of interpersonal attraction also provide for preference of team membership. Physical attraction and similarity are also important determinants or interpersonal attraction and consequently a basis for excellent teamwork relationship, team goal achievement and team activities.

Effective teamworking relationship therefore is a function for every team member. An effective team member should contribute to the growth of the team. Abilities that can enable the environmental management team to achieve its goals or that could facilitate individual achievement of related team goals are necessary for good working relationship. Good teamworking relationship should therefore establish and justify a high degree that the team members therefore satisfy mutually rewarding positive affiliation without compromising the team goals.

11.12 Activities

Carry out the following activities first as an individual and later in groups. How far does the team solution match yours? A team member should act as an observer, in rotation, for each activity. A very objective report of the team activities is expected for the team feedback at the end of each exercise.

Activity I: Least Action Game

Requirements: Seven matchsticks of broomsticks (of matchstick size and length) for each member and any flat surface.

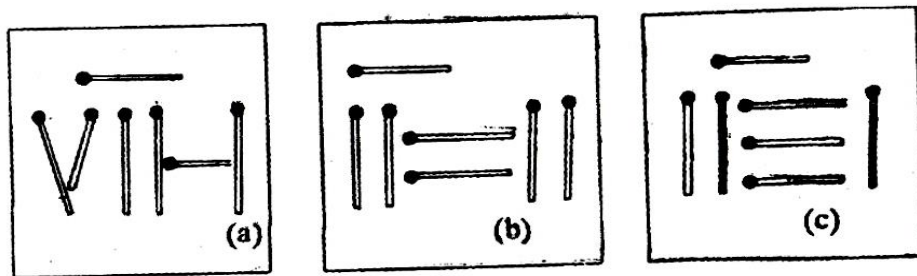


Figure 9.2: Least Action Game

The Activities

- (i) Arrange seven matchsticks or broomsticks as shown on the pattern above. Change the position of only one of the sticks to arrive at a balanced mathematical equation.
- (ii) Do you agree that a singular action on the environment can change a lot of things? Then list in a tabular form ten negative impact of bush burning on each of ecological, economic, social and political life of your community, country and the world. Compare your list with your group and agree on the six most important negative impacts for each.

11.13 Questions

1. Using any three viewpoints define the terms "team" and "teamwork" as related to environmental management.
2. Compare any two theoretical positions of team dynamics using examples related to environmental management.
3. Justify the role of facilitators of team productivity as related to environmental teamwork.
4. Compare in tabular form at least five major positive and negative roles each of environmental team members.
5. Evaluate the major characteristics of a task-oriented environmental management team.
6. Why are entry and getting-acquainted behaviours necessary in environmental management teams?

7. Why do you consider positive perception and objective evaluation of team members necessary in environmental management teams.
8. In what ways can shared responsibility be enhanced for effective environmental management teams?

11.14 Follow-up Activities

- (i) Using the checklist under Box 9.2 evaluate any management teamwork you are familiar with.
- (ii) Carry out a brief needs assessment of any environmental management team around your place of work or school.
- (iii) Using the qualities of good teamwork relationship, carry out and evaluate a conservation club team-work in your school or community.

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