

# Solidaridad

## Part two:

## Understanding change as a process

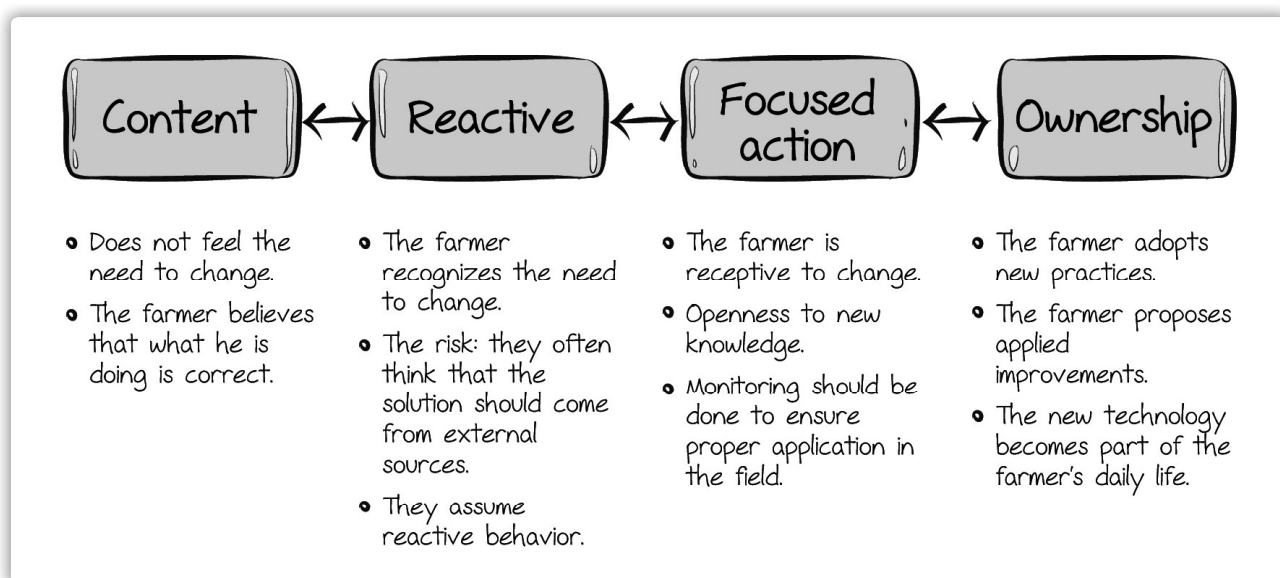
### 4. Stages in the process of change

Depending on their motivations, expectations and perception of needs, each person responds with a different behavior regarding change. The facilitator should understand the characteristics of each person and each group to facilitate activities and experiences that allow the participants in the process to proceed towards achieving their goals.



## 4. Stages in the process of change

The following stages are a guide that combines common characteristics and conditions for a particular group. The facilitator may identify other stages or subdivide those presented in this documenter (the term 'stages' is used for illustrative purposes).



### Content “I’m fine as is”

The person or group in this stage does not feel the need to change. Their attitudes and actions are perceived as adequate. They might also justify their actions with the reality they live, for example using the following expression: “*our farm is like this because we don’t have enough resources to do anything more.*”

Many people in this stage are only interested in maintaining their current condition, and will participate in projects or training solely to receive something in return (supplies, gifts, money, infrastructure). In these cases, the problem is that they are not willing to commit themselves and implement changes on the farm, or if they do, they are temporary changes that last only while they are receiving material benefits from the project.

Other farmers in this content stage may be afraid to risk what they have. This group will make comments like “if I renew this old plot, how will I feed my children?” Conformity is a defense mechanism that farmers might use to protect themselves

or to preserve the success and comfort achieved in the past. It is a defense against change and the potential disruption this could cause.

A content farmer postpones the problem until it reaches a critical and unsustainable state. Conformity frequently masks inner turmoil or an attachment to the past. Another comment might be *“My grandfather and my father did things this way, and I continue the same. If it worked for them, why not for me?”*

#### **Attitudes that denote conformity:**

- ⊙ Lack of initiative.
- ⊙ Acting as if nothing will happen.
- ⊙ Questioning the information that supports or endorses change.
- ⊙ The most frequent emotions are indifference and calm.

#### **Reactive “Yes, but...”**

Unlike people in the first stage of the process, this group includes farmers who do admit that they have a problem or situation that they should improve. The difficulty, just as with the previous group, is that they are unwilling to commit to changing their way of doing things or their attitude in certain situations. Many of the farmers in this stage need to feel safe or are looking for someone else to solve their problem (the government, an organization, the facilitator).

#### **The reaction stage can be shown in different ways:**

**Passive reaction.** These are people who attend the training activities and reconfirm the messages the technical facilitator delivers, underscore the importance of the issue and even emphasize the group’s need for what the technician is explaining and how they should implement it. Nevertheless, when they return to their farms and communities, they continue with previous practices and keep doing things the same way, despite having identified the benefits of the action proposed in the training.

**Active reaction.** In this group are the farmers who are openly opposed to change and directly express their disagreement. Generally, their participation involves a

#### 4. Stages in the process of change

large emotional component (they raise their voices, verbally attack, emphatically gesticulate). Experience shows that few farmers develop active reactive behavior; the vast majority of those in the reactive category show passive behavior. It is valuable to listen to their arguments, because often their viewpoints and suggestions can be valid and usefully incorporated into the change process.

##### **Reactive people use expressions such as:**

“This won’t work because...”, “what you propose to us is interesting, but...”, “we do not have enough resources to...”, “we are willing to do this, but you have to give us...”.



This stage also includes those farmers who tend to blow out of proportion the negative situations that could arise from the proposed changes. It is common to hear them say: “What happens if the variety you are suggesting to us does not work?” Helping this group overcome their fears and worries is crucial to be able to commit them to change.

In some cases, farmers in this stage might end up implementing certain minimal technical recommendations. Some will implement the practices just to reaffirm their standing position, and by not applying the appropriate recommendations they can show that the practice does not work, to reaffirm their initial perception that things were going to fail. An example of this case is a farmer who was given some seeds of an improved varieties to try out, but he planted them in an area with the worst soil conditions on his farm. With this attitude, whether consciously or unconsciously, the farmer is making sure that the new practice does not work.

#### **Attitudes that denote reaction:**

- ⊙ Anger towards other people and organizations.
- ⊙ Disdain, disrepute or doubts regarding the decisions made.
- ⊙ The most common emotions are anger, distrust, depression and frustration.
- ⊙ They come up with objections and reasons to not do things.
- ⊙ They applaud and approve the changes, but do not apply them in their farming practice.

#### **Focused action “Let’s get to work”**

People in this group are enthusiastic and ready to implement the recommendations the technician suggests or to jointly develop them (technician-farmer). This group of farmers is willing to implement pilots and tests on their farms. Without this group, it would be difficult to initiate the change process. They usually trust in the institutions and technicians they work with, which is why showing responsibility and commitment to this group is so important.

The changes a farmer in the focused action stage is willing to implement should be closely and carefully monitored to ensure success and achievement of goals. When the proposed actions fail, there is a risk that the farmer will regress in the process of change and become reactive or indifferent.

## 4. Stages in the process of change

### **Attitudes that denote focused action:**

- ⊙ High energy level, from motivation or anxiety.
- ⊙ Search for information and answers.
- ⊙ Problem solving and idea generation.
- ⊙ They take the risk of inventing new things.
- ⊙ Sometimes they struggle to maintain focus and keep objectives.

### **Ownership “It’s my solution”**

This stage includes farmers who have successfully incorporated new practices and made their own changes on their farms. They place great value on their efforts to achieve goals and can defend the improvement process they have developed with arguments and emotion. The success they have achieved is what motivates them. They feel they have overcome obstacles and are now in a better situation than before taking on the challenge of change. A farmer in the ownership stage has the ability to propose continued improvements. Some of their expressions are: “what we have achieved is a result of our efforts” and “now we’re better than we thought we would be.”

One characteristic that differentiates farmers in the ownership stage from those in focused action is that when problems arise, they are able to propose solutions themselves or look for someone to help them. They have acquired a high sense of self-efficacy and empowerment in what they do.

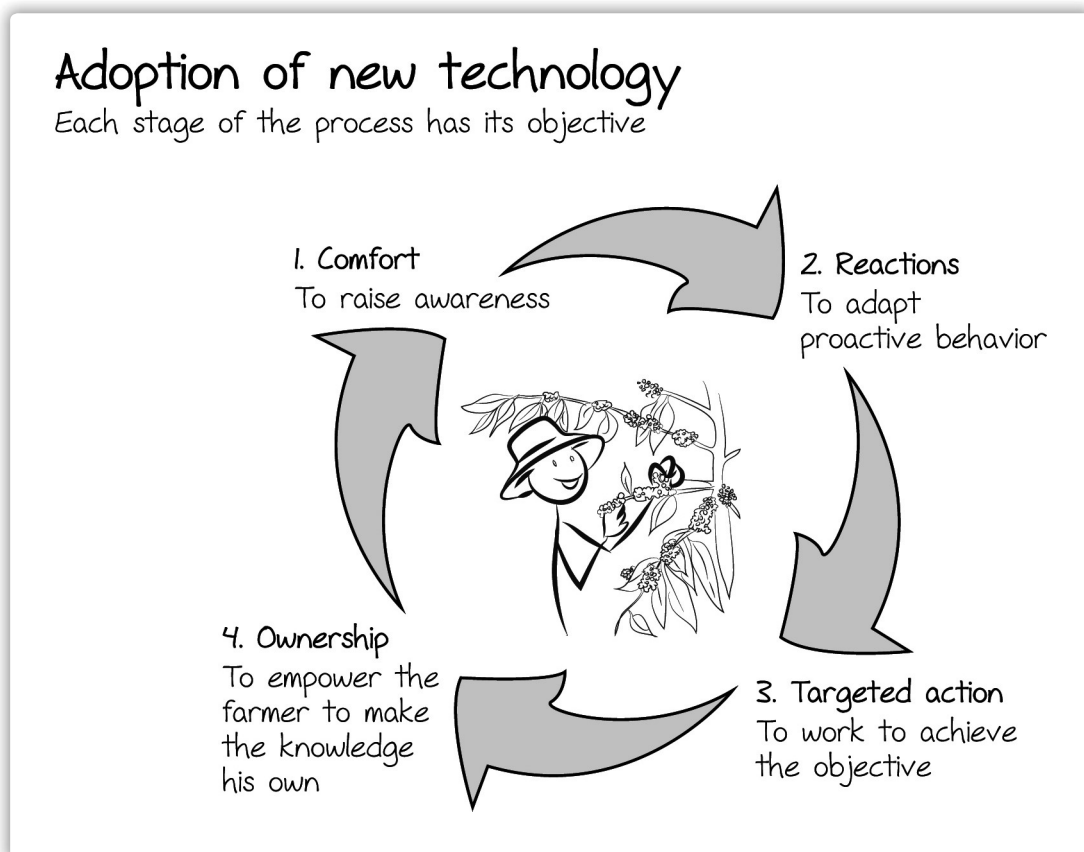
A farmer at this stage of the change process is able to tell other farmers about the success he has achieved with the new practices. Later we will show you how to maximize the potential of this group so that they can serve as promoters and support farmers in other stages.

### **Attitudes that denote ownership:**

- ⊙ Feel confident in themselves and feel in control of their farms.
- ⊙ Feel responsible for results.
- ⊙ In general, able to adapt easily and quickly.
- ⊙ The most common emotions are a sense of achievement, self-confidence and positivity.

It is important to understand that this is not a linear process, but is shown in this manner to facilitate understanding. The same person can assume different behaviors, and be in a different stage depending on varying situations of change. Similarly, they do not remain indefinitely in one stage. A situation that brings somebody to the stage of ownership, overtime can make the person revert to sticking with what has worked in the past, which then leads back to the compliance stage and the start of the process.

It is also important for the facilitator to understand that each stage of the process must have a specific goal to be achieved with the group of farmers.



## 5. Resistance as a lever for change

**Myth:** People are naturally resistant to change.

**Reality:** There is nothing in the biological system to indicate that humans are resistant to change. It isn't resistance to change, since there are constant changes from the cradle to the grave. So, what changes do people resist? They defend themselves from those things or circumstances that alter their level of control—this is very different. To effectively address the processes of change, you must go beyond the paradigm that “resistance to change is a natural behavior” and focus your efforts on uncovering the causes of resistance.





**Myth:** People are rational and will react logically to rational and logical explanations.

**Reality:** Although human beings are capable of rationally understanding ideas, this rational understanding does not guarantee: a) that they will latch onto the idea or b) change their behavior. The only way to move somebody is promoting an idea or proposal that the person deems significant enough to want to change their behavior.

**Myth:** Skeptical people must be controlled so that they do not affect others.

**Reality:** A person who expresses their differences and fears, and who dares to argue their point of view on any subject that is being addressed in a group is great news. The challenge posed by individuals who express their disagreement is in knowing how to listen to them to understand their reasons, and use them as a basis to implement work strategies that will achieve behavior change. When you manage to get a skeptic to adhere to the idea, you will gain even more followers, because: a) his “conversion” can become an imitable trend and b) the “conversion” in itself is proof of social legitimization.

**Myth:** People must be convinced to change.

**Reality:** Nobody can convince another person of a need. Change management is not done in the style of politics in election time, and it is not a matter of faith. When the person feels the need in his life, he will want to change his work style. Likewise, people are motivated to change when, in addition to the perceived need for change, they also have the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in incorporating the new ideas.

Resistance is an obstacle in the middle of the road that few technicians are able to overcome with their groups of farmers. Many technicians and organizations believe that by simply conducting training activities and giving incentives, change is going to happen. But these are only half measures, like putting on a clean shirt when what you really need is a bath. Some of these solutions work, but only for a short time. If the real cause of the resistance is not overcome, the resistance, which is persistent, will return. Although most technicians have received adequate instruction on training processes, they have little training in human process management, especially in managing change.

## 5. Resistance as a lever for change

The next step in training individuals and teams that are willing to change is to convert their resistance into willingness. If the resistance of the farmers and their families is not overcome, in the end there will be volumes of ideas but none of them put into practice.

As you have seen, in the vast majority of cases there are deep and personal motivations that propel resistance to change. Most of the resistance is not related to technical issues, but are rather aspects of human nature.

### **Fear as a driving force for resistance**

**Fears:** “What happens if...my income drops, the new crop fails, I have to invest a lot of resources” and so on.

Fear is something that is easy to feel but hard to confess. Fear is the most frequent cause of resistance to change, and the most powerful. In such a rapidly changing world where nothing is predictable in the long term, fear is natural and normal.

#### **Vicious cycle of fear:**

What gives fear so much force is that, in addition to reinforcing itself, what was feared becomes reality; fear causes the very thing you fear.

For farmers to be able to embrace change, the facilitator should understand their fears and implement tools to overcome them (part three of this document presents some pertaining ideas). The secret to neutralize the cycle of fear is to understand how to act and to do so at the right moment. Fear, like cancer, can be stopped with timely intervention. However, if it is given time, the resistance, driven by fear, will eventually take root.

The following example helps to explain each step in the cycle of fear.

**Link one:** imagined consequences.

When an individual begins to feel fear, it starts a cycle that goes on forever. First there are negative thoughts. Suddenly, a difficult situation becomes catastrophic, a challenge becomes a calamity. In other words, the person imagines the worst possible consequences. Once these negative thoughts begin

to flow, everything tends to get exaggerated. Fear takes a simple situation and turns it into something serious. “What is at stake is the farm, our family’s survival, the entire harvest...”

**Link two:** panic or procrastination.

Procrastination is one of the most common reactions to fear. People prefer to do a different activity—anything, to evade the task at hand, even though they know that sooner or later they will have to do it. An example is starting a program of pruning plant growth and renewal management on the farm. We have seen how many farmers continue working in old coffee plots that they know they will no longer have a good production. Perhaps deep down they hope that, by putting off what seems too difficult or fearsome, it will simply disappear or become more tolerable.

**Link three:** fears realized.

Panic or postponement makes people act below their level of capacity, so that their original fears become reality, only now with concrete evidence to support it.

How to stop the cycle of fear? There are two ways:

**Reduce the fear to its proper proportions “back to reality”**

As almost all fears are exaggerated, they can be countered with a strong dose of realism. It is advisable for the facilitator to engage in constructive dialogue, asking questions that lead the group to visualize and analyze possible future scenarios. Some questions to facilitate this dialogue are: What is the truth about the situation, in terms of our capacity to handle it and the consequences of not being able to manage it? What is most likely to happen? What’s the worst that could happen if the action does not work?

A look at reality suffocates the catastrophic reasoning, frightening fantasies and exaggerated consequences. People realize that the imagined odds of catastrophe are often lower than what they thought.

## 5. Resistance as a lever for change

### **Build trust**

Seeing reality objectively reduces the fear to more manageable proportions, but that is only part of the solution. The other part is building trust, helping the person to believe that he is capable of handling the change without failure. Although farmers believe that change is good for them and for their farms, they will resist if they do not feel capable or do not have the resources to do it. If they perceive that their skill and ability are lower than necessary to implement the change, their fears will soar and confidence will plummet. To neutralize the resistance to change driven by fear, the technicians have to help farmers to believe in themselves. Trust kills the fear (some additional ideas are discussed in the chapter with suggestions for implementing change).

### **Self-perceived ability to undergo change**

The implementation of a new practice is also affected by the perception that the farmer and his family have of their ability to achieve it.

Self-competence can be approached from three dimensions:

- Perceived ability to mobilize resources.

To apply a specific cultural practice usually requires a mix of resources in terms of labor, capital, land, etc. If farmers do not believe that they already have or can access the necessary resources, the practice, no matter how positive, will be difficult to implement. For example, if the farmer feels he can not get enough money to buy fertilizer for the new crop.

- Perceived degree of skills and competencies.

If farmers feel that they are not skilled enough or lack the ability to perform proper management of biological control or assess the level of damage of a pest, for example.

- Perceived ability to manage risk.

If the farmer believes or perceives that the risk is high, he will be more reluctant to adopt new technology.

The options the farmer feels he has to avoid or reduce the risk can also cause resistance. For many farmers, the problem stems not from the implied risk for implementing the new practice, but from alternatives to manage risk in a way that minimizes it.

### **Some situations that the facilitator should avoid**

Communication between the facilitator and farmers is the key to promoting directed processes of change. This communication should foster a relationship of empathy and connection with others. But, as in any interpersonal relationship, it is possible that situations will arise that affect the creation of this connection or that generate difficulties in the process. Since we are not always aware of these behaviors, the next section covers some situations that should be avoided during the process of assisting the farmers.

#### **In the design of development and support programs:**

Development organizations formulate consulting or support programs for farmers, but often with a very limited time frame to achieve the proposed results. A condition that occurs is that the program design and formulation of goals and results are solely from the perspective of the organization. They do not always take into consideration the expectations nor opinions of farmers, those benefiting from the programs.

The facilitator should seek the highest level of farmer participation in the definition of support programs, creating a sense of belonging and recognition of the importance of consulting and support work.

#### **Seek the commitment of farmers:**

The facilitator's job of accompaniment and support for change is orientated towards working with groups of farmers, as the best assistance strategy to maintain balance between quality and coverage. In this relationship established with the groups, the facilitator should promote group integration and a commitment to participate in support activities and the achievement of proposed improvements or changes.

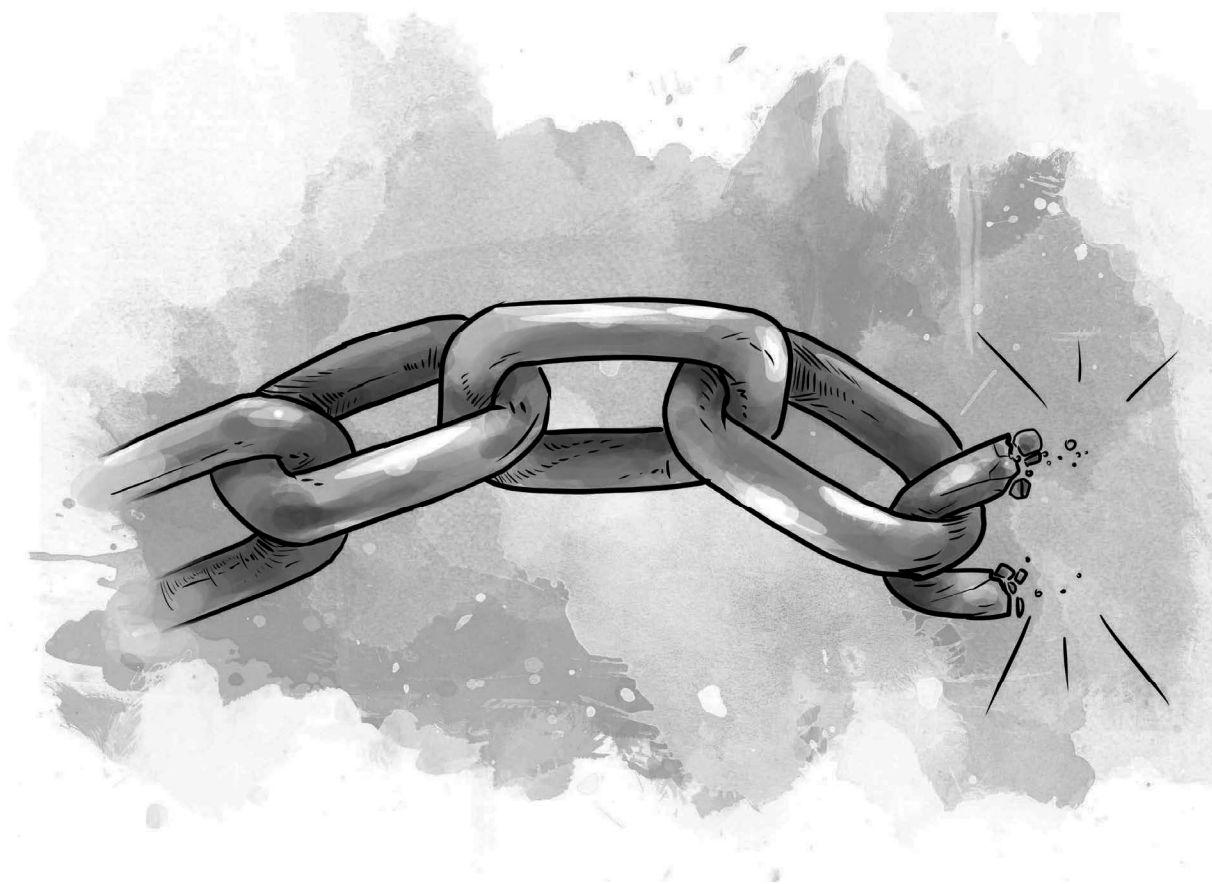
Avoid situations where the pressure to develop training content limits group cohesion and farmer commitment. It is necessary to create the conditions of organization and interest that will allow farmers to participate in the groups, and so that they are willing to reach the action in the process of change.

## 5. Resistance as a lever for change

### **In the program content and messages:**

The degree of convincing of farmers on the need to change and implement the proposed solutions is defined, among other factors, by the farmer's confidence in the effectiveness of the innovations. The solution should be identified as the most suitable alternative to overcome the situation that the farmer wants to change. The facilitator should thoroughly understand the proposed technology, how to operate it, any necessary resources to implement it and the real results of its application. Also keep in mind that research results are not always fully applicable on farmers' fields, and may require adapting them to local conditions.

Farmers expect to see a change from the technical improvement and will make their own assessments of the costs and benefits of proposed technology. This is almost always done in marginal terms, to avoid uncertainty and the risk of investing in something that might not have the same results when what was learned is put into practice on their own farm.



It is the facilitator's responsibility to know enough about the technology, its limitations and real possibilities for application, so that they can select the best alternative according to local production conditions.

**The relationship with the farmers:**

The facilitator should seek to build a relationship of trust and credibility with the farmer, and should avoid criticizing him and his way of working, as the farmer's natural reaction would be to reject the facilitator.

As an external agent, the facilitator should be interested in understanding the local culture, attending to aspects such as customs, the role of tradition in the farmer's way of acting and the influence of religion, politics or economic power on the way that relationships are developed amongst farmers and between them and the facilitator. The ability to empathize with farmers is a critical factor for success in any learning process.

**Communication:**

In change management, one can not assume that with just training farmers will acquire the necessary knowledge and motivation to begin the process of change or to understand and implement the proposed solutions. The facilitator should be sure to verify that the messages or content is understood and that they are significant to farmers in their daily work.

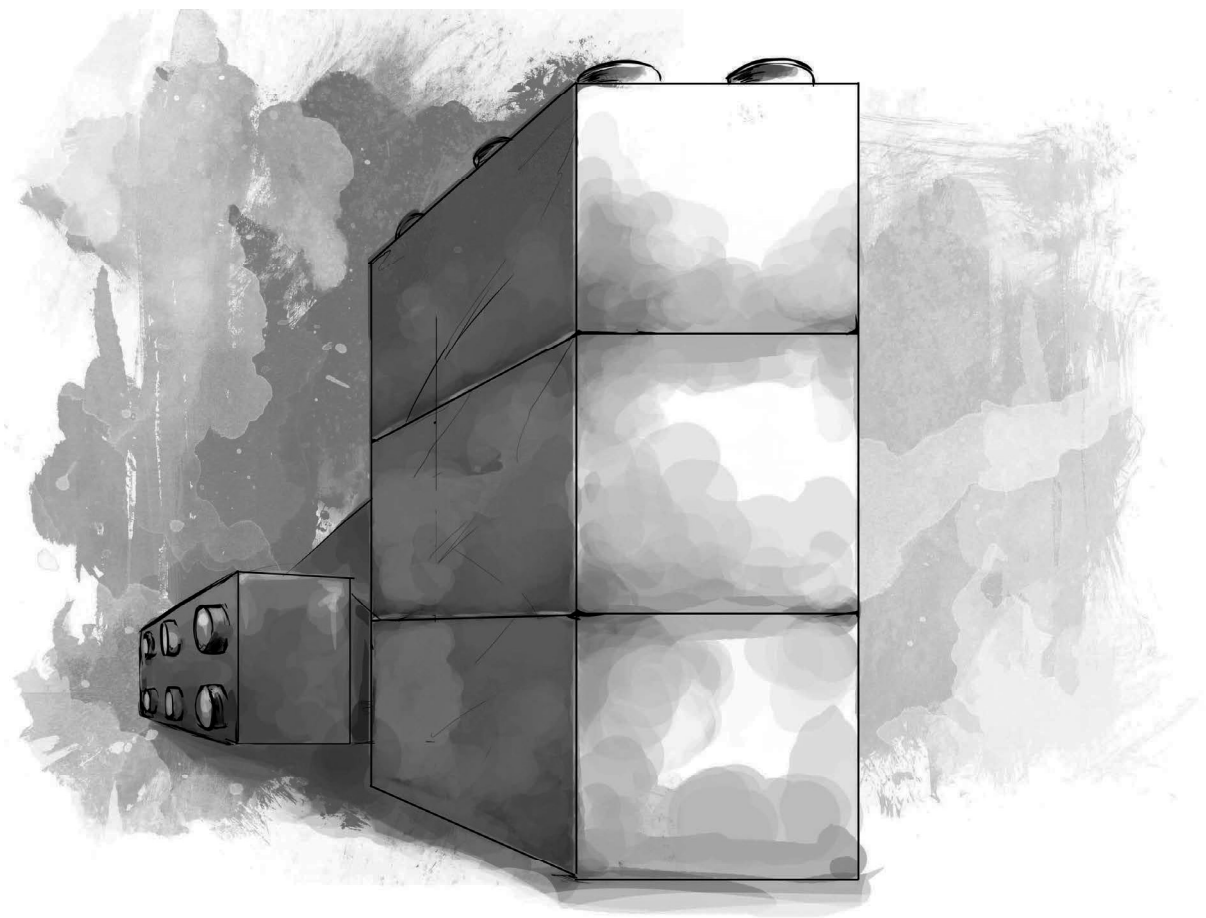
You can not expect that merely attending a training or support activity will generate the expected level of understanding in the farmers. The facilitator should generate a two-way style of communication with farmer groups.

These are some of the behaviors that should be avoided when facilitating change. It is important to be open to consider other aspects, such as social structure, farmers' perceptions, attitude toward innovation, communication and learning. In all these respects, the facilitator must be very analytical and seek to identify the issues that could slow down or speed up the efforts to assist the farmers. Discussing issues with colleagues, reading about related topics, sharing experiences and working as a team will be very helpful in achieving success with support for farmers and change management in general.

# Part three:

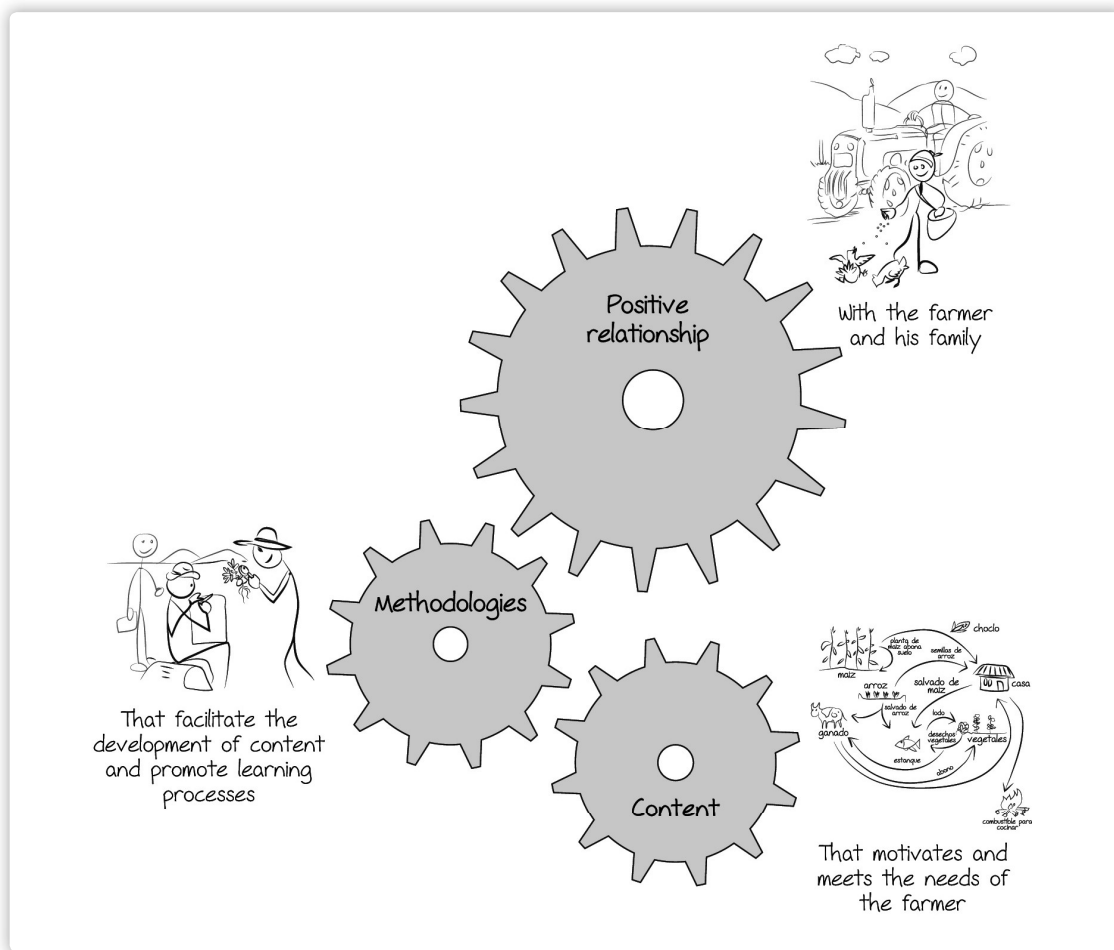
## The role of the facilitator in the process of change

When the challenges and context of the farmers change, the organizations and technicians who support them must also change how they work. Everyone must work to reinvent themselves.





## 6. The role in three important components of the process



The meetings that the facilitator has with the group must be intended to encourage farmers to act differently and achieve the proposed objectives for a project or a specific activity, such as a training session. Many projects that seek to improve the conditions of a community place great importance on training, with its contents as the fundamental basis for work. However, it is necessary to understand that the role of the facilitator extends beyond developing some content, for example technical

## 6. The role in three important components of the process

issues related to crop management. This chapter describes the role of the facilitator within three important components:

- Initially, the facilitator should work on building a positive relationship with the farmer and his family.
- For work sessions, the facilitator should develop content that motivates and meets the needs of the farmer.
- The facilitator should propose methodologies that facilitate the development of content and promote learning processes that develop new capabilities in the group of farmers.

### **1. In the relationship with the farmer and his family**

A wide variety of cultural, technical, economic and social differences occur within the groups of farmers we work with. These differences affect the way each farmer incorporates on his farm the practices and recommendations given in the training or in a program on adoption of new technology. This suggests that, in family farming, there is no magic formula or the best model for doing things. When working with farmers, facilitators must understand that their role extends beyond sharing knowledge; it is about creating a dialogue of knowledge and technician- group construction where the starting point is building a good relationship with the farmer and his family. When the facilitator ignores this aspect and limits himself only to addressing the technical content, it is difficult for change to happen, or along the way it will be hindered with much resistance, often insurmountable. Numerous studies show how the success of many professionals is based more on their interpersonal relationships and ability to deal with people than on their technical skills and knowledge. Below you will find some recommendations on promoting a constructive relationship that facilitates change.

Good gardeners always prepare the soil before planting. They hoe, fertilize and water it. Once the ground is ready, they begin to sow. The same thing happens when you sow the seeds of change in groups of farmers. The soil must be prepared if you want the change to take root. Unfortunately, many organizations and technical assistants do not perform the preliminary work. They want to implement a cultural practice, procedure or, in the case of certifications, the incorporation of a standard,

without doing the lead-up work of motivating and convincing the farmer, and most importantly, making the farmer a participant in the process. “Starting with the left foot” like that can have disastrous results. We invite you to ask yourself as a facilitator: What activities do I do to predispose a farmer to be open to trying and implementing new practices on his farm? Do I limit myself to only transmitting knowledge taken from books or my experience? When I interact with a group do I feel that I am right and ‘own the knowledge’?

When you start by creating an environment open to change, resistance is reduced and farmers are more receptive to innovation and more willing to take risks.

Many facilitators focus their work only on technical topics, placing strong emphasis on content (crop management, fertilization, pest management) but paying little attention to social aspects and the relationship with the farmer and his family. When a facilitator assumes this type of attitude, progress and project results are often minimum and the blame tends to be placed on the farmer, “its because he doesn’t want to change”, “he is resistant to change despite me having showed him the benefits.” Remember that, more than just working with a crop, we are working with people. Before incorporating farming practices and changes in farm management, the facilitator should encourage farmers and their families to make them excited about change and in so doing create a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

There are two features essential in promoting an environment receptive to change: trust and appreciation or recognition. It is necessary that people initially trust the facilitator and feel that they are appreciated and recognized for their work and effort. Resistance to change is deepened if trust is lost in organizations and technicians. The facilitator should keep in mind that trust is built over time. The facilitator creates trust when his actions demonstrate:

- ⦿ Honesty: what he says is believable
- ⦿ Integrity: he follows through with commitments and agreements
- ⦿ Openness: he shares what he knows

In a relationship with farmers, trust is a delicate feeling. It takes a long time to build it, but can be lost in an instant; once lost, it is very difficult to gain back.

## 6. The role in three important components of the process

Some examples of behaviors or attitudes that can destroy trust are:

**Preaching but not practicing:** facilitators should use their actions to be an example of what they are saying. Unfortunately, in many cases the opposite occurs. For example, although most facilitators know that participatory processes and knowledge building are more effective than lectures, the reality is that a high percentage of facilitators give lectures or use methodologies that transmit information in only one direction. Another example is the facilitator who tells farmers that timeliness is a very important aspect to keep in mind when performing crop management practices, and that they should do things on time and be productive with the time spent; however, when the facilitator schedules a training activity, he arrives late or wastes the farmer's time.

**Failing to respect the confidentiality of farmer's information:** often when working with farmers, they tend to share private details about their lives, families or properties. The technician must have enough tact and respect to handle this information with a degree of confidentiality. Those who are not careful with this information, in addition to making the mistake of promoting gossip and rumors, can generate distrust.

Some suggestions to earn and build trust are:

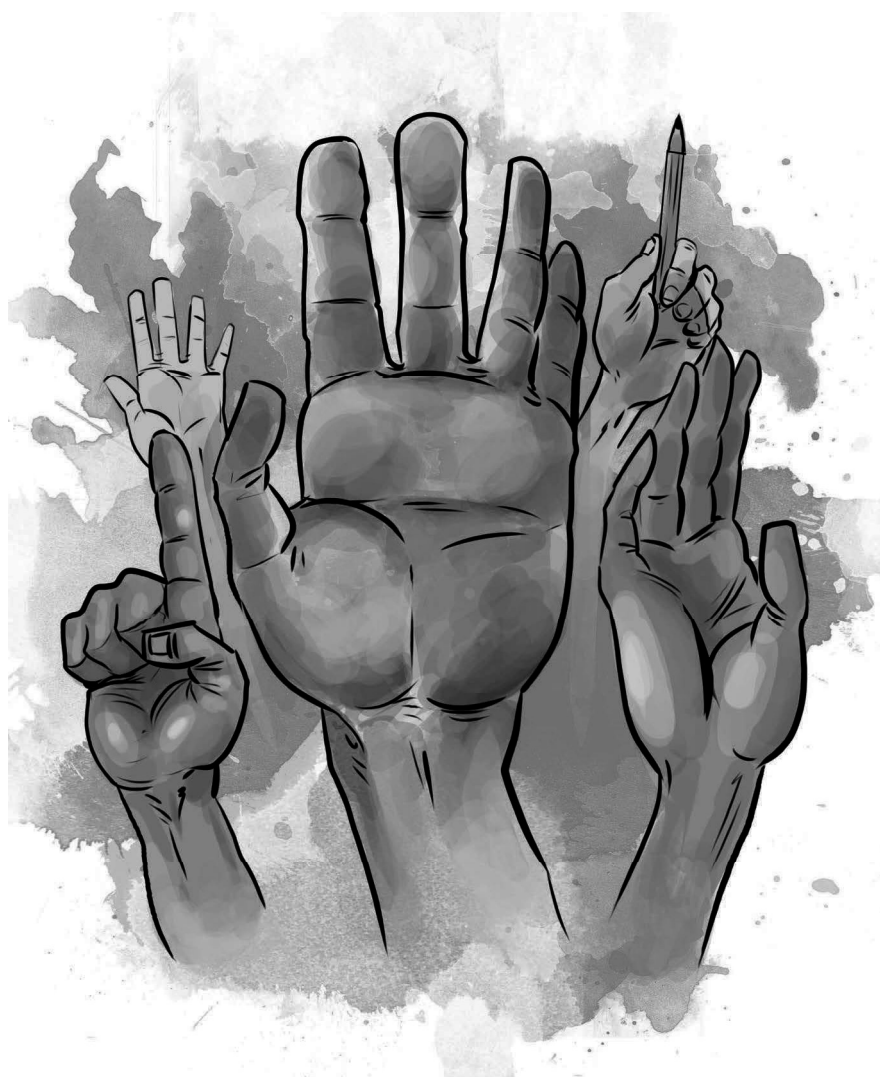
**Empathy, put yourself in their shoes.** Empathy is the ability to think and feel as if you were living another person's experience. When the first reaction is to understand the other person's point of view, instead of to dismiss or criticize them, extraordinary things begin to happen. People feel like you are on their side, that you understand and appreciate their concerns and knowledge. Even though later on you may present them with another point of view, the fact that you initiated the relationship with empathy creates a mood wherein you are more likely to receive their contributions.

**Recognize the farmer's efforts and progress.** If you want the farmers to make an effort, they must be appreciated. Nothing distorts appreciation more than ignoring the effort. As a technician, there is a common tendency to criticize what is wrong more than to praise success.

**Demonstrate by your actions that the farmer is important to you.** People need appreciation and recognition from others. When the farmer or a member of his family wants to talk with you, give your full attention. Show that you place importance on

your time with him. If for example you are in your office working on the computer, pause that activity to focus only on listening and attending to the farmer. Avoid the bad habit of answering phone calls while you are assisting the farmer. Additionally, take care to call the farmers by name, which is a good show of the respect and importance that person deserves.

**Avoid criticizing the farmer and what he does.** Ask yourself as a facilitator: How many times have I spent the first visit to a farm telling the farmer everything that, in my view, he is doing wrong?



## 6. The role in three important components of the process

Criticism is dangerous because it hurts the pride, spurs resentment and the changes it provokes are usually not lasting. Keep in mind that the person you want to correct and criticize will frequently try to justify himself, and in other cases, could attack you in turn, correcting or criticizing you as a technician. When dealing with farmers, you should remember that, besides being logical, they are also emotional. In fact, many times the emotion is stronger than rationality (consider for a moment all the effort and the feelings that can surround a farm for a small farmer). Instead of criticizing the farmers, try to understand them. Try to understand their reasons, as a starting point for there to be sympathy and receptivity.

**Learn to listen to the farmers.** In your job as a facilitator, it is very important to know how to listen. This attitude shows respect and gives importance to the farmer, and it additionally allows you to understand their way of thinking and true motivations and needs. Facilitators who do not know how or do not want to listen tend to be considered indifferent or disrespectful, which, in turn, causes the farmers to have a poor predisposition to communication. It is important to learn to listen actively, which means more than just hearing what was said, but repeating what you just heard to be sure you understood. A confirmation that you listened well is that the speaker responds appropriately, even if this means making a change in what he was doing. It is important that what the farmer says is taken into account in the process of change management and improvements proposed by the facilitator.

We hope that you understand the importance of this function in your role as a facilitator and that you take it into account in your daily work and dedicate yourself to strengthening it.

### 2. In the facilitation of content

In relation to the content or topics that will be facilitated, from the beginning it is important to ask: Do this content and new knowledge respond to the farmers' needs? Adult learning is more selective and depends largely on their interest in the new knowledge, the possibility of its application and how it responds to the problems or needs already perceived by the farmers.

Another crucial aspect is the way in which new knowledge is assimilated and how farmers relate it to their own experience or prior knowledge. Farmers not only learn the new material, but they can also modify and adapt it according to their skills.

On the other hand, they might not assimilate it if you do not generate sufficient understanding or confidence about the new content. Therefore, the most effective learning is based on problems perceived by the farmers with solutions within their reach, rather than based on theoretical content defined unilaterally by the facilitator.

Likewise, learning will be more significant if the new knowledge is communicated in an applied and practical manner that relates to the farmers' background. Valuing their past experience will provide a base to build new knowledge that is more appropriate for farmers and will give them a sense of accomplishment along with learning. The new knowledge, appropriate for farmers and recognizing their prior experience, allows them to continue broadening and sharing their knowledge by themselves.

We recommend that the facilitator take into account the following aspects in preparing the training session:

- ⦿ Understand sufficiently the new practices or technology that will be shared.
- ⦿ Ensure that it is feasible for farmers to implement the new practices or technology.
- ⦿ Direct it towards achievement of a clear objective.
- ⦿ Consider local experience and knowledge.
- ⦿ Clearly structure the communication of the training contents.

As for the facilitator's responsibility for technical knowledge and understanding the knowledge or practices that he wants to promote to the farmers, the facilitator must understand the application domain of the technologies being promoted, the expected potential benefits and the application limitations. The farmer expects the facilitator to be knowledgeable and confident of the information he provides.

While it holds true that agriculture is an activity influenced by many uncontrollable factors and that successful implementation of technology can not always be guaranteed (due to, for example, changes in climatic conditions, unexpected arrival of pests and diseases or deficiencies in how labors are carried out), it is essential that the new technologies have been backed by research and trial-tested under the conditions the farmers face. Remember that making decisions about an adequate practice or technology will have a long term effect on the farmer's economic outcome and well-being, as well as aspects such as the ecosystem.

## 6. The role in three important components of the process

A facilitator should not limit his knowledge of technologies to the contents to be included in the training, but rather broaden the knowledge associated with its implementation, especially regarding economic aspects.

Another note-worthy aspect is the importance of message clarity and clear and effective communication. We view the facilitator as a master winemaker, who selects the best grapes, thinking about the expected result in the final product, then processes them and achieves the production of a high-quality wine. Likewise, in the training of farmers, content must go through a process that condenses the information to achieve clear and concise messages that are packed with the power to generate the expected change in farmers.

This process be divided into three steps: analyze, organize and communicate. In the first step, the facilitator should have the discretion to locate the appropriate technology or best recommendations that can address the farmers' needs, document and carefully analyze them, evaluate their potential uses and define the key messages that can be taken from these alternatives. Next, you must organize this wide collection of information, analyzing how to best help the farmer understand and aiming for consistency amongst the key messages you plan to communicate by developing a common theme. Finally, with the support of information and message clarity, it's time to think about effective and clear communication of the content, media and resources that will be used to transmit the messages and generate complete understanding amongst the users of the new technology.

In conclusion, remember that the farmers expect from you the best orientation, management of training content and responsibility, based on your knowledge of the topics. The confidence projected in communication is essential to earning the farmer's conviction and trust. Therefore, the time that you dedicate to reviewing the content and preparing the communication messages will make a difference.

### **3. In facilitating the methodology**

An analysis of a training session demonstrates that farmers need more than facts and concepts to be motivated to act effectively, identify what needs to be done and develop the required skills.



We suggest that, before proposing the methodology, you take into account the following basic criteria:

- ⊙ People do not pay attention when the presentation does not relate to their interests. Involving emotional elements in the training session helps to facilitate the learning process.
- ⊙ Everyone learns in a different way. The senses are the gateway to learning (hearing, seeing, practicing), which is why some people prefer to listen while others learn by viewing images and others by doing things.
- ⊙ The methodology, in addition to keeping participants motivated and connected with the subject, helps participants to discover meaning and facilitates the construction of the proposed content.

Personal experience is one of the best ways to learn something. A training session should encourage the farmer to have meaningful experiences. For many people, it is easy to forget a good presentation, but more difficult to forget an experience. It is necessary to understand that the experience must be accompanied by a process to think and analyze with the group of farmers, so that the experience is meaningful for them and has the relevance that you want.

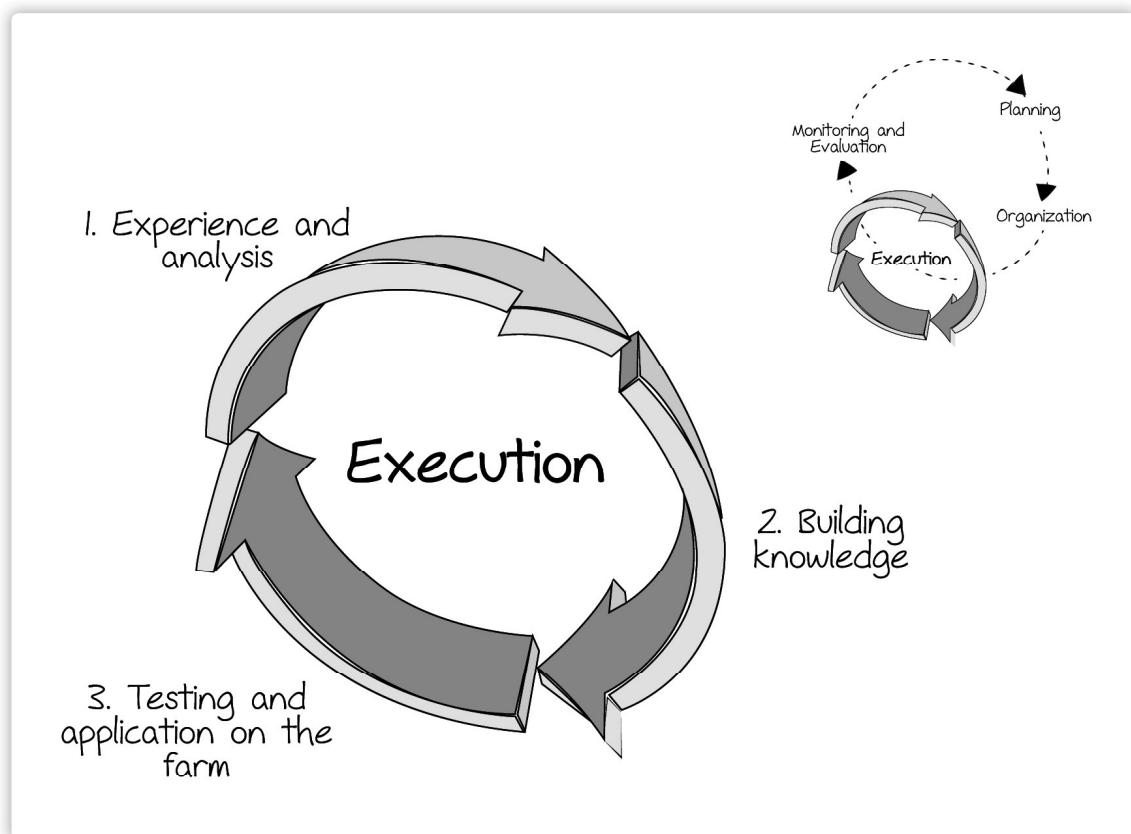
Challenge the participants with provocative questions that make them think. In many activities, the technician limits himself to only transferring information, a situation where the facilitator assumes an active role and the farmer is passive. In the ideal situation, the participant engages in concrete activities that let him experience the topic he is learning about.

Reflection and discussion about the experience and the topic should be encouraged to fortify learning. The activity that is done can be a realistic and applied experience (calibration of a fumigator, a cultural practice) or a structured activity that imitates reality (a simulation exercise, role play).

It is suggested that the training session have three parts:

- ⊙ Experience and analysis
- ⊙ Building knowledge
- ⊙ Testing and application on the farm.

## 6. The role in three important components of the process



For each part, the facilitator develops a series of sequential activities that facilitate achievement of the established objectives:

### 1. Experience and analysis

The first activity can be an experience or memory of an experience that allows the group to:

- Create awareness of the importance of the issue that will be discussed.
- Specify the problem and identify the need to implement actions to overcome it or for improvement.
- Provide a framework that encourages the group to go into depth with problem management alternatives.

For the experience or memory of an experience, a process of reflection and analysis should be generated in the group. The facilitator of the activity is responsible for creating an environment that encourages attendees to participate.

Some suggested activities that can be developed during this first part are:

- ⦿ Start with a group integration ice-breaker activity that is fun and culturally appropriate.
- ⦿ Develop experiential exercises that allow participants to have real-life experiences, which are necessary in order to derive a theory that provides them with new options.
- ⦿ Build a case study for the group to analyze.
- ⦿ Visit a farm plot that has a problem for the group to assess and analyze.
- ⦿ Show statistical information or results of the loss caused by the situation shown in a region or on a farm.
- ⦿ Facilitate a discussion of the experience for participants to share their perceptions, beliefs and feelings.
- ⦿ Ask discussion questions that encourage reflection and analysis of the experience.
- ⦿ Facilitate a positive perception of the diversity of experiences and opinions, and the opportunity to learn from other people and experiences.
- ⦿ Draw conclusions that motivate the group to build new knowledge and to seek new alternatives for solving problems.

## **2. Building knowledge**

This stage facilitates new learning within the group of participants, develops activities that permit farmers to study the topic in depth and builds knowledge through the active participation of the group.

This phase in content development seeks to:

- ⦿ Facilitate the acquisition and definition of relevant information. The new content enriches and expands on their knowledge of the subject.

## 6. The role in three important components of the process

- Develop the necessary skills and abilities of the group members for them to implement alternatives for improvement. For example, they might learn how to properly calibrate a pulping machine.
- Promote a vision that integrates personal experiences, the learning session and what was discovered to form a new learning experience.

Some recommendations for this stage are:

- Offer practical activities such as demonstrations of methods and results or guided tours of farms where they can observe new farming practices and acquire new knowledge.
- Carefully and thoroughly select the information that will be shared with the group. This information should be presented in a sequential and articulated manner.
- Promote discussion activities for participants to compare their prior knowledge of the topic with the new information provided.
- Utilize different media and materials that stimulate the farmers' learning.
- Perform activities that stimulate the different senses (auditory, visual and kinetic) and lead them to draw conclusions related to the topic or the improvement activity that they hope to apply on their farms. For example, suggest that they develop concept maps, drawings, poems, plays, musical compositions, etc.

### **3. Testing and application on the farm**

In this stage, farmers should be encouraged to test or practice what they have learned. Knowledge that is not translated into action tends to not be assimilated, and eventually fails to become a part of their everyday life. Furthermore, what is not practiced, tends to be forgotten. The ability to do something is achieved through constant practice. It is suggested that an initial practice be supervised by the facilitator to provide feedback to the participant and verify that the improvement activities or new practices have been well understood. It also provides an opportunity to correct errors, perfect the actions and feel confident before applying the lessons learned on their own farm.

The application phase seeks to:

- ⦿ Do a preliminary test of an application of what was learned and its related skills, in order to individually and collectively evaluate the results and make modifications.
- ⦿ Facilitate applying the trial run to the reality of the farm.

Some recommendations in this stage are:

- ⦿ Hold a guided practice for you to check for understanding of the content and use of new skills and abilities.
- ⦿ Recognize the group progress and the positive results obtained. The participants' successes and achievements help them to gain confidence and strengthen their self-esteem.
- ⦿ Encourage participants to compare and contrast their results.
- ⦿ Facilitate processes of self and group evaluation.
- ⦿ Ask participants to prepare action plans that describe the activities they will implement on their farms.
- ⦿ Facilitate monitoring and follow-up activities of what were implemented on the farms.