

➤ **USEFUL TECHNIQUES IN WILDLIFE EXTENSION SERVICES**

1. Use of Extension Social Situation

People's nature, beliefs and expectation form the basis on which they can be helped. They form the life situations that the extension agent is called upon to improve. To facilitate this extension workers should get to know the community where he is going to work. This he can do personally by visiting them ahead of time. He should get to know the neighboring communities and their kindred's. he should within a short period know the kindred leaders and their names and should be able to conduct himself round at the able to organized them to construct one or raise funds to hire a grader or arranges with the nearest ministry of works and Housing unit to do the job he can then assure himself of a good beginning. Or he can study about them through books, periodicals, journals, newspaper; films and slides and from accounts of travelers, missionaries and anthropologists. Most sponsoring agencies overseas conduct orientation courses before the Peace Corps, VSO, etc. set out for Africa or Asia. In the courses the above sources of information are digested. In addition, students and personnel from the receiving countries give direct lectures to the foreign extension workers and describe and explain the conditions of life to them.

The above recipe can be prescribed for indigenous extension workers as well. Even if the conditions of living are the same and familiar, they will need to get more educate on the community and people with whom they are going to work.

I once suggested to some foreign extension workers the need to write up monographs of the areas where they work, which can be illuminating to others – workers and management as well. Some people frown at this an consider it an intrusion and attempt to portray the host country in account is objective, it should be encouraged. It is in this way the author

considers his book *An African in Germany* a valuable source of information not only about Germany. But also the author's Nigerian background. It was written to guide the African student and his European host.

2. Use of Local Leaders

The two basic functions of local leaders (King, Emirs situational leaders) in Wildlife extension service are:

- a. To bring about local support for extension activities.
- b. To increase the amount of extension teaching that can be done.

No local extension officer can do the job expected of him all alone. He needs assistance and assistants. No doubt there is need for a large number of workers to reach a large number or populace. The only way out is to utilize local leaders. In order to do this, the extension worker needs to know how to do this, he needs to know how to identify leaders, how to develop and use them, and how to best use them in moving the extension programme forward (William *et al*, 1984).

➤ IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP IN EXTENSION WORK

The following are the reasons why the community leaders in extension work is very important.

1. New practices are more readily accepted by rural dwellers when and if their leaders adopt them.
2. The extension worker has greater contact with the rural people through the use of local leaders. Thus, he is in a better position to know their needs and interests.
3. When the local leaders are effectively involved, there will be less disruption of the programme.

4. It provides an enabling environment to fulfill the basic principle of extension of involving people in the process to help themselves. The leader can help explain the programme to the people better than the agent in some cases.
5. Using community leaders assists the extension agent reach many more individuals.
6. Leaders defend village work against unfair criticisms and help bring about more favourable attitude toward extension work (Williams *et al*, 1984).

➤ **LIMITATION TO THE USE OF LOCAL LEADERS**

1. Local leaders may give wrong interpretation to the programme thus bringing the credibility of the agent to question.
2. They may introduce their own opinion and value judgment to the programme.
3. They may not be good teachers and will therefore not be as effective in selling the programme to the people.
4. They may find it difficult to spare the required amount of time to receive adequate training that will enable them to be effective in the programme.
5. Location and training of leaders takes much of the time of an extension worker.
6. Local leaders may seize the opportunity to acquire prestige and personal within the community without contributing much to the effectiveness of the extension agents (Williams *et al*, 1984).

3. Involving people in actions that promote their welfare

People should not be made to be observers but participant and programme. They should participate in the planning and implementation of the scheme. A successful extension agent works side by side with the farmer so that he learns to do it the way you do it. The agent is not expected always to stand on a spot and dish out instructions on how it should be done. Do it

with him and convince him that you know what you are doing and how it should be done; thereafter, he will on his own publicize your ingenuity to the community.

All these presuppose that the programme under consideration has meaning for the people. To achieve this, the extension worker should first find out what the people want, work on it or modify it. Having done that, he should involve them at every stage so that they can feel that the programme is really their own.

4. Gaining the confidence of the community

The community sees the agent as an encyclopedia that has answer to their problems. And since this cannot be true, one has to combine theory and practice to find an answer that will convince the community that one is not indulging in guess work. If you cannot find an on-the-spot answer to a farmer's problem for example give him / her an appointment and this will give you a chance to look up the problem in your book(s) or to ask a more experienced colleague what solution he can offer to the problem. If you cannot for any reason keep the appointment with the make sure you send word to him so that he will not brand you a liar or waste the day waiting for you. Ideas that cannot be implemented be fulfilled. In its geographical location and accessibility, the people's culture, level of understanding and interest, it is best to discuss with your boss, who, if he understands your problems, may suggest an alternative but workable strategy.

5. Combining firmness with accessibility

An extension agent is just like a salesman who advertises a new product and tries to convince the public that his product is the best available of its type in the market thereby winning more buyers for his employer. He is like a clergyman who strives to win more souls for God. He is a social worker who besides his professional job can lend a helping

hand to the community itself or to individual members of the community. If for example he owns a motorcycle or a car and uses it to convey a sick person in the community to hospital where there is no public transport available, he has added yet on more feathers to his cap of success. He has made an extra friend and has identified himself not only both his work in the community but with their social and domestic problems. The extension worker is he who is every accessible to members of the community he is serving irrespective of whether it is during his working hours or not. He should not live in isolation of the community or create the impression that his sophistication does not make room for free mixing with poor, ignorant or illiterate villagers who may stain his rug or padded chairs if he allows them to come to his house. He should make time to visit them in their own homes. This wins admiration and dispels the impression that visits are best when the man visits the big man.

6. Combining enthusiasm with caution and flexibility

Psychology works best where stubbornness to change predominates and your method of approach lends itself to easy acceptability to change. Remember also that as an extension agent you are not a policymaker but a policy executor and that whatever changes you want to effect in your area of work should not conflict or run criss-cross with laid down policies.

If for example the government does not promise any subsidy to farmers participating in a project, do not ever tell them that government made any promise just because you want to be credited with pulling a crowd. It does not however; mean that policies must be followed to the letter. Amendments may be made to achieve result; it all depends on the area you are covering, the community respects him either because of his wisdom, uprightness, education, wealth or influence. He is the man who commands respect easily amongst his people; they see him as somebody who is knowledgeable and whose decision tends to augur well for

their welfare. He is not selfish or egoistic. He has sound judgment and is fair in his dealings. With such a person an extension worker has no problem in pushing through a new idea in the community. If the extension agent is working in an area where he does not understand the local dialect easily, the local leader as his contact man puts his message across to the community.

7. Use of the adoption process

The extension worker should also put into practice the extension adoption process. He should realize that the decision to adopt usually takes time people normally do not adopt a new practice or idea as soon as they hear about it. They may wait several years before trying the new ideas for the first time, and longer still before permanently adopting it. To be sure, some decisions are made quickly – but many others require extended thought and deliberation. The final decision to use a new practice is usually the result of a series of influences operating through time and this is where an extension worker has to exercise patience with slow or late adopters.

For many practices, people appear to go through five distinguishable stages:

- a. Awareness: the first knowledge about a new idea, through five practice;
- b. Interest: the active seeking of extensive and detailed information about the idea, to determine its possible usefulness and applicability;
- c. Evaluation: weighing and sifting the required information and evidence in the light of the existing condition into which the practice would have to fit;
- d. Trial: the tentative trying out of the practice or idea, accompanied by acquisition of information on how to do it;
- e. Adoption: the full-scale integration of the practice into the on-going operation.

These 5 – step stages have been with us in this country for quite a long time, and still some farmers do not use fertilizers in spite of the campaign in the press, on radio and television mounted for it. Some farmers still do not want to try out the yellow maize – NSI – because they still prefer the local maize and do not see any difference between it and the local agricultural chickens are claimed to grow too fat and have no taste. Knowledge of the adoption stages can help to remove these bottlenecks.

8. Use of audio-visuals

In this country as well as in other developing countries good things of life are concentrated largely in the urban centers to detriment of the silent majority who have neither electricity, pip-borne water, films, television sets, nor tarred roads. An extension worker who realizes this and endeavors to bring in the mobile film van into the rural areas for the people to see a film show for the first time in their lives will for long be remembered by the people.

The role of communication is of vital importance in agricultural extension. To this effect there is no limit to what part the press, radio and television can play. In the past, fertilizer was an agricultural input factor many farmers never cared to use just because there was the belief and of course ignorance that if wrongly applied, fertilizers do kill crops and if during harvest the yam tubers are injured, they will decay. Within intensified fertilizer campaigns, agricultural demonstration plots and mass education, people now request for fertilizer on their own. They now appreciate that fertilizers boost crop production if properly applied. The radio farmer' programme is very commendable in reawakening the people's interest in farming and gardening particularly when the broadcast is made in local languages of the masses who are mainly concerned with the actual farm work.

9. Continuous Evaluation

The extension worker should assess the progress being made continuously. This presupposes that the goals and objectives were known from the beginning and target of performance set. It is imperative that a proper evaluation of the individual's progress, as well as that of the scheme should be conducted on a regular basis, say monthly, terminally or yearly.

The employment of the modern technique of management by Objective will facilitate eventual evaluation. This technique can be employed in almost all enterprises. It is worthwhile for the extension worker to acquaint himself with this technique and apply it in work experience.