

## **Change, conflict and collaboration**

### **Change and communication**

By Jenni Metcalfe

The overall goal of much of the natural resources communication that I am involved with is to change behaviour or attitudes with regards to the management or use of natural resources.

But we often lose sight of this overall goal and concentrate on strategies and tactics - like using the media, running workshops, producing a brochure and so on. This can mean that we've produced some very good communication products, but have done little to create change.

How do you create change in attitudes or behaviour? There is no simple answer to this, but you may find the following points useful when trying to create change in the way people use or manage natural resources.

1. Identify whose attitudes or behaviours that need changing – this may mean grouping people according to their specific attitudes or behaviours that need to be changed
2. Determine what attitudes or behaviours need to be changed and why – this can be the subject of a major research project! It may also involve determining current perceptions, concerns and actions
3. Find out the major drivers or incentives for change
4. Find out the likely barriers to change
5. Create and maintain a dialogue with the people whose attitudes/behaviours need to change – which can be very time consuming, but can include use of the media and informed public debate
6. Share the latest knowledge amongst those involved in the change process
7. Involve people in decision-making processes through open and transparent consultation and negotiation mechanisms
8. Try to reach a shared vision that includes specific targets for change – a partnership approach
9. Acknowledge other people's values, concerns and needs as being valid, even if you don't agree with them
10. Evaluate your joint success against the specific targets that were set

### **Conflict management tips**

By Lin Martin and Jenni Metcalfe

- Try hard to understand the other person/s points of view
- Listen reflectively to what they are saying
- Look for common ground or "vision"

- Acknowledge their expertise
- Focus on interests rather than positions
- Separate the people from the problem
- Look for solutions that take into account needs of all parties

## Communication and collaboration

By Michelle Reidlinger

There is a great need for a better understanding of collaboration in Natural Resource Management. There is a genuine need to deal with many of the facets of collaboration, including:

- recognising and respecting areas of common ground
- building on mutual strengths for maximum benefits
- sharing power
- encouraging generosity and goodwill
- having a real purpose and not just getting together for the sake of it
- acknowledging and respecting differences

Of course, you can't make collaboration happen – but you can make the environment conducive for collaboration to occur.

Consider these **elements for creating a collaborative environment**:

- **Time** – it takes time to develop relationships and trust, so be patient
- **Scale** – servicing various scales of collaboration (8 or 8,000) takes different mechanisms and this needs to be acknowledged
- **Passion** – encourage, support and kindle the passions of those involved so that they share this with others
- **Regulatory and institutional frameworks** – make these transparent so everyone knows how these frameworks support (or hinder) collaboration
- **Language** – overcome language barriers (including jargon), without devaluing its usefulness, by creating shared stories and symbols. The same story may need to be told differently to those involved so they are able to share it
- **Place** – a shared sense of place (real or constructed) is important for establishing commonality between all collaborators
- **Funding** – share with others how funding can be harnessed for developing a collaborative environment (or indeed how it can hinder it)
- **Power structures** – recognise that power structures exist and put them on the table early
- **Expectations** – clarify, negotiate and acknowledge the expectations of the groups involved
- **Credibility** – determine and negotiate the credibility of those involved because the acceptance of information is based on trust and respect
- **Skills** – identify the skills necessary for members so that collaboration becomes part of the culture, e.g. negotiation or interpersonal skills

- **Initiation** – ensure all partners come to the table in the beginning so that relationships are equitable

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