



# INTRODUCTORY GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY MOBILISATION IN THE MALDIVES VOLUME 3

Environmental Education and  
Community Mobilisation



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





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# INTRODUCTION

Community mobilisation is the process of bringing together members of a community and empowering them to address common concerns and problems. Community mobilisation can happen without any external inputs: in other cases an external input may catalyze the community to mobilize on a particular issue. Lots have been written on community mobilisation and more will still be written as there is no one sure way: approaches must be adapted to suit each community, activities and facilitators.

Governments worldwide are working to develop new laws and approaches for strengthening environmental management. Most significantly they are realizing the need to work closely with communities to better deal with the increasingly complex issues of environmental management. One way to do this is through community mobilisation.

There is limited research on or existing guides for organizing community-based environmental management in the Maldives. As such in implementing the ADB TA-Promoting Sound Environmental Management in the Maldives, Live and Learn has sought to develop guidelines through a practical 'learning by doing' approach. Specifically, these guidelines are based on a practical learning by doing approach.

Generic theories of community mobilisation have been adapted, for utilization and testing. Rather than place emphasis on the theory of community mobilisation emphasis has been placed on the practical application of community mobilisation approaches in the Maldives. The process has included promoting community involvement for the implementation of environmental education tools in five (5) pilot communities. These pilot sites seek to give general representation of island communities throughout the Maldives. Rather than simply replicate existing theory on community mobilisation this guide is linking theory to practice. A specific workshop on these approaches will support this guide as this has been highlighted as an area that would benefit from increased training.

Many of the skills, resources and approaches for community mobilisation are skills many people will have already been developing: some may have some formal training in these skills. These guidelines serve as a step toward or a refresher for those who wish to work toward mobilizing the community. They are broad introduction and not a specific 'how to' manual as it is considered that each community should be treated differently. This is just a guide to encourage approaches that may be useful. This document is not seeking to re-invent ideas, the information used has been taken directly and/or adapted from a variety of other sources: these are shown in the references list. If you have more interest we encourage you to read some of the other references listed or seek out other information.

The material in this guide is a resource for you. Read it through. Use it in whatever way you think will work for you and your group. If you think that some examples need more explanation, then provide this. If you think some material should be dropped, that's fine too. Go through those parts that you think are most useful a few times. Issues and challenges facing one community may not be the same as those in another. So the guide simply highlights basic opportunities for community mobilisation – the guide is designed to be adapted.

These guidelines seek to be as simple as possible, while still giving enough detail for the reader to see some of the significant concepts for community mobilisation. These guidelines are hoped to assist relevant government and organizational staff in making important and positive steps toward community mobilisation. There is limited documentation specific to community mobilisation in the Maldives, and no such documents linked to environmental education, so this document will also serve as a step toward better understanding.

Community mobilisation is the process of bringing together members of a community and enabling them to act on common concerns and problems



## COMMUNITY MOBILISATION – SOME THEORY

*Community mobilisation is the process of bringing together members of a community and enabling them to act on common concerns and problems.*

In order to understand community mobilisation you must first have a sense of what community is. The word '**community**' reminds us that humans are social animals. You need to know as much as possible about the social, environmental & cultural aspects of the community. This shouldn't just be facts – a community is how these aspects are linked. Community is a word that encompasses many different types of social groups, organizations, and/or institutions, and may include locations such as villages or groups of villages, community

councils, church groups, youth groups, women's groups, community banks, or kinship groups. (Brown 2001)

You will learn that a community is not merely a collection of individuals, but a system that transcends those individuals. As a system it has various dimensions, technological, economic, political, institutional, ideological and perceptual. People come in and go out of the community, by birth, death and migration, yet the system persists. And it is always changing. (Bartle 1999)

The process in which people join together to take action oriented to accomplish one or more objectives is known as '**mobilisation**'. Mobilisation bears political connotations, and in the development lexicon, it is allied with

empowerment and participation, both of which refer to processes whose ends are improved social welfare. When local institutions are weak and many barriers to involving communities exist, mobilisation will be required. That said attempting mobilisation does not automatically lead to success, as constraints abound.

The word ‘enabling’ is an important concept in the role of community mobilisation. To assist in mobilizing the community it is important to enable people participation: bringing people together. The word ‘act’ implies that the goal is active participation by community members on an issue of concern through collective learning and self-educated action. The community does not just mobilize into action: they act in response to an issue.

Community mobilisation is important because the most sustainable solution to any community problem is for the community to have the skills to solve the problem. The participation of people in the solution to their problems is one of the most effective ways to not only deal with issues but also important in reducing the problems from repeating themselves. Significant research, especially in the field of community development, has been conducted highlighting, this but unfortunately theory is often not taken into practice.

*The community will mobilize toward or away from something! Either way community mobilisation is about change! Change is not always easy but small voluntary steps outside of people’s comfort zone can lead to dramatic shifts in attitude and behavior. If seeking to mobilize a community you should also*

be considering the stages people go through for change to happen. The following summary is taken from Robinson & Glanzing 2003, and highlights 7 steps people seem to follow for change. These steps are important to consider and should be incorporated for effective community mobilisation.

7 STAGES TO CHANGE	
a. <b>I wish</b>	vision
b. <b>I know</b>	understanding
c. <b>I can</b>	skills
d. <b>It’s easy</b>	convenience
e. <b>I’m not alone</b>	trusted others
f. <b>It’s low risk &amp; fun</b>	change
g. <b>That was great</b>	reinforcement

Community involvement doesn’t just happen it must be stimulated and nurtured. If attitudes are wrong, participation will not work, whereas if attitudes are right we can be surprised by what local people know and do (Chambers 1994). The key principle to enhance the effectiveness of community mobilisation is the participation of the community. There are many proposed ways of doing this. The IUCN et al emphasise that; “Community participation helps ensure that decisions are sound and all parties will support them,” (1991, p60). “In the end, the opportunity for people’s participation in any society is determined by the quality of civil and political rights that they are accorded: in a word, political freedom,” Kirkby et al (1995, p311).



## COMMUNITY MOBILISATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Governments worldwide are working to develop new laws and approaches for strengthening environmental management. These efforts focus on improving public participation in government decision-making, increasing transparency and open access to information, and providing greater access to justice in the enforcement of governance requirements (Ingle & Halimi, 2006). Most significantly Governments are realizing that they need to work closely with communities do better deal with the increasing complex issues of environmental management. One way to do this is through community mobilisation.

Empirical evidence on effective environmental solutions globally strongly supports the conclusion that purely top-down, hierarchical approaches do not produce sustainable results. (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002). Community engagement encourages citizens to be proactive in their attempts to resolve environmental challenges. At an international level the push toward sustainable development has led to Agenda 21. Within Agenda 21 the more community focused Local agenda 21 has also been promoted. Local Agenda 21 is a local-government-led, community-wide, and participatory effort to establish a comprehensive action strategy for environmental protection, economic prosperity and community well-being in the local jurisdiction or area. They highlight the following community actions for a Local Agenda 21:

“The need for greater participation of the local community in the preparation of a ‘local’ Agenda 21 cannot be emphasized enough. A key inducer to this greater participation is the formation of community organizations (variously also called citizens groups, people’s organizations, etc.) so that the collective opinion of the community can be voiced. This participation of the community organization is critical for various reasons: representation, participation, awareness, assistance, advocacy, and networking.”

Unlike traditional centralized environmental management, which often neglects the political and social dimensions of environmental issues, once it is accepted that the local communities are the major stakeholders in environmental

management the decision-making process starts to become more practical and less political: it is led by the people who are most affected and know the complexity of their issues. Community participation in environmental management includes a range of approaches, such as citizen monitoring of environmental pollution, citizen participation in local planning and resource restoration efforts known as “community based environmental management” (CBEM).

## COMMUNITY MOBILISATION IN THE MALDIVES

As the Maldives moves toward a more decentralized system of governance, with increasingly less centralized decision-making the participation of the community will have the opportunity to grow.

Community involvement in environmental management is particularly appropriate in the Maldives as the geography, and in particular distance and difficulty in access, can mean that those people making the policy are not always in touch with the people who will be directly impacted by the policy. The communities in the Maldives are also very diverse, so generic policies that do not allow for adaptability based on the community situation are often prone to failure.

The country’s wide-spread, together with the dispersed population, results in difficulties of control and enforcement. Laws passed in Malé are enforced through Atoll Chiefs operating via individual island chiefs leading to lengthy chains of communication and delays in response at both ends of the system. Sectoral division of responsibilities also leads to frequent duplication of effort in some areas. (Mohamed Khaleel & Simad Saeed, 1996)

Policies that are implemented in the communities directly depend on the community leaders understanding and endorsement for success. With understanding and endorsement they can be instrumental in raising public environmental awareness and mobilizing community support, without this they can discourage and/or ensure the failure of the policy. The involvement of community leaders and/or gatekeepers is instrumental in the success of government policies and approaches.

Centralized political systems, characterize current

government-citizen relationships throughout the Maldives, however there is a strong move toward decentralization. Mobilisation may be able to provoke some degree of devolution of management authority to Atolls and, in particular, island communities. This can lead to more realistic planning and more effective local action. However, mobilisation of the community may only be feasible with some autonomy or once a degree of decentralization has occurred. There may also be ways to catalyze community mobilisation.

“In the aftermath of the December 26th tsunami, the spirit of cooperation and unity that we saw across the country was one of its key strengths on the road to recovery and reconstruction.”

MAUMOON ABDUL GAYOOM, President, the Republic Of Maldives. Millennium Development Goals Maldives Country Report 2005

Community fabric and the significance of local social capital have become more evident in the aftermath of the tsunami, as communities confront island recovery and reconstruction activities in a way that is consistent with their self-identified needs and development plans. Unfortunately the tsunami may hinder the community as they wait for ‘gifts from the sky’ rather than take action for themselves. For a number of years, the government has promoted community participation in the delivery of public services to empower atoll communities, increase accountability and ownership. Community groups often provide public or collective services available on distant islands; however, some initial capacity difficulties have been encountered which could



be overcome through assistance for adequate organisation and management of groups in the form of co-operatives.

Findings derived from the implementation of projects related to natural disasters have highlighted: (i) the need to integrate recovery and long-term development planning, (ii) the need to identify development outputs that meet sustainability requirements, and (iii) the necessity to link infrastructure development efforts with capacity building and institutional development. Thus, the emerging necessity to develop the community’s capacity to enable its participation through the design, implementation and management of environmental infrastructure and services, and expediting recovery of affected islands.

Until the late 1970s and early 80s government administrative and notably development planning was centralised in Male, the capital city. Consequently, development became lopsided between the outer islands and Male’ with development activities being focused on Male’ to the detriment of outer islands development. To reverse this adverse situation in the country’s development, the Government embarked on the Integrated Atoll Development Program in the early 1980s within the general concept of decentralisation of government administrative machinery. This is to accelerate equitable allocation of the country’s benefits of growth and development, through the provision basic physical and social infrastructure of development and to raise the standard of living and wellbeing of the atolls population. (UNDP MDV/00/002)

The centralized and typically top-down approach to make and enforce policy that is used in the Maldives is reflective of most Government approaches across the world. However, unlike many other countries the Maldives are actively working towards decentralization. The communities are acutely aware of the longer term environmental changes that are impacting quality of life and want to see the government act on these issues. The communities in the Maldives are varied. Some islands have continued to have a certain level of community autonomy even under the centralized system of government while others have become



very reliant on the centralized government.

The Government's moves toward decentralization are expected to make significant inroads into promoting increased community participation across the Maldives. Such a change is not likely to happen swiftly, there is often resistance to change. There will be some transition time, and this is likely to vary between communities. At present we can highlight some of the areas in which a sense of community is already shown as these are the areas that need to be built on for community mobilisation for environmental management to be a success.

Community mobilisation is particularly appropriate in the Maldives due to:

- Government** – decentralization policies
- Infrastructure** – efficiency & coordination
- Geography** - distance & access
- Diversity** - of people & environment
- Biodiversity** - resource importance & scarcity

## EXISTING COMMUNITY

There are signs of existing community mobilisation such as: Rayyithunge fenvalhu (communal well); Rayyithunge thaangee (communal water tanks); Goifaalabba or Hinna (communal agriculture plots); and Holhu-ashi (communal sitting area). These existing communal activities are a very important consideration for any community mobilisation approaches.

The Tsunami has in some ways served as a reminder of the tradition of community cooperation in the Maldives. Communities already have communal use of environmental resources. Water has historically been a resource that is considered in a communal way, with communal wells available at mosques, government offices and even private

houses. With the spoiling of groundwater this tradition has not stopped but rather adapted and now there are communal rainwater sites.

To understand community and the environment in the Maldives it is also important to understand religion: this is something all too often overlooked when dealing with community environmental issues, however environment includes: biological, economic and cultural aspects. As an example the communal use of water has strong links to religion.

The cultural values of humans affect the way the natural environment and resources are perceived, used, and managed. Water management principles that heed the local religious context are likely to be more effective than imported, foreign ones. Furthermore, in Muslim countries, developing water management principles that are informed by the teachings of Islam may act as a framework for managing other natural resources. Thus Muslims and non-Muslims need to explore Islam's perspectives on the natural environment in which water resources are recognized as playing a pivotal role. Islamic teachings contain fertile ground for developing water management principles. If applied, perhaps in conjunction with other water management policies in culturally and demographically heterogeneous areas, these principles could find wider acceptance than non-native ones. Such principles would be encouraged by the "penalty and reward" system that is detailed in the Quran and *hadith*. (Hussein A. Amery 2001)

There are plots of land known as Goifaalabba or Hinna whereby if there is abundance of forest (typically coconut palms), these plots are either leased out or a decision is made by the island development committee and the revenue goes to developmental activities in the island. Anyone can lease the land even people from outside the community.

Holhu-ashi are communal sitting areas found on most islands and are considered places where people can speak their mind with no retribution. What is said there remains there, allowing people a level of personal expression while not disrupting the community as a whole. These sites also serve as a point of hospitality to allow people from other islands to come and rest and if necessary stay.

The distinct diversity of communities within the Maldives and the traditional knowledge existing in these different communities needs to be explored and documented. For example, the traditional knowledge, once highly appreciated, of using herbs as medicine is losing its value and prominence in the respective communities and has not been transferred to the younger generations. The traditional folk stories and skills of the main occupation, fishing and subsistence agriculture are also being replaced by new and sometimes less sustainable approaches.

The communities in the Maldives have also been mobilized on health issues. In regards to health there are other initiatives linked to community mobilisation on specific issues. The Ministry of Health is working with other ministries, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP on communication for behavioural impact (COMBI) for Dengue fever prevention and control in the Maldives. At a national level the work that SHE has done on mobilizing a response to thalassaemia, is a very positive example of just what can be achieved.

In 1992, SHE a non-governmental organization established that the beta-thalassaemia prevalence rate was 18.1% (1 in 5) and on the basis of the result, launched a nationwide awareness and population screening programme, visiting each island in the Maldives every 5 years and targeting 12-35-year-olds. Screening of 100 cord blood samples indicated a 28% incidence of alpha-thalassaemia. Screening results highlighted significantly high incidence

of more than one haemoglobinopathy on individual islands. This is of particular importance given the norm of intra-island marriages. Specific mutation analysis showed that three mutations accounted for more than 95% of the thalassaemia genes, ensuring a high detection rate and cost effectiveness of a prenatal diagnosis programme. Outcomes of the screening programme include screening of more than 25% of the target population; the establishment of a Government National Thalassaemia Centre; inclusion of thalassaemia into the school curriculum; the legal requirement for screening prior to marriage; legalization of prenatal diagnosis and medical termination of pregnancy; and the commencement of prenatal diagnostic services. The programme successes include effective advocacy, resource mobilisation, motivation for screening, voluntary blood donation, and thalassaemia becoming a household word in the country. (Firdous 2005)

Many modern signs of community mobilisation can also be seen throughout the Maldives. Some of these are not apparent when first entering an island but become apparent over time. The recent world cup made some community activities a bit more apparent –for example community groups in Guraidhoo (GEM & WDC) raised over US\$30,000 in order to purchase a projector and screen to televise the world cup matches for the community. Most other communities throughout the Maldives have come together to ensure there are communal facilities to watch the games.

In Nohlivaranfaru, the community has been conducting a significant tree planting campaign. This is a communal activity that was linked to world environment day but undertaken by the community themselves. They have continued to care for the trees and the area as a communal activity. There are many ways that the community comes together and mobilizes on specific issues, the aforementioned are just a few examples, the following is an example of trying to catalyze the community to mobilize for environmental management.

You need to have good organizational skills to bring the community together and good management skills to manage diverse needs once they are together



The first skill for effective community mobilisation is planning as without planning you may forget some of the necessary skills and resources. You need to be an organizer, manager, public speaker, facilitator, note-taker, listener and questioner. These are skills that have some theory but are mostly best learnt through experience – learning by doing.

You need to have good organizational skills to bring the community together and good management skills to manage diverse needs once they are together. You especially need to show these skills (lead by example) as they are skills the community will need to continue the community mobilisation approach.

To be good at community mobilisation you not only need the skills you also need a strong understanding of the concepts and principles

that you are using those skills for. There are many definitions for different concepts so it is important that you try and get a few different ideas. It is your understanding of the concepts that is important not the definition written in some book. Trying to learn concepts once and for all is like trying to eat once and for all – sooner or later you will get hungry. We hope the following concepts will whet your appetite.

## APPROACH:

### *Only the right key can open the lock*

It is important that you use the correct approach when working toward a goal. There may be many approaches that may work but some that won't and some that work better than others, this often depends on the goal, the audience and sometimes the location and time available.

There are many theories but the only way to really know is to try. The over-riding concept is to start simple and progress. If it is not working learn from it and adapt the approach. You need a strategic approach to work with communities.

In relation to 'Promoting Community Mobilisation for Sound Environmental Management in the Maldives', there are a variety of theoretical models and approaches, however the concepts in this section are highlighted based on case studies that have been conducted in five (5) pilot communities. Once an approach has been chosen work with it but don't be afraid to change it to suit your needs. The approach chosen for community mobilisation has been developed in six (6) broad steps.

## STEPS IN BUILDING COMMUNITY MOBILISATION



1. Plan



2. Listen & Learn



3. Discuss & Develop



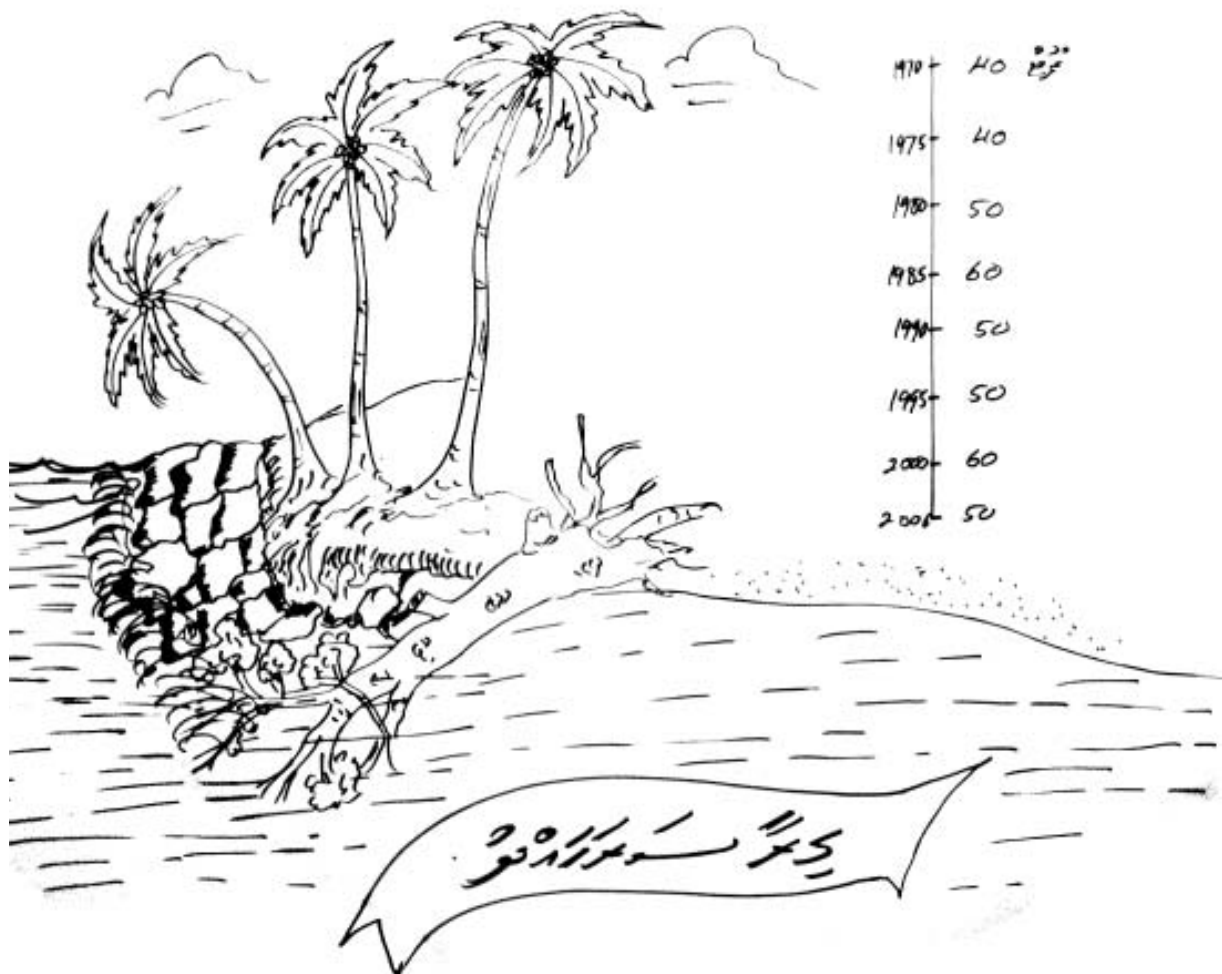
4. Adapt & Act

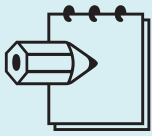


5. Support



6. Evaluate





## STEP 1: PLAN

To effectively plan for community mobilisation you need to consider: planning, goals, audience, timing, location, skills & resources and concepts. These areas will now be highlighted and some prompting questions posed to give a better idea of what should be considered.

### PLANNING:

#### *Measure twice and cut once*

Before even considering doing any work with the community, you must prepare yourself. The best way to prepare is to plan. Simple questions such as: who, what, where, when, why and how, can be a useful guide in preparing as they can help you to consider what you are doing.

- Do you understand the objectives of the approach?
- Is it community driven or are you trying to promote it?
- Are you confident to facilitate the discussion and actions?

### GOALS:

#### *If you don't know where you are going how will you ever get there?*

You need to know your goals before you start. Develop them yourself and then develop them with others. Most importantly share them with the community and assist the community in developing their own goals. The ultimate goal is the community.

- What are you doing and why?
- What is the goal of the community?
- What is your or your organisation's goal?

### AUDIENCE:

#### *The fisherman must know the sea to catch the fish.*

If you want to achieve your goal you need to know who you are working with. The community is the main audience but who within the community should you be targeting for involvement? This will most often link back to your goals. You must know

as much as possible about the social, environmental & cultural aspects of the community. This shouldn't just be facts – a community is how these aspects are linked.

- Who are you working with and why?
- Are all sectors of the audience represented? (gender, age etc)

*"Waste training will be very useful for this community. It would be very important for people who do agriculture. Those people who do agriculture are not that well educated. When selecting people to train, involve people who do agriculture and people with good educational background".*

(Community pre-test report, L. Kalaidhoo)

### TIMING:

#### *Timing can be the difference between success and failure*

The timing of the facilitation sessions should be linked to what you know about the community. The time chosen to conduct facilitation is designed to encourage maximum interest. Often when participants are asked to spend more than 2 hours it can interfere with other work commitments. Many may lose attention as many are not accustomed to spending long times discussing issues.

- How long are the activities?
- Did you set the time or did the community?

*"The timing of the trainings is very important because it would be ideal to conduct the trainings during the school holidays. If it could not be organised during a school holiday then a weekend would be good if the community was informed beforehand. The organisers have to see if there is any social functions already organised at the island level and see that it does not clash with any of the major events organised by the school or the island office."*

(Community pre-test report, Th. Guraidhoo)



## LOCATION:

*Right time wrong place!*

The location of the community is an important consideration and can affect approaches to facilitation. If it is very difficult, takes a long time and/or is expensive to get to the community it may affect the timing and approach you wish to use.

- Did you set the location or did the community?
- Is it a suitable site? Will weather affect it or your travel to the site?
- Do you have the time and money to do this?

## SKILLS & RESOURCES:

*A good tradesman never blames their tools, & ensures they have the right tools for the job!*

It is important to know how you will do what you are planning. You need to know what skills and resources are required. You will also need to develop these skills and obtain the resources. It is also very important that you ensure that these skills and resources are suitable to the situation, and if not then adapt them.

- What skills & resources do you need to conduct community facilitation?
- How can you minimize weaknesses and maximize strengths?
- What can the community supply?

## CONCEPT:

*The teacher should know the topic before teaching*

The major reason a community mobilisation approach is taken is because it is the most effective way to get some, but not all, things done. Many studies and reports support the involvement (participation) of people in solving their own problems as one of the keys to success and sustainability of actions. Part of the reason may be that the government and/or project specifically acknowledged the importance of community mobilisation.

- Why are you doing community mobilisation?
- What are the key reasons for community mobilisation in this situation?



## STEP 2: LISTEN & LEARN

To effectively *listen & learn* for community mobilisation you need to consider: listening skills, entry points, local perceptions, data and note taking. These areas will now be highlighted and some prompting questions posed to give a better idea of what should be considered.

### LISTENING SKILLS

*Hearing someone doesn't mean you're listening!*

The skill of listening is just as important as is speaking. In some cases it is more important. Good listening skills include reflective listening and strategic questioning to ensure you understand what was meant. Attentive listening shows an interest and respect for the participants' knowledge and can help to start a positive relationship.

- Have you understood what was being said?
- How do you know you understood what is being said?
- Are you interested in what people have to offer?

### COMMUNITY ENTRY POINTS:

*It's not what you know  
It's who you know!*

Community entry points can be key people or organisations, they are also dynamic, sometimes significantly changing over time. Sometimes the people or organisations that are seen as key community entry points are known as 'gatekeepers'. To work with these people can mean opening the gates of the community. These 'gatekeepers' are also the people most likely to directly affect the success or failure of any community activity. They are important in assisting with the sustainability of any community approaches, it is very important to involve them and consider their opinions.

- Who works best with the community?
- Who do you know in the community?
- Who do you know who knows someone in the community?

*"It's important because household wastes can be disposed. It can be undertaken in the island, Transporting waste to the waste management site would be a problem, since they do not have vehicles. The designated area for waste management is very far from the inhabited area, so again, the problem of transport. The NGO, Island Development Committee and the Women's Development Committee can undertake the work."*

(Community pre-test report, HDh. Nalhivaranfaru)

### LOCAL PERCEPTIONS:

*The earth is flat!*

It is also important to understand the local perceptions relevant to your goal. Make your own observations about the community as well. Think about the community's social organization, local livelihoods, politics, values, traditions and the relationship with the environment. These observations combined with the communities' perceptions can help you to develop a better understanding, but you should never stop learning about the community as you will never know it all.

- What do you think the communities perceptions related to your topic are?
- What does the community think their perceptions on environmental management are?

*"Waste disposal is not a problem in this island, since the island is big and there is enough area to dispose of waste (bush). However, it is not done properly, so this training is important. All the committees and people who work in agriculture should be involved in the program."*

(Community pre-test report, HDh. Nalhivaranfaru)

## DATA:

*It's not just about what you've got.  
It's also about how you got it and  
what you do with it!*

The mode of collecting data should be linked to the flexible nature of working with the community. A broad contextual plan for data collection is more appropriate than intensive data collection that may place a burden on the community. There are many ways to collect data from people, however for community mobilisation focus groups and interviews are some of the most commonly used. Focus groups are a bit different from interviews. Interviews are a question and answer process, whereas focus groups encourage more open discussion of the issues. Questions are still used and must be on hand as a prompt to illicit key information that does not come out through discussions. Through these discussions that most of the information is hoped to come from. This is a valuable way of encouraging involvement, demystifying the role of facilitator and extending the range of skills people can build through their participation in the learning circle.

- What do you really want to know?
- Does the community want to know this?
- What are you going to do with the data?
- Is the community happy for you to do that?

*"All the households currently bury or throw the organic waste including the fish waste into the sea; this was highlighted as a good opportunity for compost. Glass & plastic bottles are being reused by some but many others are being dumped."*

(Report of the Clean Communities Training Program, HDh. Nohivaranfaru, June 2006)

## NOTE-TAKING

*Keeping notes shows that the knowledge and experiences of members is valued and helps ensure things aren't forgotten or confused over time.*

Recording the work of the facilitation can help people to focus. It makes it possible for the group to see how its views have developed and to share experiences with other groups. Importantly, notes can make the data collected be compared with other data. Written notes also make it easier to

include any initiatives or activities undertaken by the group in a newsletter or on a website, so we can learn from one another and participants see a visible outcome from their activities. You don't need everything written, indeed for some discussions you may prefer no notes are taken, but a summary of key points is very useful. Talk to the group and decide what they want to take notes on.

- What do you want notes taken on?
- What does the community want notes taken on?
- Who will take notes?

*"The H2S training would be important for this community. It may be difficult to do it at the island level since people who've done training in different areas haven't taken any initiative to take any action. Maybe they haven't been pushed by anyone. Island office could play a role in monitoring such actions. Hospital could play a role in implementing this activity."*

(Community pre-test report, HDh. Kulhudufushi)

NB: Having specific staff to act as note-takers allows the facilitator more freedom to follow the flow of the group. Talk to the group about note taking and if they are comfortable with it or if there is any specific way they would like it organized. It doesn't need to be a big job. Notes could cover such things as:

1. What the group covered/discussed – try to get as much detail as possible. Use quotes or key words as prompts to get as much information as possible when writing up the notes.
2. Key issues, ideas, points of particular controversy – sometimes it is important to highlight who specifically states a key or controversial issue. Issues where participants agreed to disagree are also important for future evaluation of activities.
3. Note-takers should take notes in Dhivehi, and then if necessary translate to English at the soonest convenience. Translation, if necessary, should be done by the note-taker.
4. Where possible there should be two note-takers as this will help to ensure quality notes.



## STEP 3: DISCUSS & DEVELOP



To effectively discuss & develop community mobilisation you need to consider: facilitation, pre-testing, sustainability, logistics & protocols, and communication. These areas will now be highlighted and some prompting questions posed to give a better idea of what should be considered.

### FACILITATION:

*Facilitation is to 'make simpler!  
Good facilitation is the glue that holds  
a group together!*

It is always important to remember that you should be trying to make things easier/simpler. The main role of a facilitator is organisational; you are there to make the discussion process easier. The KISS approach – Keep It Simple & Strategic is used to assist in facilitation. A good facilitator is an 'introduction agency' – they bring people together and help good interpersonal relationships to form.

- Is your approach simple?
- Can you make the approach easier?
- Does your approach help bring people together?

### PRE-TESTING

*The proof of the pudding is the taste,  
not the ingredients!*

An integral part to the development of most activities is some form of pre-testing. This can be in the form of conducting the entire activity or just pre-testing key parts of the activity. You need some way to gauge whether or not the activities are suitable and effective for your audience.

- How will you pre-test your approach?
- Who will you involve in pre-testing?

*"The group was asked if they would like to consider the issues ranked at the top and to choose the best topic for the mural project. The participants agreed to focus the mural on waste management as it is a problem related to every individual and that everyone could contribute to finding a solution to it."*

(Report of the Community Mural Training Program, K. Huraa, August 2006)

### COMMUNICATION

*Be careful what you ask for,  
as you might get it!*

Clear communication is one of the most important tools in community mobilisation. Communication is a skill that is useful for all activities and especially important for people working effectively together. Some of the key communication skills for community mobilisation include listening and questioning, but it is also very important to understand body language as there is lots of communication without words. If you are not from the area try and get feedback from a trusted source that is from the area, as they will more intuitively understand the body language.

- Is the message clear?
- Is there someone local who can help you interpret the situation?

*“The mural approach could be very strong for this community. The swamp is really important to be protected and a mural would be an important way to make people aware of the importance of the swamp. Tourists visit this site so there could be a mural to encourage protection of the site. There is a rare species that is found in the swamp and the mural could be a good tool to make people aware of the importance of protecting the swamp. This is part of the message of the need to protect the swamp. Huriyyaa club, teachers and youth could all participate in developing the mural. The youth should take ownership of the mural and that could help to promote awareness among the youth.”*

(Community pre-test report, K. Huraa)

## SUSTAINABILITY

*Give a man a fish he'll eat for a day  
Teach a man to fish he'll eat forever!*

An important consideration in community facilitation is longer-term sustainability. If the activities require too many resources from outside the community then it is less likely to succeed and it may also lead to dependency on the external resources. Where possible reduce the external resources and maximize the internal resources. Where external resources are used try and ensure

if they are skills then locals are taught those skills and if it equipment see if there are any locally available alternatives or if it is possible to produce locally. Where external support is given ensure that support is directed into making the activity more self-reliant not less.

- Is external support needed for the community to continue?
- Are you giving the community the skills to continue?
- What else do they need for it to become more sustainable?

## LOGISTICS & PROTOCOLS

*If you follow the right path there  
is less chance of getting lost!*

Important considerations for working in a community include the logistics and protocols. Is the community accessible: is there available transport and enough money for transport to & from the community? Are you allowed to work in the community? Do you need special permission? Who do you get that permission from? Even if you don't need formal permission, which government departments should you notify of your intended work?

- Are you organised and following local protocols?
- Have you involved and informed the right people?





## STEP 4: ADAPT & ACT

To effectively *adapt & act* for community mobilisation you need to consider: participation, resources, adaptability, action and ownership. These areas will now be highlighted and some prompting questions posed to give a better idea of what should be considered.

### PARTICIPATION

*What I read I may forget!  
What I discuss I consider!  
What I do I remember!*

The use of participatory approaches is designed to encourage more active involvement of the participants. The specifics of the participation method are the tools, often referred to as participatory tools. These are very dynamic and constantly changing with use of different facilitators in different areas and for different focuses.

- Are the participants involved?
- What level of participation are people involved in?

### Participatory Tools

Many manuals have endeavoured to give a list of participatory tools or methods to promote the involvement of communities. This research will not replicate that but rather emphasize a few key participatory tools. In order to allow for and encourage the flexibility of these participatory tools the following will simply give a summary of general concepts of the participatory tools that assist in gaining and maintaining the participation of the community include the following:

**Transect:** This tool is used to gain physical information about an area, through participant observation and facilitator questioning. It is an external activity where the participants walk along a designated course through an area. The concept is for the participants to consciously look at their physical environment with a key focus such as water, resources, problems, solutions etc.

**Mapping:** This tool can be used inside or outside. It is designed to get participants to visually represent an area as they see it. Mapping may not necessarily be about accuracy as it is based on perception. Mapping can serve to highlight group dynamics and perceptions as people discuss the way they see an area.

**Listing:** This is a documentation tool that requires the participants to list a certain issue. This tool can be linked to Transect and Mapping, which are used to simply document certain issues. It can be important in-group verification of the data collected before it is documented.

**Timeline:** The Timeline gives a temporal history of the area or a specific issue or issues. It requires the participants to think about when things happened (seasons, key dates etc). It can be very arbitrary as most things happen over time and don't have a distinct date; this therefore brings in group dynamics and stimulates discussion on the issues. This can really promote the critical exploration of an issue.

**Drawing:** Drawing encourages people to think more about a particular issue and offers another way of expressing their views visually. This tool can be used to promote increased thought and discussion on the issues that have been highlighted. It can serve to ensure feedback from all participants, and highlight previously missed information.

**Ranking:** Ranking allows the participants to work through issues and as a group prioritise them into a ranked order. This leads to group discussion about perceptions of importance. More issues may also arise as participants explain the importance of different issues.

**Evaluation:** Self evaluation encourages the participants to look at the process and say what they did and didn't like about it and whether they thought it was good or not and offer suggestions. Evaluation is critical and looks at how to enhance the participatory process or tools for future use.

## ADAPTATION:

*Don't reinvent the wheel!*

One of the most important premises of environmental management is efficiency – it is more efficient to utilize and adapt relevant materials than to start again. If there are or have been people working on similar & relevant actions then make every effort to learn from these and where possible utilize and adapt them.

- Who is working on relevant activities?
- What resources are already available that may be useful?

## ACTION

*Education without action is like a fish without water!*

After the community has gained an increased understanding and identified problems and needs, the stage is set for community to take action. If the community can not take action on an issue that they now understand more then there may be some disempowerment – it is important to link with some practical action. This is the phase where most of the community organizing takes place and may include developing an action plan. You should work with the community during the planning and implementation process to ensure their involvement in decisions and activities.

- Is your approach linked to practical actions?
- Can the community act on the issues raised?
- Will the community have an action plan to follow?

## OWNERSHIP

*Few people drive rental cars as carefully as their own car!*

Each community is different and as such a different approach to community mobilisation is necessary – there is no generic approach. When working with communities it is important to be responsive to their needs, this may not always fit in with your own needs but showing this flexibility can strengthen the community activities and specifically increase the communities' ownership.

- Did the community give some direction?
- Has the community shown motivation for continuing?

*"We are also now using the hygiene survey form the H2S toolkit as this is easier, more comprehensive and detailed. The monthly report sent to Department of Public health (Dept Medical Services - DMS) is based on the data collected using the adapted form; we have sought and gained permission to use this form for our reporting."*

(Most Significant Change Qualitative Evaluation For Live & Learn In The Maldives, HDh. Nolvivaranfaru)





## STEP 5: SUPPORT

To effectively *support* community mobilisation you need to consider: motivation & incentives, networks and attitude. These will now be highlighted and some prompting questions posed to give a better idea of what should be considered.

### MOTIVATION & INCENTIVES

*All the resources in the world won't make a difference if there isn't motivation to use them!*

Modern research has found that in many cases behaviour is not linked to knowledge – people can know that something is wrong but do it anyway. For community mobilisation to be successful you must work with the community to highlight what the key motivations and incentives for the desired change would be. Try to find factors that are internal and as such more sustainable as they do not rely on external forces.

- What is the community motivation to participate?
- What incentives have other activities used?

### NETWORK

*It's not what you know  
It's who you know!*

To ensure sustainability of efforts, there should be continual strengthening of the community. This is achieved through positive feedback and publicity of successes, training, and capacity building. Building alliances with other organizations can assist in ensuring ongoing support for community actions. Assist the community in forming strategic alliances with NGOs, neighbouring communities, and other organizations with common interests. Provide links to more advanced and newer community groups in order to develop a network of community organisations. Strengthen the capability of community groups by pooling resources and creating networks for advocacy and funding.

- Has the community linked with networks?



- Do they have the skills and resources they need?
- Can they get them in the network?

### ATTITUDE

*Do as I say not as I do!*

Your attitude can also be a critical factor in your ability to effectively work with the community. The right attitude can help promote success. Consider your own actions and always try and 'lead by example'. This is very important as those who tell others 'to do as I say not as I do' are destined to offend and likely to fail. You can't, and shouldn't, expect the community leaders to do things in a participatory way if you aren't – you can't expect the community leaders to be transparent if you aren't. Leading by example can be one of the strongest educational influences you have in the community. Remember most of what we learn, in fact up to 80% is not from lessons in school but is from observing and learning from those people and things around us.

- Do you always do what you tell others to do?
- Do you like other people telling you what to do when they do not do it?
- Will your attitude positively or negatively impact community mobilisation?



## STEP 6: EVALUATE

To effectively evaluate community mobilisation you need to consider: indicators, review & reflection and evaluation. These areas will now be highlighted and some prompting questions posed to give a better idea of what should be considered.

### INDICATOR

*If you don't read the signs  
you'll get lost!*

An indicator is used to measure how you are progressing toward your goal and objectives. The indicator needs to be clear and measurable in order to be useful. Good indicators can be an important way of knowing if you are headed in the right direction. The success of the community mobilisation efforts is evaluated through careful monitoring of indicators or success criteria and periodic evaluation. You can help the community groups to determine some indicators that will help to show if the objectives of the action they were undertaking are being met. It is very important to not only have indicators but to also have an action plan for what is to be measured by who and at what time.

- Do you have indicators to measure effectiveness?
- Who has decided on the indicators?
- What indicators are important to the community?
- Do the indicators make sense to the responsible people?

### REVIEW & REFLECTION

*History has many lessons for the  
wise to learn!*

It is important to provide an opportunity for participants and facilitators to reflect on their work and their learning. Organisers get feedback about

what worked well and any changes that need to be made to the resource materials or how the learning circles are conducted and supported. Facilitate the community's participation in evaluation efforts to assess the successes and failures of initiatives. Do not underestimate the feedback and comments of the community, they may not have all the technical skills or understanding of alternatives, but they know their situation. During this phase, you can also help the community to reflect on the objectives of the action they were undertaking: were they met and the reasons for the success or failure. Importantly, an outsider may see one thing while the insider another – evaluation from both can be useful.

- Have you learnt from past approaches?
- Does the community perceive success or failure?
- Have insiders reflected on the approach?

### EVALUATION

*Lessons are not simply learnt from  
success or failure they are learnt from  
reviewing our actions and the result  
of these actions.*

Evaluation is an important part of the process. Evaluation encourages the participants to look at the process and say what they did and didn't like about it and whether they thought it was good or not and offer suggestions. Evaluation is critical and looks at how to enhance the participatory process or tools for future use. It is an important way of making future activities better.

- How will you conduct evaluation?
- How often will you evaluate activities?
- Who will evaluate activities?
- How will you share the results of the evaluation?

## ADB TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: PROMOTING SOUND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN THE POST-TSUNAMI MALDIVES

### INTRODUCTION

In the agreement, dated 3rd November 2005 the Asian Development Bank (ADB) appointed Live & Learn Environmental Education to provide Technical Assistance (TA) to the Government of the Maldives for Promoting Sound Environmental Management in the Aftermath of the Tsunami Disaster. The goal of the TA is to improve environmental sustainability in the Maldives. This will be done in-line with moves to achieve the desired Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The more immediate objective relates to the development and testing of an environmental management program for tsunami-affected islands that focuses predominantly, but not solely, on environmental health and awareness.

This TA is part of a series of ADB-assisted interventions to support the Government of the Maldives in its post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction program. The TA was formulated to complement the Tsunami Emergency Assistance Project (TEAP). The target of TA includes the general public, local decision-makers, teachers and government departments, national and to date local stakeholders as all play a key role in



promoting sound environmental management in the Maldives.

The TA is comprised of four closely interrelated outputs, namely: (i) Supporting Actions Towards Sustainable Water Management (ii) Building Capacity for Environmental Assessment (iii) Testing and Promoting Innovative Environmental Education and Public Awareness, and (iv) Organizing for Community-Based Environmental Management. This case study focuses on Output 4 or more specifically a combination of Outputs 3 & 4. It is a case study on community mobilisation process conducted through implementation of the environmental education toolkits across five pilot sites.

### BACKGROUND

The Maldives are a chain of 1,190 small low-lying coral islands grouped into 26 atolls in the Indian Ocean: 198 islands are inhabited and 80 of these house tourist resorts. The islands are predominantly coastal entities, and their ecosystems are among the most vulnerable in the world. The Maldives have a narrow economic base that relies on two critical sectors, tourism and fisheries. The Maldives' fragile coral reefs and coasts, fisheries and the marine environment, are the main source of livelihood as such environmental management is of utmost importance.

Unique geography and vulnerability pose key development challenges for the country. The dispersion of the population across the archipelago raises the cost of delivering social services. This has resulted in deteriorating living conditions on many inhabited islands. Impacts resulting from the absence of infrastructure and social services in the atolls were further exacerbated by the damage that followed the high waves and flooding of the Indian Ocean tsunami which hit the Maldives on 26 December 2004, leading in some cases to absolute destruction of existing infrastructure.

Community involvement in environmental management is particularly appropriate in the

Maldives due to geography and diverse communities. Policies that do not allow for adaptability based on the community situation are often prone to failure.

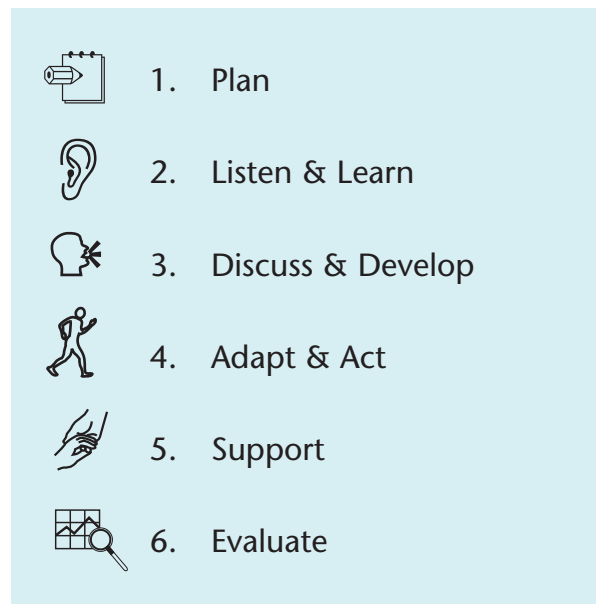
Community mobilisation is the process of bringing together members of a community and empowering them to address common concerns and problems. There is limited research on or existing guides for organizing community-based environmental management in the Maldives. As such in implementing the ADB TA-Promoting Sound Environmental Management in the Maldives, Live and learn has sought to develop guidelines through a practical 'learning by doing' approach. Specifically, the guidelines have been based on practical experience from this case study.

## CASE STUDY

This case study seeks to be as simple as possible, while still giving enough detail for the reader to see some of the significant steps taken. The case study documents the process of promoting community involvement for the implementation of environmental education tools in five (5) pilot communities. The toolkits being highlighted in the case study are: Clean Communities Toolkit, Community Water Monitoring Toolkit and the Beach Erosion Toolkit. The case study is specifically broken down into the six-step approach to community mobilisation as highlighted below. The case study also highlights some consideration as to whether the approach was a success or failure.

Rather than simply replicate existing theory on community mobilisation a case study approach to community mobilisation: linking theory to practice has been utilized. A specific workshop highlighting the community mobilisation guidelines and case study has been conducted, but this is an area that would benefit from training. There is limited documentation specific to community mobilisation in the Maldives, and no such documents linked to environmental education, so documentation of this process will serve as a step toward better understanding.

The case study focuses on the processes and outcomes of the trial, with particular attention to the factors that influenced the processes of community mobilisation. The approach chosen for community mobilisation has been developed in six (6) broad steps:



These steps will now be discussed based on their use in 'Promoting Community Mobilisation for Sound Environmental Management in five Pilot Communities in the Maldives' and guidelines highlighted.

### 1. PLAN

In-line with the whole Islands Approach the project sought to integrate the components within the TA. Most specifically the development and implementation of the environmental education toolkits utilized the community mobilisation approaches in order to maximize community involvement and promote lasting use of these tools.

Approaches to community mobilisation are being utilized and reviewed based on their effectiveness in the implementation of the environmental education toolkits. This approach will give practical feedback on whether these approaches help to strengthen community involvement in the environmental education toolkits. The feedback from this process will greatly assist in developing practical guidelines for community mobilisation in the Maldives.

The TA sought to focus trial activities with five (5) pilot communities. This would serve to pre-test approaches to promote sound environmental management. The following criteria were used as a guide to selecting the five participating communities:

- Tsunami affected islands
- Rehabilitating water & sanitation
- Link & proximity to ADB sites (Th. Guraidhoo and H. Dh. Kulhudhuffushi)
- Link to other organisations and initiatives for environmental management - Red Cross 75 Islands – water & sanitation facilities.
- Seek to link with alternate approaches
- Seek combination of larger and smaller communities
- Seek alternative dominant livelihoods – industry, agriculture & fishing
- Try to work with a relocated community
- Two North, two South & one middle
- Travel cost must be a consideration

Based on the aforementioned selection criteria the following five communities were selected:

1. In Kaafu Atoll, a central atoll of the Maldives, the community on the island of **Huraa** was chosen. Mid-sized community, based on fishing and tourism.
2. In Thaa Atoll, a southern part of the Maldives, the community on the island of **Guraidhoo** was chosen. Mid-sized community, based on fishing and business.
3. In Laamu Atoll, a southern atoll of the Maldives, a community known as **Kalaidhoo** was chosen on Isdhoo island. Mid-sized community, based on fishing and agriculture.
4. In Haa Dhaalu Atoll, a northern atoll of the Maldives, the community on the island of **Kulhudhuffushi** was chosen. A larger centre with the Atoll office, industry and tourism.
5. In Haa Dhaalu Atoll, a northern atoll of the Maldives, the community on the island of **Nolhivaranfaru** was chosen. Small predominantly agricultural community.



## 2. LISTEN & LEARN

The project utilized the Rapid Assessment of Perceptions (RAP) methodology. This provides an insight into community perceptions of their situation in relation to environmental management. The RAP involved the five (5) pilot communities from (21st December – 3rd February). The RAP involved: the general community through focus groups participatory mapping, ranking and dialogue; community leaders through interviews & reflection; and school-teachers through a questionnaire.

The RAP highlighted some of the specific environmental issues that the communities were most concerned about.

A ‘Brainstorming for Environmental Education Ideas’ workshop was also held at Ministry of Environment Energy & Water, February 2006. The aim of the workshop was to increase awareness of, ideas for and feedback on some of the environmental education approaches. It was an opportunity for us to listen to and share ideas with government, organisations, teachers, NGO’s, and other stakeholders.



## 3. DISCUSS & DEVELOP

Based on the RAP, brainstorming workshop and meetings with stakeholders several toolkit concepts were developed.

These concepts were pre-tested in the five pilot communities. Focus group discussions utilizing ranking and community leader interviews were used to gain feedback from the community on the concepts. The community pre-test provided an insight into community understanding of concepts and approaches & preferences for implementation of the tools through ranking.

The community pre-test findings showed that water & waste toolkits were the highest priorities and the communities seemed very happy to trial the toolkits. Importantly the rapport between the staff & community was strengthened from the previous meetings and key community entry points were identified.



## 4. ADAPT & ACT

### Clean Communities – Waste Management Toolkit

The aim of this toolkit is for communities to take ownership of waste issues. This is done through three key steps:

- Support community changes to household waste practices for management (separation)
- Assist community leaders to participate in waste management decision making on the Island and Atoll level
- Conduct practical activities (composting) in line with waste management



The Clean communities toolkit was implemented in 3 pilot sites (Guraidhoo & Kulhudhuffushi, Nohlivaramfaru). There was good participation of communities for the 3 training sessions and a practical composting activity was conducted as an example.

### Community Water Monitoring Toolkit

The aim of this toolkit is to increase community awareness and promote actions for safe drinking water. The toolkit places emphasis on the relationship between “healthy water and healthy people”. The communities’ involvement in managing the water resources better and monitoring of water quality were key objectives.

The Community Water Monitoring toolkit was implemented in 3 pilot sites (Kalaidhoo, Nohlivaramfaru & Huraa). There was good participation of communities for the training sessions. Practical water monitoring activities were conducted as an example and the community showed a lot of interest in the H2S kits.

### Beach Erosion Toolkit

The aim of this toolkit was to empower island communities with knowledge and skills to begin to cope with the problems of beach erosion. The toolkit included practical monitoring activities so that a better understanding of the issue can be developed thereby understanding and managing beach erosion better. The toolkit also promoted a reduced attitude of dependency on the government

The Beach Erosion toolkit implemented in 2 pilot sites (Kalaidhoo & Guraidhoo). There was satisfactory participation of communities for the training sessions.

Practical monitoring activities were conducted as an example for future community monitoring.



## 5. SUPPORT

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### Clean Communities

We have supported the Clean Communities toolkit. Extra compost leaflets were sent based on request of communities. We visited the site and checked progress of composting activities that are being conducted. The community has also requested separation bins – we are looking at ways to supply these.

### Community Water Monitoring

The Community Water Monitoring toolkit was supported in a number of ways. The communities requested additional H2S monitoring bottles, which were ordered and supplied to them. We visited the sites and have checked progress of alterations for rainwater collection where tests were contaminated. Significantly we have been working directly with MWSA staff.

### Beach Erosion Toolkit

During the toolkit training the practical activity included the setting of monitoring points at key sites for the community. To facilitate monitoring, measuring tapes were given to the community. Discussion on how to manage sand-mining in the community was facilitated. The Sandwatch document was also distributed to the pilot sites to link schools education with beach erosion.



## 6. EVALUATE

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A full evaluation was conducted throughout all the five pilot sites utilizing standard evaluation and the Most Significant Change methodology, which includes: documenting results based on stories from the community and observations from field staff.

### Clean Communities

In terms of evaluation, a community waste survey was conducted and basic community waste plan

for the island developed. We also produced a community compost pile. Significant Changes highlighted from the communities include:

- Some households are composting organic waste
- Some are experimenting with different compost styles
- Many households are burying their waste
- Island & waste centre appear cleaner
- Increased awareness

## Community Water Monitoring

The H<sub>2</sub>S tests were used in the communities to investigate drinking water quality.

A hygiene survey was conducted to assess the situation of their households and a community water monitoring plan was made for the community. Water quality testing by MWSA is also being done with more tools for community involvement. Significant changes highlighted from the communities include:

- Changed water collection
- Cleaned rainwater tanks
- Overhanging branches cut and/or gutters moved
- Increased awareness campaign
- Institutional use of hygiene survey form

## Beach Erosion Toolkit

The Beach Erosion toolkit was not such a priority for the communities and was not as easy to facilitate. The communities made a map of the beach areas: setting points along the beach to monitor erosion and observing & recording beach characteristics. An erosion monitoring plan was also made for the community. We visited the sites to see progress. Significant changes highlighted from the communities include:

- Sand-mining is being better managed
- Plans for planting trees in vulnerable areas
- Discussion has curbed the felling of existing trees in erosion areas.

## SUCCESS OR FAILURE

Overall this project is a success as it has made an important step toward real community mobilisation. The communities have participated in environmental management activities and some behavior change has been seen for environmental

management. There are some factors that affect the success and/or failure of any activities. Two of the most significant factors for this approach have been 'field time' and 'gifts from the sky'. These are discussed below to highlight some of the issues associated.

**Field time:** An important part of our approach was to maximize time with the communities so that. For a project with a short duration (9 months) we have sought to maximize the field time: over twenty contact visits with communities. This emphasis on contact time with the communities has assisted in developing a stronger rapport and some trust with the communities, but it has also placed an increased burden on the staff. Overall the contact time is considered one of the most important approaches to mobilizing the community. The planning step should seek more time to allow for realistic field contact time for community mobilisation.

**Gifts from the sky:** One of the early comments from stakeholders during the Listen & Learn step was about 'gifts from the sky'. This comment was made in direct relation to the affect that donors are having in the Tsunami affected communities. During our activities it became apparent that it is very difficult to encourage a community to mobilize when they are being given 'gifts'. This was especially relevant in relation to our clean communities toolkit whereby the value of compost was reduced as donors were giving communities cow manure for agriculture.



# CHECKLIST



There are many concepts that will assist in guiding the effective mobilisation of a community. It is important to have basic principles to reflect on throughout the process of community mobilisation approach.

The following highlight some key principles that can be used as a guide for developing an approach to community mobilisation:

- Investigate existing relevant approaches
- Listen to the community they understand
- Look at what is working in the community
- Pre-test the approach with the community
- Adapt the approach based on feedback.
- Implement the approach as soon as possible
- Support the approach with necessary training & resources.
- Evaluate the approach and adapt it as necessary for next time.

The following 6 steps are an important reminder of some of the things you should consider when seeking to mobilize the community.



1. Plan



2. Listen & Learn



3. Discuss & Develop



4. Adapt & Act



5. Support



6. Evaluate

The following checklist summarizes some of the main principles as questions. These fourteen questions can be used as prompts to ensure that you have not overlooked something significant. The fourteen questions can further highlight other questions to give further prompting to ensure you are covering many of the main topics. The following expands on the fourteen questions. As you read through think of other questions: write these down to ensure you consider them.

1. Have you understood the problem and reflected on your approach?  
Have you talked to experts, and members of the intended audience, about the nature of the problem? Have you examined alternative approaches?
2. Have you researched similar programs?  
Have you done a search to find out about similar programs?  
Have you contacted relevant people working on similar programs?
3. Have specific target audiences been identified?  
Who needs to take action? Have clear target audiences been defined?
4. Are your objectives obtainable? Are the objectives realistic? Is the audience interested?
5. Have you really understood the situation and needs of your audience? Have members of the audience participated in designing the approach? Does the approach meet the audience's needs and yours?
6. Is the solution compatible with your audience's personal values and norms? Does your audience perceive the same problem? Have you explored the 'common ground' between your proposed solution and audience values, perceptions and needs?
7. Have you planned how to evaluate? How will you and your audience know if you are succeeding or failing? Have you planned for time to reflect? How will you report back to the audience?
8. Will it be participatory and fun? Do you have activities to promote audience involvement?  
Could there be a more fun way to do things?
9. Will it be social?  
Is there time for the participants to socialize? Is there shared snacks or a meal?
10. Have you pre-tested the approach?  
Have you pre-tested the messages and materials? Do you have everything you need?
11. Have you thought about access?  
Have you offered opportunities for all of the target audience? (gender, age etc)
12. Have you approached partners?  
What other groups are doing similar things? Could you collaborate?
13. Do you practice what you preach? Have you thought about the environmental impact of your approach? How can it be reduced?
14. Will you leave something behind? How will you build the capacity of the community to continue after you leave? Have people gained new knowledge, been trained in new skills and introduced to new networks?

Different people have different skills the best way to develop these skills is through experience



Look at the following skills and attitudes that are all considered useful for community mobilisation. Read each skill and reflect on how much experience you have. Your attitude can also play a role in how well you work with the community so rate your attitude as a strength or weakness. Your responses should help consider where you may need some skills development. How can you better develop these skills?

It is not always possible to have all the skills and experience before starting but that is not a reason not to start it simply means you may need to pay extra attention to those areas where you may be weaker. Different people have different skills the best way to develop these skills is through experience. If you are working with someone with stronger skills than yourself try and learn from them.

Your skills and attitudes are called on in different ways depending on the situation. It is useful to consider potential situations and how you would react and what skills and attitudes may be important to deal with these situations effectively. Consider the following scenarios:

**Scenario A:** You have a meeting with the community and they are quite hostile and question your motives for working with them.

**Scenario B:** Upon returning to a community you find that everything planned has happened, but nothing else.

**Scenario C:** The people you have been working with, and even training, say they are too busy to do the activities.

Skills	Very Experienced	Experience	No Experience
Communication/listening			
Observe body language			
Using participatory tools			
Group mobilisation			
Social analysis			
Negotiation			
Writing/documentation			
Conflict resolution			
Leadership			
Using exercises, role-plays, games, energizers			
Asking & answering questions			
Summarizing discussions			
Give & receive feedback			
Facilitate involvement of all in group discussion			
Encourage quiet people to speak			
Encourage dominant people to listen to others			
Planning			

Your attitude can also be a critical factor in your ability to effectively work with the community. The right attitude can help promote success. Consider and rank how you perceive your attitude in relation to the following is:

Attitude	Strong	Normal	Weak
Happy			
Positive thinking			
Believe in people's capabilities,			
Listening and respecting others' ideas,			
Commitment to social change,			
Gender sensitivity,			
Respect to local cultures,			
Open minded,			
High learning aptitude			
Enjoy challenges and unwanted difficulties,			

It is very important to emphasize that issues and challenges facing one community may not be the same as those in another



There is too much to learn in one sitting - but to try and learn everything at once is like trying to eat everything at once - sooner or later you are going to get hungry! The main thing is to think about what you are doing, if there are consequences and why you are doing it!

These guidelines serve as a step toward or a refresher for those who wish to work toward mobilizing the community. They are broad introduction and not a specific 'how to' manual as it is considered that each community should be treated differently this is just a guide to encourage approaches that may be useful.

The material in this guide is a resource for you. Read it through, and consider your situation. It is very important to emphasize that issues and challenges facing one community may not be the same as those in another. The guide simply highlights basic opportunities for community mobilisation – the guide is designed to be adapted.

These guidelines have been kept simple, but as you can see community mobilisation touches on many different skills. We encourage practitioners to seek out more information on areas where they are most interested. Use the self assessment to help you reflect on those skills or attitudes you may need to work on in order to be more effective at community mobilisation.

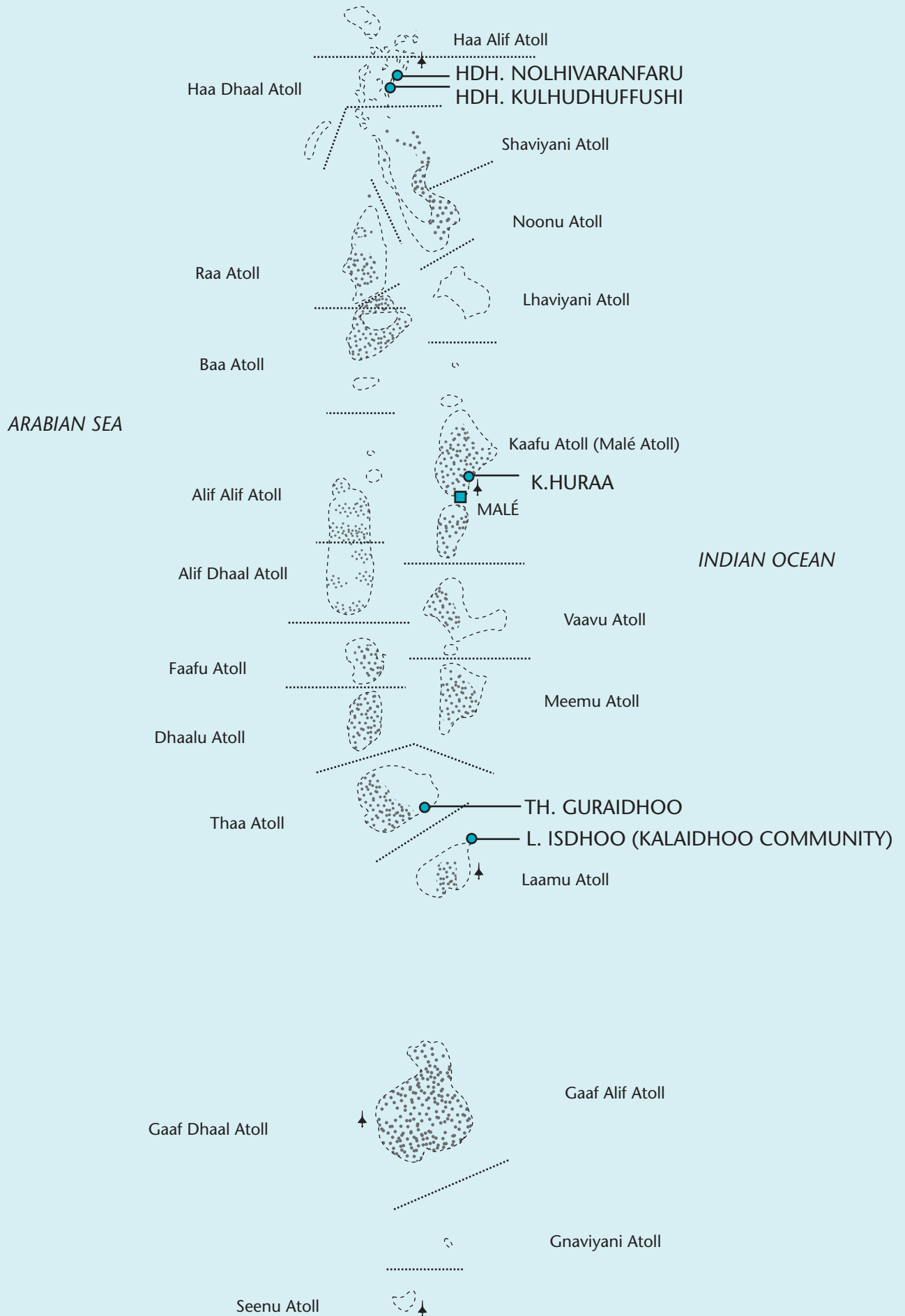
There is limited documentation specific to community mobilisation in the Maldives. If you have the opportunity to conduct community mobilisation in the Maldives we encourage you to document some of what you learn as it is these documents that help us all make our work with communities more effective.

These guidelines are hoped to assist relevant government and organizational staff in making positive steps toward community mobilisation. They are a small step in what is a very large and important field in both practice and research.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

**ADB** Asian Development Bank

**CSP** Country Strategy Program

**EE** Environmental Education

**IDC** Island Development Committee

**MWSA** Maldives Water and Sanitation Authority

**MDGs** Millennium Development Goals

**MEEW** Ministry of Environment Energy and Water

**MOFT** Ministry of Finance and Treasury

**MPND** Ministry of Planning and National Development

**NERRPO** National Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Program Office

**O&M** Operations & Management

**NEAP** National Environmental Action Plan

**NBSAP** National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan

**PCC** Project Coordination Committee

**PHAST** Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation

**RAP** Rapid Assessment of Perceptions

**SOE** State of the Environment

**TA** Technical Assistance

**TEAP** Tsunami Emergency Assistance Project

**WB** World Bank

**WDC** Women's Development Committees

**WHO** World Health Organisation

**WIA** Whole Islands Approach

**WSS** Water Supply and Sanitation

**UN** United Nations

**UNEP** United Nations Environment Programme



Plan



Listen & Learn



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