Description of recurring problems

"The Cow": an example of failure in intercultural communication

I am treating this working paper as if it was an oral presentation of the topic: "Extension and intercultural communication using a poster." An introduction and background information are felt to be unnecessary.

The poster reproduced on the next page was created and used in Egypt. Please take a careful look at it. Can you understand what it is trying to say? But of course it does not mean anything to you, because it is in Arabic. So it means as little to you as it does to most of the Egyptian peasants who it was produced for. They are illiterate. Maybe you can understand the two pictures without a text. Have a go!

If you were an Egyptian peasant, eager to know what the poster is saying, you could try to find someone to read it out for you. Perhaps one of your children could, if he has been to school. If he only went to the Koran school, he will have problems with some of the words. Maybe the village school teacher could read it for you, or the agricultural extension adviser, if you know him or come across him. If this were to happen, what you would find out is as follows (please look at the drawing on the next page but one). The small print on the lower edge of the poster, if you are sufficiently interested, tells you: (bottom right) Ministry of Agriculture, Headquarters of Agricultural Extension, Project for Agricultural Information; (bottom left) German – Egyptian Project El Nahda; Headquarters of Extension and Training; (bottom centre) Printed in the International Centre "Sirs Allian".

You may have understood the advice straightaway without having to read the text. But it is really only clear once you have sorted out the text. Egyptian peasants are in the habit of leading their cattle on a rope in a downright inconsiderate and inhumane way. They wind the rope round the horns and then again round one ear. This does not do the ears or the whole animal much good in the long run. It's all very obvious – a European halter ought to be used instead.

The whole topic may seem clear and basically very simple, and yet this wonderful poster is full of pitfalls if we care to look more closely. Perhaps we can spot some of them ourselves, but most of the difficulties only became apparent when the poster was held up in front of Egyptian farmers and they were asked to describe what they could see. We now list the critical points:

1. The "right" solution is in fact wrong

The graphic artist was an Egyptian, and he had obviously never tied a European halter. At the point where the loop round the animal's neck and the loop over the nose join at the side, they are knotted together so that the free end of the lead

should start here. In the picture the lead begins too high up, the knot near the mouth is wrong in the drawing and impossible to imitate. This is a fundamental error, but it pales into insignificance when we look further.

2. The red cross is particularly striking

Even if illiterate peasants merely glance at the picture, their attention is caught as if by magic by the red cross over the face of the cow on the right. They have never seen anything like it in their lives. The alienation principle, attracting attention by showing something familiar in a new light, and the eyecatching red do their duty. There is nothing strange like this about the cow on the left, and people pay it hardly any more attention. So the mistake in showing how the rope is tied is now relatively unimportant.

3. Wrong interpretation of the red cross

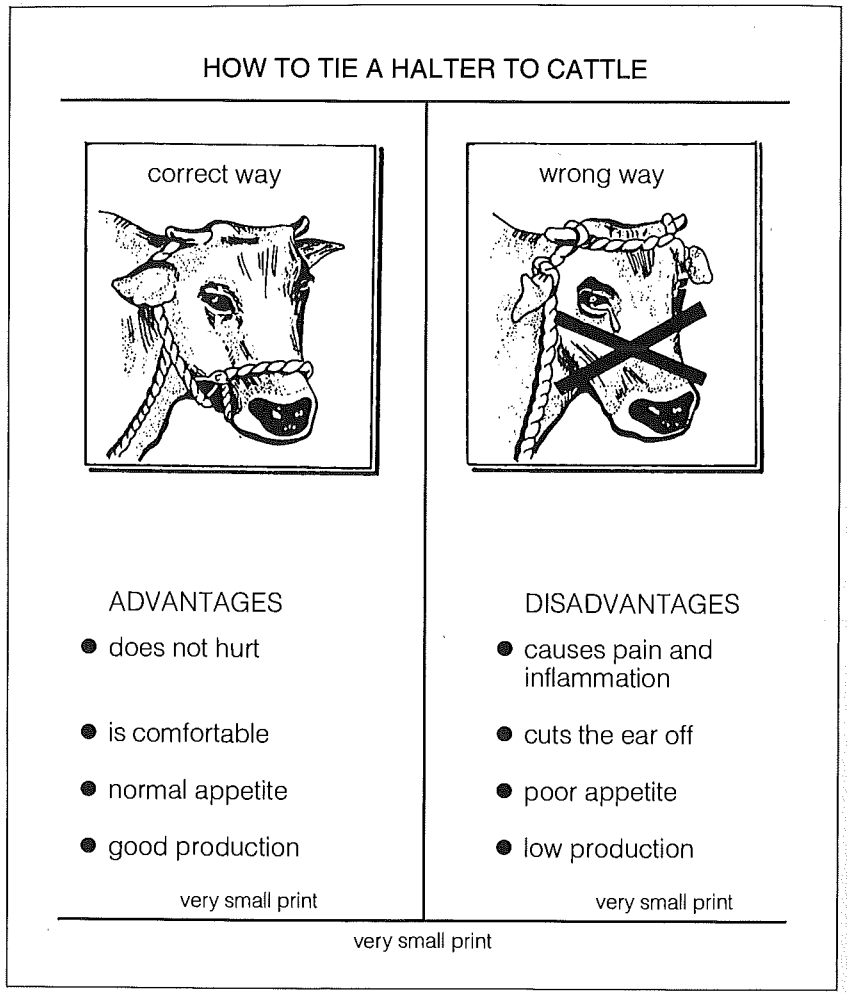
If we ask the farmers what the red cross means, they see two strange red ropes that mean nothing to them at all. Crossing out in red to show something is wrong is a typical symbol traditionally used in European schools where teachers correct in red. An illiterate cannot possibly be familiar with such conventions.

4. The tear misinterpreted

After the red rope, the farmers refer to the drop falling from the eye of the cow on the right. The cow is sick; it has a festering inflammation of the eye. This interpretation is absolutely correct, of course. Cattle cannot cry. Their tear mechanism does not convulse and empty when they feel pain. Logically, therefore, the connection between the tear, pain and a bleeding ear is absurd.

5. An appeal to pity is inappropriate

A central European, even though he knows about the anatomy of a cow's eye, will automatically see the discharge from the eye as a tear because he sees a connection with the bleeding ear. Blood and tears are such closely related concepts, linked by the idea of pain, that in the context of love of animals they immediately give rise to pity. But love of animals is for the most part alien to Egyptian culture. The peasant farmer regards his cow and his donkey as objects in the same way as his plough and his house. If his cow loses an ear, it only means that he has to tie the rope on the other side. This makes the cow just as useful as it was before.



6. Misinterpretation of the breed of cattle

Although the artist definitely took the local breed of cattle as his model, the farmers said they saw two black and white cows on the poster. They remained convinced of this despite the fact that the basic yellow brown clearly pointeded to a local breed. The shaded areas were interpreted by the farmers as patches of black, which never occurred in the local breed. Local cattle were always of one colour only. Cattle with more than one colour had to be Friesians therefore. They had become familiar with them through the activities of the neighbouring "Cattle Breeding Project El Nahda" that had organised slide shows and film evenings on

Friesians. And who else but the Germans would think of printing and hanging up posters? The combination with yellow may be not quite right, perhaps you do see cows like that sometimes, but there is no doubt that the cows on the poster are Friesians from Germany.

7. No connection between halters, health and "production"

The farmers cannot follow the connection established by the text. The word "production" is a foreign word in Arabic, too. Even if it is spelled out in terms of milk and meat, that does not help much either. It is true that the farmer now knows what is meant, but it does not concern him because he does not use his cow for "production". He needs it for work, for cultivating his fields. Milk is used primarily for raising calves. The family will consume 2 – 3 litres a day if there is any left over. There is practically no local and certainly no wider market for milk. There is limited sale of home-made cheese. Fattening cattle is practically the preserve of larger landowners. The farmer will only sell his cow when it is no longer capable of working. Healthy or sick, what difference does it make? Selling an old cow cannot be termed meat production. The local breed is tough, placid and hardy, and a bleeding or festering ear is not a worse condition than tick infestation or extreme shortage of fodder in the summer drought. The cows carry on working, come what may.

8. "Wild animals" need strong handling and control

The farmers were inclined to overlook the European halter on the poster, but, if they were specifically asked about it during interviews, they had clear reasons for rejecting it. The halter might well be suitable for the placid Friesians but would be useless with the lively and often wild local animals. This is not an objectively valid statement, nor is it merely the product of an understandable local pride. When Friesians first appeared in the village, they were presumably well fed, had plenty of fodder and were about twice the weight of the local cattle. Perhaps they were weary because of the summer sun in Egypt (though they can tolerate it much better than expected), and finally they would have been led by a European halter in the strong hand of a German master dairyman. It is not surprising, then, that they looked especially mild-tempered.

How different the local breed! They are only well fed in the spring after a lush and rainy winter season which, according to rotation, produces fresh Alexandrine clover every day in the fields. But over the summer they are reduced to skin and bone, fed only on rice straw, water and any greenery growing by the tracks at the side of ditches and canals of the irrigation system, and on harvest residues and weeds that sprout between harvest and the next sowing. Moreover they have to compete with donkeys, sheep and camels. With an average of 2 ha of irrigated cropping land, the peasant family's own needs mean that fodder cropping in summer is out of the question.

The result of this is that the animals have to be taken out to graze every day in the summer. They are not led by men, however, but by little children who are under school age and are still too young to work in the fields. I myself have often seen 6 – 8 year old girls walking with up to three cows from the village to the fields. And if a cow played up, a quick jerk on the rope was enough to bring it to heel.

9. Confirmation of the "wrong" solution

All these various points combine to create an overall impression of the poster; they influence and endorse each other. It can be no surprise to learn then that the majority of farmers summed up their reactions with: "How are we supposed to tie a halter to cattle? As in the picture on the right, of course! Even the Germans think this method is best for their Friesians."

Their conclusions give the story a kind of happy ending and perhaps we should be grateful for this outcome. It saved the numerous, respectable institutions named in the small print from losing face, at least in the eyes of the less educated small farmers.

But if there is still any doubt about how to put a rope on a cow in Egypt, a visit to Sakkara, behind the pyramids of Gizeh near Cairo, is recommended. There you can see the tombs with their wonderful friezes in low relief showing among other things rural life in Egypt 4 000 years ago. They show, in such natural detail that we can imitate it today, how halters were put on cows long ago. And for good reason!

Postscript

Since there was no introduction, a postscript would appear appropriate.

1. Correction

For maximum impact I have deliberately ignored other views on the poster. I have also been somewhat satirical and humorous – a stylistic approach intended to contrast with the sad, almost hopeless core of the message. The reader of this serious handbook and the creators of the poster perhaps deserve an apology and certainly have a right to be treated more objectively.

Everything I have described was the product of empirical investigation, but it was far from representative of all the farmers interviewed. The overall level of comprehension of the intended message established by interview is shown in → Table 1.

Table 1:

Farmers' comprehension of the "cow poster", arranged according to education

	Illiterate	Literate without school leaving certificate	with school leaving certificate	Total
Message fully understood	10 15.6%	19 52.8%	5 71.4%	34 31.8%
Message partly understood	13 20.3%	7 19.4%	2 26.8%	22 2.6%
Message not understood	41 64.1%	10 27.8%	– –	51 47.7%
Total	64 100.0%	36 100.0%	7 100.0%	107 100.000

2. Source

I certainly had considerable doubts about the effectiveness of the poster, but I am grateful to ABDEL HAMID IBRAHIM AHMED, an agricultural engineer from the Agricultural Extension Research Center, Cairo, for providing me with detailed information and the above table.

While I was present in the project "Development Support Communication" in Mariut near Alexandria, Abdel Hamid carried out surveys to evaluate project activities with small farmers. One of the questions in his survey for his Master's thesis concerned the cow poster. When he happened to mention his results, I was immediately interested. When the poster evaluation was presented to the project workers for the first time, its impact was striking.

3. Origins of the poster

On the one hand there are some typical mistakes in the poster that will unfortunately be repeated again and again in development cooperation. On the other hand, this poster was a one-off item and is to be understood as such.

Both the El-Nahda project and the neighbouring Mariut media project were in the process of being built up or restructured. The personnel were new to the location. Both projects were under pressure to get things moving. Above all, project cooperation had to show immediate results. The idea of the expert on animal husbandry for this poster was welcomed and seemed perfectly reasonable. There was no time for tests. It was imperative to print something. But in the end they have learned their lesson from this failure.

I have not used this incident to gloat over the misfortunes of others or to ridicule the man who created the poster; I simply want others to learn from the mistakes that were made.

4. Some ideas on how to exploit this case

Presenting this poster has proved its worth as a component in training and further training. It is advisable to put the poster presentation at the beginning of general theoretical explanations and discussions. It is then possible, depending on the aims, the situation and the participants, to probe more deeply into the problems of intercultural communication (→ Chapter III.10, → III.11, → C 2), human perception (→ Chapter III.5), stages in systematic problem solving (→ Chapter III.7), basic questions of the function of agricultural extension (→ Chapter I.2) or the principles of creating illustrative material (→ C 3).

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Compiled by:

Volker HOFFMANN

Traditional level of knowledge in target groups and communicating new agricultural information

People in extension organisations often have a crudely simplified or wrong idea or indeed no idea at all of the knowledge, abilities and general level of education of the target groups in a different culture. It is usually assumed that they will react to statements, information and illustrations in the same way as the originators of these methods of communication. As long as people are engaged in discussion, they can clear up uncertainties, but this kind of dialogue is impossible in larger-scale extension programmes where pre-prepared materials have to be used. Therefore, we must start analysing the possibilities for communication in the feasibility study.

The target groups' knowledge of production methods is born of long practice. In this respect they are far superior to advisers unfamiliar with the region and their foreign colleagues. Exceptions to this rule might be, for example, new settlers with no agricultural background. The target groups' frame of reference is practical experience; new information is measured by this and not by the frame of reference of the foreign experts or advisers. If we want to devise an effective communication strategy, we have to be familiar with the existing frame of reference for knowledge and skills into which new information is to be fitted.

Especially in the small farmer sector, we find ourselves dealing with people who have highly developed practical skills but usually no understanding of abstract concepts (reading, mathematical operations, use of symbols, etc.) simply because they have never learned them. Nevertheless extension works with a multitude of very abstract concepts and symbols that have never been used in the target group and its different culture. But people find it impossible to decipher unfamiliar symbols (for example, the fact that putting a cross through something means it is wrong and not that it is emphasising a particularly important message). In the same way, chemical formulas are meaningless to the non-chemist.

Foreign written or spoken language, foreign symbols, etc., obviously need to be interpreted and explained, even to people who have attended school for several years.

By way of illustration, a few examples in → Table 1 show first of all what hidden concepts are concealed in the content of current extension.

Table 1:

Content of agricultural extension, hidden abstract concepts and operations	
Content of extension	Planting out, ploughing, fertilising, spraying, irrigating, harvesting, storage, etc.
Hidden abstract concepts	Area, speed, depth, time, angle, money, relations, fractions, weight, volume, pressure, flow, yield per unit of area, percentages, prices, costs (monetary according to man-hours), optimisation models, etc.
Relations that must be established	Area = length x width Plant interval = length ÷ number Calculation of time spent on ploughing = distance ÷ speed Quantity of mineral fertiliser = area x quantity ÷ unit of area
Hidden mathematical operations and knowledge of mathematics	Enumeration (concept of numbers), reading scales, basic arithmetic, timing, weighing, establishing quantities and volumes, calculating percentages, etc.

The people in the target group have different concepts. Underlying their work is knowledge to which the advisers often have no access. The target group's know-how is usually organised along different lines. Production and marketing are organised according to their own rules that are not based on the same concepts – but they nevertheless function very well. In some regions there are, for example, no rectangular plots and no concept of area at all. Instead, people only have an idea of length, e. g. 20 paces wide by the path and as far back as you can work. And yet they have a rough idea of the size of plots (measured in yield, the seed required, etc.). This kind of knowledge expresses reality as perceived by these people. It may not be "exact" but it is applied in practice and determines the actions they take. With school education and social change, European concepts and measuring techniques will increasingly penetrate a society. But the old dimensions and concepts will endure for a long time, just as in Europe. For this reason they are the meeting point with extension. → Table 2 gives examples of how we can sometimes make use of them in extension.

In principle, every project develops its own operational methods and forms of communication appropriate to the culture and the problems it encounters. However, it is essential to develop methods before programming extension work, before the adviser sets out and tries, because he has no alternative, to communicate what he has learned from books – which his target group will certainly not be able to follow.

Table 2:

Suggested ways of overcoming difficulties of comprehension when recommending extension measures	
Plant intervals:	Use a planting stick with an appropriate forked branch for the distance between plants.
Spraying:	Give the proportions to be mixed in terms of familiar and available containers, e.g. put 1 Coke can full of powder in the water tank of the 101 backspray, or the original can of insecticide into the 1-litre container of the ULV spray, which is then filled with water, etc. Practise a walking pace and watch out for drifting in the wind. Test: what area was the spray intended to cover, what area was actually covered? Better to adjust by changing the walking speed than the proportions of the mixture. Practise protective measures: face mask, rubber boots, cleaning the equipment, removing empty containers and any liquid that is left over, washing to remove spray.
Damage threshold:	Use a counting board with holes and coloured bands, for example. Walk 100 paces down a row of plants. Check carefully for pests. For each pest a peg is put into a hole in the counting board. If the pegs do not reach the middle coloured band, do not spray; if the pegs reach the middle band, watch for a few days to see if pest infestation develops, or ask adviser; if the pegs reach the last coloured band, spray within 2 days at the latest.
Spraying date:	Instead of using a leaflet, poster, etc., the insecticide bag is nailed at the appropriate time to the shade tree, hung up in the coffee house, displayed in the cooperative or at other meeting points (and taken down again!)
Fertilising:	Instead of recommending fertiliser dosages per unit of area, we can calculate the amounts by the sack or by volume in relation to the amount of seed used or the average yield of each field, for example the heaps at the threshing point. We have to know the type of fertiliser and its nutrient content and take this into account in our recommendation.

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Compiled by:

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Effectiveness and design of pictorial representation

1. Introduction

"A picture says more than a thousand words" – therein lies the problem. A picture can give rise to many more misunderstandings than a discussion.

We can deduce from the rules of perception (→ Chapter III.5) that the act of deciphering a picture is accompanied by several processes that run parallel to each other. Thus a picture only really takes shape in the eye of the beholder.

- The observer selects, i. e. he only sees parts of the total picture.
- The observer projects, i. e. he supplements the picture, enlarges its scope and completes it, seeing what he is looking for, what his experience and usual way of looking at pictures tell him to see.
- The observer orders and differentiates, i. e. he links similar things and he regards familiar things as more important.
- The observer interprets, i. e. he gives meaning, shape and significance to what he sees in the picture.

People in a culture that "reads" pictures have developed an ability to decipher messages, but in other cultures "reading" pictures creates problems. People may be "visually illiterate".

Thus people have to learn to decipher pictures, to "read" them just as they learn to read the printed or written word. It is a problem that is often overlooked. People who are unable to read pictures are confronted not only by photographs and graphic illustrations of "real" things but also with such symbols as arrows, an illustration crossed out or the expectation that they will read a poster "logically" from top left to bottom right.

But unless people have had a good deal of training, they may well read pictures from quite different standpoints: their attention is attracted first by colours and anything that appears strange, and it might only occur to them later that the picture is trying to "say" something. Also they may assume that the pictures are there to be looked at for pleasure, not so that they can learn something or decipher "messages".

The message the communicator (e. g. the adviser) intends to send and the message actually received (e. g. by the farmer) may be worlds apart. We have to bridge this gap if communication by means of pictures is to be effective.

Is it really worth the effort? The answer is a categorical "yes". Pictures capture the attention, people do look at them, they stimulate discussion, they help to call to mind situations and to organise thoughts and ideas. People are definitely interested in pictures.

But this does not alter the fact that we must:

(1) try out a picture to see what effects it has;

(2) (perhaps) help the targeted individuals to learn how to read pictures.

When they do so, it is helpful to bear the following principle in mind: the actual meaning does not lie in what the artist tried to express but in how most people interpret the picture and in the messages they deduce from it.

We now explain and illustrate these general assertions in more detail. We describe how pictorial illustrations are perceived in various cultures and in each case conclusions can be drawn about how best to create pictures.

2. Analysis of actual pictures – important conclusions and recommendations

There have been many surveys of how pictures are interpreted in rural societies in developing countries and they are often compared with industrialised countries. These investigations have revealed some typical problems (even though the explanatory models may vary). Once the problems have been identified, we are in a position to create better picture materials for use in extension and adult education. In the following we illustrate and interpret some typical "hurdles" and come to some conclusions about how to create and utilise pictures.

2.1 Subject and background

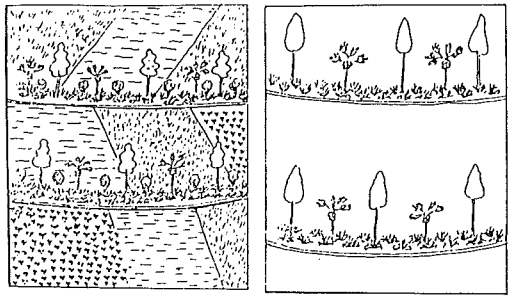
As car drivers, we would not cope with modern traffic conditions if we were not able to select from a multitude of optical impressions the most important ones at any given moment. Because we concentrate our attention on the traffic lights, the distance between us and other vehicles in front or in the rear mirror, etc., we do not register the shop window displays, the clothes of passers-by or illuminated advertisements.

But if we are moving through the tropical rainforest, "we can't see the wood for the trees", whereas a local guide who knows the forest can select important sense impressions from the vast array that surrounds him: the monkeys in the treetops, the

tracks on the forest floor that we can hardly even see, etc. This means that what we actually perceive as the subject or background depends on the geographical and socio-economic environment in which we have developed our skill of perception. We learn in childhood to reduce what we have observed to basic structural features that enable us to recognise things again.

Thus the way we perceive and differentiate subjects and background depends on how we were brought up and how we live. The way we look at pictures is affected by the same factors, plus our experience of "reading" pictures.

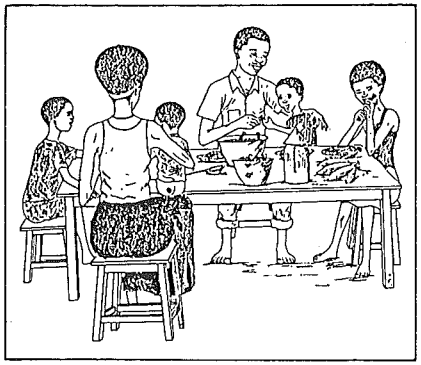
People who are not skilled in picture reading, i. e. the majority of people in the rural regions in Africa read pictures detail by detail and try to interpret every single element. The interpretation of the total picture is therefore largely dependent on the interpretation of the individual parts. In contrast, when the skilled reader of pictures first looks at a poster, for example, he takes in the main message and then looks at the details to check his interpretation of the overall picture.



Picture 1: Erosion control

The picture on the left showed fields with various crops and erosion control strips, but people saw just a few trees and fields full of birds and snakes. Fear of bird damage deterred farmers from laying out strips like these. The picture on the right was interpreted correctly.
(BIMENYIMANA/GÖRGEN).

Striking details can easily make the unskilled reader overlook the main message. Several surveys have shown that a lot of detail causes confusion and hinders perception (e. g. FUGLESANG, GRAAP, BIMENYIMANA/GÖRGEN). Details are not only studied closely, but are also compared with the observer's own experience and judged by this standard. Someone wearing different clothes, with a different hairstyle from people in the locality, is not "one of us" and his problem or his solution to problems is therefore irrelevant. These are facts whose importance for educational and extension work cannot be overstated.



Picture 2: Family meal

This picture was used in a nutrition aid course as an example of a family eating a meal. The farmers easily recognised the situation, "family round the table for a meal", but they also concluded that this must be the family of a functionary, since they themselves did not have their meals sitting on chairs round a table (tested by the Service Animation et Formation, Kibuye, Rwanda).

This communication problem did not occur to the local artist, who was accustomed to sitting at table to have his meals.

In our culture we readily identify with people from other socio-cultural backgrounds and this is exploited by psychologists in advertising (e.g. smokers are promised "freedom and adventure" on horseback in the prairie). But in the rural regions of developing countries people seem to be less willing to identify with others (see the studies by A. GOSH of how rural women in India interpret films).

Conclusions:

Pictures should only contain the details necessary to ensure that the message will be understood. The background should, if possible, be left out altogether. The details must be accurate, i.e. the illustration must be a true reflection of life regarding clothes, hairstyles, the implements used, etc. This means that specific adaptation to regional, sometimes very local circumstances is vitally important.

2.2 Perspective

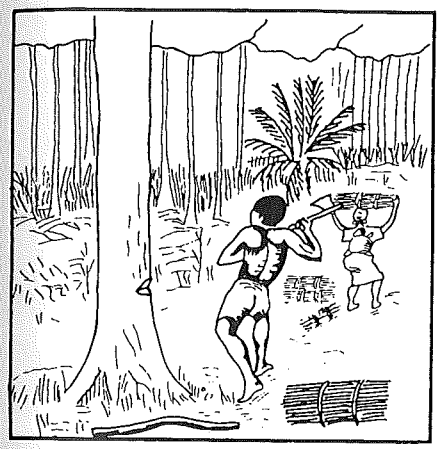
A basic problem in the way we perceive pictures is the loss of a spatial dimension when three-dimensional reality is transformed into a two-dimensional illustration.

This spatial dimension is expressed by means of perspective, based on the optical principle that parallel lines meet in the distance.

Perspective means, among other things, that the relative size of illustrated objects depends on their distance from the observer, and the fixed point of the observer results in objects or parts of objects in the background being concealed by those in the foreground (superimposed image). Illustrations that use perspective are by no means universal, and even in Europe it was only developed in the Italian Renaissance. Experience of using pictures in rural Africa shows that illustrations that incorporate perspective lead to some typical misunderstandings:

Relative size

An object that is smaller because it is in the background is wrongly interpreted.



Picture 3: Fetching wood

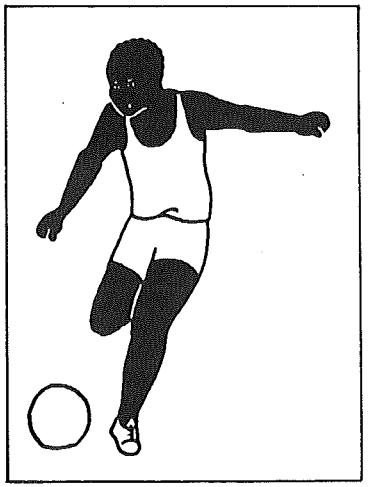
This woman is so small because she is inferior to the man. The man is knocking the bundle of wood off the woman's head with his axe (Federation of Village Cooperatives, BOUAKE).

Superimposing

When objects are partly concealed, people misunderstand what is meant, either because the visible part is interpreted as the whole object or because the object in the foreground and the object behind it are seen as joined together.

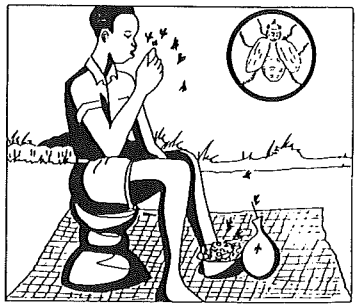
Picture 4: Transporting beams
(South African poster on safety at work)

30% of the South African workers questioned took the person in the background to be a boy and not an adult.
(WINTER in RAMM, p. 118).



Picture 5: The football player

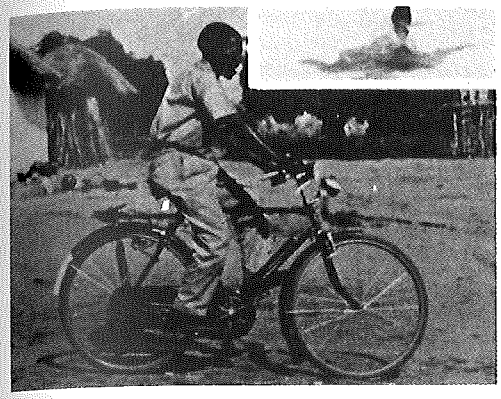
This picture makes people laugh. How can he play football with only one leg? (GRAAP).



Picture 6: Flies on food

(detail from a poster warning against cholera)

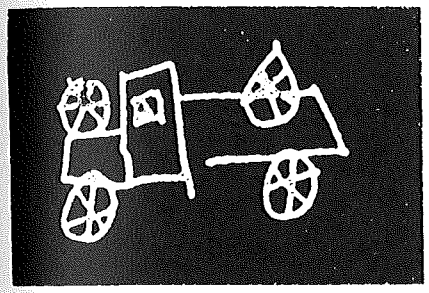
The bowl of food in front of the man's foot is seen as a part of his foot. What's wrong with the poor man's foot? (tested by Service Animation et Formation, Kibuye, Rwanda).



Picture 7: The cyclist

Superimposed images are not only difficult to interpret in drawings; they create problems in photographs too, an example being the cyclist who caused amazement by riding his bicycle with one leg. The fact that it was an action photograph was not appreciated (see below "Movement")
(FUGLESANG).

It makes just as much sense to draw something as we know it rather than as we see it – like the African schoolboy's drawing of a lorry showing all four wheels because he knows a lorry has four wheels (FUGLESANG).

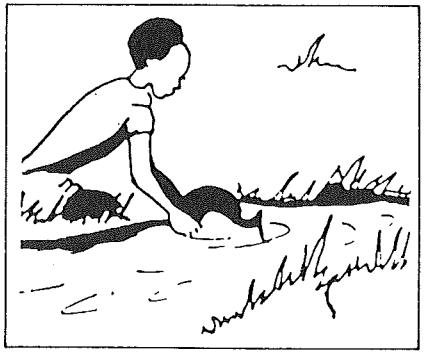


Picture 8: The lorry

In Cubism too the artist shows the different sides of an object at the same time because he knows they exist.

Shadow

In illustrations with perspective, the shadows cast by objects and people are also significant. We know from using pictures in Africa that they can hamper perception, because they break up the structural features that help people to understand a picture. Thus they try to interpret the shadow as an object in itself.



Picture 9: Fetching water

(detail from a poster warning against cholera)

The jug for the water cannot be clearly recognised in the picture. A bird? A duck? Or is it an object I am not familiar with? (tested by Service Animation et Formation, Kibuye, Rwanda)

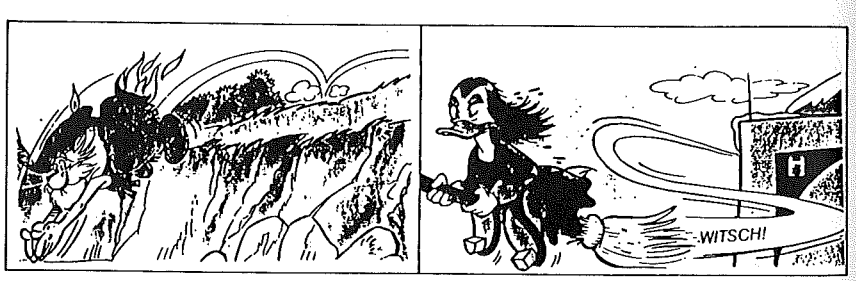
Conclusions

Illustrations that use linear perspective are more difficult to understand. Overlapping objects and objects shown bigger or smaller because of perspective should be avoided. The relative dimensions of figures and objects should be the same as in real life. Shadows cast by people or objects interfere with the interpretation of pictures because they break up structural features that are essential for recognition.

2.3 Movement

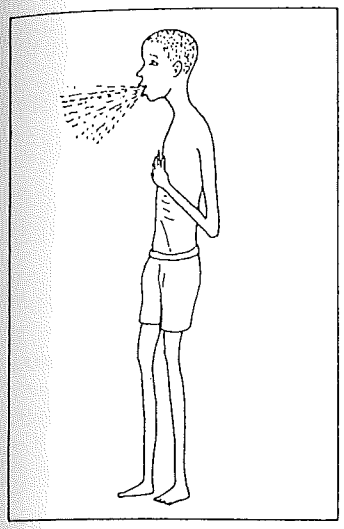
Showing movement in static pictures is difficult and uses certain conventional devices that are widely understood.

For example, tracks running along a path indicate that something is moving forwards.



Picture 10: Comics tell their stories through pictures and use a large number of devices to indicate motion (lines following a moving figure or object, stars indicating impact, clouds of smoke or dust to show speed).

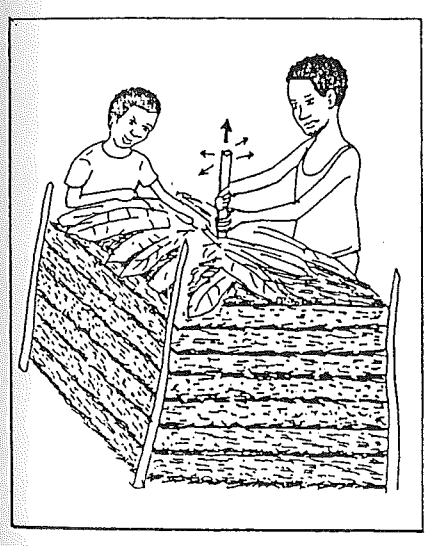
Similarly, we understand lines that make the invisible visible, for example fumes, the movement of air, etc. Anyone not familiar with this convention tries to interpret them in the same way as visible objects.



Picture 11: Coughing

That person is vomiting or swallowing gnats.
(BIMENYIMANA, GÖRGEN).

In technical instructions, arrows are used to show the direction of movement. Experience of using this convention in developing countries has clearly shown that,



Picture 12: Compost heap

None of the people questioned could understand the meaning of the arrows that show how the central rod in the compost should be moved.
(BIMENYIMANA/GÖRGEN).

where it is unknown, people try to interpret the arrows differently or they simply ignore them. Nobody realised that the star shaped lines in the safety at work poster (→ Picture 4) were supposed to illustrate movement and impact (WINTER in RAMM p. 119).

Another common way of illustrating movement is the use of picture sequences, but this method also has many pitfalls.

Picture sequences

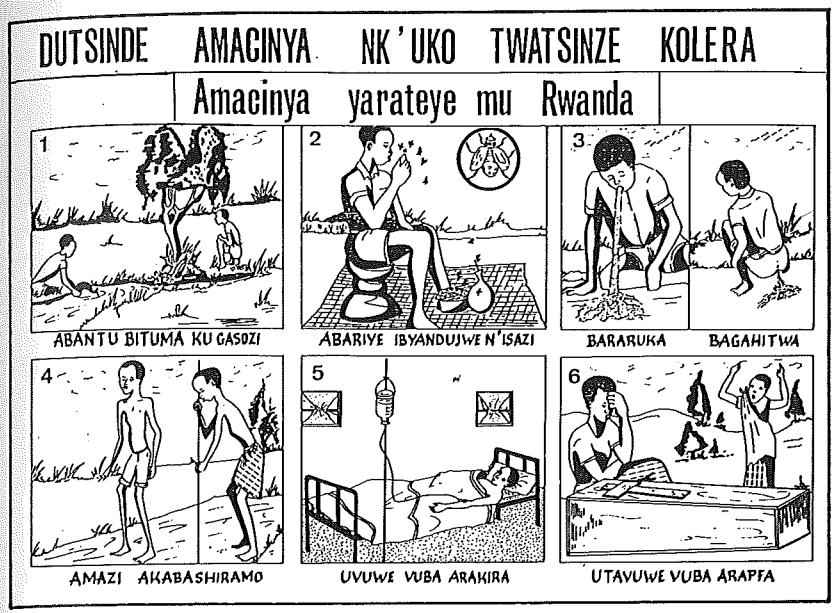
We know from using series of pictures that people do not automatically read them in the right order, from upper left to bottom right (in the same way as most European written languages). It is also by no means obvious that characters in a story told in pictures are doing jobs one after the other. It is often assumed that quite different people are doing or experiencing different things at the same time. The object of illustrated stories is not just to show a sequence over time but to underline a chain of cause and effect (if..., then...) as in the following example from Rwanda: (→ Picture 13)

The aim of this poster, that was shown all over the country by the Rwandan Ministry of Health in 1983, was to inform people about the dangers of cholera infection. The story told by posters was as follows:

1. One man answers a call of nature in the open, while another man is scooping water out of the nearby river.
2. It is well known that flies settle on faeces and now they settle on food. The polluted drinking water is in the calabash.
3. Eating contaminated food and drinking dirty water leads to diarrhoea and vomiting.
4. Diarrhoea and vomiting cause loss of fluid and the infected person has to seek treatment.
5. In hospital the lost fluid is replaced by infusions.
6. Unless he is treated, the patient dies.

But the way people saw and interpreted this series of events was in fact quite different.

Picture 13: Cholera poster



1. Someone is squatting under a bush with his intestines hanging out.
2. The man's foot is in a very bad state.
3. One man's intestines are hanging out; the other man is chewing a rope or a stick.
4. A blind man is going for a walk with his guide.
5. This is a man in hospital.
6. A woman with an eye complaint is sitting by her table. Her neighbour is waving to her.

The final message: "So you see now what can happen to you too."
(But the people responding to the pictures were as little able to read and understand the message of the text as German readers).

This complicated series of pictures involves temporal and causal relations that are difficult for the uninitiated to grasp. It is further complicated by the style (figures

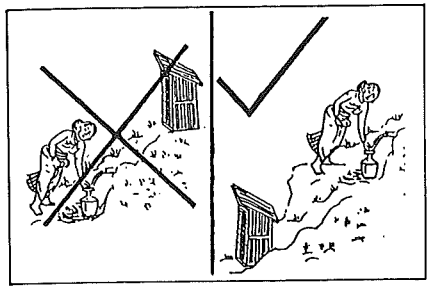
casting shadows and superimposed images) and the use of unknown symbols and unfamiliar objects (vomiting, coffin with crucifix). Nevertheless this is by no means an extreme example.

Conclusions:

A series of pictures is usually only worthwhile in the context of group discussions, because the conditions of time and space and the causal relations have to be explained and discussed. The poster box or felt picture series (Boite à image, flip-over, flanellographe) are methods of illustration adapted to these needs. Using this equipment the next picture, the next stage in a story, can be presented as the discussion progresses.

2.5 Symbols borrowed from the written language

Crossing out is often just as unfamiliar as "ticking"; people seek to explain the lines as objects (beams, ropes, etc.).



Picture 14:
Fetch water above the latrine

The drawing clearly shows a woman fetching water. But why attention was drawn to this obvious fact by means of a cross was not understood by the majority of those who saw the picture.
(FUSSELL/HAALAND)

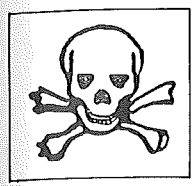
A circle drawn round something to focus attention is also unknown; the circle is overlooked altogether or interpreted as a circular object (see → Pictures 6 and 13). The circle round the enlarged fly was thought to be a window (since traditionally huts have round window apertures) with a very large mosquito.

Like the other signs, arrows are also associated with objects of similar shape or size (beams, ropes, etc.) or they are overlooked (→ Picture 12).

Symbols with historical roots, social conventions

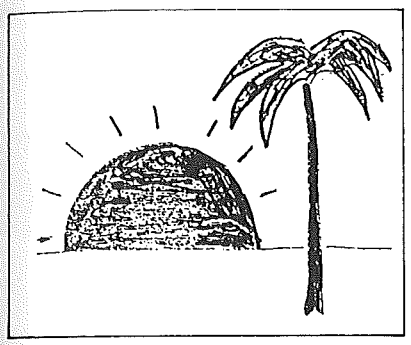
The symbols that signify abstract concepts like danger or illustrate natural phenomena like the sun, storms or fire are in such common use that we are taught

them as children. Thus we consider these symbols to be so simple and obvious that we are often unaware that they are characteristic of our culture only, and we try to use them as basic illustrations in other cultural settings. Surveys have shown that they are by no means "international".



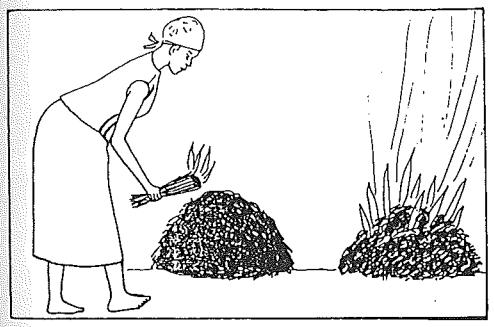
Picture 15: Skull and cross-bones as the symbol of danger

In Nepal 410 farmers were asked what this symbol means, and only 4 knew that it referred to danger
(FUSSELL/HAALAND p. 34).



Picture 16: The sun

In Egypt the setting sun was interpreted as half a water melon or a flower.
(ROSSER p. 10)



Picture 17: Burning weeds

The (reddish-yellow) flames were taken to be flowers; a woman picking flowers.
(BIMENYIMANA/GÖRGEN)

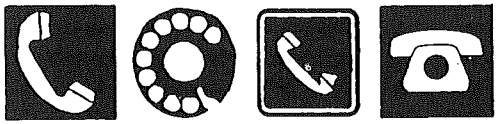
Conclusions:

Take care with symbols. They are only understood as a "reflection" of reality because we have been brought up to recognise them. In other cultures different

symbols are commonly used and we should take note of and use them. Materials for self-instruction, however, should not contain symbols if they can be avoided.

2.6 "Simple" and "realistic" as culture-dependent descriptions

We have pointed out obstacles to understanding pictures. But can we remove the barriers if we use simple pictures like those in children's picture books or reduce them to essentials as in line drawings or pictograms (examples being international traffic signs)?



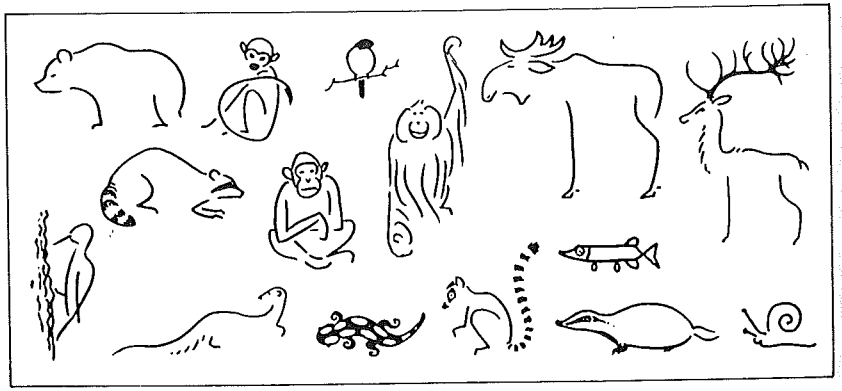
Picture 18: Various telephone pictograms

(AICHER, KRAMPEN p. 126).

Picture 19: Three sports in pictograms

(Triple jump, long jump and high jump.) Would you have recognised them?

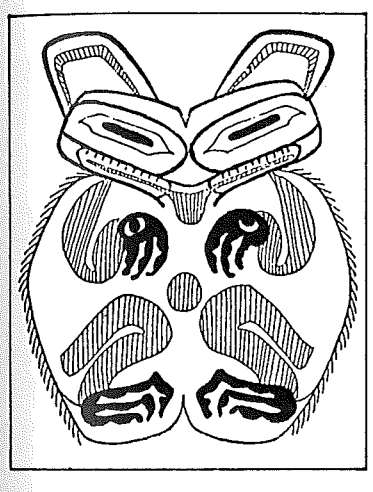
Picture 20: Animal sketches (reduced to their unmistakable essentials) (STEINER)



Or should we only work with photographs, slides and films, because they are realistic and show things as they exist in nature?

The literature indicates the following conclusions:

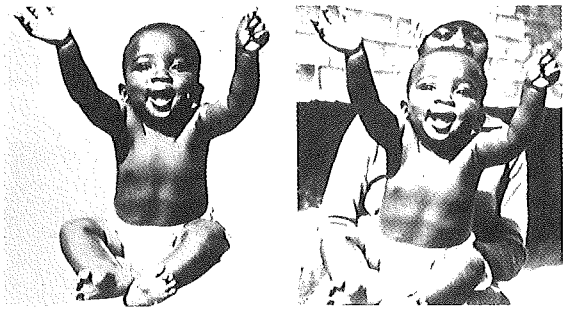
Good pictograms and sketches emphasise a few characteristic features that typify the appearance of the subject and distinguish it from cognate or similar subjects. This can simplify and shorten the process of recognition, provided the drawing captures the permanent key features and strikes a chord in the memory of the people looking at the picture. This is the real problem in fact: line drawing and pictograms are not "simple". Reduction to a few basic structural features has to take into account the society where the drawings are to be shown. What we regard as essential features are obviously not those that are recognised by rural societies in developing countries. Both the study of FUSSELL in Nepal and the surveys of COOK in Papua New Guinea have shown that line drawings of figures and silhouettes (as used in pictograms) are least recognisable. Different cultures regard different features as characteristic. We hope we have demonstrated this point clearly with → picture 21. It shows that the communication value of ostensibly convincing sketches of animals (→ picture 20) is in fact relative and that they cannot be used indiscriminately in all cultures.



Picture 21: A bear

Drawn by a Tsimshian Indian.
(BOAS in MANGAN p. 248)

We know from studies of the comprehension of photographs and films that perception, as in the case of drawings, is affected by the problem of subject and background, perspective and excessive detail, causal relations in the sequence of pictures, etc. Thus the relationship between subject and background is the factor that decides whether the picture is understood, not the faithful reproduction of reality. In particular, the background in photographs is full of detail and, unless it is blocked out, it is difficult to see the point of the picture. This is illustrated by, for example, → picture 22. Drawings are a better method of expressing a specific message than photographs.



Picture 22: Baby

A photograph with and without background. (FUGLESANG P. 95)

Films are complicated and rich in detail but they are also made incomprehensible by modern techniques of shooting and editing. Panning shots and zoom shots are disorientating for anyone unfamiliar with these filming techniques. It is not obvious that it is the same car that drives out of the picture on the right and reappears on the left. People who are not used to watching films find it impossible to interpret flashbacks. It helps if we recall the history of the film: in the early days scenes were filmed with a static camera in the same way as they are seen by a static observer.

It is important to emphasise once again that we cannot assume a universally applicable principle of simplicity. "Simple", "easily understood" have to be redefined in each and every cultural context.

From traditional methods of illustration in cultures that use pictures, we know what readily comprehensible material looks like. We think of advertisements at hairdressers, photographers, in bars and on lorries.

Conclusions:

Simplicity and "true to nature" are not criteria that apply in all cultures. Line drawings and pictograms are not simple. In this context, simple means pictorial representation that can be readily understood. Photographs do not satisfy this criterion. And finally, films are often extremely complicated because they are full of detail and can manipulate time and space in a way that is often beyond comprehension in certain cultures. Producing comprehensible, regionally adapted films is a costly undertaking.

Further information on this topic can be found in → Chapter III.5, → Chapter III.11, → Chapter V.5 and in → C 1, → C 2 and → F 2.

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C 3

Compiled by:

Regina GÖRGEN, Volker HOFFMANN, Rolf SÜLZER

C 4

Illusions of communication between projects and their target groups: a cautionary example in Nigeria

The German development sociologist Peter Ay produced a description and analysis of social processes during the planning and implementation of a development project in West Nigeria. He carried out a random sample survey of the cropping system of 240 farmers in 6 villages. During a stay of roughly three years in the village of Badeku, between 1974 and 1978, he concentrated on collecting information from farmers, project planners and personnel on the dynamics of running a project. His sources of information were participatory observation, informal interviews and group interviews with selected informants.

The Badeku Project of the University of Ibadan was established as a pilot project to test extension systems and to accelerate the transfer of technology. Thus it is comparable with a whole series of projects set up to modernise agricultural production in developing countries. However, there is relatively little information on how these projects are regarded by the farmers themselves. The reason for this paucity of information may be that the survey methods are time-consuming and presuppose an understanding of the local language. They are therefore obstacles, since it is virtually impossible to repeat and check such surveys in the same project.

The following excerpt is intended to be a cautionary tale and to stimulate discussion of the topic.

1. Project targets

1. To create a testbed for innovations. The idea was that the villages should be used to test experiments on the speed and permanence of technological change in agriculture, health and nutrition. The change and the methods devised to achieve it should be capable of being repeated elsewhere in the country.

2. To set up a kind of laboratory situation in which students and staff of the faculty and the university study and observe rural development.

3. To create a link between the university's researchers, other organisations and the rural population in whose interests they are working. In this way they were to be systematically brought into closer contact with the villagers so that they could understand their problems and reactions and therefore set up research that was more relevant and directly applicable to problems of rural development.

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4. To create a basis for local initiatives, self-sufficiency, self-confidence and participation in the planning and implementation of rural development programmes.

2. Organisation of the project and its main activities

At the top of the project's hierarchy are scientists; there are links with other organisations, and the Rockefeller Foundation provided the finance. In the formal organisational structure there are no representatives of the farmers or of the rural population.

Agricultural innovations are directed principally at improving maize cropping by using different varieties, mineral fertiliser and keeping the crop in special storage facilities. There are also experimental programmes for sweet potato and legumes and chemical weed control. This was supplemented after 1976 by a poultry and small livestock programme.

As well as agricultural activities, there is also a health programme and women's programme incorporating domestic science.

3. Phase of project development

3.1 Initial contacts, mutual expectations and their significance for the project.

Usually very detailed reasons are given for selecting a particular village in preference to others for a survey. But if we look more closely, it soon becomes clear that chance plays an important part in this decision. It may depend, for example, on who provides information and who were the first contacts sought by the project.

There are, however, typical conditions when making initial contacts and they certainly apply to other development projects as well.

The way in which the university personnel see their role determines the initial stage of the project. They assume that the project will benefit the farmers. A closer examination shows that the first contacts on both sides are not radically different. The project personnel turn first to the advisers who have already worked with farmers, and the farmers turn to their "experts" to get information about possible courses of action.

Whereas the farmers, if no information is forthcoming, rely on their experience of previous contact with institutions, the project personnel, if they have no data, keep to the theoretical models of farmers and their development.

The farmers' experience of official institutions may go back for decades and may not be simply the product of recent years. Whereas the negative effect of institutions (for example, taxes collected in cash) tended to be felt by everybody, there were always some farmers who benefited from their positive effects. But programmes like renewing cacao plantations, the extension service, cooperatives and individual development projects always applied to a fraction of the farmer population only, because of the capacity available, even if it was officially claimed that far more farmers had been reached. We have to remember that farmers are independent producers who make decisions in keeping with their individual production conditions, and positive or negative intervention by the administration is usually felt to be aimed at individuals.

But the representatives of the project assume that the farmers are a homogeneous group characterised by, for example, backward production methods, ignorance, poverty and the need for help. Even if differences are perceived, in the eyes of the project planners they are differences between poor and very poor, backward and very backward, etc. They also regard it as axiomatic that the project will help farmers to escape from their desperate plight – which gives the project personnel a sense of power to shape and influence their development.

The farmers also see the power wielded by the project and how it can affect them. But in their experience this potential influence is diffuse and may well be more to their disadvantage than their benefit. This is also true of those institutions that – officially – were founded and administered "in the interest of the farmers".

Whereas cooperatives and marketing organisations have been founded on behalf of the farmers, and failure could be explained by the decisions and the administration being in the hands of outsiders, even institutions that the farmers have organised themselves have not become established. These organisations have been exploited by other groups, especially political parties, for their own ends.

When the new university project was launched, the attitude of the majority of farmers was therefore to wait and see if the anticipated advantages would really materialise. In their view it was quite likely that the university would pursue its own interests but that they would benefit indirectly (a better road, water, electricity and possibly a job). The fact that the university was interested in coming to Badeku was confirmed again and again for the farmers by the visits and interviews, the maize demonstration fields and the work of university people in the village. But the farmers showed no enthusiasm for information from the university on how they could improve their cropping system and become "successful farmers". They were mainly interested in the fact that the university would soon create permanent jobs in the village.

Even six years after the start of the project, these hopes were still alive. When I moved into the village, many farmers regarded my arrival as the beginning of this institu-

tionalised relation between university and village, and they expected the building of a house and laboratory to start straightaway.

It can be said that project planners and workers have a diffuse sense of power. It is diffuse because they do not know with any degree of precision how things will turn out in practice. At the outset they even tend to dismiss the misgivings of the farmers and assert their own ideas, because they see themselves acting in the (true) interest of the farmers. Farmers with different views from their own are felt to be an inconvenience, and they are quickly dismissed as backward. Planners and personnel see the project only from their own point of view and act in the belief that it will automatically benefit the farmers.

This is the reason why project personnel and planners are largely ignorant of the motives and expectations of the farmers – we can even go as far as saying they will always remain ignorant despite frequent contact with farmers. Because they are convinced they are acting in the best interest of the farmers, they are tempted, in the typically uncertain early phase, to make promises. They do not, however, consider the implications; they are confident at the time that these promises will be fulfilled in the future.

The reason why the views of the farmers are not taken into account is the assumption that their views will in any case change and, of course, conform with the project. Thus official reports on contact with farmers often imply that farmers were in total agreement with the decisions of the project.

It was assumed to be obvious that the farmers wanted to expand the cultivation of maize, but in fact this was an invention, because what the farmers really wanted was credit. In their experience maize cropping was simply the precondition for receiving credit. The reports even give the impression that the farmers would not have been in a position to act in their own interest without the project.

Since the project's stated objective is the success of the farmers, their success means the project has been successful and praise for the farmers is basically self-congratulation confirming the importance of the project and its personnel.

The project takes the credit for all developments in the area and claims that they are significant for the development of Nigeria, for which the project representatives have the required expertise. It is additionally maintained that the maize project in Badeku is helping to prevent migration from rural regions to the towns, and that the production changes were, moreover, achieved without any noteworthy distortion in the rural economy. Thus what is basically a revolution is being offered without the usual side-effects of revolution.

This line of argument even gives the project the right not to bother with deviant views of farmers, because it is acting not only in the best interest of the farmers but

of the whole nation. The project presents itself as a way of converting these higher interests into the subjective interest of the farmers.

This interpretation of project management seems to be confirmed beyond doubt by events in the second year of the project: the farmers applied on their own initiative to take part in the project, more and more new groups were formed, group farms were laid out to crop maize using the new methods, consumption of mineral fertiliser rose, etc. How far the official view is from that of the farmers is shown, for example, by the fact that some farmers had in the meantime only been fulfilling the project's conditions because they wanted to avoid possible sanctions.

Whereas the Badeku farmers thought it was quite "normal" for selected farmers to be involved in the university's maize programme, the project assumed that the programme would have a demonstration effect on all farmers. But in the eyes of the inhabitants of Badeku, the two farmers with the experimental fields were employees of the university rather than local farmers.

This is in fact what the farmers told project workers at the beginning. Individual farmers told them that their own system was good and that maize could not be grown in the way proposed by the project. But the project personnel did not pursue this line of argument: instead they tried even harder to prove that the usual cropping method in the village was inferior, backward and no longer viable. It became clear in the minds of the villagers involved in these exchanges that the university's workers did not want to understand why the farmers used their particular cultivation method. They reacted by praising the new cropping method and accepting the arguments of the project workers without demur. Their justification for not actually applying the new method was that the farm would have to be extended and wage labour employed. The project workers did not realise that this argument was no different than the usual argument, i. e. the farmers did not want to abandon their traditional methods in favour of a new technique.

The project workers assumed that the farmers had now learned how effective the new method was. But all they had in fact learned was what to say to curtail the constant interference by the project's personnel. When large numbers of farmers actually tried out the new varieties of maize, because they were supposed to produce a high yield, they did so within their own traditional farming system. For the project this partial adoption was a "mistake" and evidence that the farmers had clearly not understood the new system. Thus they tried to intervene yet again to tell the farmers to adopt the new system in its entirety, since this was the only way to achieve success.

The project workers again felt completely justified in their demands, because after all the farmers had been convinced by the higher yields of the superiority of the modern method. All they needed to do was to search for the causes of the problems and eliminate them, and the farmers would then accept any innovation. For the project there were no problems with the new methods, since they were dealing

with the results of scientific research. but for the farmers adoption of the new methods meant a whole series of important decisions. They would have to change the whole process of planning and run risks. In their view, however, it was pointless to get involved in discussion or even to express their misgivings. If they did so, they would suffer disadvantages:

- The project workers would immediately continue their efforts to convince the farmers.

- The farmers who expressed doubts would be considered backward or used as examples of what to avoid.

They would also suffer the threat of sanctions, since it was pointed out that the project preferred to work with farmers who were progressive and willing to adopt innovations.

The project's field staff became aware of the discrepancy between what the farmers said and the cropping method they used in practice. However, the fact that everything was not going according to plan did not result in the project concept being revised at this stage. On the contrary, the project workers regarded it as further confirmation that it was their duty to work harder to persuade the farmers to adopt the new method.

In their estimation, if the project did not exist, the farmers would never be able to accept the innovation. Accordingly, there was even a potential willingness to accept the conditions named by the farmers for adopting the cropping method (money for wage labourers).

The farmers could point out how difficult it was for them to get the necessary inputs for the new method. For example, if they themselves tried to get seed or other agricultural supplies, it would mean hours of waiting. They had to try and find the people in charge, the stocks in the state-run stores were limited, and by no means all needs could be met, etc. This (in fact, realistic) illustration of the farmers' helplessness in the face of officialdom fits the project's philosophy. On the one hand it shows that the farmers are interested in the innovation, and on the other it confirms the need for help to be supplied by the project. The offer by project workers to organise the supplies of seed and mineral fertiliser for the farmers is regarded as a demonstration of how production inputs should be bought and as a lesson in how farmers could help themselves.

But the project has completely overlooked the fact that farmers – especially those in the higher income groups – have been solving problems of the supply of other items for decades. Farmers have bought their own spraying equipment to combat cacao diseases. Even if they only have small fields, they acquire and spray the correct chemicals. They have even been known to fetch their own mineral fertiliser,

and many farmers go back and forth between their village and Ibadan to do shopping.

When the farmers emphasise that inputs can only be acquired by the project, they mean that they do not want to do it for themselves. On the other hand, the project also demonstrates in the course of time its power to organise and exert influence, which is proved by concrete examples like well construction and the inoculation campaign against cholera. The project arranges for the usually remote bureaucracies to send their representatives to the villages, an example being the state health organisation. Such actions make the farmers more willing to take part in the project's activities, even if the individuals expect to gain little from the subprogrammes.

But, by participating, farmers can perhaps benefit from the demonstrated power of the project and gain advantage over other farmers when the project has privileges to hand out.

The project workers assume that the farmers' initial expectations are not significant, since they will be convinced by demonstrations and changes in agricultural practice in the course of the project and thus change their minds. A comparison of different groups shows, however, that initial expectations can be crucially important for the rest of the project. For example, these expectations determine to a large extent whether a farmer takes part in the project at all.

In Badeku, for example, it was still assumed, even after the project had been running for 6 years, that the university would put up buildings in the village. The groups that had formed in other villages, so that they could receive the same level of credit as Badeku farmers, expected this credit even though the link between credit and farm size had been repeatedly emphasised at the regional meetings in Egbeda. Thus when far less credit was allocated, the members could still not understand the reason, because in their view they had fulfilled the same conditions as the Badeku farmers.

The project reports tell us that the farmers had learned to apply for credit themselves. If this was true, the farmers must have realised when they applied how small the amount would be. According to the reports, the farmers completed the formalities under the supervision of the project. But in fact it was the field staff who drew up the applications, with the farmers simply appending their thumb print. They wanted to take the application forms to the relevant office as quickly as possible, and most of the groups' representatives could in any case neither read nor write. In all the interviews on this problem area in 1977 the farmers emphasised that they could not apply for credit without the help of project personnel.

In the view of the project, it is important for farmers to receive some credit, so that they are motivated to seek more for themselves, because farmers are thought to accept innovations only when tangible benefits accrue. Decisionmaking pro-

cesses that lead to a farmer participating in the programme are ignored and specific information is not provided, even when conflicts and contradictions arise. On the other hand, the farmers' groups feel no need to approach the project administration directly for information because they have been given information by the farmers in Badeku who, as they noted, had received their money.

3.2 From random to institutionalised contact

Chance plays a major role when a particular region or village is selected. But from the perspective of the villages themselves there are many factors that determine whether it is this or that village which is chosen. Villages that are already in contact with official organisations are more likely to be chosen. In Badeku it was the cacao programme of the Ministry of Agriculture; in Apoku, for example, it was another development project that had links with the Badeku project.

This is not unusual, since development projects often cover a limited area, but, considering the low level of inputs in relation to the total number of farmers, it becomes important at the national level. As a rule, contact is first made through the traditional power structures in the village. New structures are formed relatively quickly. The project workers make what can be called institutionalised contact with some of the villagers. The villagers with the best chance are those who already have experience of institutions – for example, if they have attended school, worked in towns or other regions of Nigeria, taken part in cooperative organisations or have been leaders of religious groups, etc.

The project naturally turns to these people when newcomers arrive. This is sometimes done for very practical reasons. For example, several project workers did not speak the Yoruba language and automatically they relied on those villagers who could interpret for them. These people thus became the obvious choice to liaise between the project and the farmers. The project workers had no difficulty in communicating with them and relied on them to pass on their information. The standing of these intermediaries in the villages was enhanced by the fact that the project workers turned mainly to them. They rapidly became important purveyors of information. The villagers wanted to know what they could expect from the project. The project workers gave their information to the chosen intermediary since he was the only person they knew well in the village.

Such intermediaries benefit personally from everyday events, like being driven into town or getting medical supplies. The project workers are willing to satisfy their wishes without question because it does not create extra work and it gives them an opportunity to do something informally in return for services rendered or to be rendered.

Other everyday experiences have their effect: the intermediary notices that the project workers will reward him by calling him "progressive" and "cooperative" if he

simply confirms that they are doing a good job. Usually all he needs to do is repeat the words of the project workers themselves.

3.3 Creating and reinforcing illusions

At the beginning of the project both sides possess their own stereotyped ideas based on their experience or derived from other people's reports. These stereotyped views become more significant as the project advances and help to create erroneous ideas in the minds of both the farmers and the project staff of the targets and the way the project is progressing. In this respect, the intermediaries in the villages and the field staff play a decisive role in creating illusions. The intermediaries tell the other villagers about their interpretation of the project and their expectations. In the case of Badeku, for example, this took the form of descriptions of the work being carried out on the university farm. The intermediary is in a position to draw on his own experience and to provide authentic information, since he knows more about the farm than about the project itself. He influences the expectations of the listeners so that they are different from the project's actual aims and the measures it is employing to achieve those aims. Some farmers are willing to cooperate with the project simply on the basis of expectations that are in fact misguided.

The project workers tend to transfer their positive experience of the intermediaries in the villages to other farmers. Their mainly verbal support for the work of project personnel, confirmed in the meantime by other farmers, gives them the impression that the project is developing according to plan. The success of their own operations is corroborated. The field staff can then present the intermediaries in the villages to the project management and other institutions as "typical farmers" who confirm the "importance" and "appropriateness" of the project measures. However, the intermediary is far from being a typical farmer; in truth, he is very much the exception in the village.

By telling the villagers about their experiences and expressing their own views on the project, the intermediaries can even find themselves guaranteeing the effectiveness of the project. They can substantiate their claims partly with the personal advantages that they have derived from cooperation with the project's representatives and partly with the tangible benefits enjoyed by the villagers (wells, combating cholera, credit). The result can be that the intermediary arouses even more unrealistic expectations in his fellow villagers. This can be partly explained by the fact that the contacts feel themselves to be under social pressure. For example, the villagers want to know why it takes so long for their expectations to be fulfilled. Because the intermediaries have been the principal link with the project, the villagers think they can influence the project to their advantage. The intermediaries are delighted when they are regarded as instrumental in bringing benefits to the village or creating them through personal intervention or influence, and they never miss an opportunity to remind the farmers of their "important position". But in the

long run this means that the villagers call the intermediaries to account if their expectations are not fulfilled. The villagers put pressure on the intermediaries to do something to make the project keep its promises.

However, the project employees also play their part, because they are more than willing to go along with the expectations that the intermediaries have of the university. This gives them the chance to demonstrate to the farmers what an important position they have, and they tend to make exaggerated promises about the project's measures. From the perspective of the farmers, these employees are the most important project personnel, whereas in fact theirs is a subordinate role in the project hierarchy. This is why they do not feel inclined to tone down the exaggerated expectations, and they simply put their faith in the project as an institution able to live up to these expectations.

Thus, without being aware of the roles they are playing, the project workers and the intermediaries in the villages help to create myths about the project.

Contact with other villages also contributes to misconceptions of the project. A number of factors are involved. Contact with the university also means prestige, especially when it brings the village material benefits. Several Badeku villagers were not slow to point out in neighbouring villages that these contacts would be to their advantage (e. g. road building, water supply and electricity). Wishful thinking joined forces with what the project had actually organised (e. g. well construction).

In this way, both project farmers and project workers find themselves in a similar position – they are under pressure to succeed. To justify the project, the project workers have produced reports for the university, government and financial backers that underline its success. These reports contain much about how they would have liked the project to progress rather than how it was actually progressing. A particularly important point is that the project workers vouched for the farmers when dealing with other institutions, the Credit Corporation, for example, but without telling the farmers themselves or asking their opinions. The project workers were acting, in their own estimation, for the good of the farmers. In return for this service on their part, they "simply" expected the farmers to accept innovations, to comply with their requirement that maize production should rise, to appreciate the help of the project workers, and to be grateful.

The farmers assume that they are serving the project by cooperating with it and that they can expect something in return. Especially those farmers who have already invested their labour or even cash in the project (for example, farmers who offered their fields for maize cropping experiments) want to see at long last some of the rewards to which they have a right. Despite the high yield, they regard the maize harvest on the experimental field as justified payment for their special efforts in the service of the project. But since the other farmers in the village cannot see any tangible benefits from the project, they ask the intermediaries to urge the project to get on and fulfil their expectations.

In this phase in Badeku there was increased activity among the farmers, which can be explained partly by their dissatisfaction with the project and partly by their desire to secure possible future advantages. There was a corresponding increase in activity by the project workers, who by working harder wanted to remedy the obvious discrepancies between what they expected of the project (which was in their reports) and what had really happened. In this situation there are far more opportunities for the farmers and project workers to make contact with each other. The idea of forming groups now suggests itself to both sides. In retrospect, each side claims the idea for itself. In the interviews in 1977 in Badeku, people stressed that groups were formed on the initiative of the farmers and particularly of the intermediaries in the villages. The project workers claimed that formation of groups was a fundamental part of project philosophy and played an especially important role in the project strategy that had been devised by the university staff. The concept of groups, however, fits well in the strategy of extension and spreading innovations, and precisely who can claim to have originated the idea is irrelevant. As mentioned above, forming groups for particular purposes is an everyday occurrence among Yoruba farmers. When credit was paid out, it benefited groups in many ways, and it reinforced their readiness to do something for the project. In the meantime they have learned from personal contact that the project workers are very interested in seeing maize grown with the new methods. In these circumstances the groups are anxious to respond as required and to confirm the expectations of the project workers. But we must not assume that they are deliberately telling lies to deceive the project workers. On the contrary, the project workers formulate their questions in such a way that the response they are looking for is virtually preprogrammed. Investigating and analysing the way a project is running thus becomes a search for confirmation that the project's measures are correct.

3.4 Maintaining the illusion

We might well expect that the contradiction between expectations and actual events would lead to the farmers and project workers realising that they have been indulging in wishful thinking, and that this in turn would lead both sides to revise their ideas. But this does not happen. The intermediaries between the farmers and the field staff of the project again play a vitally important role. Any problems the project has will primarily affect them. The farmers will then put pressure on the intermediaries in the villages on account of what has become an "official role". In the case of the Badeku group this took the form of the members questioning the position of the chairman and the secretary of the group. Many people left the organisation; others threatened to withdraw or refused to work on the group's farm.

The project's field staff are given work that is no longer in line with either the project's basic concepts or their own positive reports. In this phase the representatives of the farmers and the project employees are very interested in achieving something for their members to encourage their continued cooperation or to keep them in the group. In Badeku this was done by procuring credit that gave the

members financial advantages. In the groups that had formed in other villages, a low level of credit had been paid out from the start, and heightened tension resulted from the maize marketing plan, so that it proved impossible to stabilise them. Several groups disintegrated completely, although they were still nominally members of the project, which resulted in the critical situation not being recognised by the project management.

The farmers turn to the field staff with their problems and expectations, but this means they pass through a kind of filter and are amended before being passed on to project management. There are several reasons for this process of modification:

- Positive reports on their practical work that conform with the aims of the project are expected. If they mentioned discrepancies in their reports, it could be interpreted as an admission of incompetence. Moreover, as subordinates in the project hierarchy, they have no right to criticise the project.

- Field staff have little use for reports on discrepancies and unexpected reactions by farmers, because instead of the project being modified, management reacts by issuing new duties and instructions to solve existing problems. This means more work, more labour input, because the project management would like to receive reports of problems being overcome.

- The project management tends to interpret reports on deviating views of farmers, their wishes and criticisms as necessarily coming from uncooperative and backward individuals. Thus if farmers express critical views, the answers tend to be dogmatic and they discriminate against their critics. Field staff increasingly avoid reporting serious situations in order not to expose themselves to further criticism and to conceal the fact that they have far less influence on project management than they had pretended.

In summary, these three points mean that the project employees would call their own position into question if they emphasised the discrepancies. Consequently there is a tendency for them to conceal conflicts from both the farmers and project management, to ignore them or to play them down. Thus they go through the motions of carrying out instructions and then file them away as having been dealt with. In reality, conflicts continue to exist.

The employees react by trying to reduce their workload so that they can at least cover the formal requirements of their posts. For example, they have to keep minutes of meetings of the extension committee and write reports for the project management; they have to arrange the dates of discussions in the villages. It is easy to stress the positive aspects, to confirm fulfilled expectations and either to leave out critical points or to report them in such a way that they do not appear to call for further action. But we have to remember that these comments and oral reports eventually find their way into the official reports on the project. The following example illustrates what happens in practice.

During a trial demonstration of a tropical variety of bean ("cowpeas", vigna unguiculata), the project planned to let the farmers spray the experimental fields to control insects. The field staff were supposed to tell them how to carry out this work. When they appeared in the village and asked the farmers to help on the experimental fields, not one of them was at first prepared to do so. There were lengthy discussions and time passed. Finally one came forward, to be joined much later by two others. But because so much time had elapsed , explanations were kept to a minimum and the project workers did the spraying themselves, so that they could return to Ibadan before nightfall. When it was time to spray again, they did all the work themselves without even asking the farmers in the village if they wanted to be involved. They were finished in about one hour compared with about three hours when they had sprayed for the first time. The project management was told that the fields had been sprayed according to the technical instructions. The fact that not one single farmer participated was not mentioned.

The farmers are not without blame for helping to perpetuate these illusions of communication. Even though the project workers repeatedly stressed that the new cropping methods were to be applied on the group farms, the Badeku farmers still cropped maize and cassava together. This happened on a part of the farm that could not be seen from the access paths. The representatives of the project, who often came to the village with visitors from other institutions, were only shown the nearest plots and, in the experience of the villagers, that was all that the visitors wanted to see. A kind of ritual programme quickly developed for visitors. They were always taken to the well, shown the medical post and they inspected the maize store and local soap production. Then they went to the farm that in 1976 was about 2 km from the village. Different groups of visitors came, but this programme was repeated time and again; the villagers had become accustomed to visitors and had the appropriate information ready.

3.5 Withdrawal

The Badeku project was still operating in 1978, although officially it started to wind down in 1976. The stated reason was that the project had given the farmers the ability to manage their own affairs and to represent their own interests. It was claimed that they had learned to make contact with the administration and to negotiate on their own behalf and further that they would apply the new cropping methods with modern inputs. Since they had learned all these things, they would be in a position to accept more innovations in future. The eventual official withdrawal is not important for our understanding of the various phases of the project. During the whole course of the project there are in fact signs of withdrawal both by the farmers and the project: at the outset both sides anticipated success and showed therefore a high level of commitment, but this commitment diminished when the expected benefits were not forthcoming. The intermediaries in the villages and the project's field staff were among the first to be affected by this loss of enthusiasm.

Personal reactions:

Both the intermediaries and the project employees soon realised that their interpretations were incorrect and that they could not keep their promises. When directly approached, they pointed out that it was the responsibility of the project management or other institutions and that the situation being criticised was beyond their control. For example, at a meeting of group representatives in Egbeda in the spring of 1976, the project management repeatedly pointed out that the credit institution was to blame for the late payment of credit and that the project was in no way responsible. However, this weak link in the organisation had been apparent from the start, and it could have been analysed and taken into account in planning.

There are also more subtle reactions. The field staff are dependent on the cooperation of the farmers, but, since they have a great deal to do, they prefer to work with farmers who appreciate their efforts and produce positive results. They pay less attention to groups that make demands and criticise or doubt the usefulness of the work of field staff. They justify this neglect by claiming that the critical and demanding farmers are backward and unreasonable. Some of the intermediaries in the villages have put a great deal of effort into forming groups and their organisation in the hope of greater personal influence or a permanent job. Many of their smaller requests having been granted, if new requests and demands are rejected, some of them take it personally and are no longer prepared to do anything for the project. These are not calculated personal reactions; they are undirected and unpredictable and can give rise to conflict. Some groups reformed themselves as a result of personal reactions of this kind. The intermediaries were changed and new group representatives sought direct contact with the project in Ibadan without relying on the previous intermediaries and also without reference to the project's employees. However, the opportunity to investigate what had happened was never followed up.

Reactions of the institution:

Such personal reactions also provoke reactions by the project as an institution. First, the project employees are encouraged to intensify their instructional work in the villages. But then we find that the project will no longer act as general guarantor and that the farmers are no longer free to use their credit as they wish. The project exercises controls, demands security in the form of the group farm and in this way develops its own credit institution with conditions that are even more stringent than those of the Credit Corporation. The farmers' motivation for joining the groups is ignored.

There are further important changes that affect the project as an institution. In the initial phase the planners and managers went on fact-finding visits to the villages; they wanted to consolidate existing contacts and make new ones. They worked closely with the field staff – which strengthened their motivation. The visits to the

villages influenced the decisions taken by the project managers. But in the course of time, contact with the villages is left increasingly to the project's employees. The situation in which these people now have to work is one of more and more criticism by the farmers, at a time when groups are breaking up, instructions not being carried out, etc. The project management also leave negotiations and decisions increasingly to the employees. Since they do not have the formal competence to take these decisions, they tend to avoid them. The interviews showed that the farmers expected very little of the project employees. Some farmers' groups had, for example, asked to be allowed to negotiate directly with the project management, but, since the managers did not appear in the villages, the farmers assumed that the field staff had not passed on their request.

The project managers give as their reasons for withdrawal the workload at the university, the fact that the project employees have received sufficient training to work independently and the farmers have learned in the meantime how to approach particular institutions. But when they justify their action in this way, they overlook the fact that the project employees are still bound by the instructions of the management and that they are held responsible for, and therefore have to bear the consequences of wrong decisions.

There is some truth in the official explanation for withdrawal of the project, namely that the farmers have learned to handle their affairs for themselves. Some groups get seed and fertiliser for maize themselves from the appropriate government research station in Ibadan. One group even made contact on its own initiative with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture to obtain information on new varieties of cassava. Through reference to the project they managed to secure advantages for themselves and they did not even inform the project workers of their action. Nevertheless, we are not justified in attributing these independent actions simply to the influence of the project. There are instances elsewhere of farmers organising themselves in order to pursue particular interests.

Some members of groups argued in the spring of 1977 that the university project was perhaps hampering progress, because people in the area were saying that Badeku was not a progressive village. Despite a severe shortage of water in the village in 1977, the Badeku villagers refused to sink new wells because they felt that this would only delay a piped water supply even longer. Construction of the pipeline was finally begun in 1978 after a direct appeal to the local government. However, it was another six years before the pipeline was finished, and it was finally connected up in 1985. No one in the village even bothered to inform the pilot project of the actions and preparations leading up to this significant event.

It could be argued that the farmers were only able to take action because the pilot project had made them more aware. But even this line of argument is not totally convincing, because the Badeku farmers organised, for example, the construction of an advice centre for mothers before the project was started in the village. For decades roads have been repaired annually by communal effort, and there is no

doubt that Badeku farmers have been influential in the political sphere, in the Agbekoya Movement, for example.

For reasons of space, we conclude our selected extracts at this point. In his article, Peter AY goes on to give detailed analyses of the interests of the people affected by or participating in the project, the areas of conflict and the strategies for action. For further information, the reader is referred to the source we have used for this contribution.

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Peter AY: Agrarpolitik in Nigeria – Produktionssysteme der Bauern und die Hilflosigkeit von Entwicklungsexperten. Ein Beitrag zur Revision agrarpolitischer Maßnahmen in Entwicklungsländern. – Feldforschung in Westnigeria –. Arbeiten aus dem Institut für Afrika-Kunde, Nr. 24, Hamburg 1980. 337 p. (Largely verbatim from pp. 140 – 185, with some cuts).

Compiled by:

Volker HOFFMANN

Experience of technical demonstrations in agricultural development projects

Demonstrations play a key role in many development programmes. In a successful project in **Ghana**, the most progressive farmers were identified and asked to try some innovations on a small area of their fields. They were simple innovations that had been carefully tested on research stations and did not involve financial risk. The selected farmers were given intensive back-up by advisers. In **Kenya**, the expansion of tea cultivation depended largely on the demonstration effect of farmers who were already cropping tea. By observing tea cultivation, the farmers not only became interested in the crop but also learned the basic techniques at the same time. In **Zambia**, a vegetable project was successful because interested farmers were given the opportunity to establish small experimental plots on common land. Thus there was hardly any risk involved, and the farmers had their first experience of growing vegetables. The projects in **Puebla**, and many others as well, make use of demonstrations and exploit the demonstration effect in their extension programmes.

In **Nigeria**, all the production means required for demonstrations were distributed with instructions in prepared packages. This simplified distribution and ensured that all the production inputs were available in the right quantities for all the demonstration plots. In each village, leaders of the village selected a demonstration farmer to receive this package. The demonstration then consisted of four improved and one local variety of maize. Thus the demonstration also became a field trial. The demonstration plots were visited regularly by advisers and research staff to ensure continuous checking and the exchange of ideas. This model was applied successfully in other countries too.

The use of demonstration in extension has many advantages. Visits to farms with successful field trials were shown in **Puebla** to be much more convincing and persuasive than the explanations of the advisers, and subsequent extension work was made appreciably easier. Here too demonstration proved to be a good way of testing under field conditions. Innovations are introduced on a wide scale only after demonstrations have been successfully carried out, and the risk level is thus kept low.

Demonstrations are not, of course, the solution to all extension problems. The **Barpali Village Service in India** had some success when demonstrations were used to motivate farmers to adopt innovations. The advisers started growing vegetables, and thus gave the farmers some incentive to grow vegetables themselves. But in this case adoption of this innovation was made easier by extending the area of irrigated land and by creating new markets. As production rose, however, there was a considerable fall in price that made vegetable cultivation uneconomic, and the project was finally wound up.

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The same extension service then tried to improve local poultry by distributing cock birds for breeding. But the advisers did not consider the needs and capabilities of the village population, with the result that most farmers refused to exchange their birds for the better quality cock birds. There is a practical explanation for this behaviour, namely the much higher costs for coops for improved cock birds, feed and veterinary checks. Poultry cooperatives established by the extension service were a failure, and they were abandoned when the foreign specialist lost interest in poultry keeping.

These examples show that the farmers recognise the desirability of a useful and profitable innovation demonstrated by advisers or other farmers and that they will adopt it. Other innovations, that were not to the advantage of the villagers and were planned without involving them in decisions, were most definitely failures.

Demonstrations are no compensation for the inadequacy or inappropriateness of technology or an institution, and they are also no substitute for involvement of farmers in working out extension topics. They are particularly effective when it is a question of persuading farmers that they will benefit from using new technology. This is the case when target groups have already expressed an interest in adopting an innovation. These demonstrations are more likely to be successful when they are carried out by farmers on their own land. Demonstrations in **Gambia** that were carried out solely by advisers were a failure. It proved impossible to continue the project until two villages had laid out their own experimental plots and seen how successful they were. These villages only implemented the experiments because the production inputs had been made available at low cost, subsistence production was not endangered by the innovation and the farmers had no alternative income. Demonstrating an innovation on a peasant holding is always more convincing than a report of trial results, demonstrations on experimental stations or demonstrations by advisers themselves. Farmers have learned to be suspicious of anything that they have not experienced personally. Because of this mistrust the word "demonstration" was replaced in the **Puebla** project by "high yield cropping". Planting was always left to the farmers, the advisers simply giving guidance on how to proceed.

An important reason why demonstrations should be undertaken as far as possible by the farmers is that advisers do not usually have any time to spend on this job, or at least not enough time to do it properly.

For further information, see → Tables 1 and 2 in → Chapter III.14 and → E 6 and → E 7.

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Problems of working with contact farmers

Again and again attempts have been made in many different ways to involve farmers directly in extension work. One of the best known endeavours to involve contact farmers in extension was undertaken in Comilla in Bangladesh. In this case the functionaries of the cooperatives and the contact farmers were selected by the members of the cooperatives.

Only outstanding and trustworthy farmers were to be accepted. In addition, individuals were chosen to be responsible for women and young people. They were given instruction once a week in agriculture and the functioning of cooperatives. They were expected to pass on what they had learned to the target groups. At the same time they were supposed to look out for difficulties in implementation, listen to farmers' comments on the extension packages and recount them at the weekly training sessions. If the contact farmers were particularly successful, they were made into controllers in charge of up to four cooperatives. These farmers were then given additional weekly training, but this proved to be yet another demand on their time.

The assumption underlying this programme was that farmers accept information from agricultural advisers but not instructions. Thus the farmers would be much more likely to follow the advice of trustworthy farmers. Such farmers do not normally belong to the official elite in a village. These assumptions were formulated and agreed in the Comilla research centre.

But problems nevertheless arose in practice. In particular, there were disagreements between the functionaries in the cooperatives and contact farmers. As a consequence, the two areas of activity were amalgamated. In most villages only about half the villagers participated in the cooperative and the wealthier farmers benefited disproportionately. Expansion of the project over the region was prevented by escalating total costs, and it was finally abandoned.

An attempt was made later to revive the approach. Once again the cooperatives were rapidly dominated by the relatively large-scale farmers and used for their purposes. In 1974 the number of contact farmers taking part in weekly training was usually lower than 30%. The reason given was the irrelevance of such training to the real needs of the majority of farmers.

A simple concept was tried in **Daudzai in Pakistan.** The farmers were first organised in cooperatives to solve problems. Later, obligatory savings programmes and weekly gatherings were introduced. In addition, contact farmers had to take part in training every two weeks, and they also took charge of the farmers' weekly meetings. The project failed because the contact farmers had to spend too much time on extension activities.

A similar project was tried by **CADU in Ethiopia.** Of five candidates proposed by the farmers, one was chosen by the adviser to be the contact farmer. One adviser with two assistants was in charge of 15 contact farmers. Instead of giving them formal training at a centre, the advisers supervised the contact farmers during extension work. The programme functioned well at first, but in this case too it eventually led to the contact farmers neglecting their own farms. As a consequence, they became less willing to be involved in extension work.

Contact farmers were also used in the **ZAPI project in Cameroon.** They were chosen by the advisers, the main criteria being knowledge of French and contact with the administration. The status of these farmers in the rural community was practically ignored. Because hardly any attention was paid to the overall technical and institutional conditions, the project foundered.

Summary

There are very few cases where the use of contact farmers as advisers has met with lasting success. The reasons for this state of affairs seem to be as follows:

- In Comilla one contact farmer per village was supposed to have the trust of all the farmers and to take over the work of extension. It later transpired that in one village there were up to 14 leaders of opinion, and logically therefore the same number of contact farmers should have been chosen. Of course, this would not have been a practical proposition.

- The main mistake in the Cameroon project was that outside advisers often chose contact farmers who most resembled themselves. Consequently, the contact farmers were often too young, too well educated, too prosperous or too progressive to serve as credible examples for the mass of poorer farmers.

- Contact farmers were often used simply to keep down the cost of extension. The problem of limited input by contact farmers and the fact that time used for extension was needed for other purposes was usually ignored.

- Contact farmers were normally only given the task of relaying prepackaged information on behalf of the advisers. Experience has shown that the interest and enthusiasm of contact farmers rapidly decline unless they and the target groups can participate in problem solving and decisions on the measures to be taken.

- The concept of formal training was also largely misguided: by first training advisers and contact farmers, information was supposed finally to reach the mass of farmers. But because of illiteracy and unfamiliarity with texts and lectures, practical demonstrations have proved to be much more suitable as a means of communication.

Contact farmers often tend to use information and extension measures principally for themselves and relatives. There is greater danger of this happening the less the farmers are involved in deciding who should be the contact farmers and what should be the content of extension.

We have pinpointed real weaknesses, but at the same time we can see possible remedies. The more the target groups participate in choosing contact farmers, and the more practical their preparation, the more likely it is that they will support extension work in an effective way.

For further information on working with contact farmers, the reader is referred to → E 4 and → F 9.

Source:

A. WATERSTON: "Managing Planned Agricultural Development". Washington: Governmental Affairs Institute 1976.

Compiled by:

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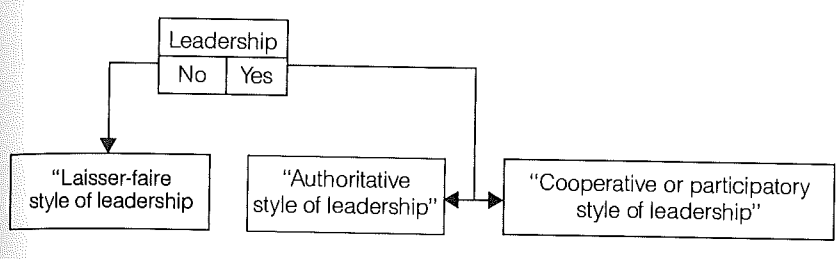
Problems of leadership style in organisations

Since being an organiser calls for a large measure of skill in dealing with people, the style of leadership in organisations is of vital importance. As described in → Chapter III.14, performance and job satisfaction in organisations depend largely on the view of people on which senior staff base their dealings with subordinates. Thus notions of how to behave and why such behaviour is desirable determine the approach, the style of leadership.

It is customary to classify systems of leadership as follows:



The classifications "authoritative – cooperative" represent the ends of a scale and are theoretical extremes. In reality, however, styles of leadership are almost always hybrid forms and lie somewhere along the scale. We can identify these styles of leadership by, for example, the methods used to persuade people to comply:

	Method of leadership	Reasons for complying
Ethically and morally not acceptable	Force Threat of force Emotional pressure Suggestion Trying to impress	Compulsion Fear, Worry Emotional dependence Mental subjugation Intimidation or admiration
Authoritative	Insistence on rank	→ Obedience and humility
	Insistence on duties	→ Interpretation of job, obligations
	Promise of reward	→ Striving to earn more
	Promise of recognition	→ Wanting to impress
	Personal concern	→ Gratitude, loyalty
	Personal request, taking into confidence	→ Helpfulness, responsibility
	Sympathetic model	→ Respect
	Idealising the job	→ Enthusiasm
	Revealing motives	→ Trust
	Putting trust in others	→ Proving worthy of this trust
	Rational orientation and reasons	→ Insight, shared resonsibility
Cooperative	Joint discussion	→ Personal decisions, shared responsibility

In general the style of leadership determines:

- the form of contact;
- the attitude of the leader to the led and his leadership behaviour;

Social-psychological effects other systems of leadership		
	Authoritative	Cooperative
I. 1. Form of contact	Distant, hierarchic	Close, egalitarian
II. 2. Personal behaviour of leaders	Stress on authority, demonstrating rank.	Straightforward, avoid ceremony and formality
3. Attitude to subordinates	Likes obedient, willing individuals. Values obedience and discipline	Values free, independent thinkers
III. 4. Emotional reaction of subordinates	Often does not feel fully understood and appreciated, feels restricted or suppressed according to his level	Feels personally appreciated and understood, liberated or privileged according to his level
5. Motives for action	Sense of duty	Insight, feeling of responsibility
6. Attitude to leadership	Respect, deference	Affection, familiarity
IV. 7. Communication on an intellectual level and bond with the system of leadership	Little	Large measure of participation in all planning and intentions
8. Social climate created	Slight tension. Danger of mutual mistrust, formation of cliques	Trust, cohesion and harmony

System of leadership	Authoritative	Cooperative
1. Preconditions	Big difference in education between leaders and subordinates	Same level of education in leaders and subordinates
2. Advantages	Quick decisions	Correct decisions, because checked by those who carry them out, stability, natural selection of potential leaders
3. Dangers	Collapse of group unless there is constant leadership	Slow decision making, collapse of cooperation in complicated situations
4. Requirements	High level of personal responsibility and self-monitoring, foresight, tact	Receptivity to ideas, mental agility, willingness to trust others, foregoing personal privileges

- the reactions of the subordinate partner, his motives and attitudes to leadership and to his superiors;
- the degree of mutual communication and the social and psychological climate (working atmosphere).

Depending on the particular circumstances, each system of leadership has advantages and disadvantages. When we recommend cooperative and participatory leadership, it must not be forgotten that adequate preconditions for this style of leadership have to be created. We should also remember that, in special situations,

Managerial functions	Role interpretation in different styles of leadership		
	Authoritative	Combination	Cooperative
1. Making plan		Inspirer Initiator	Group member
2. Implementation of plans, break-down into tasks		Isolated specialist	
3. Allocating jobs to suitable people	Leader	Organiser	Group coordinator
4. Giving instructions on implementation	Commander	Manager	Responsible senior partner
5. Showing how to implement plans: demonstrate, explain, let workers practise, encourage independence		Master Instructor	Adviser Friend
6. Supervising implementation	Controller		Helper
7. Evaluating the result	Critic		Expert
8. Correction, adjustment	Judge		Encouragement of self-discipline and group discipline
9. Maintaining discipline	Holder of power		

if time is short or action imperative, there may be no alternative to an authoritarian approach if solutions are to be found. This deviation from the usual practice of cooperative leadership is acceptable if the leaders in question are trusted individuals and have genuine authority.

The style of leadership is determined not only by the image of colleagues but also by the leader's interpretation of his own role.

The key to the cooperative and participatory style of leadership is the transfer of skills and responsibility from the leader to the workers who accept the spirit of cooperation. Thus delegation of duties becomes the most important principle of successful management.

Finally, we illustrate the above once again by contrasting the basic features and types of behaviour across the range of styles of leadership.

Delegation continuum

All the following six variations are possible and can usually be found in any organisation, institution or grouping.

I have decided:		and you are invited to discuss with me:
nothing at all	↔	whether something should be done
that something should be done	↔	what should be done
what should be done	↔	when, how, where and by whom something should be done
when, how, where and by whom it should be done	↔	the reasons for my decision
everything	↔	nothing, but just to hear what the consequences are for you
everything	↔	nothing at all

Features of different styles of leadership

Dirigistic/authoritative	Cooperative/participatory
1. A boss taking all decisions is most effective.	1. Decisions that draw on the knowledge of everyone involved are most effective.
2. Managerial staff decide as much as possible on their own (isolated decisions).	2. Workers are encouraged to think about solutions, even for difficult cases, and to put them forward.
3. Senior staff constantly try to extend their influence.	3. Senior staff work hard to improve the status of their colleagues.
4. Senior staff use pressure and fear to make colleagues work.	4. The performance of colleagues improves throgh recognition and further training.
5. Senior staff constantly check the work of all colleagues.	5. Colleagues develop a sense of personal responsibility because of jointly formulated targets and procedures.
6. Senior staff take credit for good work by subordinates.	6. Senior staff give credit for good work by colleagues and tell superiors who was responsible.
7. In discussions and in conversation workers are on their guard and reticent, because they fear blame or disapproval.	7. Discussions and conversations are lively and draw on the workers' expertise, because there is no fear of sanctions if they express themselves clumsily or make mistakes.
8. Criticism takes the form of personal blame and rebuke, without discussing the real cause.	8. Senior staff justify criticism and give colleagues the opportunity to reply.

Sources:

K. ANTONS: Praxis der Gruppendynamik. Übungen und Techniken. Göttingen: Hogrefe, 4th Ed., 1976, Delegation continuum after G. SCHWARZ, T. JOHNSTADT, p. 174.

E. BORNEMANN: Sozialpsychologische Probleme der Führung. In: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, 1962, pp. 105 – 123.

C. M. PRINCE: Creative meeting through power sharing. In: Harvard Business Review, 1972.

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"Extension", an international terminology problem

There are many problems of terminology in the international discussion of extension. We find that in practice standard translations have become established, but if we examine them more closely it can be seen that certain concepts that are regarded as synonymous have very different meanings. As a consequence, communication on the subject of extension is difficult or in some cases even impossible. In → Table 1 we have compiled examples from various European languages. Since we do not have either the knowledge or the means of transcribing non-European languages, they have to be excluded from this comparison.

The range of terminology is matched by the range of interpretations and underlying philosophies of extension.

Some thoughts on "word development"

If we turn our attention specifically to the vocabulary of German, we find that even the term "beraten" (to advise) has various meanings, although at first sight it appears to be quite unambiguous. Our everyday use of the word in the context of extension as a verb taking a person as a direct or indirect object is a relatively recent phenomenon in the history of the language.

beraten (to advise)

Person as direct or indirect object		No 'third party' as direct or indirect object	
jemanden beraten	– to advise someone	sich beraten	– to discuss/ consult
einen Rat geben	– to give advice	mit sich zu Rate gehen	– to consider
einen Ratschlag geben	– to give a piece of advice	etwas gemeinsam beraten	– to discuss together
		etwas beratschlagen	– to discuss

The original meaning of the word appears to show that it was used without a direct or indirect object in the form of a person addressed.

Table 1:

Extension and adviser: internationally incompatible expressions			
Language	**Term denoting giving advice**	**Content of term**	**Term denoting the person giving advice**
German:	Beratung	give advice, assistance for problem solving	Berater, Ratgeber
French:			Conseiller
British and American English:	Advisory work		Advisor
	Counselling	psychologically advising	Counsellor
	Consultation	consult	Consultant
	Extension	disseminate	Extension-Agent
Spanish:	Extension	spread out	Extensionista
Portuguese:	Extensao		Extensionista
French:	Vulgarisation	to make popular	Vulgarisateur
Italian:	Divulgazione	spread out	Divulgatore
French:	Encadrement	to frame to incorporate to check in to file in	Encadreur
French:	Animation	to motivate to activate	Animateur
French:		indicator monitor commander	Moniteur
Dutch:	Voorlichting	to light ahead illuminate	Voorlichter
Danish:	Oplysning	enlighten	Consulent
Italian:	Assistenza tecnica	technical assistance, help	Assistente tecnico

The unspecified recipient of advice

If you have needed to write about extension, you must have come across the difficulty of what to call the person being addressed by the adviser.

Berater (adviser)	?
Berater (adviser)	Beratener (person being advised)
Berater (adviser)	Beratungspartner (extension partner)
Ratgeber (person giving advice)	Ratnehmer (person receiving advice)
Ratbietender (person offering advice)	Ratsuchender (person seeking advice)
Therapeut (therapist)	Klient (client)
?	Kunde (customer)
?	Zielperson/Zielgruppe (target individual/ target group)

All the terms in common use are inadequate, cobbled together, and do not quite express what we want to say. If our view on the different use of verbs is correct, it helps to explain the dilemma. If "beraten" was originally used in the way shown in the second column, there was no direct object in the linguistic sense and therefore no person addressed. It was only used in the sense of "pondering", thinking things over in the company of others.

As the meaning changed to "giving advice to others", the word "beraten" was retained but the people involved in the process of giving and receiving became active and passive participants. The word for the active partner was easily derived (Berater = adviser), but for the recipient of advice there is still no unequivocal, generally accepted term in German. Because he receives advice, the terminology used denotes his passive role, his position of weakness.

Negative connotation in the change of meaning

Critics who are sceptical about the increasing professionalisation of all service activities have pointed out that, with the shift towards the transitive use, people are more likely to be deprived of the right to manage their own affairs. "Ratschlag geben" (giving a piece of advice) becomes in this sense an aggressive act, because "Schlag" means literally to be beaten with advice. We can detect this kind of aggression in the current use of extension "being applied to target groups". In French the military connotation is particularly clear. When the term "groupe – cible" is used, we realise that "cible" or "cibler" are derived directly from aiming at targets. Also "encadrer" could be of military origin; under Napoleon a "cadre" was the smallest military unit under common command.

Finally, we sometimes find people in irrigation projects being forced to cultivate particular crops – which is euphemistically called "production under close supervision" and referred to as an "extension approach". "Beratung", in the sense of of-

fering advice, sounds good and everyone lays claim to the word, even if what they do in practice is far from "advising". So, be careful! Be on your guard against misleading labels.

The reader will now appreciate why we were at such pains to define the concept of extension and its precise application in → Chapter I.2.

Source:

Volker HOFFMANN: Beratungsbegriff und Beratungsphilosophie im Feld des Verbraucherhandels. – Eine subjektive Standortbestimmung und Abgrenzung. In: Die Qualität von Beratungen für Verbraucher, Campus Forschung. Band 462, Frankfurt, New York, 1985, pp. 26 – 47.

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