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Language barriers between different professions

2.9.2 Information availability and relevancy

Much of the information about environmental solutions is generated by the scientific community, and this information needs to be available to implementation-level stakeholders who are starting up or involved in an agri-environmental project (Uetake et al. 2013). As well as this information being communicated (and therefore accessible), it also needs to be practical (Uetake et al. 2013); this need for practical research is also brought to attention by Janse (2008) when supplying policy-makers with information. The need for the clear communication of information by scientists to layman or the implementation-level also occurs in the literature (Welp et al. 2006), seen between scientists and policy-makers (Janse 2008; Janse 2006; Guldin 2003) and in participatory processes (Reed 2008). Relating to this science/ implementation-level divide is the need of research processes to incorporate valuable local and implementation-level knowledge held by implementation-level stakeholders (Welp et al. 2006). Janse (2006) also highlights the importance of professional/ technical information, which is essentially practical knowledge held by a professional in their field. The incorporation of this knowledge into the research process is highly valuable; not only does it ensure the production of practically and "real-world" relevant research outcomes (Welp et al. 2006; Janse 2006), but the regular and early involvement of stakeholders in the research process promotes a sense of "ownership" of both the research outcomes and the process (Welp et al. 2006). Research generated in this way is more likely to be implemented and used by the stakeholders (Welp et al. 2006).

Essentially within this "knowledge and information access" section of communication, the areas of interest are problems involving the following; the first problem area is pertaining to the availability of information, basically whether a communication process is occurring at all. The second concerns the "message" from the scientific community pertaining to agri-environmental research, this encompasses the relevancy of the message's informational content. Lack of relevancy of information provided by the scientific community highlights a basic misunderstanding of what information is needed by the implementation-level stakeholders. The third and final area concerns the need to incorporate implementation-level input and knowledge into the research process, as this is highlighted in the literature as needing to be addressed. This may indicate a lack of a two-way communication process, the implementation of which, however, is seen as a key to good stakeholder-scientist dialogues (Welp et al. 2006). It is a possibility that addressing the need to include valuable knowledge originating from the stakeholders themselves in the research process, would in turn address the problem of practical relevancy of research provided, and perhaps also the need for clearer communication from scientists.

2.9.6 Working language barriers

Different stakeholder groups come from different professional backgrounds; each of these groups has a different working language (U. Rammert, 2013, pers. comm.). Prager & Vanclay (2010) make reference to conservationists and farmers speaking different languages, and Guldin (2003) acknowledges the need for "boundary spanners" that speak the language of both scientists and policy-makers. There is a need for a common language to be established (Welp et al. 2006). This language barrier consists of: different terminologies used by different professional cultures (Harris & Lyon 2013), differences in word use, variations in the definition of the same word used by different stakeholder groups (U. Rammert, 2013, pers. comm.; Rammert 2012), and differences in their preferred communication style (Gelders & Ihlen 2010) (this includes the preferred communication channel, and information distribution method).

These differences can result in misinterpretation, misunderstandings, or a total incomprehension of the message. In the case of different preferred communication channels, this may result in the recipient not receiving the message at all and thus total communication failure.

Essentially within this "knowledge and information access" section of communication, it was thought to assess the following; the availability of information, or whether a communication process is occurring at all; whether language barriers occurred within the project examples, and if so between which stakeholder groups, and whether terminology, word use or communication style differences are problematic. The last area of investigation was the ways in which the language barrier was lessened, eliminated, or if there were other ways around the problem applied.

4.3.2 The inter-stakeholder group Language Barrier

Occur due to Professional Cultural Differences
This theme was based on the introduction section entitled "Working language barriers" and the research questions associated with the section were classified as codes. Incidents of language barriers occurred in all three examples to a greater or lesser extent; these are outlined in the example sub-sections below; included are those aspects of the language barrier (terminology, word use, communication style) which were or are most problematic for each project. Ways in which the language barrier was lessened or dealt with have been included, but will be expanded upon in the suggestions section. The findings support those of the literature outlined in the corresponding introduction section.

The inter-stakeholder group Language Barrier definition: The language barrier that occurs between different stakeholder groups falls under the super-theme *professional cultural differences*. This language barrier is not usually due to a difference in language in the usual sense, but a difference in the specific professional language spoken by different stakeholder groups, arising due to differences in terminology used and often different definitions of words

depending on the professional context in which they are used. This division is widened by the use of different methods or styles of communication and information distribution platforms.

Influences: The state of the *inter-stakeholder group language barrier* is a major contributing factor to the following other themes: *inter-stakeholder group relations problems, scientific cultural problems, traditional role problems* and *policy and legislation problems.* Therefore the elimination of the language barrier would greatly lessen the all of the other theme problems (excluding those which are not inter-stakeholder communication problems) and should be a top priority.

Affected by: The *inter-stakeholder group language barrier* is a result of the super-theme *professional cultural differences* and the state of the language barrier may be influenced (to a lesser extent) by the following themes: *inter-stakeholder group relations problems, traditional role problems, policy and legislation problems* and *scientific cultural problems.*

The inter-stakeholder group Language Barrier in the Examples

In the Latvian example, J acknowledges that there are language barriers. Some of the statements outlined in the previous section representing misconceptions as well as indicating a poor set of relations due to poor communication, may also be indications of a language barrier.

The scientific language barrier J faces was lowered via the Latvian Farmers' Parliament, where Zanda Kruklite and Maira Dzelzkaleja acted as translators of information, rendering scientific information practically implementable. The scientific language barrier will be discussed in further detail under the following theme.

With regards to policy and regulations J believes there is simply too much, and too many ways to interpret these, stating that "there are too many rules and regulations and they are misinterpreted or interpreted according to the way the country needs them to be, and they are lost in translation. The rules for a green project are two books long; they need to be the

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size of a pamphlet." This may indicate a language barrier as the regulations do not seem to be well understood.

He states that he feels that in Latvia "the processes of communication are in an infant state. For example when compared to Denmark, where information is shared and it is easier to find resources. Latvia is still developing towards information sharing and communication; it is not bad or good; it is in a state of development". This emphases the need for a focus on communication. There is also a need to "facilitate better communication with the scientists and/or the bureaucratic circle, and emphasise on communicating person to person."

The Eider example as already mentioned had a focus on communication, and essentially eliminated *inter-stakeholder group language barriers* by installing a translator in the form of B. This process was in no way easy, and took time. As with the development of relationships, B's diverse background ensured her understanding and fluency in the different professional languages spoken by different stakeholders; B states "there is a working language barrier, with scientists using Latin names for plants etc... It was important for me to be able to "speak farmer" and "speak hunter" and also speak with researchers. Speaking some Platt-deutsch was very useful at the round-tables where it was spoken by the farmers and locals. This was a door-opener."

With regards to the scientific language barrier B "recognised a different word use when scientists attended round tables, and acted as translator. When scientists attended round tables I had to act as the bridge when they spoke about their work."

B does emphasise that within the project, and in general there is a need for more translators spanning the boundaries between these different professions, and that everybody should do it. She says that "There needs to be a change of mind-set; individuals need to think about who they are going to be speaking to when preparing an excursion or a presentation. People should talk to the region before they hold a presentation to properly prepare, at the real communication level. One could even hold a preparation presentation in front of one of the

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local people." This once again brings up the idea of target audience based communication as an important aspect to keep in mind when working towards eliminating language barriers.

Excerpts from:

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