Farmers’ Life School Manual

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Building Regional HIV Resilience
UNDP South East Asia HIV and Development Programme

January 2004
The HIV/AIDS pandemic threatens to destroy the fabric of our society. Rural farming communities are particularly threatened and household security is at stake. Recognizing the warning signs in Asia, a joint initiative between the FAO-Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programme and UNDP South East Asia HIV and Development Programme (UNDP-SEAHIV) resulted in the birth of the Farmers’ Life School. It began in 2000 with a bold objective: from the poorest of rural farming communities of South-East Asia comes innovation by the farmers, for the farmers. This manual documents the empowerment process, through which farmers decide for themselves how to build their resilience, including resistance to HIV/AIDS risks. Today, this is a movement that is continuing to spread in other rural communities of Cambodia.

This training manual is the outcome of the Farmers’ Life School project¹, which was originally field tested in Cambodia and has generated considerable international interest. This manual was translated from the original developed by the farmers in the Khmer language for training in Cambodia. Therefore, the setting, Cambodia, and the focus of the manual, subsistence rice farmers, are culturally specific. Although some adaptation has been carried out to facilitate use by other countries, the specificity of this manual has been largely maintained. As a tool that has already been field tested, this manual will be useful as a basis for developing other culture-specific tools. In order to be fully accepted and understood, this manual should be adapted with the participation of local farmers. The purpose of publishing this manual is to share the Cambodian farmers’ experience, which will stimulate thinking and the design of materials specific to each situation. It is not a ready-made recipe. For each community and country, the key to the success of a Farmers’ Life School is to recognize the expertise of farmers and make them aware of their own expertise as valuable capital on which to build their resilience.

FAO and UNDP-SEAHIV hope that by making this Cambodian manual available in the English language, the agricultural sector, AIDS programmes and NGOs will be encouraged to assist farming communities in their efforts to build their resilience and thus reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

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I. Framework for the Farmers’ Life School

Background

This manual is a translation of the original Khmer-language documentation of the process describing how the Cambodian Farmers’ Life School was developed. This manual was developed by Cambodian farmers involved in that process. The purpose of translating the Khmer-language manual into English is to share the valuable Cambodian experience with other farmers around the world, so that other farming communities may be inspired to develop their own manuals. It is hoped that, as more farmers around the world begin to develop their own Farmers’ Life Schools, it will be possible in the future to combine and compare the experiences and synthesize them into an international guide for Farmers’ Life Schools.

In order to understand the origin and vision of the Farmers’ Life School, this initiative must be put into the proper context. This is particularly so in view of the interest generated by the Farmers’ Life School, which was initiated by UNDP-SEAHIV and the FAO-Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Cambodia country office in 2000. The process of making this unique initiative a reality illustrates the value of exchanging information among disciplines, offices and institutions – a process which, unfortunately, does not occur often enough in our daily operations.

The idea of the Farmers’ Life School can be traced back to the efforts of people from very different backgrounds who were willing to work together, take risks, experiment and invest extra time in a common vision. Their aim was to find ways to help farming communities not only to perceive that they could have a better future, but also that they could take control of their own development.

The vision for the Farmers’ Life School emerged in informal meetings between the FAO, Rome, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) team consisting of Tony Putter, Peter Kenmore, Kevin Gallagher and Jacques du Guerny, the then Chief of the FAO Population Programme Service. Therein, the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) process was described as a combination of management strategies aimed at empowering farmers through Agro Eco-System Analysis, demonstrating how the decisions that farmers make can affect their crop yields. Simply stated, sparing insects that prey on pests that are harmful to farm crops helps farmers to save their harvests. During the awareness-raising process, the farmer is empowered as the centre of the farming decision-making process. However, application of the Integrated Pest Management process is not limited to the concept of Agro Eco-System Analysis; it has its operational base in the Farmer Field School, a development approach which first began in Asia before spreading to Africa. Currently, it has been extended to millions of farmers throughout the world.

It then occurred to du Guerny that the concepts underlying Agro Eco-System Analysis and the Farmer Field School could be transposed from plants to people, and could be applied particularly to HIV/AIDS. By building upon a farmer’s existing knowledge base, other development issues could easily be examined. Human subjects within their environment could be taught exactly as in the Integrated Pest Management system when crops and
their environment are examined. The FAO Integrated Pest Management team responded enthusiastically and identified the Integrated Pest Management Farmer Field Schools in Cambodia as the most appropriate location to pioneer the idea.

In December 1999, a feasibility study of these schools was conducted by du Guerny. The essential support of the local IPM team and national authorities seemed promising. Further technical support and funding was provided by UNDP-SEAHIV as well as FAO. The original members of the team, Randy Arnst, Ken Kemp, Yim Vuthong, Yim Sophy and Moth Sokhon, later joined by Nguon Sokunthea, converged at the FAO Integrated Pest Management office to work together to develop a curriculum. The project was entrusted to the Cambodian Integrated Pest Management team for implementation. Armed with only a blueprint, and the crucial input of farmers initially gathered from the network of the Farmer Field Schools in Cambodia, this concept and method of teaching was translated into the Human Eco-System Analysis approach, with the creation of the Farmers’ Life School as the forum for learning. This team creatively pioneered the project, with the skilled trainer/facilitator, Ou Chhaya, hired as a consultant by UNDP-SEAHIV after being released from his duties in World Education, Cambodia. The result was a viably operating Farmers’ Life School network “owned” by the farmers.

Robert Nugent, the then team leader of the FAO Integrated Pest Management Cambodia country office, provided strong encouragement by urging Farmers’ Life School team members to devise their own strategies and utilize the experience of the farmers for course development. Masaya Kato and Richard Geeves of World Education, Cambodia also assisted in the development and implementation of the Farmers’ Life School curriculum and participated in preparing the initial draft of this manual. Today, World Education and CARE, Cambodia still support the Farmers’ Life School concept by including it as a key strategy in their programmes, focusing on basic life-skills education, literacy and HIV/AIDS awareness for out-of-school youth.

Most importantly, farmer facilitators and graduates of the Farmer Field School play a vital role in transferring key concepts familiar to farmers to analyse their own well-being and that of their rural communities. This is aptly reflected in the transformation of Agro Eco-System Analysis into Human Eco-System Analysis. The name of the course itself, Farmers’ Life School, was suggested by farmer-facilitators at one of the first curriculum development workshops in Cambodia’s Banteay Meanchey Province. Many of these early facilitators subsequently became trainers for future Farmers’ Life Schools as the programme spread to other communities and was taken up by other organizations. Without all these key players, the Farmers’ Life School would not have become a reality.

**General guidelines for a Farmers’ Life School**

This manual is intended primarily for use by facilitators of the Farmers’ Life School who have graduated from a Farmers’ Field School and a Farmers’ Life School, by adult educators or NGOs and community-based organizations with experience in participatory learning and people interested in introducing the Farmers’ Life School course into their own programmes. The Farmers’ Life School can be used in either community-based programmes or it can be adapted for formal educational settings. For example, in Cambodia, the Farmers’ Life School curriculum is taught as a high school elective.
This manual provides a framework to confront local concerns that face a community. The farmer’s world is filled with expertise: knowledge on when to plant and to fertilize, how to avoid natural disasters, how to remove pests and when to harvest. Farmers are skilled *technicians* and *managers* in their fields. The Farmers’ Life School is aimed at building on the *risk assessment* knowledge that farmers already have through a *holistic* approach. Combined with a *long-term* outlook, farmers are then better able to address problems and the impact of their decisions over time. Proactive change is implemented through emphasizing the importance of local resources and networks. Ultimately, the goal is to enable farmers to become effective *decision makers* in their own lives, the lives of their families and in their community network. This is an empowering process.

The following are some basic considerations in the organization of a Farmers’ Life School:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of a class</td>
<td>20-25 people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of participants</td>
<td>Usually, 20 years of age or older. However, a youth Farmers’ Life School can be initiated by more experienced facilitators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender balance</td>
<td>Equal numbers of females and males.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment of participants</td>
<td>Meet with villagers to explain the Farmers’ Life School. Only those who <em>voluntarily</em> want to participate will be recruited. Participants must decide by themselves to participate; they should not be nominated by those in positions of authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator profile</td>
<td>Ideally both men and women who:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Live in the same community as the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Come from various backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have had prior Farmers’ Life School and Farmers’ Field School training</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have good interpersonal and literacy skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of the Farmers’ Life School</td>
<td>One session a week for 16 weeks, which is about four months².</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for each session</td>
<td>Ask all participants to identify the most convenient time to meet based on their agricultural field schedule. Most sessions run from 7-11 o’clock in the morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of facilitators</td>
<td>Three is normally sufficient. The actual number is determined by the size of each Farmers’ Life School group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)

² The 16-week course is designed to correspond to a four-month rice crop planting season in Cambodia. This timeframe could be adjusted locally to suit the situation of each community.
Participants should decide on the location based on factors such as safety, ease of access and minimal disruptions. For example, a farmer’s home, a temple or school.

Participants can be excused from one session only. A missed session requires obtaining information from peers to “catch up” before the next session begins.

The answers from the group do not have to be the same as sample answers given in this manual. Groups and participants can provide answers developed by themselves.

Non-negotiable: basic structure and processes of the Farmers’ Life School.

Negotiable: topic covered within each session is to be negotiated among participants. Facilitators can give advice, but generally seek, respect and follow participants’ decisions on topics of study.

The Farmers’ Life School is not intended to solve problems faced by the community.

The Farmers’ Life School is aimed at helping participants to become confident decision makers so their own expertise will be utilized in response to community problems. The Farmers’ Life School is a process of empowerment. If participants decide to follow up issues raised in a Farmers’ Life School by organizing certain actions, the knowledge and social networks established through the Farmers’ Life School could contribute to the potential effectiveness of such organized community actions.

None required. Local resource people with useful experience or expertise can be identified to assist in the decision-making process.

Flipchart, A4-size paper, marker, pens, masking tape and scissors.

### Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venue for the Farmers’ Life School</td>
<td>Participants should decide on the location based on factors such as safety, ease of access and minimal disruptions. For example, a farmer’s home, a temple or school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Participants can be excused from one session only. A missed session requires obtaining information from peers to “catch up” before the next session begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers to questions listed for each question</td>
<td>The answers from the group do not have to be the same as sample answers given in this manual. Groups and participants can provide answers developed by themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is and is not negotiable</td>
<td>Non-negotiable: basic structure and processes of the Farmers’ Life School. Negotiable: topic covered within each session is to be negotiated among participants. Facilitators can give advice, but generally seek, respect and follow participants’ decisions on topics of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected outcomes</td>
<td>The Farmers’ Life School is not intended to solve problems faced by the community. The Farmers’ Life School is aimed at helping participants to become confident decision makers so their own expertise will be utilized in response to community problems. The Farmers’ Life School is a process of empowerment. If participants decide to follow up issues raised in a Farmers’ Life School by organizing certain actions, the knowledge and social networks established through the Farmers’ Life School could contribute to the potential effectiveness of such organized community actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite technical expertise</td>
<td>None required. Local resource people with useful experience or expertise can be identified to assist in the decision-making process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials needed for each session</td>
<td>Flipchart, A4-size paper, marker, pens, masking tape and scissors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are some tips for handling groups of people:

**How to divide participants into small working groups.** Ask everyone to stand in a line. If three groups are required, go from the first person downward in the line. The first person calls out 1; the second, 2; the third, 3; the fourth person calls out 1; the fifth, 2; the sixth, 3, and so on. All those who called out 1 should form group 1; those who called out 2 should form group 2; and those who called out 3 should form group 3.
Warm-up activity. The introduction of a session could involve telling a story, showing a picture, playing a game or singing a song, which both introduces the topic and stimulates thinking about the session. Subsequent introductions should try to link the current session to the previous session.

Closing activity. When ending a session, participants should provide a summary of the session. Every session should also end with a reminder of the next session’s topic.

Annex I contains a complete list of the Farmers’ Life School curriculum.

Preparations for starting a Farmers’ Life School

1. Preparing a village consultation agenda

Before inviting villagers to a meeting, the facilitators should first discuss with the village leader the objectives of the Farmers’ Life School and how it could be beneficial to the community. Without the support of a village leader, it is unlikely that villagers will participate in a Farmers’ Life School.

The facilitator should develop an agenda for the village consultation through discussions among the facilitator team members. Annex II contains a sample village consultation agenda.

2. Community consultation

The villagers could be invited to a consultation meeting by:

- A village leader asking his community to join a meeting
- Facilitators directly asking villagers to come to a meeting
- Villagers telling neighbours to attend a meeting

3. Record the village consultation meeting

The consultation meeting should be recorded. Annex III contains a sample meeting record form.

II. The Curriculum

Session 1: Introducing the Farmers’ Life School

Introduction

Objectives
By the end of this 30-minute unit, all participants should:

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3 Refer to Annex I for a complete list of the curriculum.
• Have introduced another participant, or themselves, to the Farmers’ Life School group

• Know the names and some basic personal information about all the other participants and the facilitators in the Farmers’ Life School

**Materials needed**

Material for the introductory session: a ball or pictures cut in half.

**Activities**

*Note:* there is no need for a warm-up activity for this unit.

Step 1. After all the participants have arrived, list all their names and distribute learning materials. Explain that: *Learning at the Farmers’ Life School is different from learning in regular schools. The Farmers’ Life School emphasizes learning through participation and discussion. Good discussion begins with getting to know each other well.*

Step 2. Ask the participants to introduce each other. Facilitators should break the ice by starting the activity. The following are some examples:

a) Each person stands up one by one and introduces himself or herself;

b) Everyone stands in a circle. A person introduces herself/himself and then she/he throws a ball to someone else. The person who catches the ball introduces herself/himself next and so on until everyone has introduced herself/himself;

c) Cut each picture in half, shuffle them and give one piece to each participant. Ask participants to find the person who has the matching half. Once they find the other half, each person is to interview the other person for three minutes to obtain basic personal information. Then, the group should reassemble and each pair should introduce one another to the whole group.

**Expectations**

**Objective**

By the end of this unit, participants should be able to compare their own expectations with the official description of the Farmers’ Life School so that they will understand the School’s process clearly (e.g., some participants may be expecting to receive money or other benefits which are not part of the Farmers’ Life School).

**Materials needed**

The sheet entitled “What is a Farmers’ Life School?” as seen on this page.

**Activities**

*Note:* There is no need for warm-up activity for this unit.
Write the following on the flipchart and ask:

- **What are your objectives for attending this course?**
- **What do you expect to learn?**

If participants say “I don’t know”, ask:

- **Well, why did you come here today?**

Write down all the answers.

Present the sheet “What is a Farmers’ Life School?”, then ask the participants how it differs from and matches their own expectations.

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**What is a Farmers’ Life School?**

1. **What does a Farmers’ Life School consist of?**

   It is a school that is created for and by villagers. The participants are people from the village. The facilitators are usually graduates from the Farmer Field Schools; they are unpaid volunteers who keep records of all the sessions, follow up on questions raised by participants, i.e., bringing in a health worker to answer questions that are not within the expertise of the facilitators and, most importantly, facilitate discussion and help the villagers to use their knowledge to solve community problems.

2. **What are the objectives of a Farmers’ Life School?**

   To provide a free forum for discussion.
   To provide the tools for community empowerment by developing skills which help one to identify and analyse problems that exist in the village.
   To place prime importance on local knowledge and resources to initiate changes.
   To understand the vulnerability that each individual and family member has to common community problems.
   To build the social capacity of the community through critical decision-making, thus alleviating the stresses of development and creating community resilience.

3. **What does one learn?**

   Real problems that affect people’s lives in the village.
   How to identify and analyse common problems that occur in the community.
   How one can improve the quality of one’s own life by utilizing the networks and resources that are available in the community.

4. **How does one learn?**

   Listening and sharing individual experiences and opinions.
   Carrying out research into the problems that are prevalent in the village.
Setting the rules

Objective
By the end of this unit, participants should have agreed on and understood the rules of the Farmers’ Life School.

Activities
During the Farmers’ Life School, there are some duties that should be the responsibility of the participants, such as cleaning the meeting area and preparing snacks.

Step 1. Ask: What duties are required to facilitate better learning?
With the answers, form a consensus on how the responsibilities for each duty can be shared. For example, each group can rotate its responsibilities by week.

Step 2. Tell the class: In order to accomplish our objectives it is important for everyone to respect certain rules. Rules that are imposed by outsiders will not be enforced here. This school will be run by rules created mainly by you, the participants. What rules do you want for this group?
Write down all the answers on the flipchart and discuss with the group whether each item is appropriate.

Step 3. Explain that: Although we have made our own rules, there are some non-negotiable rules that all participants must follow for an effective Farmers’ Life School. These are:
   a) All discussions about individuals and their problems must remain confidential unless permission is explicitly given by the person for a known purpose;
   b) The ethics of interviewing must be followed;
   c) One can miss a maximum of only one session.

Step 4. Display this Farmers’ Life School rules sheet at every subsequent session of the School.

Session 2: Problem identification

1. Brainstorming

Objectives
By the end of this one-hour session, participants should be able to:

- Explain the meaning of “problem identification”
- Explain the process of identifying and prioritizing problems

Activities
Step 1. Ask: When there is a problem on the farm, what steps does one take to solve it?
Suggested answers are:
• Identify the problem
• Analyse the problem
• Prioritize feasible solutions
• Outline steps to reach solutions and to take appropriate actions

Say: *These steps can also be applied to community problems. Let’s discuss.*

Step 2. Ask: *What is problem identification? Why is it important?*

List all the answers on the flipchart, summarize and get the group’s consensus. Answer: *Problem identification* is a process that helps us to identify what is preventing us from achieving our goals. In cases of extreme poverty, farmers may not have long-term goals: they should understand that they still have some control over their lives and that they can build on their existing knowledge. Tell them: *It is important to identify the problem correctly; otherwise there is the danger of adopting an ineffective solution. If you cannot pinpoint a problem you will never be able to solve it properly.*

Step 3. Write the following on the flipchart and say: *We are going to do an exercise that will help us to identify problems better.*

**Exercise:** Many vehicles speed along a dusty section of the road where young children play. The children could be hit by a car and they could be injured or even killed. What should we do to solve this problem?

Work in small groups to discuss and analyse this problem and agree on some solutions. Possible answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Possible solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too many vehicles</td>
<td>Block access to lorries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make street one-way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles go too fast</td>
<td>Put up speed-limit signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make speed-bumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dust makes it hard to see</td>
<td>Sprinkle the road with water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sweep the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers do not see children playing</td>
<td>Put up “Children playing” sign to inform drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on this road</td>
<td>Teach children not to play on the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach children to avoid vehicles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Say: *As you can see, there is more than one factor that can be a root cause for this one problem.*

Step 4. Ask the participants to think of a time when they found a solution to a problem that did not work as planned. Invite the group to share their stories. Ask: *What do these stories tell us about identifying the causes behind problems and solutions?*
Possible answers include:

• Some problems have causes that are not obvious
• We may need the help of our family and friends to fully understand a problem
• Identifying the wrong problem means formulating the wrong solution

Step 5. Tell the participants that, when examining their farmland or the human world, they must identify all the factors that may be causing a problem.

Session 3: Agro-ecological system, human-ecological system and problem-solving

1. Brainstorming

Objectives
By the end of this one-hour session, participants should be able to:

• Define the word “system” and “eco-system”
• Discuss and explain the major elements of the “Human Eco-System”

Materials Cards/squares of paper

Activities
Step 1. Ask: What is a system?
Possible answers: A system is a way of identifying elements that interact together. If an individual element within the system is malfunctioning, the rest of the system’s elements will suffer.

Step 2. Ask: What are the benefits of looking at problems as part of a system?
Possible answer: Looking at problems as a part of a system makes it easier to identify factors that are related to the problem.
Tell the class: For example, in the case of HIV/AIDS one may wish to examine the factors that increase the risk of infection.

A system’s approach to HIV/AIDS examines the key factors that are involved. There are both immediate factors, e.g., unprotected sex with a new partner, and root causes such as a failed crop or the incurring of a debt. Often, these factors are interrelated: if farmers have poor crops and they are starving, they may decide to go to the cities to look for jobs. If a farmer does not have much schooling, he/she may end up working in the entertainment sector, thus increasing his/her vulnerability to HIV4. The vulnerability to

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HIV occurred because the roots of the problem (poor crops, starvation, poverty, etc.) were not dealt with as potential factors that would increase vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. To solve a problem effectively, a person must first identify and deal with the root causes.

Step 3. Ask and write on the flip chart: What is an agro-ecological system?
Say: Think of all the things that affect your farm, i.e., sunshine, pests, good insects, etc. List all the answers on the flipchart and categorize them. Summarize and get group consensus.

Possible answers: An agro-ecological system has smaller parts of the environment (sunshine, rain, insects, etc.) that, when combined, influence the entire environment. Should one part not work, the whole environment will suffer. For example, if there is too much rain, plants will not grow properly and animals will starve.

Step 4. Say: All factors that you have examined can be grouped into six categories of an agro-ecological system:

```
   Climate          Soil
   ---------------  ----------
   Herbivore       Weeds
     Neutral       Beneficial
                    insects  insects
```

2. Small group discussions

Step 1. Ask the group to put the factors they have identified in Step 3 into these six categories; break the participants into six groups each; assign each group to one of these six categories of an agro-ecological system.

Step 2. Ask each small group to discuss and draw on a piece of paper the relationships/linkages between the category assigned to that group of the agro-ecological system and that of the other five categories using real-life examples.

Step 3. A group representative should present the results of that group’s discussion. Encourage the other groups to ask questions and critique the presentation from each small group. Summarize the discussions, while emphasizing that all six categories are interrelated.

Step 4. Ask and write on the flipchart: What is a human ecological system?
List the answers on the flipchart, summarize and get group consensus. Possible answer: A human ecological system has factors in the natural and man-made environment that, when combined, affect the entire human being.
Step 5. Ask: *What factors can affect a human life?*
Write their ideas on small pieces of paper or cards and attach all the participants’ answers around a picture of a person as follows:

![Diagram of factors affecting human life]

### 3. Introducing the six categories

**Step 1.** Explain to the participants that the Farmers’ Life School uses six major categories of the human ecological system as follows:

- Education
- Economy
- Culture
- Environment
- Health
- Society

Ask: *Of the factors that you chose, which can be placed under one or more of the six categories of human life?*

**Step 2.** Divide the participants into six groups, each assigned one of the six categories of human ecology.

Ask each small group to discuss and draw on paper the relationships/linkages between their category of the human ecological system and the other five categories, using real-life examples.

Each group should nominate a person to present the results of that group’s discussion. Encourage others to ask questions and critique the results.

Summarize the discussion and emphasize that all six categories of the human ecological system are related to each other and form the overall human ecological system.
Session 4: Agro Eco-System Analysis

Objectives
By the end of the one-hour session, participants should be able to:

- Explain what “problem analysis” is
- Discuss methods used to analyse a problem
- Conduct a problem analysis
- Explain what is meant by Agro Eco-System Analysis
- Describe the method of Agro Eco-System Analysis

Materials
- Picture of squares to be used for Quiz 1
- Picture of a tree to be used for brainstorming

Activities

1. Quiz

Step 1. Display on the flipchart a picture of squares that you have prepared before the session.

![Picture of squares](image)

Step 2. Tell everyone: *Count how many squares there are in the diagram.*
Write down all the answers on the flipchart.
Count the squares with the participants.
The correct answer is 35 squares.

Step 3. Say: *This is an example of problem analysis. How many squares are there really? 35!* Some counted quickly and found fewer. Others really looked at the drawing, helped each other and found more. The more you analyse and discuss, the more clearly you will see and understand a picture or problem.
2. Brainstorming

Step 1. Ask: *What is “problem analysis”?*
Write down all answers on the flipchart, summarize and reach a consensus.
Possible answer: Thinking and discussing about the causes and consequences of a problem in order to find an appropriate solution.

Step 2. Ask and write on the flipchart: *How do you analyse a problem?*

Step 3. Say: *Now I would like to apply this method of analysis to the plant world; the Farmers’ Life School calls this Agro Eco-System Analysis.*

Step 4. Show the picture of a tree that you have drawn before the session. Select a plant-related problem with participants and write it down on the tree trunk. Below is an example, with “stunted plant growth” having been selected as the problem for analysis.

Step 5. Ask: *What are the causes of stunted plant growth?*
List all the answers from participants around the root of the tree.

Step 6. Ask: *What are the consequences of stunted plant growth? What happens to people’s lives if all their plants do not grow properly?* List all answers on the tree branches. See example below:

![Diagram of causes and consequences of stunted plant growth]

- **Causes:**
  - Poor soil
  - Beneficial insects killed because of pesticide use
  - Lack of rainfall
  - Pests
  - Land and animals have to be sold

- **Consequences:**
  - Poverty
  - Starvation
  - Family must migrate for work
  - Land and animals have to be sold

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Step 7. Say: You have just done an Agro Eco-System Analysis. When looking at the consequences of stunted plant growth, every farmer can see how it is a good strategy to keep plants as healthy as possible by ensuring that the right amount of water is available for the plants, and that pest control and fertilization carried out via a natural means is cheaper and less toxic to farmers’ health than man-made alternatives, etc. If the plants are not kept healthy, the yield will be low and the family will suffer from reduced income. This type of problem analysis can also be applied to people’s problems. We call that Human Eco-System Analysis and we will learn more about this method of analysis in a later session.

Step 8. Ask the group to draw linkages between any of the factors causing the problem of stunted plant growth and use arrows to link those that are related. Say: We can see that all these problems are interrelated. If one part of the environment is changed (e.g., not enough rain), the entire system can be affected (poor irrigation system, no one can fix it owing to poverty and HIV, etc.). When a situation such as one of these is created, one should examine each link and its synergies. The web can then be simplified by identifying and focusing on the most important links. This type of process saves time by not dealing with less important root causes.

![Web of problems diagram](image)

3. Small group discussion

Divide participants into five groups.

Step 1. Ask each group to analyse one of the key issues for their farm land, using the problem tree. Participants should decide among themselves what issue is the most important.
The small group session lasts 15 minutes. Each group should select a person to present the results of the discussion to the entire group.

Step 2. Write on the flipchart all the problems, causes and consequences mentioned in each group’s presentations. Discuss as an entire group the linkages between each box and draw arrows between those that are related using the web of problems diagram as an example.

Session 5: Field observation

Objectives
By the end of the three-hour session, participants should have learned how to examine their crop fields, take notes, collect specimens and identify, by drawing if necessary, the problems and good points of the surrounding fields. Participants will then present the findings.

This session will help the participants to gain confidence in their observation skills, and act as a preliminary examination of the problems that are affecting their fields.

Activities

1. Brainstorming

Step 1. Say: Farming takes place in stages. What are the stages of life for your crops? Participants should reach a consensus on which stages their crops undergo. Explain that these field observation sessions should occur during the full rice crop production season, with these stages as a guide for field examination. It would be beneficial to repeat this session two or three times during these key stages to see how influential the individual farmer’s decision-making is to his/her fields.

Step 2. Say: The first step of critical observation is to examine your own fields. We need one volunteer who will allow us all to go into his/her fields for examination during all of these sessions.

Step 3. Ask: Why is it important to examine the fields?
Possible answer: Examining a field can lead to improvement of the fields by identifying root causes of the problems of a field so that corrective actions can be made in time.

Step 4. Break into five groups.
Ask: What is it that you see in the fields? What factors are affecting the plants and increasing or decreasing yields? Please consider factors such as pests, helpful insects, flooding, poor irrigation, over-fertilization, etc.
Say: Remember, the more things that you can observe, the more you can help yourself and your neighbours to succeed. Take notes and collect specimens. At times drawing the situation may be helpful in describing a problem.
Step 5. Say: *All the factors that increase or decrease yields can be put under the six categories of ecology discussed in Session 3: climate, weeds, beneficial insects, herbivores, soil and neutral insects. All of these categories are related to each other to form an agro eco-system.* Ask participants to sort all the things they have observed under these six categories.

Step 6. Ask participants to use the tree analysis and web of problems explained in Session 4 to define the causes and consequences of things negatively affecting crops. Each group should select one person to present the findings of that group.

A sample outline should include the following:
- Introduce group members
- General observations
- Plant observations
- Factors increasing or decreasing yield
- Categorizing observations under the six categories of Agro Eco-System Analysis
- Problem tree analysis and web of problems
- If this is not the first time that observations have been made, participants should contrast the findings from previous sessions to the new findings, i.e., if a pesticide is killing beneficial insects, crops may be in jeopardy
- Conclude and ask the group members to give their comments

Step 7. If the participants have chosen a problem which they feel requires the information and/or expertise of an expert/technical person, the facilitator is required to follow up by contacting someone with this knowledge for the participants and having the expert answer the questions that the participants have.

**Session 6: Needs and daily practices of villagers**

**Objectives**

By the end of the three-hour session, participants should be able to:

- Discuss the daily behaviours and needs of villagers
- Analyse positive and negative consequences of daily practices
- Identify possible strategies to reduce practices that have negative consequences
- Identify possible ways to satisfy the needs of villagers

**Activities**

1. **Brainstorming**

Facilitators should explain to participants that the same process of Agro Eco-System Analysis can be applied to humans, as discussed in Session 3.
Ask and write on the flipchart: *What are “daily practices?”*
List all the responses on the flipchart, summarize and get group consensus on a definition of daily practices.
Possible answer: Activities that occur routinely and often on a daily basis.

2. **Small group discussion – list examples of daily practices**

Divide the class into five groups.

Step 1. Ask each group to discuss: *What are the typical daily practices of people in our village? Be critical, identify the differences between men and women, rich and poor, adults and children, and in farming techniques, etc. Think about the things that can be observed in the fields and in normal human interactions.*

Give 15 minutes for small group discussions. Ask that a person be selected from each group to present the results of each group’s discussion.

Summarize the answers from each group.

Step 2. Say: *Classify the daily practices into useful practices and practices with negative impacts. How would you classify each practice?*

Discuss the consequences of each behaviour using the table below.

*Note:* The classification does not make a judgement about each practice from a moral perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Useful practices</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
<th>Practices with negative impact</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tell the groups: *Interpretations of positive and negative practices will vary owing to cultural/ethnic/religious beliefs. Some practices can also have both positive and negative consequences. These are difficult to classify. Can you see some examples in your previous list that can have both good and bad effects?*

The facilitators should prepare ahead of time some examples of practices which have good, bad, or both good and bad effects.

*Example:* Drinking alcohol can relieve stress and facilitate friendly conversation, but in excess it can result in drunkenness, road accidents, domestic violence and serious health problems.

Step 3. Ask a person from each group to present the outcome of that group’s discussion. Summarize the answers group by group.

Step 4. Ask: *What can be changed in our daily practices to improve the present situation and that of the future? For example, eliminating helpful insects that prey on pests will be detrimental to our crops. To improve the present situation, these insects*
must be preserved. To improve a child’s future through education, it is important that all children in the family have enough to eat so they could concentrate on their studies. This means that money must be properly saved and invested.

Write the answers on the flipchart and summarize.

3. Brainstorming

Step 1. Say: A person’s life can be divided into different stages just like the crops in a field:

- Birth to 5 years old
- 6 to 14 years old
- 15 to 19 years old
- 20 to 54 years old
- 55 years old until death

Ask: What needs are essential for survival at each stage of life? Do you think the needs of most people are being met these days? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Step 2. Ask: What can people do to make their needs on the farm and in the community easily met?

Possible responses: work to earn and save money, do not waste time or money, try to get a good education, form associations with others for everyone’s benefit, etc.

Step 3. Say: Remember that every individual needs skills to do certain jobs, to have a better lifestyle, or to just exist. Skills often coincide with needs in the community. An example of this would include literacy skills, numerical skills and farming skills. These skills can be taught. Think about the types of skills that are needed for a better life in your community. What can people do to acquire these skills? Write down their responses.

Session 7: Community networks

Objectives
By the end of this three-hour session, participants should be able to:

- Explain “What do community networks consist of?”
- Describe the impact of a problem (by using an example or a case study) on a villager and other members of his/her family and village
- Identify possible solutions to current problems in people’s relationships

Activities
1. Small group discussion

Tell the group that community networks can be used to build on the skills and needs for each person in the community at each stage of life. Moreover, it helps to build support networks when negative practices exist in order to help people to improve the situation.
Divide the class into three groups.

Step 1. Ask each group to discuss the following question: *If a person in our village has a problem, does it influence other people in the village? If yes, how?*

Step 2. Assign a problem to each group to discuss in relation to the influence of that problem on other people in the community (appropriate time for discussion is 15 minutes):

- Group 1 – Dirty house
- Group 2 – Deforestation in and around the village
- Group 3 – Over-fertilizing crops

Ask that a person be selected from each group to present the results of the discussion. Summarize the answers and discuss with the group how the problems of an individual can influence the lives of others in the village.

Step 3. Explain: *Negative practices can affect both the individual and the entire community. We must work together to suggest ways to mitigate negative practices. Community strength depends on the support we give each other.*

*How would you improve negative practices in your family, the village and society? How can current community networks be utilized for everyone’s benefit?*

Show the participants the example on the next page. Suggest that each group fill in its own examples of negative practices. Ask each group to present its results and summarize.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Negative practices</th>
<th>Possible outcomes</th>
<th>How to overcome negative practices</th>
<th>What networks can be used to help?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td>No crop rotation and too much fertilizer.</td>
<td>Poor crops and poverty.</td>
<td>Introducing crop rotation and traditional agricultural knowledge.</td>
<td>Neighbours and elders who still use these techniques can support and educate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Village and society</strong></td>
<td>Frequenting brothels as a societal pass time.</td>
<td>Increases the risk of HIV infection. There also is no HIV preventive education.</td>
<td>Have alternative sources of entertainment, e.g., sports, and educate people about HIV vulnerabilities, e.g., poverty and starvation.</td>
<td>Have village leaders organize sports events, and have teachers organize group meetings on the effects of HIV and how to prevent it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 8: Resource mobilization

Objectives
By the end of this three-hour session, participants should be able to:

- Explain what are “resources”
- Describe the resources commonly found in the community
- Discuss how to use these resources to solve problems
- Discuss how to use these resources in a sustainable manner

Activities

**Brainstorming**

Step 1. Ask and write on the flipchart: *What are resources?*
Write down all the answers and summarize.
Possible answers: money, books, teachers, technical people, influential people, knowledge, skills, etc.

Step 2. Ask: *By looking at this list can you give a definition of “resources?”*
Possible answers: Resources are people or things which can help bring about change and improvement.

Step 3. Ask: *What resources are in your community?*
Ask participants to write their responses on pieces of paper.
Ask participants to categorize all their responses into three groups:

- Natural resources, i.e., mountains, forests, rivers, etc.
- Human resources, i.e. police, monks, teachers, etc.
- Infrastructure resources, i.e., school buildings, roads, hospitals, public transportation, etc.

Step 4. Ask: *What resources do we have to reduce the factors that decrease crop yields? What resources do we have that can be used to make the needs of each stage of crop and human life attainable? How can we use these resources efficiently, without waste?*
Jointly develop some guidelines on how to efficiently use available resources.

The following are suggested guidelines:

a) Participants must know what and where resources are available in the community; and

b) Participants should know how to use the available resources appropriately, i.e., in a prioritized, needs-based and sustainable way.
Session 9: Village Walk

Objectives

By the end of this three-hour session, participants should be able to:

• Explain what a “Village Walk” is

• Conduct an appropriate Village Walk with the guidance of a facilitator

Activities

1. Brainstorming

Step 1. Say: Before conducting any interview, we must first examine our community, observing power structures, relationships and differences that are obvious among people. To do this, we must conduct a Village Walk, which involves walking through the village, while making critical observations.

Step 2. Ask and write on the flipchart: What do you think we might learn from a Village Walk?
Write all the answers on the flipchart, summarize and get a group consensus.
Possible answer: Through a Village Walk we can learn what problems we have in our own village and gain ideas on how the lives of villagers can be improved through existing resources.

Step 3. Ask and write on the flipchart: What do people do during the Village Walk? How is it conducted?
List all answers on the flipchart.
Summarize the answers and add the following list if they were not already given by the participants.
During the Village Walk we can:

• Go by foot, bicycle, motorbike or car

• Go alone or in a group

• Ask the villagers questions during the Walk

• Compare differences between rich villagers and poor villagers, people’s dress, manners, language, form of transport, social activities and so on. Also, we can observe differences between the various private and public houses, buildings and land

• Compare characteristics of different people, houses, public buildings, environments, structures and other physical things

• Identify what problems exist in the community

• Identify what resources and community networks in the community could be utilized or implemented to reduce community problems
2. Field work – carrying out a Village Walk

Divide the class into small groups. Ask each group to carry out a Village Walk applying the principles discussed during the brainstorming. The duration for this exercise is 30 minutes.

After the Village Walk, ask each group to:

- Analyse the information obtained through the Village Walk
- List and discuss the problems identified in the village and what resources and networks could be identified in order to solve the problems

Session 10: Presenting the results of the Village Walk

Objectives

By the end of the three-hour session, participants should be able to describe the process and findings of their Village Walk.

Activities

1. Drafting and organizing the presentation

Ask each group to discuss the findings from the previous week’s Village Walk and decide on the main points and structure of the presentation.

Ask the following questions:

- What problems, resources and networks were identified?
- How did the relationships between people reflect problems in the community?
- What resources and networks can be utilized or implemented to improve the community situation?
- How are these factors part of a community system?
- Who will present each segment?
- Does your group have questions for everyone to respond to during or at the end of the presentation?

2. Making the presentation

When making a presentation such as this it is important that all groups should be prepared for questions. Moreover, each group should really be able to see the factors that are interconnecting in causing these problems and the impact they have on the community.
The presentations should include:

- Introduction of group members
- General observations of village
- Problems, their causes and consequences
- How did the relationships between people reflect problems in the community
- Examine the problem as part of a system
- List resources and networks that can be used to improve the situation
- Conclude and encourage the participants to ask questions

Each group should make a presentation.

3. Group activity – prioritize problems

Step 1. Say: *All these problems are relevant. However, we cannot study all of them during the Farmers’ Life School. Therefore, we have to select the five most important problems in the community that need to be addressed urgently.*

Ask the group to form two-person pairs and each of them to agree on the five most important problems in the community. Ask each pair to look for another pair to form a group of four and pick the five most important problems out of the ones they chose previously. Repeat the process with another group of four so that it becomes a group of eight and so on.

Ask the participants to select the five most important community problems.

Step 2. Say: *We have prioritized the five most important problems. We shall study and analyse these five problems in depth starting in Session 13.*

Ask the participants if they feel they need the knowledge of an expert to help them to understand the problems selected. If the participants have chosen a problem which they feel requires information from an expert or the expertise of a technical person, the facilitator is required to follow up by contacting someone with this knowledge for the participants at the session where that problem will be analysed and discussed.

Session 11: Human Eco-System Analysis

Objective

By the end of this session, participants should have learned what Human Eco-System Analysis is.
**Activities**

1. **Brainstorming – What is Human Eco-System Analysis?**

Ask and write on the flipchart: *What is “Human Eco-System Analysis?”*

Write the definitions on the flipchart. Summarize and formulate a group definition.

Suggested answer: Human Eco-System Analysis is a method that helps us to understand how different factors affect a person’s life and helps us to make decisions which will improve the person’s living conditions.

Tell the class: *In the Farmers’ Life School, we shall analyse real problems that exist in the community. This is done through interviewing a person who has problems that we want to study. The class will be divided into five groups and each group will interview a different person. Upon return to the class, the information collected will be analysed.*

2. **Small group discussion**

![Problem Tree Diagram]

Divide participants into five groups and assign each group one of the five problems selected from Session 10.

Step 1. Ask each group to analyse the problem using the problem tree picture.

In this example, HIV/AIDS was chosen.

- *What can contribute to the high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS?*
- *What are the consequences of getting infected?*
Allow 15 minutes for small group discussions. One person in each group should present the results of that group.

Write on the flipchart all the problems, causes and consequences mentioned in each of the presentations.

Step 2. Discuss as an entire group the linkages between each box and draw arrows between those that are related. Use the web diagram below as an example.

![Web diagram analysis of HIV case](image)

Step 3. Say: We can see that all these problems are interrelated. As was the case in the plant eco-system, if humans change one aspect (gambling too much) the entire web can be affected (family will become poor, land will be lost, etc). When a web like this is created, one should examine each link and their synergies. The web can then be simplified by focusing on the crucial links. This type of process eliminates time that would be wasted when the less important root causes are examined.

Step 4. Show the format for Human Eco-System Analysis as outlined next page. Say: This format is a great way of organizing your data.

- A “non-supporting factor” is a negative, dangerous practice, behaviour or resource which exists in the community and creates the problem or makes it harder to overcome.
- A “supporting factor” is a positive or helpful practice, behaviour or resource which exists in the community and helps people to overcome the problem.
### Human Eco-System Analysis

**I. General information**
- Date of analysis
- Age and sex of interviewee

**II. Supporting factors**
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 

**III. Non-supporting factors**
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 

**Problem:**

**General notes:**

---

### 3. Brainstorming – steps in Human Eco-System Analysis

Step 1. Ask the class: *What steps do you think are needed to carry out a Human Eco-System Analysis effectively?*

Step 2. Write all the answers on the flipchart, summarize and reach a consensus. Possible responses are listed below:

- Meet with the village leader to obtain permission to interview someone in the village
- Select interviewees
- Ask for permission from the interviewees to be interviewed
- Discuss and prepare the interview/questions to be asked, taking into consideration ethics and the rights of the interviewee
- Conduct the interview
- Conduct Human Eco-System Analysis with the interviewee participating, i.e., tree example, Human Eco-system Analysis format, and six headings of the Analysis
- Discuss what could be done to solve problems; remember to think about community networks and resources that can be utilized
4. Brainstorming – the six headings of Human Eco-System Analysis

Tell the class: All problems have factors that can be placed under the six categories of Human Eco-System Analysis (discussed in Session 3) that affect the problems we are studying.

What information should be collected under each?

Examine the factors under the six categories of Human Eco-System Analysis that may affect the problems under study.

Write down answers given. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six categories of Human Eco-System Analysis</th>
<th>List of how the six categories of Human Eco-System Analysis could possibly affect the problems under study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Extra sources of income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main source of income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Sanitation and hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to medical care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diet and nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Literacy skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to education (adults/children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of people who are illiterate in families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Communications in family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disputes in family or community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social support networks: friends, support groups, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Waste disposal and latrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water availability and cleanliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hazardous substance management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Religion, beliefs, gender roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special customs or practices that can be detrimental to health or costly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special customs or practices that are not detrimental to health and build strength and unity within village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Session 12: Conducting a successful interview ethically

Objectives

By the end of the two-hour session, participants should be able to:

- Describe the meaning of “ethics” and the importance of ethics
Activities

Brainstorming

Step 1. Say: *An example of ethics is to ask the person you intend to interview for permission to have an interview with him or her. It is unethical to barge into an interviewee’s home without informing the person ahead of time and to expect that person to give you information. Treating interviewees with respect is important.*

Ask: *What are ethics and can you define the term?*

Step 2. Record all answers on the flipchart. Summarize and get a group consensus.

Possible answer: *Ethics are defined as beliefs which are widely accepted as they reflect the morals of the culture under study.*

Step 3. Ask and write on the flipchart: *Why is an ethical approach to interviewing important?*

If the following answers were not given by the participants, add them to the discussions:

- If we are not ethical, people will be angry with us and will not want to cooperate with other Farmers’ Life School researchers
- If the Farmers’ Life School is not explained properly, the interviewees will not understand what we are doing and why we are doing it
- Responses may not be accurate because the interviewees fear they will be judged
- The study subject may feel forced to participate in the study, even if the programme’s objectives are not understood and he/she is not willing to be interviewed

Step 4. Ask: *What is an ethical approach to interviewing?*

Summarize the answers. Include the following if they have not been addressed:

- Direct permission from the interviewee must be obtained before the interview. At this meeting, the interviewers or a facilitator should clearly explain the study’s objectives to the interviewee
- The interviewee should clearly understand the interview process, what the aims of the Farmers’ Life School are, and why the interviews are important
- The interviewee has the right to stop the interview at any time
- The interviewers will neither use the information gathered from the interview nor identify the interviewee in any way without first getting permission from the interviewee
- Making jokes at the interviewee’s expense is unacceptable
- Some countries may require formal written consent for interviewing. Prior to interviewing, have the interviewee sign the consent form (see Annex IV)
- If the interviewee is a minor, the signature of a parent or guardian should also be obtained
- Influential people, such as the village leader, a teacher or an NGO coordinator, must not influence or intimidate the interviewee

Step 5. Discuss in small groups:

- In what circumstances could interviewees feel inconvenienced or embarrassed by a Farmers’ Life School interview?
- What could be done to avoid this?

Possible answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations that must be avoided</th>
<th>Proper methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants come to the house without getting permission directly from the interviewee himself or herself.</td>
<td>Participants get permission from the interviewee before the day of the Farmers’ Life School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants come to the house of the interviewee too early or too late in the day.</td>
<td>Participants arrive on time and introduce everyone properly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants do not give respectful greetings, do not introduce everyone or do not thank the interviewee.</td>
<td>Participants are polite, show respect to the interviewee and say “thank you” for the permission to interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some participants in the group are closely related to the interviewee.</td>
<td>Participants think about who is in the group and transfers anyone who might make the atmosphere uncomfortable for the interviewee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants just start asking questions without any introduction.</td>
<td>Participants explain what they are doing, why they are there, and what will happen during the interview and what will be discussed in the Human Eco-System session that will be held afterwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants do not listen politely, or they make jokes or laugh about what is said.</td>
<td>Participants all listen respectfully while making notes and concentrating during the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants discuss the interviewee as though s/he is not there.</td>
<td>Participants make sure that they invite comments and suggestions from the interviewee during the Human Eco-System Analysis session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants do not include the interviewee in the Human Eco-System Analysis discussion and analysis session.</td>
<td>Participants include the interviewee in the subsequent Human Eco-System Analysis discussion and analysis session and say “thank you” at the end of the interview to the interviewee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Session 13: Conducting Human Eco-System Analysis**

**Objectives**
By the end of the four-hour session, participants should be able to:

- Complete an interview with a person (interviewee) on one of the five most important problems in the community selected by participants during Session 10
- Fill in the Human Eco-System Analysis form
- Discuss the causes and consequences of the problem with the interviewee and how she or he coped with the problem.

**Activities**

1. **Small group activity – preparations for the interview**

Human Eco-System Analysis can be carried out multiple times, until participants feel comfortable with the process and fully understand their particular community’s problems.

Break into five groups and assign each group one of the five priority problems of the community as agreed in Session 10.

The facilitators should ask each group to discuss and agree on the following:

- *What questions will be asked?* Keep in mind things learned in previous sessions (factors under Human Eco-System Analysis, Village Walk, resources and networks that can be accessed, etc.)
- *Who will ask for consent and explain the interviewee’s rights?*
- *Who will explain the aim of the interview?*
- *Who will be responsible for asking each of the questions?*
- *Who will be responsible for recording the answers?*

2. **Conducting the interview**

Step 1. Go to the interviewee’s house. One facilitator per group is adequate.
Step 2. Begin the interview by introducing everyone’s name. Explain why the participants are doing the interview (the facilitator may do this the first time) and what the Farmers’ Life School and Human Eco-System Analysis are. Ask the interviewee for consent once more; have the consent form signed if needed; and explain that the interview can be stopped at any time.

Step 3. Ask the group to start the interviewing process by asking questions and taking notes.

3. Human Eco-System Analysis

Step 1. Ask the group to carry out a Human Eco-System Analysis based on the information given by the interviewee with the interviewee as a member of this discussion and analysis session. Conduct the problem tree analysis, and the web of problems to discuss with the interviewee the causes and possible consequences of the problem. Use the format for Human Eco-System Analysis in Session 11 as a guideline.

Step 2. Ask the group to discuss how the problem might be addressed. The opinions of the interviewee should be solicited first. Then members of the group can give their own opinions. Encourage each one to think about the community networks and resources that the community possesses which it may bring to bear in order to address the problem.

Facilitators should ensure that:

- Group members are attentive during interviews and that their questions show they are listening to what is being said
- The interviewees are not showing signs of distress or embarrassment
- The interviewer’s behaviour is both appropriate and respectful
- Feedback is given to the group on its performance (after the interview but not inside of the interviewee’s home);
- If the interview starts seriously to lose direction or if a participant become really nervous, the facilitator should be ready to divert the problem
- Small groups apply lessons learned from feedback given after previous interviews and Human Eco-System Analysis if this is not the first time Human Eco-System Analysis has been conducted.

Session 14: Presenting Human Eco-System Analysis

Objective
By the end of the four-hour session, participants should be able to describe the process of presenting Human Eco-system Analysis.
Activities

1. Presentation by each group

Step 1. Provide groups with sufficient time to complete their notes, discussions and displays for the presentations. The presentations should use the following sequence:

- Present data from interview
- State the conclusions about causes and consequences
- Present the problem tree analysis
- Ask for questions from other participants and answer directly

Ask each group to present its results.

2. Facilitator summary

Step 1. Facilitators should summarize the presentations, highlighting main ideas and issues emerging from the data, the conclusions and the analysis.

Step 2. Work with participants to find the main “lessons learned” from each interviewee. Facilitators should document these lessons on the flipchart and keep for classroom display.

Step 3. Ask participants for their ideas on what people can do to avoid, reduce or overcome the problems covered by the interviews. Facilitators are required to:

- Give feedback to the group post-presentation
- Be ready to step in with a question if the presentation starts seriously to lose direction or if questions are slow in coming from the other groups
- Provide encouraging feedback
- Take note of the main points of each presentation to prepare for the summary at the end of the session
- Ensure that other group members are attentive during the presentations

Session 15: Developing an action plan for post-Farmers’ Life School activities

Objectives

By the end of the two-hour session, participants should be able to:

- Explain why plans are needed
- Develop a plan for post-Farmers’ Life School activities
Activities

1. Brainstorming

Step 1. Ask: *How can you apply the Farmers’ Life School to your daily life? What can you accomplish or implement in the community or in your own life with the skills you have learned in the Farmers’ Life School?*

Step 2. Write all the answers on the flipchart, summarize and discuss with the class whether each idea is feasible and how beneficial each idea is.

2. Small group discussion – writing an action plan

Divide the class into three groups and ask each to draw up an action plan for post-Farmers’ Life School activities.

Ask: *How do you plan to accomplish your goals? Drawing up a plan/time-frame such as the one below will make your goals easier to attain. Think about the things that are needed or should be accomplished in each phase before the goal is accomplished. In the example, each phase is separated by month.*

An example of an action plan for a Farmers’ Life School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>What resources can be utilized?</th>
<th>Networks that can be used</th>
<th>Who is responsible for managing this activity?</th>
<th>Month 1</th>
<th>Month 2</th>
<th>Month 3</th>
<th>Month 4</th>
<th>Month 5</th>
<th>Month 6</th>
<th>Month 7</th>
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Have the groups present their plans. Compare, discuss and summarize all the action plans.

Session 16: Presenting the findings to the village

Objectives

By the end of this session participants should have:

- Reviewed sessions held in the past
- Developed an action plan that covers all the important points of the Farmers’ Life School and decided on all points of presentation
- Presented the findings to the villagers and asked villagers for their feedback
Activities

1. Group discussion

Step 1. Inform the participants that the findings they all worked together to produce are valuable. The participants learned how to alleviate some of the problems in their community, and they did so by utilizing their own knowledge, resources and community networks. The rest of the village can learn from their increased decision-making skills. The community benefits from being informed, and the changes that they may want to implement will be more widely understood, valued and supported.

Step 2. Tell the participants to review the sessions in which they previously participated. Ask the participants how they would like to present what they learned in the Farmers’ Life School. Ask them to write an action plan that covers all the important points of the Farmers’ Life School. The participants should be able to decide for themselves how and what should be discussed. Remind them that the Farmers’ Life School focuses on empowerment and building social capital to launch a developmental process unique to their village. Remember that interviewees should be informed and that they should give their consent to this meeting.

2. Presenting the material

Step 1. The method for explaining what has occurred in the Farmers’ Life School should begin with contacting the village leader for permission. The village leader should be formally invited by the facilitators to meet with both the participants and the facilitators of the Farmers’ Life School. Explain to him/her why presenting the Farmers’ Life School to villagers will be beneficial. Discuss with the village leader the appropriate venue for sharing the information and the date and time that is most convenient for most people in the village. Discuss how villagers will be informed of the meeting.

Step 2. Inform villagers about the time and date of the meeting. Then, present the findings to the community.

Step 3. Ask the villagers for feedback. Perhaps, they too, would like to be a part of the next Farmers’ Life School or they may also have suggestions on how to improve the community. Moreover, this information can be used to further improve the conditions of the community through contacting local authorities and informing them about the Farmers’ Life School process. Local authorities in countries undergoing a process of decentralization may take a strong interest in how communities can be taught to solve their own problems.
Annex I. Curriculum of a Farmers’ Life School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Framework for Farmers’ Life School</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Background</td>
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<td>b) General guidelines for Farmers’ Life School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) Preparations for starting a Farmers’ Life School</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introducing the Farmers’ Life School</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Problem identification</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agro-ecological system, human-ecological system and problem-solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agro Eco-System Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Field observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Needs and daily practices of villagers</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Community networks</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Resource mobilization</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Village Walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Presenting the results of the Village Walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Human Eco-System Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Conducting a successful interview ethically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Conducting Human Eco-System Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Presenting Human Eco-System Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Developing an action plan for post-Farmers’ Life School activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Presenting the findings to the village</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note: This curriculum sheet may be photocopied to distribute to the participants.

Annex II. A sample village consultation agenda

- Welcome by the village leader
- Introduce the facilitators
- Explain what is the Farmers’ Life School
  How and what will participants learn through the Farmers’ Life School? Why is it useful for the villagers?
  Encourage questions from the participants to dispel any potential misunderstandings
- Explain how the participants in the Farmers’ Life School are selected
  Through voluntary enrolment by each individual
- Discuss which dates and what times are most convenient for participants
  Where is an appropriate place to conduct the Farmers’ Life School?
- Comments by the facilitator
- Comments and closing remarks by the village leader
Annex III. A sample meeting record form

Meetings

• Topic:

• Village information
  Village name:
  Commune:
  District:
  Province:

• Date and time:

• Participants:

• Agenda (refer to Annex II for a sample agenda as a reference)

• Results of discussion

• Prepared and signed by facilitators:

Annex IV. A sample consent form

Purpose

The aim of these interviews is to stimulate community resilience by examining the consequences of decision-making. In order to do this, members of the community will be interviewed. It is hoped that, at the end of these Farmers’ Life School interviews, the villagers will have developed effective decision-making and problem-solving skills to help the community.

As a rule, the Farmers’ Life School will cover how to analyse a community problem, the ethics of interviewing, how to conduct and present an interview and how to use the networks and resources available in the community to help relieve or avoid the problem. Participants will decide on the community issues that need to be addressed most urgently. As the interviewee, you will be asked to contribute your first-hand experience in dealing with one of these problems. As a result, you and the group will analyse the causes and consequences that stem from this problem.
Interviewee’s rights

Your confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study, and in all written data compiled during and after completion of the Farmers’ Life School. The Farmers’ Life School participants understand that your privacy is crucial for voluntary participation. Participants will not disclose any information related to the interviews unless permission is expressly given by you for specified purposes.

All interviewees have full control over their own interviews. You, as an interviewee, have the right to stop participating in this interview at any time. You have the right to refuse to discuss any particular matters you consider private.

Please note that no monetary compensation will be given to you for the time spent and for your participation in the interview.

Consent

I, , voluntarily consent to participate in the Farmers’ Life School interview exercises.

If the signatory is a minor please have parent or guardian sign below:

I, , acting as a parent or guardian, voluntarily give permission for the above signatory to participate as an interviewee in the Farmers’ Life School.
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http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/FLS.htm  
Authors: Ou Chhaya, Jacques du Guerny, Richard Geeves, Masaya Kato and Lee-Nah Hsu  
Language: English | 974-91708-1-4  
January 2004 |
http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/Ruili_Model.htm  
Authors: Jacques du Guerny, Lee-Nah Hsu and Cao Hong  
Language: English, Chinese | 974-91669-7-3  
August 2003 |
| ![From Early Warning to Development Sector Responses against HIV/AIDS Epidemics](http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/EWDSR.htm) | From Early Warning to Development Sector Responses against HIV/AIDS Epidemics  
http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/EWDSR.htm  
Authors: Philip Guest, Jacques du Guerny and Lee-Nah Hsu  
Language: English, Chinese | 974-91330-6-4  
May 2003 |
| ![Multisectoral Responses to Mobile Populations' HIV Vulnerability: Examples from People's Republic of China, Thailand and Viet Nam](http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/Multisectoral.htm) | Multisectoral Responses to Mobile Populations' HIV Vulnerability: Examples from People’s Republic of China, Thailand and Viet Nam  
http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/Multisectoral.htm  
Authors: Jacques du Guerny, Kellie Wilson, Promboon Panitchapakdi and Philip Guest  
Language: English | 974-91165-8-5  
February 2003 |
http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/meeting-challenge.htm  
Author: Jacques du Guerny  
Language: English, Chinese | 974-680-220-8  
December 2002 |
| ![Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore Cluster Country Consultation on Migrant Workers' HIV Vulnerability Reduction: Pre-departure, post-arrival and returnee reintegration](http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/BIMPS-Report.htm) | Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore Cluster Country Consultation on Migrant Workers’ HIV Vulnerability Reduction: Pre-departure, post-arrival and returnee reintegration  
Workshop organized by UNDP-SEAHIV, CHASPPAR, MOH Philippines, OWWA Philippines and ASEAN Secretariat  
Language: English, Chinese | 974-680-221-6  
September 2002 |
| ![Indigenous South East Asian Herbal Remedies: Symptomatic relief for people with HIV/AIDS](http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/Herbs.htm) | Indigenous South East Asian Herbal Remedies: Symptomatic relief for people with HIV/AIDS  
http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/Herbs.htm  
Authors: Somsak Supawitkul, Rachanit Rachakid and Pornpimol Saksoong  
Compiled by Marissa Marco, Phimjai Kananurak and Kannika Marco  
Language: English | 974-680-212-7  
August 2002 |
| ![Communities Facing the HIV/AIDS Challenge: From crisis to opportunities, from community vulnerability to community resilience](http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/Crisis.htm) | Communities Facing the HIV/AIDS Challenge: From crisis to opportunities, from community vulnerability to community resilience  
http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/Crisis.htm  
Authors: Lee-Nah Hsu, Jacques du Guerny and Marissa Marco  
Language: English, Chinese | 974-680-271-8  
July 2002 |
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<td>The Potential Costs and Benefits of Responding to the Mobility Aspect of the HIV Epidemic in South East Asia: A conceptual framework*</td>
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<td>92-2-112631-5 November 2001</td>
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<td>HIV Policy Formulation and Strategic Planning: For the communication, transportation, post, construction and tourism sectors, Lao People's Democratic Republic*</td>
<td>974-680-184-8 October 2001</td>
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<td><img src="image11.png" alt="Cover" /></td>
<td>The Impacts of Mapping Assessments on Population Movement and HIV Vulnerability in South East Asia*</td>
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## Other Publications

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<td>UNDP-FAO Mobilization and Empowerment of Rural Communities along the Asian Highway (Route S) in Cambodia to Reduce HIV Vulnerability <a href="http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/review-route5.htm">http://www.hiv-development.org/publications/review-route5.htm</a> Fact sheet and project evaluation report by Jacques du Guerny Language: English, Khmer</td>
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<td>UNIFEM/UNAIDS/UNDP-SEAHIV Information Kit on Women, Gender and HIV/AIDS in East and South East Asia Language: English</td>
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<td>Regional Summit on Pre-departure, Post-arrival and Reintegration Programmes for Migrant Worker Workshop organized by CARAM Asia, UNDP-SEAHIV, CHRF and IOM Report Language: English</td>
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<td>November 1999</td>
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Development is the process of enlarging peoples’ choices to live long and healthy lives, to have access to knowledge, and to have access to income and assets: to enjoy a decent standard of living.

ISBN: 974-91708-1-4