The use of dialogue in the formulation of regional environmental objectives: A case study of the Dalarna County (Sweden).

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Abstract

In recent times, environmental issues have gained a lot of public attention due to the threat of environmental problems to the future survival of humanity. In view of this most countries, of which Sweden is not an exception, have come up with environmental quality objectives to help deal with the threat pose by these environmental problems. Sweden has adopted sixteen (16) environmental quality objectives with most of it slated to be achieved by the year 2020 with the exception of the climate change objective scheduled to be met by the year 2050. To achieve these objectives, each County in Sweden is mandated to adapt, define and translate into potential targets 15 of the 16 environmental goals. The Dalarna County conducted its first review of the regional environmental objectives between 2006 -2007. This process adopted a consultative meeting approach with the relevant stakeholders. Currently another review process is going on but this time around, the County Administrative Board (CAB) has decided to adopt the process of dialogue. This study sought to assess the impact of this dialogic process, the stakeholder's perception about this process and also the major challenges associated with the use of such process in reviewing the regional environmental objectives and also formulating action plans. By adopting a qualitative approach through interviewing of relevant stakeholders, it was established that this new approach has helped enhanced stakeholder's sense of responsibility, fostered mutual learning and increased stakeholders understanding about the process, enhanced collaboration and relationship among the stakeholders and finally led to the emergence of new and co-ordinated action. It was also established that all the stakeholders had a positive perception about the process. Finally, it was identified that the main challenges associated with the use of the dialogic process included: inability to achieve all the environmental objectives as scheduled and also lack of recognition of this new role of the County Administrative Board by some stakeholders.

Key words: *Dalarna County, Environmental Objectives, Dialogue, Revision, Action plans*

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Figures and table.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAB- The County Administrative Board of Dalarna

MDG- The Millenium Development Goals

NODAVA- Norra Dalarna Vatten and Avfall

SEPA- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

UNDP- United Nations Development Programme

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

In recent times, environmental issues have gained a lot of public attention due to the threat of environmental problems to the future survival of humanity. This has made it possible for such issues to be discussed at the local, regional, national and international arena. Furthermore, most countries have also adopted national environmental objectives with specific targets for achieving environmental sustainability. According to the UNDP, 2005 the setting up of country-specific environmental objectives is not only vital to achieving the environmental goal of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7 (environmental sustainability) but would also ensure sustained progress in achieving the other MDGs.

Sweden, with the formulation of its 16 environmental quality objectives is not an exception in ensuring the country's commitment to achieving the targets of the MDG (SEPA, 2011). The main goal of this environmental policy is to ensure intergenerational equity in terms of environmental benefits and also to contribute to reducing environmental and health problems outside Sweden's borders (SEPA, 2011). As indicated by SEPA, 2011, the environmental quality objective would help to guide environmental actions at every level. To achieve these objectives, there is the need for enhanced collaboration among all interested stakeholders of which the County Administrative Board (CAB) is not an exception (SEPA, 2011). As asserted by SEPA, 2011, "every CAB is obliged to adapt, define in detail and translate into potential targets 15 of the 16 environmental quality objectives". This would require that the CAB also co-operates and engages all interested stakeholders in the formulation of their action plans to ensure that the set targets are met (SEPA, 2011). In line with this, the CAB in Dalarna County has embarked on formulating action plans towards the achievement of its regional environmental objectives in line with the national objective. The first review took place between 2006-2007 and it involved a multi stakeholder involvement from the CAB, the Municiplaities, Interested Non Governmental Organisations, Public Utility companies, Local companies and others. With this multi stakeholder process, the Dalarna CAB adopted consultative meetings as a way of getting stakeholders opinion on the

environmental objectives and the action plans (Dalarna County Administrative Board, 2011). The Second review of the environmental objectives and the formulation of action plans also started in 2010 and will run until 2012. With this, the Dalarna CAB has adopted dialogue as an integral part of the whole multi stakeholder review process through the formation of a working group that will be representative of all the interested stakeholders in about eleven (11) different sectors namely the hospitality industry, construction and housing, water supply and sewage management, waste management, Energy production, trade in goods and consumption and services, agriculture and farmland actors, forest sector, Manufacturing sector, transport and communication and environmental protection (Dalarna County Administrative Board, 2011).

1.1 Problem statement

As indicated by Makinde, 2005, most policy implementations have failed as a result of lack of dialogue with the interested stakeholders in the policy formulation stage. To avert this, the Dalarna CAB has also decided to shift from the use of consultative meetings to dialogue in the formulation of its regional environmental objectives and action plans. According to Sanders and Hammond 2002 the use of dialogue ensures movement towards the adoption of a collective action. They indicate further that, the tension between coherence and incoherence is dealt with through dialogue. Notwithstanding this important role of dialogue in the creation and transformation of our world, it is also characterized by vagueness among stakeholders as to what the term really means and how it is used. As asserted by Gergen *et al,* 2004 " choruses now sing praises to dialogue but seldom stop to consider that their tributes may be directed towards entirely different practices" . These different practices may result in the different formulation or framing of issues or problems by the different stakeholders thereby leading to communication failures and as such inability of the interacting parties involve in the dialogic process to deal with a common problem in a more constructive manner. Furthermore, dialogic processes are often regarded theoretically as one of the ways of enhancing participation and democratic principles in decision making processes. But is it always the case in practice? How do the participating stakeholders in a dialogue perceive the process? Do they describe the emerging process in a similar way as the dialogue theorists do? What

are some of the benefits and constraints that could be associated with exercising dialogue in practice? This study aims at contributing to the understanding of perceptions of creating ´´dialogue`` in practice and how these perceptions relate to the normative theories proposing ´´dialogue`´ as a good way of decision making and policy formulation and planning.

This study would assess the challenges associated with the dialogic process, describe stakeholder's perception of the process and also identify the impact of the dialogic process in the formulation of the regional environmental objectives and action plans within the water supply and sewage management working group.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- Assess the impact of the dialogic process in the revision of the regional environmental goals and action plans.
- Describe stakeholder's perception of the dialogic process.
- Assess the challenges associated with the use of dialogue in the revision of the regional environmental goals.

Research questions

This research intends to answer the following questions:

- What are the impacts of the dialogic process being used in the formulation of the regional environmental objective and the action plans?

- How do stakeholders perceive the dialogic process that they are engaged in?

- What are the challenges associated with the use of dialogue in the revision of the regional environmental goals?

CHAPTER TWO

2. THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to better understand and critically analyse the empirical data as a way of providing answers to the research questions posed in the earlier chapter, relevant theories would be needed to do a better and meaningful analysis. In describing stakeholders perception or interpretation of the dialogic process, it is prudent to explore different theoretical interpretations of the term "dialogue" and also theories on collaborative policy planning, and others to know how stakeholders responses relate to the different perspectives on the term dialogue as expressed by different authors and also its impact on the stakeholders(within the water supply and sewage management) with regards to mutual learning, collaboration, joint meaning making, mutual understanding, mutual respect and others.

2.1 Theoretical interpretation of the term ´´dialogue``

As asserted by Charkraverti, 2009, the term dialogue is used both loosely and in specific ways. The term may have different interpretations depending on the one defining it and also the context within which it is being used. Literatures reviewed below indicate three different interpretations of the term "dialogue" by different authors. These three different interpretations can be grouped as pre-condition oriented, process oriented and outcome oriented interpretation of the term "dialogue". Some of the outcome oriented interpretations of dialogue involve the definitions by Charkraverti, 2009, Hawes 1999, Eisenberg and Goodall 1993, Bohm, 1996 and Romney 2011. Charkraverti, 2009, defines dialogue as a 'way of building a better communication, relationship and understanding between persons or groups stuck in a continuous conflict'. Eisenberg and Goodall 1993 also define dialogue as a way of giving the voiceless a voice to challenge authorities. Hawes 1999 also sees dialogue as a tool for mediating between groups of different interest. Bohm, 1996 also asserts that dialogic conversations are those in which something new emerges and also enhances collective thinking, cooperation and collective intelligence. Romney 2011 also defines dialogue as a 'focussed conversation that is deliberately engaged in with the aim of enhancing understanding, addressing problems

and questioning thoughts or actions. Also with regards to pre-condition based interpretation or requirements of dialogue, Chakraverti, 2009 again sees dialogue as a conversation that can have much impact if the parties or groups engaging in it have much interest in the process. Arnett, 1986, also asserts that dialogue can only occur among conscious-oriented thinkers rather than strategist. This is so because as indicated by Arnett 1986, conscious-oriented thinkers look out for good outcome that ensures the maintenance of ethics and values whilst strategist always look out for means of achieving personal aims or goals without due consideration to ethical practices. Process oriented interpretations of dialogue also have authors like Chakraverti 2009, who again sees dialogue as a conversation characterized by non -polarized discourse (Thus communication leading to the emergence of new and more inclusive perspective) and deeper mutual inquiry and learning that often lays the foundation for better understanding and relationship among participating groups. Dialogue characterized by non-polarised discourse enhances collaboration and collective problem solving among parties or groups (Chakraverti, 2009). Isaacs, 1993 also asserts that, dialogic conversations is usually characterized by people gradually learning to do away with their defensive exchanges and in turn probe into why those exchanges exist with the hope of collaborating in the end. This helps groups or parties to suspend their stereotypic perspectives and see the world from other perspectives and thus enhance the creation of the enabling environment for people to think together and create a shared meaning that may result in new and co-ordinated action (Isaacs, 1993). Harris, 2011 also sees dialogue as a well designed and managed process of active involvement of stakeholders. From the above different interpretations, one could see that Chakraverti, 2009 shares the three main interpretations of dialogue.

These three different interpretations of dialogue (outcome oriented, pre-condition oriented and process oriented) elaborated above would help the author in analyzing how the stakeholders (interviewees) talk about the term “dialogue” by relating it to these different viewpoints presented above.

2.2 Dialogue and organizational transformation

As asserted by Gerard and Teurfs, 1995, dialogic processes have the potential of transforming organizational cultures in three ways. They name these three types of transformations as ability to change participant's behaviour, ability to foster the establishment of communities by helping participants feel the importance of being in full community and finally ability to encourage participants to replace an attitude of unyielding individualism with an attitude of co-operation and partnership. This would help enhance or encourage constructive problem solving within the organization. This is so because as indicated by Gerard and Teurfs, 1995 dialogic processes helps in the earlier identification of a problem and also a better and clearer understanding of it. By being able to identify the problem and understand it better, the dialogic process has the potential of helping stakeholders to come up with a broader set of solutions to the problems identified and this would facilitate the implementation process due to high level of commitment and unity in the proposed solutions among the stakeholders (Gerard and Teurfs 1995). As indicated by Gerard and Teurfs 1995, stakeholders who have engaged in dialogic process through the earlier stages as a way of finding solutions to a problem would be more united and committed behind the final decision or solution.

2.3 Collaborative policy dialogue

As asserted by Innes and Booher, 2003, "collaborative policy making is a way of establishing new networks among players in the policy making system and to increase the distribution of knowledge among them". Collaborative policy planning is a new form of governance that is creative and adaptive form of policy making in this era (Innes and Booher, 2003). To ensure effective collaborative policy planning and making among diverse and interdependent players with different power relations, collaborative dialogue is very essential (Innes and Booher, 2003). Collaborative dialogue would only occur among stakeholders of a particular policy when the stakeholders are encouraged to engage in joint fact finding that will ensure that there is a consensus on the nature of the problem and the conditions affecting it (Innes and Booher, 2003). Furthermore, in collaborative dialogue, each participant in the dialogic process must legitimately represent his or her interest and also be sincere with his or her concerns. Also statements

made by stakeholders in the course of the dialogic process must be comprehensible and accurate (Innes and Booher, 2003). As indicated by Innes and Booher, 2003 " collaborative dialogue depends also on participants ability to follow a discussion that results in mutual understanding rather than being artificially constrained by rules about what can be discussed or what cannot be changed". Although collaborative dialogue is very significant to the creation of agreements and establishment of new approaches, to achieve true benefits of it, the players in the dialogic process must be diverse and interdependent on each other (Innes and Booher, 2003). This is necessary because according to Habermas 1984, for communication rationality to be achieved, there is the need for inclusion of all interests in the discourse. This communicative rationality is a form of reason based on consensual discussions (Intersubjective discourses) rather than pure individual interpretive or strategic action (Willson, 2010). According to Habermas, 1984 communicative rationality is a reason ingrained in speeches which meet the validity claims of truth, comprehensibility, rightness and sincerity whilst simultaneously aiming for mutual understanding and agreement among interacting parties. Communication rationality is very relevant for collaborative dialogue in that it would help the stakeholders understand the perspectives of others, encourage the construction of a common understanding and meaning and also create a sense of ownership among stakeholders with the outcome of their dialogic process.

Furthermore diversity of actors in the dialogic process would also help enhance creativity as a result of the search of actions in response to the wide range of different interests (Innes and Booher , 2003). The interdependence of stakeholders in collaborative dialogue would also ensure the collective creation of an adaptive learning system that is efficient (Innes and Booher, 2003). Innes and Booher 2003 , further asserts that collaborative dialogue among diverse and interdependent actors would result in reciprocity, enhanced relation, learning and creativity. Reciprocity occurs as a result of the actors in the dialogic process developing understanding of their interdependence as they collaborate thereby enhancing cohesion among the participants for continued work (Innes and Booher, 2003). Furthermore, relationships are established in collaborative dialogue because it offers actors who under normal circumstances would have found it difficult talking to each other, the platform to interact and build new relationships and social capital (Innes and

Booher, 2003). With regards to learning, as different stakeholders interact with each other through an engagement of actors in interested tasks, they tend to learn from one another (Innes and Booher, 2003). Collaborative dialogue also enhances the creativity of stakeholders because it offers them the opportunity to provide solutions to a problem thereby resulting in the generation of tremendous creativity among themselves (Innes and Booher, 2003). Innes and Booher, 2003 again asserts that when collaborative dialogue is adopted in policy planning and making, it would eventually result in four kinds of changes which would also help complex systems become a complex adaptive systems that has the ability or potential to learn and evolve through feedback and distributed intelligence. The four changes to the system include creation of stakeholders identity, development of shared meanings among the actors, development of heuristcs (Thus participants agreeing on , explicitly or de facto new rules of thumb to guide their action) and finally emergence of genuine innovations (Innes and Booher, 2003). Stakeholder's identities are created as a result of the dialogic process offering stakeholders the opportunity to articulate their concerns. This development and articulation of shared and linked identities helps to enhance long term collaboration among the participants (Innes and Booher, 2003). Furthermore, the shared meanings are developed among the participants due to the dialogic process offering a common platform for discussion among the participants on issues which may eventually help stakeholders to have a common view about the issue at stake (Innes and Booher, 2003). According to Innes and Booher, 20003 "dialogue speeds up a process of building shared meaning that could have taken years or never have happened". When the adaptation of the system become heuristic as a result of the dialogic process, it will help stakeholders to give each other a listening ear, respect the views of each other and finally look out for common interest instead of differences (Innes and Booher, 2003). Finally, collaborative dialogue could result in genuine innovation. This occurs due to the enhanced interaction and collaboration it offers which may result in the creation of strong social capital (Innes and Booher, 2003). Below is a diagram describing the whole collaborative dialogue process described above.

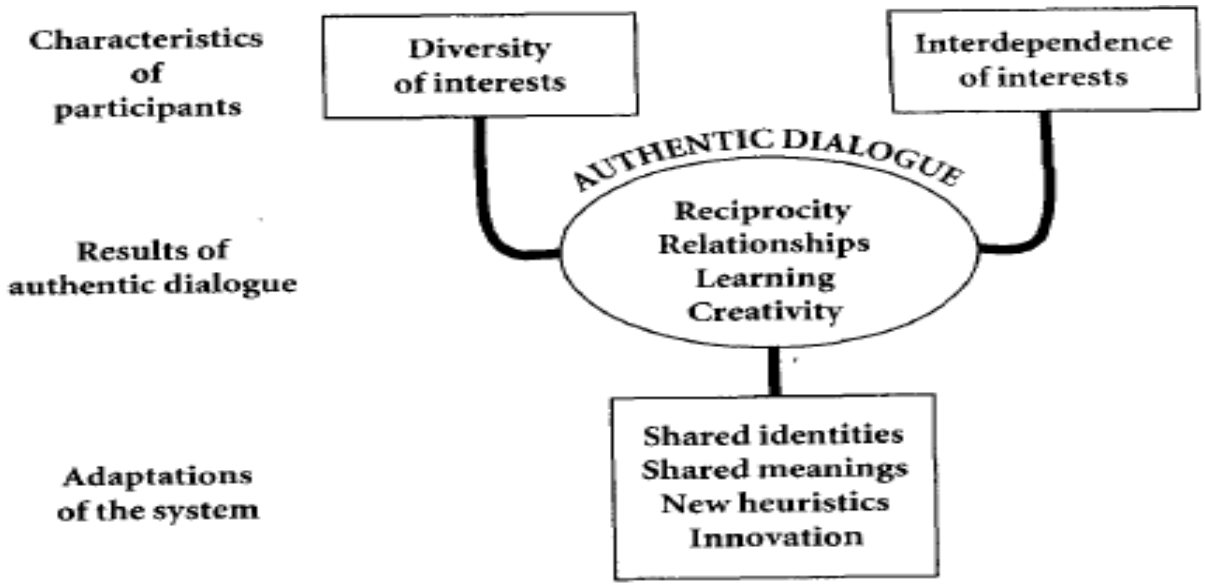

Figure 1: collaborative dialogue process diagram

Source: Innes and Booher, 2003

Innes and Booher´s 2003 model on collaborative dialogue would help the author in analyzing how the dialogic process has impacted on the stakeholders engaged in the revision of the regional environmental objectives and also the formulation of action plans. With this the author will pay attention to factors indicating how the interview persons perceive the current process in terms of reciprocity, relationships, learning and creativity and also signs of the system to create shared identities, shared meaning new heuristics and innovations.

CHAPTER THREE

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The Dalarna CAB was selected as a focus of our case study because it is one of the County's in Sweden that is currently in the process of formulating its action plans within the water supply and sewage management sector

3.1 Dalarna County in brief.

Dalarna County is situated in the central part of Sweden. It extends from the Norwegian border from the west and to Gävle in the east. It has a total land area of about 30,404km^2 which is like the size of Belgium (Dalarna County Administrative Board, 2009). The county has 15 municipalities as shown in the map below. The name Dalarna County was adopted in 1997 through an act of parliament after the county's name had been changed from Kopparberg County (Dalarna County Administrative Board, 2009). It has Falun municipality as its capital. As at 2008, the total population of the county was 275,867 (Dalarna County Administrative Board, 2009). Some of the important industries in the county include lumbering, textile weaving, woodworking and sawmilling among others. Below is the map of the county showing the various municipalities.

Figure 2: Map of Dalarna County

Source: Dalarna County Administrative Board, 2009

3.2 Methodology

This study adopted a case study approach with the Dalarna County as a case study area. This was done for two reasons. The first is that Dalarna County is among the counties in Sweden currently using dialogue in the formulation of its regional environmental objectives and action plans. The second reason is that, the author wanted to have an in depth understanding of the study (the dialogic process). As asserted by Flyvbjerg, 2001, case studies are considered as an appropriate methodology if one wants to focus on studies that provide answers to “how” and “why” questions. Example of such question is how stakeholders perceive the dialogic process being used in the formulation of the regional environmental objectives and action plans.

3.3 Data collection

This study was based on qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders and also the review of primary and secondary documents. Below gives a brief description of how these methods were used

3.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders making up the members of the working group within the water supply and sewage management sector of the regional environmental objective. Focus was directed on stakeholders within this sector because it is the sector which is currently using the dialogic process in formulating the regional environmental objectives and actions plans. The interviewees were drawn from the County Administrative Board of Dalarna (CAB), Norra Dalarna Vatten and Avfall (Nodava), Borlange Energi AB and Smedjabacken Energy and Vatten. One representative each from these organizations was interviewed. The representatives were purposely selected based on the extent to which they have been involved in the whole dialogic process. Semi-structured questions that are open-ended in nature were asked as a way of helping the author to ask follow up questions on issues of interest and also on issues that seem unclear to him. The questions were designed based on the author's understanding of the situation which was informed by the review of relevant literatures and also responses from other interviewees. See appendix 1 (page 33) for the detailed questions asked.

3.3.2 Literatures reviewed

The author reviewed a number of literatures in the area of dialogue, collaborative policy planning and making, public participation in decision making and others. The literatures used included peer reviewed articles, textbooks and information from relevant organizational websites. See complete list of literatures used on the reference section (page 32).

3.4 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by first transcribing all the interviews conducted. The data was then grouped into thematic areas in line with the objectives of the study and then analyzed to provide answers to the research questions with the help of relevant literatures and theories. Innes and Booher, 2003 theory on the outcome of collaborative dialogue was also used in analyzing the responses from the interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Description of the case being investigated

The adoption of dialogue in the formulation of the regional environmental goals by the Dalarna CAB have been going on in other sectors (the waste management sector) for some time now whilst others have their process in the start´-up phase. With regards to the water supply and sewage management sector, the dialogic process was initiated in May, 2011 in Falun during a meeting with the CAB and Dala VA[1]. During this meeting, the CAB as a way of getting the stakeholders within the water supply and sewage management sector to play an active role in the formulation of action plans towards the achievement of the Dalarna environmental objectives asked the stakeholders within this sector (in a workshop) to identify the three major environmental problems within their area of working that they have the capacity to work on to improve it. With this, the stakeholders identified three main areas of interest that they would like to work on to improve it. These areas are energy efficiency, storm water management and water and sediment quality management. This resulted in the stakeholders making up three sub-working groups to effectively address the problems identified in these three areas. After this the CAB in its next meeting with the stakeholders, invited experts in the areas (energy efficiency, storm water management and sediment and water quality managment) the stakeholders have resolved to work with to give inspiring lectures on different approaches of effectively dealing with the identified problems. As a way of getting feedback on the task of the different sub-working groups, dialog days are organized where each sub working group within the water supply and sewage management sector is given the opportunity to present their work or what they have done to other stakeholders in other sectors, politicians in their respective municipalities and managers of companies. The most recent dialogue day was held on November 16th 2011 at Tällberg which attracted about fifty five (55) participants. Within this three (3) sub-working groups, the

[1] A network of companies engaged in carrying out municipal related activities or task in Dalarna County. Such network meets twice a year

mode of working varies from each other. Some groups (The energy efficiency group) aside organizing meetings have also established a shared file system on Microsoft outlook where members can share information and also engage in discussions. Others like the water and sediment quality group (formerly upstream group) do not have a strict or specified schedule for meetings but rather meets when there is a need for it. They also keep close contact through sending emails on issues of mutual interest.

The process (thus mode of engagement of the other stakeholders by the CAB and also the stakeholders way of working) described above is what my interviews persons referred to as a dialogic process that they are currently engaged in. Innes and Booher, 2003 have also linked certain qualities to the outcome of collaborative dialogue (see page 15). In this section, some of the analysis of the interviews would be done by looking for signs in the responses from my interview persons to estimate those qualities (as asserted by Innes and Booher, 2003) in their experiences as a way of answering my research questions.

4.2. Impact of the dialogic process in the revision of the regional environmental objectives

According to the stakeholders interviewed in this study, the adoption of dialogue by the County Administrative Board (CAB) in the formulation of the regional environmental goals and action plans has made significant impact to the process. According to them the, dialogic process has helped to enhance a sense of responsibility, collaboration and good relations among the stakeholders. It has also helped increase the understanding of the stakeholders about the goals and also offered the platform for mutual learning and exchange of ideas. The process has also led to the emergence of new and co-ordinated action among the stakeholders. Below is a description of how the dialogic process has contributed to what has already been indicated above based on the responses from the stakeholders in the study.

4.2.1 Enhancement of a sense of responsibility among the stakeholders.

As indicated earlier, in the previous review of the regional environmental objective, the CAB used to set the agenda as to what should be done by the stakeholders in order to achieve the environmental goals. Though the stakeholders were sometimes involved

through consultative meetings where their inputs were taken by the CAB. This process was seen as a top-down approach and that made most stakeholders became apathetic to the implementation of the final outcome of the process. With the adoption of dialogue this time around where the CAB asked the stakeholders to dialogue and come up with what they can do to help achieve the regional environmental goals, this new process has helped made most of the stakeholders more responsible and also committed to their action plans in helping achieve the Dalarna regional environmental goals. This is so because the dialogic process has helped create a sense of ownership of the final outcome of the process among the stakeholders. As indicated in an interview with the CAB.

*´´I think the outcome of the process is that, they (*the other stakeholders*) have themselves identified what the big problems are , they have themselves identified what they can do about it, and they have themselves started working on it*``.

This view was also affirmed by the other stakeholders in the study who also said that.

´´Many of the things which we suggested to the CAB should have been done five years ago but we didn't do it. But now when we make them more specific and put them in writing, then we can't say anymore that oh we know we should have done it but we didn't have the time. Now it's binding because we came up with it´´- Representative of Borlänge Energy AB.

This view was also supported by the representative of Smedjabacken Energy and Vatten who also said that.

*´´Now it's (*the action plan to achieve the regional environmental goals) *not just paperwork but something binding that we have to work hard to achieve´´*

The enhancement in the sense of responsibility among the stakeholders occurred because of their active involvement in the process through the use of dialogue which helped create some sense of ownership of the process and the final outcome. As asserted by Gerard and Teurfs, 1995, stakeholders who have engaged in a dialogic process through the earlier stages as a way of finding a solution to a problem would be more united and committed behind the final decision.

4.2.2 Improved collaboration and relationship among the different stakeholders

According to the interviewed stakeholders, the dialogic process has helped fostered close collaboration and enhanced the relationship among their colleagues within the water supply and sewage management working group. This is so because as indicated in the interview, the dialogic process has helped enhanced close interactions between the stakeholders than before as a result of the stakeholders meeting regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest. These interactions are also encouraged through the creation of three (3) sub working groups within the water supply and sewage management working group. These sub-groups are the energy efficiency group, Day water or storm water management group and water and sediment quality group (formerly upstream group). The members of these groups have a specified assignment to work within the framework of effective and efficient water supply and sewage management and as such meet most often to discuss such issues and this helps enhance close collaboration and also help improve relations among the stakeholders. When the stakeholders were asked how the current process has impacted on their relationship and collaboration with the other stakeholders they answered in the affirmative as illustrated below.

´´*Its very interesting and very rewarding co-operation. I have a very much closer relationship now with the stakeholders of this sector than I have before. We are sort of more colleagues than different parts*``- representative from CAB

This was also affirmed by the representative from Smedjabacken Energy and Vatten who indicated that.

´´ *Before this (*the dialogic process*) I didn't know anybody and I didn't have anybody to work with. I was alone and had to take more help from consultants but now we have more connections and we know each other and we work for the same goal*``

This is necessary in every dialogic process because as indicated by Chakraverti, 2009, a good dialogue process often lays the foundation for better collaboration and relationships among stakeholders. Innes and Booher, 2003 also asserts that collaborative dialogue offers the platform for the establishment of relationships among stakeholders because it

offers the chance for actors who under normal circumstances would have found it difficult to work together to do so.

4.2.3 Increased understanding and mutual learning among stakeholders

As indicated by the stakeholders interviewed, the dialogic process has helped deepened their understanding about the regional environmental goals and also their contribution to the realization of these goals. It has also helped enhanced mutual learning among the stakeholders. This was made possible because as the stakeholders work together (in the sub groups under the water supply and sewage management working group) through the process of dialogue in their mutual inquiry into the problems in their sector and what action plans should be adopted to help achieve the regional environmental goals, it has helped fostered collective thinking and communication among them. This had in turn helped offer the platform for the stakeholders to exchange ideas and question thoughts thereby deepening their understanding of the process and also fostering mutual learning among them. As indicated by Isaacs, 1993 ´´people who communicate share an understanding not simply of words but of how to form words to make meaning. Charon 2006 also asserts that as individuals (actors) interact over time each tends to influence the other and this gradually affects one's stream of action, the perspectives one assumes, interest, goals and abilities. Innes and Booher 2003, also indicated that as different stakeholders interact with each other over time through the engagement of actors in interested tasks, they tend to learn from each other. This increased understanding and mutual learning offered by the process of dialogue was evident in the stakeholders responses to the interview conducted as indicated below.

´´ *I think the current process (*dialogue*) is very rewarding. It offers us the opportunity to learn from each other. Normally we have the same problems regardless of where we work but we have different ways of solving the problem. So when we all come together we always have something to learn from each other so that's good*``- representative of Nodava

The representative of Borlangi Energi AB also indicated as follows.

´´I think each other's points of view about the regional environmental goals have deepened. I also think that the CAB`s view about what we can really do and how the reality looks also in the municipalities has also deepened. I think this process has helped increased both (the other stakeholders and CAB) sides understanding of each other's problems``

4.2.4 Emergence of new and co-ordinate action among stakeholders

As indicated by the stakeholders in the study, the dialogic process has helped them come up with some emerging solutions to some of the problems faced. With regards to the water supply and sewage management working group, the dialogic process has helped in the establishment of three (3) sub working groups. These are energy efficiency group, Day water or storm water management group and water and sediment quality working group. As indicated by the CAB.

*´´ Now on their (*the other stakeholders*) own initiatives, they have made three working groups within themselves. The authorities weren't involved at all. They are going to work by themselves´´.*

These groups have been tasked to come up with guidelines on how the stakeholders within this sector can optimize energy in their operations, effectively manage storm water flow so that more untreated water is not pumped into the rivers as a result of the threat of too much storm water rupturing the sewage piping system. They have also been tasked to effectively manage polluted water and other substances from industries and businesses upstream (Upstream group). Within these sub-groups, the upstream group has developed a brochure on the guidelines for the discharge of sewage from industries and business operators to alert them about what kind of chemicals and other substances should be discharged directly into the sewage treatment plant. As indicated by one of the stakeholders in this group.

´´We have developed guidelines on what should be let out into the sewage system by industries and business operators with the help of all our members´´- representative of Borlange Energi AB

This was made possible because the dialogic process offered the platform for the emergence of new initiatives and co-ordination among the actors. As asserted by Bohm, 1996, dialogic processes may result in the emergence of something new. Innes and Booher, 2003 also indicated that collaborative dialogue may result in the emergence of innovative solutions.

4.3. Stakeholders perception about the dialogic process

Based on the responses from the interviews conducted, this study revealed that although most of the stakeholders couldn't provide specific definitions to the term ´´dialogue``, their perception of the process that they are currently engaged in showed different positive thoughts about the dialogic process. These thoughts or perceptions were based on two main categories of dialogue namely process and outcome oriented interpretation of the term dialogue.

The CAB sees the dialogic process as a bottom-up approach that offers the other stakeholders the opportunity to come up with their own initiatives on what they can do to help achieve the regional environmental goals without any imposition from the CAB. This was seen as very relevant in making the other stakeholders find their role in the new regional environmental objectives by helping them come up with action plans that are realistic and achievable. As indicated in an interview by the CAB.

´´Now we want to make the process more adaptive to the different stakeholders instead of adaptive to the authorities system of objectives``

This perception of the dialogic process is more outcome-oriented. As indicated by Innes and Booher, 2003, collaborative dialogue would only occur among stakeholders of a particular policy when the stakeholders are encouraged to engage in joint fact finding that will ensure that there is a consensus on the nature of the problem and the conditions affecting it.

Some stakeholder's perception about the dialogic process was based on both process and outcome-oriented interpretations of the term ´´dialogue``. Some of the stakeholder's perceived the dialogic process as a way of learning that helps deepens their understanding of the regional environmental goals and also enhances their sense of responsibility in achieving it. As indicated by the representative of Borlange Energi AB in an interview.

*´´ I think it (*the dialogic process*) is a good approach from the CAB to make us more responsible´´*.

This view was also affirmed by the representative from Smedjebacken Energy and Vatten who also said.

´´When you have dialogue, then you get more involved in everything and take more responsibility for the questions that needs to be worked with``

Other stakeholders also perceived the dialogic process as enhanced interaction among different stakeholders. This kind of definition was more process-oriented interpretation of dialogue. As indicated by the representative of Nodava.

´´As it is now, we don't really talk to each other unless we have to. So what we are trying to do (the dialogic process) is to create the platform for us to interact more frequently and talk about our problems before they actually becomes a problem``.

These interpretations are necessary because as indicated by Harris, 2011, dialogue is a well designed and managed process of active involvement of stakeholders. Innes and Booher, 2003 also asserts that collaborative dialogue among diverse and interdependent stakeholders would yield reciprocity, enhanced relation, learning and creativity. These tenets of dialogue were highlighted as the stakeholders interpreted the dialogic process that they are engage in.

4.4 Challenges associated with the use of dialogue in the revision of the regional environmental objectives.

Two main challenges were identified with regards to the use of dialogue in the formulation of the regional environmental objectives and action plans. These are

1. Inability to achieve all the regional environmental objectives as scheduled
2. Lack of recognition of the new role of the CAB by some stakeholders.

These challenges are elaborated below.

4.4.1 Inability to achieve all the regional environmental goals as scheduled

The current regional environmental objectives being reviewed are slated to be achieved by the year 2015. With the adoption of dialogue as a process for this revision, a lot of ideas are generated by the stakeholders which are then formulated into an action programme that would ensure that these objectives are achieved. However, due to insufficient funding or resources of some municipalities or business operators who are key stakeholders of this process coupled with the flexibility granted the stakeholders by the CAB in coming up with their own initiatives on what actions should be taken to reach the environmental goals. There is the danger that all the action plans that are formulated may not be fully implemented as scheduled. This can affect the achievement of all the regional environmental goals on time. This problem may occur as a result of some of the key decision makers (Board of Directors of companies, Politicians etc) with regards to approval of funding not been directly involved in the dialogic process. In view of this, some (the Board of directors, politicians etc) may find it difficult to accept and commit resources to the implementation of some of the outcomes or the action plans that come out of the dialogic process. As indicated in an interview with the representative of Nodava

*´´Our major challenge now is that as the process (*dialogue*) continues, we get a lot of ideas on how to make things better and the big issue is that, it all depends on money. In the end, it's our politicians that decide on how much money we have to work with and most of them do not necessarily see things the same way we see them. When we talk about increasing our funding, we don't get the response that we want so that's tough´´*

This lack of sufficient resources by some municipalities and business operators to fully implement the action plan that emanate from their dialogic processes coupled with the flexibility granted by the CAB in stimulating stakeholder´s own initiatives in the design

of their own action plan, may pose a threat to the achievement of all the regional environmental objectives as schedule. As indicated in an interview with the CAB:

´´ Another challenge is to accept that this action programme from the stakeholders won't be covering everything that needs to be done to reach all the sixteen (16) environmental objectives on time``

4.4.2 Lack of recognition of the new role of the County Administrative Board.

Another challenge identified with the use of dialogue in the revision of the regional environmental objectives and the formulation of action plans is that, some of the relevant stakeholders within this sector (water and supply) who should have been part of the working group have not done so due to their stereotypic perspectives about the CAB as only a controlling authority. As indicated by the CAB in an interview:

´´One of our challenge is that, many of the stakeholders already have an opinion about the County Board as a controlling authority and as such most don't want to collaborate with us by being part of this new phase of County Board as stimulators of initiatives``

This has made such stakeholders unable to recognize the new role of the CAB as not wholly a controlling authority but also as stimulators of initiatives with regards to the formulation of action plans in reaching the regional environmental objectives. This lack of recognition of this new role has also affected those stakeholders collaboration with the CAB in this new process and as such may lead to important outcomes or opinions being missed out of the action plans that would be formulated to reach the environmental objectives. These stakeholders haven't recognized the CAB´s new role because of the kind of perspective they have built about the CAB over the years as solely a controlling authority in charge of inspections and law enforcement and as such may see this new phase of CAB as a way of manipulating them.. This kind of meaning (influenced by their perception) that has been ascribed to the CAB´s role by such stakeholders is the result of their inability to recognize the CAB´s new role and as such participate effectively in the dialogic process to enrich the outcome of the process (the action plan). As asserted by Blumer, 1969, the meaning one ascribes to something will determine how the person acts towards that thing.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has tried to identify the impact of the dialogic process being used in the review of the regional environmental goals and the formulation of action plans. It has also described stakeholder's perception about the process and also identified some of the major challenges facing this process. It must be stressed that this new approach that has been adopted by the CAB has fostered a win´-win situation between the CAB and the other stakeholders in the Dalarna County. This is so because this process has helped enhanced stakeholders collaboration among each other, offered them the opportunity to learn from one another and also exchange ideas for the common good of the county and their respective companies . It has also helped the CAB to understand the reality of the business operators as to what they can really do or contribute to achieving the regional environmental objectives and not what the national environmental goals prescribe that it should be done. The current approach has also to a certain extent made the stakeholders trust the process. This would eventually help the CAB together with the other stakeholders come up with well tailored solutions (having a sense of ownership) to the environmental problems facing the Dalarna County.

Although all the stakeholders had positive thoughts about the current process they are engaged it, it was difficult to establish whether the current process would make much impact with regards to the actual implementation of all the action plans that are formulated as compared to the previous process of reviewing the environmental objectives and formulating action plans where a consultative meeting approach was used. This is so because the current process is still in an early stage and whether it would make a better impact than the old approach (consultative meetings) with regards to achieving the environmental objectives would require a comparative study at the end of the target year (for this current environmental objectives). Furthermore, the challenges identified in this study could be improved if the process can be structured such that every working group can have at least one member of the participating company or municipality (aside

their current representatives) who is directly involved in the approval of funding for projects being an active member of the working group. This would help deepened such key decision makers understanding about the action plans that would be formulated and as such could play a key role in securing funding for its full implementation.

The CAB should also intensified its campaign to reach out to those stakeholders who are not cooperating with it because of those stakeholders inability to recognize this new role that has been adopted by the CAB to help enrich the action plans that emanate from such processes.

I recommend that similar studies be conducted in all the other ten (10) working groups so that we can a holistic picture about the impact of this current process and also what needs to be done to improve it in the future.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Stakeholders interview questions

- Can you briefly tell me something about the regional environmental objectives that you are currently working with? How do you work with these goals?
- How does the process of formulating the action plans work?
- What is your responsibility within the working group?
- Who decides about the agenda for the meeting?
- How do you prepare for the meeting? are there a lot of things to read?
- Who are the other stakeholders involved in the process?
- How do you exchange ideas with each during meetings?
- What do you think has been your contribution to the process and that of others?
- How much influence do you have over the other stakeholder in the process and how much influence do others also have over you?
- Are you all given equal chance to contribute during meetings?
- How will you compare the current process to the previous one?
- To what extent has the current process deepened your understanding of the regional environmental objectives and actions?
- Do you feel that your views are taken onboard during the process? If Yes, how? If no why not?

4. To what extent do you agree with each other on the suggested goals? What have been the major disagreements? How was that resolved?

5. How has this process affected your relationship and collaboration with the other Stakeholders?

6. What are the challenges you have experienced so far or expect to experience with the current Process?

7. You mentioned the term “dialogue” what does the term means to you and how does this definition guide you as you interact with the other stakeholder in the process?

8. What is your overall impression about the current process? Anything you would recommend to be added or changed?