



Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences

Department of Urban and Rural Development

Uppsala 2012

The Swedish EPA

- A study of the communication from an environmental
communicator´s point of view

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Master thesis

Environmental Communication and Management

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Title The Swedish EPA - A study of the communication from an environmental communicator's point of view

Keywords: Environmental communication, conflicts, participation, perspective, dialogue.

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Examiner: Lotten Westberg

Course: Practice and Thesis Work in Environmental Communication and Management, EX0265; 15 ECTS

Program: Environmental Communication and Management; 60 ECTS (1 year master program)

Paper: Master Thesis in Environmental Communication and Management, 15 ECTS/ 15 hp

Advanced level, A1E

Uppsala, 2012



Swedish University of
Agricultural Sciences

The Swedish EPA

- A study of the communication from an environmental communicator's point of view

Naturvårdsverket

– En studie av kommunikation från en miljökommunikatörs perspektiv

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Summary

This work deals with the communication in the Swedish EPA. The main issue is to understand how the work with communication functions within the EPA, in several ways, internally between the different stakeholders who deal with information in the EPA and externally, it means between the EPA and the councils and other external actors.

The EPA, especially the department of wildlife management (the N-department) is involved in a process that tries to increase the dialogue between stakeholders and the cooperation. An example of this is that several of the workers in the department are participating in “Dialog för Naturvården” (Dialogue for environmental protection). The department is in charge of organising the VIA-conference about wildlife management and species protection. The conference is an important thing for the department, and the goal is to make the different councils and actors participate in the process and send the idea of *dialogue*, collaboration and cooperation.

Internally, the informants of the department feel left outside the process when they consider that their voices are not listened to by the Information secretariat. A lack of communication is the source of *conflicts* among the different levels of informants.

In this work I analyse those two cases and relate them to *environmental communication* theory in matter of learning, *perspective*, conflict management and *participation*.

Then we will see that it is possible to make the message of participation and dialogue even clearer in order to improve the cooperation in the administration.

Case study number two is complex and needs to go deeper in the human being and the symbolic interactionism theories to understand what is going on. Distrust? An escalating conflict? Or it is, maybe, the possibility of becoming stronger.

Key terms: Environmental communication, conflicts, participation, perspectives, dialogue.

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1 Introduction

The protection of the environment implies the use of communication skills since it has an important role in promoting changes. The communication or low communication is even a source of conflicts or situations that could be considered not optimal.

1.1 Problem background – A process of change

The Swedish EPA is now involved in a process of change which we can observe especially in the wildlife department. There are changes in the structure of the department with some people leaving their positions in the department and changes in the way that the EPA wants to communicate with the public and with the council administrations. An example of this is “Dialog för naturvården” (Dialogue for the protection of the environment). The purpose of Dialogue programme is to get a broader understanding of the problems and conflicts that appear when natural resources are involved and get good solutions with help of dialogues. A more participatory process is also part of the EPA work with the councils in the country. The VIA – Conference (...) is one of the activities that the EPA held to promote the collaboration between councils and the different administrations which have a voice in wildlife questions. There are changes in the way that internal communication is being managed. In this case, the internal communication and the information flow into the organisation are going to go ahead with some changes which can influence the structure as we now know it, and that can bring consequences for the workers in charge of information.

1.2 Problem

The wildlife management department is responsible for questions about the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife (mammals and birds), and the department is also responsible for the hunting register. One of the many purposes that the department has is to coordinate the work with wildlife management with the councils and other organisations in the country. The department coordinates the work with communication and information about wildlife and predators.

The VIA-conference is managed by the department with the goal of increasing the cooperation between the councils and administration and learns about each other's experiences. The 2-day conference has a wide selection of workshops in which the supervisors have to play the role of a communicator or facilitator. The question is how the leaders of the workshops can manage them in a way that facilitates the fulfilling of the goal with the conference.

The EPA is a big organisation with more than 550 workers. This implies that the work with communication is complex too. The I-secretariat has as vision to be the best information department in Swedish administration. Therefore they are making several changes that directly affect the tasks that people working in information perform. One of those changes is the handbook for communication that will be a guide of how to do the information work in the EPA. One of the problems with the new policy is that I-secretariat wants to achieve the best results and at the same time try to decrease the number of workers with 10%. The information workers in the wildlife management department and marine environment

department (N-KOM group) think that the communication between the direction (I-secretariat) and themselves is not optimal.

1.3 Aim

The broad aim of this study is to investigate how the Swedish EPA and the Wildlife Department deal with communication. The objective is to go deeper in problems related to internal communication and other issues related to the way people communicate with the public. The study aims to address the following issues:

- How do the supervisors communicate in the VIA- conference?
- How could they be better off in the workshops in the VIA- Conference?
- Why it is non-optimal communication between the informants of the department and the I-secretary?

This study will focus on the Wildlife department in the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The purpose is to analyse some aspects of the communication in the EPA from an environmental communication point of view. That is why in this study we try to analyse the low communication between the different levels of information workers in the EPA. To study the external communication we look at the way of working in the VIA-conference. Other issues as communication via the internet or media have not been considered in this work because this study focuses more in participatory process and conflict management. The internship which gave place to this thesis took place during three weeks from the 1st of April 2008 until the 21st of April 2008 in the EPA office in Stockholm and in the VIA-Conference in Lidingö.

2 Method

This master thesis is based on a three weeks internship in the EPA department of wildlife management in Stockholm. In the internship was included a two day conference in Skogshem & Wijks Conference Center in Lidingö, during the 10th and the 11th of April.

The observations, interviews and other activities done during this period are summarised in two case studies.

A case study is an instrument that helps us to study a problem in depth and help examining phenomena with no clear boundaries. (Merriam, Sharan B, 1993)

For case study 1, I used my own observations and action research because I was part of the research in some cases. The observations are completed by a survey; an evaluation of the VIA-Conference that I summarised for the department.

Case study 2 is also based on observations and on using a participatory approach. By using PRA- methods, you ensure that the persons you interview are owners of the process too and not only persons that you interview to get some information.

In the research I used the problem and solution analysis and appreciative inquiry.

In both cases I used a little bit of facilitation, for example helping designing a workshop.

3 An EC theoretical review

In this chapter I present the relevant theories that I have used in relation to this study. In the case of environmental communication there are some unsustainable headings such as learning and perspectives, conflict management and participation and facilitation.

3.1 Learning and perspective

“(...) Earlier, I defined environmental communication as a form of symbolic action. Our language and other symbolic acts do something. They create meaning and actively structure our conscious orientation to the world. Speeches, films (...) and other forms of human symbolic behaviour (...) invite us to view the world this way rather than that way (...)” (Cox, R. 2006, pp. 14)

3.1.1 Perception and perspectives

The interpretation of others' actions is depending of the perception and perspective which we use when looking at those actions. For example, our pre-understanding of a concept is going to have a meaning in understanding it. At the same time, the way in which we understand (knowing and learning) influences our pre-understanding (Personal message⁴).

Why we make interpretations in the way we do?

The way we look into a conflict, for instance, also depends on how we feel towards it and in the way we usually know, how we approach an issue and so. Here, the different forms of acquiring new experiences are the base of our preunderstandings:

- Assimilation: Bringing in all the new experiences. The environment “adapts” itself to you. You are changing the environment (or information) in order to understand.

- Accommodation: Reconsidering all we have been thinking before. You “adapt” to the environment. You change some ideas about yourself in order to understand.
- Regressive: Looking back at circumstances
- Progressive: Visionary

Our interpretation is an act of symbolic interactionism. According to Joel M. Charon (2007), there are five central ideas about the human being:

1. The human being has to be understood as a social person.
2. Human action is not only caused by interaction among individuals but also interaction within the individuals.
3. Humans do not sense their environment directly; instead, humans define the situation they are in.
4. The cause of human action is the result of what is occurring in our present situation.
5. Human beings are described as active beings in relation to their environment. Words such as “conditioning,” “responding,” “controlled,” “imprisoned,” “formed,” are not used to describe the human being in symbolic interactionism.

(Charon, J.M., 2007, pp. 29-30)

The human being acts as following of a lifelong process of social interaction in which our reflections about each others’ acts guide our own acts.

This is because it is important to take the others’ perspectives in order to understand how our acts can be interpreted and understand other actions from their own perspective. In solving conflicts or misunderstandings, it is good to have these concepts in mind. Therefore, through role-taking we understand the consequence of our own actions by learning or observing others’ way of acting in some situations (Charon, J.M., 2007)

In short, we can say that the understanding of others’ actions, is a critical reflection that leads to a new action or to change (Personal message¹) For instance, in a conflict the actors involved recall the sequence of events (What did you do?) after a concrete experience. Then they relive the experience (How did you feel?) and make a re-interpretation of the experience, maybe an abstract conceptualisation of the experience that made them feel like they did. (Personal message²). By the end of the cycle they respond to the re-interpretation, and that is active experimentation (see figure 2 about the Learning Cycle)

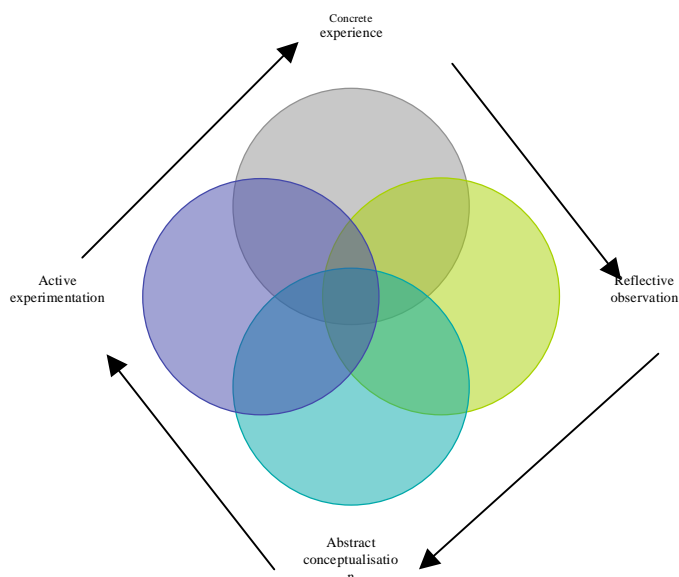


Figure 1. The Kolb Learning Cycle (Personal message²).

3.1.2 Participation theory and social learning

The participatory methods are a technology that combines the advantages of social interaction with the social learning process through group dynamics, facilitation or looking from multiple perspectives.

Those are some of the advantages that participatory methods have, for example over lectures held in the classic way.

The principles of participatory methodology:

1. Systemic and Group-Learning Process
2. Multiple Perspective of Stakeholders
3. Facilitation Leads to transformation
4. Learning Leads to Sustained Action

Being a participant gives the actors a chance of owning the ongoing process, and then, being a part of the outcome. (Personal message³)

3.2 Conflict management

The different points of view that human beings have make it necessary to get help in interpreting processes. By facilitation, environmental communicators can help solving a conflict or de-escalate it.

3.2.1 Escalating conflicts

How a conflict becomes bigger is described in a nine steps escalating process (Personal message⁴). An example is when some actors going from a “Non conflict” situation to a situation in which they discuss and defend different arguments, then, they are tense and they start losing trust in the situation they are in. This is step one of nine. In this chapter I will present only the three first steps since they are of interest for this study.

In the second step, the parts start confronting other arguments, they start settling their own position and they may even ridicule the opponent.

In the third step, the steamrolling can start running over. Then, distrust appears in both, the parts and the situation. The part starts misinterpreting the other’s acts and expectative are negative.

Those three parts belong to one side of the conceptions. When the parts pass it, the others are the problem, steps 4, 5 and 6. If the conflict continues even more then it is only to destroy the opponent.

2. Debate polarization

1. Discussion, Argumentation

Figure 2. The three first steps of a escalating conflict. The one-side conceptions

3.2.2 Negative effects of conflicts/ why do we not solve problems?

According to Diamond et al. (2005), human beings do not properly take care of the problems or conflicts that affect them. It can lead to negative consequences. Why do we not solve conflicts, then?

1. Prior experiences in problems:

- A prior experience is not a guarantee that the problem will be anticipated. If the decision maker didn't pay attention in the past or if the item has not been rehearsed enough to belong to our long-term memories.
- Decision makers may be reasoning by false analogy. When we face a problem we try to do as in past experiences but maybe the characteristics of the actual problem differ from the old one.

2. Perceiving or failing to perceive a problem:

- Imperceptible origin of a problem. A problem that is literally imperceptible as a result of poor technology.
- Distanced managers: the managers of a company may not know about a problem because they are not in contact with some of the stakeholders who are around the company.
- An up-and-down fluctuated slow trend. When something becomes a problem we analyse it but the problem shifts down and stop being a priority so we forget it. For environmentalists a clear example is the global warming: it is difficult to affirm that all the years' temperature increases with the same speed but some years are warmer and other colder.

3. Failing in attempting to solve a problem once it has been perceived. It is because there are different interests between the stakeholders and we use the term "rational behaviour" or "rational bad behaviour". A conflict arises if somebody takes a decision (or make something) that is against the rest of the interested.

(Diamond et al. 2005)

The problem which we do not solve in time, or the conflict that we are not able to de-escalate can lead to the conflict's going up some steps in the stairs (see 3.2.1), and in worst cases it can lead to "collapse" (Diamond et al. 2005)

3.2.3 Positive effects of conflicts/ De-escalation of conflicts

Not all the conflicts lead to collapse; a conflict could make the parts involved in it becoming stronger after solving it. Using *Non Violence Communication* is a way to come closer to the other needs which is a good principle when we start solving a conflict. What does NVC involve?

- a) expressing our needs,
- b) sensing the needs of others regardless of how others are expressing themselves,
- c) checking to see if needs are accurately being received,
- d) providing the empathy people need in order to hear the needs of others, and
- e) translating proposed solutions or strategies into positive action language.

(Glasl, F. 1999)

Listening to the needs and avoiding the use of *win-loose technologies* we can start de-escalating a conflict and get some positive output from it. (Personal message⁴)

A conflict that reaches the third escalation level (see 3.2.1), needs to be confronted step by step to guide the conflict some steps downstairs (Glasl, F. 1999). The parts have to be able to re-open the doors to each other in an act of empathy. The parts have to avoid making cliché of the other part in order to make it easier to accept changes in others' way of thinking. To conclude, the discrepancies between act and words lead to misunderstandings. The parts can interpret the other's actions as hidden negative actions. These feeling increases when meeting between the parts are few and face to face communication is almost inexistent. (Glasl, F. 1999).

4 Results and Analysis

The empirical study is presented in this chapter.

4.1 The empirical study

In this chapter I present two cases studies; the first one is about my observations and learning in the VIA- Conference and the workshops led by Wildlife management department officers. The second one is about the non-optimal communication in between the different information workers and information secretary in the EPA.

4.1.1 Case study 1: The VIA-Conference

The VIA-Conference about wildlife management and species protection is lead by the EPA with the purpose of increasing the cooperation between administrations, increasing the dialogue and, of course, informing about the changes in laws or news about wildlife or species protection.

The goals of the conference were named by the head of the department (wildlife management) Susanna Löfgren:

- Coordination of the nature protection in a yearly conference.
- A meeting point to identify and enforce networks
- Giving guidance
- Focusing on burning questions
- And, making collective efforts to get a wider perspective, dialogue and to do a more homogeneous job.

In the conference, which was held in Skogshem & Wijks Conference Center in Lidingö, on the 10th and the 11th of April, were present 90 participants from the different Swedish councils as representants from the government from the environment department and the department of agriculture.

The conference had 8 workshops lead by experts in those questions from the wildlife management department (EPA). The first day workshops: "Förevisning av vilt", "Artskyddsförordningen och CITES för nybörjare" and "Länstyrelsernas beslut om jakt och andra undantag". The second day, the workshops were "Viltturism", "Viltskadeföreskrifter" and "Workshop om klövviltsförvaltning" and later on "Rovdjursutredningen" and "Vildsvinförvaltningen".

I could not participate in all of them because some of them were at the same time. My observations are based on my participation in "Artskyddsförordningen och CITES för nybörjare", "Viltskadeföreskrifter" and "Rovdjursutredningen". The rest of the information is from the evaluation papers and from conversations with participants. (See appendix 1, in Swedish)

Time constraints

I participated in the workshop about "Artskyddsförordningen och CITES för nybörjare". The workshop had different points and gave place to interesting discussions. The presentation was a short film about the work with protection of species. Then the leader continued with going through the questions which the participants had sent in previous days. In this part, the participants asked questions and, in this way, lead the workshop. The last part was other question that the participants should answer in small groups. The participants appreciated the workshop and had the feeling that they should have had more time for it.

Improvisation

The conference missed some of the leaders which lead to the fact that in some cases, the workshops were kind of improvised. This is the case of the second of the workshops I observed: "Viltskadeföreskrifter". The fact that there are some people who are able to substitute the expert in the issue is a very good point to the EPA. The workshop did not invite that much to participation and resembled more a lecture or basically, giving information, than a workshop. To present it, the leader used a power point presentation, which is a method that was common in several workshops. The presentation was the starting point for discussions which developed in a way that could be considered disorderly because the participants talked without asking in some cases, or changed the issue to try to lead the questions to their interest area. This also happened in other workshops.

Workshops that are not workshops

According to some of the participants in the third of the workshops I was observing, workshops became "not workshops". In Longman (English contemporary dictionary, 1995)

describes a workshop as a “meeting at which people try to improve their skills by discussing their experiences and doing practical exercises”. For instance, the workshop about “Rovdjursutredningen”, in which more than 40 persons participated, made it very difficult to act as in other workshops. Therefore, this “time for discussion” should be named something else, but not a workshop. Nevertheless, the leaders, in this case they were two, tried to do it as participatory as possible but a many voices were quiet.

In the next two tables I present the results from the evaluation divided into first and second day workshops.

Table 1. Participants’ evaluation of workshops, first day

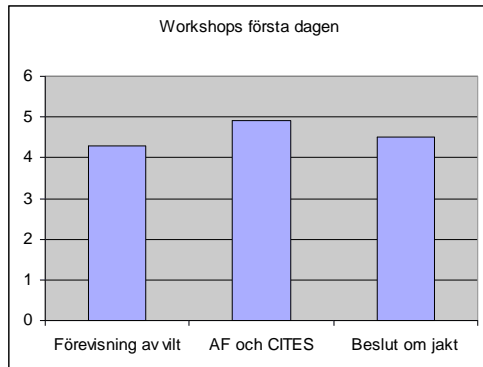
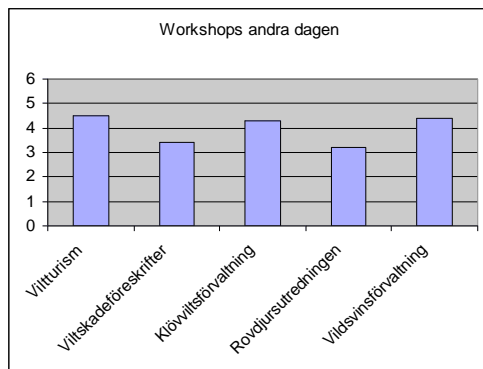


Table 2. Participants’ evaluation of workshops, second day



4.1.2. Case study 2: About non-optimal communication in the organisation

The wildlife management department (N-department), is the work place of the N-group, the group of persons that work with information. The administrators and the informants work close to each other in the physical space of the N-department. The environment of the department is relaxed and offers the workers the opportunity of meeting and discussing several times a week. For example, Monday morning meetings in which the staff talk about what will happen during the week or the relaxed Friday breakfast that offers a good opportunity to listen to the others’ feelings. The leader does a good job in this sense and always gives space to all the participants through, for instance, going round the table and asking them things in various moments in a meeting.

Looking at this first paragraph, is what we can define as optimal communication. This made me detect that other parts of the information flow were not working in an optimal way,

especially in comparison to the first paragraph. The relation between the N-informants group and the Information Secretariat is not that well. It was clear to me on the meeting I was observing on the 8th of February. The meeting was not that relaxed as in the N-department, and nine persons followed it, informants from the N-department and one person from information in EPA in Östersund (by telephone).

The secretary of information presented their vision of the information work in the EPA. This vision is to make possible a more efficient and rational work with communication within the organization and to be the best governmental organization in terms of communication in the country. One of the ways proposed by the I-secretary is reducing the number of informants with 10%. Then, the informants reacted and said that it is very difficult to coordinate the work between informants because the I-secretary has not direct contact with the informants. About the efficiency, a commentary from the informants made obvious the position of the N-information group when they rhetorically asked “Why reduce informants and not biologists?” Other questions that the N-group asked the I-secretary were about which functions they wanted to improve and which ones they thought were unnecessary. At this point, some of the N-group members pointed out that some persons had been left out from the process. One more example of this is the “handbook for communication”, a “modern” document that aims to help the coordination of the work with information. It is a manual of how to communicate in the EPA. The document has been created without the active participation of the informants who have been left out from the process again. The I-secretary considered itself participatory when they indicated that all of the information workers have the possibility of influencing and changing things in the “handbook for communication”. They told the N-information group that it was impossible to consult them previously because in this case they would never have been ready with the book. The N-information group told me that it was the end of a period of seven years and that the changes that are going on will make a new period.

This is the background of a case that we have the opportunity of look deeper into with the information I got from the members of the N-group in a workshop in which we use a problem and solution analysis. The exercise had two parts; the first one consisted of describing the causes and effects of low communication with the I-secretary. The second part consisted of imploring the benefits and effects of a good communication between informants.

Table 3. N-information group description of low communication, causes and effects



Causes of low communication:

In the chart, the members of the N-information group talked about the causes of low communication. First they spoke about that there are no meeting places where the informants and the I-secretary can meet. It is directly related to the lack of sensitivity of the I-secretary with the informants, the secretary of information does not seem to be aware of the problems and difficulties of the informants. The informants felt left outside and they felt that their job is not valued enough.

The meetings also worried the N-information group. During the last months (even years) there have hardly been any meetings between the parts and the few meetings they have had have excluded some of the members. This is a clear case of lack of participation in the process.

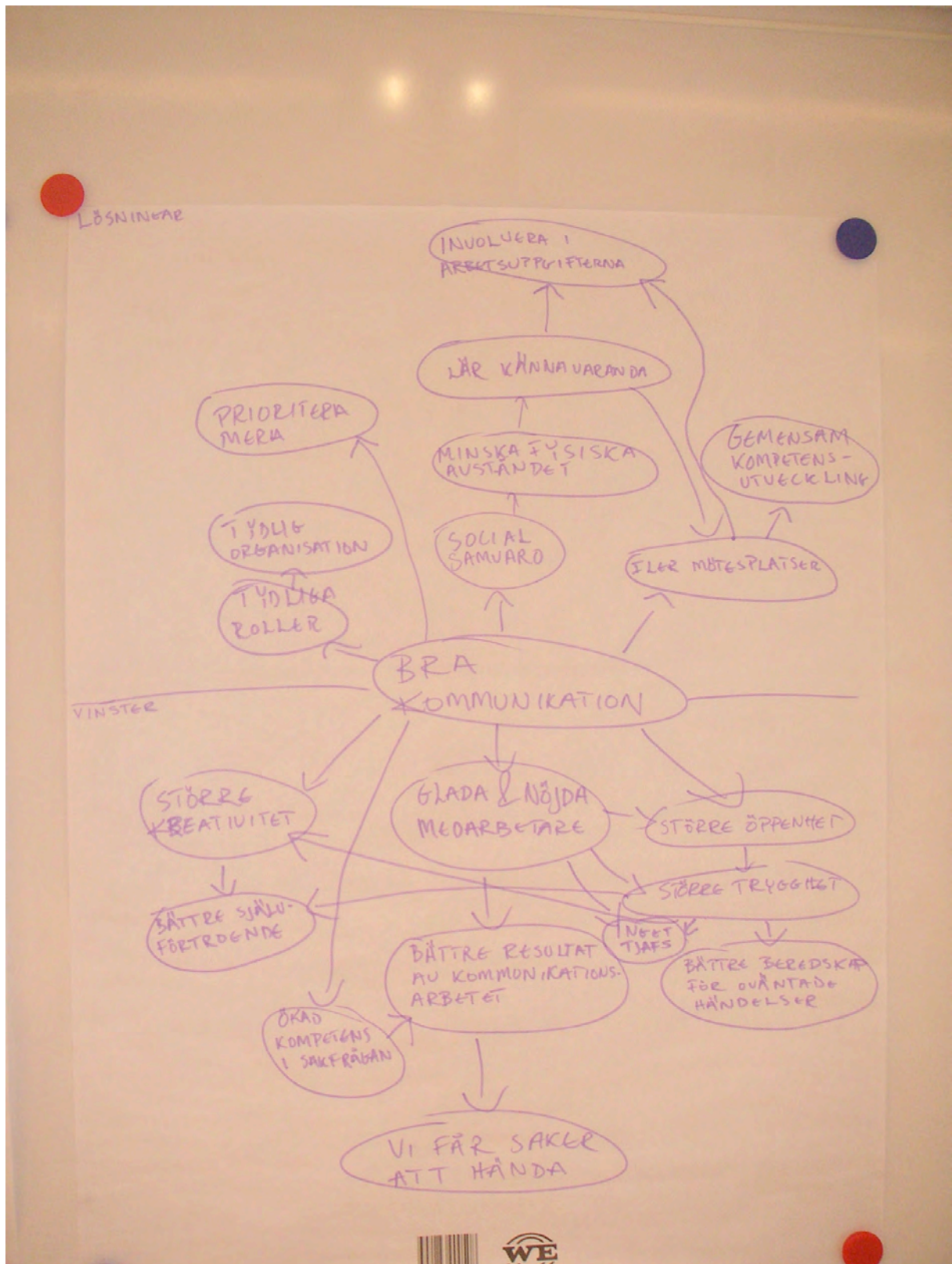
The proposal of changes also creates conflicts. According to the members of the N-information group, some of the changes could mean that an A-team and a B-team emerge. Even a competition between groups could be the outcome of this process.

There were more causes pointed out by the N-group during the discussion, for instance, the unclear position that makes it difficult to assign who is the person or group which has the competence in a question. The role played by actors in communication between the groups is for most of them unclear as is the way of working of the organization. This leads to distrust towards the I-secretary and the competence of some of the members. The N-information group said that the final cause of this is the “jealous guarding of one’s special preserves”. In Swedish *revirtänkande*.

Effects of low communication:

One of the most direct effects of low communication has already been explained in the cause’s part. This is that the workplace environment, become worst off and difficult and creates conflicts based in distrust. It leads to a passive way of acting in which the informants prefer looking for solutions themselves instead of collaborating. The lack of collaboration and the inefficiency as effects of low communication have as outcome that the information is not clear to everybody and therefore the N-information group thinks that they loose possibilities to be more efficient. And it is related to the lack of participation. More effects of this problem are that there could be various EPAs in a scenario in which different parts are not able to collaborate. Each informant then becomes an “island” with constraints to communicate and collaborate with others.

Table 4. N-information group description of good communication, benefits and effects



Solutions for a good communication:

In table 4, the N-information group comments the benefits and effects of good communication between the informants of the EPA and the secretary of information.

The proposal for solutions starts with working more together to reduce the distance between the different parts working with information, especially, reducing the gap between the secretary of information and the informants in N-department. They should work on making roles clear to each one and avoiding the competition among groups. The N-information spoke about the possibility of a common development of competences and more common work with the I-secretary through more meetings. They want to feel that the I-secretary is involved in their work. The common development of competences could have as an outcome a stronger I-secretary and informants who feel like they are part of the process.

Benefits of good communication:

The most direct benefit is that their work feel more valued and they feel like they are part of the whole process. In this scenario, the distance between persons working in information is reduced, the informants will feel happy about their work, and they will feel security and are open to dialogue and collaboration. The information they publish is of best quality and they gain in creativity. The good environment makes good things around the EPA happen and communication is fluent and they have a clear role within the organization. The final outcome is that the works they perform look more professional to the public and they are then closer to the I-secretary's vision: to be the best governmental organization concerning information.

4.2 Overview of results and analysis

This chapter aims to address the research questions stated in chapter one, based on the theoretical framework and the empirical data. The research questions are presented in the following parts:

- How did the supervisors communicate in the VIA- conference? And how could they be better off in the workshops in the VIA- conference?
- Why is the communication non-optimal between informants of the department and the I-secretary?

4.2.1 Making workshops more participatory.

The workshops' goal was to inform and invite the different members to participation and collaboration but after the observation I did there are some question that should be answered in order to be better off when having the next conference.

The more inefficient lecture model in which a person act as a school teacher, is still dominating the VIA-conference and therefore, workshops lose a little bit of their essence and meaning. A workshop should improve the learning by doing or learning about others experiences. The PRA-methods and facilitation tools give us some guidance that we need to create a better environment for communication and dialogue.

Most of the workshops were lead by only one person who usually was an expert in the matter and had answers to all the questions. Nevertheless, I observed that the role of a facilitator could be useful in order to lead the process and give all of the participants in the workshop the

opportunity to participate. One leader (the expert) and one facilitator could be the solution to some of the problems that emerge during workshops. For example, taking a little more control of the time or ensuring that all the participants' voices are heard.

Another positive thing is to show the participants that they own the process and that they are really participating in it. To make it reliable, one of the ways that can help us to improve the situation is to use PRA-methods. This methodology has many advantages such as increasing the interest in participating by the members of a group or making it more enjoy. More advantages are them derivate of the social learning process; taking the others perspective and learning of each other way of doing. Because of that, it is a tool that should be considered in this kind of conference.

Another advantage of having a facilitator apart from the expert, and using PRA-methods is that it is easier to go ahead with the process when the expert (as it has happened in the last conference) has to be substituted and the organiser has to improvise. If the participants own the process, during the workshop they can try to answer the questions or do the work themselves, depending less on the expert in charge. It is important, according to the VIA-conference goal, to promote the change of experiences between the participants, and with this method we can create a better environment for this kind of discussions.

It is a bigger problem when the workshop has more than 40 participants. The problems are several, such as not optimal rooms to work in, difficulty to listen to all the participants, and time constraints. Why not to call this king of workshop "discussion about..."?

4.2.2 Conflicts in communication.

A conflict emerges between two important parts in the information work in the EPA, the N-information group and the Secretary of Information. The conflict seems to be escalating in small steps. Nowadays we can situate it in between step 2 and 3, (2. Debate polarization and 3. Steamrolling running over) because both parts seem to be setting their own position and, in the case of N-information group, they do not trust the I-secretary.

In this case we can see two different perspectives, the actions that are being taken by the I-secretary have to be interpreted by the N-information group that, according to the circumstances, are acts that suppose a threat, create distrust and make all of them lose good opportunities of good communication.

The lack of participation has been another of the causes of the conflict. The members of the N-information group have been excluded from the process of creating the handbook for communication. All the members of the N-group agreed that the handbook was an important thing to the EPA's information work and at the same time they criticized the excluding way of working that the I-secretary has had and the lack of sensitivity towards the informants. It makes the N-group feel that they are not part of this process.

The problem has been present for almost seven years but nobody has taken care of it. It is as Diamond (2005) describes "*an up-and-down fluctuated slow trend*" which has made difficult for the persons involved in it to attend the problem with enough efforts.

Those are the causes and effects of this conflict so far, but the conflict can have a better ending if the stakeholders have the possibility of de-escalating it a couple of steps. Then, both groups have to approximate their perspectives and work to increase the collaboration. A win-win situation is possible, and if so happens, the conflict could have a positive outcome.

5 Conclusions

My internship at the EPA has given me a good perspective on the work that the organisation does with communication. I have had the opportunity of participating in preparing workshops and analysing how the leaders of the workshops prepared them. About this part of the work I conclude that the VIA-Conference can do a little more to improve the workshops. Some of the workshops were not enough participatory and not all the participants had the opportunity of contributing with something. For example, with help of participation methods and facilitation tools, the leaders of the workshops could help those participants to contribute and be part of the social learning process.

The lack of participation is the base of the conflict that has emerged between the N-information group and the I-secretary. The N-information group members are not invited to meetings and are not invited to contributing to the big issue of the information work in the EPA, the Handbook for Communication. The outcome is a conflict that makes communication difficult. The conflict is in the first steps of an escalating conflict and probably it will not escalate further, but more dialogue and more efforts to take the others' role are needed.

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Personal messages

1. Sriskandarajah Nadarajah, Professor in the Department of Urban and Rural Development. Lecture 01st of October 2007, Master in Environmental Communication Management
2. Westberg Lotten, Guest lecture 04th of October 2007, , Master in Environmental Communication Management
3. Guibon David, Guest lecture 14th and 15th January 2008, Master in Environmental Communication Management
4. Lars Hallgren, Assistant Professor. Master in Environmental Communication Management

5.

Appendix 1: Resume of VIA conference evaluation (in Swedish)

Viltförvaltning och artskydd

10–11 april på Wijks konferenscenter, Lidingö

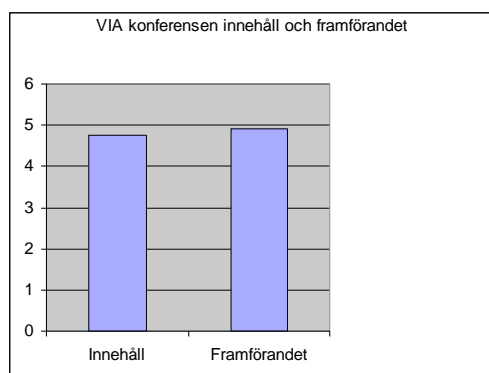
Sammanfattning av utvärderingen

Av 52 inkomna blanketter, var inte 10 totalt ifyllda och 3 lämnades in utan svar alls. Ungefär 80 % av deltagarna lämnade sina intryck om konferensen genom att fylla i denna utvärdering.

Innehåll och framförande

”Viktigt för mig var mötet med branschkollegor i hela landet!”

Deltagarna bedömde konferensens innehåll och framförandet som positivt, båda låg i genomsnitt nära 5 av 6 i betygsskalan.



Kommentarerna som deltagarna yttrat kring innehåll och framförande, visar att själva innehållet har varit mycket intressant för de flesta.

Deltagarna tyckte att konferensen innehållit ett bra urval av workshops och föredrag även om många av dem gick parallellt. *”Svårt att välja WS eftersom arbetsuppgifterna ofta berörs av flera av workshop och man gärna skulle vilja gå på flera”* och *” 2 Workshop som framförallt handlade om artskydd låg samtidigt vilket är olämpligt”*. Fler kommentarer av den typen kommer från dem som arbetar med alla dessa uppgifter (inom länsstyrelsen) och som gärna skulle ha gått på fler workshops.

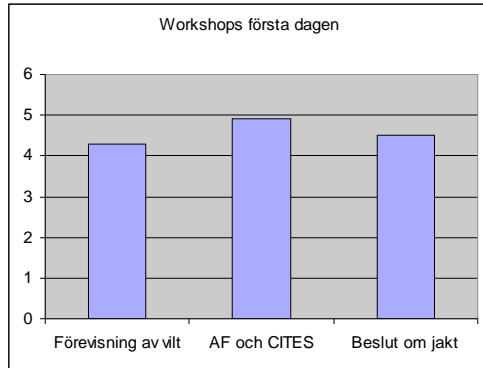
Bland kommentarerna om en trevlig stämning på konferensen, hittar man andra kommentarer om föredragare, t.ex. detta angående norrmannen: *”Kul med norrmannen – blir det någon från Finland nästa gång?”*, inte alla i länsstyrelsen visar sig vara intresserade i större perspektiv av frågan. Görans (SLU) deltagande var däremot uppskattat.

Workshopen

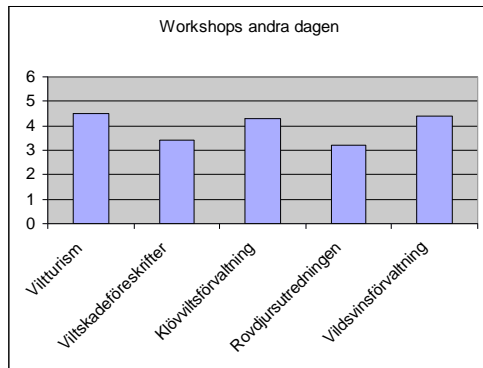
”Oväntat bra och kreativt tankeväckande!”

Deltagarnas intryck av workshoppen har varit varierande, alla workshops blev godkända och de flesta blev betygsatta över 65 %. Några tyckte däremot att workshoppen borde förberedas lite mer och att det var synd att många ledare hade varit sjuka.

Annat som saknades, enligt svaret på enkäterna, är kopior av alla föredrag och workshoppen. Enligt några av deltagarna, skulle det ha underlättat att skriva alla noteringar utan att ha det spritt överallt. Dessutom hade det varit användbart för dem som inte kunde vara med på två workshop som var samtidigt.



Den första dagens workshop blev omtyckt av deltagarna, som i många fall tyckte att det skulle ha behövts en hel dag till t.ex. om *AF och CITES* eller mer tid för att diskutera frågor.

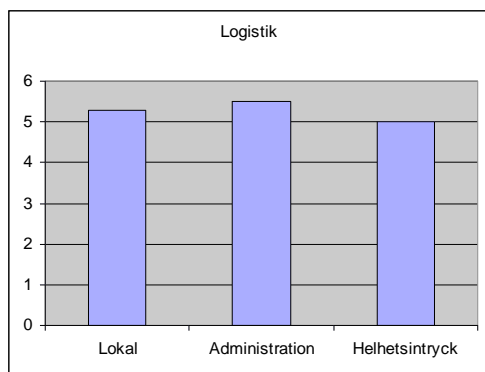


Den andra dagens workshop fick lite mera varierande kommentarer. Deltagarna tyckte att i rovdjursutredningen var gruppen för stor för att ha workshop. Man tyckte att det skulle behövas mer stöd från jurister och genomgång av lagar på vissa workshoppen där det är svårare att tolka lagen.

Lokal, administration och helhetsintryck

”Bra arrangerat, flöt på bra logistiskt, fina hotellrum, god mat, intressant program!”

Nedan visas grafiskt det som står klart i det här uttalandet från en deltagare i årets konferens.

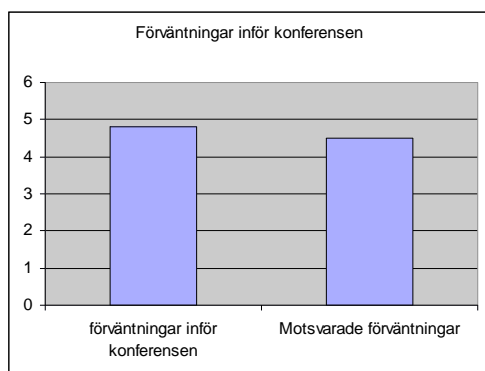


Lokal och *Administration* fick betyget mycket väl godkänt av deltagarna. Sen kom *helhetsintrycket* som man fick av VIA- konferensen. Att *helhetsintrycket* har varit lite lägre än *lokal* och *administration* beror delvis på (alltid enligt kommentarerna som inkommit) att diskussioner saknades runt vissa ämnen, att några kunde inte gå på mer workshops och det kan bero på att det saknades några viktiga institutioner eller personer i konferensen (veterinärer och jurister bland annat)

Deltagarnas förväntningar

”Kändes som ett bra tillfälle att vidga vyerna!”

Förväntningarna inför konferensen och infriandet av dessa stämmer ganska väl överens.



Två exempel på svar på frågan om konferensen motsvarade deltagarnas förväntningar:

- *Nej, definitivt inte de två första workshops jag deltog i (Förevisning av vilt och Klövviltförvaltning) Jag är relativt ny och ville ha lite fördjupning. Föredrag och nyheter mm bra.*
- *Ja, men framöver behövs mer tid för artskydd och CITES. Workshopen om det var bra men det hade behövts mer tid till under fredagen. Trevligt med gemensam middag.*

Det som deltagarna hade önskat diskutera lite mer om var framförallt artskyddet och CITES. Sedan har några kommentarer inkommit om klövviltförvaltning, viltskadeföreskrifter, den nya älgförvaltningen och viltturism.

Ska viltförvaltnings- och artskyddskonferensen ordnas varje år?

”Bra nätverksbyggande! Värdefullt!”

37 av deltagarna uttryckte sig positivt till att ha VIA- konferensen varje år och bara två tyckte att det går bra att ha konferensen vartannat år eller var 18:e månad. Anledningen till att man vill ha en VIA- konferens varje år är att det är mycket viktigt för deltagarna att knyta kontakter och till exempel att det behövs p.g.a. uppdateringar eftersom mycket ny information kommer ut vid varje tillfälle.



Förslag från deltagare (Om kurser och annat)

Här listas de olika förslagen som deltagarna själva har beskrivit det:

- Samverkans-/handläggartreff för NR, biotopskydd etc.
- Vilthägn och djurskydd framförallt för vildsvin och älg men även fjällvilt.
- Samordning av Länsstyrelsens hantering av ansökningar av tillstånd till jakt med lampor på vildsvin och liknande. Kanske en WS om detta i höst? Även en WS för samordning av ersättning för besiktningar och lagar ang. viltskadeföreskrifterna...?
- Inventeringsmetoder på klövvilt. Ett plus är att konferensen avslutar på fredag (så man kan återhämta sig under helgen)
- Besiktning av hägn, praktisk kurs där man lär sig att titta på vanliga lösningar
- Artskydd tillämpning med syfte även att påminna om att annan lagstiftning också kommer in.
- Förvaltning och samarbete mellan myndigheter och organisationer (jägar-) om mårddhund.
- 1) Fler diskussioner framöver vad gäller toleransnivåer, mål för regional- central förvaltning. Diskussioner måste/bör leda fram till gemensamt synsätt/ förvaltningssätt av stora rovdjur regionalt.
- 2) Föredrag om klövvilt- rovdjur senaste nytt. 3) Föredrag kanske från näringen för ökade insikter.
- För lite artskydd. * Lokalerna var inte anpassade till diskussioner. För stora grupper till workshops.