

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

GASINGAN, DEBBIE E. APRIL 2012. Communication Strategies of the Agricultural Training Institute- Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-CAR) in Conducting Agricultural Training for Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs). Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study identified the trainings conducted by ATI-CAR, strategies of ATI-CAR in planning and preparation, common strategies of ATI-CAR in implementation and evaluation, determined how the findings in the evaluation were used by the institution, determined the level of appreciation of the AEWS on the trainings conducted and processes followed by the ATI-CAR, and identified the challenges encountered by the ATI-CAR during the planning and preparation training implementation and evaluation process of the downloaded training.

Respondents of the study were 12 AEWS, three from Tublay, two from Tuba, four from Itogon and three from La Trinidad. Key Informat interview and interview schedule were done.

There were two types of trainings being conducted by ATI-CAR, the requested training which was being requested by the AEWS and the downloaded training which come from the upper departments which the ATI-CAR was mandated to conduct.



The process in the requested training have several steps: TNA, coordination with ATI-CAR, preparation of training proposal, review of proposal, recommending approval of the municipal mayor, program review of the ATI together with the LGU/MAO, preparation of training design, canvassing of materials, purchase order preparation, implementation of requested training, evaluation and activity report.

The processes followed by ATI-CAR in the downloaded training also have several steps: agricultural office managers assembly, TNA, formulation of training design, formation of training management staff, curriculum development, preparation of materials, invitation of participants, invitation of resource person/s, administration arrangement, implementation of the downloaded training, evaluation and activity report.

There were also factors in choosing training method like the number of participants, venue, nature of the subject matter, objective, expertise of user or trainor, materials and supplies available, time and budget. Lecture and demonstration are still preferred as a training method.

The trainings were being evaluated through three evaluations: the pre-posttest floated before the training, resource person evaluation and overall evaluation floated after the training. Findings in the evaluation serve as a basis of the ATI-CAR for the improvement of their future trainings.

Challenges encountered were lack of coordination and organization of trainings, non-arrival of participants and sometimes, the speakers; attitudinal differences of participants and some technical problems during training implementation.

In conclusion, a process is being followed by the ATI-CAR in the planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation of their trainings.



Since the focus of the study was on downloaded training, it is recommended that documentation of requested training should be also done.



## INTRODUCTION

### Rationale

It is a fact that communication strategies, systems, and practices do play a central role in high-performance. As Bailey (2007) puts it, a thoughtful and comprehensive communication strategy is a vital component to any successful change and improvement.

A strategy is a method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem.

Government institutions use communication practices and strategies when they are to conduct a certain activity. The International Rice Research Institute (1985) stressed that government institutions should make sure that these strategies are being followed as they lead in analyzing constraints to agricultural and rural development, in removing bottlenecks, and opening new avenues for other agencies whose primary function is to disseminate information to the farmers.

In Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) was established to serve as a lead office for extension and training services of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

The ATI-CAR was established by virtue of Executive Order 116, signed by President Corazon C. Aquino on January 30, 1987. The institution is mandated to train agricultural extension workers and their clientele; conduct multi-level training programs to promote and accelerate rural development; and ensure the research results are communicated to the farmers through appropriate training and extension activities (Executive Order 116).



With the institution's vision to see agricultural and rural communities in CAR teeming with progressive and globally competitive farmer entrepreneurs practicing sustainable agriculture, ATI-CAR conducts major programs under its training services. Primary clientele of their training services are the Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) of the Local Government Units. Secondary clientele were the AEWs of the Department of Agriculture family, farmers, women and youth organizations, and other government agencies. AEW is a collective term for government extension workers like the Municipal Agricultural Officer, Municipal Agriculturists, Provincial Agriculturists, Provincial Veterinarians and Agricultural Technicians.

In an interview with some of their staff, communication plans and strategies is a must for their trainor for them to fulfill the mission of the institution which is to continuously capacitate the AEWs as primary clientele, farmers and other stakeholders in CAR through responsive and dedicated service and hereby make them efficient and effective partners and actors in agricultural and rural development. According to Richard (2008), odds are almost in every situation in a project which induces change. Without a plan on how to handle that change and communicate it to the effected audience, that change will not be as well received.

Analyzing the situations, the processes of interventions made and the achievements in certain training is a difficult task for a trainor. During the planning, implementation and evaluation, various stories on the processes involved comes out which can be revealed through a documentation. The longer it takes to put strategic communication framework into place, the more we can be certain that the vacuum will be filled by the enemy and by



news informers that most assuredly will not paint an accurate picture of what is actually taking place (Rumsfeld, 2006).

According to Cristino Balancio, Media Specialist III of ATI-CAR, documenting the communication processes and strategies involved in the conduct of their trainings is needed to serve as a basis for other trainers to formulate appropriate communication strategies when they are to conduct training. He added that lessons from the study may enrich their learning as well on what it takes to be an effective trainer.

This study is in support to the growing need of documenting best practices of certain organizations. Communication strategies in planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation of training of the ATI-CAR will be documented to determine the effectiveness of the strategies used by the institution and to further collect suggestions on how to improve such strategies that can be used to strengthen the implementation of future trainings.

### Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to document the communication strategies involved in the Agricultural trainings conducted by ATI-CAR for the AEWs.

Specifically, it answered the following:

1. What are the trainings being conducted by ATI-CAR?
3. What are the communication strategies of ATI-CAR in planning and preparation of downloaded trainings?
4. What are the communication strategies of ATI-CAR in implementation and evaluation of downloaded trainings?
5. How are the findings in the evaluation used?

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6. What is the level of appreciation of the AEWs to the trainings conducted and processes followed by the ATI-CAR?

7. What are the challenges encountered by the ATI-CAR during the planning, training implementation and evaluation process?

### Objectives of the Study

In general, the study aimed at documenting the communication strategies involved in the Agricultural trainings conducted by ATI-CAR for the AEWs.

Specifically, the study was able to:

1. identify the trainings being conducted by ATI-CAR;
2. identify the communication strategies of ATI-CAR in planning and preparation of downloaded trainings;
3. identify the communication strategies of ATI-CAR in implementation and evaluation of downloaded trainings;
4. determine how the findings in the evaluation are used by the institution,
5. determine the level of appreciation of the AEWs to the trainings conducted and processes followed by the ATI-CAR and
6. identify the challenges encountered by the ATI-CAR during the planning, training implementation and evaluation process.

### Importance of the Study

The result of the study may contribute to the awareness and understanding of the role of communication in planning, implementing and evaluating trainings. This would emphasize the importance of communication in the activity.



On the side of the institution being studied, the result may guide their trainers in what communication process and strategy is appropriate to be used in planning, implementing, and evaluating their training/s. It would help them get a picture on what is likely to happen when they are to conduct a training, which would aid them to prepare in facing the possible challenges that would come along the way. It would uncover some relevant information that might be useful in improving the institution's programs and their implementation schemes.

On the side of other researchers, the result of the study may serve as a basis or reference for studies with the same scope.

On the side of the students, the result may provide them insight on the importance of formulating communication strategies not only in training, but also in other fields where such strategies could be applied.

### Scope and Limitation

The study was limited only in determining trainers of ATI-CAR and some Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) in Benguet as samples of the study.

Furthermore, the study was limited only in determining communication strategies involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating trainings conducted by the ATI-CAR. Monitoring is not included in the study because in the case of the institution and any other agencies, monitoring is usually done six months to one year after the implementation that would take time if it would be included in the study. Also, the study was limited only in determining the communication strategies involved in the downloaded training.





## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Importance of Socio-demographic Profiling

The profile of the respondents is an important factor in a study.

Buerkel (1951), as cited by Busitan (2009), stressed that the communication process is complex because each communicator creates meaning based on personal experiences. No two persons interpret the same past experience, motivations and personal reality.

David (1980), also cited by Busitan (2009) stated that the socio-economic status of the family affects the individuals' attitude and interests even in the socio-economic media. Individuals with high economic status have wider range choices and those belong to low economic status have limited choices.

In a related study, Gunnad (1980) as cited by Baluscang, Jr. (1988) stated that the more number of years in working experience one had, the greater were his knowledge, skill, experience and methods in the adoption of new practices that could be influenced by the social, psychological, and economic factors of the new generation.

Socially, they must associate themselves with other people for an interchange of ideas and for possible suggestions or solutions to problems they are most concerned with (Baluscang, Jr., 1988).

According to the Upland Development Working Group (1991), development is viewed as an endless process of learning, problem solving and change. Information needed to make good development decisions constantly change as situations change. Gathered data must reflect the field situation as faithfully and as comprehensively as possible.

### Types of Training Conducted by ATI-CAR



According to Buli-e (2011), there are two types of training being conducted by ATI-CAR, the Downloaded training and the Requested training. Downloaded trainings are the trainings being set by the higher departments in the government like the Department of Agriculture, which had been passed to the institution to bring to the target participants. On the other hand, requested trainings are the trainings being requested by the clientele, the AEWs or the farmers which are granted by the institution upon meeting the necessary requirements.

### Communication Practices in Training

Organizational contact during training can go beyond to sustain interest and possible anticipation which help the participants to learn (Lynton and Pareek, 1967).

Communication is about sending and receiving information. Basic communication means we have information to convey and we need our audience to “act” on that information or we wouldn’t be there in the first place. Also, acting is about audience perception and our ability to influence that perception. To get others to listen, to remember, to change their minds or attitudes is communication. The most efficient training is the best communicated training (Shaw, 2001).

Broadly speaking, communication and society are mutually constituted. The tendency within political economy and forms of institutional analysis is to concentrate on how communication is socially constructed, on the social forces that contribute to the formation of channel of communication, and on the range of messages transmitted through these channels (Mosco, 2009).

According to James (2005), communication practices are about designing education for everyday life. Training practices are used to convey knowledge

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from the community. That's how education is organized. You can select that practices you want to work with, you don't have to do them in a fixed order, or otherwise group them together.

### Strategies in Training

The ends of community development are political in its wide sense, and political ends are not achieved without access to, and appropriate use of strategy (Roberts, 1979). Strategy refers to the means through which goals are to be accomplished. A strategy statement includes a clear statement of the problem as analyzed, goals and the means through which goals are to be achieved (Asian Institute of Journalism, 1983).

Strategic planning examines the pitfalls in the current management of organizations, companies or concepts and plans for safe movement towards upward growth, in future. Strategic planning lets organizations, companies, and individuals update their aims and identify capabilities, thereby trying to harness the resources required for being upwardly mobile (Bailey, 2007).

The selection of strategies depends on a number of factors. Rapid change and the urgent need for greater independence of action and for skills of collaboration on the part of individuals and organization all call for training strategies that emphasize attention on process and organizational dimensions (Lynton and Pareek, 1967).

### Evaluating Trainings

Designing evaluation for training and development involves ensuring that training meets its learning objectives for the target audience. Feedback allows people to know how they are progressing and organizations to gauge how well its members are performing.



Reports produced based on learner assessment validates training program usage (Duggan, 2010).

Review and evaluation of plans refers, of course, to the analysis of actions taken to determine whether they are in conformance with plans (Steiner and Miner, 1982).

According to Lynton and Pareek (1967), the effectiveness of training is determined by all three partners in it, the participant, the institution, and the work organization. By no means, every weakness or failure in training is therefore that can be attributed to the institution or assessed or removed by improvements in its program.

No evaluation is totally objective: it is subjective to a series of linked decisions. Findings must be considered by decision makers within the context of decisions made by the evaluator in undertaking the translation of issues into data collection tools and the subsequent data analysis and interpretation (Owen and Rogers, 1999).

Trainings are to be evaluated to identify the strengths and weaknesses, assess the contents, organization, and administration of program, and identify trainees who benefited most or least from the program (Noe and Hollenbeck, 2006).

Once you computed your evaluation, distribute it to the public who need to read it. And of course, if there were lessons learned from the evaluation on how to make your training more effective, act on them (Business Performance Pty Ltd, 2010).

### Challenges in Training

Communication planning operates within certain constraints. These constraints set the direction for communication planning as well as the limits on the kind of decisions that can be made (Asian Institute of Journalism, 1983).



According to Chapman (2010), organizations are facing great pressure to change these days-to facilitate and encourage whole-person development and fulfillment beyond traditional training.



## METHODOLOGY

### Locale and Time of the Study

The study was conducted in La Trinidad, Benguet (Figure 1 & 2). It is the capital municipality of Benguet. La Trinidad is located three kilometres north of Baguio City and is 256 kilometres north of Manila. It is bounded on the north by the municipality of Tublay, on the south by Baguio, and on the west by Sablan and Tuba.

The place was chosen because it is where the Agricultural Training Institute-CAR is situated. The institution is located inside the Benguet State University Compound, La Trinidad, Benguet.

The study was conducted from October 2011 to February 2012.

### Respondents of the Study

There were 13 respondents chosen purposively in this study, one was a trainor of ATI-CAR who had been training Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) for not less than two years, and 12 AEWs who had been attending trainings conducted by ATI-CAR for two or more times. The AEWs were interviewed in the municipal agriculture office of the municipalities, three from Tublay, two from Tuba, four from Itogon and three from La Trinidad. Two of them were Municipal Agricultural Officer, one Agricultural Trainor, one Agriculturist, and one Veterinarian.

On the other hand, the key informant interviewee of the study was Cristino Balancio, the head of the technical support services and the media specialist III of ATI-CAR. He was 53 years of age and had finished his masteral degree on rural development. His specialization was training management, rural development, etc.





Figure 1. Map of Benguet showing the locale of the study

### Data Collection

An interview schedule was used in gathering information from the respondents of the study. Interview with key informants was also done using guide questionnaire.



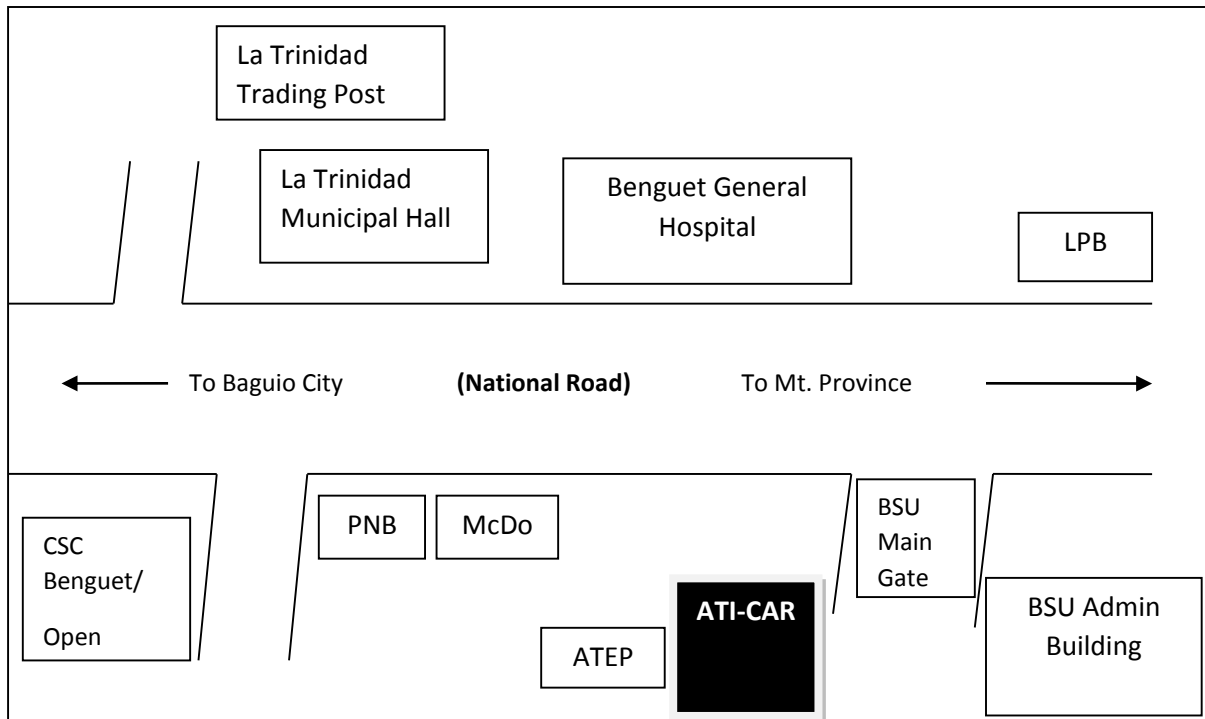


Figure 2. Vicinity map of ATI-CAR

### Data Gathered

The data gathered were the socio-demographic profile of the respondents; communication practices and strategies used by trainers of ATI-CAR in planning, implementation process and evaluation of the training; uses of the findings of the evaluation; level of appreciation of the AEWs to the trainings conducted and processes followed by ATI-CAR, and the challenges encountered during the planning, implementation and evaluation process.

### Data Analysis

The data gathered was analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts. The data were also processed and presented in a narrative form.





## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Trainings Being Conducted by ATI-CAR

According to Buli-e, there were two types of training being conducted by ATI-CAR, the Downloaded Training and the Requested Training. Downloaded trainings were the trainings being set by the higher departments in the government like the Department of Agriculture, which had been passed to the institution to bring to the target participants. On the other hand, requested trainings were the trainings being requested by the clientele, the AEWs or the farmers, which were granted by the institution upon meeting the necessary requirements.

The result supports the study of Flores (2007) that generally, training services is provided by the concerned agricultural extension offices and workers as mandated, nevertheless, some training requests have not been conducted due to lack of logistics.

Topics of trainings usually requested by AEWs include Business Management and Crop Protection with seven respondents attesting. Half of the respondents requested about Agricultural Science. This implies that the respondents considered training opportunities which are necessary in their job and at the same time, necessary for their daily living.

Process in the implementation of requested training. Figure 3 shows the process being followed by the Agricultural Extension Workers in requesting trainings. Their usual reasons in requesting for training were for information updates; for technology transfer (for them and farmer clientele); and for enhancement skills and development of partnership in the extension delivery system. This implies that the AEWs needed lot more of trainings for them to be able to meet their information needs.



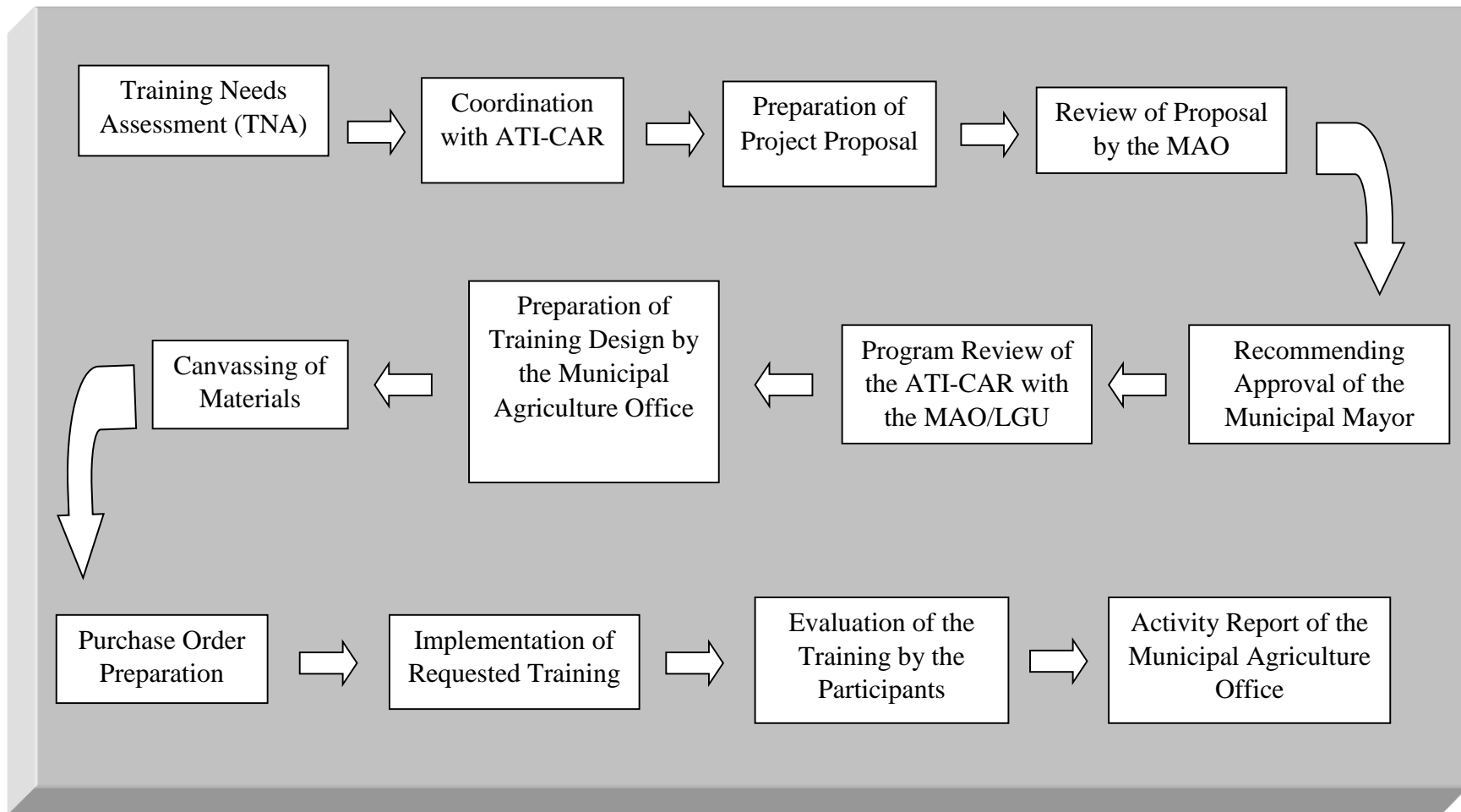


Figure 3. Process of requesting training followed by AEWs



*Training Needs Assessment (TNA).* According to the respondents, focus group discussion was often done during farmers and municipal agricultural fishery council meetings. In here, the farmers and other AEWs were asked about the trainings they needed for the enhancement of their skills and capabilities. Sometimes, the requesting group submits their training needs to the office of the ATI personally. The farmers' active involvement in deciding the needed trainings supports the study of Tiwari (1994) that there is an active involvement of farmers in research, farm trials and extension activities of the government.

*Coordination with ATI-CAR.* The focal person of the requesting group, after identifying the training needs, coordinated with the administration or accounting office of ATI-CAR for possible funding. The focal person was chosen depending on the type of the training requested, whether it was under his/her specialization or not.

*Preparation of training proposal.* Training proposal was done by the one in-charge of the training. At the time of the study, the common components of the training proposal were: rationale, goals and objectives, participants, methodologies, course output, resource requirements and training schedule.

*Review of proposal by the Municipal Agricultural Officer (MAO).* The proposals received were submitted to the head of the Municipal Agricultural Office for review after having been submitted by the requesting party. The proposals were brought back to the person in-charge to incorporate the corrections. If it was done well, the proposal, upon the approval of the MAO, was submitted to the municipal mayor for recommending approval.



*Recommending approval of the Municipal Mayor.* After the MAO had approved the proposal, the municipal mayor would review again the proposal. If there were some corrections, it would be returned to the MAO for the incorporation of corrections. If there was none, it would be brought to the ATI-CAR office for final approval after the recommending approval of the mayor.

*Program review of ATI-CAR with the MAO/LGU.* Program review was the validation plan of ATI-CAR with the local government unit or the MAO upon the mayor's approval of the proposal. The program of ATI-CAR for the year was being reviewed to see if the requested training was in line with the yearly activity plan of the institute. The requested training would be granted if it is lined and the other way if it was not, however, special request training could be done if the need is urgent even if it was not in lined with the scheduled activity of the training institute.

*Preparation of training design by the Municipal Agriculture Office.* Provided that there was fund allotted to the requested training, a training design was made which was reviewed and approved by the MAO, municipal mayor and the ATI-CAR.

*Canvassing of materials.* For the previous trainings, after the approval of the activity design, the materials needed for the training to be conducted were enlisted. The supply officers canvass the materials in a minimum three different shops for possible funding.

*Purchase order preparation.* The enlisted and canvassed materials were audited for the approval of the MAO, municipal mayor, and ATI-CAR again. Upon the approval of the Bids and Awards Committee headed by the administrator and supply officer, the purchase order was then awarded to the winning bidder given the same quality of the



materials. Then, after the supplies were released, billings of the materials were done wherein the administration officer or supply officer prepares the statement of account for the payment of the materials needed in the training.

*Implementation of requested training.* After all the things needed were cleared, implementation of the requested training followed. It was usually implemented at the ATI-CAR hall especially if it was concerned with lectures and discussions. Others were also conducted at the requesting municipality's area depending on the arrangement of the MAO and the ATI-CAR office considering the type of training method to be used.

*Evaluation of the training by the participants.* Evaluation sheets were floated after the training. For some instances, the trainers ask the participants directly on what they can say about the training while someone was taking down notes.

*Activity report of the office of the municipal agriculture.* Activity report was then carried out after the training implementation. These include the summarized evaluation of the training conducted, attendance sheets, financial reports and photo documentations. A copy was given to the ATI-CAR and the other one to the MAO office for filing.

Process in the implementation of downloaded training. Figure 4 shows the processes followed by ATI-CAR in the downloaded training. The training institute was mandated to bring the training to the people as part of their function.

*Agricultural office managers' assembly.* The agricultural office managers or MAOs and the ATI-CAR have had an assembly twice a year wherein government programs were presented. When managers needed certain training, the ATI-CAR directly brought the training to them since it was in lined with government programs.



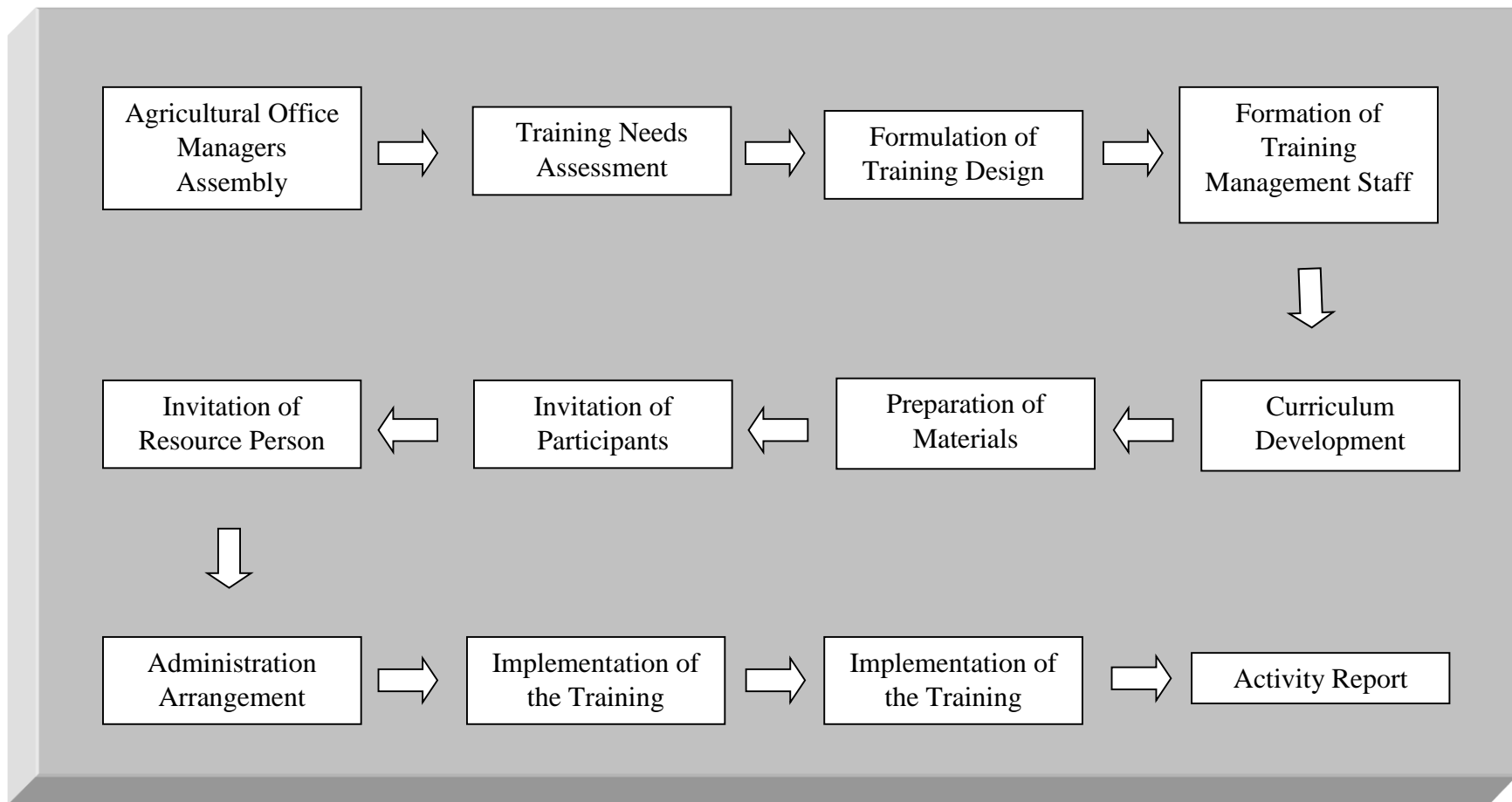


Figure 4. Process followed by ATI-CAR in the downloaded training



*Training needs assessment.* According to the ATI-CAR, training needs assessment can be done right after the implementation of certain training. Survey questionnaires were often floated to the participants of the training. The survey questionnaires already served as the basis in identifying the training needs assessment of the participants. Also, focus group discussions were being done. The ATI-CAR invited key informants from the community as a representative of a certain group like farmer leaders, political leaders and youth leaders. Key informants were identified through the help of LGU's who pointed out the potential key informants of a certain community. The ATI-CAR met the key informant group. Sets of questions were discussed with them regarding the problems related to agriculture. After the answers were summarized, training design was then constructed after determining the training need.

*Formulation of training design.* Upon the agreement of the managers on what training to conduct, training design was made by the institution. It was oftentimes prepared by the project officer, reviewed by the head of the training division and noted by the head of the institute. Once it was approved, training was ready for implementation.

*Formation of training management staff.* Training management staff was also formed for an organized conduct of the training. Staffing here includes the chairperson who sees to it that the implementation goes smoothly, and was in-charge of the training report. There was also one to two technical staff that manages the day to day activity and may serve as the resource person/s in some cases when the resource person did not arrive. Lastly, there was two to three support staff that helped in the documentation and arrangement of administration activities. The training management staff was appointed depending on their capability, availability and expertise.



*Curriculum development.* Curriculum was developed after the formation of the training management staff. In developing the curriculum of the training, different factors were taken into consideration as follows: if the training was based on training needs of the participants wherein the ATI-CAR prepares the curriculum in accordance with the kind of training needed; if it was the priority of the government or Department of Agriculture wherein the curriculum developed was based on the activities of the government; and if there was enough budgets and enough time wherein the development of the curriculum depends on the allotted budget and time for the training. This indicates that before curriculum was developed, these factors were considered.

*Preparation of materials.* Evaluation instruments for the resource person, overall training and pre-test were prepared after the development of curriculum. Also, visual aids like handouts and PowerPoint presentation were prepared to be used by the resource person/s for an effective lecture and discussion, though the resource person/s were also required to prepare their own presentations. This corroborates the account of Liberty (1999) that these visual aids can help the speaker stay organized and keep the audience's attention. It was also used to deliver information efficiently and effectively.

*Invitation of participants.* After the materials were prepared, letters of invitation for the training were sent through fax or individually through buses. E-mails, phone calls and text messaging was also done by the institute as a follow through of the letter sent to the target participants. This corroborates the study of Agyao (2009) that in the government services, public services are offered faster and efficient through the use of telecommunication systems like phone calls, among others.





*Invitation of resource persons.* Invitation letters were often sent to the proposed resource person of the training. They are being selected basing on their expertise and availability. According to the FreeArticles.com Free Articles Directory (n.d.), other than the topics, the main attraction of every seminar was the speaker who has the background, experience, reputation and expertise that will sell the seminar and help it succeed.

*Administration arrangements.* Administration arrangements were also done as a preparation for the training to be implemented. The training supplies and demonstration materials were purchased. Searching of venue for the training and catering services was also done. All the necessary things needed for the training implementation, the sound system and stage, etc., were made sure by the implementers to be already prepared.

*Implementation of the downloaded training.* After everything was polished, implementation of the downloaded training follows. The training was oftentimes being implemented in the ATI-CAR halls though the venue still depends on the type of training being implemented.

*Evaluation of the training.* After the training implementation, evaluation sheets were being floated to the participants after the training. It was then collected, compiled, tabulated and summarized and would serve as an attachment of the training report. Also, the result was being reviewed by the ATI-CAR during technical meetings for the improvement of the planned activities of the institute.

*Activity report.* Activity reports were then accomplished after the training was implemented and evaluated. This include the filled training completion report form, directory of participants, evaluation results, training design, action plan and photo documentation. Copies were given to the monitoring and evaluation unit of ATI-CAR for



recording, a copy was given also to the ATI-CAR accounting as attachment of their financial reports, and a copy was sent to the central office of ATI in Manila. Partner institutions were also furnished with their own copy for record and filing.

It can therefore be noted here that the downloaded trainings was a top-down approach which comes from the Department of Agriculture while the requested training was a bottom-up approach which comes from the clientele who needs the training.

#### Communication Strategies of ATI-CAR in the Planning and Preparation of Downloaded Training

According to Balancio, downloaded trainings usually follow the basic communication flow; from source to acquisition of feedback. Below were the noted communication processes of the ATI-CAR for such kind of training.

*Source.* The project officer of the training to be conducted drafts a letter of invitation to the target participants of the training.

*Message.* The letter of invitation to the target participants contains what the training was all about and that the target participants were being invited in that training. The letter was addressed to the head of the agency or MAO upon the approval of the director of the ATI-CAR to the letter.

*Channel.* The ATI-CAR uses few channels in inviting their target participants about training.

First channel commonly used by the ATI-CAR was letter which was sent to the MAO through hand carry (*paw-it*), e-mail or fax taking into consideration the factors of the receiver has the necessary technology for them to be able to receive the letter through



electronic system. This implies that letter was the main means of notification used by the ATI-CAR.

Another channel used was text or phone call. According to the ATI-CAR, there was always a phone call or text to the participants as a follow through of the letter sent to them. This implies that the ATI-CAR gets the result of their notification faster. This corroborates to the findings of Agyao (2001) that everyone practically sees the need to have his own phone, whether for business or personal reason, for faster delivery of information.

Announcement was also another channel used by the ATI-CAR in notifying their target participants. Balancio said that during meetings or trainings at the ATI-CAR office, announcement of upcoming trainings were made. This again supports the study of Dahal (1989) that oral communication is frequently employed because of the convenience of face to face communication, speed and the possibility of immediate feedback.

The findings of the study corroborates the study of Bucu (1989) on the communication support to agricultural projects in Benguet stating that different communication channels substantially differed in their degree of usefulness in creating awareness, in influencing attitude and behavior, and in encouraging clientele.

*Receiver.* The receivers of the message sent by the ATI-CAR were the target participants of the training. It may either be received by the head of the agency or by the Municipal Agriculture Office.

*Effect.* After the target participants had received the letter of invitation from the ATI-CAR, it was then for them to decide whether they will attend or not. This was related in the findings of the study that respondents considered trainings which were necessary in



their living and at the same time, necessary for their living. This implies that if they need the training, they would confirm to attend the said training.

*Feedback.* The result showed that AEWs confirmed to the ATI-CAR in different ways.

Ten of the respondents said that they confirmed with the notification or invitation through text and phone call sent directly to the coordinator or technical person involved.

Six of the respondents said that they confirmed through a letter which was addressed to the ATI-CAR director attention to the project officer of the activity. This indicates that with the advent of communication technologies, some respondents still prefers to use letter as a channel to communicate their confirmation to the ATI-CAR.

On the other hand, two of the respondents said that they personally go to the ATI-CAR office and personally confirms to the project officer or technical person involved in the training. The findings corroborates to the study of Lorenzana (2003) that directly talking with clients is better and more important rather than communicating through a third person or a media.

The result showed that the AEWs were being notified about certain trainings conducted by ATI-CAR and the AEWs responded to these notifications through some means of communication.

Factors in choosing training method. In conducting trainings, the ATI-CAR considered some factors in selecting what training method they used. These include the number of participants, venue, nature of the subject matter, the objective, expertise of user/trainor, material and supplies available, time and budget. This supports the study of Golocan (1990) that while as many approaches/strategies as available were employed or



tried out in order to maximize project implementation, the final choice of a certain strategy or a combination of approaches depend upon the present needs of the situation.

*Number of participants.* If there were many participants, the trainors of ATI-CAR often use lecture-discussion, open forum, and individual and group workshops. If there were only few participants, lecture-discussion, group dynamics, games or simulations, workshops, practicum, field works and field tours were used.

*Venue.* According to the ATI-CAR, training methods depended on the training venue. Training held in fields often used practicum, tour, workshop, and fieldworks especially if the training was all about agricultural skills. On the other hand, trainings held inside halls used lecture, lecture-discussion, focus group discussion and brainstorming.

*Nature of the subject matter.* According to the ATI-CAR, training methods depended on the subject matter whether it was for skills development or knowledge acquisition. Trainings on agricultural skills preferred fieldwork while knowledge acquisition preferred lecture, focus group discussion and brainstorming.

*The objective.* According to the ATI-CAR, objectives about knowledge acquisition used lecture, lecture-discussion, brainstorming and case studies. Skills development preferred workshop.

*Expertise of user/trainor.* According to the ATI-CAR, expert trainors or those who were used to the certain training method preferred to use the method they were used to because it was most likely that they were comfortable with it.

*Materials and supplies available.* Before identifying the training method, the trainors of ATI-CAR made sure that materials and supplies were available. For trainings about agricultural skills where the things needed were complete and available, ATI-CAR



used demonstration method followed by practicum. On the other hand, on knowledge acquisition, lectures, lecture-discussion, focus group discussion and brainstorming was used.

*Time.* Time was another factor in choosing training method. In terms of short time trainings, usually, lecture-discussion and open forum was used by the ATI-CAR. On the other hand, long time trainings uses demonstration, focus group discussion and brainstorming.

*Budget.* Budget matters in choosing a training method. The ATI-CAR trainors chose training method affordable enough by the available budget. In cases where all the necessary things were provided for the training, demonstration followed by practicum was used. On the other hand, when there was no enough budget, lecture discussion and open forum were used.

According to Balancio, the training methods always depend on the nature of the subject matter. This corroborates to the study of Tiwari (1994) that technician combine methods depending on the involved field of activities. According to Amadeo (2004), the extension workers chose technique best suited to the situation.

#### Communication Strategies of ATI-CAR in the Training Implementation and Evaluation of Downloaded Training

Below was the common communication strategy of ATI-CAR in the implementation of trainings as described by Balancio.

Sender. The senders of the message were the trainors of ATI-CAR who communicates the technologies to the intended clientele like the AEWs. This source is



initially responsible for the success of the message. According to Sanchez, the sender's experiences, attitudes, knowledge, skill, perceptions, and culture influence the message.

Message. The message that the ATI-CAR oftentimes communicate to their clientele were the new technologies and new trends in agriculture. Balancio said that the message still depends on the kind of training they conduct whether it was about agriculture or any related topics. The sender has to begin by deciding what he wants to transmit. This supports the account of Sanchez that this decision by the sender was based on what he/she believes about the receivers knowledge and assumptions, along with what additional information he/she wants the receiver to have. It was important for the sender to use symbols that are familiar to the intended receiver. A good way for the sender to improve encoding their message was to mentally visualize the communication from the receiver's point of view.

Channel. The ATI-CAR uses several channels in communicating the technologies to their intended audience depending on the method of training they use. Below were some of the methods used by ATI-CAR in conducting trainings according to the key informant interviewee.

*Panel discussion.* It was a modified version of the panel using mix persons. One to four persons represent the audience and one to four persons serve as resource persons or expert. Moderators direct the proceedings.

*Open forum.* It was a 15 to 60 minutes open discussion that was carried among members of an entire group and one or more resource persons. It was also directed by a moderator.



*Group discussion.* It was a purposeful conversation and deliberation about the topic of mutual interest among six to 20 participants under the guidance of trained participants called a leader.

*Workshop.* It was a group sharing a common interest or problem meeting together to improve their individual proficiency, to solve a problem or to extend their knowledge of the subject through intensive study, research and discussion.

*Fieldwork.* Done in the field where demonstration and practice was done.

*Practicum.* This involved the application of the theories and principles learned in actual field situation.

*Demonstration.* It showed how to perform an act or use a procedure. The learners watch an expert who perform the demonstration and listen to the explanations. Then, demonstration was followed by practice opportunities for the learners.

*Brainstorming.* The idea was to get out of the group all ideas possible with no thought of how practical ideas might be.

*Case study.* Problems on event or services were analyzed and discussed and come up with solutions or recommendations.

*Lecture.* This was the verbal presentation by the speaker to the listeners who were expected to retain key concepts. Though, a pure lecture does not allow comments, reactions or questions from the participants.

Other strategies used were: group debates, role playing, group dynamics, assignment, and other small group methods. According to Sanchez, most channels were either oral or written, but currently visual channels were becoming more common as technology expands.





Feedback. Feedbacks of the trainings conducted by the ATI-CAR were through the evaluation floated after the training or the questions thrown by the training participants during the training.

Training method preferred by AEWs. Below were some of the training methods preferred by the respondents.

*Lecture.* Eleven of the respondents preferred lecture. For Cabanes, it was the easiest. Three of them also said that it helped in the mind setting and knowledge enhancement, it was detailed and the subject matter can be explained thoroughly. Also, according to a respondent from Tublay, it provide the bird's eye view on what the training was all about wherein it provides a synthesis on what lies for the topic being undertaken. This implies that majority of the respondents were up to knowledge acquisition. This supports the account of Blanchard (2012) that major benefit of the lecture is that it is interactive and that trainees can ask questions or has the presenter change the pace of the lecture if necessary.

*Demonstration.* Nine of the respondents also preferred demonstration. According to Sotero, it was useful in field since they actually see the processes or the method and they tend to understand and follow what the trainor was talking about. Four of them said that this method was a follow-through of the discussion and supplements the lectures. Actual application was regarded than lectures and oftentimes, techniques could not be learned only in lectures.

The result corroborates the study of Lorenzana (2003) that new technologies were better disseminated using demonstration as a method. Also, this supports the study of Golocan (1981) about the adoption of technologies by farmer trainees of the Mountain



State Agricultural College that the training approach received favorably by the majority of farmer trainees was actual demonstration.

*Field tours.* Three of the respondents preferred field tours because of its potential of gaining more insights and more ideas from the field visit. This corroborates to the study of Golocan (1981) that having field trips to existing successful enterprise helps the participants to learn other method or techniques. In contrary, Taeza (2002) as cited by Flores (2007), stated skills training, field trial and field tour were among the least effective interventions in term of delivery services.

Training Evaluation. According to Balancio, there were three evaluation instruments being floated during their trainings.

First was the pre-test which was floated before the training proper starts. This instrument was used to evaluate what the participants already know about the training to be conducted. This was also used to motivate them to learn especially if they cannot answer the questions in the instrument. Then, after the training, post-test was floated to the training participants to find out whether they had grasped something from the training.

Second was the resource person evaluation. This was being floated after the training. If there were many resource persons, it was floated every after each resource persons' discussion. This instrument was used to evaluate how well the resource person had delivered the topic to the participants. Also, the participants would write their comments and suggestions about the resource person.

Third was the overall evaluation which was floated after the training proper before the participants finally disperse. This included the overall rating of the participants on the activity in terms of the topics, activities, objectives attained, methodologies used,



instructional aides, choice of resource person, training management team, training facilities and services, and the meeting of their expectations. The participants' comments and suggestions for the improvement of the training was all included.

### Use of Findings in the Training Evaluation

After the training, evaluation sheets were tallied. According to Balancio, findings were generalized which were often reviewed during the planning of the next training or just after the training.

The results of the evaluation served as the basis of the ATI-CAR for their upcoming trainings. The results were being studied well. The pre-test evaluation was studied through the post-test evaluation whether the participants had grasped something from the training conducted. The resource person evaluation was studied in terms of the rating of the training participants on the: clarity of the topic objectives at the beginning, organizations/sequencing of topics, clarity of topics/ideas presented/discussed, effectiveness of methodology/ies used/style of teaching, quality and effectiveness of instructional aides used, ability to teach/communicate ideas, ability to answer questions, ability to arouse/sustain interest, ability to manage time and how the topic was ended.

On the overall training evaluation, the training was evaluated in terms of participants' appreciation, usefulness of the activity to the participants, suggestion for improvements and suggested trainings for the future.

Also, the training is being rated in terms of: meeting of expectations, attainment of the objectives, course content/topics, activities included, methodologies used, instructional/presentation aids, choice of resource person, training management team, and training facilities and services.



The summarized suggestions were being given to the trainers for personal insights. This validates the account of Duggan (2010) that reports produced based on learner assessment validates training program usage. This accredits the account of Lynton and Pareek (1967) that by no means, every weakness or failure in training was therefore attributed to the institution or assessed for the improvements of its program.

### Level of Appreciation

The trainings conducted and processes followed by the ATI-CAR in conducting trainings were rated by the AEWs in terms of their appreciation whether the training had done something to them for them to appreciate it.

*Level of appreciation of AEWs to the trainings conducted by ATI-CAR.* The level of appreciation of the AEWs to the trainings conducted by ATI-CAR was also rated by the respondents. The ratings used were: very well appreciated (5), well appreciated (4), appreciated (3), less appreciated (2) and not appreciated (1).

Six of the respondents appreciated very well the trainings conducted by ATI-CAR. According to a respondent, the trainings help in human resource development, in building confidence and in the enhancement of skills and knowledge. Also, five of them said that trainings were relevant to current situations wherein they, as AEWs, were kept in pace with the new trends of agriculture, updates and new technologies in the farming industry. This validates the study of Flores (2007) that the agricultural technicians were very highly appreciative of trainings because their competence was continuously being improved.

Three of the respondents appreciated well the trainings conducted by ATI-CAR. A respondent affirmed that the trainings conducted by the ATI-CAR were very organized, on time and the management was very good. Also, another respondent said that there was



training needs assessment which helped them voice out their training needs to the ATI-CAR. Meanwhile, one respondent said that some training should not be conducted during the last quarter of the year since AEWs have many activities during this quarter like their participation in the Adivay Festival.

Two of the respondents appreciated the trainings conducted by ATI-CAR. A respondent's reason was that the training was still implemented no matter how late it was. Although appreciated, one respondent described some of the trainings as boring because of the methodology used by some of the speakers.

This corroborates to the study of Cadiz (1985) on the role of communication in action projects in rural development stating that a project which provides its beneficiaries the chances to perform new roles and functions to take part in new type of activities will most likely enhance such beneficiaries' self-reliance and participation in rural development. She added that a project that encourages its beneficiaries to link not only among themselves but also with the larger society can be expected to enhance collaboration and interaction among various participants in development.

*Level of appreciation of AEWs to the processes followed by ATI-CAR.* The level of appreciation of AEWs to the processes followed by ATI-CAR in conducting trainings was also rated. The same rating was used in this area.

Five of the respondents appreciated very well the processes followed by ATI-CAR in conducting trainings. Their reason was that it was organized, understandable, and easily followed in a way that it was speedy and within the time frame.

Three of the respondents appreciated well the processes followed by ATI-CAR in conducting trainings. Two of them said that it was well-organized, well-documented and



its agency mandate and procedure was followed. Also, a respondent said that method of training was based on requested methods, lecture, demonstration and experiential basis.

For the three respondents who just rated the training as “appreciated” noted that the method being used by some of the trainers were too formal and more on paper work than focusing on practical applications.

According to Piquinto (1992), trainings and workshops were appreciated if it was proven effective by the participants, providing their learning opportunities and access to information, knowledge and resources which was needed for their transformation. Also, Flores (2007) pointed that for anything to be appreciated, its relevance and benefits have to be recognized wherein, in the case of training and extension, their benefits may be seen in the effects on the clientele.

#### Challenges Encountered by the ATI-CAR in the Downloaded Training

Planning and preparation, implementation and evaluation. Trainings operate within certain constraints. These constraints set the direction of the training as well as the limits on the kind of decisions that can be made (Asian Institute of Journalism, 1983).

*Planning and preparation of training.* According to Balancio, when they send communication letters to the participants, some do not reach the participants. Also, it takes time before the communications reach the receiver especially to far areas. In such cases, there was always a follow-up text or call from the ATI-CAR office to the participants to make sure they were informed about certain training.

Balancio, added that far areas were difficultly notified about a training because of the time of travel needed to reach that certain place through hand carry or buses. He added



that far areas tend to have less telecommunication system making it harder for the ATI0CAR to send the invitation to the target participants. As stated by Lee (1993), as a communication source, we can spend a lot of time preparing messages and in selecting channels, but if the receiver does not get the message, we have not communicated.

*Training Implementation.* According to five respondents, participants who had confirmed to attend do not attend the training. Also, early participants wait for the late participants causing a shortened time for the training.

Another problem said by Sotero was the differences of participants in terms of knowledge and perceptions. Some has attitudinal problems wherein they were talkative and selfish in a way. In this case, it was suggested that the trainers must establish a common environment between the participants.

According to two of the respondents, there was a time when they experienced training without electricity. Lino stated that the communication between the resource person and the participants was affected because of the poor roofing which produces affecting sound when it rains. In this case, she suggested that the ATI-CAR secure generators and proper roofing in their training halls.

*Training Evaluation.* According to the ATI-CAR trainer, there were no many problems in the evaluation by AEWs as participants. The ATI-CAR trainer said that some AEWs as their participant in training were observed to be hesitant in voicing out their comments and suggestions about training. Also, on the evaluation sheets, some questions were left blank. On the other hand, the ATI-CAR trainer mentioned about their farmer participants who cannot read and write. In this case, they uses oral test (question and



answer, games with easy answers yes or no), evaluation smiley (draw ☺ or ☹ depending on their reaction on the subject matter) to let the farmer participants evaluate the training.

Respondent's suggestions for the improvement of trainings conducted by ATI-CAR. The respondents suggested for the improvement of trainings being conducted by ATI-CAR.

Four of the respondents suggested that the ATI-CAR must plan carefully the trainings they are to conduct. Lino said that AEWs must be given enough time to rest from attending trainings and do their tasks in their offices before conducting training. She added that trainings also should start early every year not on the last quarter of the year wherein the government activities like the Adivay were also conducted.

Two respondents also suggested that the ATI-CAR should follow schedule. Tomin suggested that they must start on time and not wait for late participants.

Meanwhile, Sotero suggested that in terms of approach, the trainors must not go beyond the capacity of the mind of the participants. This implies that if the AEWs did not understand the technology the trainor was trying to transfer to them, they might as well not be able to transfer it to the farmers easily. This corroborates the study of Bengwayan (1987) on the communication analysis of agro-technology transfer in the Cordillera Region stating that most technologies being transferred are worded too technically and if these are not transferred into a simpler form of literature, they will be useless to most farmers.

Others suggested considering having training outside the country, formation of the training as “one common environment” wherein participants should be treated in the same way; tapping resource persons from other extension providers; and continue to conduct trainings.





## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

The study on the communication strategies of the Agricultural Training Institute-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-CAR) in conducting agricultural trainings for Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) was conducted from October 2011 to February 2012.

Specifically, the study was able to identify the trainings being conducted by ATI-CAR, identify communication strategies of ATI-CAR in planning and preparation, identify communication strategies of ATI-CAR in implementation and evaluation, determine how the findings in the evaluation were used by the institution, determine the level of appreciation of the AEWs on the trainings conducted and processes followed by the ATI-CAR, and identify the challenges encountered by the ATI-CAR during the planning and preparation, training implementation and evaluation process.

Respondents of the study were 12 AEWs and one trainer of ATI-CAR.

Key informant interview and interview schedule were done in data collection.

There were two types of trainings being conducted by ATI-CAR, the requested training which was being requested by the AEWs and the downloaded training which come from the upper departments which the ATI-CAR was mandated to conduct. Majority of the respondents requested trainings on Business Management and Crop Protection.

The process in the requested training have several steps: training needs assessment, coordination with ATI-CAR, preparation of training proposal, review of proposal by the MAO, recommending approval of the municipal mayor, program review of the ATI together with the LGU/MAO, preparation of training design by the MAO office,



canvassing of materials, purchase order preparation, implementation of requested training, evaluation and activity report.

The processes followed by ATI-CAR in the downloaded training also have several steps: agricultural office managers assembly, training needs assessment, formulation of training design, formation of training management staff, curriculum development, preparation of materials, invitation of participants, invitation of resource person/s, administration arrangement, implementation of the downloaded training, evaluation and activity report.

Majority of the respondents said that they were being notified about training through letter though the ATI-CAR staff said that there was always a text or phone call to AEWs as a follow through of the letter sent. On the other hand, majority of the respondents respond to the notification through text or phone call.

There were also factors in choosing training method. These were: number of participants, venue, nature of the subject matter, objective, expertise of user or trainor, materials and supplies available, time and budget. Majority of the respondents preferred lecture as a training method and the rest preferred demonstration and field tours.

The trainings were being evaluated through three evaluations: the pre-posttest floated before the training, resource person evaluation and overall evaluation floated after the training. Findings in the evaluation serve as a basis of the ATI-CAR for the improvement of their future trainings.

On the respondents' level of appreciation, half of the respondents appreciated very well the trainings being conducted by ATI-CAR. Also, almost half appreciated very well the processes followed by ATI-CAR in conducting trainings.



Challenges encountered during planning and preparation was the lack of coordination and organization of trainings. On the training implementation, challenges encountered were the non-arrival of participants and sometimes, the speakers; attitudinal differences of participants and some technical problems. During training evaluations, challenges encountered was the illiteracy of the respondents especially some of the farmers.

### Conclusion

From the results, the following conclusions were derived:

1. A process is being followed by the ATI-CAR in conducting their trainings; however, methods or strategies used in delivering the information vary from one situation to another.
2. Different means of communicating the training is being applied by the ATI-CAR to its intended clientele.
3. Lecture and demonstration remain to be the best method in delivering training programs.
4. Results of evaluation in certain trainings conducted by the ATI-CAR are being utilized by the agency for the improvement of their performance and services.
5. The trainings conducted were appreciated by the AEW participants.
6. Challenges vary from one aspect of the training to another, from planning to evaluation.

### Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following were recommended:



1. Lecture and demonstration should still be used as the main method of the ATI-CAR trainors as proven to be the most appreciated and preferred by the respondents.
2. The ATI-CAR should continue to conduct evaluation of training and review it every time to figure out things they needed to do for the improvement of trainings they are to conduct in the future.
3. The ATI-CAR should plan carefully their whole year activity wherein they should schedule trainings on the early months of the year where less government activities were done. They should coordinate properly with the MAO/LGU as pointed out by some of the AEWs as a challenge encountered during planning and implementation.
4. Since the focus of the study was on downloaded training, it is recommended that a documentation of requested training should also be done.



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