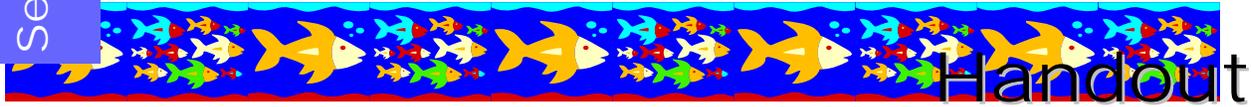


Module Four

Stages of Group Development



Handout

Activities and Discussions: Problems and solutions to potential problems within the community.

Topic # 1: Problems and constraints encountered by communities.

- Ask the participants what “community” means to them and identify the major problems (financial, operation, relationship, etc) in their community.
- Encourage them to give practical examples that their co-participants can relate to.
- List the big words relative to community that the participants have shared, e.g., people, surroundings, common beliefs, same profession/livelihood, using common resources, etc.
- Synthesize the information shared, and then discuss the meaning of “community” as it is regularly defined, what composes a community, characteristics, and boundaries.

Potential problems:

1. Lack of organization and support within the community
2. Lack of awareness towards important issues like use of destructive fishing tools

Topic # 2 : Identification of possible solutions to the problems and constraints identified.

- Likewise, ask from the participants for possible solutions to the problems identified.
- Again, list the responses on the board.
- The answers could be synthesized in the following context:

Potential solutions:

1. Community Organization or Group Formation: the organizational structure whether formal or informal should be clear to the people in the community. The group objectives and actions to be taken define what kind of organization is needed, e.g., traditional or informal.

2. Education: increases awareness and deepens the understanding of the people regarding the real issues or problems; makes the people better decision-makers in solving their problems; and collectively responds to their needs. Education can be done through training, seminars, conferences, study tours, etc.

Conclusion of the exercise:

- Emphasize that all these are interrelated processes in the community.
- It is crucial to conduct a community analysis before organizing a cooperative. It is not possible to organize an effective group if the people are not aware of the problems or issues confronting them.
- A person wanting to join a cooperative should be required to participate in a formal session on cooperative concepts, nature, philosophy, principles, practices, roles, duties, etc.
- As soon as these sets of information are made available to him, a prospective member can now decide to join the cooperative. He is now ready to answer YES to the following questions:
 - Is the cooperative the answer to your needs?
 - As a person, can I become a good member?
 - Is the cooperative a means through which a person can help himself and others to develop better, stronger livelihood?

THE PROCESS OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

The process of group-building causes attitudinal and behavioral changes among individual members.

Groups are organized for different reasons: some groups, like cooperatives, are formed to accomplish specific tasks; some groups are created for social purposes (e.g., a town celebration committee); still others are organized for religious purposes. Sometimes we hear a person say, "Let's not get too serious about the work; we must enjoy each others' company." This statement shows that some people see the purpose of a group as completing a task in a fast, business-like way, while others see it as a way to enjoy others' company.

Studies about groups tell us, however, that all groups that are effective are concerned about both:

- the work aspect, or the task to be done and
- the human aspect, or interpersonal relationships

Roles that group members can play

- **Contributing:** suggest new ideas to accomplish goals
- **Information-seeking:** ask question to clarify facts or feelings
- **Information-giving:** offer information related to the task
- **Summarizing:** assess the progress of the group in accomplishing its goals
 - **Standards-setting:** express ideas about the quality of the work

Functions related directly to the personal relationships in the group

- **Supporting:** encourage others to participate, praise other members
- **Compromising:** mediate disagreements and reconcile differences to relieve tension
- **Providing observations:** observe how members are working and use this information to improve relations or efficiency
- **Ensuring participation:** encourage communication among members and give everyone a chance to participate
- **Tension-reducing:** try to reduce tension with appropriate jokes or other statements

Stages in the Life of a Group

Stage 1: Members of a group **depend** on the leader (or whomever is perceived as the leader) to guide them. The members are concerned with knowing the task, and the leader must define the goal.

Stage 2: The group experiences **conflict** arising from different opinions regarding the best way to get the work done. The main task at this stage is to get answers to the following questions:

- Who will be responsible for what?
- How will we accomplish our goal?
- What procedures will we follow?



Stage 3: The group members are **united** after resolving their conflict. They feel themselves to be part of the group and are able to help one another accomplish the work. They share ideas, information, and feelings. This stage is the most enjoyable, as both the task and the interpersonal needs are fulfilled.

Stage 4: Members are **interdependent**, meaning they can work in subgroups, as a whole group, or individually. There is strong commitment to accomplishing the task and to **problem-solving**. Members support each other. It is a challenge for groups to reach this state, and many do not.

Groups might pass through a particular stage quickly or stay at one stage for some time. Groups might also go back to an earlier stage, depending on how the members react to the task and to one another.

The individual member grows in the same way the group does. The group is a learning environment for the member, as he is an active part in its life and activities. The group member passes through the same developmental stages as does the group.

If the group creates a positive atmosphere for the individual, members will work together to meet a common goal. They will help one another and, consequently, the whole group from one stage of growth to the next. The challenge a group faces is to achieve the right balance between the task-related and human-related functions so there are smooth transitions between stages.¹

¹ Training Manual on the Transfer of Technology Among Rural Women, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific