**EXERCISE 7. DRAWING UP A CONSTITUION**

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| *OBJECTIVE***After this exercise the participants will be able to:*** Draw up a constitution
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| *EQUIPMENT NEEDED** Flip chart or large pieces of paper, marker pens
* Several copies of the blank constitution worksheet
 | *EXPECTED OUTPUTS** A constitution for the group
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| *TIME*2 hours | *PREPARATION*None |

*SUGGESTED PROCEDURE*

1. Ask the participants about the national government. What rules does it follow? How often are elections held? What prevents powerful politicians from doing whatever they want? (*Answer: the constitution*).
2. Explain that just as a country needs a constitution, so does a group. The constitution describes the group’s goals, describes what powers the leaders have, and set out the rules for managing the group and its assets.
3. Explain that the government, banks and development organizations also require groups to have a written constitution.
4. Ask the group what types of rules the constitution should have. List these on the flip chart.
5. Divide the group into smaller groups, and ask each to discuss one aspect of the constitution (see the Constitution worksheet). Each group can discuss the items in one or more rows in the worksheet. Invite them to fill in the blank spaces in the worksheet, and to change or add to the wording as needed.
6. Ask the subgroups to report back to the plenary. Facilitate a discussion to reach a consensus on each point. Note the decisions on a blank copy of the worksheet.
7. Read through the completed constitution and ask for any final comments.
8. Invite the officers to sign and date the constitution, and if appropriate, ask a respected local person who is not a member of the group to sign it as a witness.

**Constitution worksheet**

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| **BASIC INFORMATION** |
| **Name** | The name of the organization is ……… |
| **Location** | It is based in ……… |
| **Formation** | It was formed on ……… and registered with ……… on ……… |
| **Contact information** | Address: ……… Telephone: ……… |
| **Objectives** | The objective of the organization is to ……… |
| **Functions** | The organization undertakes the following activities: ……… |
| **MEMBERS** |
| **Membership** | Any person over the age of ……… who lives in ……… or who works in ……… may join the organization.Members are responsible for ……… |
| **Contributions** | Members must pay an annual membership fee, the amount of which is determined by the annual general assembly.If a member fails to pay the membership fee, the following rule will apply ……… |
| **GOVERNANCE** |
| **General assembly** | The general assembly is the highest decision-making body of the organization. It will meet at least once a year. It has the power to elect and dismiss officers, decide on the general purpose and direction of the organization, and amend this constitution.A minimum of ……… (number or percent) of members must be present for the general assembly to make decisions.The chair may call an extraordinary general meeting at ……… days’ notice. |
| **Management committee** | The organization’s officers will consist of the following:Chairperson  Secretary  Marketing coordinator  Other ……… Vice-chair  Treasurer  Production coordinator A member may serve a maximum of ……… consecutive terms in any one position. |
| **Election procedures** | The officers will be chosen by a secret ballot of members at a general assembly. Elections will be held every ……… (months or years)The minimum number of members who must be present to hold an election is ………A member must be proposed and seconded by another member before being put forward for election. At least two members must stand for each position. |
| **Decision-making** | Decisions will be made by consensus if possible, or by simple majority vote if necessary. |
| **Meetings** | Regular meetings will be held every ……… (weeks or months).Members are obliged to attend. The general assembly may impose a fine for lateness or absence.The chair may call additional meetings at ……… days’ notice. |
| **Records** | The secretary will keep a record of the meetings and the decisions made. |
| **Disciplinary actions** | The general assembly may impose penalties on officers or normal members if they do not fulfill their responsibilities. These penalties are to be listed in the bylaws of the group. |
| **Review of the constitution** | This constitution may be revised by a two-thirds majority of members present at a general assembly meeting. |
| **Dissolution** | If the organization is dissolved, the following rules will apply……….On dissolution, the funds of the organization will be disposed of in this way……… |

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