



 CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES
**Organizing and Managing
Farmers Groups. Part 1:
Managing Groups**

SMART Skills Manual

faith. action. results.

Skills for Marketing and Rural Transformation (SMART skills)

SMART Skills manuals:

- Introduction to SMART skills for rural development
- Organizing and managing farmer groups
- Understanding natural resources
- Managing natural resources
- Marketing basics
- Seven steps of marketing
- Promoting innovation

Purpose of the SMART skills series

To introduce you to the following five skill areas:

- Group organization
- Natural resources management
- Finance
- Marketing
- Innovation




Manual content

Two modules:

- Working with groups
- Organizing and managing a group





Module 1:

Working with groups

Module content

Helping local people get organized for agro-enterprise development:

Lesson 1:

Why work with groups?

Lesson 2:

The role of the group promoter





Lesson 1: **Why work with groups?**

Outcomes

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- List the advantages of working with groups for the development agency.
- List the advantages of being a group member from the point of view of the farmer.
- Explain the features of a successful group.

Overview

Lesson 1 covers the following content:

- Working with groups or individuals?
- Types of groups
- Why groups are good for their members
- Why development organizations work with groups
- Why do groups fail?

Working with groups or individuals



- **Working with individuals:** Local leaders and innovative farmers
- **Working with temporary groups:** Offering courses on specific skills
- **Working with local people in fairly permanent groups:** Dealing with savings and loans, production and marketing

Types of farmers' groups

- Farmer field school
- Innovation group
- Savings-and-credit group
- Production group
- Processing group
- Marketing group
- Community group
- Resource management group
- Cooperative
- Farmers' association



Why groups are good for their members

- Buy cheaper inputs
- Get services and advice:
- Build their capacity
- Obtain financial services
- Get better prices for products
- Share the work burden
- Do things individuals cannot do
- Get empowered



Why development organizations work with groups

- **Cost effectiveness:** Easier, quicker and cheaper
- **Scale and impact:** Reaching more farmers
- **Task sharing:** Group activities
- **Sustainability**
- **Payment:** Group contributions
- **Feedback:** Better and more useful feedback



Costs of membership

Group membership costs time, effort and money.

Group members may have to:

- Attend meetings
- Do extra work
- Pay fees
- Contribute materials
- Make long-term commitments
- Submit to the decisions of others



Avoiding problems and showing benefits of groups

If group members do not feel benefits, they will:


- Stop attending meetings
- Miss work sessions
- Stop paying their fees
- Sell their produce to someone else

To avoid these problems, the group should:

- Have realistic goals
- Make sure that decisions and leadership are transparent
- Bring clear benefits to its members

Reasons for groups failing

- **Goals:** Uncertain or unrealistic goals; too many goals
- **Procedures:** Long meetings; poor record keeping
- **Facilitator:** Too dominant; mishandles group coordination
- **Leadership:** Leaders too dictatorial or weak
- **Management:** Favoritism; unfair distribution of group profits; allowing conflict to get out of hand
- **Membership:** Unfair burden of work & allocation of benefits; lazy and/or power-hungry members; weak communication



Lesson 2: **The role of the group promoter**

Outcomes

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain the role and working methods of the field agent as a group promoter.
- Describe how to use participatory learning methods.
- Plan training on group management for the group.

Overview

Lesson 2 covers the following content:

- Roles, qualities and duties of a group promoter
- Building trust
- Encouraging learning and involvement
- Training and workshops
- Supporting group activities
- Individual discussions
- Monitoring activities
- Writing reports
- Group stages
- Withdrawal of the group promoter

Main tasks of a group promoter

Helping farmers to form and build strong groups that can:

- Run themselves and work on their own
- Develop their own initiatives, e.g. enterprises, savings schemes and conservation measures
- Be a strong basis for improving the livelihoods of people in the community.



Four basic roles of a group promoter



Group advisor



Participatory trainer



Facilitator of linkages



Monitor

Qualities of a successful group promoter

- Is committed to the goal of helping local people help themselves
- Is familiar with the problems that local people are facing
- Knows (or learns) the local language and culture
- Has skills in group organization and areas such as marking, innovation and finance
- Is friendly, open and able to listen and learn



Duties of a group promoter

- Facilitate: **not** dictate
- Build trust
- Encourage learning
- Attend group meetings
- Organize training
- Help the group plan and implement activities
- Visit and talk to community members
- Monitor and evaluate the group's progress
- Follow up on discussions and decisions



The group promoter as facilitator

- **You are a facilitator.** You help the group to become self-reliant.
- **Your role changes over time:** From initiating and leading to guiding, assisting and finally to coaching and advising.
- Initiating and leading do **not** mean teaching or dictating.
- **Local people have a lot of knowledge and expertise.**



Building trust

As the group promoter, you have to:

- Make yourself available to everyone in the community
- Treat local people with friendship and respect
- Get to know a wide range of people in the community
- Build relationships with community leaders, farmers, input suppliers, traders, etc.
- Do not take sides in discussions or disputes
- Recognize group members' hidden agendas and discuss them openly.

Encouraging learning and involvement

- **Be inclusive:** Avoid interacting with a select few group leaders
- **Build a pool of potential leaders:** Ensure that as many members as possible learn the skills to contribute to the group
- **Encourage openness and communication:** Encourage group members to speak up and make their views heard.



The group promoter's role during meetings

Help group leaders to:

- Choose an **agenda**
- Allow **flexibility** to change the agenda
- Report on **the previous meeting**
- Encourage members to participate in **discussions**
- Use **participatory learning methods** to provoke discussion
- Encourage **decision-making**



Training and workshops: Planning

When planning training or workshops, you should identify:

- **Participants:**

Who should attend

- **Objectives:**

What do you hope to achieve?

- **Content:**

What subjects should be covered and in how much detail?



Training and workshops: Deciding on the details

- **Location and timing:** Where and when should the training take place and for how long?
- **Logistics:** Transport, food, drink and accommodation
- **Materials and equipment:** Training materials, flipcharts, etc.
- **Monitoring:** Attendance records, key information, etc.
- **Funding:** Costs for the course.



Training subjects: Broad areas of skills

Innovation:	Testing techniques for improving production
Natural resources:	Improving management of soil, water and other natural resources
Marketing:	Selling products to a particular market
Finance:	Managing and investing money, saving, etc.
Group organization:	Organizing a group to benefit its members

Supporting group activities

- Identify and prioritize needs
- Help the group to plan to put the solution into practice
- Help develop and implement a work plan
- Discuss problems and try to find solutions
- Arrange visits to other groups or to information sources so that the group can learn and share ideas



Individual discussions

As the group promoter, you may need to:

- **Meet with group leaders** to help them to learn how to manage the group
- **Work with sub-groups** of members (e.g. women or young people)
- **Meet outsiders** to explain the group's purpose and to explore collaboration



Monitoring activities: Purpose

Monitoring enables the group to:

- Check on its progress
- Make adjustments if required

Monitoring gives the development organization information on:

- The effectiveness of its interventions
- Ways to improve its interventions



Monitoring activities

- Help the group to identify and monitor **indicators**
- Ensure that the **findings** are analyzed
- Ensure that **feedback** on the findings is given to the group
- Monitor the **work plan** and **follow up** on any **problems**
- Monitor **group members' attendance** and activities
- Check **group records** and make sure that they are complete and up-to-date
- **Report on progress** to your development organization

Writing reports: Purpose

Regular reporting on each group is important, because it:

- Enables you to keep track of your inputs and the achievements of each group
- Gives your colleagues and supervisors information to check on progress and identify problems
- Lets someone else take over your work if you are ill or if you move somewhere else.

Writing reports: Content

The following information may be included in a report:

- The topic and why it was chosen
- The date and place of the training
- The names and contact information of the organizer and resource persons
- Names and details of participants
- A brief description of each topic
- Recommendations and evaluation



How many groups can you serve?

How many people can you reach through groups if you:

- Visit ten groups a week
- Each group has 15–30 members
- Each household has five people

You can reach:

- **At least:** $10 \times 15 = 750$ people
- **At most:** $10 \times 30 = 1,500$ people

Group stages

Stage	Period	Activities
Start-up	1 cropping season of market cycle	Sets vision; decides on rules; choose leaders
Consolidation	1–2 seasons or cycles	Builds on initial achievements; establishes working procedures; engages in activities
Regular activities	2 seasons or cycles	Group has strong relations with outsiders; can resolve most problems itself.

Group promotor's role in group stages

Period	Group promotor's role
Start-up	Initiating and leading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intensive involvement• Regular visit to farmers• Learn about farming systems
Consolidation	Guiding and assisting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less intensive and frequent• Training in new skills
Regular activities	Advising and coaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occasional visits• Preparing the group to work without you


Withdrawal of the group promoter

It takes 3–5 years for a group to reach self-reliance.

You can gradually withdraw from a group once it can:

- Get access to government and NGO services
- Negotiate with input suppliers and buyers
- Take initiatives without your assistance.





Module 2: Organizing and managing a group

Module content

Module 2 describes how to help local people to get organized as a group. It covers the following content:

- Lesson 3: Entering the community?
- Lesson 4: Forming a group
- Lesson 5: Participation
- Lesson 6: Leadership and management
- Lesson 7: Governing the group
- Lesson 8: Holding meetings
- Lesson 9: Keeping records
- Lesson 10: Financial management



Lesson 3: **Entering the community**

Outcomes

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe how to enter the community and the types of information to gather.
- List various ways to identify potential group members.
- Describe how to ensure that women, young people and the disadvantaged are included.

Overview

Lesson 3 covers the following content:

- Enter the community
- Collect different types of basic information
- Helping people to move up out of poverty
- Choosing a target group
- Elite capture
- Barriers faced by women and how to help women
- Talking to young people
- Remember the poorest and most disadvantaged

Entering the community: Gain the community's acceptance

Prepare yourself:

- Find out about the community, its people, leaders
- What do they do for a living?
- What are their main problems?

Introduce yourself:

- Get the support of local leaders, e.g. elders, chiefs and other influential people

Explain the project:

- Explain project aims and methods
- Ask how best you can help them

Gather basic information: Methods

- **Participatory rural appraisal methods:** mapping, transect walk and seasonal calendars
- **Individual interviews** with community members
- **Focus group discussions** with community members
- **Aerial photos**, e.g. Google Earth
- **Secondary information**, e.g. government data about the area
- **Formal surveys**
- **Direct observation**

Participatory appraisal methods: Mapping

Approach

Ask the local people to draw a map of their community, showing key features and problems.

Use

Understand the local geography and issues such as land ownership, farm production, soil and water problems.



Participatory appraisal methods: Transect walk: Approach

Approach the transect walk as follows:

- Get the local people to walk through the community;
- Noting important features and problems; and
- Draw a cross-section, showing these items.



Participatory appraisal methods: Transect walk: Use

Identify natural resources and relationships with farm production.



SOIL	rocky	gravel	gravel	sand	clay
LANDUSE	forest	farmland grazing	village	farmland grazing	farmland
CROPS AND VEGETATION	trees bamboo	grass shrubs millet sesame		sesame beans hibiscus	
PROBLEMS	erosion	drought pests		drought pests low soil fertility	drought
OPPORTUNITIES	fuel wood timber bamboo	pasture rain fed farming	market, transport, water, credit, health care, school	pasture rain fed farming	flood -recession farming

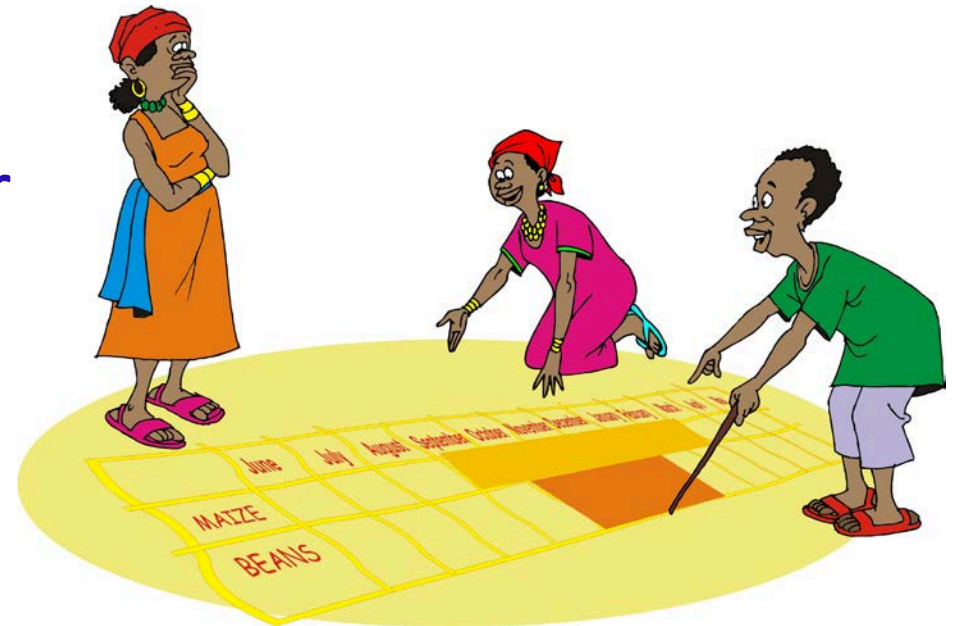
Participatory appraisal methods: Seasonal calendar

Approach

Ask local people to draw a calendar showing the rainfall each season, the crops grown, livestock raised, labor uses, health problems, etc.

Use

Understand the farming system and changes throughout the year.



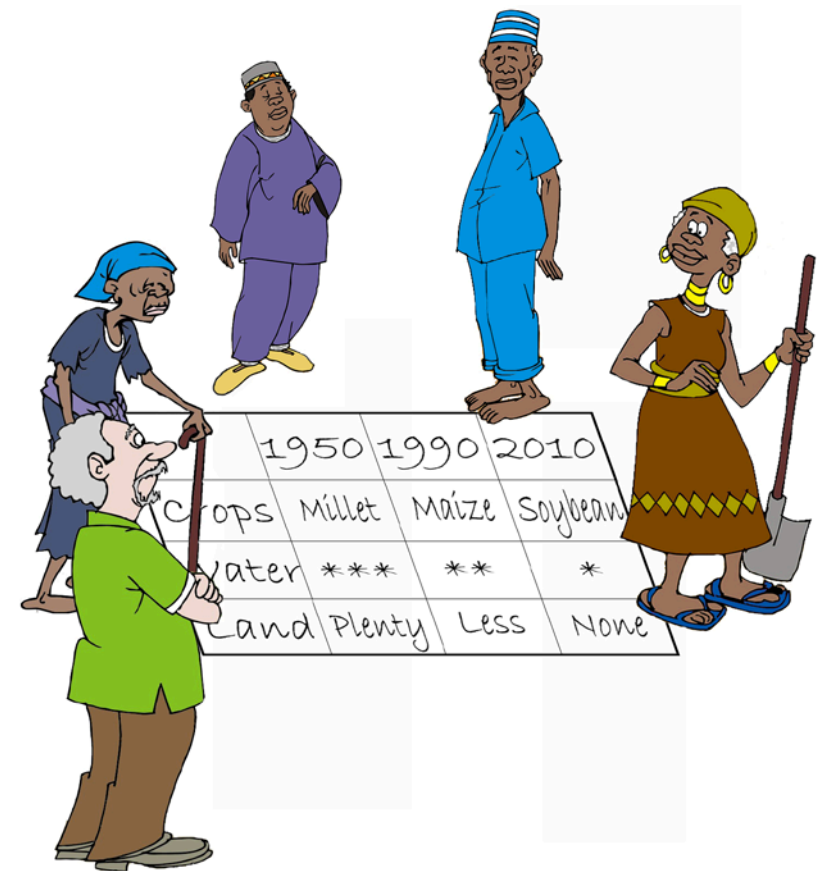
Participatory appraisal methods: Historical timeline

Approach

Ask older people to describe the history of the community and the former status of farming and natural resources.

Use

Understand the community history and long-term changes.



Participatory appraisal methods: Daily timetable

Approach

Ask men and women to describe what they do each hour of the day.

Use

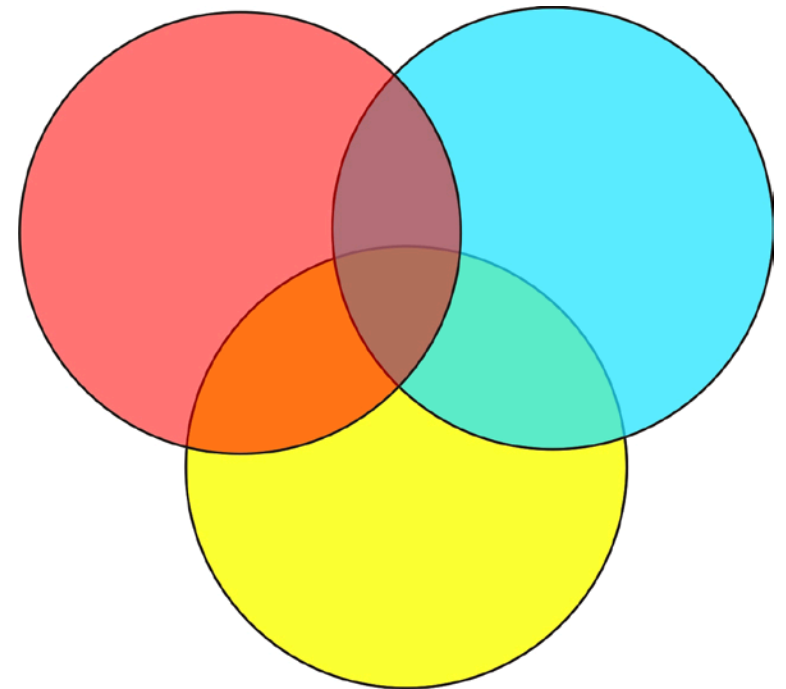
- Show the tasks of men and women.
- Identify problems and opportunities.



Participatory appraisal methods: Venn diagram

Approach

- Ask people to identify organizations that affect them.
- Map the relationships among them.



Use

- Understand the institutional landscape.
- Identify key actors.




Participatory appraisal methods: Matrices

Approach

- Get people to list items (e.g. crop types).
- Describe items according to certain criteria (e.g. ease of production, yield, etc).

Use

Systematically compare alternative crops, livestock, trees, enterprises, etc.

	Horti culture	Maize	Mango
	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●
	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ●
	●	● ●	●

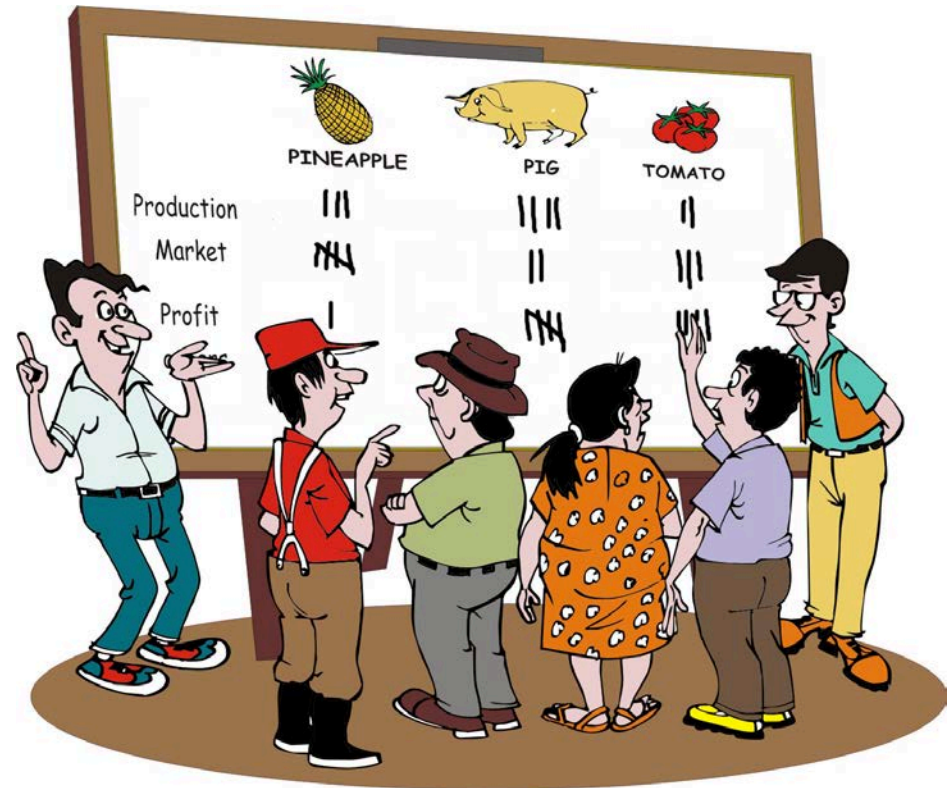
Participatory appraisal methods: Ranking

Approach

- Get people to list items.
- Rank them according to certain criteria.

Use

- Prioritize.
- Select among a set of alternatives.



Types of information

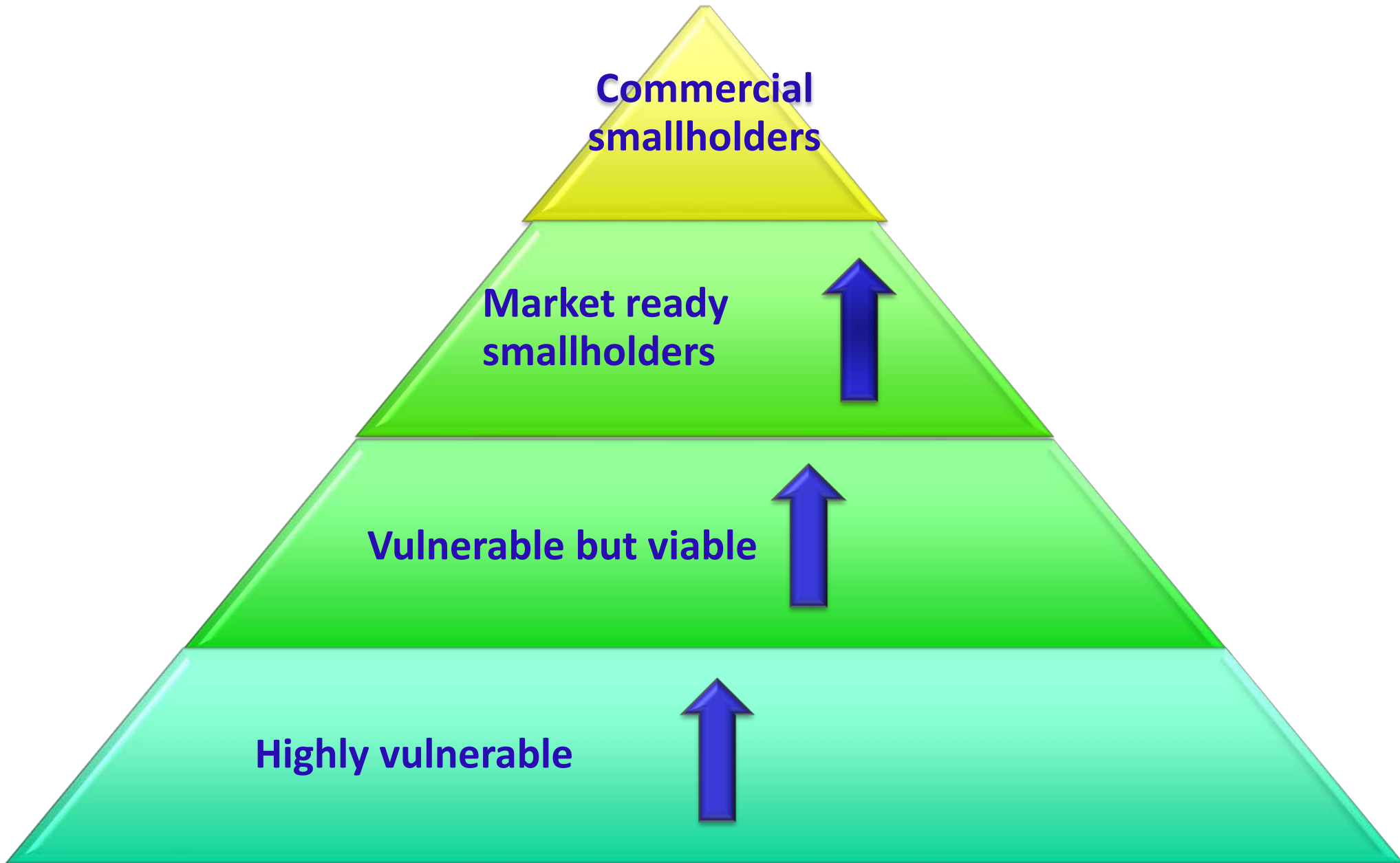
- Broad **understanding of the community** and its situation
- **Focus areas** that are important to the local people
- Information on **individual farmers**
- Information on **all different types of people in the community**: men and women, young and old, landowners and landless, farmers and traders



Identifying people who fit your criteria: Methods

- Ask the local authorities for help
- Wealth ranking
- Land size
- Food security
- Gender, age and HIV status
- Self-identification
- Progress out of Poverty Index

Helping people move up out of poverty



Who to include: Commercial smallholders

- Are **better-off farmers** who can pay for services themselves
- Should not be your **primary** target group, but should not be excluded
- Often have links to markets and, therefore, they can be **strong partners** for your work.



Who to include: Market-ready smallholders

- Are ready to produce for the market
- Regularly produce a small surplus of staple foods and other products
- Have an inconsistent market engagement
- Are not in a position to break out of the poverty cycle on their own



Who to include: Vulnerable but viable

Vulnerable farmers:

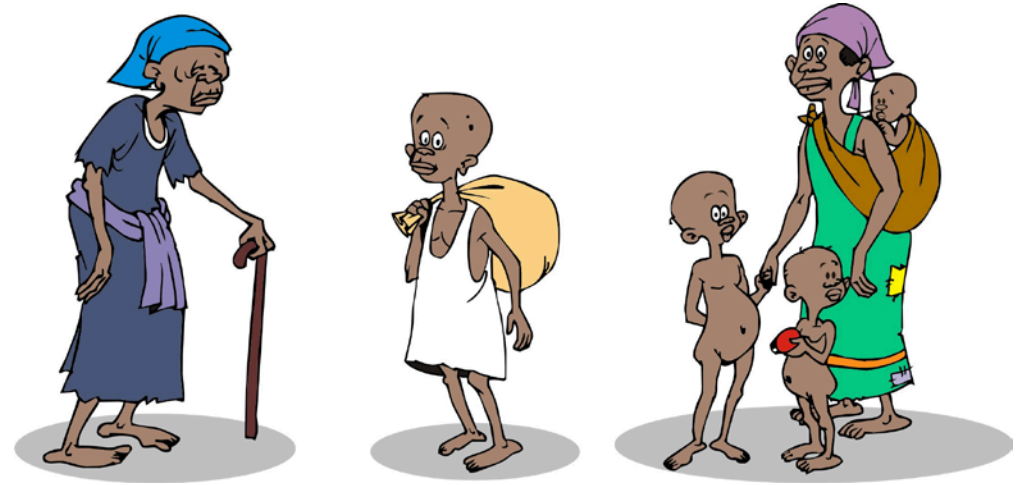
- Grow food for their own needs
- Sometimes go hungry
- Can grow with a little guidance
- Can diversify their production and start selling surpluses with your assistance



Who to include: Highly vulnerable

The highly vulnerable:

- May be the poorest people in the community
- Often have special needs
- Have fewer resources to invest
- Must be allowed to work at a pace that allows them to take on new ideas
- Must be managed effectively



Choosing a target group

The target group depends on **project goals**.

You and your team should decide:

- Who to work with
- What types of support you can offer these different groups of people

By dividing the community into different segments, you can:

- Work at different speeds
- Use specific methods that help particular groups

Elite capture

Be careful of **elite capture**.
Richer, better educated
people may join and use the
group for their own purposes
and benefits rather than
those of the group.



Elite capture: Support of community leaders

Consider gaining the support of **community leaders**, who can:

- Provide role models for group members
- Act as group advisors without being included in the group itself



Talking to women: Different roles of women

Women may:

- Be responsible for households, child care, gardening and looking after small animals
- Have tasks such as weeding and milking
- Do the majority of work on the farm – particularly if the men are away (e.g. earning money in town).



Talking to women: Barriers faced by women

Women may:

- Be expected to follow the views of their fathers or husbands.
- Be shy or afraid of expressing their real views, especially in mixed gatherings
- Not be able to attend meetings because of their household duties



Talking to women: Barriers faced by women (Continued)

Women may:

- Not be allowed to talk to men other than their relatives
- Feel uncomfortable talking to a male stranger
- Not be able to travel, particularly at night
- Not be as well educated as men



Helping women: Suggestions for field agents

- Work as a team
- Talk to groups of women separately
- Form separate women's groups
- Sensitize the men
- Avoid overburdening women



Helping women: Suggestions for field agents (Continued)

- Schedule meetings so that women can attend
- Encourage women to participate
- Build women's confidence
- Set targets and quotas



Talking to young people

Young people:

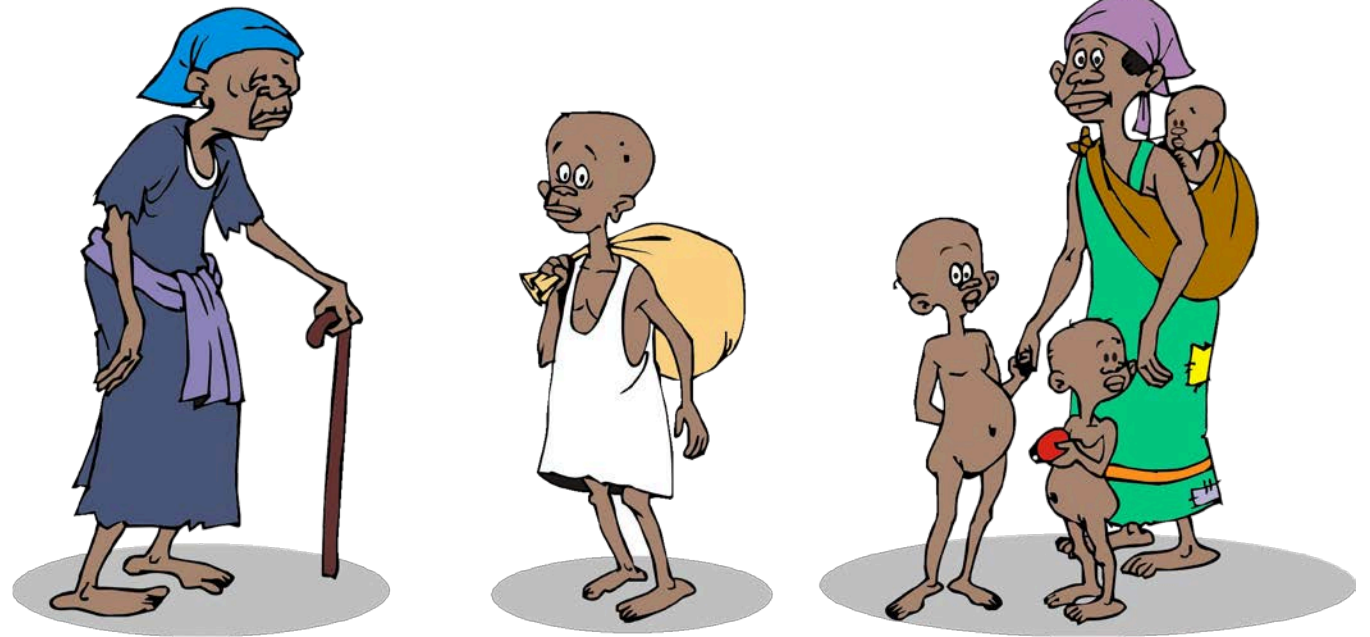
- Are often **better educated** than older people
- Have a **broader outlook** and **bigger ambitions**
- **Lack opportunities** in a traditional society
- Are not allowed to make decisions on their own
- Often **move to the city** in search of a better life



Identifying the poorest and most disadvantaged

Most disadvantaged:

- People who are disabled
- People who are ill
- People living with HIV
- Aids orphans



Helping the poorest and most disadvantaged

You must:

- Find out who they are and where they live
- Find out what problems they face
- Find ways to help them





Lesson 4: Forming a group

Outcomes

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe the principles of forming a group.
- Explain how to help farmers form a group.
- List the six building blocks of a group.

Lesson 4 covers the following content:

- Building on existing groups
- Principles of group formation
- Type of entry point
- Calling a meeting of potential group members
- Discussing the group approach
- Selecting a focus, visioning and setting priorities
- Identifying group members
- Choosing a name for the group
- Formally creating the group
- Discussing the building blocks of a self-help group

Building on existing groups

Types of existing groups:

- Farmer field schools
- Adult literacy groups
- Women's groups
- Village savings and loans groups
- Church groups
- Market groups

Five principles of group formation

The group should:

- Be small
- Be homogeneous: members should have similar economic conditions
- Have a common interest
- Have clear objectives
- Be voluntary and democratic



Taking it slowly – but not too slowly

- Forming a **stable group** takes time: **2–6 months** to begin with.
- After forming, it takes several months or years to **consolidate group activities.**
- **Do not push the group along too fast.**
- **Avoid long delays,** which may dampen interest and enthusiasm.



Type of entry point

There may be:

- Only one realistic entry point
- Several alternatives to choose from
- A combination or different issues as entry point



Decision on the entry point

The decisions on the entry point are determined by:

- The project proposal document
- Local conditions
- Wishes of the community

Do **not** dictate what the community should do.
Evaluate the situation and narrow down the possibilities to those that are realistic.

Calling a meeting of potential group members

- Invite people in your target group to discuss their situation and expectations.
- Choose a **convenient time** and **place** for men and women.
- Discuss **general ideas** only.
- Ask questions and **encourage people to participate** and to speak freely.



The group approach: Common features of successful groups

Group members of successful groups:

- Have common interests.
- Decide on their objectives and work together to achieve them.
- Elect a committee to manage the group.
- Share in benefits of the group.



The group approach: Common features of successful groups (Continued)

Group members of successful groups:

- The group writes a **constitution** and abides by it.
- Attend regular **meetings**
- Participate in **discussions**
- Participate in **decision-making** and activities
- Keep **records**



Suspicious about groups

Reasons for people being reluctant to join groups:

- **Government imposed cooperatives** on farmers
- **Powerful local people** may see the group as a threat.
- The poor are dependent on **big farmers and traders** and leave decisions to these people.



Suspicious about groups (Continued)

The poor may be reluctant to join groups, because they often have:

- **Heavy workloads**
- **Little time and energy**
- **Poor health**
- **A low level of education, which cuts them off from new ideas**



Ways of overcoming suspicions about groups

- Explain the **advantages** of group membership
- Explain that **forming a group is required for the project.**
- Explain that **group members will decide what to do.**
- Win the **support of traditional leaders and local officials.**
- Do not force people to join the group. – **Group membership is voluntary.**

Helping participants select a focus: General and specific goals

Examples of general goals:

- Improving crop yields
- Improving income from farming

Examples of specific goals:

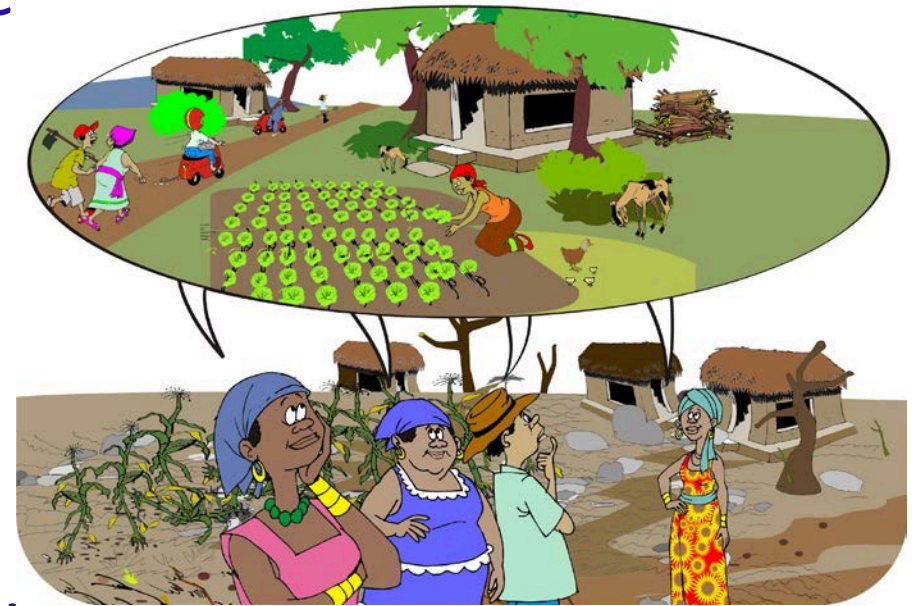
- Improving crop yields by reducing erosion and restoring soil fertility
- Improving income by marketing maize to traders in the capital city



Visioning

Visioning involves:

- Asking people to imagine what their group will look like in the long run
- Asking people what they need to reach this long-term vision
- Repeat the exercise for medium-term (five years) and short-term (next year) activities.



Setting priorities



- Get people to put the **problems in order of importance (priority)**.
- If everyone agrees on a priority, it becomes a **goal** of the group.
- Consider form **separate groups** for people with **different priorities**.

Identifying group members

- Identify those who would like to become **founding members** of a group with the identified goals.
- If there are **too many people, suggest form two or more groups** focusing on **different goals**.



Selecting a name for the group

- **Ideals:** Unity' working together; prosperity
- **Commodities and activities:** Rice-making group; maize-makers; water users' group
- **Locations:** Bondo Village Association; Teso Community Group

Make sure that the name is not too limiting.



Formally creating the group

Once these things have been discussed and agreed on, it is **time to formally create the group.**

- Write the **names of the founder members** in a list.
- Ask them to add their **signatures.**
- Get the **village chief** or local leader to **witness the event.**



Discussing the building blocks of a self-help group: Participation



A **group** relies heavily on its **members' commitment** and **active participation**.

Members make the **decisions** and then **put them into effect**.

Imagine the group is a train, in which everyone takes turns at pulling the carriages along

Discussing the building blocks of a self-help group: Leadership

Leaders are:

- **Chosen** by the members
- **Accountable** to the members for their actions.

The group should decide on several **leadership positions** (e.g. chairperson, secretary and treasurer) and **elect** people to fill these positions.



Discussing the building blocks of a self-help group: Governance

Draw up a **written constitution** (which is needed to register the group with authorities) and **bylaws/rules** that govern day-to-day procedures.

These rules help the group to:

- Avoid internal conflict
- Make the responsibilities of each member clear.



Discussing the building blocks of a self-help group: Regular meetings



The group will hold regular meetings to:

- Make decisions
- Elect officers
- Check on progress

The meetings should:

- Follow a set procedure
- Should give a chance for everyone to make their opinions heard.

Discussing the building blocks of a self-help group: Record keeping



Records:

- Help group members to remember what has been **decided**
- Are very important in **monitoring and evaluation**

Discussing the building blocks of a self-help group: Financial management



The group has to manage money – i.e. membership fees, income from savings schemes and marketing activities, and grants or loans.

Financial management must be:

Accurate, transparent and credible to retain the members' trust.



Lesson 5: Participation



Outcomes

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe how to promote participation in the group.
- List the desirable characteristics of a group member.
- Discuss the rights and obligations of group members.
- List ways in which members may contribute to the group.

Overview

Lesson 5 covers the following content:

- Participation and promoting participation
- Rights and benefits of membership
- Advantages and disadvantages of membership
- The ideal group member
- Members' duties and obligations
- Types of contributions

Participation

Participation means:

- **Working together** and **building relationships** among individual members
- Sharing **responsibility**
- Each member **learning** from and **contributing** to the group a
- **Listening** to and valuing different views
- **Making decisions together**, if possible by **consensus**



Promoting participation

Promote participation by:

- Helping people feel **comfortable**
- Having people seated in a **circle** rather than rows
- **Guiding**, structuring and summarizing discussions
- Using **games** and **role-plays** to get people to relax
- Making sure that everyone has a **chance to speak**



Promoting participation (Continued)

Promote participation by:

- Asking, probing and listening
- Giving people enough time to **express opinions**
- Keeping the **language simple** and practical
- Acknowledging everyone's views and opinions
- Stimulating creative ideas



Rights and benefits of group membership

Group members may:

- Voice their **opinions** about the group and group activities
- Make **decisions** jointly
- Become **leaders** of the group
- **Benefit** from the group's activities
- Share the **profits** from the activities



Advantages of participation

- Decisions and activities reflect the **will of all group members**
- Members **support the group's decisions** and activities
- The **results** are likely to be **effective** and **sustainable**
- It gives people a **sense of identity** and unit
- Group members gain a **feeling of empowerment**



Disadvantages of participation



Participation

- Puts responsibilities onto people's shoulders
- Takes more time than more directive approaches

Traits of an ideal group member

An ideal group member is:

- A good communicator and listener
- Contribute to discussions
- Open to people's ideas
- Trustworthy and honest
- Cooperative
- Solves problems
- Confident and positive, patient
- Original and creative
- Fair and considerate of others
- Hard-working and enthusiastic



Members' duties and obligations

Group members must agree to:

- Abide by the group **constitution and rules**
- **Attend meetings** regularly
- **Elect the group leaders**
- **Pay the membership fee**
- **Contribute labor and materials** when required



Members' duties and obligations (Continued)

Group members must agree to:

- Make **regular contributions** to the group savings fund
- **Market their produce together**
- **Help members** when they are in need



Types of contributions

- Regular annual **membership fee**
- Labor on **common projects**
- Expertise (e.g. accountancy, marketing skills, etc.)
- **Land** on a **short-term basis**
- **Materials** and equipment
- **Meeting facilities** and refreshments
- Cash **donations**





Lesson 6: Leadership and management

Outcomes

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe the desirable characteristics and skills of a group leader.
- List the types of leaders and officers a group should have and the functions of each.
- Describe how leaders should be chosen, and how long their terms of office should be.
- Elect leaders and choose people to fill management positions.
- Describe how to hold leaders and members accountable for their actions.

Overview

Lesson 6 covers the following content:

- Leadership and leadership styles
- Qualities of a good leader
- Mistakes that leaders make
- Participatory leadership
- Officers
- Duties of a chairperson, secretary, treasurer, production coordinator, marketing coordinator and auditor
- Forming a management committee
- Electing leaders

Leadership: The management committee

The management committee is made up of:

- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Other officers.



The skills and abilities of group members should be used to rotate leadership among group members.

Qualities of a good leader

A good leader:

- Has an exemplary character
- Has vision and gives direction
- Is enthusiastic, confident and purposeful
- Is a team player
- Resolves conflict
- Is a good communicator
- Is calm, focused and analytical
- Is knowledgeable
- Is participatory



Leadership styles: Leaders who command

Leaders who command:

- Make decisions on behalf of the group
- Allow **little or no discussion** with group members, which does not encourage the group to grow in confidence and skills.



Leadership styles: Leaders who consult

Leaders who consult:

- Encourage discussion
- Then make a decision on behalf of the group.



Leadership styles: Leaders who enable

Leaders who enable:

Set certain **limits**, but enable members to discuss and make their own decisions within these limits.

This is also known as **participatory leadership**.



Leadership mistakes

Common leadership mistakes include:

- Not listening to members
- Failing to keep members informed
- Misunderstanding roles
- Looking after their own interests and not those of the group as a whole



Participatory group leadership

In participatory leadership:

- All members have the **same chance to participate** and can become leaders
- Elections **change leaders regularly**
- **Duties are rotated** to give all members a chance to develop leadership skills
- **Everyone is fully involved** in the group affairs

Advantages and disadvantages of participatory leadership

Advantages: Group members:

- Are more satisfied
- Have a chance to develop their skills
- Are motivated to work hard

Disadvantages:

- If something does not work out, who is responsible?
- Participation takes time, which may be a problem if something has to be done quickly.



Who can become a leader

Anyone in the group with the **right skills** can become a leader.

Literacy and **numeracy** are important for leadership.

It is possible to become a chairperson without being able to read.



Officers

A group needs some – or all – of the following officers (who make up the management committee):

- Chairperson
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Production coordinator
- Marketing coordinator



Duties of the chairperson

The chairperson:

- **Coordinates** the group activities
- **Organizes, chairs** and summarizes **meetings** and review sessions
- **Encourages participation** by all group members
- Ensures the **group constitution** is followed



Duties of the chairperson (Continued)

The chairperson:

- Ensures that group members pay their **contributions**
- **Delegates work** and assignments and ensures that the **work plan** is followed
- **Maintains harmony** in the group with others.
- **Represents group** at meetings with others.



Duties of the secretary

- **Writes the agenda and minutes**
- Keeps a **record of attendance** at meetings
- **Maintains the documentation:** a list of members, the constitution, bylaws, business plan, etc.
- **Reads aloud the minutes** of meetings
- **Deals with communications** to and from the group
- **Assists the chairperson**



Duties of the treasurer

- Manages the group's **money**
- Keeps **financial records** of the group
- Reports on **expenditures, receipts** and **available balances**
- **Receive money** on behalf of the group
- Keeps the **cash book** and **receipts**
- **Counts the money** kept by the group
- **Reports on the groups financial situation**
- Prepares **financial records** as required by government and external organizations



Duties of the production coordinator

- Ensures that members have the needed **knowledge** and **skills**
- Arranges for members to get **seed** and other **inputs**
- Coordinates the **timing of planting** and **harvesting**
- Manages the members to **work as a group** on common tasks
- Coordinates **production targets**
- Keeps **records** about production targets and actual production figures



Duties of the marketing coordinator

- Coordinates the **delivery of the output** to a common **collection point**
- Arranges for the produce to be dried and stored
- Ensures the **quality** and **quantity** of the **produce**
- Identifies **potential buyers**
- Negotiates and manages the **sale** of the produce
- Keeps **records** about marketing targets, profits and actual sales



Duties of an auditor

- Checks the **accuracy** of the **accounts** prepared by the treasurer
- Checks the **amount of money** in the group's bank account
- Signs the accounts to state that they are accurate



Forming a management committee

The management committee:

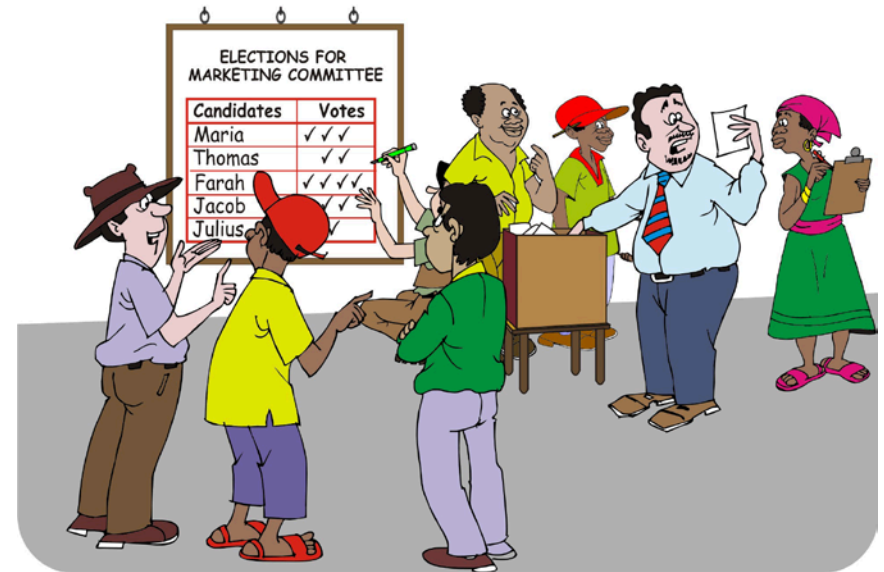
- Consists of **all leaders**
- Is responsible to all group members
- **Meets regularly to coordinate group activities**
- Is **coordinated** by the chairperson
- **Reports to the general assembly** during the annual general meeting



Electing leaders

For someone to be elected as a leader:

- Another member must **nominate** the person for the position.
- The person nominated must say he or she is **willing** to stand for the position.
- The group must **elect** the person to the position.

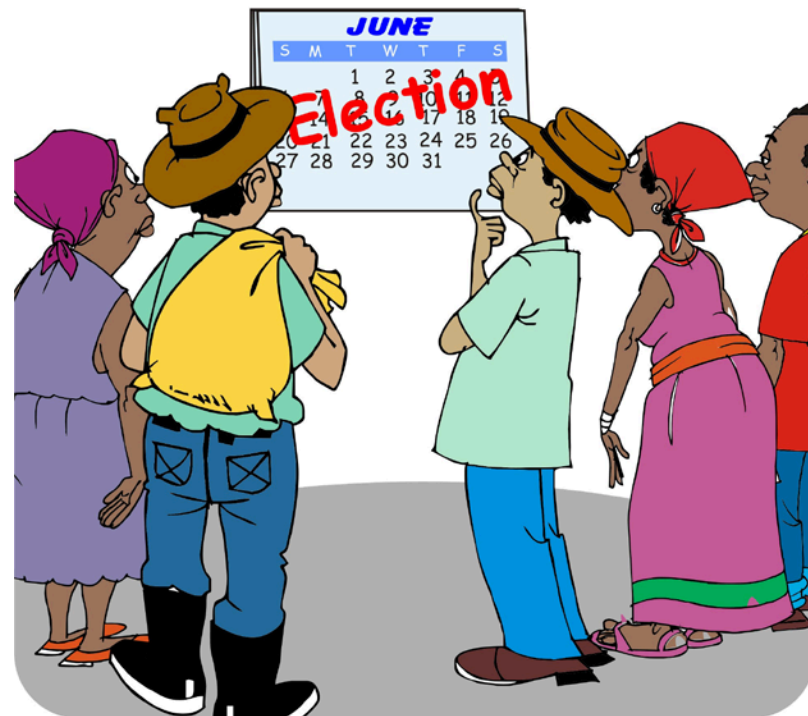


Changing leadership

Leadership could be changed each month, each season, or each year. In most groups, the leaders are elected **each year**.

The leaders must:

- Be **accountable** for their **actions**
- Required to **explain** what they have done
- **Justify** their actions.



Professional managers: Training members to do the job

This approach can be problematic:

- It may be difficult to find a suitable training course.
- There may be no group members who are willing or suitable for training.
- Training someone may be costly and time-consuming.
- It may be unrealistic to try to train someone in all the skills needed.
- The trainees may be tempted to use their skills to get a job elsewhere.

Professional managers: Hiring a professional

Hiring a professional is often a better option:

- A professional can be expected to have all the skills needed: **no additional training** is needed.
- The professional is paid a **salary**, based on performance or results.



Professional managers: Hiring a professional (Continued)

Hiring a professional is often a better option:

- The position is subject to oversight by the group's management committee.
- The job may be **part-time** if necessary.
- If the professional **does not perform adequately, he/she can be replaced easily.**



Lesson 7: Governing the group

Outcomes

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- List the elements of good group governance.
- Describe the function and parts of a constitution.
- Write a constitution for the group.
- Give examples of bylaws and internal rules.



Overview

Lesson 7 covers the following content:

- Aspects of good governance
- Need for a constitution
- Parts of a constitution
- Checking with the authorities
- Keeping the constitution
- Bylaws
- Registering the group



Aspects of good governance

Good governance includes:

- Regular, independent elections
- Term limits
- Transparency: open and freely available information to all
- A constitution and bylaws
- Record keeping
- Good communication



What is a constitution?

A **constitution of a country** tells the leaders and citizens of a country what they can and cannot do.

The constitution of a farmer's group:

- Tells the group's leaders what powers they have
- Sets the rules for the management of the group and its assets



Why is a constitution necessary?

A constitution:

- Is made by the group members and can only be changed by the members in the **general assembly**.
- Provides **guidelines** and defines members' rights and obligations.
- Is often required to **register an organization with the authorities** in a country and to **open a bank account**.



Parts/items to include in a constitution

A constitution has to include the following main items:

- Goals and functions
- Members' information
- Governance



Parts/items to include in a constitution (Continued)

Goals and functions:

- Name of the organization/group and basic information
- Basic information
- Objectives and functions of the group

Members:

Membership and contributions

Governance:

- General assembly and Management Committee
- Review of the constitution
- Meetings, decision-making and election(s)
- Records and disciplinary actions

Checking the constitution with the authorities

- Before approving its draft constitution, the group may **check it with the relevant government authority.**
- The group has to fulfill certain **legal requirements to register as a cooperative.**
- A non-governmental organization (NGO) may be legally prohibited to pay its members for their work.



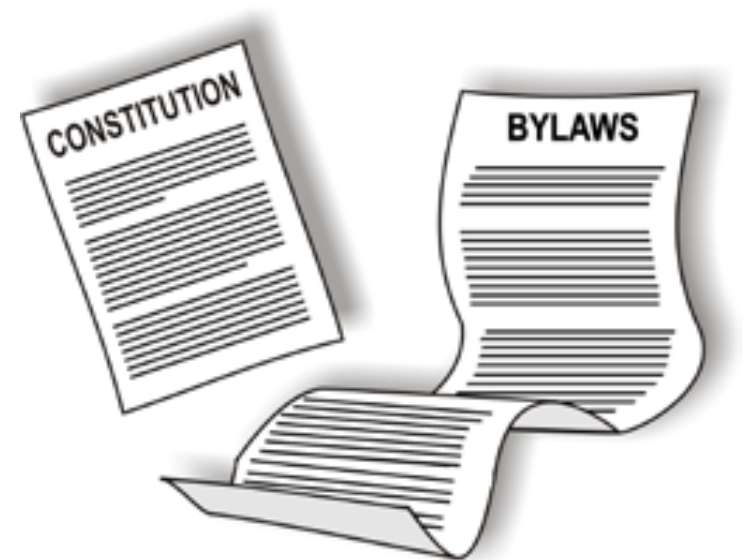
Bylaws

Bylaws are internal rules that the group sets for itself.

The constitution gives the big picture. The bylaws fill in the details.

Example:

The constitution says members will be penalized for not attending meetings. The bylaws set the type of penalty (e.g. amount of a fine).



Aspects covered by bylaws

- The **number of members** allowed in the group
- The level of **membership fees**
- The **frequency of meetings** each month
- How **officers** are elected
- The **duration of posts**
- How to **share costs**
- How **records** will be kept
- What action to take if a member does not comply with one of these rules



Registering the group

- The group has to **register with the authorities** and with your **development organization**.
- The management group should determine the **requirements** for registering the group with the authorities.



Registration information required by the CRS

Farmer's group:

- Registration: New or existing group
- Name of group
- Country, district, diocese and village
- Telephone numbers of the group
- Number of members (Male and female)
- The year the group was formed and the year it started working with the CRS

Area in which the group farms:

Elevation (meters); longitude (decimal degrees) and latitude (decimal degrees)



Lesson 8: Holding meetings

Outcomes

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- List the types of meetings that the group may hold and the purpose of each type.
- Describe how to hold a group meeting.
- Describe how decisions can be made.



Overview

Lesson 8 covers the following content:

- Types of meetings
- The importance of attending meetings
- When and how often to meet
- Attendance
- Procedures during meetings
- Decision-making methods



Types of meetings

Open to all members:

- Regular meetings
- Annual meetings
- Extraordinary general meetings

Open to some members:

- Interest-group meetings
- Committee meetings
- Informal meetings



Regular meetings

- **Regular, frequent intervals:** every week, every two weeks or once a month
- **Chaired by the chairperson**
- Members meet to **discuss and plan activities and allocate tasks**
- **Nature of the meeting depends on the type of group**, e.g. a innovation group will meet to plan and check on experiments and analyse findings



The general assembly

The general assembly:

- Consists of the **officers and management committee**
- Is responsible for the **day-to day running of the group**
- Is the group's **highest decision-making body.**

General assembly: Annual general meeting

At the annual general meeting:

- The **chairperson** and other officers **report to the members** on the **group's activities and achievements** during the previous year
- The **treasurer** reports on the **financial situation** of the group
- The **auditors** report whether the treasurer's accounts are in order.
- The **members elect the officers** for the **coming year**



Extraordinary general meetings

- **Urgent topics** sometimes come up that need the members' agreement, but the next annual general meeting is too far in the future.
- The **chairperson** may call an **extraordinary general meeting** so the members can discuss these topics.



Special interest-group meetings

- The group may contain several **smaller interest groups**, each **focusing on separate issues**.
- Each interest group **meets separately to coordinate their activities**.
- All the interest groups come together a few times a year to **plan and coordinate the activities of the group as a whole**.



Committee meetings

- The **management committee** meets regularly to **plan and coordinate activities**.
- A large group may have **subcommittees** to deal with **specialist subjects**, such as inputs, marketing or water management.



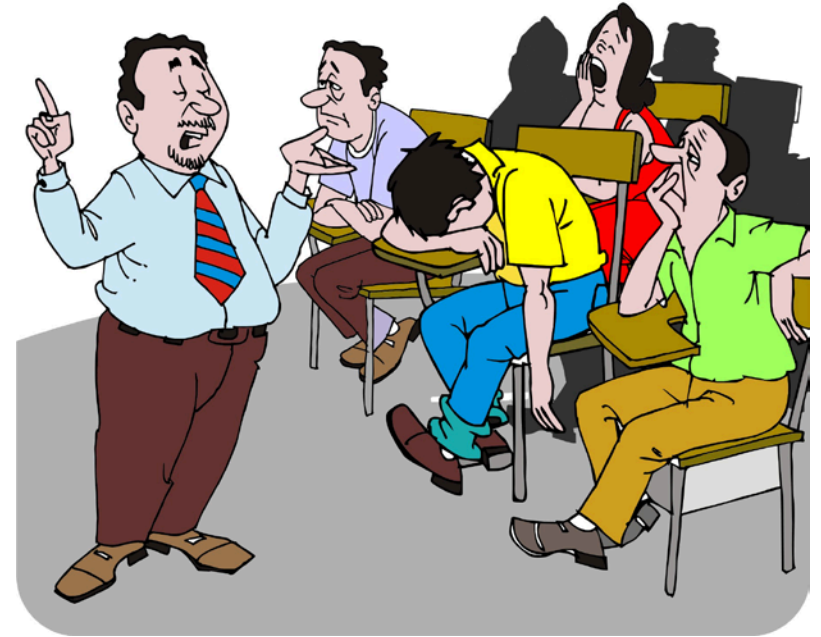
Informal meetings (Unofficial meetings)

- The chairperson may also call **informal meetings** of a **few regular members** or members of the management committee.
- These meetings may be **useful to solve problems** or get the participants' opinions, but because they are **not official** meetings, they **cannot make decisions** on behalf of the management committee or the group as a whole.



Importance of attending meetings

- **Group meetings** are important for discussions, learning and decision-making.
- Members who cannot attend meetings, should say so in advance and give a reason.
- If members stop attending meetings, you should find out why.
- Consider **combining meetings** with **training sessions** to make them more attractive.



When and how often to meet

- Schedule meetings on days, at times and at locations that are **convenient for both male and female members** and for you as the **group promoter**.
- **Early stages require frequent meetings** (every week or two weeks).
- **Stress the need for members to attend these meetings regularly.**



Attendance

- At each meeting, the **secretary** has **members sign an attendance sheet** (or ticks off their names on a list) as they arrive.
- If the group has decided to fine people who miss meetings, the **secretary or treasurer collects the fines from the non-attende**es.



Procedure during meetings: Before the meeting

The chairperson and secretary:

- Invite members to the meeting.
- Inform them of the date, time, location and purpose of the meeting.
- Plan a meeting agenda
- Inform people beforehand if they will be required to present a report.



Procedure during meetings: At the meeting

Let members sit in a **circle**, so that everyone can hear and see everything and have an **equal chance to contribute**.



Procedure during meetings: At the meeting (Continued)

- The **group chairperson facilitates the meeting** following the agreed **agenda**.
- The **secretary takes notes of the discussions and decisions**.



Procedure during meetings: After the meeting

- The secretary writes up the minutes and submits them to the chairperson.
- The chairperson follows up with the people responsible to make sure that any decisions made are put into effect.



Decision-making process: Executive decision-making

- The **group leaders** may seek advice and **input from the group members**, but they have **ultimate control** over all the group decisions.
- **Executive decisions** are needed if a decision has to be made immediately, e.g. buying and selling products and day-to-day management



Decision-making process: Committee decision-making

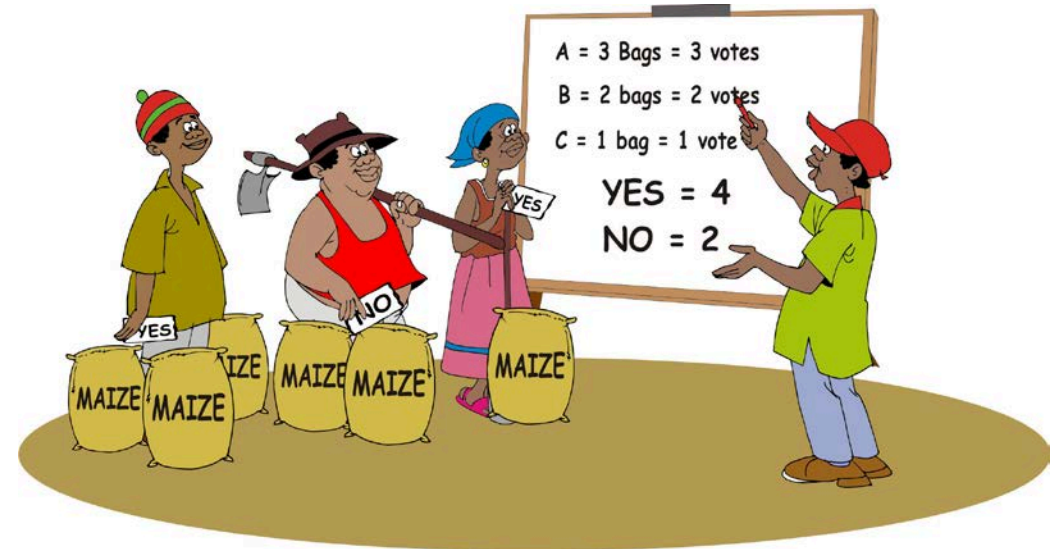
- Normally, it is the **management committee**.
- **Committee decisions are made when a decision is needed fairly quickly and it is impractical to gather all the members' opinions, e.g. setting weekly targets and planning activities.**



Decision-making process: Proportional decision-making

Proportional decisions are appropriate where different members have invested different amounts in the group, e.g. **deciding what to do with money invested.**

Member's votes are weighted to reflect the amount(s) they have invested in the group.

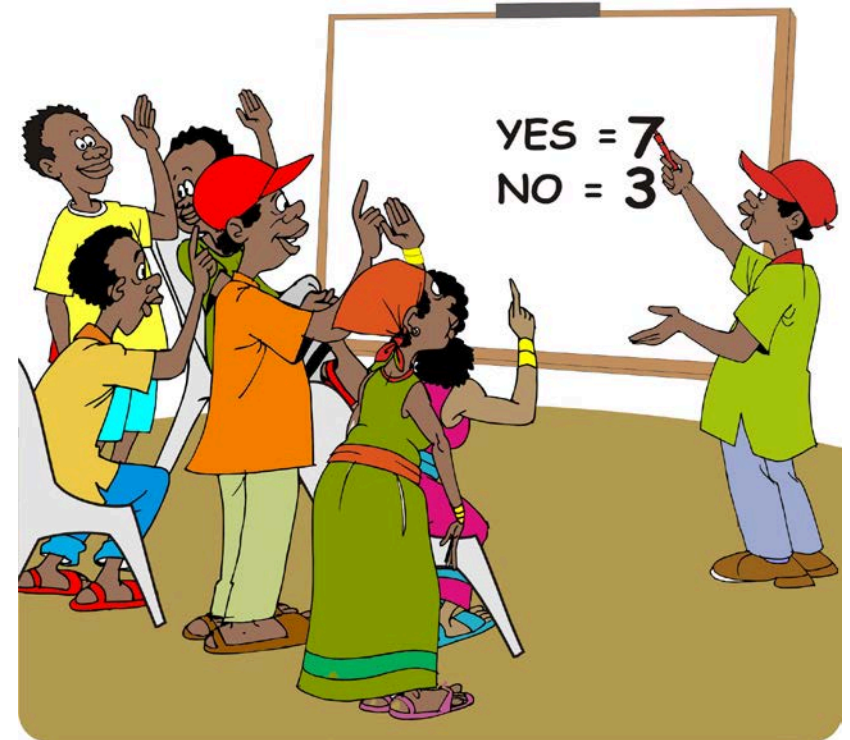


Decision-making process: Democratic decision-making

Democratic decisions are best if the **approval of the majority** is needed, but full agreement is not absolutely necessary, e.g.

- Guiding the overall direction of the group
- Setting overall targets
- Electing officers
- Approving the group accounts


Each member gets one vote on all issues that are vote-worthy.



Decision-making process: Consensus decision-making

- **Consensus** is best when **everyone's agreement is needed**, e.g. for changing the group's constitution.
- **All group members must agree** in order to make a decision.
- Consensus is a **good option** for **group unity** and **inclusion**.





Lesson 9: Keeping records

Outcomes and Overview

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe the types of records the group should keep.
- Describe how a group should keep records.

Lesson 9 covers the following content:

- Importance of record-keeping
- Developing the ability to keep records
- Types of records that should be kept
- Record formats
- Methods of keeping and storing records



Importance of record-keeping

Records:

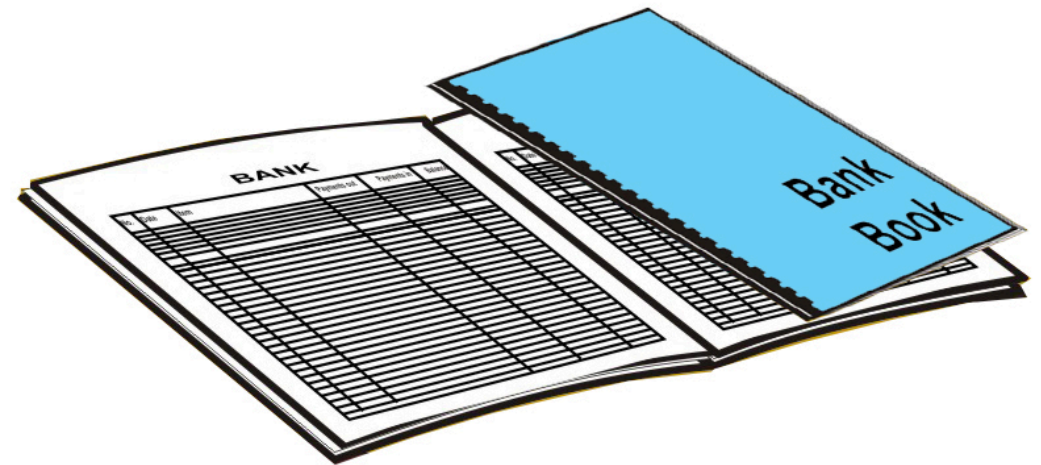
- Help members remember what has happened and what **decisions** have been made.
- Provide **information** for the group and its supporters **to monitor progress**
- Help **avoid misunderstanding** among members and with supporters and business partners



Importance of record-keeping (Continued)

Records:

- Document the amount of **money** the group has received, paid out and owes
- May be **required by the government, banks or other organizations.**



Developing the ability to keep records

Record-keeping is:

- Gathering information about the group
- Writing it up
- Keeping it for future reference

It is important that all members understand the records.

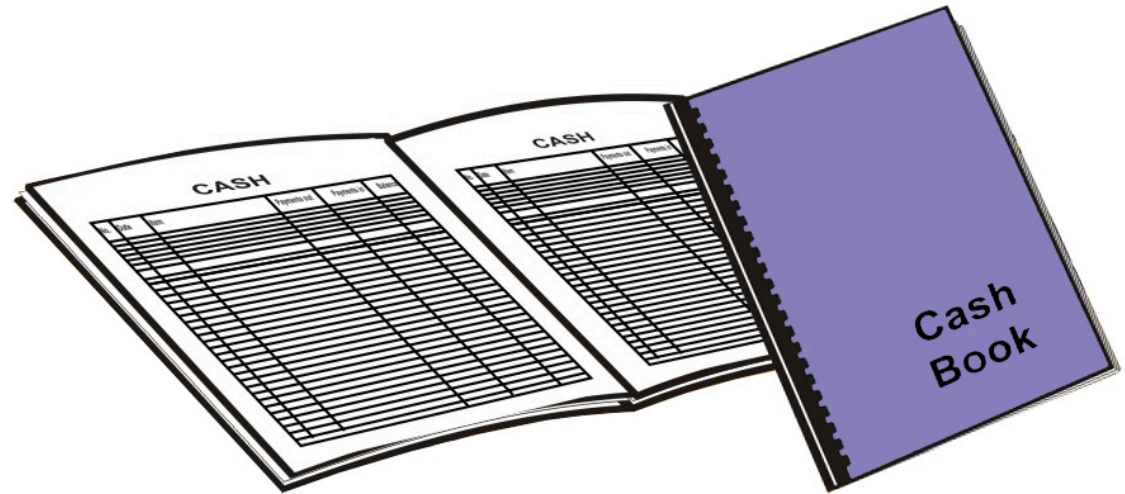
Therefore, they should be kept as **simple** as possible.



Developing the ability to keep records (Continued)

Discuss what records are important:

- Names of members
- Incoming money
- Minutes of meetings



Members		
Joshua	Odinga	0123 456 789
Henrietta	Abdallah	0123 987 654
Mary	Mascarenhas	

Attendance				
Joshua Odinga	✓	✓	✓	
Henrietta Abdallah	✓	✓		
Mary Mascarenhas	✓	✓	✓	

Minutes
Date: 3 Jul 2014
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna

Types of records that should be kept

Basic records:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The group's constitution• Bylaws• Registration documents
Membership:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List of members
Meetings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance of meetings• Minutes of meetings
Technical documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training materials• Reference materials
Financial records:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership fees• Loans, interest and savings• Bank statements

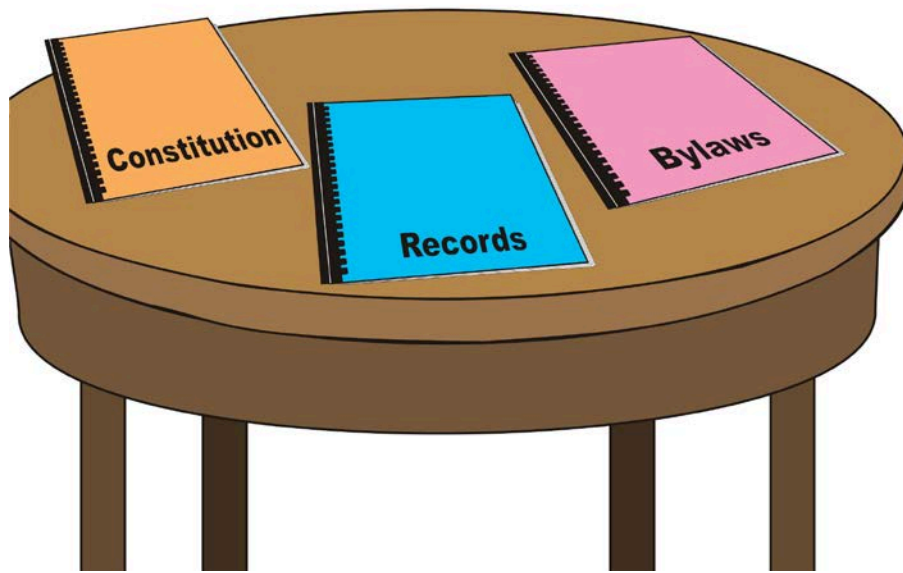


Responsibility of record-keeping

- The **group secretary** is the main officer responsible for keeping records about the group and the decisions made.
- The **treasurer** is responsible for keeping financial records.
- Other officers, e.g. **marketing and production coordinators**, are responsible for keeping records about their areas of responsibility.



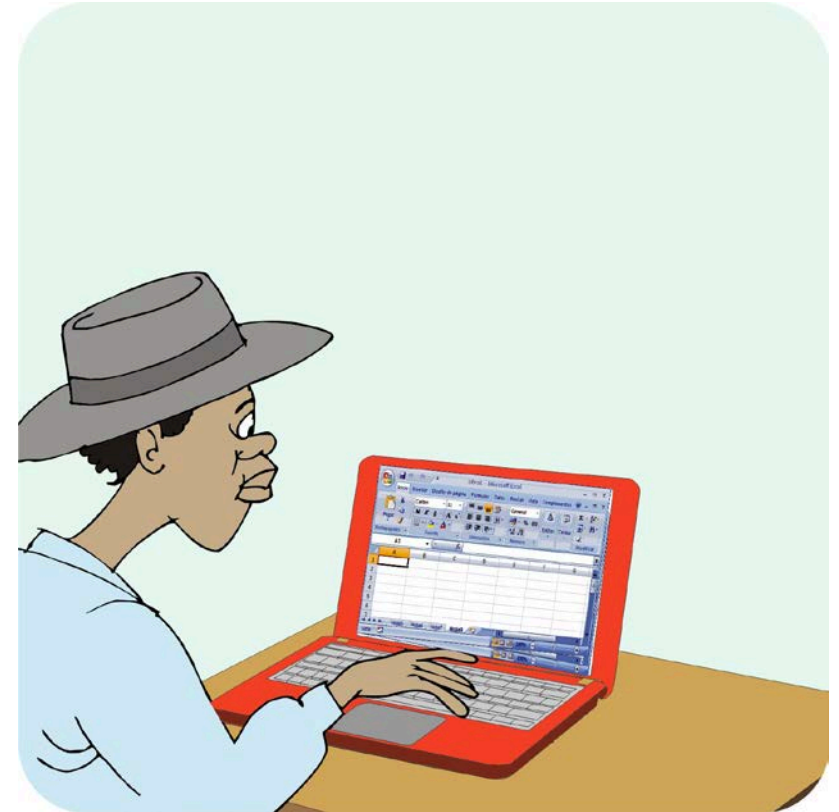
How to keep records



- **Computers:** Are expensive and require electricity. Few communities have the skills to use them.
- **Typewriters:** Some communities use typewriters to type their records.
- **Hand-written:** Most groups write their records by hand on paper.

How to keep records: Computers

- Keep the **software updated**.
- **Protect** the computer from **viruses** and **electrical surges** with a surge protector.
- Keep the computer **safe from water**, dust and thieves.
- Make a **back-up copy** on CD-ROM or flash drive.
- **Print out a copy of all records** as a permanent backup.



How to store records

- **Take care not to lose information** about agreements, assignments and finances.
- **Keep records in a safe place,** away from water, termites and children.
- A biscuit tin with a tight lid is a good choice.
- For **important records, make a copy** and store it in a **different location** in case of fire or theft.





Lesson 10: Financial management

Outcomes

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain why people should pay a fee to join the group.
- Explain the four parts of a simple accounting system.
- Record transactions in a cash book.
- Describe the advantages of opening a bank account for the group.

Overview

Lesson 10 covers the following content:

- Membership fees and level of fees
- Paying fees
- Keeping accounts
- The cashbox
- The cash book and the bank book
- File folders
- Checking the accounts
- Opening a bank account
- Savings and credit schemes
- Regulations and tax

Membership fees

- Help **cover the group's cost.**
- Ensure that **people who join are committed** to the group.
- **Encourage unity**, since all members do something visible for the common good of the group.
- Are **a form of insurance** which cushions a group's enterprise from unforeseen difficulties or provides emergency assistance to group members in time of need.

Level of membership fees

- The membership fee should be **enough to put together a useful sum of money.**
- **Exclude the poorest people** from paying the fees or may be charged reduced fees.
- **Other methods of raising money:** sales of produce, savings activities, grants and loans.



Paying fees

- Every member should be **obliged by the group constitution or bylaws to pay a fixed amount to the treasurer.**
- Payments may be each week or month, quarterly or once a year.
- The **size of the contribution** must be set with the **agreement of all members** and will depend on the proposed use.
- The **treasurer must give receipts and keep proper records of each member's contributions.**

Keeping accounts

The treasurer:

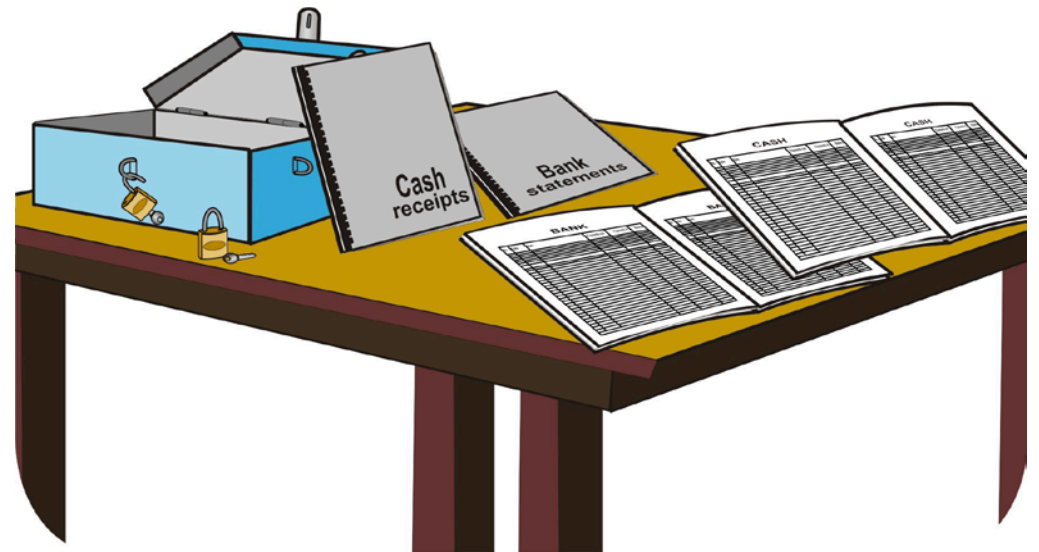
- Looks after the **group's money**.
- **Reports** to the group on any **expenditures** and the current cash balance.
- Documents the **amounts** of money spent and for what purpose.
- Documents **information on loans**:
 - The size of loans
 - To whom the money was lent
 - When will it be paid back



A simple accounting system

A simple accounting system consists of:

- A lockable cashbox.
- A cash book bank book
- File folders



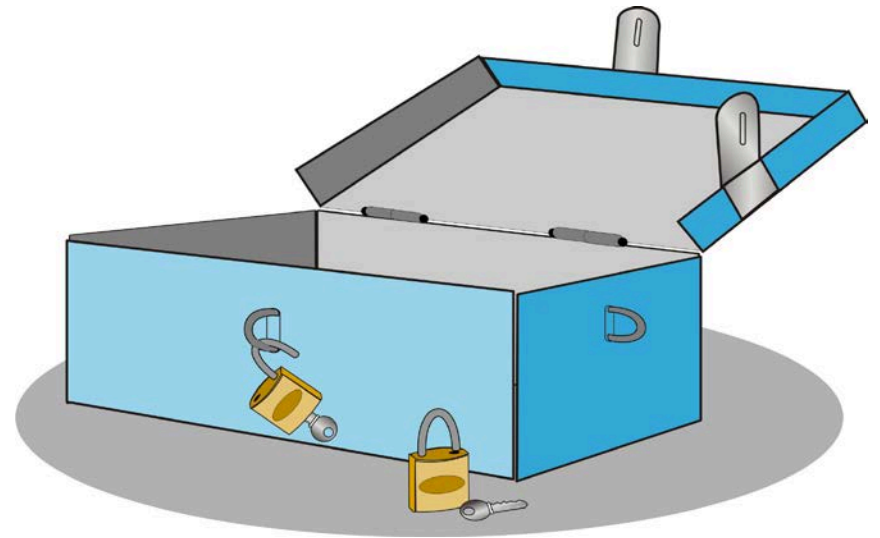
A simple accounting system (Continued)

In a simple accounting system:

- Cash is kept in the lockable cashbox
- All incoming and outgoing amounts are documented in the cash book
- The bank book is used for the group's bank account
- File folders are used to hold receipts and documents in chronological order: one folder for the cash receipts and another folder for the bank receipts and statements

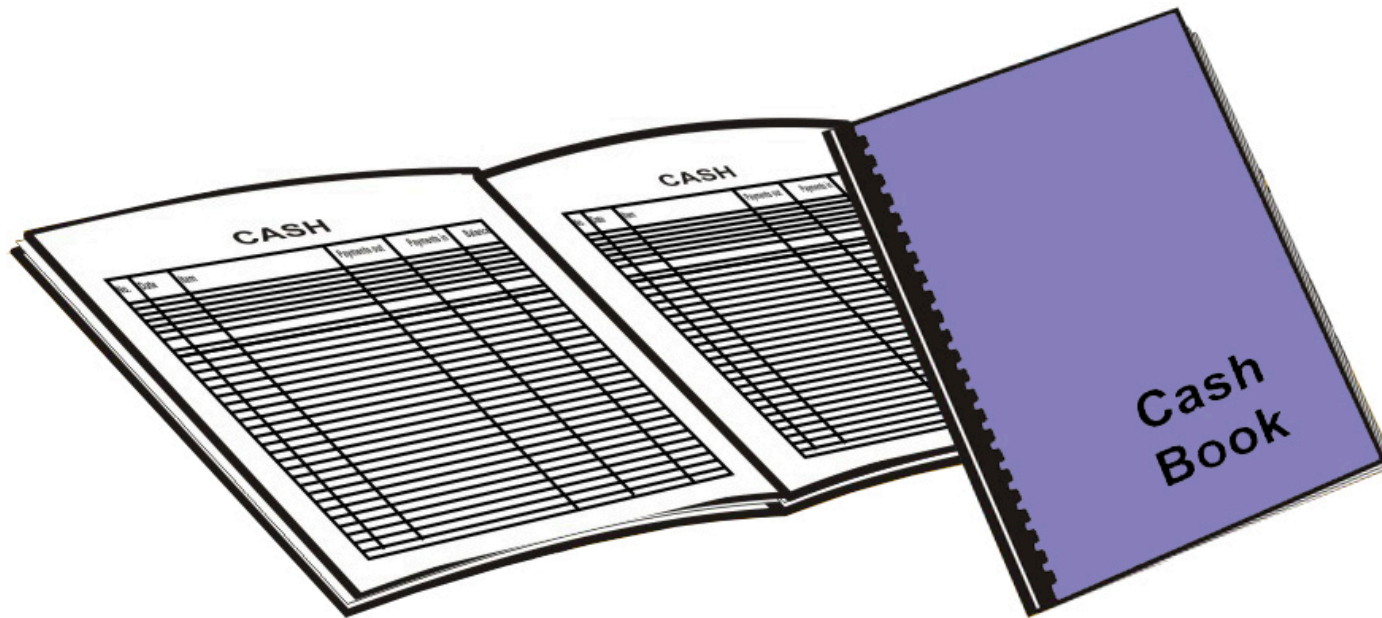
The cashbox: Securing the cashbox

- Keep the **cashbox locked at all times.**
- Consider fitting it with **two or three locks with different keys** that are kept by different people.
- The treasurer can only open it in the presence of at least one other member.
- The **money in the cashbox is recorded in the cash book at all times.**

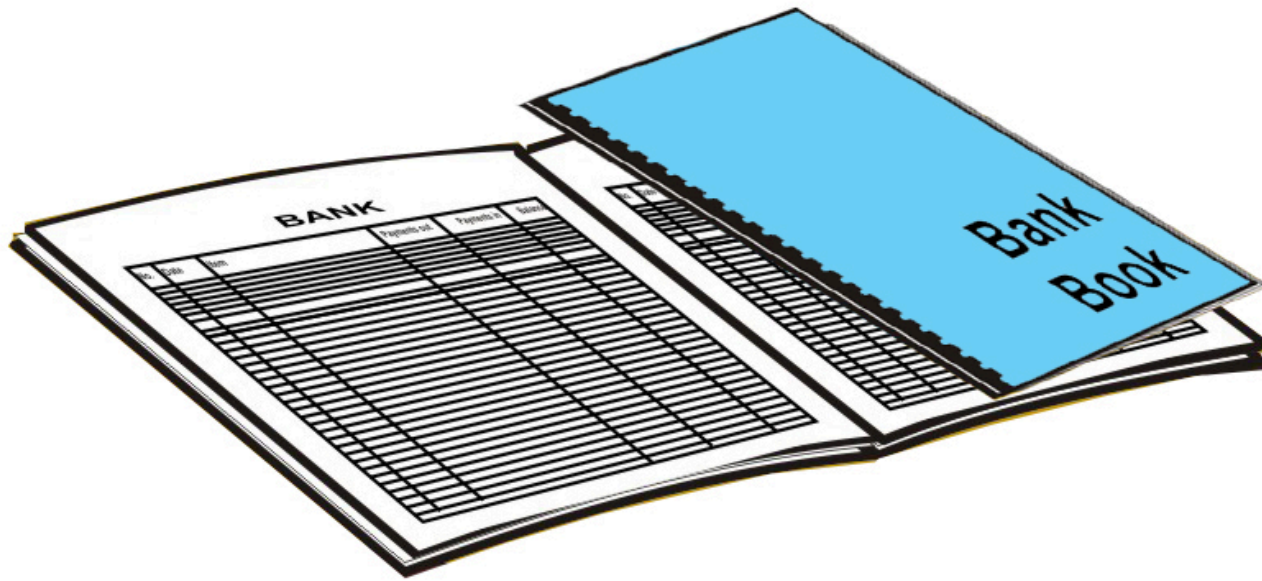


The cash book

The cash book can be a simple **school exercise book with lines ruled on each page.** Every time money that money is put into or taken out of the cashbox, the treasurer records it on a new line in the cash book.



The bank book



- If the group has a **bank account**, it should have a **separate book to record bank transactions – i.e. a bank book.**
- This bank book is managed the same way as the cash book.

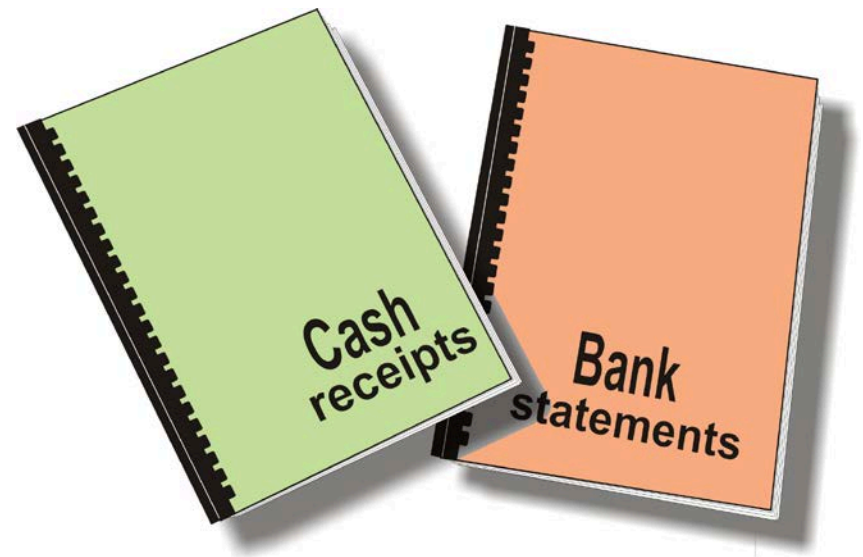
Using pictures rather than words

- If many of the **group members cannot read and write**, they may find it difficult to understand accounts like the ones described above.
- **Use pictures instead of** (or as well as) **words in the cash and bank books** to accommodate these group members.



The file folders

- There has to be a record showing when money is taken from the cashbox or bank, e.g. a **receipt** from a trader or a shop. The treasurer puts **all receipts in a file folder in chronological order.**
- On the **top right corner of each receipt**, the treasurer should write **the same number as in the cash book or the bank book.**



Checking the cashbox and the cash book

If the money in the cashbox does not agree with the balance in the cash book, the treasurer must find out if:

- Has someone **forgotten to write a receipt** for some money?
- Is there a **mistake in the amounts** written in the cash book?
- Is the money **counted** correctly?
- Has someone taken money out of the cashbox **without authorization**?



Checking the accounts

The treasurer must check the accounts every three months and at the end of the year.

- There should be a receipt for every line in the cash book/bank book.
- The dates and amounts must match.
- The balance in the cash book must match the exact amount of money in the cash box.
- The balance in the bank must match exactly the amount on the bank statement and the totals of all receipts.

Opening a bank account

Opening a bank account is a good idea, because money in the bank:

- Is safe
- Can earn interest
- Provide access to formal loans



Uses of a bank account

A bank account can be used to:

- Make business transactions, e.g. buying inputs
- Build up a credit history for the group



Savings and credit schemes

- The group may run a savings and credit scheme.
- If it does, the **money should be held separately from the group accounts.**
- There should be a separate book for members' contributions and for loans.



Paying by mobile phone

Group members can do the following transactions on their mobile phones:

- Transfer money
- Pay their membership fees
- Contribute savings.
- Get loans.

It is important to keep track of this money in the same way as any other type of money.



Regulations and tax

- The treasurer must make sure that its **financial procedures** of the group **comply with the law**.
- The procedures for a cooperative or NGO may be different for an organization registered as a business.
- In some countries, the group may have to pay tax for certain types of activities.



Module summary

In this module, you have learned:

- The reasons for working with groups
- The characteristics and role of the group promoter
- How to enter the community, form a group and promote participation
- The qualities of leaders
- Choosing leaders
- The elements of group governance
- The purpose and types of meetings
- Keeping different types of records
- The principles of financial management