**EXERCISE 1. WORKING WITH GROUPS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *OBJECTIVE*  **After this exercise the participants will be able to:**   * Describe the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of various groups * Suggest ways of improving the performance of groups. | |
| *EQUIPMENT NEEDED*   * Flipchart paper (one sheet per participant), marker pens | *EXPECTED OUTPUTS*   * Summaries of some groups that participants have experienced * Understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of groups * Ideas on how to improve the functioning of groups |
| *TIME*  60 minutes | *PREPARATION*  None |

In this exercise, you and your colleagues will share and analyze your experiences working with groups.

*SUGGESTED PROCEDURE:*

1. Divide the group into pairs. Ask each person to think of a group they have facilitated or are familiar with. This may be a traditional community group, one set up by the government, or one supported by that person’s own organization.
2. Ask the first person in each pair (person A) to interview the other person (person B) about his/ her group. Person A summarizes the responses on the flipchart. See Table 3 for the topics to explore.
3. After 15 minutes, ask the partners to swap roles (person B interviews person A).
4. After another 15 minutes, ask the participants to come back into plenary. Invite several participants to give a brief (3-minute) summary of their conversation, using the flipchart as a visual aid.
5. Lead a discussion of the key issues that have emerged. What are the main problems across groups, and how can they be solved?

**Experience with groups**

TABLE 3 EXPERIENCE WITH GROUPS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NAME OF GROUP**  **SUMMARY OF GROUP** |  |
|  |
| **What type of group is it? (marketing, production, farmer field school, savings and credit, cooperative, etc.)**  **Where is it?**  **How many members does it have? When was it founded?** |
| **FUNCTIONS OF GROUP** |  |
| **What does the group do? (sells maize, mills rice, purchases inputs, collects money and makes loans, etc.)** |
| **REASONS MEMBERS JOIN GROUP** |  |
| **Why do people join it?**  **How does the group benefit its members?** |
| **GROUP STRENGTHS** |  |
| **What does the group do well?** |
| **GROUP WEAKNESSES** |  |
| **What does it not do well?** |
| **ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS** |  |
| **What was done to help the group overcome its weaknesses and perform better?**  **What else could be done?** |