Module 4; Community and Rural Development through Groups, January 2003 Revised by Michael Kenny, Centre for Adult and Community Education, NUI Maynooth.

This module addresses the concept, role, and aspects of groups in rural and community development. The collective approach to participative development requires a high level of knowledge and skill in group work. Utilising the human potential of groups is one of the great challenges of rural and community development. This is especially vital when the local development target group is marginalised and disadvantaged. It is through building the people that we can rejuvenate rural areas and communities.

This module is made up of five units.

- **Unit 1: Participatory Development: A vital Concept in Local Development**
- **Unit 2: Groups? What are they and how do they work!**
- **Unit 3: Working in Groups: A Key Skill in Rural Development**
- **Unit 4: The Process of Group Development; The Role of Facilitator**
- **Unit 5: What Is Leadership In Local Development?**; **Groups and Staff; Working Together?**

References and Useful Resource

At the end of this unit the course participant will have insight into all key aspects of effective use of groups in local and rural development. Each unit has an activity attached that must be completed for fulfillment of the module assessment.

Unit 1: Participatory Development: A vital Concept in Local Development

1.1 Introduction

Participatory development implies the ACTIVE participation of individuals, groups and communities in shaping their environment and the quality of their living conditions. Development activities are organised, from the outset, in such a way as to involve local people. Particular efforts are made to involve the most marginalised people. People are assisted to identify their own needs and to devise appropriate responses to them.

There are many shortcomings associated with representative democracy in societies with centralised bureaucracies. People may feel remote from the decision-making centres. They may feel excluded and powerless. This sense of powerlessness is especially strong in marginalised communities, where widening inequalities make central policies seem increasingly irrelevant to people's lives. The low population densities in rural areas tend to exacerbate these feelings. Participatory development is seen as a vehicle to help people to challenge such exclusion by encouraging them to participate in collective action in pursuit of common interests and goals.

1.2 The Process of Participation

The process of participation involves a series of stages and a set of methods in which a clearly defined strategy is pursued. These methods must, however, be adapted to the particular context. For action to be sustained, the development process generally must:

1. *involve local people in using their own experience* as a *basis to identify their own needs and resources and to devise potential solutions.*
2. *enable local people to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and confidence.*
3. *empower local people to take initiatives. Again, this can involve the development* of *appropriate skills, knowledge and confidence. It also involves resourcing specific proposals.*
4. *enable people to participate in the shaping* of *the physical and social environment and in the conduct* of *local affairs.*

Community participation can lead to a spirit of self-help and self-confidence which enables people to recognise their own abilities. This facilitates them to identify local opportunities resources and thereby create alternatives to dependency on state-agencies.

In order to promote people's participation in the development process, the methods used should be part of a well thought-out strategy.

1.3   A Framework for Participation

In this sub-section, you will look at a model or framework for participation. There are different levels of participation appropriate for different situations. It is important to recognise that there is more than just one community. There are, in fact, many interests or holders to consider. A stakeholder is any individual, group or agency who may be affected by a particular development.

The model or framework focuses on three main considerations:

- *levels* of *participation, methods* of *participation*
- *phases* of *participation*
- *who* is *involved*

1.3.1   Levels of Participation, Methods of Participation

Levels of participation are about the degree to which people are involved, or are allowed to responsibility in the development process. Participation may be viewed as involving five levels which offer increasing degrees of control to the stakeholders involved.

These are: (a) Information, (b) Consultation, (c) Decision and Planning together, (d) Action, (e) Support.

(a) Information

The minimum level of participation is where people are informed about what is planned. For pie, an agency may decide to establish a social housing project. People may be aware, but they may not have any input into decisions concerning where the houses will be how they will be designed or who will live in them.

(b) Consultation

(c) Decision
A greater level of participation is achieved when participants are directly involved in the decision. They help to identify options and join in deciding the best way forward. Using the same example, people are involved in deciding what type of housing should be provided, where it will be located and what kinds of amenities are required to support it.

(d) Action

(e) Support
Groups are assisted to do what they want, perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support provided by the resource holder. In the above example, the groups develop their own plans for the social housing project and secure support from the agency in order to implement them.

Promoting Participation

When considering means of promoting participation it is necessary to think about what level of participation is desired. Whatever level of participation is required will ultimately inform the means adopted to get people involved.

Information
Methods used at this level of participation will focus on clear dissemination of information. This involves

letting people know what is planned, and what is happening. It is then up to people themselves to decide how they wish to respond. There are a number of options, and it is possible to use one or a combination of them as follows:

- *have leaflets, newsletters, mail shots, etc., printed and distributed*
- *make presentations* at *meetings*
- *issue Press Releases* to *the media*
- *advertise through the medium of posters, press, radio.*

Consultation
At this level the primary focus is to establish what people think about the options and elicit feedback. Ways of doing this include:

- *information giving*
- *surveys an research*
- *consultative meetings*
- *discussions where the options and constraints are clearly outlined.*

Decision
This option is about people's active participation in deciding what needs to be done. It involves:

- *Information-giving* to *start the process*
- *Stakeholder analysis* to *decide who should* be *involved.*
- *Brainstorming* to *consider options*

Decision Making Methods

Brainstorming: This is a method that is used to generate a large number of ideas within a short space of time. It can be a very effective way of looking at different aspects of an issue or problem and drawing out people's ideas and experience in a creative way.
The issue or problem is written on a flip chart, and people suggest ideas as they come to mind. They are encouraged to build on each other's ideas. All ideas and suggestions should be accepted and written on the flip chart. The group then reviews the ideas and suggestions in a review stage and begins to consider how viable are the various options.

Cost Benefit Analysis: is a method used to make choices. First and quite simply, each option is considered in terms of the benefits. Will this option bring about a change which people want? Second, the option is considered in terms of what the costs will be, particularly in light of resources available.

SWOT Analysis: (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is a method used to understand as many facets as possible of a particular issue or problem when deciding what action to take. This method, known as SWOT, is widely used by groups and organisations.
Each option being considered is examined under four headings:
(a) Strengths and
(b) Weaknesses are usually explored referring to intrinsic factors within the option. How well will this option meet the need?
(c) Opportunities mean the range of resources, skills and funding which could be brought in and used to help implement the option.
(d) Threats mean external problems or blocks which could hold back implementation. (SWOT Analysis is examined in greater detail in Module 3)

Planning together: Planning together is agreeing how decisions will be implemented, in a clear, step-by-step fashion. It is about agreeing a strategy for implementing the decisions taken. Planning together will allow all involved to clarify the specific methods which will be used, the time-frame within which the work must take place, and the resources which will be needed and how they will be utilised.

1.3.2 Phases of Participation

In the previous section we looked at why it is important to be clear about the level of participation required, in order to know what strategy to employ. However, any strategy also take account of the fact that there are different phases within the participation process.

These are: (a) Initiation, (b) Preparation, (c) Participation and (d) Continuation.

(a) Initiation

The Initiation phase occurs when something triggers and motivates people to get involved. Participation may occur *organically* or *instrumentally.* Organic participation means that people come together themselves spontaneously. In other words, the initiative comes from within the community. For example, an announcement of plans to build a power station might trigger a campaign of protest against it. Instrumental participation means that people are actively encouraged to become involved in the development process. This often means that structures are put in place to facilitate their participation. An agency might establish a community development project in an area, but would seek to have local people involved in identifying the services which should be provided, implementing those services and being red in the overall management of the project.

(b) Preparation
At the Preparation phase the process is thought through. A commitment to using participatory methods exists. At this stage it is necessary to consider who should be involved and how they should be involved. This will inform the methods used to involve people. Perhaps a series of public meetings will be held or perhaps people will be appraoched directly or a training programme may be organised. Essentially, this phase is concerned with deciding a strategy which will include people in the development process.

(c) Implementation
In the Implementation phase, the methods used should ensure participation. This will depend on the level of participation which is being sought. People may be attending information meetings, or they may be actively involved in the process of deciding a strategy to address a problem facing their community. In our example of a campaign against a power station, members of the local community may be involved in researching the potential damage which the power station may cause to the environment, highlighting those findings, liaising with environmental groups elsewhere, lobbying local politicians and stimulating a media debate.

(d) Continuation
What happens at the Continuation phase depends on the particular project and on the level of participation. A women's group, for example, which has been focusing on personal development, may want to become more active and provide some service within the local community. Results from a consultative process may indicate the need to set up some form of partnership organisation. The group, which has been campaigning against the power station, may wish to continue to monitor developments that may damage the environment.

1.3.3   Who is Involved?

As well as considering the level of participation and the different phases in a participation process, there is also a need to think about who is to be involved. Who are the stakeholders? What is the purpose *of* the process? Who will benefit? Who will pay? Who will control the process?

When a development process is undertaken many people may wish to be involved. However, different people will have different needs and perspectives. For example, the perspective which a business person will bring to the process may be quite different from that *of* a woman isolated in the home and caring for elderly relatives. Some people will want more involvement than others in the participation process. Some people may not wish to be involved at all. Others may be happy just to be informed or consulted. Still others may want to be involved in decision-making and in taking action to address whatever problems are identified.

When designing a process for participation, it is important to pay attention to differences in power within a community. Some people will be quite confident about getting involved in the participation process and in seeking what they require. People who have traditionally been marginalised and excluded, however, may have less confidence. It is necessary to adopt explicit measures to facilitate their involvement.

1.4   Needs Identification

A major step for any programme or project is the systematic identification of needs. If people are to be mobilised to participate, then the issues to be addressed must be identified.

There may be an awareness of a need, but not of a solution to it. For example, there may be a recognised need to provide training for the long-term unemployed, but those concerned with the problem may not know how to address the need appropriately.

The basis of participatory local development is to link needs identification with the location solutions and the generation of remedial action. In order to do this it is often necessary to work with the target groups.

The main objectives for needs identification are:

(a) To *understand the problem as completely as possible*
This involves knowing as much as possible about the problem which has been identified and which people hope to address. This may seem obvious, but it is not always attempted. It is important to try to establish how the problem has come about, how it affects people's lives and what its impact is on the community. There may be a need for training for unemployed people, but the more people know how the lack of training is affecting the unemployed, and the type of training which the unemployed require, then the more comprehensive the understanding of the problem will be.

(b) To *identify the scale* of *the problem*
It is desirable to be clear about the scale of the problem in terms of how it impacts on different sections of the target population. For example, emigration may be a big problem in a certain area. However, the level of emigration might be particularly acute among early school-leavers.

(c) To *identify and locate the target group*
Once the nature of the problem and its extent are understood, it should be relatively easy to locate the target group. For example, in trying to reach women who may be interested in returning to work, the local women's group might be a focal point for reaching them.

(d) To *define the* characteristics of *the target group*
Unless the characteristics of the target group are clearly defined it will be difficult to design appropriate responses. Keeping with our example of training for the unemployed, it may be that people over 40 years of age are more in need of a specific type of training than are other categories of unemployed people. To generate solutions or in other areas which have addressed similar needs. New ideas for potential solutions may be stimulated by working closely with the target groups.

(f) To *implement solutions*
Involving the target group throughout the process of need identification will enhance the likelihood of effective action. When people have been involved in identifying the need and generating ideas around potential solutions, they will be far more likely to be committed to taking action to implement potential solutions.

1.4.1   Methods of Needs Identification

There are a variety of methods that can be used for needs identification. These are not in themselves exceptional. They are, in fact, standard methods used for much social research. The main methods are as follows:

I Desk Research
There may already be material available that answers your questions, such as baseline studies, existing community profiles, statistics from statutory bodies on unemployment, and education. Desk research can be used to assess existing statistical evidence, documentation, published materials and relevant actions.

2 *Consultation*
Consultation involves discussions and interviews with members of the target group, and with members of other agencies, in order to obtain a variety of views on the particular issue.

3 *Audit*
It involves identifying exactly what social and economic opportunities and services are available in an area, and who is providing them. It also makes clear where shortfalls exist.

4 *Survey*
A survey can be used to pinpoint needs and examine them in depth. However, it is very important to be clear as to why the survey is being conducted and what information is being sought.

5 *Discussion Group*
A forum might be established to enable discussion and analysis of issues among the members of the target groups. Meetings, seminars and workshops could all be appropriate vehicles for exploring needs.

The more involved the target group is, the more likely it is that needs will be accurately identified and that workable solutions will be devised. It may also lead to the more efficient targeting of resources.

In general, the greater the commitment to involving the target groups in the identification of needs, the more time the process will require. Members of target groups who have been traditionally excluded may not feel confident about their ability to have a role in this process.

1.5   Mobilisation Process

The Mobilisation process refers to the process of stimulating, encouraging and supporting people to become involved in the development process. The approach taken will be very much dependant on their current level of skills and confidence and also the level of participation required. When people have not been involved in development activities, they may not feel confident about their ability to have an impact, therefore, the mobilisation process will involve building people's capacity to be involved. Whatever the starting point however, there are some issues which need to be considered:

(a) A*chievement.*
People must have a sense of what they can achieve by becoming involved. Objectives must be realistic and achievable. If people become involved in a group or a development process which has unrealistic and overly ambitious objectives, the likelihood is that failure to achieve such objectives will leave people with little faith in the process. In any mobilisation process therefore, it is necessary to consider who is going to be involved and what they can realistically hope to achieve.

(b) *The creation of appropriate forms of organisation for facilitating participation.*
Any organisation concerned with participation must be structured in such a way as to give people an opportunity to share their ideas. It is also important that these ideas are listened to and acted upon.

(c) *The development of a capacity to promote relationships among people with differing interests and to resolve interpersonal and political conflicts.*
When people are brought together there is no guarantee that they will all have the same ideas with regard to what needs to be done, or, in fact, how it should be done. In any sphere of life 'here people interact, it would be naive to assume that all relationships are unproblematic. In the context of groups where there are shared aims and objectives, it is important that interpersonal or political conflicts are managed to avoid disrupting the work of the group. This will require that the person charged with the mobilisation process can allow people to air their concerns, acknowledge differences and work through any disputes in a constructive manner.

(d) *The promotion of an awareness that the specific initiative is also an example of a potential long-term development process.*
This relates to the necessity to encourage people to think what their overall vision is, and to see specific objectives as steps towards

1.5.1 Training for Mobilisation

Needs identification will progress more effectively where those involved possess, or are in a position to develop, certain skills. This relates both to group members and to those charged with mobilising them. This suggests the importance of training.

The more profound the level of exclusion experienced by people, the less confident they may be in their ability to influence decisions or to have an input into the development process. At an individual level, people struggling with the effects of poverty may have reduced self-esteem and confidence.

Therefore, before involving people in needs identification, it may be necessary to provide them with training and personal development opportunities. This is an important element of *capacity building.* People's capacity for community action is built by providing opportunities for them to grow in self-confidence and to learn and develop skills. An opportunity to reflect and discuss with others the factors which shape and influence one's life is often a key feature of capacity building.

1.5.2 Training for Mobilisers

It is also important that those charged with mobilising people in a process of needs identification have certain skills. It may be necessary for them to have training. Specifically, it is important that they have a good understanding of group behavior, and that they have the skills to facilitate group interaction. Whoever is charged with the mobilisation process may need to have a wide range of skills in order to encourage, and stimulate members of the target group to become actively involved in the process. Once people become involved they will often require skilled assistance, in order to find the process useful and rewarding, and thereby commit to it. Thus, the mobilisation process is not just a matter of plain research, or passive information giving. It involves a pro-active approach on the part of all the actors involved.

Needs identification is important for its own sake, of course. But it is also the stage where it is easiest to get people involved in their own development. Thus, it is vital that this stage is planned carefully. No two projects are ever exactly the same. The skills, needs and actual identification of needs will require a period of training. In other cases this will not be required, as many may be community activists who already have a track record of working towards the improvement of their community. The precise process will depend on the context of the specific project.

End of Unit 1

Unit 2: Groups? What are they and how do they work!

2.1 Introduction

In this Unit you will examine what a group is and the various kinds of groups which exist. You will also explore the importance of groups to locally based development.

You also consider factors that affect the dynamics within a group in the context of the different needs that exist within groups. You learn why it is important to pay attention to group tasks, the tangible work that a group is trying to do. It is also important to pay attention to group process, that is, the way in which a group operates.

You also look at factors that influence success in working with groups. You learn about the importance of planning and evaluation within group work and locally based development.

2.2 Groups In Local Development

In Ireland, groups have successfully undertaken work in areas such as community enterprise, community arts, community-based social services and community education. In rural and urban areas alike groups have constituted the mechanism by which people engage in active partnership and undertake work to improve the quality of life of their communities. Irrespective of size or focus, groups provide an important vehicle for people to come together. In doing so, they share and exchange skills, information and knowledge and develop a coherent approach towards the issues which are facing their communities.

When considering the impact and role of community groups in local development, it is worth noting that community groups may be geographically based, having a shared locality which brings the members together, or they may be 'communities of interest' where the link that brings members together is something other than locality; it may be because the members are women; members may come from the same ethnic group or members may a particular type of disability.

Community groups are generally formed when there is recognition of a need for action. Sometimes the vision behind the initiation of a group comes from the experience of people experiencing marginalisation as members of a particular community. At other times it is articulated by people whose work or job has brought them into contact with the problems area or of a particular community of interest.

Local development initiatives are broadly concerned with improving opportunities for people, whether such opportunities be economic, social, educational or cultural. Members of communities who have been excluded from the benefits of centralised decision making will often seek to address their needs themselves. In other words, they undertake the responsibility for improving the quality of life within their community. Specific communities will have their own particular needs, to which solutions must be appropriate. Communities themselves are best placed to understand these needs. Generally, groups will rely on outside support to undertake their work, whether this is in terms of statutory funding for their work, or seeking change at a policy level which will facilitate their objectives.

Over the last two decades, the State has extended further support to community groups involved in local development, acknowledging the importance of their role (the Government of the White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State, 13/9/200). This is most clearly evident in the implementation of programmes to counter disadvantage, and which advocate bottom-up development and envisage local groups to be the prime movers in defining measures necessary to address the problems of disadvantage and marginalisation.

2.3 The Concept of a Group

Groups have played a very important role in local development in Ireland. From Muintir na Tire in the 1930s, with its emphasis on self-help and mutuality; through to the vast range of groups operating throughout Ireland today, community groups have been an important conduit/medium for active citizenship.

Groups are important vehicles for bringing people together, harnessing collective energy and allowing people to discuss and reflect on needs and potential solutions. With good support and maintenance, a group can provide a basis for people to commit to effective action.

Charles Handy defines a group quite simply as "any collection of people who perceive themselves as a group:' Michael Olmstead offers a more complex definition:

"[A group is] *a plurality of individuals* who *are* in *contact with* one *another,* who *take* one *another* into *account, and* who *are aware of some significant communality.* An *essential feature of a group* is that its *members have something* in *common and* that they *believe* that what they *have* in *common makes a difference." (Olmstead* 1959. p.p 21 - 22)

Groups can be either informal or formal. An informal group may emerge to call a meeting or to discuss some issue. With such a group, the roles of different members may not be well- defined. Indeed, the aim of the group itself may not be defined. A formal group, on the other hand, has a clear focus and clearly defined roles within the group. Examples of formal groups include support groups, project teams or committees.

A *group* is not *a random collection of individuals. Group members have a* sense *of shared identity, common objectives, defined membership criteria and their own particular ways of working.*

A group is a number of people with a shared interest. Natural groups include families and tribes, and created groups include teams, commit- tees and learning groups. There are all sorts of reasons why people come together to work in groups. Examples include:

- Sports Clubs work together to provide facilities for particular sports
- A business association may come together to address the issues affecting business in an area
- Learning groups enable participants to learn collectively as an alter- native to mainstream education
- Interest groups may come together to address a local issue such as town planning or education provision. Such groups usually disband when the issue is addressed
- Local Development Associations or Community Councils work together to address the social, cultural, environmental and economic needs of their area.

2.4   Role of Groups in Local Community Development

The existence of community development groups is fundamental to local development. Local and community development groups provide a forum for members of a community to participate in the development of their area. The involvement of local people in the development process brings an enormous voluntary effort to bear on development activity that enables progress to be made in areas that might otherwise remain un-addressed. The existence of a well-structured and representative local development group can make a very significant difference to the development of an area. A recognised representative group can also influence the provision of public services by acting as spokesperson on behalf of the area. It is however important that such groups are not self-appointed and that they have a mandate from the area they represent.

Local and community development groups should be regarded as working in parallel with statutory bodies and Local Authorities. Each should complement the other.

The ability to work with other people is crucial to the effective functioning of local groups. These groups, and the individuals within them must:

- have the ability to operate in an open manner that is protected by an ethos of confidentiality within the group
- ensure that all their activities are grounded in principles of justice, equality and concern for the impact of their activities both on the environment and on people living in the area.

Local community development brings people together to identify their needs and to work collectively towards meeting those needs. It is argued that "The process or the way the work is carried out is as important as the programme of development being undertaken" (Kelleher and Whelan, 1992:1).

2.5   How are Groups Formed?

Groups may be formed *organically* or *instrumentally.* A group forms *organically* when a :tion of people come together spontaneously to pursue common objectives. A group is formed *instrumentally* when an outside agent encourages people to come together to form a group.

For example, an individual is aware of an issue which impacts on his/her well-being he/she decides to tackle it. They may not have the energy, resources or skill, however, if they come together as a number of people they increase the resources and at their disposal. They can then adopt a collective approach to problem solving.

The following are some of the benefits of collective problem-solving. Perhaps you came up others.

- *A group brings a range of skills, talents and perspectives together to focus on the problem.*
- *With a group there may be a greater level of enthusiasm and energy than a single individual can manage.*
- *Within the group, information and ideas can be shared and exchanged,* so *that group members learn from* one *another.*
- *Group members can also provide emotional support to* one *another.*

2.6   Why are Groups Formed?

Groups are formed for many reasons such as wanting to pursue a recreational interest, or spond to some problem affecting the community. Groups can be formed to address :economic, political, spiritual, health, sporting, cultural issues or local development issues.

The following are some common reasons for forming groups:

Awareness Raising
Groups may be formed to increase interest in, and awareness of, issues affecting the members' lives. For example, you might form a discussion group to discuss health or environmental issues.

Mutual Support
Sometimes a group of people who share a similar problem may come together to provide mutual support for one another. This support can help members to make difficult decisions or to change damaging behaviour. An example of one such group is Alcoholics Anonymus.

Group Counselling
This is similar to the mutual support group, but in this case the group explores a shared problem with the help of a counsellor. For example, a group of widowed people may discuss their problems and fears with a trained counsellor.

Social Action
A group may come together to use its collective power to campaign for social change or improvement. For example, a group might form to improve housing standards in an area or to seek better community facilities.

Campaigning
Campaigning is a method of social action. Groups are often formed to campaign on particular issues. Such groups seek to win public support in order to exert pressure on policy makers. They try to gain publicity through demonstrations, public meetings and the targeted use of the media. An example of such a group is

the Burren Action Group which campaigned against the locating of an interpretative centre at Mullaghmore, Co. Clare.

Education
A group may be formed to promote education, to impart skills, share learning, develop confidence and offer information.

2.7   Challenging Exclusion and Social Relationships: The implications for Development Groups

Society is deeply divided between those who have access to resources and those who do not. In addition to inheritance, education and employment are the usual routes by which to acquire wealth and status. People with education and professional employment usually have a higher status than those without and consequently, they have more power as they will tend to be invited to participate in local decision making and may be in positions of influence.

This leads to the situation whereby the causes of the divisions in society are not examined and thus they are perpetuated. Those in a position to examine the divisions of society are those who have benefited from those divisions and hence may have little interest in changing the status quo. Generally, people are socialised into accepting traditional power structures, for example obeying a 'superior' or 'authority' figure, or internalising ways of behaving which 'defer' to 'authority' without question. It may seem almost natural that educated people speak more than those who left school early or that men speak more than women do. It is important to understand that social relationships underpin the way people behave. Thus, a participant may defer to a perceived 'superior' or a woman may defer to a man. It is incumbent on a facilitator to recognise this and to counter the effects as far as possible. The skills that underpin this aspect of facilitation include developing awareness around social relationships and challenging inappropriate behavior.

To work effectively in a group, people should understand that within existing social relationships not everyone can feel involved in their community and indeed may feel as if they are not welcome to participate in community activity and local group structures. Working effectively as a group requires a belief that everyone is of value and has the capacity to contribute to the well being of the community.

2.8   Clarifying Group Goals

All groups have reasons for existing. However, groups will vary as to how clearly they perceive what those reasons are. Moreover, different members may have different ideas as to what the aims of the group should be. This will have implications for how the group operates. At certain stages it may be necessary to explicitly clarify the goals of the group. Goals generally fall under either of two headings, *(a) Task Goals or (b) Process Goals.*

(a) Task Goals
Task goals refer to the pursuit of tangible and visible benefits for the members and, perhaps, the wider community. An example of a task goal would be the establishment of a resource centre within a community. A task goal is a material change that the group seeks to bring about.

(b) Process/Maintenance Goals
Process/Maintenance goals refer to how something is done. Members may derive personal benefit from the process of pursuit of task goals. A process goal, for example, might be a commitment to develop the skills, confidence and creativity of the members. Process goals will be evident in-group structures and in how decisions are made. Process goals are concerned with developing the potential of group members.

Different groups emphasise different kinds of goals. Some groups are very task-oriented, while others are more process focused. Both goal types should be persued within local development work. Task goals should be achieved by a process that ensures that participants have as much control as possible. While pursuing particular tasks, participants should also be enabled to acquire the capacity to act themselves. It should be noted that, in cases, process goals can only be achieved if task goals are met. This is because group members can lose heart if they fail to achieve their objectives.

Process goals are especially important in areas which experience disadvantage. When people have a history of being alienated and excluded, they may not feel confident in their ability to influence decisions concerning their own area. Their capacity to express their own needs may need to be fostered and encouraged. According to Kelleher and Whelan (1992), this type of development requires a strong commitment from participants, in addition to outside support. Local development is more likely to be sustainable when communities go through a process of building co-operation and confidence at local level. The success of a community's efforts very often depends on the ability of people to work as a team to agree common goals.

Striking a balance between the two functions is a key to working effectively as a group. In other words it is important to get the work done whilst at the same time it is important to ensure that the process through which the work is carried out does not lose sight of the need to maintain a good atmosphere within the group.

Task Functions
The task of groups is the work towards the objectives set out at the starting out stage or forming stage. It involves much of the more tangible and practical work of groups such as:

- time tabling
- initiating discussion - setting out the agenda- asking for clarification
- bringing information into the group- summarising discussions
- checking actual consensus
- carrying out actions/reporting on actions completed.

Process/Maintenance Functions
The maintenance functions include the caring and nurturing of members, in other words the maintenance of working relationships within the group. The work of maintenance includes:

- seeking contributions from all members of the group
- welcoming new members
- encouraging participation from quiet people
- preventing vocal people from dominating . setting ground rules (see below)
- expressing personal and group feelings
- enabling members to resolve conflict and tension.

2.9   Group Task

The character of a group will be affected by the nature of the tasks it sets out to achieve. For example, a feminist collective aiming to provide services for survivors of abuse will operate very differently from a group assisting unemployed people to start up their own business. The area of work in which the group is involved will also have implications for the level and depth of support which group members will be expected to give each other.

There is also an important play-off between task and process. When a group is task orientated it is planning for action. It seeks to deliver something tangible and visible. When a group is process-focused, it is concerned with the group members developing skills and confidence to manage action.

Local development groups should always seek to strike a balance between achieving tangible and fostering a process of empowerment and skill development for the members of the group.

Unit 3: Working in Groups: A Key Skill in Rural Development

4.1 Introduction

In this Unit you will examine what a group is and the various kinds of groups which exist. You will also explore the importance of groups to locally based development.

You also consider factors that affect the dynamics within a group in the context of the different needs that exist within groups. You learn why it is important to pay attention to group tasks, the tangible work that a group is trying to do. It is also important to pay attention to group process, that is, the way in which a group operates.

You also look at factors that influence success in working with groups. You learn about the importance of planning and evaluation within group work and locally based development.

3.2 Behaviour in Groups

People behave differently in a group context. In addition individuals may behave differently in various groups - a person may feel very confident in one situation but may feel totally intimidated in another.

There are therefore a number of forces at work in determining the behaviour displayed in a group context:

1. The interaction of various personality types
2. External influences which arise because of the particular situation/context.

It is useful for individual group members to reflect on their own behaviour in different group contexts. The following suggestions may help to explore these behaviours.

3.2.1 Helpful And Unhelpful Behaviour In Groups

Helpful Roles for Task Functions

- The initiator, who gets things going
- The information seeker or giver, who identifies the information needs and fulfils them
- The opinion seeker, who seeks and clarifies suggestions
- The elaborator draws out the meanings in the contributions
- The evaluator helps to summarise and evaluate the work of the group.
- The energiser lifts the mood of the group and brings out better quality participation.

Helpful Roles for Maintenance Functions

- The encourager brings out the best in the participants and the contributions
- The harmoniser mediates the differences and helps to maintain a stable working environment
- The gate-keeper attempts to keep communication channels open by bringing people in and stopping others from dominating
- The group-observer keeps the group aware of its own process and progress.

Unhelpful Behaviour in Groups

- The aggressor works by deflating others and by dominating the group. This is achieved by talking too much, not listening and trying to control the group.
- The blocker takes up a position and stubbornly resists other views or values.
- The recognition-seeker diverts the attention of the group towards him/herself, by boasting, acting in unusual ways or whatever.
- The self-confessor uses the opportunity of the group discussion to disclose personal details and to take the group away from its agenda.
- The playboy diverts the attention of the group by playacting, joking, cynicism and so on.
- The special interest pleader. This person brings outside issues into the group and s/he attempts to overturn the agenda to respond to his/her own agenda. (Bradford, Leland 1978)

Other forms of unhelpful behaviour include: -

- The arrogant person who feels s/he is too good for the group;
- The disinterested person who is bored and disruptive;
- The clique who has a set agenda and who collude in secret or prearranged ways
- The whisperers who form little sub-groups and speak quietly to one another when other people are talking
- The stubborn person who will not be moved. (Hope and Timmel, 1995)

3.3   Skills for Effective Group Work

Participating in-group work can be very challenging and requires the development of various skills. People may have to learn to relate in a dif*ferent* way. It is through being aware of things like the influence of social relationships and different personality types, and through reflecting on one's own behavior as a group member that individuals learn how to develop the skills to work more effectively in a group context.

Members of groups can enhance their effectiveness by developing the following:

- *facilitation skills*
- *interpersonal skills . active listening*
- *clear and assertive communication skill*

3.3.1 Facilitation

Facilitation is the process whereby a group is enabled to meet objectives, attending to both the task and maintenance functions in the most satisfactory way. Groups may choose to engage an outsider facilitator from time to time to fulfil a particular role.

However, group members themselves ought to have an awareness of the concept of facilitation and the potential for them to act in a facilitatory capacity during working sessions or meetings. In particular, the chair-person of a group should act in a facilitatory manner.

3.3.2 Interpersonal skills

Listening and active listening: Listening is a very difficult process, but one that is essential for effective group work. Group members need to listen attentively to what each group member has to say. Making eye contact, nodding and encouraging the speaker are all ways of indicating that you are listening.

Group members can also listen to what people are not saying by reading the body language of the speaker and the tone of voice that is used. Members must also ensure that they hear what a speaker means, regardless of their level of articulation or the extent to which there are barriers to communication by virtue of social constraints.

Many people are not good at expressing themselves clearly. Group members must overcome their own prejudices about accent, social back- ground, race, sexuality and gender to enable all members to contribute to the group. The chairperson or facilitator should clarify and interpret for the benefit of the group, ensuring that the speaker is correctly represented.

Listening also involves speaking. Active listening includes:

- summarising, briefly summing up what the speaker says . clarifying, checking out what the speaker means
- reflecting what participants are saying and paraphrasing to develop clarity, for example, 'what I am hearing is ...'
- asking questions to enable people to develop their thinking
- encouraging members by valuing their contributions and eliciting opinions.

Good and Bad Listening ;

Good listening requires that we:

- show interest
- be understanding of the other person
- express sympathy .
- build on what another person is saying, single out the problem if there is one, listen for causes of the problem
- help the speaker associate the problem with the cause
- encourage the speaker to develop competence and motivation to solve his/her own problems
- cultivate the ability to be silent when silence is needed.

Good listening requires that we do <u>not</u> engage in:

- "On-off listening" when the listener "switches off" at times
- "Red flag listening' when certain words trigger a response that causes us to stop listening
- "Open ears, closed mind listening" when we quickly decide we know what is to be said
- "Glassy eyed listening" when we appear to listen while daydreaming
- "Two deep for me listening" when we stop listening because we don't understand
- "Don't rock the boat listening" when we don't listen to something that may challenge our opinions.

In listening do not:

- Argue
- Interrupt
- Pass judgement too quickly or in advance
- Give advice unless it is requested by the other
- Jump to conclusions
- Let the speaker's emotions react too directly on your own. (Source: Adapted from Hope & Timmel (1995))

At all times be clear on how any intervention will contribute to the work of the group.

3.3.3 Clear and assertive communication

Assertiveness is a personal skill that is fundamental to effective group work. Assertiveness is the skill of open, direct and honest communication. It requires a genuine respect for other people and for oneself. Aggressive and manipulative behavior are inappropriate in any context. Assertiveness is not about winning at all costs. It means that people take full responsibility for what they say and feel. In a group context, this

implies that an atmosphere of mutual respect is created and that the ground rules of listening and taking responsibility for ones participation in the group are adhered to. (Lindenfield, 1986).

It is important in a group context that people feel they can honestly state what they believe. Clear communication is difficult in a threatening atmosphere.

Examining characteristics of verbal and non-verbal communication behaviour helps individuals recognise their own personality traits and identify traits in others. This is useful in terms of effective behaviour in a group context.

Verbal Behaviour; Characteristics of Non-Assertive Verbal Behaviour**.**

- Apologetic tone
- Self-defeating statements, for example, 'I would never be able to do that'.
- Talking at length without getting to the point
- Overuse of weak words like 'perhaps', 'possibly', 'maybe'

Verbal Behaviour; Characteristics of Assertive Verbal Behaviour.

- Concise accurate statements
- Suggesting alternatives
- Poses questions to clarify opinions.
- Knowledgeable on facts

Verbal Behaviour; Characteristics of Aggressive Verbal Behaviour.

- Overuse of 'I' and 'Me' statements
- Stating opinions as 'hard facts'
- Assuming too much
- Devaluing other group member's opinions.
- Interrupts others in group
- Continually 'advising' and 'preaching' in an authoritarian manner

Be more assertive by:

- Don't be afraid to say 'No'.
- Don't put yourself down
- Stop asking permission - Go ahead and do it!
- Don't think everyone else is better than you
- Realise that you are more beneficial to a group by being more assertive.
- Think favourably about yourself and your abilities

Be less aggressive by:

- Realise that aggression is a weakness, is counter-productive and more likely to invite conflict
- Talk less and listen more to other members
- Before you speak, ask yourself if you are stating an opinion or a hard fact. Make suggestions but not in an authoritarian way.
- Use less 'I' and 'Me' statements. Instead use 'you'
- Stop assuming that you are better than everyone else

Non-assertive Voice.

- Monotone

- Unduly high-pitched.
- Too quietly-spoken
- Pausing too much, hesitant

Assertive Voice

- Clarity of speech
- Fluent, evenly paced
- Emphasising key words.
- Appropriate tone

Aggressive Voice

- Loud, shouting.
- Over-paced
- Negative and threatening words

Non-Verbal Behaviour

Non-verbal behaviour refers to body language and the use of voice - How things are said rather than what is said. Body Language

Characteristics of non-assertive body language

- Poor eye-contact
- Covering your mouth with your hand.
- Nervous and fidgety movements

Characteristics of assertive body language

- Clear eye contact but not staring and intimidating.
- Open hand movements.
- Open facial expression
- Relaxed in posture, upright when in a sitting/standing position

Characteristics of aggressive body language

- Staring and consequently intimidating
- Pointing finger and engaging in excessive hand movement
- Leaning forward if seated and moving impatiently if standing.
- Rigid facial movements

3.4   Roles in Groups

Members play a range of roles in groups. When you know the roles it is relatively easy to identify the actors of each role in the group. Often people are not aware that they play these roles and usually there is a mixture of roles being played. The following are some of the roles played:

The Volunteer Role
Volunteers at every opportunity, to the point where he/she takes on every- thing and will not be able to do a fraction of what they have taken on.

The Single Issue Role
Knows exactly what he/she wants done and outlines their idea at every opportunity, even though it is not relevant to this particular meeting, e.g. wants to build a dog track.

The Shy One Role
Never speaks or gives an opinion. When asked for an opinion will agree with what the last speaker has argued.

The Know-All Role
Is an expert on everything that is suggested and always shares this 'expertise'?

The Jester Role
Cracks jokes all the time, rarely contributes anything useful and is not taken seriously when he/she does.

The Boss Role
Knows exactly what needs to be done and tells everyone what that is.

The Storyteller Role
Has a story about everything and loves to tell the story.

The Supporter Role
Supports everyone else's ideas, just to make them feel good. Has no consistency in what they will support.

3.5   Stages Of Group Development

The experience of participating in a group changes over time. Most people will be aware of a sense of enthusiasm, a burst of energy when a new group is established. We all know of groups that have simply drifted apart. There are a number of clearly definable stages in the development of groups. Understanding these stages helps avoid the unnecessary frustration that occurs at certain times within a group's development.

There are several theories on the stages of group development. The Five-Stage Model is a very simple, yet insightful model of group development.

Five Stage Model

- Forming; when people come together, form ideas for what they want and agree the objectives of the group
- Storming; when people start liking and disliking other group members, and issues over power and structure emerge
- Norming; when people start working more constructively and establish clearer conditions for working together (ground rules: *see* Facilitator's Note below)
- Performing; when participants work progressively and start meeting the objectives of the group and their own needs
- Mourning; the goals and objectives of the group have been met and the group disbands, sometimes with a sense of loss.

The first two stages of group development in this model have to do with power relationships, testing ones own and other members' power and influence and perhaps 'jockeying' for control.

The final three stages have to do with personal and interpersonal relationships and how people accept others in the group and develop awareness of their own behaviour. This enables them to work cohesively together towards their goals (Prendiville, 1996).

The stages of group development are broad guidelines, and groups will generally go through various stages or phases. Groups can get stuck in any stage. For example, a group can remain locked in the storming stage, when members are in constant conflict with each other, or the group is split over an issue. It takes

good will and good facilitation to enable a group to progress from one stage to the next. Sometimes it simply is not possible for a particular group to progress. In this situation, the group may have to disband. It may be possible to retrieve the situation by reforming with new aims and objectives.

3.6   The Group Contract

What follows is a sample set of ground rules. Ground rules should be agreed between group members at an early stage in the group's existence. This strengthens the sense of group and ensures all members understand the groups norms at an early stage.

1. Personal Responsibility: Participants take responsibility for being in the group, for what they say and for asking that their own needs are met
2. Participation: Participants take responsibility for their own participation
3. Respect: Participants respect other members views and opinions
4. One Voice: Participants agree to speak one at a time only.
5. Listening: Participants agree to listen respectfully to everyone.
6. Conflict: Participants agree to deal with conflict when it arises with good will to resolve it
7. Difficult Behaviour: Participants agree to develop awareness of their own behaviour and to modify it for the benefit of the group, if needed
8. Time Keeping: Participants agree to start and finish on time

These are some suggestions. Ground rules are agreed with the members of the group following discussion. Issues like confidentiality, equal time/equal space, *etc.,* are more important for some groups than for others. It is vital that participants have a stake in the group and the ground rules.

3.7   Dealing with Conflict

All groups encounter conflict. It is completely human to disagree with others, to dislike some people, to find certain habits irritating, or to simply feel unexplained anger or fear in different situations. Conflict should be seen as part of the natural order of any group relationship. Very little or no apparent conflict could signify a lack of interest and initiative. On a positive note, conflict can include some healthy challenges to established practices and can be a source of creative problem solving. On the negative side, if conflict is not managed skill-fully, groups are weakened. Group members should also be aware that personal loss of argument can lead to bitterness for the individual and disharmony and inefficiencies within the group.

Good groups will develop strategies for dealing with conflict and handling difficult people in ways that will not damage the person or undermine the effectiveness of the group. Conflict, if well managed, can be a key factor, contributing to the success of community groups in meeting their community's needs.

In the context of community groups, conflict can take many forms. To manage conflict positively and effectively, it is important that people learn how to recognise attitudes in conflict and acquire skills to prevent conflict from being disruptive. It is also important when dealing with conflict that people are not made to feel that everyone is "against them".

Recognising attitudes to conflict and managing conflict requires skills that can be acquired and developed. Developing interpersonal skills is integral to acquiring the skill to manage conflict.

Essential skills needed to engage in conflict management include:

- active listening,
- interpretation and
- clarification.

In addition, group members should be encouraged to concentrate on:

- Diagnosing the nature of issues

- Initiating the approach, or the confrontation in a way that does not demean the other person/group, and which does not take up a defensive position
- Listening actively to the other side, ensuring that all the issues are brought out and acknowledged
- Assertive communication in discussions
- Planning and generating solutions to the issues.

Group members must ensure that they remain fair and calm; - prepared to handle the difficult issues as they arise. No single member of a group can take all the responsibility for conflict management. There are various strategies that are useful for handling conflict situations.
For successful conflict facilitation, it is vital:

- to allow sufficient time to deal with it
- to define the problem as clearly as possible :
- to deal with negative feelings in an effective way -
- to help people to identify their part in the problem in very clear, concrete ways.

Conflict Resolution; Force Field Analysis

Many attempts at conflict facilitation fail because there is no clear picture of the issues involved in the dispute. The people involved may have an intuitive idea, and act on it only to find that the conflict was more complex than they had imagined.

Force field Analysis is a method devised to graphically depict the forces n any conflictual situation. The method assumes there is a central tenet or crux, which is depicted by a middle line. It is extremely useful for group members to clarify and isolate the central issue. This ensures that everybody is clear about the issue and provides the opportunity to dialogue in order to reach clarity.
First stage: Group members, on either side of a debate, are invited to list their perspectives on the conflict, and to state where it is vis a vis the perspectives of other members of the group. The central line is the issue or crux of the conflict, with the opposing perspectives on either side. This analysis may be depicted graphically as shown below.
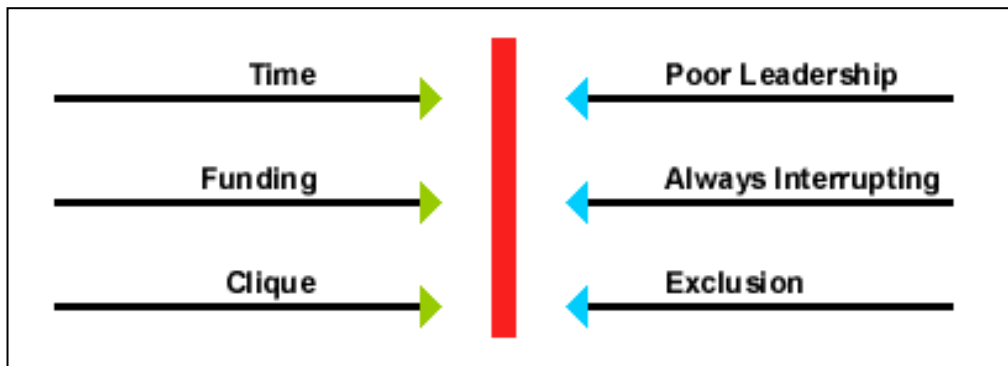
Second stage: Identify the arguments for and against. The participants should be encouraged to state simply the arguments to start with and to write them down on either side of the line. Initially each argument is allocated an arrow converging on the central line. The arrow is given length to depict the weight of each statement. The longer the arrow, the stronger the statement. Participants are encouraged to include as many arguments as possible, and to give the appropriate arrow length. This method involves the identification of strengths and weaknesses of opposing forces.

This graphic depiction has the effect of clarifying and prioritising the issues involved in the conflict. The resolution will emerge from an evaluation of the arguments posed by the opposing sides.
This technique is useful for both group and individual conflict situations.
End of Unit 3

Unit 4: The Process of Group Development; The Role of Facilitator

4.1 Introduction

There are a number of different features that determine how a group operates. Each group has explicit or implicit ground-rules that describe acceptable behavior within the group. Each group is also defined, to a certain extent, by the needs of its members. There are also other factors, some *internal* to the group, some *external,* which influence the success of the group.

Ground Rules

Ground rules may be described as the contract between members of a group as to their expectations for the group. They will vary from group to group. Explicit ground-rules are an important foundation for good practice and time ought to be given to allow members negotiate what these ground-rules should be.

Ground-rules, for example, may define the levels of confidentiality expected, any limits on personal disclosure, how people wish to be listened to, how time will be used within the group and so forth. They serve to clarify what members' rights and responsibilities are within the group. They can be reviewed as time goes by.

Needs

There are three broad needs which people have as group members, and it is important that an appropriate balance is found. These are:

(a) Task needs: People come together in groups because they have a common aim or goal. There is something which they wish to achieve and it is the reason for the group's existence. It is important that the aims of the group are clearly defined. Failure to do so will very often lead to shifts in direction and confusion among members as to why they are there.

(b) Socio-emotional needs: Members of a group need to interact with each other. They need to feel good about being in the group. Sometimes this means more than the achievement of aims and objectives. Members must have the opportunity to express their opinions and feelings, to hear what others have to say, and to reflect on their experience. Furthermore, they may want to joke or to complain about something in the news. This is all part of enabling group members to interact in a positive way and it will have implications for the energy within the group.

(c) Individual needs: All members will have their own personal pre-occupations. Usually, they will put them to one side when participating in the group. However, sometimes they may be so pressing that the member may need to talk about them before getting on with the activities of the group. It is important to allow space for this within a group. It is also important to ensure that group members do not spend all the time dealing with personal needs when group tasks need to be dealt with.

In order to function effectively, a group should aim to meet the various needs of its members. Otherwise, members may feel disappointed and disheartened.

4.2 Trust

The issue of trust is one which requires careful consideration for development workers red with groups. As a member of a group, it is important to be constantly sensitive to needs of others. It is important to recognise that building trust, openness and honesty between people is a critical element for local action.

It is important to be open to feedback. It is desirable that group members and development members take time to examine their own values, attitudes and beliefs. Being a member of a member of a group means continuous learning. Trust is never finally achieved. It is an on-going challenge. Even where members of a group have known each other well, the process of establishing is ongoing. The establishment of trust has significant implications for the group that is developing a dynamic in which members' needs are met.

4.3   Group Structure

The success of a group will often be affected by how clearly the group has defined its *aims, objectives* and *tasks.* These can change over time. However, they should not be so flexible as to lead to a lack of coherence within the group. The process of planning is much easier when a group is clear about what it wishes to do and why.

Aims or *Goals* are the overall vision of a group. They are generally quite broad. They represent the optimum to which a group aspires. For example, an aim might be to improve the quality of community life in a given area.

Objectives constitute the specific outcomes necessary to meet the broader aims. For example, the group might decide that one necessary element in improving the quality of life is to improve education and training opportunities.

Tasks are specific measures to meet the objectives. Continuing with the example above, a particular task might be to gain statutory support for skills training courses for early school- leavers. This will involve designing proposals, meeting and exchanging information with the relevant authorities, recruiting trainees and so on.

The clearer a *group* is *about its aims, the easier it will be for the group to plan what its work will be.*

Other internal factors that influence group success include the way it is managed and the skills of the members. It is generally important for a group to have a strong, accountable management committee. The committee ensures that different elements of the group's work are co-ordinated to achieve the group's aims. It feeds back information to the wider group and checks options and needs. In addition, the ability of the committee to work as a team will enhance the effectiveness of the group in accomplishing its task.

While a group need not possess all the skills necessary to implement a project, it is an advantage to have access to some of them within its own membership. It is important for the group to utilise the skills of its members. In addition, the group may benefit from availing of training in different aspects of development.

4.4   External Factors

There are instances when factors external to the group will determine the ability of the group to undertake its work successfully. Amongst the external factors which have implications for the success of a group are:

Support of the wider community
The support of the wider community is important for a group. It helps to validate and consolidate the work which is being undertaken. For the members of the group it can enhance a sense of achievement, and can also be used when seeking funding and resources. For this reason it is advisable for groups to publicise their work, allowing people to know what they are doing and the contribution that they are making to the well being of the overall area.

Access to facilities and resources
Poor access to facilities and resources can undermine the work of a group. If groups are meeting in uncomfortable premises it can interfere with the ability to work effectively. The lack of resources can directly inhibit people's participation; for example, the lack of child-care facilities are a serious drawback for women with children when it comes to being involved with groups.

Statutory goodwill

The presence or absence of goodwill from statutory agencies will have implications for the success of a group. Where such goodwill exists there is a likelihood of support in terms of funding and resources. Therefore, it is important that groups are clear about their aims and objectives, and the value of their work, and are able to articulate this clearly to the relevant statutory agencies. This also implies the importance of making agencies aware of what is being done and actively seeking their support.

Secure funding

Funding is a major consideration for the success of any development group. Groups can encounter a whole range of expenses, from rent to administration costs, from hiring trainers and facilitators to the costs of employing a full-time development worker. There is a range of ways to raise money; from voluntary fund-raising efforts to grants from statutory agencies and trust funds.

The formulation of long-term plans and an overall strategy can be hindered by the constant pursuit of piecemeal funding. Many groups may find themselves chasing whatever money is available, whether or not it is available for work which is compatible with their objectives. However, group effectiveness is enhanced when the group is clear about what it wishes to do, and what it requires money for, rather than applying for funding and then trying to organise work which meets the criteria of the funding agency.

Access to the support of a full-time development worker

Not all locally based groups have the services of a full-time development worker. Ironically, it is usually those groups that are most successful in achieving their objectives that manage to obtain funds to employ one. These development workers possess at least some of the skills and expertise to research, plan and implement a development project.

In some areas, statutory agencies employ full-time development workers who serve as a resource to local groups, supporting them in their initial stages and providing on- going support with planning, strategy development and so forth. Full-time staff are also employed by larger projects.

4.5   Stages in Group Development

In order to understand the events that occur in group life it is important to note that there are stages through which a group develops before reaching a stage of maturity. According to Barry Tuckman (1965), many groups progress sequentially through a number of stages. However, some groups may not pass through all five stages, while others may jump backwards and forwards from one stage to another. These stages are:

(a) Forming: In the initial stages of coming together the group is anxious, and dependent on the leader. The group attempts to discover its code of conduct. Members test out behaviour, to discover what the norms of the group will be: how serious, how humorous and how supportive will it be. A group in this mode is questioning and tentative.

(b) Storming: The group feeling is one of conflict, with rebellion against the leader, polarisation of opinion, conflict between sub-groups and resistance to control. There is likely to be emotional resistance to the task, with claims that the task is impossible. A group in this mode will often approach the task feeling *"It can't be done",* or *"I won't* do *it.* ". This stage often represents a testing out of the leadership, which, if viewed positively, may be the means by which members start to take the task seriously and work out its personal implications for them.

(c) Norming: At this stage some group cohesion develops and norms for the group emerge. The internal organisation and processes of the group become established. The former resistance seems to be overcome and conflicts are patched up. People have arrived at a way of living with the other members of the group. The group at this stage can be capable of offering mutual support to members. Increasingly, a determination to achieve the task will be accompanied by an open exchange of views and a sense of

(d) *Performing*: Most internal group issues are resolved and the group is doing the task for which it was brought together. Roles within the group are functional and flexible, with interpersonal problems having been resolved. Individuals feel safe to express differences of opinion and trust the group to find acceptable compromises. There is a lot of energy available within the group for doing the task, and solutions begin to emerge. A group in this mode approaches the task feeling *,"We are doing it!* ".

(e) Mourning (Ending): Individuals leave the group and discussion focuses around past-shared experiences or attempts to hold the group together. Suggestions may be made for the group to meet at a later date for further support. There is often a desire for the group not to end formally.

B. Symons (1981), in *Deprivation, Participation and Community Action,* details stages that a community group must go through in order to acquire the skills to become a truly representative body. While outlining the process, he emphasises that there are times when stages overlap. If a group is to function effectively, he claims, it must continue to practice the skills achieved in each stage of its development.

Stages identified by Symons are as follows:

- *The prime objectives of the group are identified.*
- *The group is actually formed, and begins* to *develop* a *community identity.*
- *The group adopts* a *structure suited* to *its nature and activity.*
- *Group members develop differentiated roles,* so as to *pursue their objectives more effectively.*
- At *this stage the group must develop* an *appropriate relationship with the community. If it is* a *representative body, it should develop* a *democratic and representative structure. This may involve annual elections (or positions within the group. However, annual elections are not enough. There should be mechanisms* to *ensure on-going participation by members.*
- A *group requires effective leadership* to *evolve further. Good leadership ensures it does not become dominated by any clique or individual or become closed* to *influence by the membership.*

Any group can, at *times, benefit from outside expertise. However, the group must have the confidence* to *use that expertise intelligently and critically. It should neither reject opinions that do not suit its own prejudices, nor should it uncritically follow the advice* of *some "expert". (Symons, 1981, p. 208)*

It is important that local development groups address some key questions in their initial stages of development. This involves recognising the needs of the area and what they can do to address those needs. It also involves identifying the resources that exist in the area and what resources can be resourced from outside.
Ultimately, it is important for a group to make sense of its situation and clarify its needs, values, expectations, resources and abilities. These will significantly influence the range of choices available in the development process.

4.6   Factors That Affect the Dynamics in a Group

Every group has its own unique dynamic that has implications for the way in which members will interact with each other and work together. The following are some of the considerations that will have implications for the inter-actional process.

The Number of People in the Group
The number of people in a group affects the level and type of interaction that can occur. Specifically, it has implications for the degree of sharing which is possible. With large numbers, members may not feel sufficiently comfortable to contribute openly and honestly.

The fewer the members, the greater is the likelihood of trust between them. It is also more likely that members will have similar aims. These advantages may be offset by the lack of variety and the greater probability of a poor mix of skills and perspectives.

In a larger group greater diversity occurs, thus leading to more creativity and to clearer role definition. Larger groups are often more successful in resolving complex problems. However, within the larger group there will be significant differences in the style, frequency and length of spoken contributions.

The larger group favours the outspoken and tends to militate against the more reticent group members. This has implications for how group meetings and activities ought to be structured to ensure that the value of each member's skills and ideas are not lost. In practice, this often means dividing the large group into smaller "buzz" groups to ensure that each member has an opportunity to contribute.

Open or Closed Membership

An important characteristic of a group is whether it is *open* or *closed.* With an open group anybody can join at any stage. With a closed group. the membership is fixed at an early stage.

Open groups will often have a greater level of energy through the addition of new members. New members can offer a different viewpoint. They may add to the problem solving capacity of the group.

However, new members must be integrated in as sensitive a manner as possible. The impact of new members can inhibit openness. It can damage the sense of trust needed to broach certain subjects. In addition, open groups are likely to have *"members at different levels* of *commitment* to *the process and members who are not at the same level* of *development."* (P. E. Slater 1958. 137 -138).

A closed group, in which membership is defined at the outset, lends itself well to the establishment of trust and to strong group bonding. Such groups often operate within a specified time frame and thereby remain very focused.

When a group first comes together it is essentially a collection of individuals. As has already been pointed out, the group will have a reason for coming together, yet for the group to become a positive medium for change in the pursuit of both task goals and process goals, it is necessary for the group to be more than the sum of its parts. For this reason, groups will often require the assistance of a facilitator. The word "facilitate" means to make easy. The role of a facilitator then is to make it easy for the group to plan and work effectively together. She/he requires a host of skills in order to assist the group grow as a unit which can achieve tasks and objectives, but which also meets the individual needs of the members.

Groups are important vehicles for participatory development. There are many different kinds of groups, pursuing different kinds of goals. It is necessary that each group develops appropriate working methods for its own purposes. In this subsection we look at two key elements which contribute to the success of group work: (a) Planning and (b) Evaluation. We will look at these elements from two main angles:

1. Why they are important considerations for the facilitator, and
2. Why they are important for the group

4.7   Principles Underpinning Groups Working In Community Development

Community development work must be underpinned by certain fundamental principles - concern and care, justice, equality, participatory democracy and inclusiveness.

Concern and Care
The ways in which work carried out by a local group impact on everyone in the community must be considered. If development work has the potential to impact negatively on some members of the community the work should not be carried out.

Justice
Work carried out by groups involved in community development must b carried out in a spirit of justice. The activities of groups must be geared towards achieving a more just society for all, rather than maintaining and contributing to injustice.

Equality
Everyone in a community is equally entitled to participate and to benefit from the work of a community group.

Participatory democracy
The type of democracy with which we are most familiar is representative, democracy where the decision making function is handed over to elected representatives. Participatory democracy on the other hand, engages the, participation of its constituent community in decision-making on an ongoing basis.

Inclusiveness
People who tend to be marginalised or left out of decision-making and the organisation of community development activity should be included .in group activity in a meaningful way. There is an obligation on established group members to create the conditions that facilitate the inclusion of all community interests.

Care
Groups must underpin their work with a concern for the impact of their activities on all members of the community, as well as on the environment. In addition the group should exercise care in the way it functions and should be mindful of its members' needs in terms of working in a supportive environment.

4.8   Planning In Group Work

Anyone who intends to work with a group needs to work out ahead of time the benefits that they hope to achieve on behalf of prospective members. This will provide guidelines for designing a suitable approach and later for assessing its effectiveness. Plans are made to be followed, but also to be reviewed and changed in the light of new information and/or changing circumstances.

In essence, this means that the person who is about to start working with a group needs to know as much as possible about its history. Thinking about the factors that influence trust will guide a facilitator as to how appropriate certain methods may be, and the level of interaction that the facilitator will seek. It is important to consider how safe members will feel within the group. Will members be expected to share information about themselves, their feelings, their experiences? If so, have the expectations around confidentiality been made explicit? It may be necessary to clarify what your role as facilitator is with the group, so that the group understands what it is you are seeking to do and what the limitations are. Effective, safe group work requires time for thinking, feeling, planning and support, as well as implementing.

It is also important to be well prepared, in terms of having a suitable venue, a timetable, and any relevant information and equipment ready. It is important to have decided what format to use, whether it will be exercise-based, broad discussion or brainstorming sessions. At this stage it is also important to know the literacy levels within the group and the appropriateness of word-based flip charts for example. There are a number of questions which must be addressed: How are you going to open the group discussion?, How will you maintain energy?, How many breaks and when? The clearer the person guiding the group- work session is about what they are seeking to achieve, the greater the likelihood that an appropriate process will be devised which will maximise the benefits for the group.

How Well Do Group Members Know Each Other?

In a group where members know each other, or work together, it is likely that members will develop relationships with each other outside of the group. These relationships may have implications for dynamics within the group. In particular, it may have a bearing on how comfortable members may feel about self-disclosure.

A related issue is the need to ensure that what happens within the group does not have repercussions outside. There may be concerns about confidentiality. There may also be questions of power and influence. For example, if one member of the group is the employer other member, this may have implications for how they relate within the group.

Did Members Choose to Join or Were They Sent?
If you join a group because you feel it has intrinsic worth, your attitude to it is likely to be positive than if you

are there because you were sent. This has implications for the dynamics within a group, as it influences the level of commitment which individual members to the group.

How Long Will the Group be Together?
The duration of a group also has implications for the group dynamic. One factor is whether or not members are aware in advance of how long the group will be in existence. This may implications for the pace at which work takes place. Some groups may have a precise lifespan, until the completion or achievement of some specific task. Alternatively, a group may envisage itself having an indefinite lifespan and embarking on an extended programme of work and development.

From the outset, some groups may aspire towards growth and expansion. For example, forming a pressure group, the focus may be some immediate issue but the intention may be to have a broader and more long-lasting campaign.

Is the Environment Comfortable?
The environment in which the group works may be examined at two levels. First, the social environment may impinge on the group insofar as the public perception of the group and its activities may be either positive or negative.

Second, there are considerations at a practical level. There may be difficulties in finding venues that facilitate access for people with disabilities. The absence of crèche facilities makes it difficult for women with young children to be involved. It is important that the environment in which groups meet is comfortable. This conveys to the group that a value is being placed on their work. The meeting place should be pleasant and be without interruptions and distractions. Group effectiveness will be impaired if the group is meeting in a cold, damp room, with Kango hammers blaring away next door. Seating arrangements are also important. Are seats arranged so that members can make eye contact? This may have implications for building trust and resolving conflict.

Hidden Agendas
The issue of "hidden-agendas" is an important one for the dynamics of a group. Each person will have his or her own individual reasons for joining the group or for seeking positions within it. These may be in addition to, or instead of, the reason expected. For example, a member may seek a prominent position in the group, such as chairperson or secretary, in order to gain prestige or to feel needed. The member mayor may not be committed to the work itself and to the aims of the group. In this example, fulfilling these personal needs constitutes a hidden agenda.

Personal objectives are not necessarily damaging. However, where members have personal objectives that are not shared with the group, there is always a danger that manipulation will occur. This could have negative implications for the development of trust and group effectiveness. Members will work together best when there is communication about individual objectives and agreement about shared objectives. A group leader who is aware of the various agendas and can find adequate ways of dealing with them, will be more effective.

Composition of a Group

The character of a group will be affected by whether or not the make-up of the group is homogeneous or heterogeneous. When a group is homogeneous it means that individual members have significant common characteristics. Group members may have similar backgrounds and experience. This relates to factors such as class, gender, race, and age profile of the group. When a group is homogenous it is easier to achieve consensus and a shared understanding or shared perspective on problems and issues.

In any group, clear ground-rules are necessary to focus the group on objectives and to facilitate trust. This issue becomes crucial when the make-up of a group is heterogeneous, as group members may have a diversity of life experiences, perspectives and motives. Within an area-based group that is tackling the problems of the area, a successful retailer may offer a different solutions and different perspectives to that of a lone-parent who is dependant on welfare. In such situations it is important that members are sensitive to each other and that they understand the importance of valuing differences of perspectives and attitudes.

Group Norms

People who come together in groups tend to form structures and develop standards that help them to operate effectively and maintain themselves as a group. These "usual ways of doing things" or norms, are helpful to the group because everyone knows what is going to happen and how it is going to happen.

Such clear-cut procedures are evident in the Dail, church services and so on. They are often referred to collectively as the culture of the group or organisation. Members are expected to conform to these standards or informal rules and pressure is often exerted by the group on individuals who deviate from them. From this process of social control a group derives its strength to pull together as a group and increase its effectiveness and morale.

The Role of Facilitator

4.9 Introduction

The role of a facilitator is to enable people in a group to formulate and express their views/decisions on whatever issue is before them.

If the views or information provided in this resource pack, or expressed by another person in a group with which you are working, differs from your own views or information, do not argue about who is "right" or "wrong". It is important for people to be exposed to different points of view or experiences so that they can broaden the basis for making up their own minds.

It is essential that facilitators display respect for, and tolerance of, the views and backgrounds of others when working with community groups.

Promoting this ethos within a group is very important if the group is to - be successful in reaching its goals.

A key role of the facilitator is to create the conditions for balanced challenging discussion, equality of participation and strategic decision-making.

4.10   Conducting a Session

As facilitators, your work may take the form of informal training (for example a meeting with a community group) or perhaps a more formalised training session. This section provides tips on training sessions that you can adapt to suit the particular need.

Session Preparation

1. Obtain as much information as possible on the community group and their expectations of the training
2. Re-check the supplies/materials you need before you leave the house: Flip-chart Markers
3. Copies of handouts/worksheets Pre-prepared session plan
4. Check equipment before session, e.g. slide projector, overhead, recorders, tapes, etc.
5. Arrive early - allow extra time for setting-up (see physical arrangements above) and anticipate some participants arriving very early for the session.
6. Plan to be ready at least 10 minutes before the session.
7. Circulate and talk to people individually as they arrive. Encourage the group to circulate rather than sit down and wait for the session to start. Sometimes it's a good idea to start a session with tea/coffee as this makes it easier for people to mingle.

Starting a session
It is most important to make everyone feel welcome. If meeting the group for the first time introduce yourself. Invite participants to do like- wise. Start on-time, indicate a finishing-time and keep to it. Reach agreement regarding smoking arrangements. Suggest a time for coffee break.

General pointers
Prepare flip-chart on the aims and content of the session. This should be displayed and introduced to the participants.
Your session should achieve a balance between the provision of information and group activities. Dividing a group into pairs or small buzz groups to consider the material covered and allowing time for recording feed-back is one way of achieving this balance. Make sure that buzz groups are clear on activities and that they appoint someone to record their opinions for feedback purposes.
You will be facilitating groups to explore local issues and to progress these. This will involve providing the groups with the additional information, insights and observations that you have. However, when doing this be careful to avoid pushing your own views.

Closing the session
It is useful to recap on the main learning points and findings of the session. Refer to any follow-up sessions that are planned and advise participants on tasks to be performed in the intervening period.
Be prepared to stay after the session, as some participants may need to talk. Encourage people to explore options available to them and to choose what is best for them. Try to be available, but do not create dependencies.

4.11   Physical Arrangements and Group Size

Think of the participants' comfort. Choose a quiet, attractive space with no interfering noises or In-house traffic. The room size should promote a feeling of intimacy. If something about the room is inadequate, try to rectify it, don't just ignore It.

The best seating is in a circle so that everyone can see each other and group interaction is welcomed. The next most desirable arrangement would be U-shaped.

Before your session is due to start, check the facility where you will be meeting participants. Use the pre-session venue & group checklist.

Venue Checklist

- Are there clear directions posted to the meeting place so that all can easily find the room?
- Can you post signs?
- What time will the venue be open? Arrive early
- Can you re-arrange the room to suit your requirements?
- Do you have to do it yourself or is there a caretaker to do it?
- Is there a flip chart stand and paper or chalkboard available for your use?
- Is there an overhead projector for your use, if you need one?
- Can you use masking tape to hang posters on walls?
- Are there arrangements for a coffee break?
- Is somebody assigned to prepare the tea/coffee?

Group Checklist

- Familiarise yourself with the group
- Familiarise yourself with issues likely to arise
- Establish a rapport with the group, greet people on their arrival
- Balance the provision of information with group discussion/input

Recap on main learning points/decisions at the close of a session

4.12   General Pointers for Working With Groups

Be Enthusiastic; In any group you will experience growing pains. You can help the group by dealing with issues as they arise, optimistically and enthusiastically.

Win the Confidence of Participants; As a facilitator, you should convey genuine interest in, and concern for, the activities of the groups with which you are working. Facilitators should not hide behind the protective shield of authority. Group members need to know that it is acceptable to disagree, to have different points of view, and to express their opinions. You can reinforce this attitude by encouraging respect for different views rather than insisting on total agreement.

Foster Group Cohesion; Feelings of belonging take time to develop. You, as a facilitator, can foster these feelings through group activities that help group members get to know each other.

4.13 Techniques for Group Facilitation

Group Discussion
To facilitate group interaction, name the person speaking in order to focus the group's attention on him or her. Help the group to make connections. When someone speaks, point out similarities, differences, and connections with the topic under discussion. Help the participants to think logically. This will assist them in making objective decisions. When a decision has been reached, you should summarise what has been agreed and make sure everyone in the group is aware of what has been decided.

Questioning
Questioning is the facilitator's primary tool. Through the skillful use of questions, session objectives can be achieved while still preserving the facilitator's objectivity. Your presence or this resource pack will not provide all the answers. You will however encourage the search for answers by encouraging people to focus on an issue and arrive at their own conclusions. There are a number of different types of questions that can be used, each having its own purpose and application.

Overhead Question: This type of question is posed by the facilitator to the whole group. As a number of answers may be possible, the facilitator should be prepared to repeat the question or ask other prompting questions.

Use an overhead question; Examples

To open discussion to the presentation "What are your reactions to?"
To give everyone a chance to speak "Why else might that be important?"

Direct Question: This question is posed by the facilitator to a specific person, often preceded by the person's name.

Use a direct question; Examples

To call on a person for suggestions "Ann, what information do you have?"
To involve someone who has not "John, what do you think about this?"

Relay Question: The question initially posed by one individual to the facilitator is relayed to another individual or to the whole group by the facilitator..

Use a relay question; Examples

To help the facilitator avoid giving the answer "How do the rest of you feel his/her own opinion about Mary's question?"
To get others involved in "Liam, would you care to comment on Joan's question?"

Reverse/Return Question: These questions are referred by the facilitator back to the same participant who asked the question. Reverse/return questions should not be used to hide the fact that you don't know the answer to what is being asked. If you don't know, say so, and refer the question to the group to *see* if any participant knows. Reverse/Return questions can be very frustrating for a group if they are continually used by a facilitator and they can give the impression that the facilitator knows very little if they are used as a means of dealing with direct questions about a specific topic.

Use a Return Question; Examples

To help the facilitator avoid giving his/her own opinion "Well, Pat, what do you think?"
To encourage questioner to think for his/herself "Kate, what has your experience been?"

Acknowledging Responses
There are five basic techniques you can use for acknowledging responses. Choose the technique that is appropriate to the circumstances you are dealing with. Always use Neutral words

- React in a noncommittal way
- Explore Ask questions: Gather additional information
- Restate all or part
- Reflect back to the person
- Summarise

4.14 Difficulties And How To Cope With Them

Age Difference.
In a community group, you could have people aged from 20-90 - that's a difference of 70 years. They cannot be expected to have the same priorities or the same point of view. Capitalise on this by discussing diverging views and seeking to promote understanding by linking similarities, differences, values, and experiences. Exploiting the potential for different age groups to learn from each other will bring a richness to the overall group.

Punctuality
Starting and finishing times should be agreed for all meetings/sessions. At the first meeting, stress the importance of attending all sessions on time. Delaying start and ending times can generate hostility and a lack of group cohesion.

Structure your sessions to give some leeway for people arriving late. Begin your session with an introduction. In this way people who are up to five/ten minutes late will not actually have missed anything important. Do not start to repeat material you have already covered for the benefit of latecomers. This is very irritating for the people who have arrived on time, particularly if there are a number of latecomers and each of them is accommodated by repeating material for them.

Alienation
Some members may feel that they don't belong and they are consequently likely to leave the group physically or mentally. You can bridge that gap and strengthen feelings of inclusion by words and actions, such as, calling the person by name, talking to them personally before and after the session. Try to identify similar experiences or other commonalties that this person may have with other group members.

Monopolisers
Groups may become accustomed to relying on one or two individuals to do most of the talking. While a group may, at first, welcome someone who expresses their opinion frequently, this may eventually lead to this person monopolising the group. The group may become resentful of this behaviour. Remind the whole group that each member needs to be heard. Body language can be used to indicate that the opinion of people present. Use group techniques to involve others. If this doesn't work consider taking with the individual privately, perhaps the chairperson of the group could initiate a general discussion with this person on how the group is functioning. The chairperson could use this opportunity to express his/her concern that some members of the group do not seem to express their opinion as freely as others and perhaps this particular person would assist the chairperson in creating the opportunities for quieter people to speak out.

Please remember that monopolisers are members of the particular group you are working with, they may be friends or neighbours of others in the group, therefore it is important to handle the situation with diplomacy.

Silent Members
Some people fear speaking out in a large group. Invite the participants to talk by calling on them in sequence a few times. Without making an issue of it, you may want to find out whether the silent person feels included and whether he or she is benefiting from the discussions. If the answer is yes, drop the issue.

Hostility
This may stem from a sense of frustration over content, time-keeping, house-keeping (noise, temperature,

etc.), personality conflicts, prejudices, or rivalry. Speak privately with the individual. An opportunity to be heard may re1ieve the hostility. In the group, encourage open-mindedness and tolerance.

Dependency
It is important to strike a balance with groups to ensure that your role as a facilitator does not cultivate a sense of dependency on you. Try to avoid doing things for a group, rather perform an advisory and resource role.

End of Unit 4

Unit 5: What Is Leadership In Local Development?

5.1 Introduction

Leadership is a skill that comes naturally to some. However, it is also a skill that can be developed. Leadership skills are required in many diverse situations and they involve the ability to take initiative, influence the behaviour of others, identify solutions to problems and motivate people to undertake particular courses of action.

Many people assume that people are born with leadership skills. However, as H. Dimock points out leadership is seen as a function of a situation; people may be effective leaders in one situation but not in another.

Within community groups it is important that there is an emphasis on fostering collective leadership, that each member has the opportunity to bring their skills to bear in a problem-solving situation. This is because community development, with its emphasis on participation, is concerned with the empowerment of all involved. A situation whereby a group is reliant on a leader, fosters dependency within the group and is inimitable to the process of capacity-building.

The following qualities are sometimes regarded as factors in leadership:

Charisma, knowledge, wisdom, experience of achieving change, good communication skills, 'in touch', strong commitment and motivation, ability to inspire respect, trust and loyalty, sense of fairness, objectivity, strategic thinking.

5.2 Styles Of Leadership

The style of leadership adopted in a group depends, to an extent, on the type of group it is. Different groups come together to fulfil different needs and the style of leadership may vary depending on these needs. For example, a tutor on a training programme will have a clearly defined leadership role. The tutor's role is to provide training and ensure group participation in this process. The tutor is appointed and a certain degree of automatic authority comes with the position. This type of leader usually works with a group for a specific purpose and time. He or she leaves the group without affecting its dynamics.

If a group is left to itself, it is likely to generate leaders of its own. Often it will not have a formal leader; instead leadership will move from one person to another as the needs of the group change. Very often the leader will be the group member who can best deal with problems posed by the immediate situation. This Unit focuses mainly on the issue of leadership within groups.

5.2.1 Leadership Roles

Leadership roles are not fixed. They can vary over time and in reaction to particular situations. The following is an outline of some leadership styles. You need to consider these styles to understand how leadership style affects the dynamics of a group.

Laissez-faire
Laissez-faire leaders participate very little. Group members are generally left to function or flounder, with little input from leaders. Group members seldom function well under a laissez-faire style. This style is effective only when the members are committed to a course of action and have the resources to implement it. For example laissez-faire leadership may work well in a college department in which the faculty members are competent, conscientious and responsible and have the resources to meet their objectives.

Authoritarian
Authoritarian leadership is ideally employed only in a crisis, when there is a major task to be undertaken in a short time. An authoritarian leader will usually make a decision for the group and announce it. There is little or no time allowed for group consultation. At best, this type of leader will present a decision and invite clarification or comments.

Consultative
Consultative leadership, the leader presents a particular situation or objective to the group and invites comment, clarification and input. However, the leader holds the final decision making power. This type of leadership involves much interaction and consultation with group members. The leader can often be called upon to exercise power where a group does not wish or is unable, to come to a final decision on its own.

Enabling
An enabling leader facilitates a group to make its own decisions and find solutions to its problems. This leader, if required at all, will aid the group in working through the process of coming to a decision. However, the responsibility for making the decisions will rest with the group itself.

Shared
Different leadership styles are demanded by different groups in different situations. A shared leadership style can distribute the burden of responsibility. However, it takes time for a group to develop an effective way of sharing leadership. This can occur only when the group has built sense of trust and understanding between members.

A shared or collective leadership:

- *allows for skills, ideas, information and knowledge* to *be shared within* a *group.*
- *distributes the tasks more evenly,* so *that the workload does not just fall* on *one person or* on a *core group.*
- *recognises that* a *group may* go *through phases during which different capabilities may be more relevant or the group may set itself other priorities.*
- *tends* to *accommodate these changes more flexibly and allow for differences* of *opinion* to *be more openly expressed in decision-making.*

Within the life-cycle of the group, it is not always appropriate that a shared leadership culture exists. In the initial stages of a group, an appointed leader may need to take a directive role in order to help the group become established.
As members get to know one another, different members should gradually be encouraged to take more of the leadership role. The appointed leader takes responsibility mainly for those needs that no one else inn the group seems to be meeting. As the group members take more and more responsibility, the original leader can become less active.

5.3   The Role of Leadership in Groups

Leadership involves several different kinds of roles. All groups, whatever their purpose, rely on members and leaders performing the various kinds of roles satisfactorily.

Some authors suggest that there are (a) Task roles, (b) Maintenance roles, and (c) Miscellaneous roles that don't fall into either category.

(a) Task Roles

The task roles that a group leader has, are concerned with enabling the group to meet their aims and objectives, whether these are very straightforward or complex. You may think of the concept of a task role as helping the group to remain on track, to keep focused and to draw on the skills within the group so that the task is achieved in the best possible fashion.

In order to do this, there are certain roles that a group leader may adopt:

1. Information Provider*: The group leader gives and receives information and opinions and offers facts, ideas and suggestions. The leader tries to provide relevant information* so as *to help group discussion. Participants are asked to give their opinions and feelings and the leader tries to draw out what facts group members have to contribute to the overall task.*
2. Guidance and Direction: *The leader proposes goals and tasks to initiate action within the group and develops plans* on *how to proceed. The leader focuses attention* on *the task at hand and stimulates higher quality work from the group.*
3. Summarise progess so far: *The leader pulls together ideas* or *suggestions, re-stating and summarising the major issues which have been discussed and the various options which have been considered.*
4. Co-ordinate*: The leader may demonstrate the relationships among various ideas and help to harmonise the activities* of *various sub-groups and members.*
5. Tester: *The leader examines the practicality and workability* of *ideas and evaluates alternative solutions. Potential solutions are then applied to real situations to see how they work. The group leader will identify any sources* of *difficulties that the group may have in meeting its goals and compare group decisions and accomplishments with the group's standards and goals.*

(b) Maintenance Roles

Maintenance Roles are concerned with enabling the task to be achieved with a "good spirit", or energy. It is about allowing group members to interact positively, whilst working towards the task.

1. Encourage participation: *Every group member is encouraged to participate. Recognition for contribution is given by the group leader. A group leader will demonstrate acceptance and openness to the ideas of others.*
2. Harmonise: *A group leader will persuade members to constructively analyse their opinions and search for common elements in conflicts and try to reconcile disagreements. A leader will show good communication skills and ensure each member understands what the others are saying and will also evaluate the emotional climate to learn how members feel about the way the group is working.*
3. Relieve: *A group leader may ease tension and increase the enjoyment of group membership by joking, suggesting breaks and proposing fun approaches to the group's work.*
4. Set Standard: *A group leader will express group standards and goals to make members aware of the direction of the work and the progress being made.*
5. *Active* Listener: *A group leader listens and serves as an interested audience for other members and is receptive to the ideas of others.*
6. Trust *Builder: A group leader will accept and support openness of other group members and will reinforce risk-taking and encourage individuality.*

(c) Miscellaneous Roles

A leader may also have a great deal of power and control within a group, deciding what will happen and how it will happen. Sometimes this may be positive, helping to give a group direction and focus, but at other times this may be quite disempowering for the group, serving to reinforce dependency.
The following is a list of roles which a leader may adopt:

- *Ideologist:* - Serves as the source of group beliefs and values.
- *Scapegoat:* - Serves as the target for members' frustrations and disappointments.
- *Expert:* - Offers ready sources of information and skills.
- *External* group *representative:* - Serves as official spokesperson.
- *Controller* of *internal relations:* - Controls the group's structure and in-group relations.
- *Purveyor of rewards and punishments:* - Promotes demotes and assigns pleasant or unpleasant tasks.
- *Arbiter and mediator:* - Acts as both judge and conciliator. The leader has the power to reduce or increase factionalism within the group.
- *Exemplar:* - Serves as a model of behaviour for the other members.
- *Policy -maker:* - Establishes group goals and policies.

Planner: - Decides the means by which the group shall achieve its goals

5.4   Leadership Skills

There is a wide range of roles that a leader may need to adopt. To be an effective leader, a range of skills are required which include the following:

(a) Listening
Active listening skills are important for a group leader. Active listening involves listening to the content, voice, and body language of the person speaking. A group leader will let the speaker know that he/she is listening. The skilled leader actually tries to listen to all the group members at the same time and not just to the one who is talking. It is necessary to be aware of what members are feeling and thinking even when they are not speaking and to try to pick up on silent messages. Active listening also involves scanning the room for non-verbal gestures that suggest how people are feeling.

(b) Reflection
Reflection involves restating what a speaker has said in different words. The purpose of reflecting is twofold. Firstly, it helps the speaker to become more aware of what he or she is saying. Secondly, it lets the speaker know that the group leader is aware of how he or she is feeling.

A group leader will use reflection with individual members and also at times reflect what two or more members may be saying about a topic or issue. In summary, the use of reflection clarifies and deepens members' understanding and communicates that the leader is in tune with what is happening.

(c) Clarification
Often, it is necessary to help members clarify their statements. Reflection is one technique for achieving this, but carefully chosen questions can also help. Clarification may be done for the benefit of the entire group or for the member's own benefit. The skill of clarification is important for ensuring clear communication. Confusing messages create frustration and drain energy if they are not adequately clarified.

(d) Summarising
The skill of summarising is essential for all group leaders. Groups often generate material from a range of viewpoints. Because members are busy listening and talking during the meeting, they often do not pick up on or remember many of the details. A summary is useful in making a transition from one topic to another. It can highlight the key points in the discussion and may serve as a bridge to the next activity. It is especially important if the discussion covered a wide range of points or ideas. A good summary will pull the major points together and can serve to sharpen the focus of the members of the group.

(e) Mini-lecturing and Information giving
There will be times when the leader will need or want to give information to the group. It should be short, relevant, interesting and energising. Information should be current, correct, and objectively delivered.

(f) Encouraging and Supporting
This skill of encouraging and supporting is especially important in helping members deal with the anxiety of being in a new group and in sharing their thoughts and ideas with others. Members are often concerned that they will say something wrong or stupid. The leader's encouragement and support can help members overcome their fear. It can help them to take risks that they otherwise might not take.

(g) Tone Setting
The establishment of mood is subtle but crucial to the atmosphere of a group. Some leaders are not aware of the tone-setting dimension of group leading and thus, without realising it, set an unnecessarily serious tone. Others, wanting to be liked, set an overly light tone and end up frustrated because no one seems committed to the group. It is important to realise that the leader sets the tone by words and actions, and by what he/she allows to happen. If the leader encourages sharing, for example, then a more positive atmosphere is established.

5.5   Facilitator or Animator?

In local development work, the group leader can be either a *facilitator* or an *animator.* A facilitator is one who makes it easier for the group to discuss and plan fruitfully. An animator is one who brings the group to life.

Facilitator

A facilitator provides a process to help group members discuss what they wish in the most satisfactory and productive way. To be a successful facilitator, the process of getting participants involved should be the priority task. It should even take precedence over the content.

Facilitators must demonstrate neutrality about the content of the meeting and have no stake in the decisions themselves. The facilitator's responsibility is to ensure that there is communication in the group and that all the members are satisfied with, and fully committed to, the decisions taken.

The facilitator who comes from outside a community may well challenge a group about the implications and consequences of their plans, but ultimately, the group should own its plan, and not follow ideas from outside.

Animator

The term animator has gained in currency in recent years, especially in the context of bottom-up, or locally instigated development. Basically, an animator acts as a catalyst in a local area, stimulating local initiative, providing information and facilitating linkages between local *efforts* and external support systems.

Animators are particularly important at the pre-development stage of local mobilisation. They help to focus generalised discontent into constructive action. They empower local people to negotiate with external agencies, to identify and foster local leadership through specifying training needs and to generally motivate entrepreneurs and community groups.

They can therefore assist a community group to discover and use all its potential for creative and constructive teamwork. Animators stimulate people to think critically, to identify problems and to find new solutions. They provide a process in which people can share their concerns, information and opinions, set goals, make decisions and plan. When the process gets stuck the animator needs to identify the problem and to enable the group to understand and deal with it constructively.

Groups and Staff; Working Together?

5.6   Introduction

In this Unit, we look at some issues concerning *voluntary* and *professional* work within the field of local development. In Ireland, local development work has traditionally been viewed as a voluntary activity. However, the number of professionals in development work has grown in recent years. Funding to employ full-time development workers has become more readily available through various statutory and European programmes to support locally based development.

5.6.1   Voluntary Groups and Full Time Workers

Local development work requires knowledge, skills and resources. In the light of this, many groups, including those with only limited funding, employ full-time development workers. These trained and experienced workers can assist the group in achieving its aims and objectives.

However, the decision to employ a full-time development worker may have implications for the group. It raises a number of issues in relation to group development. It heightens the need for training amongst voluntary members, to allow them to contribute in a meaningful way.

It can also give rise to other tensions. For example, in a community with high unemployment, it may be a difficult decision to appoint a person from outside the community to one of the few jobs available. On the other hand, the job requires skills and experience that may not be available locally. There are complex issues to be tackled. Funding agencies demand certain results and professional reports. For these and other reasons, it may be appropriate to appoint a non-local full-time worker.

5.6.2   Voluntary Work in Local Development

In Ireland, volunteerism has traditionally been a strongly held principle in local development. It is accepted that members of the community undertake socially useful work without payment.

Mass unemployment has impacted on all aspects of Irish life and this is also evident in the practice of locally based development. In disadvantaged communities today, particularly in urban settings and increasingly in rural ones, local activists tend to be unemployed or on low incomes. This differs from the past, when employed people on a voluntary basis carried out most work in their spare time.

Collective local action requires a vast amount of unpaid work on the part of local residents. Local activists get involved in forming management committees, negotiating funds, setting up limited companies and employing full-time staff. Many volunteers are involved at management level in projects. The responsibilities of management include policy development, financial accountability and supervision of work. These activities require time, work and expenses. In addition to management responsibilities, voluntary community involvement can involve local people in long hours of work at various other tasks, such as delivering the services of the project, fund-raising and so forth.

Intensive involvement in a project over a period of time can create problems for volunteers, as they usually have other commitments. For example, in addition to being involved in a local project many volunteers carry family and home responsibilities. Volunteers are often required to represent their project in the local area. They may be required to attend meetings, participate in training courses and to deal with issues arising from projects. As well as demanding time and commitment, such activities often also involve the volunteer in hidden expenses. Volunteering costs money. For unemployed people, expenses for child minding, travel and meals can place an excessive burden on already inadequate incomes. It is necessary to acknowledge the financial and personal demands on volunteers.

5.6.3 Unpaid to Paid Work

Involvement in development work may give a person a sense of worth and status. However, the benefits of unpaid work do not feed a family. While volunteers who have other sources of income may be happy to give their time and energy to a project, for those who are unemployed, getting a job is a priority.

Many people with a record of voluntary service and development skills expect that they will be considered for jobs which become available. However, they may find themselves up against serious obstacles. They may find that years of experience do not qualify them in any formal sense. Moreover, lack of experience outside the immediate area may be a drawback when projects are intended to tackle broad social and economic issues.

In recent years, training programmes have been developed to become primarily geared to local activists. They provide an important route to obtaining a qualification for people with experience. Locally-based projects are ideally placed to build up the skills and qualifications of voluntary workers by identifying appropriate training courses in which volunteers may participate.

5.7   Training for Group Members

The process of local development is enhanced when members have a broad range of specific skills. It is likely that all participants in a project can benefit from some training. Local

Development work involves many different skills. Rather than assume that the necessary skills exist within a group, it is advisable to adopt a training strategy to develop them.

All groups require management skills. Managing a development project is a complex task. It involves policy development and programme planning. For groups that employ a development worker, the management committee must set out guidelines within which the development worker and the group operate. It must raise funds and monitor the finances. It must control the overall direction of the group. Effective management committees are essential in order to maintain community control and to direct group development projects. The management committee will often need to negotiate and liaise with national or European agencies. Management committees need the ability to understand and respond to the complicated legal contracts, terms of reference and language used by these agencies. (Kelleher & Whelan, 1992 p.74).

In truth, however, many locally-based groups have few management skills or resources. Many do not work to a plan. Their funding may be on an ad-hoc basis and thus counteract a long- term vision. The majority of groups have no financial base or budget. They work mainly on a day-to-day programme as opposed to a strategic plan of action.

Group members also need to acquire knowledge of the more technical issues which affect their lives. Among the skills and knowledge they require are the following:

- *Knowledge* of *personal, work and welfare rights.*

- *Specialist knowledge* on *particular aspects* of *social problems and issues in the community.*

- *Knowledge* of *legislation and conventions that impinge* on *the work* of *the group.*

- *Knowledge* of *the resources that exist within the neighbourhood and in the wider community.*

- *Knowledge* of *political processes and* of *the workings* of *private and public bureaucracies.*

- *How to contribute to tribunals and public inquiries.*

- *The roles* of *various specialists in the community, such* as *planners, health inspectors, development workers and solicitors.*

- *Interactional skills and knowledge. It is important that the group is able to manage its relationships with other groups, politicians, private and public industries, funding agencies and* so *on. Members need to have particular skills in representing and negotiating. They also need to be able to carry out tasks and to evaluate the results.* (Thomas, 1983 p.133).

5.8   Need for Development Workers

With proper training, the contribution of local activists can be greatly enhanced. However, groups often need professional development workers in order to proceed beyond a particular stage.

In order to facilitate groups in the development process, development workers require specific skills to run the group. Ideally, they need to know how decision-making within groups occurs, and they need to be capable of intervening in such a way as to assist group development.

They also need a good grasp of how local and central government operates in practice. It is desirable that workers know how to get the best value out of bureaucratic institutions. It is very beneficial if they are familiar with a wide range of social legislation. It is also important that workers are able to pass all this knowledge and experience on, so that groups they assist can operate as effectively as possible without outside direction. (Symons, 1981, p.207)

By examining the wide range of skills necessary to undertake local development, a picture emerges of the way in which a development worker can affect groups by virtue of the application of such skills.

5.8.1   The Professional Development Worker

A central theme of local development is the establishment of local ownership and control development initiatives. This objective remains constant whether the community itself initiates the project or whether it is facilitated to do so by outside intervention. While groups can and do initiate local action solely as a result of their own efforts, this action frequently tends to be limited and short-term in nature. Effective development usually requires some form of external input, in terms of either financial support or assistance.

What is the role of the full time worker in locally-based development? To answer this question it is necessary to begin by first examining the various roles that a development worker may adopt in working with a group. One may then look at key elements of the development worker's role in relation to group development. Finally, one then considers the roles a development worker may undertake on behalf of a group in furthering the development process.

5.8.2   Working in Conjunction with a Locally-Based Group

There are a number of different ways in which a development worker can work with a locally-based group. The worker may act as a facilitator or catalyst, play a non-directive or a directive role or he/she may act as an advocate for the group.

Facilitator or Catalyst

The role of the full-time development worker in locally-based development is often described as that of enabler or facilitator. This means that the development worker enables the group to articulate a desired state of affairs and then works with the group to achieve this end. Decisions are made by the group and the development worker creates suitable conditions to allow for informed and effective action.

Murray Ross (1967) outlines the way in which the development worker facilitates group development:

"As an enabler the worker seeks to facilitate the community process through listening and questioning; through identifying with, and in turn being the object of identification for, group leaders in the community; and

by giving consistent encouragement and support to indigenous people striving with common problems"
(Ross, 1967, p.147)

A development worker therefore does not lead; rather he or she facilitates local efforts. Rather than providing answers, he/she asks questions that stimulate insight. The worker does not carry the burden of responsibility for organisation and action in the community. Instead, he or she provides encouragement and support for those who do.

The worker helps the group to clarify its own objectives, to identify its goals and to take action to achieve them. Ideally, throughout the process the worker maintains a low-profile approach, encouraging rather than challenging, offering advice rather than leadership.

Development workers are not, strictly speaking, leaders. They can, however, be catalysts by enabling people in a particular community to identify, clarify, and implement their own goals. The aim is to bring about the maximum involvement of the group in solving the problems that concern it. It is important that the worker can assess the group's needs in the different stages of its development process so as to help the participants to fill the roles and learn the skills necessary to achieve their goals.

Non-Directive Role

Many people claim that the role of a development worker is NON-DIRECTIVE. If a development worker adopts a non-directive role, the relationship between him/her and the group is based on the principle of working *with* rather than *for.* It involves sharing skills, knowledge and experience in a form with which people can relate.

This relationship was first described by Battens (1967) as the non-directive approach and it is widely advocated in the practice of development work. According to Battens, the essence of non-directiveness is:

"to create sufficiently favourable conditions for successful group action without in any way infringing group autonomy either by making decisions for the group or by doing for its members anything that they could reasonably be expected to do or learn to do for themselves." (Battens, 1967 p 13)

The key characteristic of the non-directive role is the ability to give people the opportunity to make their own decisions and develop their own plans and objectives. This is achieved by:

- *Trying to strengthen the incentives people have for acting together.*
- *Providing information about how other groups have organised.*
- *Helping people systematically to think through the problems they wish to deal with.*
- *Suggesting sources of any needed material help and technical advice.*
- *Helping to resolve any interpersonal difficulties between group members.*

Thus, the non-directive approach encourages the group to question, to decide and ultimately to think, by "structuring, enlarging and systematising the thinking process of the group." (Batten, 1967 pl47).

Directive Role
Radford, however, presents another view of the worker's role. He is critical of the non-directive approach on the grounds that it indoctrinates development workers with the belief that their role in development work at all times and in all situations, should be non-directive. By doing so it:

"was sending workers into the community with an absolute determination not to provide leadership, even where that was clearly what was needed and missing." (Radford, 1978)

Radford suggested that in some communities the development worker may be seen as an expert and therefore expected to play a directive role in promoting change. By adopting such a role, the development worker would in effect become "leader" and as a result would be expected to act accordingly. Rothman (1969) describes three degrees of directiveness:
1, Channeling,
2, Funneling and

3, Scanning.

Channeling: This is a strongly directive approach. If a development worker adopts this approach, they assert a particular point of view, and support it with argument and documentation. Thinking is channeled directly towards a given goal by the development worker.

Funneling: This is considerably directive, though less so than channeling. In this case, a range of possible choices are outlined by the development worker. The development worker subtly funnels thinking in a given direction by asserting his/her preferred goal, and the rationale for this preference.

Scanning: This is mildly directive. The range of possibilities related to solving a particular problem are scanned. They are presented to the group impartially and on the basis of parity. The worker then provides an orientation to goal selection and sets out the boundaries within which possible rational goal selection may take place. (Rothman, 1969 p.92)

Each of the above approaches is a clear alternative to a non-directive approach. According to Radford, non-directiveness can be interpreted in many situations as a gross betrayal. He insists that it is just one technique among many, to be used where appropriate.

Having said this, it would appear that many development workers prefer the non-directive approach. Whatever approach is adopted, the role is interventionist. Development workers are not detached onlookers. It is important that workers show that they understand the groups problems. In addition it is important that development workers give encouragement at appropriate times.

5.9   The Development Worker as Group Advocate

Development workers are called to play many different roles in the practice of locally-based development. Some roles are within the group itself and some involve transactions between the group and other organisations or agencies. The development worker, as a result, may undertake specific roles on behalf of a community group. Two roles that the development worker may adopt on behalf of the group are those of (a) Negotiator and (b) Representative.

(a) Negotiator
A development worker may be called on to negotiate with agencies and organisations on behalf of a group. For example, he or she may be required to negotiate with local government, national government or with representatives of the European Union. In this context, the role of the development worker is to act as mediator or broker, between the community and the bureaucracies.

There are several reasons why a development worker may practise such a role:

- It helps to establish greater recognition and credibility for a group and project.
- It ensures a community contribution to decision-making which affects the locality.
- It helps a group gain access to resources.
- It can be a way of mediating where delays have disrupted group plans or project schedules due to factors outside the group's control.

Henderson and Thomas in "Readings and Community Work" claim that the development worker's role in interfacing between a group and other formal organisations is that of broker, mediator, advocate, negotiator or bargainer. These labels imply a large degree of autonomy and activism on the part of the development worker. However, they emphasise that the nature of these "interface roles" does not determine or predict the roles the development worker plays within the group situation:

"*The worker may, of course, take or be given more of a leadership role at the interface but remain within the bounds of non-directiveness with (his or her) transactions with local people.*"
(Henderson and Thomas. 1981 p.148)

Although many development workers take on the role of go-between or broker, particularly when dealing with powerful agencies such as local authorities, it is a role that is rarely openly acknowledged. This is

because of the view that development workers should enable people to speak for themselves. They should not allow themselves to become, or be seen as, spokespeople or leaders for the community.

Such a rigid stance, however, while underlining the importance of generating local leadership, neglects consideration of the needs and capacity of the group to deal with the situation at hand.

This leads back to the debate as to whether or not a development worker should adopt a directive or non-directive approach. Ultimately, it would appear that this is a decision which the development worker must make based on the circumstances involved, the wishes of the group, its ability to deal with the task and its stage of development.

(b) Representative
Describing the development worker as a Representative of the group offers an alternative of the development worker's role. A. K. Rice (1965) presents three types of representation all of which outline the development worker's autonomy in his/her dealings other parties, which include:

1. Observer/ Recorder
   "Here the worker's job consists solely of *observer and the taking* of *notes* of *what occurs. The neighbourhood group has not given him (sic) the mandate to express any views or intervene in the discussion. His (sic) presence may also be a support to the group and an unsettling factor to the other side."*

2. Delegate
   "In this role, the development worker is given a set piece to say, either at some agreed point in the transactions or at his discretion. For example, the worker might be asked by the group to present the statistical side of *the case it is making to decision-makers, and it is understood that the worker will* confine *his (sic) contribution to giving this information.* He *(sic) has* no *authority to* go *outside this brief:"*

3. Plenipotentiary
   "In this role, it is only the pre-determined goals and policies of *the group that provide limits* on *the negotiating power* of *the development worker in transactions with other systems.* He *(sic), and perhaps the group members, are given a flexible and open-ended mandate to contribute to the discussion as he (sic) thinks fit."* (Rice, 1965 p 148-149)

The various roles outlined here show the range of functions a development worker can perform for a group. They also underline the need for the development worker and the group to clarify the issue of roles.

5.10. Role Clarification

While development workers in Ireland are usually employed directly by a group, the funding is frequently provided by a development agency. The development worker, while accountable to the group, may also feel some allegiance to the funder.

The need for role clarification is most clearly illustrated in relation to a development worker's status as an agency employee. In this case the development worker must manage the roles of both group worker and employee. Local groups need to recognise that the development worker is accountable, not only to the local group, but also to the agency. With this dual accountability comes a certain amount of tension.

By making explicit these different roles, members avoid seeing the development worker as simply another group member. They recognise the constraints within which the development worker operates. They come to realise that there are times when a development worker may, either intentionally or unintentionally, try to impose the agenda or ideology of his or her agency.

This realisation increases the awareness within the group that other forces may attempt to influence its development. The group comes to realise that it must read a situation carefully prior to making a decision. Otherwise there may be a risk that the group will take a direction other than the one it wishes to follow. By

openly discussing the demands of the development worker's role in relation to group and agency however, it may also be possible to establish procedures to assist the group and the development worker concerned to manage the roles effectively.

The over-riding interest of a development worker and the agency ought to be the long-term development of a community. Yet, all parties should be aware of the conflict of interests that may occur. Role clarification helps to address this problem.

For groups that directly employ full-time development workers the issue of role clarification is equally important. This point is particularly emphasised by Savil (1981). Whilst arguing that community groups should employ development workers, he pointedly raises the whole issue of worker accountability. He claims that trained and articulate development workers can manipulate and direct groups. He suggests:

"They may do so *for a variety* of reasons such *as their personal motivation,* ideology, *shortage* of *time available,* or *as a strategy for achieving objectives. Furthermore,* they *may feel* that to *direct* the *group* is the best *service* they can *provide* in the *circumstances."* (Savil. 1981 p.204).

He claims, however, that this may damage group development rather than enhance it. Although most development workers do not act in this way, it is a problem that locally based groups should be aware of.

End of Unit 5

Conclusion of Module 4