Group building

Duration of this Session: 4 hours

Session Objectives

The objectives of this Session are:

❑ To introduce the concept of group formation and stages of the process, and discuss factors that might facilitate or hinder the group process.

❑ To identify types of group conflict that youth could face and the underlying causes.

❑ To develop an understanding of how intergroup conflict could be resolved.

List of Handouts

TOPIC 1: Stages of group formation

Duration of topic: 60 minutes

Activity 1 for this topic

This topic will be introduced through an exercise on group formation. The facilitator will distribute to each participant a small piece of paper inscribed with an animal (for example, a dog, cat, horse or bird). The participants will be asked to silently act out the physical characteristics of their animal. Participants then move around the training space and form groups with individuals who have chosen the same kind of animal (for example, all animals that can fly, such as birds and bats). (10 minutes)

Materials

Small pieces of paper, markers

Activity 2 for this topic

Step 1:   The facilitator will ask participants to form four random groups. Each groups will be assigned a specific stage of life development to discuss (childhood, adolescence, young adulthood and adulthood). (30 minutes)

Step 2:   Participants will be asked to share their own experience and observations of each stage of life development. They will answer the following questions:

1.   What activities did you commonly engage in when you were a child, an adolescent or young adult?

2.   What activities do adults commonly participate in?

Step 3:   Group outputs will be presented in turn, and the facilitator will take note of the main points.

Inputs for this topic

The facilitator will process the first activity by asking a set of questions (see Facilitator's notes). This will be followed by a discussion on why youth form groups, what types of groups they form and join (both formal and informal) and how youth tend to be stereotyped as a "group". Refer to Handouts 7-1 and 7-2. (20 minutes)

Facilitator's notes

Guidelines for activity 1

To facilitate discussion after the activity, the facilitator may ask the following questions:

1. How did you feel during the exercise?
2. How easy or difficult was it for you to locate your group-mates?
3. What brought you together as a group?
4. How did you feel when you finally found your group-mates?
5. Was there tension in the group? Why was there tension? Or, why was tension absent?

Guidelines for activity 2

The facilitator compares and contrasts the stages of life development and those of group formation/development. S/he emphasizes the following:

- That group formation mimics the stages/processes of life development.
- That for each stage of group development, there is a corresponding stage of life development.

Stages of Group Formation

Stage	Stages of Life Development	Main Feature	Stages of Group Formation
I	Childhood	Dependency	Dependency and inclusion/Forming
II	Adolescent	Some conflict	Counter-dependency and fighting/Storming
III	Young adult	Relationships and working life	Trust and structure/Norming
IV	Adult	Work	Work and productivity/Performing

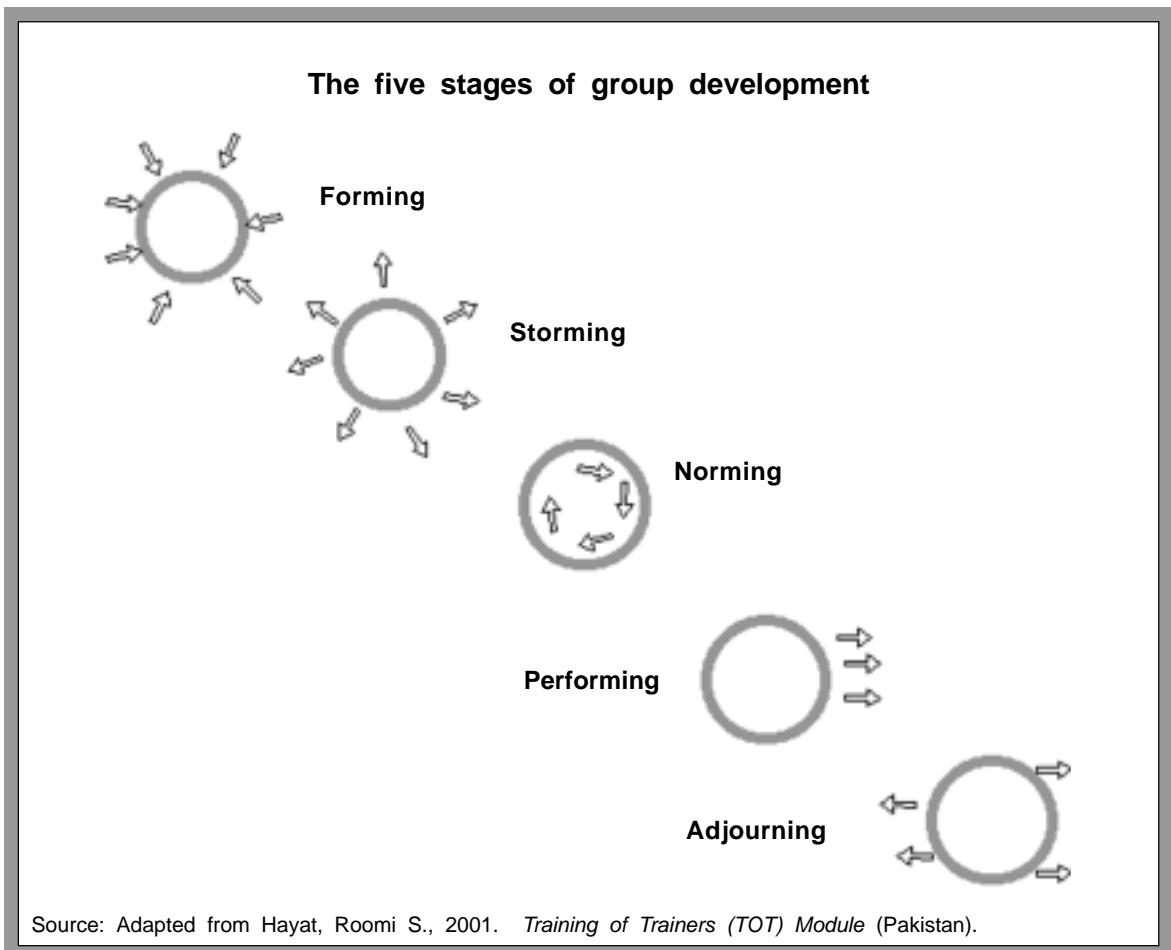| Characteristics	Stage of Group Formation			
	I	II	III	IV
1. Clarity of values, goals, roles, tasks	Not evident	Low	High	High
2. Level of conformity	High	Low	High	High
3. Leadership style	Directing	Directing	Consulting	Delegating
4. Conflict	Not evident	High	Frequent but manageable	Frequent but brief
5. Conflict management	No need	Begins	High	High
6. Cooperation of members	High	Low	High	High
7. Trust	High	Low	High	High
8. Group's reaction to presence of subgroups	Not evident	Intolerance	Tolerance	Integrated into group

HANDOUT 7-1:   Concept of group and stages of group formation

A group is composed of two or more individuals who interact and influence each other. Group members may belong to one or more groups.

Various studies have revealed that the behaviour of individuals changes when the concerned individual becomes part of a team or group. A group experiences a re-enforcement of ideas and beliefs and the successful achievement of goals.

In 1965, Tuckman identified four stages of group development. These stages were later modified and an additional fifth stage was added. The group behaves in a cyclical manner, and any imbalance (internal or external) may cause a team to fall back to an earlier position. The five stages of forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning are illustrated below.

The five stages of group development

Forming

Storming

Norming

Performing

Adjourning

Source: Adapted from Hayat, Roomi S., 2001. *Training of Trainers (TOT) Module* (Pakistan).

The duration of a stage varies according to different variables. Sometimes, the fourth stage of *performing* is achieved during the first or second meeting. In other situations, it may take months to reach this stage. A youth leader who develops a clear understanding of the different stages can prevent unnecessary disruption during normal development of each stage.

Stage 1:   Forming

Forming is the first stage of group formation. Throughout this stage, members keep a low profile and hesitate to express themselves openly and assertively. During this stage, there is a transition from individual to member status.

When members in a group come together, some members may know other members and some may not. Each member should be encouraged to come forward to interact with the others. In this stage, rules concerning how the group will function are formulated so that objectives agreed upon by the group may be achieved.

The group should encourage all members to contribute suggestions on how they will work together. The duration of this stage is not fixed and depends a great deal on the members' progress. During the forming stage, the team leader's guidance is tested formally and informally. The team leader acts as an observer and monitors the progress of individual members.

Stage 2:   Storming

Storming is the second stage of group formation and often the most difficult. In this stage, group members begin to express themselves. This may bring to the surface conflicting ideas and opinions. Individual goals and agendas emerge, and members may express unhappiness about their respective roles in the team/workplace. Team members begin to realize how much work lies ahead, and some may become nervous. Storming may produce a period that tests the group. While not much work is achieved during this stage, team members begin to understand each other.

In order to cope with the situation at this stage, the team leader must be firm, yet flexible. The first attempts to diffuse hostility and encourage positive attitudes and behaviours towards one another should be made at this juncture.

Stage 3:   Norming

During this stage, team members accept the team and team ground rules (norms), their role in the team and the roles of other team members. Team members become accustomed to working together, and their initial resistance fades. They begin to collaborate rather than compete with one another. In the norming stage, team members express criticisms constructively and ground rules are confirmed. There is a feeling of team cohesion, and sense of common spirit.

The team leader now sets a tone that allows for constructive criticism and the development of a plan of activities. Members start to spend time working on the activity plan.

Stage 4:   Performing

At this stage, the team has developed its dynamic and defined its expectations. It can now begin performing. Team members have accepted each other's strengths and weaknesses and can start moving forward together.

The team leader is now leading an effective and cohesive team. The achievement of this stage can be identified by the significant amount of work being produced.

Stage 5:   Adjourning

The adjourning stage occurs when a team ceases to exist. Ideally, a task has been completed, and the function of the team is no longer required.

HANDOUT 7-2:   Factors influencing group processes and intragroup relationships

Six basic concepts necessary to understanding group processes are as follows: group size; stages of group development; roles; norms; communication; and cohesion (Huges 1999).

Group Size

As groups become larger, cliques are more likely to develop. Cliques are subgroups of individuals who often share the same goals, values and expectations. As cliques generally wield more influence than individual members, they are likely to exert considerable influence on the larger group. Many intragroup conflicts are the result of cliques clashing on their different values, goals and expectations.

Developmental Stages of Groups

Refer to Handout 7-1 on Tuckman's Stages of Group Development.

Group Roles

Group roles are the sets of expected behaviours associated with particular jobs or positions.

Task and Relationship Roles in Groups (Benne 1998)

Task Roles

Initiating: Defining the problem, suggesting activities, assigning tasks.

Information-seeking: Asking questions, seeking relevant data or views.

Information-sharing: Providing data, offering opinions.

Summarizing: Reviewing and integrating others' viewpoints, checking for common understanding and readiness for action.

Evaluating: Assessing the validity of assumptions, quality of information, reasonableness or recommendations.

Guiding: Keeping the group on track.

Relationship Roles

Harmonizing: Resolving interpersonal conflict, reducing tension.

Encouraging: Supporting and praising others, showing appreciation of the contributions of others, being warm and friendly.

Gate keeping: Assuring balanced participation by all group members, making sure that everyone has a chance to be heard and that no individual dominates.

Group Norms

Norms are the informal rules that groups adopt to regulate and regularize the behaviour of group members.

Group Cohesion

It is the sum of forces that attract members to a group, provide resistance to leaving it and motivates them to be active in it.

TOPIC 2: Identifying group conflict

Duration of topic: 60 minutes

Activity for this topic

The facilitator introduces the topic using the "tiger, elephant and mouse" game: (20 minutes)

Step 1:   The facilitator divides the participants into two teams. Each team is instructed to choose a leader and plan their strategy. Members choose to strike the pose of a tiger, elephant or mouse.

Step 2:   The tiger chases away the mouse, the elephant chases away the tiger and the mouse chases away the elephant. Actions are as follows: tiger (hands in claw position and makes the sound Grrr!), elephant (stoops over and swings arms together in a trunk) and mouse (hands on head and wiggles ears).

Inputs for this topic

The facilitator provides inputs on the meaning of, and reasons for, group conflict, the types of group conflict that youth may face and how those can be identified. Refer to Handout 7-3 and 7-4. (40 minutes)

Materials

Overhead projector

Facilitator's notes

In processing the activity, the facilitator may want to ask the following questions:

1. What were you thinking when you were planning your animal pose?

2. What makes one animal more powerful and stronger than another?

3. What facilitated or hindered effective group process?

4. What insights can you draw from this exercise?

Facilitator may emphasize the following points:

- That members of the same group are usually motivated by the same goal and interest (for instance, to win a game).

- That in order to achieve a group goal, the following should be considered:
  - Group has a clear sense of purpose.
  - Members work together as a team.
  - Strategies are carefully planned.
  - Time and resources (human and material) are important.

Group conflicts may refer to problems in human relationships and interaction caused by differences in any of the following:

- Values, goals, beliefs, ideas.
- Needs and fears.
- Procedures.
- Power distribution (age, gender, job, position/status).

HANDOUT 7-3: Defining group conflict
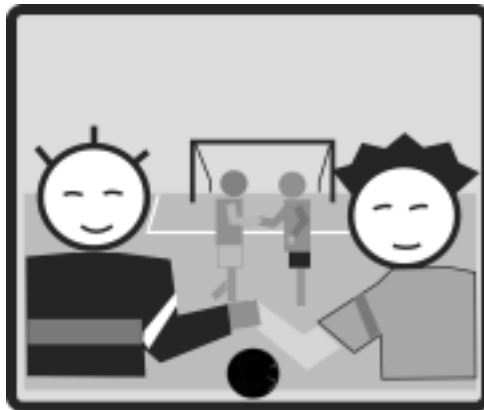
Types of group conflict

Group conflict may be divided into two main types of conflict:

Intragroup conflict:

This type of conflict occurs within a group, for example, between two sets of people in the same football team or between two factions of the same youth gang. Group dynamics and team building strategies are necessary approaches to resolving intragroup conflict.

Intergroup conflict:

This type of conflict occurs between two different groups, for example, between youth (as one group) and adults (as another); between two different youth gangs; between students and teachers in a school; or between a youth gang and the authorities. Intergroup conflict could also be at a higher level, such as between a younger and older generation (for example, differences in perception and in behaviour). Communication skills play an important role in resolving intergroup conflicts.

HANDOUT 7-4: Common causes of group conflict

Common causes of intergroup conflict are:

- **Negative stereotyping of members of another group:** drawing conclusions based on stereotypes (for example, "students are lazy") rather than looking closer at the real characteristics of a group. Negative stereotyping can strengthen the sense of identity and pride in a group (emphasizing that the other is weaker) but leads to escalated conflict between groups rather than conflict resolution.

- **Prejudice about a group's own values (not respecting other worldviews):** just as with individual values, a group has a tendency to believe that its own value-system (view of the world) is the correct and only view, rather than respecting different views.

- **Persistent emphasis on the existing differences (rather than similarities) between two groups:** linked to the two points above, groups that focus on their differences rather than similarities will be more likely to distance themselves from each other and have more difficulty resolving conflict between them.

- **Inadequate/negative communication between groups:** as with interpersonal relations, intergroup relations require good communication skills.

- **Lack of interaction between groups:** lack of interaction between groups often serves to increase stereotyping and a lack of understanding of each other. Furthermore, fewer interactions provide fewer opportunities for communication and the building of trust between groups.

The above causes of conflict are further aggravated by other influences, such as:

- **Unequal power distribution:** usually the group falls into two power categories:

  - Base power group.
  - Dominant power group.

  The base power group, fearing retribution from the high power group, tends to censor information communicated, which may be important to the latter. Simultaneously the high power group may not see the need to share information with the low power group. This keeps both groups unaware of the other's intentions and may increase conflict. Often, youth would be considered a low power group when trying to negotiate with older generations.

- **Explicit and inexplicit attitudes:** negative attitudes create stereotyping. The extent to which attitudes are explicit or inexplicit varies. Explicit attitudes are those more obvious and often easier to deal with. Inexplicit attitudes are less obvious, more taboo and therefore, more difficult to deal with. These are hidden attitudes many of us carry on topics such as gender, age, ethnic and religious discrimination. While we may not say them straight out, these are opinions or beliefs we secretly apply to a whole group.

- **Allocation of power and societal history:** at a wider level, intergroup relations are frequently defined on the basis of, for example, political history, societal history of race and/or religion and social constructs of gender roles. Divisions that are grounded in societal history are often reinforced through social mechanisms (political, economic, educational or legal) that strongly influence different groups.

TOPIC 3: Resolving group conflict

Duration of topic: 120 minutes

Activity for this topic

Case Study

Step 1:   The facilitator distributes copies of a case study (see Handout 7-5).

Step 2:   The facilitator divides the participants into three groups. Each group discusses and analyzes the case and devises strategies that will address the problem of illegal drug use among young people.

Step 3:   Each group will be assigned an observer who will take notes on the decision-making process and the nature of interaction between and among group members. Observers will be guided by the following:

1.   What were the points of disagreement and agreement?

2.   How were disagreements resolved?

3.   What was the participation of each group member? Did everyone contribute his/her ideas? Were participants willing to compromise, or did someone dominate the discussions?

4.   What factors facilitated or hindered the group from arriving at a consensus?

Facilitator allots 20 minutes for group discussion.

Step 4:   After the group discussion session, each observer will be asked to narrate his/her observation regarding the group decision-making and interaction process.

Step 5:   The facilitator will ask the rest of the participants to share their insights and learning from the group activity. Refer to Facilitator's notes. (90 minutes)

Materials

Handout, flip chart paper, pens

Inputs for this topic

The facilitator discusses techniques to (a) diagnose; and (b) resolve intergroup conflict, with a focus on the problem-solving model. Refer to Handout 7-6. (30 minutes)

Facilitator's notes

The facilitator convenes the participants in plenary. S/he may ask the following questions:

1. What are your common diagnoses of the problem?

2. Did you find it easy/hard to find solutions? Why?

3. What criteria did you use in choosing the "best" solution?

The facilitator can explain to the participants that there is no short cut to problem solving, and an appropriate problem-solving strategy would need to be developed in order to avoid the following pitfalls:

- Mismatch of solution to problem.

- Wrong timing in making and implementing decision.

- Non-workability of solution.

In a group situation, members bring in their own life experiences, personal insights and preferences. Their nature and level of self-expression may vary due to their different backgrounds and experiences. Group members, by virtue of their position and interest in the issue, may find it difficult to reach a consensus or unanimous decision. In some instances, however, a group decision is reached because members are pressured by time or by people who may have a stake in the issue. While group members may agree on a desired outcome, they may differ on how they should achieve it.

It is important for a youth development worker to fully understand the character and investment of individuals participating in a discussion. Some knowledge of basic facilitation skills and group behaviour would be useful.

HANDOUT 7-5: Case study

Case Study of Village Wawa

The Ministry of Youth in conjunction with three other private corporations donated 20,000 dollars for the development of youth programmes in Village Wawa. The people in this village chose to address the problem of illegal drug use. A group was formed to identify possible solutions to the illegal drug use problem. It was composed of the following people:

1. Village official

2. Police officer

3. Priest/monk

4. Businessman/woman

5. School principal

6. Youth representative

7. Parent

Group members discuss and decide how the 20,000 dollars can best be used.

HANDOUT 7-6: Diagnosing group conflict

It is very important to try to arrive at the right diagnosis of a group conflict. Often, we end up attributing conflict to one aspect of a relationship, when in fact, it has to do with another. This can occur between any set of groups, such as a younger and older generation. Therefore, it is also important to map needs and fears in intergroup conflict negotiation (see Session 3).

The scenario below illustrates the effects of wrongly diagnosing a conflict between students and teachers.

A group of students are in conflict with teachers about wanting to have shorter school days. Due to a misconception, the teachers attribute this to the fact that young people want to have more free time to play. The real reason for this request is that the students find it hard to follow the instructions of the teacher and want more time outside of formal school time to understand their homework. This conflict can only be resolved if the diagnosis is correct.

In Diagnosis 1, the teachers attribute the reason for conflict to the students being lazy. They shorten the school days slightly to quiet the complaints, but this does not solve the conflict.

In Diagnosis 2, the teachers take the time to understand the real source of the conflict, do not stereotype the students as being lazy and find out that the problem lies in their teaching styles. The problem is resolved because the lessons are changed, not because the school day is shortened.

The previous example illustrates an intergroup conflict that emerged for only one reason (the teaching style). Sometimes, however, conflict emerges due to a number of interrelated reasons.

Conflict issue: 'Students want to go home from school early'

REAL SOURCE OF THE CONFLICT Group 1 (students)	
"We know we need to study to be able to get jobs. We wish we could understand the teachers better. They teach in such complicated language that we do not understand and fall behind in class. We are asking to go home earlier so that we can have more time to understand the lessons and do the homework"	
DIAGNOSIS Group 2 (teachers)	
Diagnosis 1: *"Young people today are lazy. All they want to do is rush home to play computer games. Now they have the rudeness to ask to end lessons early to go home."*	**Diagnosis 2:** *"Let us discuss the problem with the students in order to better understand their request. There must be a reason. Perhaps we need to change something in our teaching style?"*
Result: • No change in the teaching style. • Days shortened to subdue the students. • Students fall behind and are unhappy, even though the school day is shortened.	**Result:** • Teachers slow down and use simpler language so that the students can understand the lessons better. • No need to shorten the school day. • Students' performance improves.

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