REPORT ON

Strengthening Leadership and Book and Record Keeping in Farmers' Groups and Cooperatives

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Introduction

The development and promotion of Farmers Groups and Cooperatives in the country have been recognized as an emerging third sector; a vehicle for socio-economic development; and economic-plus enterprise; and the means to transformational development. A study conducted by Regional Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives (RAMCO) revealed that lack of trust and leadership issues are some constraining factors in the progress of Cooperatives and Farmers' Group. Therefore the Book keeping and leadership training to the executives' members of agriculture and livestock farmers' group has been conducted by RAMCO in collaboration with Agriculture Sector Samdrupjongkhar from 4th to 8th May 2017 at GYT hall, Phuntshothang Gewog.

The core objective of the training is to build the knowledge and skills of the office bearers in leading and managing their group, proper record of books of account, generating group cohesion, enhancing participatory decision making, analyzing sources of conflict and resolving it, communicating effectively and working as a team. This will eventually culminate into building trust and boosting the performance and income of the groups.

The total number of participants from 3 farmer groups was 29 out of which 5 were female participants. The training period was divided into two parts, the first three days was focused on book and record keeping and the remaining two days was used to deliver leadership training. The training fund was supported by CARLEP an IFARD funded project.

1. Book and Record Keeping Training

Book keeping Training schedule

For the purpose of the delivery of the training, the following schedule has been followed.

Training schedule for book keeping

DAY 1	
Time	**Session Topics**
0900-0930hrs	Introduction Course Expectation Leveling
0930-1100hrs	Case presentations (AgayDorji's story)
1100-1115hrs	TEA BREAK
1115-1300hrs	Analysis of business process through group work

	Making business process analysis
	Introduction to Stock register
1300-1400hrs	LUNCH BREAK
1400-1530hrs	Stock register write up and maintenance
1530-1545hrs	TEA BREAK
1545-1700hrs	Recapitulation presentation

DAY 2	
Time	**Session Topics**
0900-1100hrs	Introduction to Cash book
1100-1115hrs	TEA BREAK
1115-1300hrs	Cash book Exercise
1300-1400hrs	LUNCH BREAK
1400-1530hrs	Introduction to bank book, cash & bank book exercise
1530-1545hrs	TEA BREAK
1545-1700hrs	Recapitulation

DAY 3	
Time	**Session Topics**
0900-1100hrs	loans, principals and interest
	Loan forms and cash & bank book recording
1100-1115hrs	TEA BREAK
1115-1300hrs	Savings & Credit
1300-1400hrs	LUNCH BREAK
1400-1530hrs	Investment methods
1530-1545hrs	TEA BREAK
1545-1700hrs	Investment plans

Training Overview

The specific day details on the delivery of the training are as follows:

Overview:

Prior to the delivery of the unit I (Overview of record and book keeping) a session on basic principles of accounting was delivered to the participants, to create a base on the understanding of the accounting concepts and applications.

Setting the base, the participants were then introduced to unit I through a deductive approach, whereby the participants were introduced to the case study of (Agay Dorji).

The case study presentations was delivered in a modular form with interactive narration, creating a desire into the participants on the level of transparency on the records and the books relevant to the context of farmers group business activities.

Key Observations

1. The participants comprehended the story and looked up to the story as a modular example to be followed in their groups.

2. Specific examples had to be used with regard to the narration of the story, for example; for agriculture groups, as in the manual livestock examples created confusion for the groups and vice versa.

OUT PUT

- The desires in the participants were created on the need and importance of record and book keeping.

- The participants were able to map out their own business process for their agriculture and livestock group with distinction.

Day 1: Unit 2

Overview

(Stock Register) was introduced to the participants connecting it to the business process mapping, which was done independently by the participants.

Key observation

1. The participants lacked the psychomotor skill of drawing the forms; it was a major setback requiring skill roll back in demonstrating the use of tools such as scale, sharpening pencils, use of the note books.

2. The participants took time in the understanding of the logic of extracting the balance amount that has been used for the subsequent forms.

3. The participants who knew English and retired personnel performed better.

OUTPUT

1. The participants learned to coordinate their psychomotor skills and to draw forms.

2. The participants acquired the logic of addition and subtraction in the context of calculation of the balance amounts.

3. The participants demonstrated the understanding of the use of the stock resister based on the number of their business products.

Day 2: Unit 3 & 4 (Cash and bank book)

Based on the skills acquired by the participants, the use and the maintenance of the cash book were introduced to the participants. Upon the obtaining of the perfect usage of the cash book, participants were introduced to the use of the bank book concurrently with the use of the cash book.

Key observation

1. The participants drew the forms better and neatly and understood the filling of the forms using the same level of skills and logic.

2. The participants demonstrated the importance of filing of the documentary evidences in the use of acknowledgement of the cash receipts and payments.

3. The participants took time in understanding the principles of "contra" entry of accounting for deposits and withdrawals from the bank.

Out put

1. The participants demonstrated understanding of the due process of "contra" entry of accounting of deposits and withdrawal of the group fund.

2. The participants demonstrated the skills level of customizing their own books of accounts by the use of relevant tools such as pencils, long note books, calculators etc.

3. The participants also acknowledge the due importance attached to documentary evidences in the context of perpetual existence of the groups' activities.

Day 3: Unit 5 & 6: Loans, share capital, savings & credit

The participants having acquired the skills in accounting for all incomes and expenses, they were introduced to the common practice of the use of the group funds "Loans". The participants demonstrated exceptional interest for this session, for the fact of the direct relevance (Many group being in this business and for the fact of the use of the previous

skills which they have acquires). The participants were also introduced to the concept of savings and credit.

Key observation

1. The participants found the loan session interesting and acknowledged the immediate use of the same methodology.

2. The participants realized the prudent use of the group funds in extending the due credit through the charge of nominal interest to the members.

3. The participants demonstrated the prudent investment principles of investing into investments that generate surplus for the groups.

Out put

1. The participants acknowledged the rectification of the interest rate to be charged from compound interest to simple interest.

2. The participants committed to further the group development through schemes such as group lending and savings.

3. The participants acquired skills of prudent investment plans in the future of investing into income generating activities without compromising on group social responsibilities.

Training approaches

For any training to be effective and meaningful, it is essential to match the training approach with the participants. Thus, since the participants were adults, we have applied the adult learning principles that focused mainly learning by doing and through sharing of experiences. More importantly, the sessions helped participants to learn by doing. Also, these modes of delivery encouraged the participants to engage in meaningful learning and gave them the motivation, commitment and methodology to acquire skills and knowledge. The training approaches included the following:

1) **Power Point presentation (Lectures):** The lectures were done mainly to introduce the participants to the concepts, definitions and main points. The use of the tool was kept to the minimum keeping in view the principles of "learning by doing".

2) **Exercise:** To carry out hands on practices in drawing forms and filling out the same in their respective groups. To acquire logic of the due process of record and book keeping.

3) **Case studies:** Cases studies and exercises prepared specific to the context of book keeping within the context of the participants group have been adequately used during the training for generating the intended outcome of the training.

4) **Group discussion/Activity:** Each concept presentation was followed by group discussion and activity. This enabled the participants to contextualize the concept and foster better understanding within their own group context.

5) **Presentation:** Participants made presentations following group discussion, individual reflections, case studies, etc. After presentation, participants had to comment and share their views and opinions.

6) **Worksheet activity:** Worksheets was used in relevant sessions. The worksheets were mainly given for individual activities to carry out several book keeping activities.

Course Assessment

The course employed the following methods of assessment:

- Participant presentation

- Participants Evaluation

- Course Evaluation

- Training attendance

- External observation

Generic Key Observations

1. The participants found all the units relevant to their group activities. However, the units were understood better with only specific examples, meaning livestock groups could not comprehend agriculture example and vice versa.

2. As set out in the manual, the pre-requisite to have a functional literacy in the participants needs to be strictly followed for the participants. Participants without the requirement were not able to contribute and acquire the knowledge and skills adequately.

3. Participants who had the experience of attending previous training (any kind of training) did better than those who were fresh. The participants who attended other trainings were able to use the experience in their group discussion, guiding fellow participants and in demonstrating appropriate conduct in the training forum.

4. The participants were from new groups and it was timely on the delivery of the book keep session where they can install the record and book keeping system.

5. Overall the participants committed to keep the records and books based on the training guidelines.

Leadership Training

Learning outcomes

- Play leadership roles in farmers' groups and cooperatives

- Explain the importance of group dynamics and contribute towards generating group cohesion

- Participate in decision making process

- Communicate effectively in their group

- Analyze the source of conflict and resolve it

- Work as a team

Training schedule

DAY 1	
Time	**Session Topics**
09:00-09:30hrs	• Introduction of the participants • Course Expectation Leveling
09:30-11:00hrs	• Who am I?
11:00-11:30hrs	TEA BREAK
11:00-13:00hrs	• Understanding Leadership concepts and qualities
13:00-14:00hrs	LUNCH BREAK
14:00-16:00hrs	• Change Management
15:30-1545hrs	TEA BREAK
DAY 2	
Time	**Session Topics**
09:00-09:30hrs	• Public Speaking
09:30-11:00hrs	• Decision Making • Time Management
11:00-11:30hrs	TEA BREAK
11:00-13:00hrs	• Managing Teams Effectively

13:00-14:00hrs	LUNCH BREAK
14:00-16:00hrs	• Communication: Learning to listen and assert

The training was delivered using the following modes

1. **PowerPoint presentation (Lectures):** The lectures through use of slides were presented mainly to introduce the participants to the concepts, definitions and the primary points of discussion.

2. **Individual work and reflections:** Individual works and reflections were encouraged by way of provoking their thoughts and feelings on a given learning topic. It was also a way of encouraging the less vocal ones to speak up and be a part of the training.

3. **Experience sharing:** Whenever possible participants were encouraged to share their experiences from the field. This experience sharing was also a way of encouraging them to engage fully besides letting others draw ideas from their experiences.

4. **Group discussion:** Group works were assigned to encourage sharing of ideas and opinions and coming to a consensus.

5. **Presentation:** Participants made presentations following group discussions, individual reflections, etc. After presentation, participants had to comment and share their views and opinions.

6. **Game activities:** Game activities were also encouraged to arrive at the concepts. This not only enabled the participants to keep themselves alert and bring in some fun but share their thoughts.

Session materials

The materials used for the training was:

- Flip charts
- Meta cards
- White boards and marker pens
- Power point presentation
- A 4 papers and
- Chart papers/news print papers

General observation

The following are the observations made during the two days training.

1. ***Participation in presentation and discussion*:** The training rule that they made themselves was very effective as they observed it strictly. One of the rules was in a day all the members of the group should at least make one presentation of the group discussion or if there wasn't such an opportunity should share their views on the issues discussed. Thus, everyone was engaged and this was connected to their role as leaders which are to make sure that they facilitated all of their members to participate meaningfully in their meetings and activities.

2. ***Recapitulation*:** The recap of the previous day's activities through different approaches was very effective. This ensured that the participants participated fully, asked questions and seek clarifications during the training session. For instance, in both the batches, during the recap session of day one, it came as a surprise and some could not respond. However, at the end of second day when a review of the day was carried out by randomly selecting participants, the ability to respond was much better and even better during the recap on the third day. However, fun and learning should be mixed.

3. ***Training without PPT*:** As a facilitator, not using power point is very challenging and tiring. Extra preparation was necessary such as handouts, planning of time and flow of the session. Thus, the participants found it more engaging than having to look at power point and reading from there. Instead, giving handouts, making them read and discuss in small groups and then make presentations on points and areas allotted to each group allowed the participants to interact and discuss meaningfully.

4. **_Training content_:** The Training Manual has been developed keeping in mind the level of participants. It is user friendly for the facilitator and at the same time had many activities to engage the participants and which also made them draw lessons. However, the tree analysis was a little bit challenging for the farmers but it made them reflect on the conflict and analyze it so that it can be amicably resolved.

5. **_Overall impression_:** Leadership training is an important element of making the farmers' Group and Cooperatives successful and progress. The participants expressed that the training is an eye opener and would really help them take up leadership roles effectively. The level of interest shown by participants was their way of expressing the importance of the training. However, it would be necessary to monitor and eventually conduct an impact assessment of the programme