

## UNDERSTANDING GROUP DYNAMICS

When a group or team meets to do a particular job, such as planning a budget or reviewing output production, the members concern themselves primarily with *content*, that is, the task or the subject matter.

Difficulties which have no direct relation to the budget or output production may develop in the group. Problems of communication occur even though the language being used is seemingly clear. Difficult feelings may also emerge between people. These indirect matters involve *processes, dynamics*, and need special attention if the group or team is to get on with its work.

Learning more about the distinction between these two levels of functioning and developing the capacity to identify underlying dynamics can be very helpful.

Groups also develop structure, that is, ways in which the different parts of a group (the people) relate to each other and to the group as a whole. Groups also develop norms, rules, roles and procedures. Some of these are explicit and overt and some of them are implicit and covert.

Developing the capacity to understand the patterns of relationship and the above factors and make constructive use of this can greatly enhance group effectiveness.

### **Aims for the programme are to help participants:**

- Develop awareness and understanding of the difference between content and dynamics
- Increase understanding of the importance of roles, norms and structure
- Develop the capacity to think about the group 'as a whole'

### **Method**

The course will be practical, highly participative and experiential with theoretical input. There will be time for reflection on participants' work settings and application of learning.

### **Programme Outline**

The 2 Day programme:

#### Day 1

- The 'group as a whole'; theory and practice
- Dynamics in your team and how to work with them
- Learning from the group in the 'here and now'

#### Day 2

- Dynamics 'below the surface'
- Overt and covert norms and roles
- Change processes in groups