Annex 3: Games for Training

■ Openers and Name Games

**Write Your Name in the Air:** Ask participants to write their name in the air – first with right hand; then left hand; and then both hands, elbow, nose, knee or foot.

**Rhyming Names:** Each person introduces him/herself with a “rhyming” adjective that starts with the same letter). Example: “I’m Chandramma” and I’m Charming” or “I’m Harish and I’m Happy.” As they say this, they can also mime an action that describes the adjective.

**Throwing Names:** Participants stand in a circle. Throw a ball to someone in the circle, saying his/her name as you throw it. The person who catches the ball throws it to another person and says his/her name, and so on. Once everyone has caught the ball, add extra balls so several are being thrown at the same time, following the same pattern.

**Find Your Partner:** Before the game starts, prepare a list of famous couples (e.g., Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton, Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba Gandhi) and write each name on a piece of paper. Stick each paper to the back of each participant. Tell participants who they are and ask them to find their partners. After pairs are formed, one partner will introduce his/her partner to the rest of the group.

**Three Greetings and Run (Howdy, Howdy):** Participants stand in a circle holding hands. The leader walks around the outside of the circle and touches someone on the back. The two people race around the circle in opposite directions. When they meet, they stop and greet each other three times. Then both continue going around the circle until they reach the empty place. Whoever loses walks around the outside and touches a new person and the game continues.

**Groups Game:** Explain that the purpose of the game is to get organized into different groups. Ask people to walk around and when the music stops, call out a type of group and ask everyone to join their group. Start with simple groupings to break the ice: two’s, four’s, eight’s. Then add other categories: “Gender, age, village, occupation, height, marital status, favorite food.” At the end bring everyone together into one big group and ask, “How did it feel to form into certain groups?” (e.g., some groupings are stigmatized, such as certain professions).

■ Paired Games

**People to People:** Divide into pairs. A caller shouts, “Front to Front,” “Back to Back,” “Foot to Foot,” and pairs are expected to follow directions. When the caller shouts “People to People” everyone finds a new partner. The person left without a partner becomes the new caller.

**Mirror Image:** Divide into pairs. Decide in each pair who is the mirror (B) and who is the person looking into the mirror (A). A initiates actions and B mirrors all the actions, including facial expressions. After a while, players reverse roles.
Leading and Guiding: Divide into pairs. In each pair, one participant puts on a blindfold. Her partner then leads her carefully around the area, making sure she doesn’t trip or bump into other participants. After some time, the facilitator asks the pairs to swap roles. At the end, participants discuss how they felt when they had to trust someone else to keep them safe.

Games In a Circle

Passing Objects around Circle while Singing: Ask each participant to pick up any object (e.g., stone, pen, etc.) At an agreed signal, everyone starts singing a song and passing the objects around the circle to the rhythm of the song.

Clap Exchange: Send a clap around the circle (e.g., two hand claps then one double-handed clap with your neighbor). The neighbor repeats the same claps and passes it to the next person, and so on. Do this as fast as possible. Send many claps around the circle at the same time.

Mime the Lie: Walk into the circle and mime an action (e.g., swimming). The person next to you in the circle (B) asks, “What are you doing?” You respond, for example, “I am praying.” Then B walks into the circle and mimes what you said you were doing (praying). When C asks what B is doing, B also lies, saying “I am jogging,” and so the game continues until everyone in the circle has had a turn at doing one thing but saying they are doing something else.

Nodding Game: Usually, we nod our head when we say yes and shake it when we say no. In this game, we do the opposite: For yes, shake your head and for no, nod your head. Go to one participant and ask questions. If the answer is yes, the person should say yes by mouth and shake his head; if the answer is no, then he should say no by mouth and nod his head. If anybody makes a mistake, he becomes the person who asks the questions. This game shows that changing our behavior is not easy, but through practice we can learn new behaviors.

O Kovalamma! Go around the circle and ask each participant to say, “O Kovalamma,” going round the circle, one at a time. Each person should say it with a different emotion (e.g., fear, anger, sadness, excitement).

Seven Clap: Ask participants to count around the circle (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) Don’t say “seven” or a multiple of seven (e.g., 14) or any number that has seven in it (e.g., 17) but clap instead. If someone makes a mistake, the person drops out and you start the counting again from one.

Shopping List: One person starts by saying, “I am going to the market to buy fish.” The next person says, “I am going to the market to buy fish and potatoes.” Each person repeats the list and then adds an item. The aim is to remember all of the items that people before you have listed.

Sagidi Sagidi Sapopo: Teach a simple chant: “Sagidi Sagidi Sapopo.” Everyone repeats the chant together until they find a rhythm. Each person looks at the person to their left while chanting. The leader starts the activity by doing a simple action along with the chant (e.g., touching chest, slapping thigh or putting hands in the air). Each time the group repeats the chant, the leader initiates a new action, while at the exact same time the person to the leader’s right copies the leader’s action from the last repetition. As the chant is repeated, each person copies the action of the person to his left, until everyone is doing a different action.
Communication Games

Muddling Messages (The Whisper): Participants sit in a circle. Think of a long message (e.g., “I’m going to go to the market to buy bananas, mangoes and a goat. Then I am going to meet my cousin for lunch.”) Whisper this message to the person to the right and continue around the circle. Once the message has been passed around the circle, ask the last person to say the message aloud. Compare the final message with the original version. Discuss the following questions: (1) Why did the message change? (2) How could people in the group have ensured that it was passed around the circle unchanged? (3) How does this game relate to communication in real life?

Pass the Picture: Ask five volunteers to leave the room. Those who remain draw a few pictures on a flipchart (e.g., a person, a house, a tree and some animals). Then hide the picture and ask the volunteers to return. One volunteer is shown the picture. The volunteer then describes the picture in words to the second volunteer, who in turn describes it to the third volunteer and so on. The fifth volunteer draws the picture on a new flipchart sheet as she understands it. She should receive no help from the rest of the group. When she has finished, compare it with the original picture. There should be some interesting differences.

Yes/No Game: Form two lines facing each other. Explain that one group is the “YES” group and can only use the word “YES.” The other group is the “NO” group and can only use the word “NO.” Each group should try to convince the other group of the truth of what they are saying, but can only use the one word, either “YES” or “NO.” After a minute or so, get the groups to swap roles, with the “YES” group saying “NO” and vice versa. After the game discuss the following question: “How did you feel doing this exercise?” Include comments on body language, use of attacking or avoiding stances, laughter, etc.

Cooperation Games

Knot: Form groups of eight people. Ask each group to stand in a tight circle. Each person reaches out and holds the hands of two other people across the circle, not the people on either side of him. He should not hold the hands of the same person; they should be two different people. This creates a “knot.” The aim is to untangle without letting go of hands until everyone is standing together in one circle. Talk about the experience after the game.

Tsunami: Draw five, non-overlapping circles with chalk on the floor, big enough to fit all participants. Give each circle, or “island,” a name. Then say that one island will be hit by a tsunami so those people will have to move quickly to another island. Allow the suspense to build, then call out the name of the island that will be hit. Participants run to the other islands. The game continues until everyone is squashed into one island. Afterwards, discuss the game with participants, focusing on cooperation (or lack of it) within the group.

Group Statues: Ask participants to walk around the room, loosely swinging their arms and gently relaxing their heads and necks. After a short while, shout out a word (e.g., “peace.”) The whole group must instantly strike a pose to show what the word means to them. Repeat several times.

Competitive Games

Tiger-Man-Gun: Divide into two teams. Introduce three symbols: (1) TIGER (action: claws raised in the air and a roar); (2) MAN (action: hands folded across chest); (3) GUN (action: hands pointing a gun). Then explain the scoring system: TIGER wins over MAN; MAN wins over GUN (MAN controls GUN); GUN wins over TIGER. Ask each team to secretly decide on their symbol. Then get the two teams to line up facing each other. At a signal, teams show their symbols. Announce the winner. Then ask teams to select another symbol (secretly), and the game continues.
Thread the Needle: Divide into two teams of equal numbers (no more than 10 people each). Ask teams to form a line and hold hands and then face the other team. Each team should number off. A leader shouts out two consecutive numbers (e.g., four and five), the fourth and fifth persons in each line hold his/her hands up high creating a hole. The rest of the team then “threads the needle” – moves through the gap – without dropping hands. Team members at both ends run through the hole (with other team members following) and back to their original position. The first team back in its original position without breaking the line wins. Repeat this several times. Ask one participant to be the judge.

Killer Wink: Ask someone to be the “killer” in advance of the game or through a piece of paper distributed to all participants (all papers are blank, except one paper that has “KILLER” written on it). Then explain the rules to all the players: The one killer murders people with a wink. Everyone should walk around the room in different directions, keeping eye contact with everyone you pass. When the killer passes you, he may wink at you. If he does you are dead, but wait a few seconds before dying so you don’t give away the killer’s identity. The killer should keep his winks secret to protect his identity. The game continues until someone guesses the killer.

Energizers

Fruit Salad: Set up the chairs in a circle so that there is one less chair for the number of people in the group. Then allocate fruit names to each participant (e.g., orange . . . banana . . . mango . . . . orange . . . banana . . . mango . . . orange . . . ). Call one of the names (e.g., orange), and all the “oranges” have to stand up and run to another seat. As the caller, you also run and find a seat. Whoever is left without a seat becomes the new caller. When the caller shouts, “Fruit Salad,” everyone has to stand up and find another seat. If the room is hot, or if people are too old to run, ask participants to walk.

The Wind Blows For: Set up the chairs in a circle so that there is one less chair for the number of people in the group. Then shout, “The wind blows for . . . .” and add a descriptive phrase (e.g., “everyone wearing a watch.”) Everyone who is wearing a watch has to get up and run to another chair. As the caller, you also run and find a seat. Whoever is left without a seat becomes the new caller. Other examples include: “The wind blows for everyone who . . . has a beard, wears glasses, is single, is in love, ate too much for lunch!”

Touch Blue: Ask participants to walk around. When you shout “touch blue,” each player has to find something blue on another player and touch it. Then give other instructions: “Touch . . . someone with beard, wearing glasses, something yellow, someone wearing sandals, etc.” Each time, participants must touch what the leader calls out.

Pass the Action: Players sit in circle. “A” stands in the center of the circle. “A” walks toward “B,” using a specific action (e.g., hopping or walking with hands above the head). When she reaches “B,” “B” walks to the center of the circle using “A’s” action. When “B” reaches the center, he walks toward “C” using a new action or movement. The game continues until everyone has taken part.

Elimination (Stigma) Games

Many games “stigmatize” players by forcing them to drop out of the game for making a “mistake.” This represents a form of stigma. These games can be used to trigger discussion on how it feels to be excluded from the group. After playing, stop and ask those who were eliminated, “How did you feel when you were eliminated and left sitting watching the other players?”

Idli, Puri and Dosa: Explain the three actions: (1) IDLI (fingers pointing down), (2) PURI (fingers pointing up), and (3) DOSA (trace two circles in the air). Call out the words one at a time and ask participants to do the actions. Anyone who makes a mistake is out of the game.
ON the Bank – IN the River: Draw a line representing the river bank and ask participants to stand behind the line. When the leader shouts, “IN the river” everyone jumps forward over the line. When the leader shouts “ON the bank,” everyone jumps backwards over the line. If he says “ON the river” or “IN the bank,” participants who move have to drop out of the game.

Simon Says: Ask participants to find an empty space with enough room around them to swing their arms. When you say, “Simon says do this” and follow this by some movement or action (e.g., swinging your arms at your sides), the whole group should copy the action. When you say “do this” without including the words “Simon says,” participants should remain motionless (i.e., do not copy the action). Build up a rhythm of instructions using “Simon says” and then suddenly add a new action saying “Do this.” For example: “Simon says lift your right foot. Simon says put your hands over your head. Now lower your right foot.” Participants who copy your action when you do not say “Simon says” have to drop out of the game.

Forming Groups by Number: Call out different numbers at random – “2 . . . 5 . . . 3 . . . 4” – and ask participants to form groups according to the number called. After each number is called, participants will have to make a quick decision about who to join or who to exclude. Those who are not in groups of the correct size will have to drop out of the game. When several people have been eliminated, stop and discuss the game. Ask participants how they felt about being excluded from groups and being forced to drop out. Then relate this to their work with communities.

Guessing Games

Who Is the Leader? Participants are in a circle. Someone volunteers to leave the room. A leader is chosen. Her job is to lead the group in a series of rhythmic actions or movements that the whole group copies (e.g., clapping, raising hands over head, swaying back and forth, etc.) The volunteer then tries to guess who is leading the actions. The group protects the leader by not looking at her. The leader must change the action at regular intervals without getting caught. When the volunteer spots the leader, he joins the circle and the person who was the leader leaves the room while the group selects another leader.

Who Am I? One participant leaves the room while the others decide on his occupation (e.g., driver, politician, fisherman). When he returns, the others mime activities to help him guess his identity.

What Kind of Animal? Participants sit in a circle and pair off. Each pair secretly decides what type of animal they are. Two participants without chairs are the elephants: They walk around the circle calling the names of different animals. Whenever they guess correctly, the animals named have to stand up and walk behind the elephants, walking in mime. This continues until the elephants can guess no more. Then they call “LIONS,” and all pairs run for seats. The pair left without chairs becomes the elephants for the next round.

Who Has It? Participants sit in a circle while one person stands in the center. While he closes his eyes, participants pass a small object from person to person. The person at the center gives a signal, opens his eyes and tries to guess who has the object. He has three guesses. Meanwhile, the object continues to pass behind people’s backs.
Games to Divide Participants into Groups

Introduction: The methods below are fun ways of creating groups. At the same time they generate energy, enthusiasm and spirit for the small group activities which follow.

Love One: Cross your arms in front of you and say “This is LOVE ONE” and get all participants doing the same thing. Then say “LOVE TWO” and demonstrate; hold another person at the shoulders and ask the whole group to do the same thing (i.e., get into pairs holding each other by the shoulders). Then say, “LOVE FOUR” and get two pairs to combine into four people and ask the whole group to do the same thing. Then set up groups to fit your group size. If you want six in a group, say “LOVE ONE” . . . then “LOVE THREE” . . . then “LOVE SIX.”

Animal Groups: This group divider requires slips of paper with a word on each slip: one slip for each participant. Prepare the slips of paper beforehand with the names of animals written on each slip (e.g., cat, dog, sheep, etc.). Make the same number of slips for each animal. Hand out the slips. Then ask everyone to stand and start making the sound of their animal and link up with others making the same noise to form a group (e.g., cat group, dog group, etc).

Occupational Groups: The same activity as ANIMAL GROUPS with occupations written on slips of paper (e.g., farmer, fisherman, driver, soldier). Group members find each other by miming the work done in their occupation.

Puzzle Groups: Give out picture puzzles, each cut into the number of pieces needed to make up a group. Group members find each other by matching their puzzles.