

The Farming Juggle

Exploration
#201

Objectives:

- To energise the group
- To reflect on decision making under stress while handling unexpected tasks

Number of players: 10-50, recommend to have >15 people in 1 group

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Materials needed: Up to 6 different balls (differing in size and material)

Facilitation skill: ★ Easy exercise, gentle, not too daring or adventurous



Relevance for climate resilience

The way people deal and cope with challenges depends on the capacity that they have and the time in which they can react. If the severity of a situation increases, but capacity to respond remains the same, problems develop, strain increases and eventually, things break down. The Farming Juggle is a dynamic exercise that can be used to explore the complex and compounding effects of multiple stressors in any system.



Process:

1. *Before you play, check that all the players are comfortable with having something thrown at them. Ask those that are not comfortable with this to move outside the circle and observe the process.*

2. Gather everyone into a circle, yourself included. Explain the context for the game, making it relevant to the area in which you work.

3. Throw the first ball to a "community member", announcing that the farming in the community is going well.

Participants must keep the ball in motion by continuously throwing it around the circle, not letting it touch the ground or stay in any one participant's hands more than 2 seconds if possible. Allow some time for the group to find their rhythm.

4. At any point you can introduce new balls into the circle, either announcing their entrance in advance (e.g. "you are dealing with a specific livestock disease amongst your sheep" or "there is conflict in your community") or springing it on the circle of participants as a surprise ("there is a flash flood"). Either way, participants must try to keep as many balls circulating and off the ground as possible.

Keep adding balls into the mix, until the play becomes too chaotic, with balls being dropped very often.

Debriefing:

The debriefing is where the shared learning takes place. Example questions:

1. How did you feel in the first stage of the game?

2. By comparison, how did you feel when multiple balls were in the circle?

3. Seeing as it is virtually impossible to keep all balls from dropping on the ground, how did you or the group prioritise which balls to put the most energy into catching?

4. How does what you have experienced in this game relate to your reality?

Variation:

You can play this with a different story line too, to illustrate compounding stressors: e.g. an office situation, or implementing an adaptation process.

Acknowledgement:

This game was introduced by "Indigo". Images from the ASSAR project and an IFAD training session in the Gambia.



A range of soft, lightweight balls

