INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICE

Level - I

LEARNING GUIDE 13

Unit of Competence:	**Work with Others**
Module Title:	**Working with Others**
LG Code:	**ICT ITS1 M04 L02 – LG13**
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LO 2: Contribute to Workgroup Activities

Instruction Sheet	Learning Guide - 13

This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics –
- • Provide support to team members to ensure workgroup goals are met.
- • Contribute constructively to workgroup goals and tasks are made according to organizational requirements.
- • Relevant Information to work shared with team members to ensure designated goals are met.

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, you will be able to –
- • Support is provided to team members to ensure workgroup goals are met.
- • Constructive contributions to workgroup goals and tasks are made according to organizational requirements.
- • Information relevant to work is shared with team members to ensure designated goals are met.

Learning Instructions:
1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Follow the instructions described below 3 to 6.
3. Read the information written in the information "Sheet 1, Sheet 2 and Sheet 3" in page 3, 8 and 13 respectively.
4. Accomplish the "Self-check 1, Self-check 2 and Self-check 3" in page 6, 10 and 20 respectively.
5. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation from the "Self-check" proceed to "Operation Sheet 1, Operation Sheet 2 and Operation Sheet 3 " in page ---.
6. Do the "LAP test" in page – ---

Information Sheet – 1	Contribute to Workgroup Activities

1.1. Provide Support to Team Members to Ensure Workgroup Goals are Met

Good interpersonal relations is entering into and maintaining effective peer-group relationships in the work setting. This is vital if work is to be performed effectively and completed according to the goals set by the organization.

Bruce Tuckman, a leading psychologist in group dynamics, identified **four stages** in the development of groups and teams, as set out in Table 1.1. As the group moves through each stage, these concerns develop in the following order of inclusion, control and acceptance:

Table 1.1 Team members' activities in each stage

Stage	Activities
1. Forming	Clarification of goals Commitment to group's purpose Establishment of relationships Making tentative contributions Communication between members
2. Storming	Critique of group's performance Presentation of alternative points of view Emergence of conflict over power or leadership Provision of negative and positive feedback Discussion of problems or concerns Resolution of conflict
3. Norming	Offering support to other members Problem-solving and decision-making Improvement of plans Verification of goals Development or extension of skills
4. Performing	Improvement in ways of doing things Development of interpersonal relationships Acceptance of delegated tasks Involvement in decision-making Achievement of performance

An effective workgroup or team is one that achieves high levels of both task performance and human resources maintenance over time. Every manager should promote workgroup effectiveness. The structure of a group or team can develop slowly or quickly.

A workgroup will develop quickly if all members of the group help other members in the following ways:

- explaining and clarifying work tasks
- helping one another with tasks when required

- solving problems together
- providing encouragement for new members of the group
- providing feedback to all group members
- undertaking extra tasks if necessary.

1.1.1. Group Work Activities

Group Work Activities and enabling strategies

- Group Tasks or Assignments
- Discussion
- Role play
- Problem Based Learning

1.1.2. Description of Group Work Activities

Group work is a form of cooperative learning which aims to develop student's knowledge, generic skills, (e.g. communication skills, collaborative skills, critical thinking skills) and attitudes. The ability to participate effectively in group work or team work is seen as a desirable employability skill and should be considered to be part of every learner's educational experience.

Group work can be a means for acknowledging and utilizing an individual learner's additional strengths and expertise.

1.1.2.1. Skills required for Group Work:

- Teamwork
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Time management
- Negotiation
- Delegation
- Co-operation
- Leadership

1.1.2.2. job description

A **job description** is a list that a person might use for general tasks, or functions, and responsibilities of a position. It may often include to whom the position reports, specifications such as the qualifications or skills needed by the person in the job, or a salary range.

1.1.2.3. Roles and responsibilities

A job description may include relationships with other people in the organization: Supervisory level, managerial requirements, and relationships with other colleagues.

1.1.2.4. Goals

A job description need not be limited to explaining the current situation, or work that is currently expected; it may also set out goals for what might be achieved in future.

1.1.2.5. Organizational requirements

Basically, an organization is a person or group of people intentionally organized to accomplish an overall, common goal or set of goals. Business organizations can range in size from one person to tens of thousands.

1.1.2.6. Vision statements, Mission statements and values of an organization

- **Vision:** Defines the desired or intended future state of an organization or enterprise in terms of its fundamental objective and/or strategic direction. Vision is a long-term view, sometimes describing how the organization would like the world to be in which it operates.

- **Mission:** Defines the fundamental purpose of an organization or an enterprise, succinctly describing why it exists and what it does to achieve its Vision.

    It is sometimes used to set out a "picture" of the organization in the future. A mission statement provides details of what is done and answers the question: "What do we do?"

- **Values:** Beliefs that are shared among the stakeholders of an organization. Values drive an organization's culture and priorities and provide a framework in which decisions are made. For example, "Knowledge and skills are the keys to success" or "give a man bread and feed him for a day, but teach him to farm and feed him for life". These example values may set the priorities of self sufficiency over shelter.

- **Strategy:** Strategy, narrowly defined, means "the art of the general" (from Greek *stratigos*). A combination of the ends (goals) for which the firm is striving and the means (policies) by which it is seeking to get there.

Self-Check – 1	Written Test

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. List the stages of development of a workgroup or team, and describe what these mean:

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. A workgroup will develop quickly if all members of the group help other members in the following ways:

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Group Work Activities and enabling strategies

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. Describe the Group work

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

5. List the Skills required for Group Work:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. What is a job description?

_____
_____
_____

7. Explain the following:
   - **Vision:**

     _____
     _____
     _____

   - **Mission:**

     _____
     _____
     _____

   - **Values:**

     _____
     _____
     _____

   - **Strategy:**

     _____
     _____
     _____

Answer Sheet

Name: _____   Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

Information Sheet – 2	Contribute Constructively to Workgroup Goals

2.1. Contribute Constructively to Workgroup Goals

2.1.1. Communication skills in groups or teams

The communication process is dynamic and interactive. People place meaning and structure on the variety of messages received from others. This interaction may be direct or indirect. Effective communication occurs when the intended meaning of the sender and the perceived meaning of the receiver are one and the same. The communication process takes place in various situations for different reasons, with the potential for many interpretations.

We discuss communication channels and communication barriers in other chapters. At all stages of development of a group or team, leaders and members should communicate with each other.

Effective interpersonal communication within a group or team has two components: **spoken** and **unspoken**.

- **Spoken communication skills**. Good spoken communication skills allow all members actively to participate in the interaction process. Members share ideas and their knowledge. In formal situations (e.g. meetings) members should be given the opportunity to speak and to share their ideas, qualifications and experience.
- **Non-verbal communication** is a message sent by any other means other than words or graphics. This can be by facial expressions, gestures, posture or how you dress. Or by how you speak on the telephone or face-to-face. Non-verbal communication can, in some instances, be more important than verbal communication.

Constructive Feedback: is obtained from formal/informal performance appraisals, from supervisors and other team members, and from clients. This shared information improves work practices and behavior and service to customers.

2.1.2. Advantages of Teams

The advantage that working as a team has over people working alone will depend on the qualifications and competencies, and effectiveness, of the people in the team, and whether the synergy of a team is either positive or negative. Usually, if a group is involved **in making a decision** it will be more likely to deliver a successful outcome than an individual, but if the synergy is negative the meeting can become bogged down with irrelevancies and no decisions are made.

Working in a team is also better **for the morale and motivation of the workforce.** People usually experience greater job satisfaction working in

groups than working alone. Although success can depend on the specific problem, **difficult problems** have been found to be more effectively handled by a group, whereas relatively simple problems may be handled more effectively and quickly by one person working alone.

2.1.3. Disadvantages of Teams

While many groups or teams are successful, they can also have disadvantages. Groups **take a lot longer** than one person to make a decision and to take action. Teams **take time to develop a structure** and are more effective over a longer period of time, and in some situations speed will be essential.

2.1.4. Groupthink

What is groupthink? Groupthink is when a team or group make decisions *without weighing all the pros and cons,* and agree for the sake of agreeing.

Teams suffering from groupthink fail to consider problems objectively or to research adequately. They do not consider alternatives and may take unnecessary risks. Groupthink may even lead members to look after their *own interests* rather than those of the organization employing them. Teams that suffer from groupthink:

- fail to express doubt because of social pressure from other members
- appear to be invulnerable
- stereotype outsiders unfavorably
- are ready to ridicule critics
- have a false impression of internal harmony by avoiding disagreements.

2.1.5. Team Climate

The climate of a team is created by its cohesiveness. When a team has a common commitment to a task and is considering a problem objectively, the climate is positive. If there is a lack of unity in a team, and dissatisfaction and low morale, the climate is negative and the team will be less effective.

Self-Check – 2	Written Test

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. Describe the two components of effective interpersonal communication within a group or team:

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Explain why constructive feedback is important to employees and the organization:

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of teams:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Explain 'groupthink':

   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What happen with Teams that suffer from groupthink?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

6. When a team climate becomes positive and negative?

   _____
   _____
   _____

Answer Sheet

Name: _____   Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

Information Sheet – 3	Share Information Relevant to Workgroup

3.1. Share Information Relevant to Workgroup to Ensure Goals are Met

For a group/team to work effectively members should use open communication channels by observing one another's satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance; recognizing workplace hazards, risks and controls; and clarifying the organization's preferred task completion methods.

3.1.1. Group problem-solving

Solving problems in a group has four major advantages:

- Greater knowledge and information (synergy).
- More approaches to the problem.
- Increased acceptance of solutions.
- Better comprehension of the decision.

3.1.2. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a process where all members of the group express any ideas or solutions that occur to them **without logic or deep thought**—quickly and at random. Often an illogical, random thought from one person will lead to a logical thought from another, merely through the association of ideas. All members of the group should be allowed a chance to put forward ideas through effective communication and effective listening.

3.1.3. Group size

How a group performs tasks can be affected by its size. As a group grows in size, more coordination and communication is required to achieve a positive outcome. It is difficult to estimate an ideal group size, but problems can occur when the group becomes big, as shown in Table 1.2.

It has been suggested that a smaller group is better than a large one for solving problems.

Table 1.2 Group size relative to effectiveness

Group Size	Effects of Group Size
Less than five members in a group:	There are fewer people to share task responsibilities. There are fewer potential resources available. There is more personal discussion and interaction. There is more participation by all members of the group. It is easier to reach conclusions and make decisions.

More than seven members in a group:	There are fewer opportunities for all members to participate. There are more potential resources available (synergy). There is more member inhibition and reluctance to participate, which can result in domination by one or two aggressive members. It can take more time to reach a decision. It can result in divisions into sub-groups.

Group Cohesiveness: is when members are attracted to and motivated to remain part of the group. Group cohesion happens when members are of the same socioeconomic background, have the same attitudes, values and needs, and respect and hold one another's competencies in high regard. Some other factors which enhance group cohesion are agreement on group goals; small size; tasks requiring interdependence; and physical isolation from other groups, performance needs, or performance failure or crises.

3.1.4. Team Environment

A poor physical environment can influence team performance. Make sure any group or team you work in has the following:

- **Quiet environment:** Any group of people meeting to create new ideas, make decisions and achieve results needs a quiet location with few distractions and interruptions in order to perform effectively.
- **Good seating arrangement:** In any group situation, whether informal or formal, a good seating arrangement can have a positive outcome, as people can then communicate more effectively.

3.2. Team Building Techniques

To build an effective team out of a group of people, there are several preconditions that exist.

- **Group size:** An effective group needs to be small. For the activities in this book, groups performing practical tasks should consist of no more than three people, unless four are specified.
- **Group matched to task:** Group members who are similar in age, education and experience (homogeneous groups) work better together for simple tasks, where goals and objectives require cooperation, good working relationships and speed of completion. Group members who differ in age, education and experience (heterogeneous groups) work more effectively with creative and more complex projects, if speed is not a consideration.

- **Group cohesion:** Cohesion occurs in a group that works well together. Group members recognize each other's contribution to the group goal, and operate well by using the following stages of formation:

  - ✓ Group contribution. In any team situation, it is essential that each member be allowed to contribute his or her special skills and attributes. Every one of us is good at something: one person is artistic, another good at mathematics, or has superior IT skills, and someone else has good organizational abilities. If all members contribute these special skills to the group goal, this will produce good synergy.

  - ✓ Group objectives. The group identifies and establishes the common objectives required to complete the goal. All members of the group must come to an understanding and agree on how this will be achieved.

  - ✓ Group structure. Coordination is very important, and the appointment of a leader is essential to achieving the group objectives. The leader is responsible for making sure that the group objectives are understood and are completed in the designated time.

- **Leadership:** Some people are born leaders, others have to learn; but it is widely recognized that leaders have some common characteristics:

  - ✓ intelligence
  - ✓ social maturity
  - ✓ motivation and achievement orientation
  - ✓ self-confidence and enthusiasm
  - ✓ good communication skills
  - ✓ commitment to the job.

3.3. Team Decision-Making

The purpose of any group/team in a business is to achieve the corporate goals.

The best decision is one that would not have been taken by an individual alone; is a sound solution to the problem; is based on unbiased input from each team member; and addresses the team's goals. Below are different kinds of decision-making processes:

Method 1: Decision made by authority without group discussion
The leader in the group makes the decision. This is used for simple, routine, administrative decisions when little time is available.

Method 2: Decision made by authority after group discussion
The members of the team create and discuss ideas, but the leader makes the final decision.

Method 3: Decision by expert
An expert is selected from the group and makes the decision.

Method 4: Decisions by averaging individuals' opinions

Each team member is separately asked their opinion and the results are averaged.

Method 5: Decision by majority vote

This is the most commonly used method often by a 'show of hands' until 51 percent or more of the team members make the decision.

Method 6: Decision by consensus

A collective decision is arrived at through an effective and fair communication process. All team members express their thoughts and feelings. Active and effective listening and questioning techniques are used to reach an effective and fair decision.

3.4. Team Work

There are a number of benefits of team work. Among them are:

- distributing the workload
- reinforcing individual capabilities
- creating participation and involvement
- making better decisions
- feeling we play a part in the work being done
- generating a diversity of ideas.

For example, aircraft technicians have to depend on co-workers when a new aircraft is being developed and it is very important for them to get along as a team. Teamwork not only creates safety, but also creates efficiency. The team members work together, learn from each other and feel motivated.

3.5. Support groups

Group therapy offers participants the opportunity of learning and gaining support from others who are experiencing similar problems. The topics covered in support groups include medical management, nutrition, cognitive behavioral techniques, creative expression, stress management and other issues. There are support groups for eating disorders, anger management and drug and alcohol abuse.

3.5.1. Identify and Plan Strategies/Opportunities for Improvement

Workgroups/teams enable organizations to accomplish tasks that individuals cannot do alone. An effective group/team has positive synergy and can become a key human resource of the organization. An effective group or team that is working towards the organization's goals can have a positive effect on individuals in the team, which will improve their performance. It is therefore important for managers to recognize that:

- Group/team activity is important in organizations.
- Groups/teams can have a positive or negative effect on the business and the people who work in it.

- An understanding of group/team behavior can have a desirable effect on workers in the organization.

The use of joint labor–management committees to discuss a wide range of company conditions has been growing for a number of years—conditions such as occupational health and safety, training, or production policy. Strategies to improve workgroups should be put in place as outlined below.

Margerison and McCann identified eight basic types of work functions that group/team members need to perform in order to work effectively:

- Advising: Gathering information and providing it to others.
- Innovating: Coming up with new ideas and new procedures.
- Promoting: Making people aware of new ideas and procedures.
- Developing: Taking the ideas and developing them so that they will work in practice.
- Organizing: Making plans, obtaining approvals, working out budgets, developing schedules.
- Producing: Carrying out the work to implement the ideas or produce the products, ensuring that this is done in an effective way.
- Inspecting: Ensuring that the work carried out meets the standards and policies and procedures of the organization.
- Maintaining: Supporting the other activities to maintain standards.

3.5.2. Linking skills

Linking skills ensure that team members work together in carrying out the above functions: These skills include:

- active listening
- communication
- problem-solving
- team development
- work allocation and delegation
- building team relationships
- setting quality standards
- setting objectives
- interface management
- participative decision-making
- conflict resolution.

| Self-Check – 3 | Written Test |

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. List the four major advantages of solving problems in a group:

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   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Describe the brainstorming and how benefits all members of a group or team:

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Explain Group Cohesiveness

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Explain how team environment can influence team performance:

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. List the several preconditions that exist, to build an effective team out of a group of people.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. List some of the widely recognized common leadership characteristics:

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. List the different kinds of decision-making processes: in which team decisions can be made:

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8. List the number of benefits of team work. Among them are:

_____

_____

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9. list the eight basic types of work functions that group/team members need to perform in order to work effectively:

_____

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_____

10. Linking skills ensure that team members work together in carrying out the above functions: These skills include:

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_____

Answer Sheet

Name: _____   Date: _____

Short Answer Questions