This information sheet discusses some of the underlying principles of working together and identifies some practical strategies for helping the Good Food Group work well together.

RESPECT

It is important to respect all people and their experiences, and what they can bring to the group. Making decisions together relies on everyone in the Good Food Group being respectful of each other so that all members feel that their opinions are being listened to and that their voice can be heard. Taking time to help people to get to know each other can help foster respect.

It can be challenging to work in an environment where different cultures come together and where more than one language is spoken. In order to help all members to really listen to all people and understand their input it might be useful for a group member to act as translator, or for the group to bring in someone who can perform this role.

DEVELOPING A GOOD FOOD SYSTEM IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Information Sheet 3

GOOD FOOD GROUP – WORKING TOGETHER SUCCESSFULLY

STRENGTHS BASED APPROACH

It is motivating to hear about the positive things that are already in place within a community, and the things that have already been successfully achieved. Positive stories encourage people to take more action and to continue working together. Many times successes can be overlooked and quickly forgotten.

It is important that the group not only looks at things that aren’t working well, but also focusses on success. Celebrating the positives can give positive energy and a ‘can-do’ feeling. Remember that change comes in small steps, and that each small step can make a difference. Take time to celebrate!

RESPONSIBILITY

It is important to note that the Good Food Group itself is not responsible for undertaking all the actions that are identified and prioritised by the group. Many actions are already being undertaken by different organisations, groups and people in the community. It is the role of the Good Food Group to support the work of these organisations and people.

Some members of the group may also be employed by these organisations and can therefore support the implementation of the relevant actions as part of their work. For example, in one community Good Food Group, the group were concerned about the increasing sales of confectionery. The store manager who was a member of the group elected to make the store counter confectionery free and placed the confectionery above eye level on the shelves. He successfully implemented this and reported back to the Good Food Group.

Another role of the Good Food Group is to encourage and advocate for areas that could improve the food system. One way to do this is to report recommendations from the Good Food Group to higher governance groups in the community.
“The way of engaging participants is the really strong part; the way of working...... [The Good Food Group members] had taken on board the meeting discussions, understood the actions required of them and were focused.”

Nutritionist (mid-term review, Good Food Systems Project)

More Information

This information sheet is the 3rd in a series titled ‘Developing a Good Food System in your community’. It is based on the work of the Good Food Systems Project led by researchers from Menzies School of Health Research. Information sheets developed at this stage in this series include:

1. Good Food Systems Overview.
2. Good Food Group - Formation.
4. PLAN-DO-COLLECT-LEARN cycle.
5. Tools.
6. The Project.

For more information about the project and the associated tools please click here or visit: http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Projects/Nutrition/Good_Food_Systems_Project/