

ACTIVITY SHEET 1: DECISION-MAKING

How to make sustainable decisions

When an organization makes a decision, it represents agreement among members. But too often, decisions are made but not carried out. There are many reasons this happens, including:

- Members agree because they feel tired of the discussion or feel pressured and give in.
- Members are confused about decision-making processes.
- Members have different interpretations of the decision.

Here are a few things you can do to help your organization make decisions that have solid support.

DEFINE AND AGREE ON HOW DECISIONS WILL BE MADE

- *What is your organization's "Decision Rule"?*
 - Consensus, majority rule, autocratic, etc.
- *Who decides what?*
 - Does the core or officers decide everything? Do committees decide certain things?
- *What is the basis for making decisions?*
 - Do members understand the organization's purpose?

SET THE TONE

- *It's okay to disagree.*
 - Don't take disagreements or challenges personally.
 - Check-in with those who disagree
- *It's okay to make mistakes.*
 - If the group makes a decision that results in errors, the group can discuss what happened and learn from it together.
- *Be open-minded.*
 - Remember that it's a group decision. Welcome new ideas. Try new ways.
- *It's not life or death.*
 - Even if you know you're right, it is not worth fighting over.

KEY STEPS IN DECIDING

- *Summarize the main points of the discussion.*
- *Clarify the decision being made.*
- *Check decisions for full-investment*
 - Draw out remaining questions
- *If it doesn't seem like a clear consensus:*
 - Poll the group.
 - Have more discussion.
 - Try adjusting the proposal and look for a compromise.
 - Discuss the option of postponing the decision.
- *Use your organization's "Decision Rule" to reach a decision.*
- *Record it!*

This Activity Sheet was written by staff and student leaders of SOMeCA. The concepts and tips have been developed through application and reflection.