THE FLOATING STICK
BRIEF FOR FACILITATORS

Key Themes	**Teamwork and Communication**
Participants	**Any number**
Timings	**Suggest 20 to 30 minutes for activity + debrief time**
Materials Required	**Garden Bamboo sticks (one per 8 people)**

Overview

To help participants learn how to work together and communicate. It also highlights that although sometimes difficult, most objectives can be achieved with a little teamwork.

Running the activity

Advise participants that you would like them to carry out an exercise which will demonstrate that anything can be achieved with a little effort and a lot of teamwork.

Ask the participants to line up in two groups facing each other and point the index finger of each hand out in front of them. Now, place the floating stick on top of their outstretched fingers so that it is balanced along the top of each person's fingers in a straight line.

The team must lower the floating stick to the ground without holding on to it, grasping it or losing contact with their fingers. The stick must remain balanced on each person's fingers at all times. If at any point someone loses contact with the stick, the task will be restarted.

Note: As the participants carry out the task they will find that the rod goes up rather than down. Only with concerted effort and a lot of careful communication can they get the rod to move down.

If participants comment that they are going to give up, then provide them with ideas and suggestions that will help. The trick is to take things slow, calmly and carefully and eventually the stick will go down.

Suggested Review Questions

- What was your initial reaction?
- How well did you cope as a group? What skills did the team need to succeed?
- What was difficult about the task?
- What worked well/what did not work?
- How well did you communicate?
- What would you do differently next time?

The Reason?

As everyone is trying to keep their finger connected to the stick, the greater upwards pressure is more than the weight of the stick. Therefore, the stick rises rather than falls.