



Project Management

Course Toolkit

Cyprus
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Introduction – About the Toolkit

This Project Management Toolkit has been produced as part of the broader **Cypriot Civil Society Strengthening Programme** implemented by **INTRAC** (International NGO Training and Research Centre) www.intrac.org, UK, The Management Centre of the Mediterranean www.mc-med.org and NGO Support Centre, www.ngo-sc.org, Cyprus.

This toolkit is intended for use by Cypriot CSOs – we hope you find these materials useful – please let us know if you have any feedback!

Project Management

Course Objectives

- Develop understanding and skills in Project Cycle Management concepts and practice
- Increase awareness of and strengthen skills in applying participatory methods to project/ programme management

Course Content

- The Project Cycle
- Stakeholders and Participation
- Identifying 'problems' and prioritising solutions
- Linking project aims, outcomes, and activities
- Monitoring and evaluating projects/ programmes
- Responding to change in the project context
- Participatory methods for project management

PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

'A PROJECT is a set of related activities planned to take place during a defined period of time to improve the situation of a specific group of people.'

'A PROGRAMME will have a range of strategies working towards defined outcomes. A programme can include a collection of interrelated projects and activities, with a variety of methods of intervention. It may be a mixture of development, relief, advocacy, networking and capacity building.'

Project Cycle Management

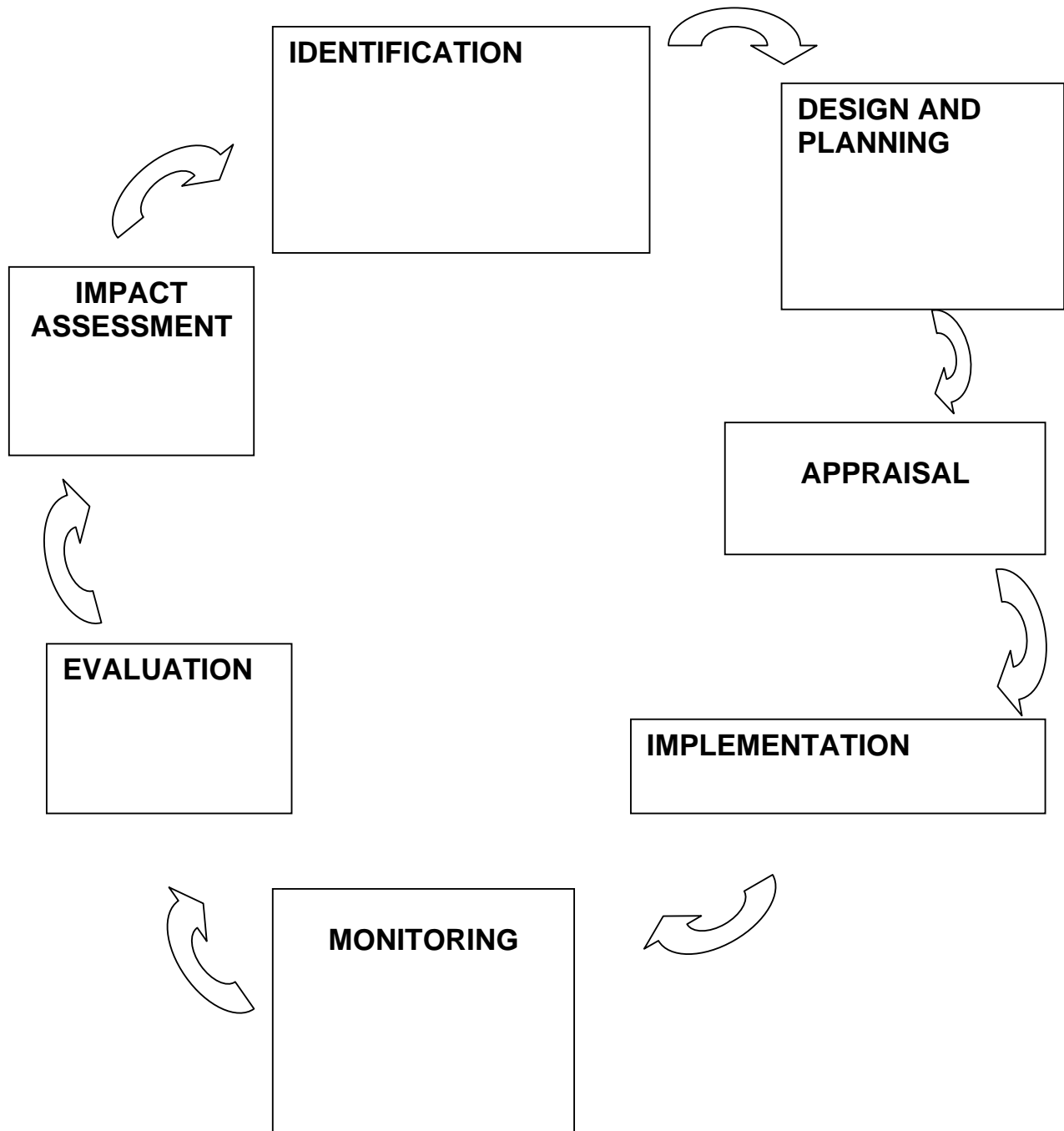
The way in which projects are planned and carried out follows a sequence or pattern which is known as the project cycle.

The cycle starts with an idea and develops that idea into a working plan which can be implemented and evaluated.

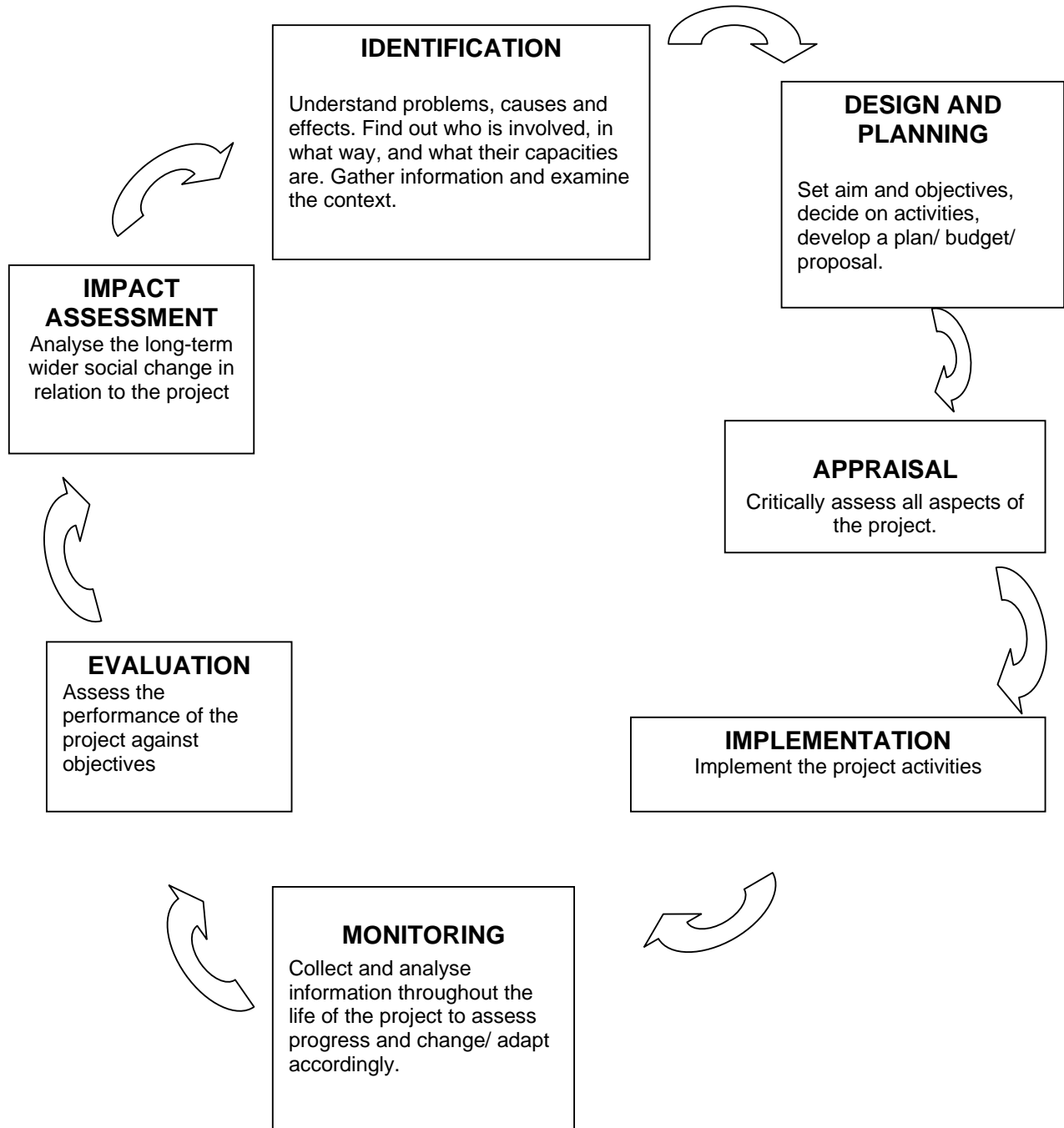
The stages in the project cycle are designed to:

- Help us think through the key steps in setting up and running a project
- Help convert problems or ideas into projects
- Ensure that projects are documented and prepared so that they are technically and institutionally feasible
- Help prioritise between different projects
- Help projects achieve sustainable outputs
- Improve monitoring and reporting
- Encourage and improve the process of learning by experience

THE PROJECT CYCLE



THE PROJECT CYCLE



STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The Stakeholder Concept

NGOs and the project and programme activities they are engaged with are not isolated entities. In the same way that projects must be sensitive to issues of gender and context, an NGO's activities must be drawn from an awareness of and engagement with stakeholders.

Stakeholders can be defined as **all parties who affect or are affected by the NGO/ project**. They can be *individuals, groups, a community* or an *institution* – all those with an interest in an organisation and its activities.

Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder participation is essential to development projects. Stakeholder participation is intended to improve project:

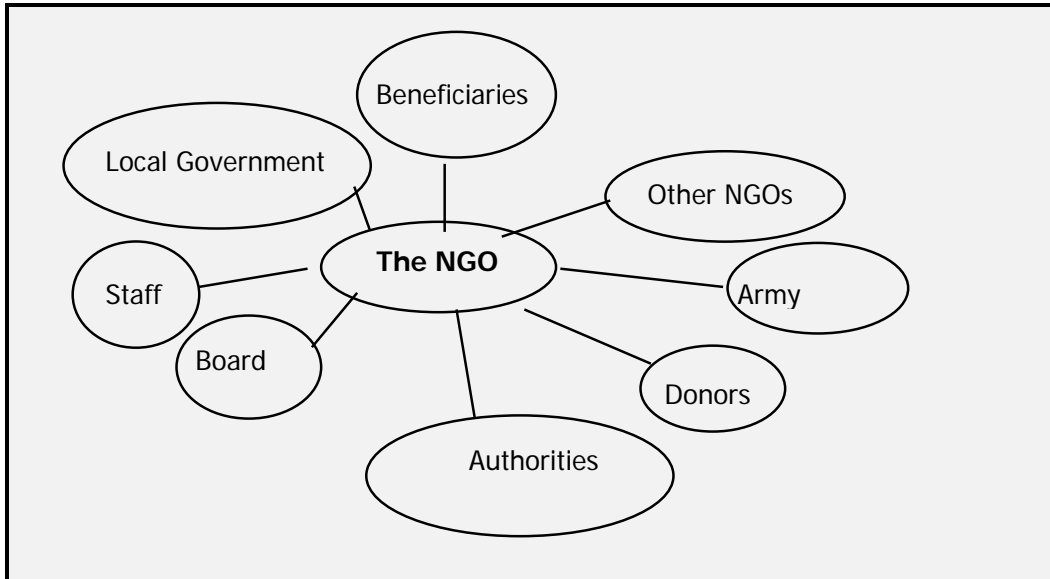
- **Effectiveness**
- **Efficiency**
- **Sustainability**
- **Transparency**
- **Accountability**

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder analysis is increasingly used by NGOs because, as intermediary bodies, NGOs are subject to the influences of many stakeholders. Stakeholder analysis helps NGOs identify and define all the parties who have an interest in their work in a more systematic way than merely responding to the different and conflicting demands they make. It can also help identify any previously unrecognised influences. This information is vital in many different aspects of NGO management (such as project planning, strategic assessment, monitoring and evaluation, relationship building).

Stage One – Identifying and Understanding Stakeholders

Stakeholders are often shown in a "spider diagram" showing those parties with an interest in the NGO. An example of one such spider diagram is given below.



Once the groups been identified, they can be plotted on the matrix below to allow decisions to be made about which stakeholders to consult with.

Project's impact on stakeholder	HIGH	Essential to involve	Essential to involve	Essential to involve
	MEDIUM	Desirable to involve	Desirable to involve	Essential to Involve
	LOW	Involve if possible	Desirable to Involve	Essential to Involve
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
		Stakeholders' interest in project		

Stage Two – Consult with Stakeholders

Stage Two – Consult with Stakeholders

There are many ways in which to collect information, and many types of data to gather.

- *Numerical Data* (Quantitative Data): information measured in numbers
- *Descriptive Data* (Qualitative Data): verbal or narrative information
- *Primary Data*: new data collected for a particular project
- *Secondary Data*: information collected from other people's research
- *Objective Data*: facts collected
- *Subjective Data*: opinions collected

For stakeholder analysis, the data collected will be ***descriptive, primary*** and ***subjective***.

Stage Three – Use what has been Learnt

Once information has been gathered from stakeholders, it should be used to inform and shape project design and planning. The information should be used to check:

- Do the project's objectives respond to the needs of the community?
- Are the outputs of the project given local priorities, resources, etc.?
- Have you learnt anything that could be a major risk to the project's success?
- What assumptions can be made in light of the information gathered?
- Are there any gaps in your knowledge of the community/ project? Do you need to go back and gather more information?

STAKEHOLDER PROFILE

A stakeholder profile is a process and tool useful for helping NGOs to understand their stakeholders.

How to complete a stakeholder profile...

- Detail each stakeholder's interests and indicate ways in which they agree/ conflict with the project's aims
- Consider each stakeholder's ability to influence the project
- Assess the stakeholder's position in the community/ country and what impact participation may have on the stakeholder
- Detail the stakeholder's capacity for participation in the project
- Determine the stakeholder's commitment to the process
- Explore how each stakeholder relates to the others

Complete the table for one of the stakeholders of your project:

Stakeholder:.....

<i>Interests</i>	
<i>Influence</i>	
<i>Status</i>	
<i>Capacity</i>	
<i>Commitment</i>	
<i>Relationships with other stakeholders</i>	
<i>Strengths as a participant</i>	
<i>Weaknesses as a participant</i>	

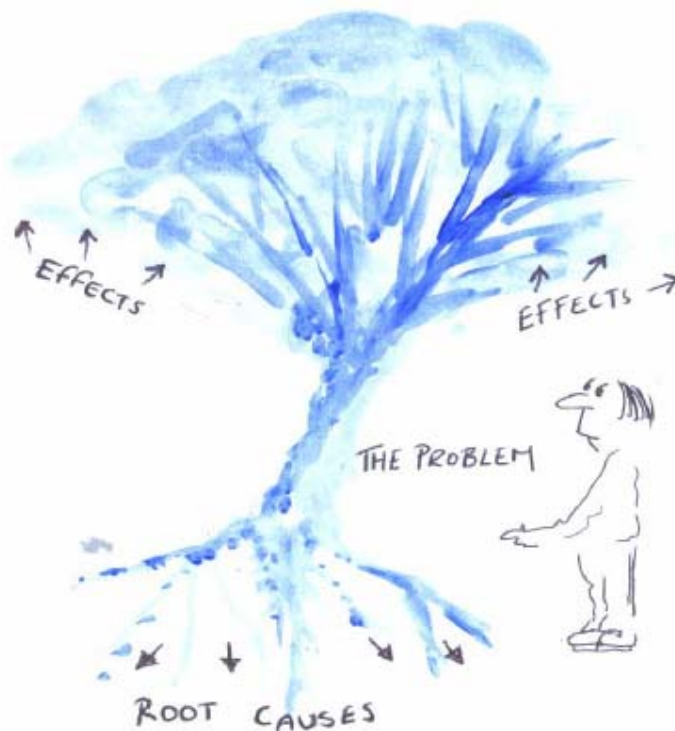
Participation Matrix

	Inform	Consult	Partnership	Control
Identification				
<i>Planning and Design</i>				
<i>Implement- ation</i>				
<i>Monitoring and evaluation</i>				

Problem Trees

Problem Trees are used to help analyse a situation and identify a core problem that you want to focus on. The tree has a trunk that represents the core problem, roots that represent the causes of the problem, and branches that represent the effects.

As a visual mapping tool, this is ideal for gathering information in a participatory way.



Using problem trees:

- ... to help analyse a situation
- ... to identify a key issue to focus on
- ... to clarify the causes of a problem
- ... to allow stakeholders to participate in setting project objectives



How?

- Ask a group of stakeholders to state a common problem facing the community – this is the **trunk** of the tree (the core problem)
- Ask why this problem exists... get to the **roots** (the causes)
- Ask about how the problem impacts upon the community... understand the **branches** (the effects)

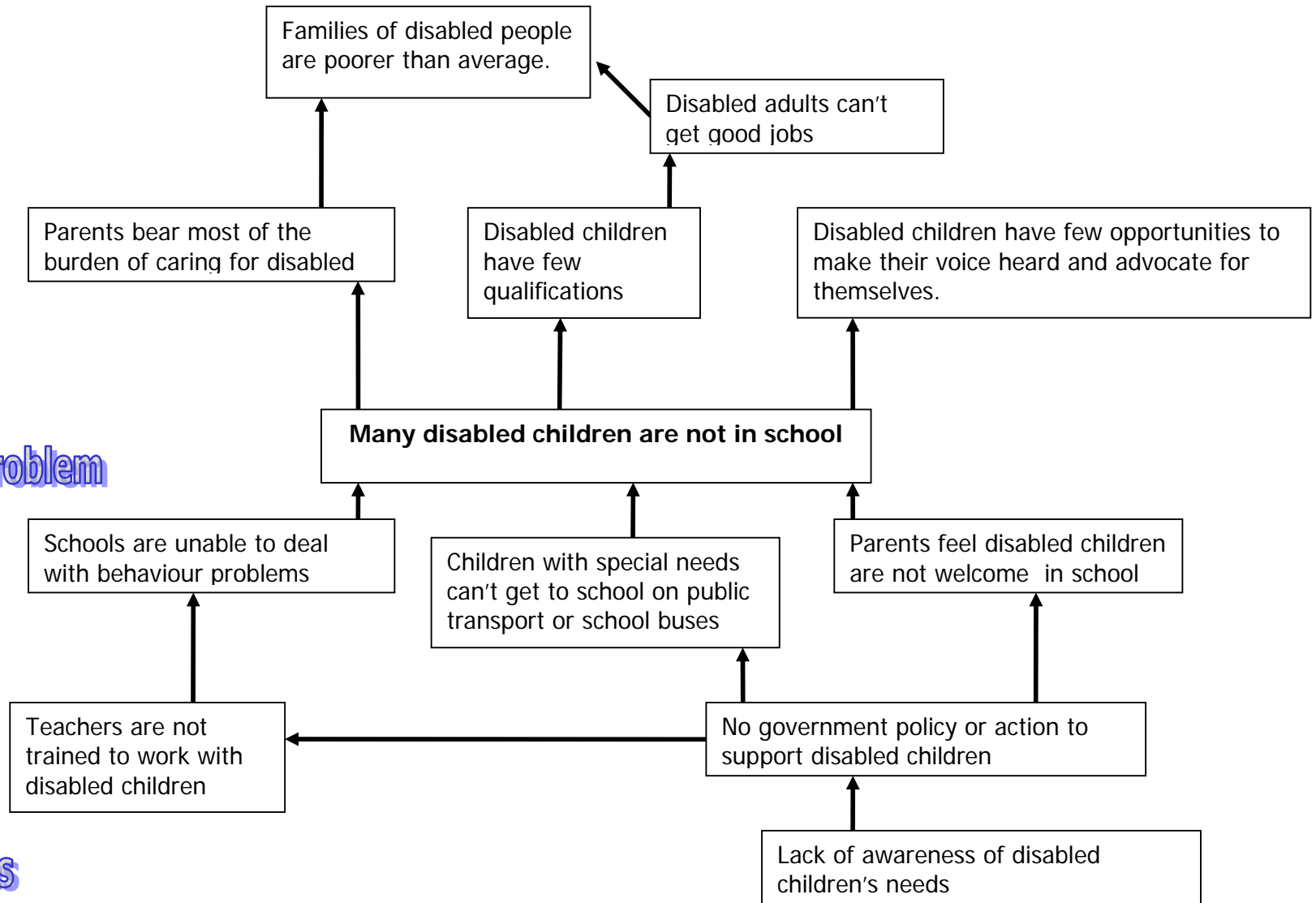
Effects



Main Problem



Causes





Solution Matrix: Many Disabled Children are Not In School

Causes of Problem	Coping Strategies	How Can Local People Solve it
Teachers are not trained to work with disabled children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents come in to class to help out. • Parents talk to teachers to explain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapists could train volunteers to work with disabled children in schools. • Negotiate flexible school attendance
Schools are unable to deal with behaviour problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some schools the dinner lady or the class assistant looks after children with difficult behaviour. • Some children have therapy to help improve their behaviour. 	Retired teachers could help out in class as volunteers.
Children can't get to school on public transport or school buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents arrange transport with private mini-bus companies. • Parents share rides. 	Get mini bus donated.
No government policy to support disabled children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local NGO starting to lobby government. • MP with a disabled child is helping. 	Become more aware of international laws on child rights – contact local UNICEF office; look up websites; organise publicity event and invite TV/radio.
Parents feel disabled children are not welcome in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents talk to the school to explain exactly what the child needs. • Some schools are now making the buildings more accessible with ramps. 	Encourage exchange visits between schools who do/don't welcome disabled children.
Lack of awareness of disabled children's needs	Local NGO trying to raise awareness in the community.	More discussions with local government education services for disabled children.



Solution Matrix: Many Disabled Children are Not In School

Causes of Problem	Coping Strategies	How Can Local People Solve it

Historical Trends and Timelines

Purpose:

To obtain a historical understanding of sequential changes that have occurred, relating to particular points of interest. From a project planning perspective, this could focus on the evolution of a particular problem. This could then be used to start discussions on what the causes could be and to identify possible strategies to help address the problem.

How to:

There are three ways to record discussions that focus on historical data – in written form, as a matrix or as a graph. To develop a matrix summarising historical trends:

1. Agree on what events are important to the situation at hand.
2. On a large sheet of paper draw rows and columns to make a matrix. List dates going along the top, for example, write at the head of three columns: "Today", "10 Years Ago" and "20 Years Ago" (see box below).
3. Write in the topics of interest along the side – such as key local events, key external events, influence of local personalities/groups, major changes (social, environmental, economic) and key trends – as pertaining to the agreed performance questions or indicators or simply to understand specific aspects of the context in which change happened.
4. Work either with a representative group of people or with different, more homogenous groups to fill in the table, using seeds, stones, numbers, etc. The discussion focuses on how people view changes with respect to the issues listed. The quantities indicated are not absolute numbers but are a relative comparison of how the aspect has changed from one time period to the next.
5. You can add a fourth column – "the future" – in which people identify what they would like to see change and what targets they have related to the aspects being discussed. The changes recorded can then be sorted into positive, neutral or negative events, depending on their impact on the organisation or community.

Creating a Vision for a Project

What is Visioning?

Visioning is a technique used to assist key stakeholders in developing a shared vision of the future. In project planning it answers:

- What will be the end result of the activity?
- How will the lives of poor/disadvantaged people have been improved as a result of it?

When do to Visioning?

When you begin the process of project planning, visioning comes after you have clearly described the problem and the current situation and before developing a detailed project plan. The vision provides a basis on which to develop the goal and purpose of your project.

How to do Visioning?

When visioning the change, ask yourself, "What is our preferred future?" and be sure to:

- Draw on the beliefs, mission, and environment of the organization.
- Describe what you want to see in the future.
- Be specific.
- Be positive and inspiring.
- Do not assume that the system will have the same framework as it does today.
- Be open to dramatic modifications to current organization, methodology, teaching techniques, facilities, etc.

Key Components for Your Vision

Incorporate Your Beliefs

Your vision must be encompassed by your beliefs.

- Your beliefs must meet your organizational goals as well as community goals.
- Your beliefs are a statement of your values.
- Your beliefs are a public/visible declaration of your expected outcomes.
- Your beliefs must be precise and practical.
- Your beliefs will guide the actions of all involved.
- Your beliefs reflect the knowledge, philosophy, and actions of all.

- Your beliefs are a key component of strategic planning.

Benefits of Visioning

The process and outcomes of visioning may seem vague and superfluous. The long-term benefits are substantial, however. Visioning:

- Breaks you out of boundary thinking.
- Provides continuity and avoids the stutter effect of planning fits and starts.
- Identifies direction and purpose.
- Alerts stakeholders to needed change.
- Promotes interest and commitment.
- Promotes laser-like focus.
- Encourages openness to unique and creative solutions.
- Encourages and builds confidence.
- Builds loyalty through involvement (ownership).
- Results in efficiency and productivity.

Vision Killers

As you engage in the visioning process, be alert to the following vision killers:

- Tradition
- Fear of ridicule
- Stereotypes of people, conditions, roles and governing councils
- Complacency of some stakeholders
- Fatigued leaders
- Short-term thinking
- "Naysayers" (people who are critical or say no to everything)

Reference:

Adapted from

1. National School Boards Association, Education Leadership Toolkit

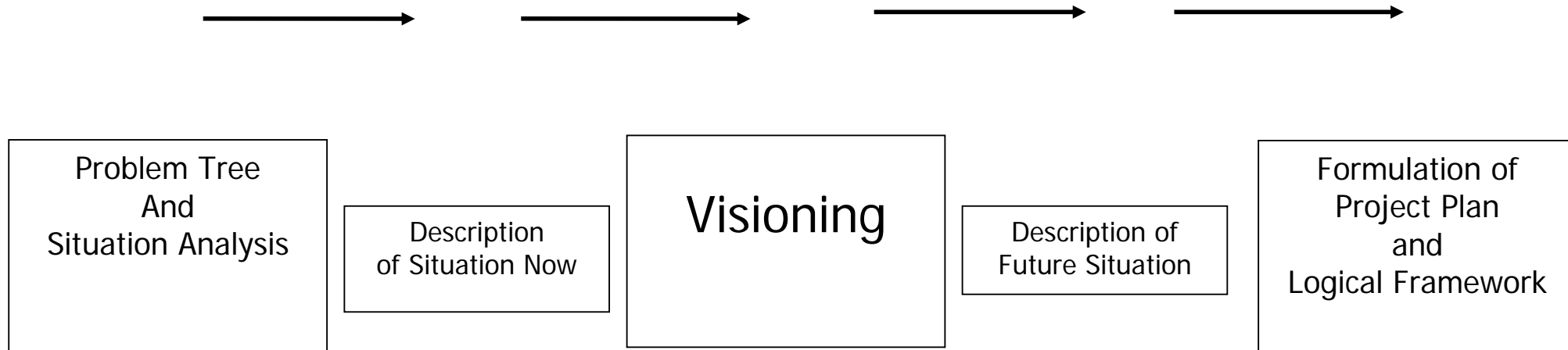
<http://www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/cav.html>

2. Tools for Development / version 15 / September 2002, DFID

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/toolsfordevelopment.pdf>



Where Visioning Fits in



Example of a Vision Statement

Ethiopia Basic Education Project

Adapted from T. Kennedy and S. Jones, Ethiopia Basic Education Project
Workshop Report, 1997

In five years, the Ethiopia Basic Education project would result, in three regions of the country:

Pupils:

- All girls and boys of appropriate ages will be in school and achieve good levels of literacy and numeracy.
- More relevant curriculum taught in local language and including practical skills.
- Reduced drop-out repeat, and failure rates.

Schools:

- Equipped and furnished primary schools with sufficient classrooms, libraries and laboratories.
- Schools will have adequate toilets for teachers and children and water supplies.
- Increasing numbers of schools will have electricity and access to modern teaching aids (e.g. videos, computers)

Teachers:

- Teachers will be well trained, better paid, respected and professionally interested.

Education Officials

- Capacity to do their professional work will be enhanced, including their management skills.

Parents:



- Aware of the importance of education
- Will co-operate in the management of schools
- Will encourage their children to go to school.



Group Task: Visioning Exercise

Objective:

Imagine what the ideal situation in your community would be in 5 years time, after your project has been implemented, and all the problems have been resolved!

For a project helping a disadvantaged group:

In what ways would lives of the people you want to help, and their families, and wider community have changed?

Or

For an environmental or infrastructure project:

What difference would you see in the community / environment as a result of the project? What would people be doing differently? What difference would you see as you look around you?

At this stage, don't think of how the ideal future could be achieved, concentrate on describing what it would look like.

Small Group Work:

- a. In each group, divide into sub-groups of 3 people.
- b. In the sub-groups, discuss what you'd like to see. Draw on the ideas that came out of the Solutions Matrix.
- c. Together, draw a picture of what your vision for the ideal future looks like, if it were achieved.
- d. Discuss your picture, your thoughts and feelings with your group.

Small Group Discussion:

- a. Each sub-group shares their picture in turn with the rest of the group.
- b. As you are presenting, identify the key words or phrases that are most important to your vision (facilitator writes them on a flip chart).
- c. Listen carefully to each other. This is not the time for critical questions or analysis, but an opportunity to get a deeper understanding of how different individuals feel about the ideal future.
- d. Ask any questions for clarification.

Creating a Common Vision:

- a. Review the list of key words from the 3 sub-groups.

- b. Are there themes, ideas, or emotions that are common to each sub-group?
- c. Record these or highlight them to present to the other project group
- d. Ideally they would be encapsulated into one or two sentences.

More examples of shorter project visions...

Cyprus Civil Society Dialogue:

The long term goal of this project is to build a bi-communal think tank which will continually generate ideas and policies and will take part in shaping the future of the island within the European Union. The Cyprus EU Association will host the Think-tank and will support its activities by organising seminars, conferences, workshops and fund raising activities. Other partners will also help supporting the think-tank with their expertise and experience.

<http://blogora.net/page/Cyprus+Civil+Society+Dialogue>

The Silk Road Project Vision

The Project acts as an umbrella organization and common resource for a number of artistic, cultural and educational programs. By examining the cultural mosaic of the Silk Road, we seek to illuminate the heritages of its countries and identify the voices that represent these traditions today. I believe that when we enlarge our view of the world we also deepen our understanding of our own lives and culture. Through this journey of discovery, the Silk Road Project hopes to plant the seeds of new artistic and cultural growth, and to celebrate living traditions and musical voices throughout the world.

Yo Yo Ma, Artistic Director

The University of Edinburgh, Information Services Vision for a new library:

The redeveloped Main Library building will be:

- an intellectual hub for the University
- the focus for a wide range of activities in learning and research
- more open and accessible than it is now
- a place where users can engage and converse with each other and with information specialists

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and Rebecca Wrigley

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Sessions 1 and 2: Participatory Tools and Methods

Learning Objectives

1. Introduce background to participatory tools, e.g. PRA, PLA
2. Discuss why we use participatory tools
3. Present basic principles of how to use participatory tools
4. Familiarise participants with some practical tools for participatory project work and their uses.
5. Give participants practice in using the tools.
6. Develop awareness of the advantages and pitfalls of the different methods.



Background to Participatory Tools

You can only develop yourself – you can't develop someone else

Participatory tools and approaches evolved during the 1970s and 1980s in response to the perceived problems of outsiders not taking local people into account in the context of development work. Previously development projects had been designed and developed by outside 'experts' on behalf of local people – often using very 'technical' processes costing lots of time and money. The following story provides an example:

An agricultural research station in India worked with local farmers to increase the productivity of their barley crop and therefore their income. After seven years of plant breeding experiments they managed to increase productivity by about 20 per cent, which initially delighted local farmers. However, the farmers soon went back to sowing their original barley seed. The researchers were very confused about why all their hard work had failed!

By not working closely with local farmers they had not anticipated that the straw of the new barley was too tough for the farmers' sheep to eat. They therefore could not use the barley as a winter fodder which was just as valuable to them as the sale of the grain. This meant that any benefit received from the increased productivity was cancelled out by the reduction in available fodder.

In response there are now a growing family of participatory tools and approaches that emphasize local knowledge and shared learning.

The purpose of PRA is to enable NGO workers, stakeholders (e.g. government officials) and local people to work together to plan development projects that are relevant to the local context. They can enable people to make their own appraisal, analysis, and plans. The tools can be used at any stage of the project cycle.

Actively engaging local communities and wider stakeholders using participatory tools is important for the effectiveness of development projects because:

- It helps to ensure they 1) **respond to the needs** of local people and 2) are **relevant to the local context**
- It encourages **local ownership** of the project and that its achievements are lasting in the long term.

The methods used range from visualisation, to interviewing and group work. The common theme is the promotion of interactive learning, shared knowledge, and flexible, yet structured analysis.

Examples of Participatory Tools

Participatory Tools we will practice during the course:

- **Focus Group Discussions:** Focus groups, or *focused* group interviews, are facilitated group discussions in which an interviewer asks a series of questions of a group. The group provides answers to the questions, and a discussion follows.
- **Time Line:** An illustration of key events in the life of an individual, household, community or organisation over a specified period of time in the past.
- **Role Play:** Groups role play a situation or a change in the community. Different groups (e.g. men, women, old people) may role play the same situation from very different points of view. The different groups can comment on how each other see the same problem.
- **Matrix Scoring:** This tool allows a group to make a comparison between different options, or different issues, solutions to a problem, or different situations at different times.

Oral Techniques

- **Testimonials:** A recorded narrative - delivered in the first person - of an individual's attitude to and experience of a particular situation or project.
- **Role Play:** Groups role play a situation or a change in the community. Different groups (e.g. men, women, old people) may role play the same situation from very different points of view. The different groups can comment on how each other see the same problem.
- **Dreams or Visioning:** This helps to identify what good changes people would like to see in their community. For M&E it is useful for identifying indicators and is a good basis for planning. Looking 2-5 years ahead is a useful time frame. Start by having people think of their dreams individually then working as a group to draw a common dream out of the separate ones.

Mapping and Modelling

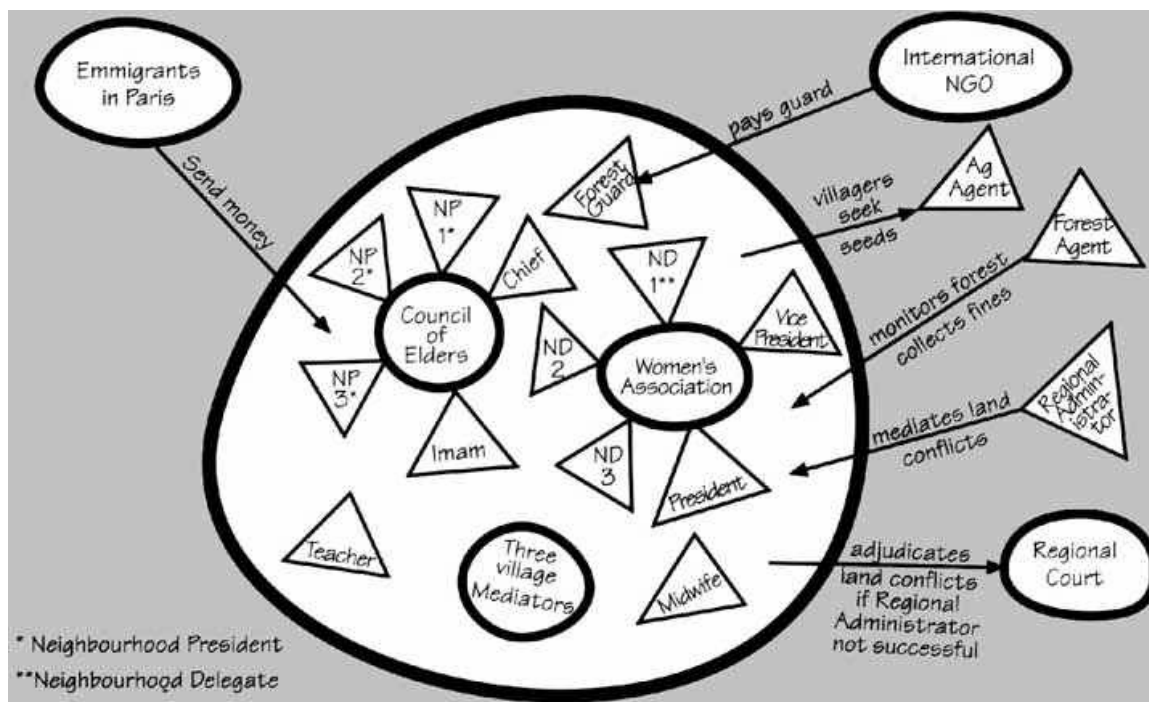
- **Community Mapping:** A community map is a schematic drawing of an area, used to identify the location and types of resources used by a community, from the perspective of its inhabitants. Different information will be shown if the map is done by different groups e.g. women, or children.
- **Transects:** Transects are diagrams of the land use in an area. They compare the main features, resources, uses and problems of different zones. Transects can be constructed by walking in a line through an area with a key informant using direct observation to note specific factors and talking to people you meet on the way (e.g. noting areas which have no shops, which have a lot of litter, where houses are falling down, where there are many beggars, where certain crops are grown etc).
- **Seasonal Calendars:** These are ways of representing seasonal variations in climate, crops, income-generating activities, nutrition, health and diseases, debt,

etc. they can help identify times of shortage – of food, money or time – and the best time of the year for particular kinds of development work.

- **Daily routine diagrams:** These help compare the daily routines of different groups of people, and seasonal changes in the routines. They can help identify suitable times for meetings, training courses, visits et. They can also be useful for assessing changes in household roles between men and women, children and older people, over time. This may be useful for assessing the impact of a programme over time.
- **Livelihood analysis diagrams:** These can help interpret the behaviours, decisions, and coping strategies of households with different socio-economic characteristics. Variables for livelihood analysis may include: proportion of income by sources, expenditure on different items, credit and debt.

Charts & Pictures

- **Flow Chart:** A visual tool for showing causes, effects and relationships in order to explore impacts of a project or a change. People, institutions, resources etc. are represented diagrammatically. Arrows are drawn between them to indicate flows or linkages. For example: relationships between political, economic and cultural factors causing increasing environmental damage; effects of major changes in a community.
- **Venn Diagram:** A Venn Diagram is a set of different size circles - each representing an institution - drawn to show the relationships between a community or household and the institutions that affect it. Different circles indicate the institutions or individuals. When the circles are separate there is no contact between them. If they overlap a little there is some cooperation in decision-making. If they overlap a lot there is considerable cooperation. More powerful groups or individuals have larger circles. An example is given below.



- **Wealth or Well-being ranking:** This can be used to investigate perceptions of wealth differences and inequalities in a community, to discover local indicators and criteria of wealth and well-being and to establish the relative wealth of households in the community. This can be useful if the project is trying to target the poorest people. It is done by making a list of all households and asking different people to sort them into categories according to their own criteria of wealth or well-being (not just economic). Often only three categories are needed: the poorest, middle and richest.

Videos and Photos

- **Photos:** Take pictures of the same place at different times of day, different seasons, before and after a change etc. You can also ask community members to take photos themselves.
- **Videos:** Video role plays, or interviews and use them to discuss issues in a wider group. Again – with some support community members can use videos themselves to present their perspective.

Participatory Tool 1: FOCUS GROUPS

DEFINITION

Focus groups, or *focused* group interviews, are facilitated group discussions in which an interviewer asks a series of questions of a group. The group provides answers to the questions, and a discussion follows.

WHY USE FOCUS GROUPS?

Through discussion by the participants, a range of views is elicited, and new insights can be generated. We can collect a great deal of information, and capture a range of different opinions and perceptions about a service or a topic. The purpose of a focus group is to understand the participants' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way that would not be feasible using one-to-one interviews. Attitudes and feeling are often more likely to be revealed in a group setting, where there is interaction and discussion.

WHO TO INVITE?

Usually between 6 – 10 in order to involve everyone in the discussion. They should be people who have something in common, for instance similar jobs, similar ages, similar age and gender. This is because we want *to explore the same questions with different groups of the population* – to see whether different groups have similar or different perceptions. For instance, do young mothers have similar or different opinions about a programme, or an issue, compared to older men? Try to select people who do not know each other. Focus groups usually work better where the group of people does not already know each other. However, this is only true where people will have the confidence to speak to people that they do not know. The discussion should be planned for not more than 1.5 – 2 hours.

VENUE AND ENVIRONMENT

Ensure the place is welcoming and comfortable. If members of the invited group do not know each other, it may be good to make some time for informal meeting before hand. It can help to provide refreshments. Do you need to provide child care? Have you thought whether the time of day is convenient for the people invited?

If people are shy about talking to each other before the meeting, it can help to introduce two people to each other, and ask them to talk to each other for about 5 minutes about their family, work, or what ever seems appropriate. In this way, every one will feel that they have some form of relationship with at least one other person before the group discussion begins. This can help them feel less anxious.

PEOPLE NEEDED TO RUN A FOCUS GROUP

- One or two facilitator/s – to ask the questions, keep the discussion going and focused and to ensure that there is a summary made of the discussion.
- Note taker – or person responsible for taping the session.
- Other people for organisational purposes – to provide refreshments, child care....

PREPARATION OF QUESTIONS

Design the questions to be used in different phases of the focus group. It is useful to think about three types of question:

- General questions to get participants thinking about a topic
- Further specific questions to get the information required
- Further probing questions – follow up questions – to get at more detail, or more specific information. Probing questions can ask 'why', and 'why' again, in order to understand something better. Probing questions can be used to establish whether what some-one has said is a fact, or whether it is their opinion, and whether the others in the group have different opinions or experiences.

You can have a list of about 10 questions prepared in advance. Questions may have sub-portions. The order of questions is usually influenced by the direction the conversation takes. You may not use all the questions you have prepared if you do not think it necessary, or if the session is becoming too long.

The list of questions should not be too detailed. The aim is to structure questions so that they are clear and stimulate discussion. It is a good idea to test the questions with a pilot group first, - you may want to improve the questions or the order of questioning if you find that they do not work in the way you expected.

HOW TO KEEP THE DISCUSSION FOCUSED AND INTERESTING

The facilitator should try to keep the discussion *focused* on the topic, and at the same time allow people to bring in additional relevant information. This flexibility, and new information, will encourage others to expand on things that are relevant to their own experience or views.

You need to *keep people on track*. Memorise your unstructured questions and keep them in front of you. If you find the discussion is getting off the point, or is becoming personal, then introduce a different question to bring people back to the topic.

You also need to *maintain momentum*. Remember to use probing questions, to ask whether there is any thing else, why something happened, or why was it important

Finally, it is important to get closure on questions. This is because people can feel frustrated if they feel an issue has not been analysed and summarised. Make sure that all the views expressed are included in the summary. It is often useful here to remind people that this is not a debate, and that you are interested in knowing the range of views and information.

AGENDA FOR A FOCUS GROUP

Your focus group should include the following stages:

- Welcome
- Introduce yourself and other facilitators

- Explain the goal of the meeting: - why we are here, what you want to gain from this meeting, and why do you need this information. Explain that you are interested in knowing the *range of opinions held by the participants*. *This is not a debate*. People are *not* expected to persuade others to agree with them. There is no 'right' and 'wrong' answer that we want to hear. We therefore hope that people will give us their own information and express their own views, even when they are not in agreement with others.
- Explain how the meeting is to be recorded (note taker, tape recorder...)
- What will happen to the records? Here there are issues of confidentiality. Be clear about whether or not participants will be identified when the information is analysed, or whether it will be anonymous. Will copies of any reports be available to the participants? It is important to be very transparent here.
- Ask the group to introduce themselves
- Facilitated discussion – this is described above under 'Preparation of questions' and 'How to keep the discussion focused and interesting.'
- Conclusion – thank people for attending. Tell them again what will happen to the records of the meeting. Will you provide copies of any final reports to them....

WHEN SHOULD WE USE FOCUS GROUPS?

- For exploratory work: this is when we want to understand the broad nature of issues that particular groups face. This can help us identify areas that we need to understand better.
- To assess the dimensions of a topic. This is similar to the point above, but is more focused – this will be useful in planning our work, to make it more relevant for particular groups. It is also a useful way of evaluating our work, by collecting the views of different groups about a similar project.
- To get in-depth knowledge about a topic – range of experiences etc
- To study how opinions form and change via group discussion. This can be useful in awareness raising workshops etc.

Remember that you cannot generalise from a focus group to a larger population. This is not the purpose of a focus group. The purpose is to understand issues from the points of view of different groups.

FACILITATOR SKILLS

It is important to create an open, tolerant, and non-judgemental atmosphere so that members are comfortable expressing their ideas. Make participants feel at ease. Facilitate open communication by asking open-ended questions. Use probing questions for additional information when necessary. The facilitator needs to avoid giving personal opinions. It is not the facilitator's job to influence discussion in particular direction.

TASK

You will develop a role play of a focus group discussion of your choice. Pick a topic and develop a set of general and probing questions that you will use. Allocate tasks to different members of the group. Some should play the interview team (facilitator, note taker etc) and some should play the focus group. After the break, run the focus group discussion as a role play (10 mins maximum).

Participatory Tool 2: Matrix Scoring

Purpose:

To make a comparison between different options, or different issues, solutions to a problem, or different situations at different times. Matrix scoring shows how well options meet a criteria. This method can be used to understand people's opinions on for example, different organisations' services, changes over time, or different activities that aim to reduce a problem.

How to:

1. First be clear about what you want to compare. The example below is a decision matrix to help decide what trees should be planted in a village.
2. Discuss and agree what you want to show, and what headings you will use. This is an example.
3. The value of the method comes from the discussions that are provoked as participants come to a decision about the final scores of each indicator / factor / option.
4. All the criteria need to be worded in the same way i.e. positive or negative terms (for example score for positive characteristics like 'keeps well in transit' rather than 'easily spoiled in transit' – which is negative).
5. Decide on the scoring system: you can allocate a maximum points per box (e.g. 5) or you can specify a total number of points to allocate per criterion (for example distribute 25 points for good taste between the different fruit).

Fruit tree	Good taste	Easy to sell	High productivity	Less land occupation	High market price	Total
Little apple	****	****	*****	*****	****	22
Walnut	*****	*****	*****	*	*****	21
Peach	*****	***	****	****	***	19
Persimmon	**	*****	*****	**	*****	19
Plum	***	**	*****	*****	**	17
Pear	*****	**	**	**	**	13
Apple	*****	*	**	****	*	13

6. Discuss and decide on scores as a group. The process of reaching agreement through discussion is key. Voting defeats the purpose as the group needs to decide by consensus and understand the reasons for the preference.

Task

1. Decide what topic you are going to examine.
2. Prepare a matrix as above.
3. If you have time, try a second type of matrix using different scoring system or scoring for 'before' and 'after' a project or an event.
4. Discuss in the group what you found was useful about the process and what was challenging
5. Prepare a flipchart to present to plenary after the break, summarizing these points.

Participatory Tool 3: Timelines

Purpose:

This method supports action planning by generating a whole picture of a situation, issue or problem as seen by all the different stakeholders in a project. This helps the group to share a common starting point, can help identify patterns from the past, and then see what learning can be applied in the future.

Materials: A long sheet of flipchart paper or several stuck together on a long wall horizontally (or a roll of wallpaper lining is ideal); A5 cards of different colours; markers for everyone.

Group Size: Minimum 8 people

Procedure:

1. Place cards with years or months (depends on the time scale you are using) across the top of the sheet.
2. Ask participants to work in groups of 4 and write significant events relevant to the project or issue on the cards (one event per card).
3. Collect the cards, read them, clarify items, and place them under the appropriate year/month on the time line.
4. Summarize and review the results briefly.
5. Groups continue to write new cards, to fill in gaps, or add details.
6. Look for patterns and periods of change. Label the patterns above the years with new cards.
7. Discuss with the group what new insights the time line brings. What have they learnt from this? What forces have shaped the present? What can be learnt for the future?
8. If appropriate, ask the group for projections about the future.

Comments / Options:

- This method relies heavily on the shared knowledge of the group, bringing out a rich history greater than the knowledge of any one individual.
- The historical scan can help frame future steps for strategic planning
- The time line can be colour coded with different groups of stakeholders using different coloured cards or pens (e.g. for a project dealing with drug abuse: medical staff; police; social workers; community leaders; and young people etc. could each have a different colour).
- The time line can also be used to draw out positive and negative events more clearly: positive above the line, negative below the line
- External events impacting on the project can also be added (e.g. availability of crack cocaine; HIV/AIDS transmission).
- It can be done with pictures instead of words and labels.
- This activity is a good context setter in the early stages of a workshop. It is a means of establishing a common ground for future thinking. It does not have a final outcome and needs to be followed up with other planning and analysis tools.

Task

1. In your group, decide on a topic that you want to use to practice the time line.
2. Run through the process as a practice during the first 20 mins of the session.
3. Discuss what went well, and what you'd do differently.
4. Decide who will present the exercise in plenary.

Sessions 3 and 4: Monitoring and Evaluating Projects / Programmes

Learning Objectives

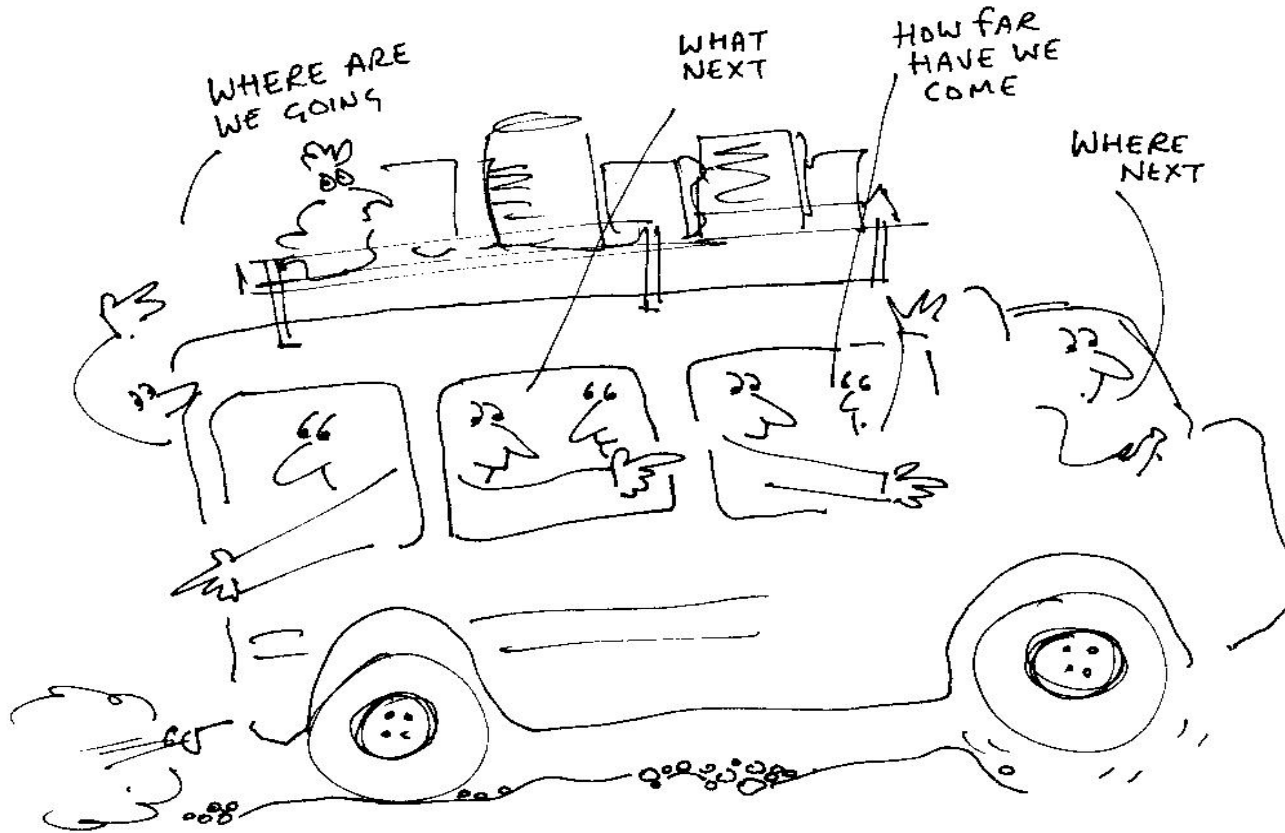
- Understand what monitoring and evaluation is and why it is important.
- Understand the use of indicators.
- Participants design a monitoring system for their project.

Why is Monitoring and Evaluation Important?

"If you don't know where
you're going, any path
will do"

Cheshire Cat – Alice in Wonderland

Why is Monitoring and Evaluation Important?



Monitoring and Evaluation: Levels of M&E

Point of measurement	Type of measurement	What is measured
Outputs	Monitoring	Effort (implementation of planned interventions)
Objectives	Evaluation	Effectiveness (has planned change happened?)
Impact	Impact Assessment	Change (has planned change affected beneficiaries as expected?)

Examples of Indicators

Objectives (changes you are looking for)	Indicators (how you know change has happened)
Increased health of community members	Number of visits to local doctor
	Incidence of childhood diseases
Increased participation of women in political processes	Number and percentage of women voting in elections
	Number and percentage of women members of parliament
Increased participation of citizens in civil society	Number of people volunteering for a civil society organisation
	Number of civil society organisations formally registered
	Number of people who are members of a civil society organisation
Increased environmental health of a river system	Number and diversity of fish species found in river
	Concentration of chemicals found in river
	Number of months during the year that the river has flow of water
	Cases of reported chemicals spills into river system
	Diversity of plants and insects on river bank
Improved well-being in rural communities	Increased productivity of local olive groves
	Increased number of young people finishing school and attending further education
	Increased number of small scale business enterprises established and profitable.
	Increased government support received to renovate old buildings
	Increased average household income
Reduced rate of HIV/AIDS infection	Increased availability of free condoms to vulnerable communities (e.g. sex workers)
	Increased number of people aware of HIV/AIDS and causes of infection
	Increased access to clinics offering advice and testing for sexually transmitted diseases
	Number of intravenous drug users who share needles
	Number of new cases of HIV/AIDS infection

The M&E Matrix Worksheet

Objectives and Outputs (what change you are looking for)	Indicators (how will you know change has happened)	Data Gathering Methods And Frequency (how will you collect information)
Objective:		
Output 1:		
Output 2:		
Output 3:		

Core Data Collection Methods

For M&E

1. Document Review

What information already exists?

e.g. health clinic records, population statistics, school enrollment figures, old photographs, municipality records, university studies, geographical maps, etc.

2. Stakeholder Analysis

Who needs to be involved in the M&E Process?

e.g. project beneficiaries, local officials, project staff, people who live in the area, etc. Decide with the key stakeholders how they should be involved in M&E.

3. Physical Measurements

Weighing (e.g. to measure malnutrition in children, or yield of a crop), counting (e.g. lambs born, carpets completed).

4. Direct Observation

Visits to a community, to a health centre, farm, school etc. Best if done by several people (to cross check information) and documented with a checklist or a short report.

5. Questionnaires and surveys

Questionnaires can be face to face, on the phone, posted, or picked up and filled in by people at a centre (e.g. clinic or youth club).

Surveys are usually more elaborate and involve sampling (see separate sheet).

6. Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews based on a check list of questions but which also can address new questions which arise. They usually include discussion and allow feedback on opinions about the project. They are useful for collecting information on unintended effects of a project.

7. Case Studies

Used to document the life story or sequence of events over time relating to a person, household, village, place, or organization. Can also be filmed on video and done in a participatory way by people in a community interviewing each other.

Session 5: Adapting to Change in Project Contexts

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how the wider context can influence development projects.
2. Understand how unexpected, or emergent, events can affect project implementation
3. Anticipate change and how to adapt to it.

Understanding Systems and Change

What is a system?

System: Set of elements joined together to make a complex whole.

Why think about systems?

Throwing a Stone and a Bird

When throwing a stone do you know where it will land?

A stone's trajectory can be predicted quite accurately using the laws of mechanics

When throwing a live bird do you know where it will land? Why not?

A bird is much less easy to predict – unless of course you tie it to a stone! – but then you are destroying its capability as a bird.

The projects that we plan are not isolated from the world we live in but are intricately interconnected and affected by it. By developing a programme logic we can sometimes simplify things too much - that is we think about how the stone responds and not the bird!

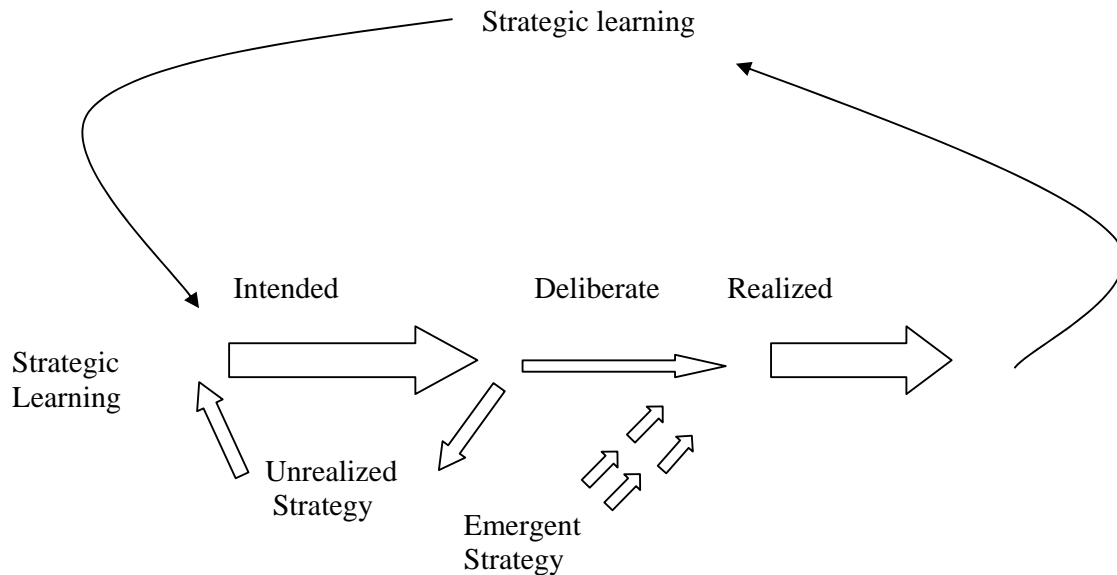
The human systems in which we live are living organisms – they respond like birds not rocks! They are not like predictable machinery. They come to life. They have an identity, a memory, patterns of behaviour, disabilities, a life span and in most cases, death.

Effects of small changes in a system can cause, through feedback loops and multiplying effects, large changes in the system. These 'feedback loops' can be difficult to predict and may therefore cause unintended consequences. For example:

In Africa people imported a plant called the water hyacinth so they could have nice flowers in their garden ponds. What they didn't expect is that it would like the environment so much. It spread from ponds to lakes and grew fast. In Lake Victoria it has spread so much that it is now blocking villages and their fishing boats can no longer go out to fish!

This can have a significant effect whether a project achieves its goals. The development world is littered with such situations!

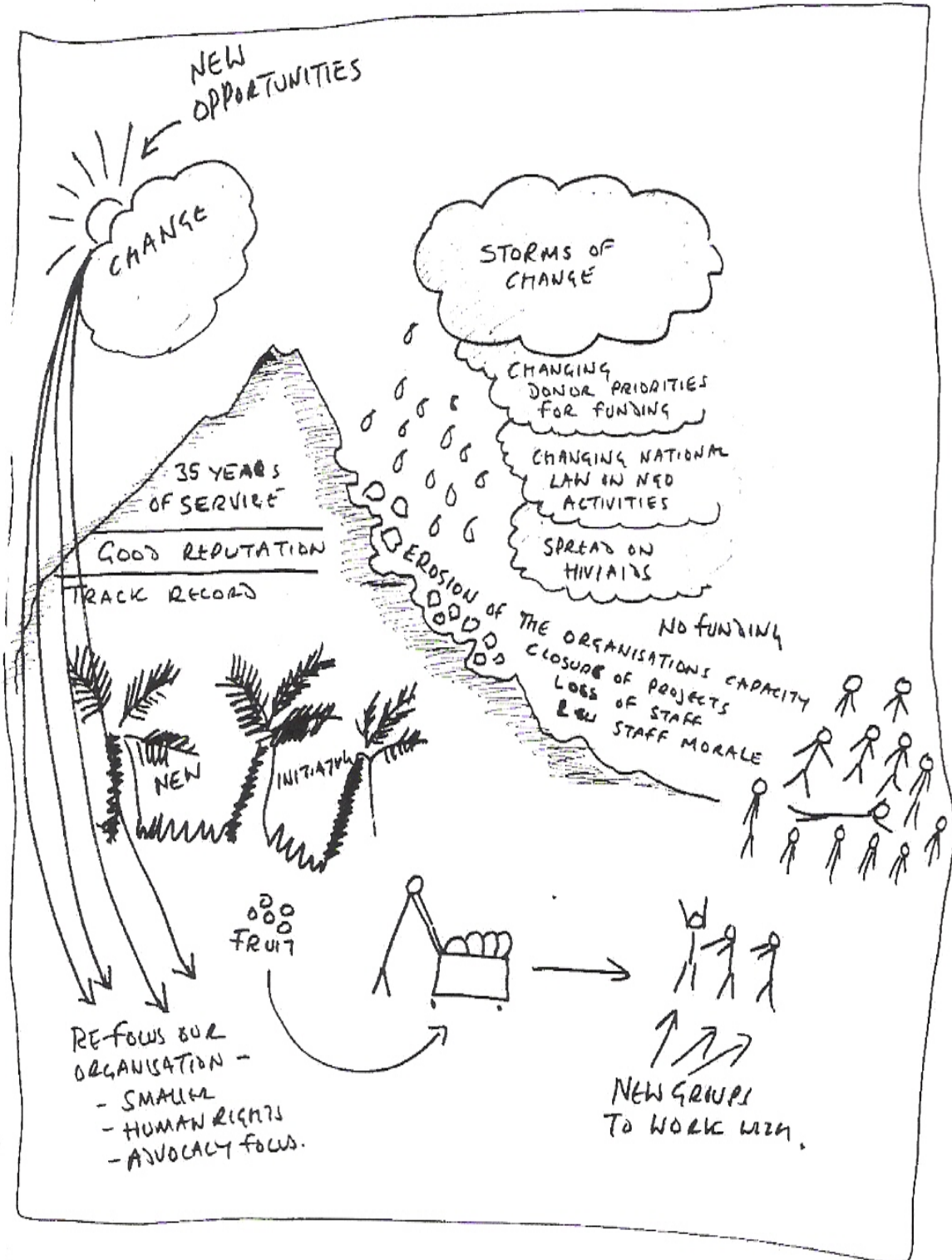
Strategy Formation: Mintzberg's¹ Model



- **Intended strategy** refers to the strategic goals
- **Deliberate strategy** means those intentions which actually happened in practice.
- **Unrealized strategy** refers to the intentions, which, for whatever reason, were never translated into action.
- **Emergent strategy** is the pattern of the organisation's responses to changes in the external environment which were not anticipated when the original strategy was formulated, but which created opportunities.
- **Realized strategy** is the strategy actually implemented and is the sum of deliberate strategy (which was intended as part of the original strategic plan) and emergent strategy (which was not foreseen but which was consistent with the organisation's mission and values and was implemented).
- **Strategic learning** feedback loops recognise the importance for managers of learning from the experience of what happened and why so that future intended strategies can be better formulated.

¹ Source: Mintzberg H and Quinn JB (1992) *The Strategy Process: Concepts and Contexts*, Prentice Hall, USA.

Example of using a Rich Picture to map a system



Session 6: Introduction to Logical Framework

Learning Objectives

1. Introduce the Logical Framework often used as a planning tool often used by funding organisations.
2. Explain how what we have learnt so far can be used to develop a logical framework.

The Logical Framework: A HIERARCHY OF OBJECTIVES

What is a Log Frame?

The Logical Framework (or Log Frame) is one of the most widely used tools in project planning in development. It links the main activities of a project with wider development goals.

Why is it useful?

- It helps organise thinking
- It relates inputs to outcomes
- It assigns responsibility
- It acts as an action plan for a project
- It is a communication tool between stakeholders
- It helps promote stakeholder consensus

Why is it 'logical'?

It uses **If... Then...** logic

IF these inputs are available **THEN** these activities can take place. Next, **IF** we undertake the activities **THEN** we will create the outputs. **IF** the outputs are achieved **THEN** the purpose will be fulfilled.

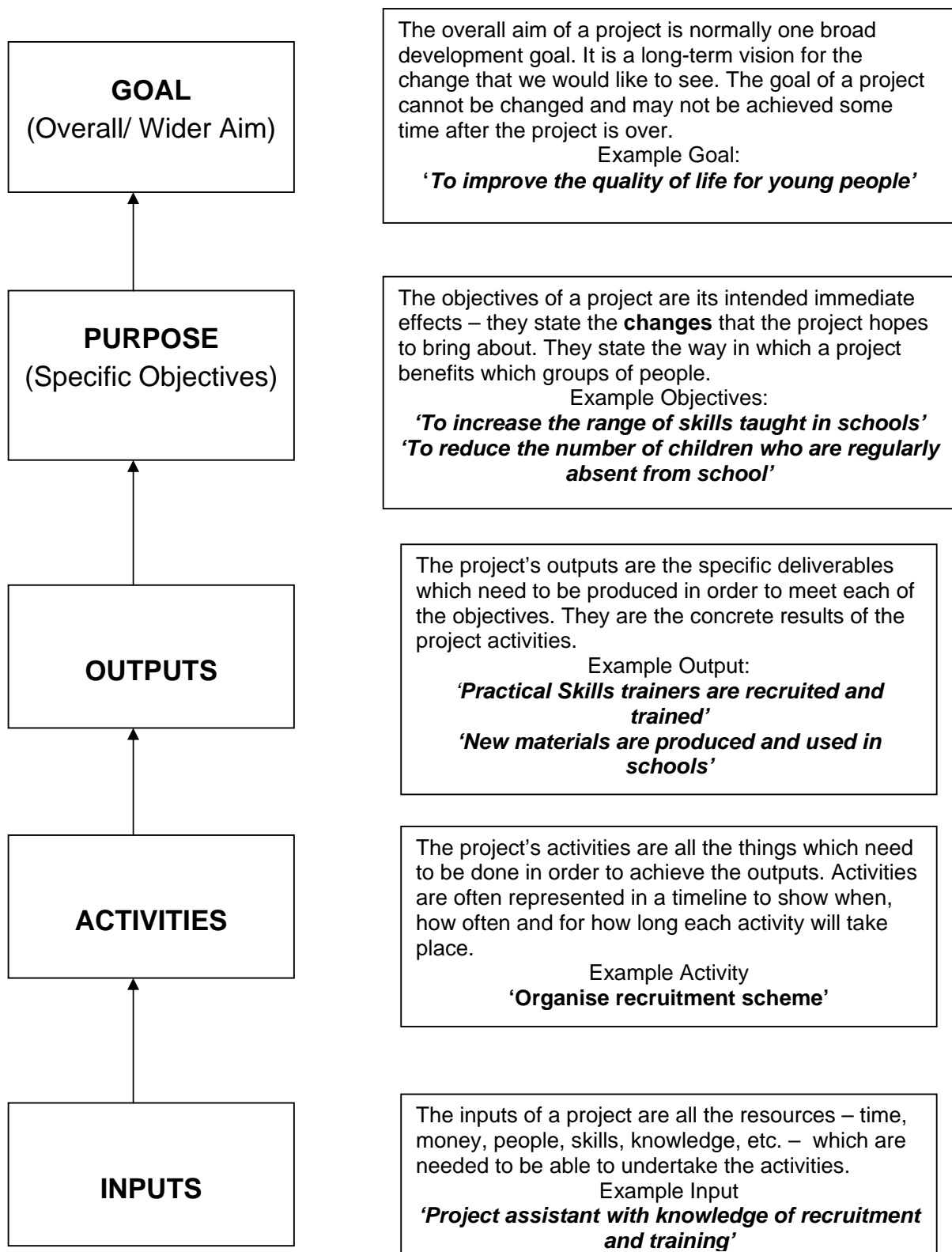
What are some of the limitations of the Log Frame?

- Constructing the framework is time-consuming and requires training
- Complex ideas, processes and relationships are simplified
- Cause-effect concept does not always hold true, particularly in conflict situations
- Managers may become too attached to specific targets – these targets may be unrealistic
- It may impose too much rigidity on projects which need to be flexible and responsive to changing circumstances

How can some of these limitations be overcome?

- Log Frames can be used as 'living' documents – changing as a project evolves
- Gather sufficient information in the identification phase to ensure the *project has the most appropriate objectives*
- *Ensure that indicators are clear and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound)*

The Logical Framework: A HIERARCHY OF OBJECTIVES



THE LOG FRAME MATRIX

Project Structure/ Summary	Indicators of Achievement	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
<p>GOAL</p> <p>Overall goal which the project will help to achieve</p>	<p>The evidence (quantitative and qualitative) which will be used to measure/judge the achievement of goal</p>	<p>Sources of information/ data which will be used to assess the indicator(s)</p>	<p>Main external factors necessary to sustain the objective in the long-term</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>Immediate impact upon project area or target group – the change or benefit to be achieved by the project</p>	<p>The evidence (quantitative and qualitative) which will be used to measure/judge the achievement of the purpose</p>	<p>Sources of information/ data which will be used to assess the indicator(s)</p>	<p><i>(Purpose to goal)</i></p> <p>Main external factors necessary if project purpose is to contribute to reaching project goal</p>
<p>OUTPUTS</p> <p>The specific deliverable results expected from the project to attain the purpose</p>	<p>The evidence (quantitative and qualitative) which will be used to measure/judge the achievement of the outputs. <i>Remember QQT (Quantity, Quality, Time)</i></p>	<p>Sources of information/ data which will be used to assess the indicator(s)</p>	<p><i>(Outputs to purpose)</i></p> <p>Main external factors necessary to achieve project purpose; factors which may restrict this</p>
<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>The tasks to be done to produce the outputs</p>	<p>The kind and quality of activities to be produced when</p>	<p>Sources of information/ data which will be used to assess the indicator(s)</p>	<p><i>(Activity to output)</i></p> <p>Main external factors necessary to achieve project outputs; factors which may restrict this</p>

My Personal Action Plan

What 3 actions will I take following this training:

1.

2.

3.

How will I do them?

By when?