

From the Roots Up

Strengthening Organizational Capacity through Guided Self-Assessment

Peter Gubbels & Catheryn Koss
World Neighbors

World Neighbors Field Guide
Capacity Building



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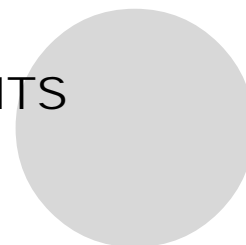
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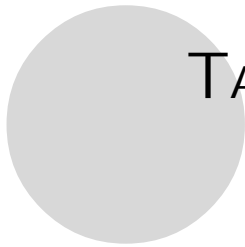


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PREFACE

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since the first edition of *From the Roots Up* was printed, we have received comments and suggestions from readers working with international NGOs, educational institutions and U.S. based grassroots organizations. We were able to incorporate much of this feedback into this revised second edition of the field guide.

While most people found the format user friendly, several readers commented that the density of the guide made it difficult to find the information they needed. In response, we expanded Chapter Two to provide a chapter by chapter outline of the guide's contents. Used in combination with the Table of Contents, this should make it easier to move through the guide.

We also tried to respond to some of the common questions that emerged regarding the process. Many users wondered how the methods outlined in the guide could be "scaled back," or used in less intensive and time consuming ways. Angus Heard-Hughes from Heifer Project International wrote, "I found myself wondering how this elaborate process/set of tools might be simplified for an organization unable to conduct an all out self-assessment." At the end of Chapter Five we attempt to address this concern, although we welcome others' ideas on the issue. Another common question was how to deal with resistance to change, particularly from organizational leaders who may feel threatened by certain outcomes of the self-assessment. In the chapter on Working with Facilitators (Chapter Seven) we added a section on how to anticipate and address this type of resistance. We also expanded Chapter Three to include more information on the benefits of organizational self-assessment and how organization members can continue to learn and improve once they have reached their capacity-strengthening goals.

Readers also shared their feedback on the level of detail and structure. Robert Chambers wrote, "A virtue is being systematic and prepared in advance. But there is a downside to that because it can lead to dominance and too much structure... Reading this makes me recognize anarchic tendencies in myself. I have been advocating 'optimal unpreparedness' in my book, and there is over-preparedness here. But you could argue that structure and discipline are needed. Trade-offs, as ever."



PREFACE

While we agree that there is a danger in over-preparedness, we suggest that there is an even greater risk with insufficient preparation, particularly when facilitators lack the depth of experience needed to conceive new exercises or processes on the spot. Our experience has shown that structure, when it is not rigid, can actually increase facilitators' ability to be flexible and innovative. As unexpected issues or needs emerge, it is much easier to adapt and change planned exercises than it is to invent activities from scratch. Problems arise not when there is too much structure, but when the facilitators are unable or unwilling to make changes in response to the participants' priorities, feedback and learning styles. Rather than advocating for "optimal unpreparedness," we encourage optimal preparedness tempered by responsiveness and flexibility.

We have tried to emphasize throughout the guide that the methods presented are only suggestions, and that they always need to be adapted and changed to fit specific contexts and needs. However, by providing the process details, we do run the risk of stifling innovation. This challenge of trying to give enough information so that users at different skill and experience levels can effectively apply the methods, but still promote flexibility and creativity, is one with which we continue to struggle. In the end we have decided that providing too little information could exclude more users than including too much detail, and we ask those wanting less structure to use the outline in Chapter Two and the Table of Contents to navigate and find the information they can use.

Thanks to all those who shared their encouragement and suggestions with us. We particularly appreciate learning about how users are applying and adapting these methods in a variety of contexts. We hope that others will share their feedback with us so that we can continue to learn from these experiences and improve this resource.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



As practitioners, our primary sources of learning have been from colleagues, from the growing pool of participatory action learning literature, and from our own improvisations and experiences in the field. We do not claim sole ownership of any of the methods presented in this field guide, nor do we attempt to attribute the ideas to any one particular original source. In the appendix we have listed many of the printed resources that have been useful in this ongoing process, as well as contact information for ordering them.

This field guide is the result of a collaborative effort by many rural communities, program leaders and organizations who worked to develop effective methods for strengthening the capacity of local organizations. It would be difficult to unravel the tangled web of invention, adaptation and synergy that contributed to this guide, which itself is still evolving. However, we would like to acknowledge some of the key people and organizations involved in this learning process.

Very little could have been accomplished without the support and input of our World Neighbors colleagues and community partners in West Africa. They not only gave us the first opportunity to learn by doing, but also patiently bore the consequences of our relative inexperience. Special thanks goes to Fatoumata Batta, Salim Touré, Paul Bandre, Charles Lankoande and Fatimata Lankoande. Thanks also goes to Mick Howes, formerly of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex whose insight, experience and critical feedback provided invaluable support during the initial year of this effort.

The staff and local partners of various peer agencies also contributed to the body of experience reflected in this guide. These include SOS-Sahel (Mali), Réseau de Gestion Décentralisée des Ressources Naturelles de cinquième Région (GDRN5) (Mali), ISODEC (Ghana), Association Tin Tua in Fada N’Gourma (Burkina Faso), Capacity-Building for Decentralised Development (CBDD) (Nigeria), Agence Seeno (Burkina Faso) and 3AG (Mali). Within these agencies, Mary Allen, Aly Basha Konaté, Nicholas Atampugre, Sintiki Tarfa, Abba Gana Shettima, Tsuamba Bourgou and Siapha Kamara provided valuable insights and ideas.

Without the participation, encouragement and support of colleagues within World Neighbors headquarters, this guide, and the experience it documents, could never have been produced. Denise Caudill helped shape many of the original exercises, initiated documentation of the



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

process and continues to create innovative and effective participatory tools and methods. Jethro Pettit, as the Director of International Programs, provided critical institutional support. His leadership and vision not only engendered this initiative, but shepherded it through challenging obstacles and hurdles.

Lastly, this work would not have been possible without the generous financial contribution of NOVIB (the Netherlands), member of Oxfam International, who sponsored the initial phase of the program in West Africa and co-funded the production of this guide.

To all, our sincere and grateful thanks.

THE BIG PICTURE

1

1.1 TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT

The number and size of local non-government organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) involved in development work has rapidly increased over the last 15 years. At the same time, local government structures in many parts of the world have assumed more responsibility for promoting community development in response to trends towards government decentralization and democratization. These trends have not always been accompanied by an improvement in program performance at the community or district levels. In many countries there are signs that a rapid expansion of local NGOs/CBOs and the increasing role of local government may actually be lowering the quality of community development programs overall, partly because local organizations have limited capacity and experience in participatory approaches to community development.

Recently there has also been a shift in the donor community towards a “performance culture” emphasizing effectiveness, impact, cost-efficiency and accountability. However, evaluations of local development programs typically only measure results in terms of outcomes and benefits (i.e., clean water, increased income, etc.). Often, they do not assess the *process dimensions* of the program (the way these outcomes were achieved), although there is a growing realization that poor performance may be linked to internal organizational problems.

In response to this realization, the emerging trend in impact assessment and evaluation is to include management and capacity issues. This is designed to increase the effectiveness and viability of local organizations *as organizations*, rather than only focusing on what they do (i.e., the projects they and their community partners implement). This more holistic approach recognizes that project assessment cannot be divorced from the assessment of the organizations that plan, implement, support or fund them. Assessing the organizational capacity of intermediary NGOs, CBOs and local governments has become an essential competency area.

This shift to capacity building and institutional strengthening is also linked to the notion of “sustainability” and “strengthening civil society,” with the recognition that community capacity requires supportive local organizational structures and processes. It is leading donor agencies away from micro-management and towards transferring the responsibilities of assessment and improvement onto the local organizations themselves.

In This Chapter

- 1.1 Trends in Development
- 1.2 Two Perspectives on Capacity Assessment
- 1.3 Developing These Tools & Methods
- 1.4 The Cycle & Actors of the Development Process

1

THE BIG PICTURE

Capacity building can be understood as an explicit effort to improve an organization's performance in relation to its purpose, context, resources and sustainability. The aim is to develop a more effective, viable, autonomous and legitimate local organization by creating the conditions in which change can take place from within the group or organization.

1.2 TWO PERSPECTIVES ON CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Capacity assessment is currently being approached from two perspectives. First, many Northern agencies are concerned about appraising the capacity of their partners and of new organizations they are considering funding. These agencies are developing tools and procedures to enable their staff to carry out assessments in order to make funding decisions and provide advice. (Some agencies have even developed computer software programs to assess NGO capacity!)

Initially, therefore, demand for assessing organizational capacity has come from Northern donor agencies seeking an approach that can assist them as they move away from a “project” model towards program or partner-based funding.

More recently, many donor agencies have started supporting a second approach that helps local NGOs, CBOs and government structures carry out their own self-assessments. This approach is based on the principle that ongoing self-assessment and learning is integral to being a healthy organization. It arose partly in response to the criticisms, voiced by Southern organizations, that Northern systems for assessing capacity were too culturally biased, too rigid and too quantitative. In addition, many development organizations want the values of participation that are promoted in program work to be reflected in the way capacity assessment is carried out.

However, while participatory tools and methods have become widespread in development work, surprisingly little use has yet been made of their potential to strengthen the capacity of local organizations. Relatively little is written about how to use participatory tools to enable intermediary and community organizations assess their strengths and weaknesses, reflect on their performance, learn from experience, identify priorities for program development and strengthen their organizational capacity.

1.3 DEVELOPING THESE TOOLS & METHODS

World Neighbors' purpose is *to strengthen the capacity of marginalized communities to meet their basic needs, and to determine and sustain an equitable and inclusive development process*. The issue of community and organizational capacity is therefore central to our work. Working in partnership with individuals and organizations at the local level, World Neighbors is recognized as a leader in participatory, people-centered approaches to community development.

In order to engage in an inter-institutional learning process, a team of World Neighbors' experienced field staff came together in 1995 to form the Action Learning Group (ALG). One of its goals was to analyze, document and promote effective strategies for strengthening the capacities of community-level organizations and local institutions. Since its inception, the ALG has conceived, field-tested and adapted participatory action learning methods to understand, assess and document change in community and organizational capacity.

Field experience in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria and the USA indicates that the methods developed through this ongoing process of "learning by doing" can be a powerful way to enable community groups and organizations to assess and improve their performance and viability.

1.4 THE CYCLE & ACTORS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This self-assessment process was designed to be used within a broader approach of sustainable development which seeks to increase the level of self-reliance and effectiveness of local organizations. There are as many ways to strengthen local groups and organizations as there are development programs; even different World Neighbors programs around the world use a variety of development approaches based on the local context and needs.

Voisins Mondiaux (World Neighbors-West Africa), with whom the tools and methods presented in this guide were first developed and tested, works with isolated, rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa. The programs begin where the people are and help them to find solutions to the problems that they face with regard to food security, health and environmental degradation. From the beginning, there is a capacity building component to the work, with efforts to strengthen the capacities of community members to organize themselves, access needed resources and eventually take over full responsibility for their development program.

The following diagrams illustrate how this gradual capacity building process takes place in the West African communities with whom Voisins Mondiaux works.

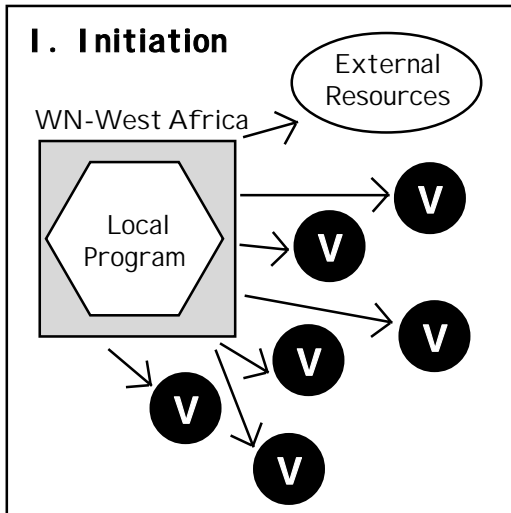
Three Views of Capacity Building

- Capacity building as a **means**: to strengthen the organization's ability to carry out specific activities.
- Capacity building as a **process** to enable the organization to continually reflect and adapt its purpose in response to change and learning; to connect its evolving purpose and vision on the one hand and its structure and development activities on the other.
- Capacity building as an **end**: to strengthen an organization's ability to survive, become self-sustaining and fulfill its purpose.

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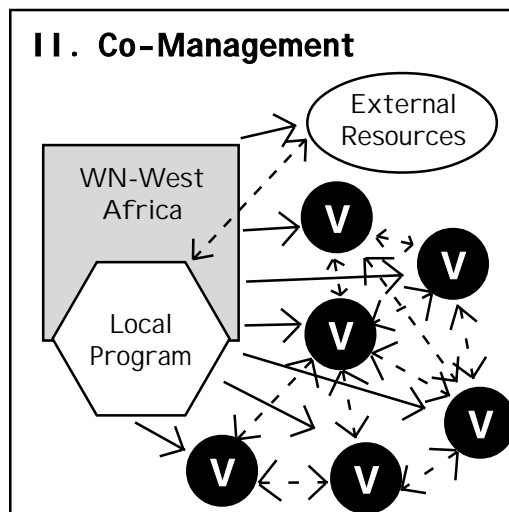
THE BIG PICTURE

1. Initiation: In the rural and marginalized areas where World Neighbors-West Africa works, local organizational structures are often non-existent, weak, divided and/or not able to adapt to the rapidly changing forces that influence communities' ability to meet their basic needs. Therefore, most of the initiative to implement a development program initially comes from WN staff members, all of whom are nationals of the countries where they work. These staff members hire and train local resource people to work directly with community leaders and groups to identify and respond to community needs. WN works with different villages in the same area, although initially there may be little cooperation or interaction among villages. WN staff also serve as the primary link with external funding agencies, while working with community members to mobilize local resources.

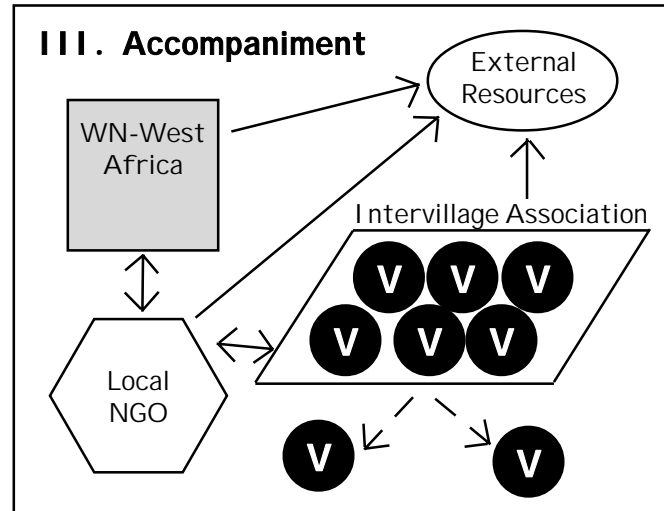


2. Co-Management As local program staff and villagers work together on projects that respond to the expressed needs of the communities, such as water systems or communal grain banks, other more intangible accomplishments are also taking place. Village participants are pooling their resources, discussing their shared problems, and strengthening the abilities of local leaders to mobilize the community to undertake development activities. At the same time, WN local staff members are developing their own skills, their understanding of local concerns and resources, and their relationship with community members. As the program supported by World Neighbors-West Africa becomes stronger, it begins to take on its own identity. Program staff may decide to

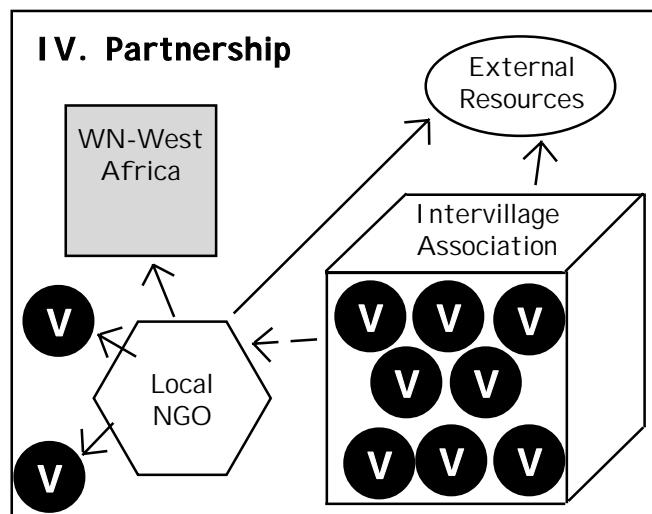
move towards forming their own local NGO, and they begin to build more direct relationships with external donors. Also at this stage, villages may officially form Village Development Committees, although they are still largely dependent on the intermediary NGO for funding and management of the development initiatives.



3. Accompaniment: The role of local program staff gradually shifts from an operational one to a more supportive one, helping the Village Development Committees strengthen their capacity to implement and evaluate development efforts, access financial resources and eventually take over responsibility for all facets of the process at the village level. Neighboring villages may join together to form an Intervillage Association to address larger issues and to strengthen the communities' ability to further their common interests. This Intervillage Association also begins to form direct relationships with external partners, including donors and local government agencies. Program staff are also taking on more responsibility for accessing their funding and for administering the larger development program, while working with the communities on forming strong organizational structures. Depending on the context, local staff may transform themselves into an autonomous, local NGO, working in partnership with World Neighbors-West Africa.



4. Partnership At this stage, the gradual shift of responsibility at both the community and program levels is largely completed. The Intervillage Association takes over implementation, management and evaluation of the community's development activities. As the support needs of the active villages diminish, the newly formed local NGO will begin to organize other villages. The relationship between WN and the local NGO has evolved into a partnership. Likewise, the NGO and the Intervillage Association may work together to strengthen the capacity of newly formed local organizations. World Neighbors may continue to provide technical support to the NGO, but it is the NGO that initiates this exchange. Similarly, the local NGO will continue to work with the Intervillage Association *at their request*.



1

THE BIG PICTURE

The ALG has also learned that, while applying capacity assessment methods is a fundamental component of an effective development strategy, these tools are not sufficient in and of themselves to strengthen capacity. Organizational capacity is a complex and context specific phenomenon. Due to these complexities, enhancing organizational capacity takes time to achieve and requires a coherent, long-term strategy that goes far beyond tools.

Overview: Looking at the Big Picture

1. An increase in the number of local NGOs and CBOs, along with widespread decentralization, has resulted in a shift towards local organizations taking on more responsibility for development programs. However, this shift has not always resulted in improvements in program performance, partly due to a lack of local organizational capacity.
2. The emerging trend in impact assessment and evaluation is to include management and capacity issues, recognizing that project assessment cannot be divorced from organizational assessment.
3. Capacity assessment is currently being approached from two perspectives. One is primarily externally driven and is used for making funding decisions, and the other is more internally driven and is based on the principle that ongoing self-assessment is integral to being a healthy organization.
4. This self-assessment process is designed to be used within a broader approach of sustainable development aimed towards increasing the level of self-reliance and effectiveness of local organizations.
5. Capacity assessment tools are not in and of themselves sufficient to strengthen organizational capacity. Strengthening capacity takes time to achieve and requires a coherent, long-term strategy that goes far beyond tools.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE 2

2.1 THE STORY OF STONE SOUP

A traveler was walking down the road when he came upon a lively market. He had walked for many hours that day and was quite hungry, so he asked one of the villagers at the market for help finding something to eat. The man replied that he himself did not have enough to feed his own family and was unable to help the stranger. After several others responded in the same manner, the traveler almost gave up hope. But then he spotted a smooth, round stone a little bit larger than a ripe mango, and suddenly had an idea. The traveler picked up the rock and announced to the men and women at the market that he possessed a magic cooking stone.

A small crowd surrounded the stranger, waiting to hear more. Once the traveler won the attention of the villagers, he explained that with this magic stone, he could make enough soup to feed the entire village. He only needed someone to loan him a pot and some water, and he would demonstrate.

Immediately one of the women who lived nearby offered to bring everyone to her home in order to see this miracle for themselves. The crowd followed the woman and the traveler to the house, where a pot of water was already bubbling on the fire in preparation for dinner. The traveler ceremoniously placed the stone in the water and smiled confidently at the skeptical group.

“You know,” said the traveler, “Stone Soup is very good all by itself, but if you really want to make it right, you should add a few carrots to the pot. It’s too bad that we don’t have any carrots.”

A man in the crowd stepped forward with a bunch of carrots that he had bought at the market and added them to the pot. A woman then suggested that if carrots would make the soup better, surely an onion or two could not hurt. She generously donated a couple of onions from her basket to be chopped and added to the meal.

Each time something was added, another person from the group would contribute a new ingredient until the pot was full of sweet vegetables, chicken and spices. When the soup was cooked, all the villagers ate heartily, exclaiming that the traveler did indeed possess a remarkable stone.

In This Chapter

- 2.1 The Story of Stone Soup
- 2.2 Think of This Guide as a Stone
- 2.3 Who Should Use This Guide?
- 2.4 How To Use This Guide
- 2.5 How To NOT Use This Guide

2

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

2.2 THINK OF THIS GUIDE AS A STONE

Just as the traveler used a simple stone to help a village create a wonderful meal, this guide should be used as a catalyst for collective innovation and action. The facilitator brings this “stone” to the workshop, as well as his or her experience, but it is the participants who supply the vegetables and spices in the form of new ideas and insights into how to adapt these methods to the local context and needs.

This guide, therefore, is not designed to be followed step by step like a recipe, but rather should be used to stimulate the creation of methods and exercises that address each specific situation. Our aim is to give the reader an understanding of the underlying concepts and building blocks of capacity building and participatory action learning so that he or she can adapt the exercises and methods presented, or invent new ones.

2.3 WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE?

This guide has been written specifically for local intermediary organizations* working with community-based partners to address problems related to hunger, poverty, environmental degradation, illiteracy and poor health. However, the methods and exercises presented have been successfully adapted to fit many different contexts in both developing and industrialized countries. Throughout the guide you will find tips on how to adapt and create exercises and methods to fit the specific needs of the organization with which you are working.

The intended readers (or the “You”) of this guide are facilitators helping organization members conduct their own self-assessments. But again, we hope that the information presented will be useful to a wider audience, including World Neighbors field staff and program partners, our peer agencies, intermediary organizations, local government agencies and other development practitioners. This guide may also be helpful to program managers, donor organizations and policy makers by offering a conceptual framework in which to assess their capacity building efforts.

Participants in a guided self-assessment could be staff, volunteers, board members, members of community groups or networks, or any other group of people who have come together to pursue a common goal. The process and exercises will always need to be designed and adapted depending on who is participating in the self-assessment.

*Please see pg. 182, Appendix 1 for a definition of intermediary organization.

2.4 HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

At the beginning of each chapter is a quick reference guide showing the chapter's contents. At the end of every chapter is an overview highlighting the main ideas presented. Some readers may want to read through the entire guide and then use these reference tools to quickly go back to sections they would like to review. Other users may decide to read only those sections that seem relevant to their work. We hope the format of the guide accommodates both styles of use.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the main concepts of organizational self-assessment, including organizational development, capacity areas and locally generated indicators. This chapter also discusses how guided self-assessment works, what it can address and the relationship between capacity and the transference of responsibilities.

Chapter Four presents ideas for preparing exercises, including a “tool kit” and process for creating participatory exercises, ways to adapt exercises to specific contexts and needs, and how to use the preparation process to strengthen facilitators' abilities and understanding.

Chapter Five gives an overview of planning a guided self-assessment workshop, particularly selecting and sequencing exercises. A group process for setting the workshop agenda is presented, as well as example schedules.

Chapter Six specifically addresses conducting fieldwork, including logistics, choosing participants, setting the agenda, and adapting exercises to the community level.

Working with facilitators is covered in **Chapter Seven**. Topics include team selection, training and capacity building and giving (and receiving) constructive feedback.

Chapter Eight addresses analysis and documentation issues, including ways to synthesize and analyze information as a group, how to accurately and completely capture exercise results and discussions, tips for organizing data, and a process for writing a report collectively.

In **Chapter Nine** is a reference list of the exercises included in this guide. This allows readers to quickly get an overview of the exercises and their possible applications in order to find those that can be used or adapted to meet their specific needs. The exercises which follow are not presented sequentially, but rather by theme. While some users may decide to apply the exercises in the order in which they are pre-

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

sented, that is by no means the only way to organize a self-assessment workshop. [NOTE: See 5.5 *Selecting & Sequencing Exercises* (pg. 36) for more on this subject.]

At the end of this guide are several Appendices, including a Glossary of Key Concepts and a list of Recommended Resources. Listed are many excellent publications about participatory methods, effective facilitation and capacity building from which we have drawn and to which we refer readers seeking more information.

2.5 HOW TO NOT USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is published in a format that is easily photocopied in the hopes that, as you change and create the methods presented here, you will construct your own guide. Each time that you conduct an organizational self-assessment, you will invent new exercises, devise better systems and develop stronger facilitation skills. It is important to take the time to document these experiences so that your guide can grow and “learn” as you do. Rather than following the procedures outlined in this book, we encourage you to take this information and make it your own.

We hope that you will share your innovative ideas with us as well. Please send us your new or adapted exercises, more effective methods, or lessons learned. **If we include your submission in an updated version of this guide (with due credit going to you), we will send you a complimentary copy of the new guide.** Make sure to include your name, organization, mailing address and email (if available) when sending in contributions.

Send your ideas to:
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Overview: Using This Guide

1. This guide should be used to stimulate the creation of methods and exercises that address each situation. Eventually you will create your own guide based on your experience.
2. This guide has been written specifically for local intermediary organizations working with community partners addressing problems related to hunger, poverty, environmental degradation, illiteracy and poor health. However, the methods and exercises presented can be adapted to fit many different situations.
3. Each time that you conduct an organizational self-assessment, you will invent new exercises, devise better systems and develop stronger facilitation skills. It is important to take the time to document these experiences so that your guide can grow and “learn” as you do.
4. We encourage you to share your ideas and innovations with us. If we include your contributions in an updated version of this guide, we will send you a complimentary copy.

GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT 3

3.1 WHAT IS GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT?

The self-assessment process presented in this field guide is designed to help organizations recognize their own potential and decide for themselves how to best address the challenges they face. This process provides organizations with the tools and perspectives necessary to regularly reflect on their performance, and to improve and adapt their plans and activities according to their purpose, context and resources.

A critical component of community and local organizational capacity building is to place a flexible and practical self-assessment method in the hands of community and organization members. This enables participants to identify the priority capacity areas to be strengthened in order to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of their program activities. For each of these capacities, participants formulate their own indicators to be used to evaluate the organization's current capacity and to monitor progress over time.

3.2 WHY DO GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT?

As more organizations and donors realize that the effectiveness and sustainability of their development efforts are linked to strong organizational capacity, organizational assessment is increasingly being included as a part of monitoring and evaluation. They are finding that evaluation of projects cannot be divorced from the assessment of the organizations that plan, implement, support or fund them. This is leading away from evaluations that focus exclusively on what organizations do, and toward more holistic assessments that take into account other organizational issues such as identity, relationships with others, and decision-making.

Stakeholders may be involved, to varying degrees, in the planning, implementation, analysis and communication stages of an organizational assessment, depending on the objectives and methods used. Participatory approaches to organizational assessment, such as the those presented in this guide, are emerging partially in response to the critique of Southern NGOs that northern systems for assessment are too culturally biased, too rigid, and too quantitative. In addition, Southern NGOs express a desire to have the values of participation they promote in their program work be reflected in the way assessment is carried out. Guided self-assessment offers several other important advantages over assessment approaches that rely more heavily on outside evaluators or predetermined methods.

In This Chapter

- 3.1 What Is Guided Self-Assessment?
- 3.2 Why Do Guided Self-Assessment?
- 3.3 Understanding Organizational Development
- 3.4 What Are Capacity Areas?
- 3.5 Locally Generated Indicators
- 3.6 How Guided Self-Assessment Works
- 3.7 What Happens When You Reach Stage Five?
- 3.8 What Can A Guided Self-Assessment Address?
- 3.9 Organizational Capacity Building & Transfer of Responsibility

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GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT

Guided self-assessment is based on the principle that ongoing self-assessment and learning is integral to being a healthy organization. The process can strengthen participants' analytical skills and contribute to creating a culture of learning within the organization. In order to bring lasting change, an organizational assessment cannot be a one-time activity, but must build the foundation for ongoing reflection, learning and growth. When organization members are actively involved (and not just consulted) in all stages of the assessment, they will be able to continue to learn and improve with little or no outside support. While the results and insights that emerge from an assessment are important, the true value of guided self-assessment is its potential to foster more systematic and ongoing organizational reflection and development.

The results from a guided self-assessment emerge from the participants' own analytical processes. It is therefore less likely that the implications and recommendations will be dismissed as irrelevant or unrealistic. While reports prepared by outside evaluators may sit unopened on shelves, organization members are less likely to ignore findings that they themselves generated and articulated. A key challenge, however, is moving from these findings to taking actions to improve effectiveness and viability. This movement from learning towards action depends greatly on the organization's leaders and their ability to foster a strong commitment to change.

This is not to say that other organizational evaluation approaches are not useful or effective. What is important is that the methods used are appropriate to the overall objectives of the assessment. Guided self-assessment is an effective approach when the objectives are to promote organizational reflection and learning, and when the motivation for improvement and change comes from the organization members themselves.

3.3 UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

When seeking to measure organizational capacity, it is critical to remember that all organizations go through various stages of development. No organization comes into existence fully mature with all its capacities strong. On the other hand, not all organizations consistently move forward in their development. Some get "stuck" in one stage, or may even regress depending on internal and external factors (i.e., the departure of a key leader or the discontinuation of funding).

The guided self-assessment process seeks to help organization members identify at what developmental stage they are currently and what actions they can take to evolve, improve performance and become

more viable. This concept of evolutionary development can take the negative judgement out of assessment. For example, an organization is not “poor” at raising funds and “good” at mobilizing volunteers, but rather has a more fully developed capacity, *at this stage in its development*, to mobilize people than to raise financial resources.

World Neighbors has found using the analogy of a tree to be an effective way to help participants identify these stages. A tree, when it first emerges from the ground, is particularly vulnerable and requires nurturing and protection to survive. As a tree matures, its roots grow deeper and it becomes more capable of fending for itself. The more mature the tree becomes, the more fruit it can bear. Likewise, an organization gradually grows into a viable and self-sustaining entity that becomes less vulnerable to threats, less dependent on outside support and more effective in its performance. [NOTE: See the *A Common Understanding of Organizational Development* exercise (pg. 97) for how to present these concepts to workshop participants.]

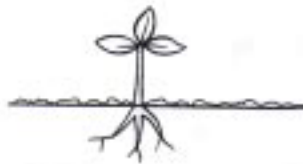
Five Stages of Organizational Development

Stage 1 Embryonic



At the **Embryonic** stage, the tree is a vulnerable seed trying to penetrate the soil. At this stage, an organization is just beginning to form and to define itself.

Stage 2 Emerging



At the **Emerging** stage, the tree has broken through the soil to benefit from the sunlight. However, it is still vulnerable, and its roots are not deep.

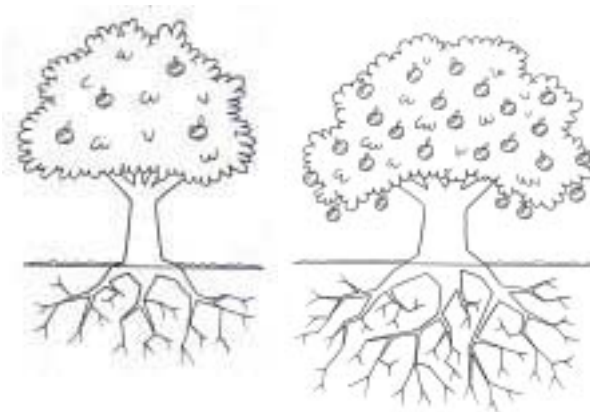
Stage 3 Growing



At the **Growing** stage, the tree is becoming stronger and develops deeper roots. An organization at this stage can protect itself from many threats, although it is still vulnerable to significant negative forces.

Stage 4 Well Developed

When a tree (or an organization) is in the **Well Developed** stage, its roots (capacities) are strong and deep, fruit (results) starts being produced, and it can withstand all but the most extreme threats.



Stage 5 Mature

A **Mature** tree (or organization) is able to continually bear large quantities of fruits (or results). Due to its capacity building efforts, an organization at this stage has become a viable and permanent local institution.

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GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT

3.4 WHAT ARE CAPACITY AREAS?

Capacity areas tend to address WHO the organization is (i.e., its purpose, values and approach that give it a distinct identity), WHAT the organization does (i.e., its choice of activities, level of efficiency, etc.), HOW it operates (i.e., management issues, resource mobilization, etc.) and with WHOM it relates (i.e., program participants, donors, etc.). These capacity areas affect the performance and viability of local organizations.

Examples of Capacity Areas			
LEGITIMACY & RECOGNITION	IDENTITY & VISION	SYSTEMS & PROCEDURES	PERFORMANCE & RESULTS
Official/Legal Recognition	Shared Hopes & Commitment	Communication Systems	Able to Identify & Prioritize Problems
GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP	Clarity of Vision, Purpose & Direction	Organizational Learning	Acquire & Adapt New Practices
Broad-based Leadership	Shared Values & Philosophy	Staff & Volunteer Evaluation/Incentives	Implementation of Program Activities
Systems of Accountability	RESOURCE MOBILIZATION	RELATIONSHIPS	Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation
Representative Decision Making	Systems for Generating Revenue	Intra-organizational Collaboration	ADVOCACY
Mediation & Conflict Resolution	Mobilizing Human Capital	Linkages with External Agencies	Locally Appropriate Application of Policy
	Obtaining External Funding	Negotiation for Services & Resources	Advocating & Lobbying for Local Interests

3.5 LOCALLY GENERATED INDICATORS

Indicators are used to measure capacity and to track progress. Participants generate capacity indicators by imagining what their organization or community group would be like at each of the five stages of organizational development. For example, an organization with an Embryonic capacity to collaborate with other groups may only recognize the need, but be unable to initiate partnerships. At the Emerging stage, the organization would be able to identify potential partners, and so on. In this way organizations are able to diagnose their current developmental stage and measure the progress made over time.

A critical principle underlying the methods presented in this guide is that participants generate their own capacity indicators. Field tests of these exercises have generated a wealth of sample indicators, presented here to serve only as examples. It should be emphasized that it is the process of generating locally appropriate indicators of organizational capacity that is important, and not the indicators themselves.

Examples of Indicators				
STAGES	CAPACITIES			
	Self-Financing	Collaboration	Program Evaluation	Community Organizing
Embryonic	raises less than 20% of core costs	recognizes need to collaborate	annual informal evaluation meetings with communities	initiative comes from outside
Emerging	raises 20-30% of core costs	identifies potential partners initiates contact with potential partners	plans include some specific indicators to measure results	takes initiative to call meetings
Growing	raises 30-50% of core costs	collaborates with several groups	program evaluations use participatory methods	some responsibility for running meetings
Well Developed	raises 50-90% of core costs	receives significant support from partners	staff spend at least 10% of time on evaluation all program plans include impact indicators	full responsibility for calling & running meetings
Mature	raises more than 90% of core costs	benefits from all forms of support from partners	evaluations include nonparticipants & wider community use of specific, measurable indicators	diverse interest groups are involved written record of meeting discussions

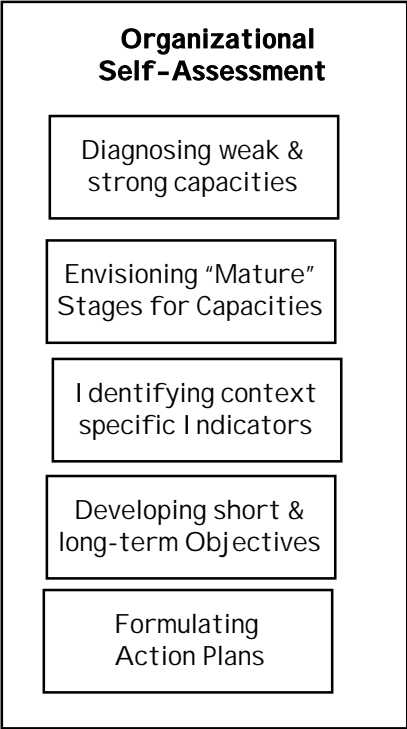
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GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT

3.6 HOW GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKS

The tools and methods presented in this guide help participants strengthen their organizational capacity by:

- Diagnosing and prioritizing the organization’s strengths and weaknesses
- Developing locally appropriate indicators for continuing to measure these capacities
- Identifying concrete actions that will help the organization to mature



An important component of this process is that the participants themselves *generate* and *analyze* the information. For example, an organization might decide that its system of financial mobilization and accountability needs to be strengthened. On the other hand, participants may conclude that their organization already has a strong and clear vision. *What is important in the process is that local organizations define their own list of important “capacity areas” to be strengthened and the indicators for measuring them.*

Once organization members identify their priority capacity areas, they need to envision what a strong or “Mature” level would look like for each capacity as it relates to their purpose and performance. With this ideal in mind, participants then identify the different evolutionary stages that their organization must go through to achieve this objective.

Taking the capacity *mobilizing financial resources* as an example, organization members might decide that a Mature organization would raise and manage 100% of its core administrative and operating budget from diverse local funding sources. An Embryonic group, on the other hand, would rely on external donors for most of its financial needs. In between these two extremes, participants would identify the characteristics of an organization that is Emerging (i.e., raising 25% of its core budget), Growing (i.e., raising 50% of its core budget and handling most of the accounting duties) and Well Developed (i.e., raising 75% of its core budget with full responsibility for financial planning and management).

Once these stages are outlined, participants identify indicators for measuring these capacity areas, so that they can continue to assess their organization and develop their short and long-term capacity strengthening objectives for the future.

Participants then need to devise strategies and plan activities to achieve these capacity building objectives. This entails identifying what combination of system, structure, and environmental factors limit performance and how these can be overcome. It also requires supporting organization members to select the right mix of tools, methods and strategies for bringing about the required changes. These will vary according to the capacities identified.

Continuing with the previous example, an organization that wanted to increase its capacity to raise and manage local funds could decide to ask the support organization to provide a special grant for setting up more effective fund development activities. Or, participants may decide to begin charging a nominal fee to all NGOs that participate in a network that the organization sponsors. *The key is helping organizational members have a clear understanding of their short and long-term objectives, what they need to do to achieve them and how they are going to measure their progress along the way.* Capacity goals should seek both to improve performance or impact, and to enhance the organization's viability.

3.7 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU REACH STAGE FIVE?

Overtime, the organization will ideally reach the Mature level for some of the capacities that it is working to strengthen. For example, an organization may eventually increase its self-financing capacity until it meets its ultimate goal of raising more than 90% of its core funding. When this happens, the organization members can choose between two strategies for continued growth and development. They may decide to direct their efforts away from the more mature capacities and focus their energy on improving the weaker capacity areas. If organization members score a five on the indicators they have set for self-financing, for example, they may stop their efforts to strengthen this capacity and focus on weaker areas.

A second option is to “raise the bar” by reformulating the indicators. In the above example, the organization could make the indicators for self-financing more challenging by adding that a certain amount of funding should come from local sources. If the organization members reformulate indicators, their organization's score on the capacity would initially drop because new and higher standards would be set. A drop in score would not indicate a diminished ability to raise funds, but rather provide room for continued improvement. This needs to be kept in mind if comparisons over time are being made. In practice, with an ever changing environment, organizations must be constantly learning and adapting to remain viable, including re-examining their capacity building efforts and the indicators used to measure progress.

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GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT

3.8 WHAT CAN A GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT ADDRESS?

A guided organizational self-assessment can cover a variety of themes at both the organizational level and at the program or community level. These themes fall into four broad categories: To Do, To Be, To Relate and To Manage. Understanding these themes can help facilitators and organization members identify the focus of the self-assessment.

Organizational Self-Assessment Themes				
To Be	To Do (Organization Level)	To Do (Community Level)	To Manage	To Relate
Purpose/Mission	Delivery of Services & Benefits	Effects & Impacts	Human Resource Management	Constituencies (Community Groups)
Identity	Needs Assessment & Planning	Effectiveness	Financial Management	Local & Regional Government
Autonomy	Implementation	Participation	Organizational Learning & Change	Partners & Peer Organizations
Legitimacy & Recognition	Choice of Activities	Sustainability of Activities	Leadership & Decision-Making	Donors & Funding Sources
Approach & Values	Relevance of Activities	Relevance of Activities	Circulation of Information	Networking & Influencing
Sustainability & Viability	Strategies & Efficiency	Gender & Equity	Mobilization of Resources	Advocacy & Negotiation
	Monitoring & Evaluation			Technical/Support Services

3.9 ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING & THE TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY

Building capacity of local organizations is not enough to ensure a self-sustaining development process. If the supporting intermediary organization strengthens the capacity of the local organization or community group, but does not progressively hand over responsibility for program activities commensurately, the capacity will go unused and may be lost. On the other hand, if the supporting organization hands over responsibilities too quickly and without ensuring that its local partner has developed the underlying necessary capacities, there is a great risk of failure.

For the capacity building process to become effective and self-sustaining, therefore, there must be an appropriate dynamic and progressive equilibrium between the degree of responsibility and the

GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT

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organization's capacity. The organizational self-assessment process can help ensure that this occurs.

The shaded boxes within the diagram represent the increasing level of responsibility held by a local organization as it builds its capacity. At the beginning, communities or embryonic organizations are **Responsive** and focused on technical training and activities. Most of the resources and program implementation are managed by external staff who consult community members about decisions. Progressively, an organization will **Share Responsibility** for program implementation as it develops its organizational capacities and strengthens its leadership structure. As the local organization continues to mature, it will take over **Implementation**, or the management of the day to day operations of the program. With growing responsibility, the organization focuses on **Self-Financing** and long-term planning to continue to become more sustainable and autonomous. Once the local organization has achieved **Independence**, it continues to build links with other agencies in an ongoing effort to improve performance and viability.

Nature of Relationship	Organizational Development Stages				
	Embryonic	Emerging	Growing	Well Developed	Mature
Partnership Consultative/ Supportive					Independence Increasing Relationships Focused
Accompaniment Increasing Autonomy				Self-Financing Viability/Autonomy Focused	
Co-Management Organizational Support			Program Implementation Management Focused		
		Shared Responsibility Process Focused			
Initiation Appraisal/Planning	Responsive Technical/Activity Focused				

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GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT

Overview: Key Principles & Best Practice For Strengthening Organizational Capacity

1. Guided organizational self-assessment is designed to help organizations recognize their own potential and decide for themselves how to best address the challenges they face.
2. Assessing the process dimensions of a development program is important for improving the self-reliance of local organizations and for strengthening a community's capacity to take collective action.
3. Guided self-assessment helps to create a culture of learning within an organization and provides recommendations for change that are generated and articulated by the participants themselves.
4. All organizations go through a series of developmental stages, which can be illustrated using the analogy of a tree.
5. Capacity areas tend to address who the organization is, what the organization does, how it operates and with whom it relates.
6. A critical component of participatory self-assessment is that local organizations define their own list of important capacity areas to be strengthened and the indicators for measuring them.
7. In order to smoothly transfer the responsibility from an external agency to local organizations, there must first be mechanisms in place by which leaders and community members diagnose and address their organizational strengths and weaknesses in undertaking collective action.
8. Once organizations reach their capacity goals, they can choose to focus on strengthening other capacity areas or to reformulate indicators.
9. For the capacity building process to become effective and self-sustaining, there must be an appropriate dynamic and progressive equilibrium between the degree of responsibility and the organization's capacity.

PREPARING EXERCISES

4.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING & ADAPTING EXERCISES

It is important to stress again that every self-assessment process needs to be designed in a way that addresses the specific needs of the organization or community group. Therefore, facilitators not only need to be able to conduct participatory activities, they must also have the ability to adapt and create exercises to fit the context in which they are working.

In this chapter we present some key principles and processes that can help facilitators invent new exercises and change the ones presented in this guide.

4.2 TOOL KIT FOR PARTICIPATORY EXERCISES

Participatory exercises rely on a diverse set of tools used to elicit, organize, visualize, verify, analyze and interpret information. These tools include:

- Listing & Brainstorming
- Key Words
- Grouping & Categorizing
- Scoring
- Ranking
- Weighting
- Matrices
- Diagrams
- Maps
- Calendars
- Timelines
- Graphs & Charts
- Direct Observation & Gathering Quantifiable Data
- Mini-Surveys
- Analogies & Metaphors
- Dialogue & Semi-Structured Interview

What follows is a brief description of each tool, its purpose and uses, and examples of how it can be applied.

In This Chapter

- 4.1 The Importance of Creating & Adapting Exercises
- 4.2 Tool Kit for Participatory Exercises
- 4.3 Combining Tools To Form Exercises
- 4.4 The Building Blocks of Participatory Exercises
- 4.5 Designing New Exercises: Group Process
- 4.6 Adapting & Mastering Exercises: Group Process

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PREPARING EXERCISES

Listing & Brainstorming This tool is often used at the beginning of an exercise to systematically elicit information through a group discussion around a fundamental question (i.e., What are the characteristics of a viable organization?). Listing & Brainstorming can generate criteria, activities, capacities, lists of people or any other information accessible from the collective experience and knowledge of the group.

Often the group's list will be completed or complemented by one prepared ahead of time by the facilitators. It is important to stress that these checklists should be used as a secondary source of ideas, after the group has had an opportunity to pull from its own knowledge base. In addition, only those items from the checklist that are accepted by the participants should be added to a list. Those that are accepted should be written on different colored cards or in a different color marker to distinguish them from the participants' ideas.

Many exercises in this guide use Listing & Brainstorming, including: *Relationships Assessment* (pg. 142), *History of Support* (pg. 118) and *Activities Onion* (pg. 120).

Characteristics of a Viable Organization	
Effective Leadership	Strong Management
Broad-based Leadership	Effective Staff Training
Accurate Record Keeping	Capacity to Write Funding Proposals
High Level of Participation	Clear Goals & Objectives
Good Financial Management	Good Information Systems

What Is Our Organizational Purpose? (Key Words from Individuals)
Healthy Children & Mothers Livelihood Empowerment Building Partnerships
Women's Empowerment Economic Development Healthy Families Food Security Strong Community
Income Generation Helping Women Health Food Security Community Empowerment

Key Words: This tool is used to elicit participants' understandings of key concepts or ideas. Rather than asking group members to formulate complete definitions, generating Key Words allows participants to capture the essence of their perceptions, which can then be synthesized to form a group definition. Key Words can also show patterns in understanding by analyzing repeated words or ideas, and can be used to symbolize more complex concepts that would be too cumbersome to use in their entirety during exercises.

Exercises in this guide that use Key Words include: *A Common Understanding of Capacity Building* (pg. 95), *A Common Understanding of Organizational Development* (pg. 97) and *Purpose Mapping* (pg. 106).

Grouping & Categorizing: This tool allows participants to sort information into broader categories. This can be used for grouping similar ideas, identifying patterns within data, organizing families of information based on useful categories (i.e., Internal Issues vs. External Issues or Getting Better, Staying the Same, Getting Worse), or as an initial step of Ranking. Grouping & Categorizing is particularly useful for dealing with large amounts of information by reducing a number of distinct elements down to more manageable categories.

Exercises in this guide that use Grouping & Categorizing include: *Strengths & Weaknesses* (pg. 110) and *Trend Analysis: Women's Well-Being* (pg. 160).

Trends: Women's Well Being		
BETTER than Before	The SAME as Before	WORSE than Before
Women's Income Levels	Time Spent Doing Domestic Work	Agricultural Production
Girls Attending School	Reproductive Health	Household Expenses
Infant & Child Health	Women's Mobility & Participation	
Quality of Female Leadership	Overall Status of Women	

Scoring: Scoring entails evaluating capacities using a predetermined scale. Scoring is useful for identifying strengths and weaknesses, making comparisons between past and current situations, and identifying trends by averaging scores. Scoring can be undertaken by a group, or can be done individually to capture each participant's assessment of the situation.

It is important to understand that scores are not meant to be statistically significant, but rather illustrate participants' perceptions and to identify major trends and differences (i.e., highs and lows).

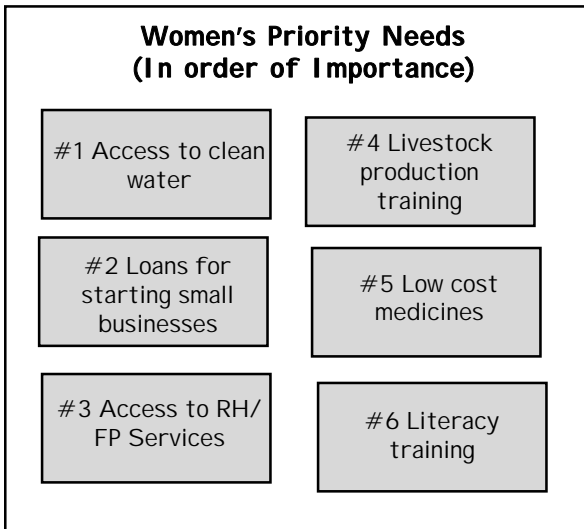
Viability Assessment				
Characteristics of a Viable Organization	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Average
Effective Leadership	3	3	4	3.3
Capacity to Raise Funds	2	3	2	2.3
High Level of Participation	3	3	3	3
Good Documentation	3	3	2	2.7
Strong Staff Training Program	3	3	4	3.3

Scale: 1 = Embryonic, 2 = Emerging, 3 = Growing, 4 = Well Developed, 5 = Mature

Many exercises in this guide use Scoring, including: *Leadership Assessment* (pg. 134) and *Activities Performance Assessment* (pg. 122).

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PREPARING EXERCISES



Ranking: Ranking helps participants compare elements or information on the basis of strength, importance or other criteria defined by the group. By assigning each element a value in relationship to the others, the participants can prioritize and identify the relative strength or value of each.

Exercises in this guide that use Ranking include: *Well-Being Ranking* (pg. 114) and *Viability Assessment* (pg. 150).

Weighting: Weighting is a tool that shows the distribution of significance, importance, participation or responsibility among elements. Participants are given a certain number of small stones or beans that they can distribute among different elements in whatever way they see fit. For example, in order to measure the degrees of responsibility held by different actors in a literacy program, participants can distribute ten beans among the actors based on their

level of involvement with each activity. Weighting can also be used to prioritize, giving participants more freedom than Ranking.

Exercises in this guide that use Weighting include: *Transfer of Responsibilities* (pg. 156) and *Prioritizing Capacity Areas* (pg. 170).

Transfer of Tasks & Responsibilities									
Tasks	PAST (1995)			PRESENT (1999)			FUTURE (2003)		
	Village Group	Local NGO	Local Gov.	Village Group	Local NGO	Local Gov.	Village Group	Local NGO	Local Gov.
Fundraising		XXXXXX XXXXXX			XXXXXX XXXXXX			XXXXXX XXXXXX	
Choosing Trainers		XXXXXX X	XXXX		XXXXXX X	XXXX	XXXXXX	XXX	XX
Scheduling Trainings		XXXXXX XXXXXX		XXX	XXXXXX XX		XXXXXX XXXXXX		
Follow-up		XXXXXX XXXXXX			XXXXXX XXXXXX		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Organizing Participants	XXXXXX XXX	XX		XXXXXX XXX	XX		XXXXXX XXXXXX		
Designing Training Tools		XXXXXX X	XXXX		XXXXXX XXX	XX	XXX	XXXXXX	XX
Evaluation	XXXXXX		XXXXXX	XXXXXX		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXX	XX
Totals	13	44	13	16	43	11	38	26	6

Matrices: A matrix is used to relate two sets of data together. It also allows participants to categorize information into two groups simultaneously. For example, a matrix can sort community groups based on the level of support they have received and the degree to which their organizational capacities have developed over time.

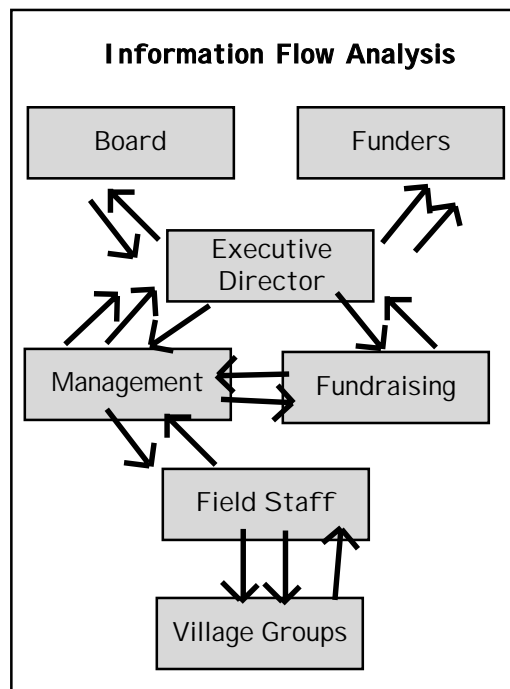
Exercises in this guide that use Matrices include: *Decision-Making Analysis* (pg. 132), *Community Support/Self-Reliance* (pg. 154) and *Threats to Viability* (pg. 158).

	High Level of Self Reliance	Medium Level of Self Reliance	Low Level of Self Reliance
High Level of Support		Men's Group (Village A)	Women's Group (Village A)
Medium Level of Support			
Low Level of Support	Men's Group (Village B)	Women's Group (Village B)	

Diagrams: This tool helps participants visualize information that relates to systems or relationships among actors or structures. Diagrams can show how different elements interact or work together, the direction of this exchange, and overlapping interests or commonalities. Certain diagrams, such as flow charts, can also illustrate cause and effect relationships by demonstrating a sequence of events and the corresponding impacts.

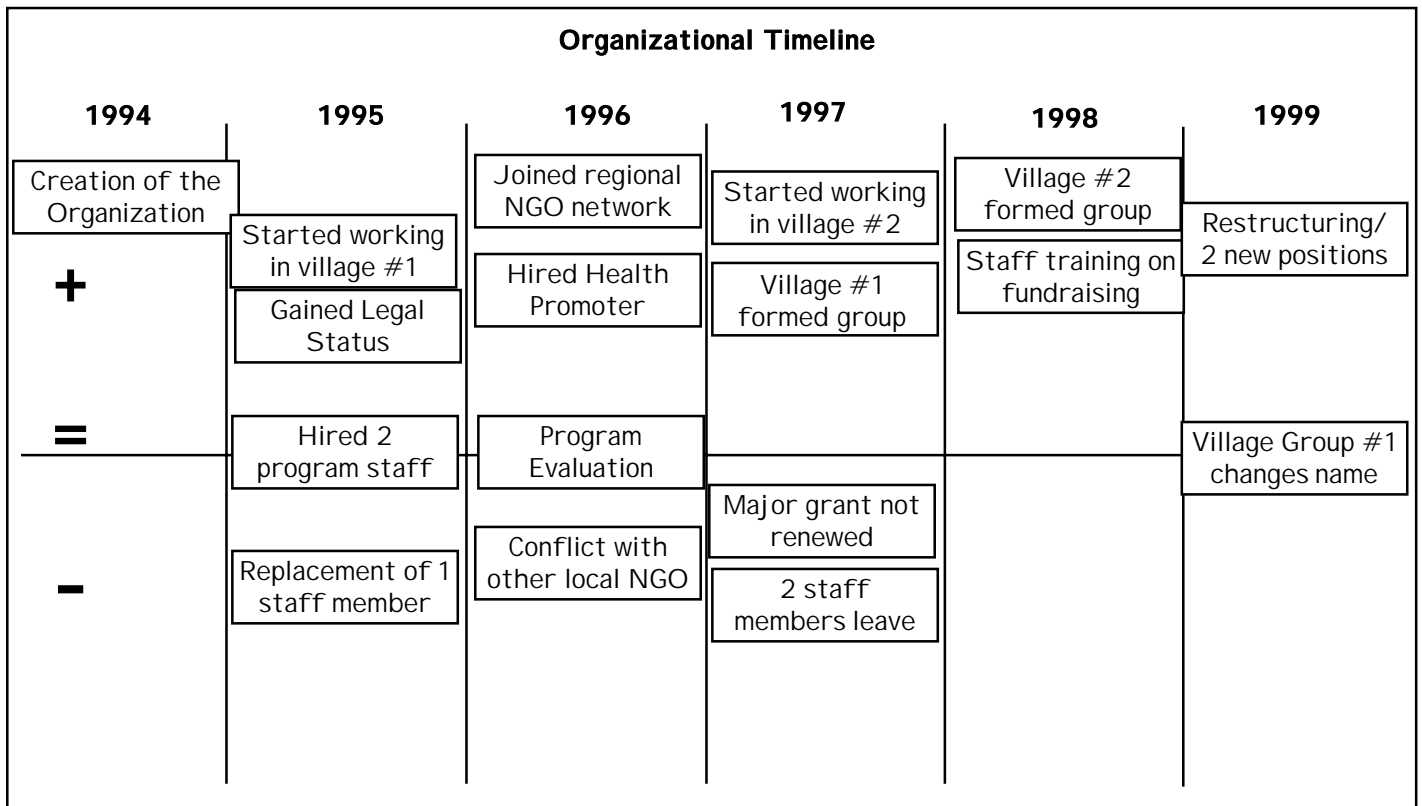
Types of diagrams include: Venn Diagrams, Organizational Diagrams, Flow Charts and Spider Diagrams.

Exercises included in this guide that use Diagrams include: *Organizational Structure* (pg. 130), *Information Flow Analysis* (pg. 138) and *Pyramid of Action* (pg. 178).



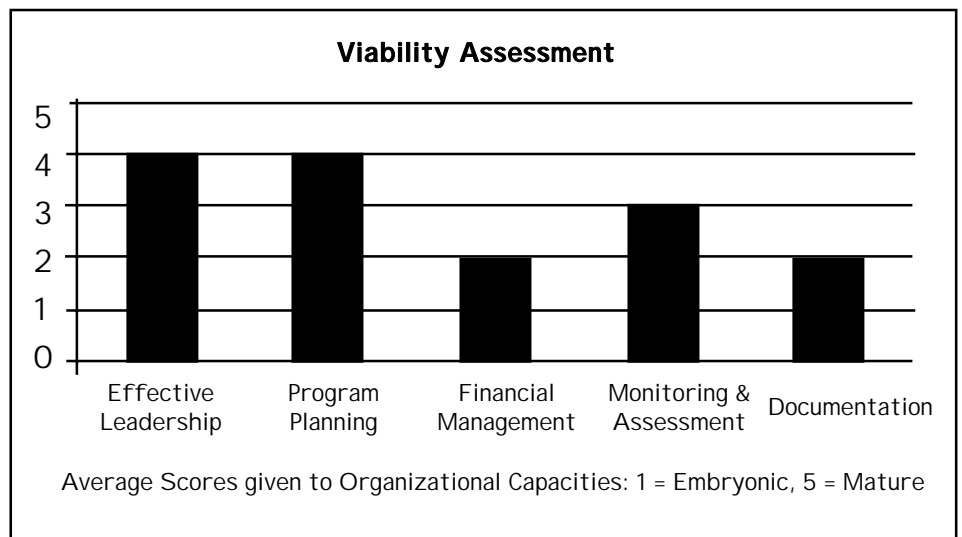
Timelines: Unlike calendars, which illustrate *cyclical* changes, a timeline shows a *sequence* of activities, or progressive change. These changes can then be sorted into positive, neutral or negative events, depending on their impact on the organization or community.

Exercises included in this guide that use Timelines include: *Organizational Timeline* (pg. 102), *Timeline Analysis: Organizational Development Stages* (pg. 104) and *Relationships with Community Groups* (pg. 144).



Graphs Graphs offer a visual way of representing numerical information. This tool translates numbers into geometrical shapes to illustrate relationships among measurements. Graphs can be used to compare information, or to represent percentages or degrees.

Types of graphs include bar graphs and pie charts.



4

PREPARING EXERCISES

Direct Observation: In addition to the information provided verbally by the participants, a large amount of data can be collected through observation and direct data collection. Examples of this include walking through the village, attending community meetings, observing body language, reviewing reports or records, and measuring program results such as trees planted, crop yields or infant weight. This tool is also used to verify information collected through participatory exercises.

Mini-Survey: This is a simple tool for collecting basic information in a systematic manner. Mini-surveys allow users to look at percentages of the total and identify correlations among different variables or elements. For example, a mini-survey could be used to find out which households, out of all of the households in a community, participate in a development project. It could then elicit which of these households are headed by single women with children.

Information is generated by taking the complete list of community members or households generated with a mapping tool, and then systematically identifying which households meet certain criteria.

Mini-Survey			
	Adopted low grazing system	Used clinic in last year	All Children Attend School
Household A1	X		
Household A2	X	X	X
Household A3	X	X	
Household B1		X	
Household B2		X	
Household B3	X		X
Household B4		X	X
Household C1	X		
Household C2			X
Household D1	X		X
Household D2		X	
Household D3		X	

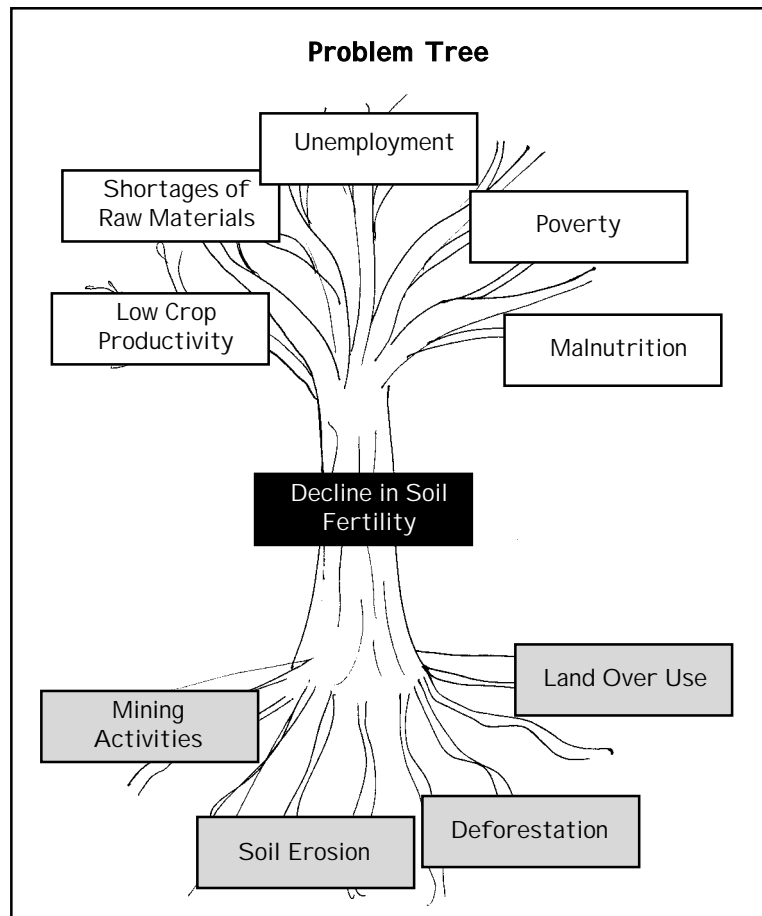
Analogy & Metaphor: This tool is used to synthesize information and to give it meaning through the use of an analogy or metaphor. Analogies such as a tree can illustrate relationships among data while providing an accessible way for participants to quickly take in and analyze the information. Analogy & Metaphor are particularly useful when trying to combine and present complex concepts or findings.

Exercises in this guide that use Analogy & Metaphor include: *A Common Understanding of Organizational Development* (pg. 97), *A Common Understanding of Self-Assessment* (pg. 98) and *Problem Tree Analysis* (pg. 128).

Dialogue & Semi-Structured Interview:

Semi-Structured Interview (SSI) is the principle tool that is included in almost every exercise. Anyone can ask questions, but the manner of doing so can considerably affect the quality of the responses. The major themes to be addressed in the SSI are prepared in advance. However, the facilitator must construct the actual questions as the interview proceeds, and in light of the exercise results. In this way, the interview is similar to a group discussion, or an informal conversation. Facilitators must practice a great deal in order to develop the art of SSI. Often, answers to one question will spark new questions that can deepen participants' understanding of the issue being addressed. Key words to use to ensure *open-ended* questions include: Who?, What?, Why?, When?, How? and Where? Facilitators should avoid closed questions that can be answered with only yes or no. It is also important to avoid leading questions that signal to participants the facilitator's expected answer.

Almost all of the exercises in this field guide include SSI Questions, including *Purpose-Problems-Impact-Objectives-Activities* (pg. 124), *Management Efficiency Assessment* (pg. 136) and *Trend Analysis: Renewable Natural Resources* (pg. 162).



4

PREPARING EXERCISES

4.3 COMBINING TOOLS TO FORM EXERCISES

Often you will want to combine different tools in order to elicit, organize, present and analyze information. For example, an exercise may first ask participants to BRAINSTORM all the characteristics of an effective leader, then GROUP similar characteristics together, and then SCORE their own organization. The facilitator may then want to present these scores in the form of a GRAPH in order to help the participants to analyze the implications.

The more comfortable you become with the underlying tools of participatory exercises, the more flexibility and creativity you will have in building your own.

4.4 THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PARTICIPATORY EXERCISES

Every participatory exercise in this field guide can be deconstructed down to its fundamental parts, or building blocks. These parts can be changed to adapt or create exercises based on the specific context and needs of any given situation. These building blocks include:

Relevance: What is the fundamental issue being addressed? How does the exercise contribute to the overall objectives of the assessment? How does this issue relate to the organization's performance, impact and/or viability?

Objectives: What specific information is being sought? What do you hope to learn from the exercise?

Participants: Who is able to generate this information? Who should participate in the collection and analysis of the data?

Tools: What is the most effective way to elicit, organize, visualize and analyze the information? [NOTE: See 4.2 *Tool Kit for Participatory Exercises* (pg. 21).]

Steps: What will participants be asked to do? In what order?

Checklist: How can you complement local knowledge by bringing in another perspective?

Preparation: What exercises do you need to conduct beforehand? What materials and visuals will this exercise require?

Building Blocks of Participatory Exercises

Relevance

Objectives

Participants

Tools

Steps

Checklists

Preparation

SSI Questions

Tips

Semi-Structured Interview Questions (SSI): How will you stimulate analysis and interpretation among participants?

Tips: What are the possible difficulties and ways of overcoming them?

4.5 DESIGNING NEW EXERCISES: GROUP PROCESS

Once you understand these tools and building blocks, you can invent exercises to fit the specific needs of the organization or community group. This creative process can itself be a participatory activity carried out by the facilitation team. Here we present one possible sequence for carrying out this process.

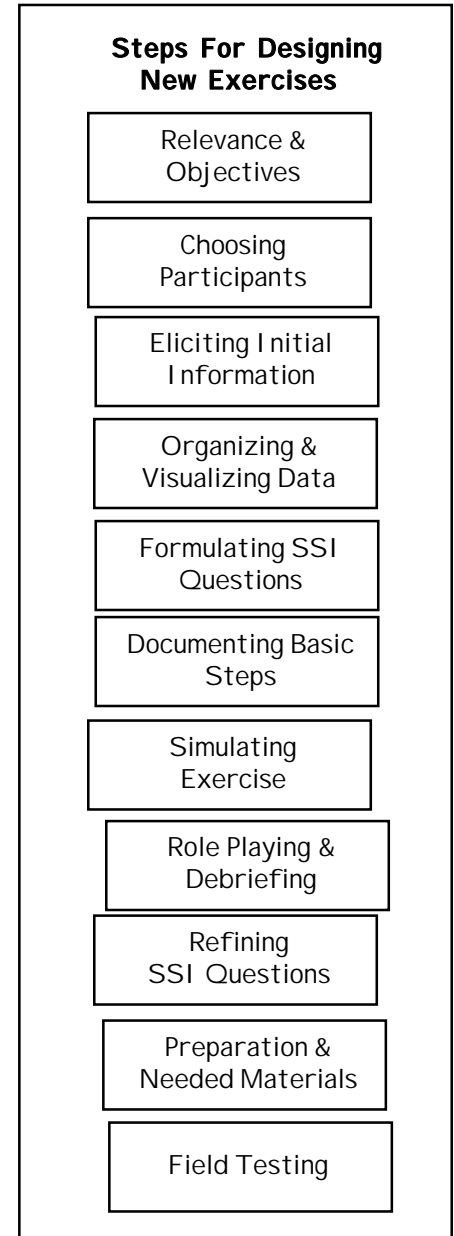
Discuss the Relevance & Objectives: What do you want to discover and why? It is important to relate these questions to the overall objectives of the assessment. The **WHAT?** statements are written on cards* as objectives and the **WHY?** statement is written as the relevance.

Decide Who Should Participate: Who will most likely be able to provide this information? Who should be involved in collecting and analyzing this information? You should consider the different perspectives of the various stakeholder groups to get both a complete understanding of the situation as well as to verify the data. Write down the participation criteria on cards and place them under the relevance and objectives cards.

Eliciting Initial Information: The first steps of the exercise will be designed to draw upon participants' experience and knowledge in order to elicit basic data. This may involve brainstorming characteristics, listing households, naming tasks, etc. It may be necessary to build on this initial information by using a series of linked inquiries, or steps that pull out multiple sets of information. For example, in the *Relationships Assessment* exercise (pg. 142), the participants first identify all the organizations or groups with which they relate, and then brainstorm the different categories or types of relationships. Think about the initial information needed and the possible tools that could generate this data.

Organizing & Visualizing Information: How you organize and visualize the data will give the information meaning and guide the analysis process. Do you want to illustrate relationships among pieces of information? Track progress over time? Identify patterns? Assess the current situation? Based on these decisions, identify the tools appropriate to the exercise.

*Cards can be sheets of colored paper cut in halves or thirds.



4

PREPARING EXERCISES

Guiding Interpretation: Make an initial list of Semi-Structured Interview Questions designed to stimulate analysis and interpretation. Things to highlight through the SSI process include:

- Extremes
- Variations & Divergences
- Striking Similarities
- Information that contradicts or confirms findings from previous exercises

SSI questions should help participants identify possible explanations and implications for their organization or community group.

Document Basic Steps: Once you have a sketch of the exercise, make an outline of the basic steps to be followed. You may want to write each step on a card in order to make changes later.

Simulate Exercise: One person in the group quickly simulates the exercise by narrating the steps and going through the motions. Make adjustments to the steps based on how well the exercise worked in the simulation.

Role Play: Group members take on the roles of facilitators or participants and go through the exercise playing their assigned parts. This process serves to further test the exercise and generates a checklist, while helping to anticipate difficulties and increase the facilitators' familiarity with the process.

Debrief: After the role playing session, discuss as a group how the exercise steps flowed and evaluate the visualization. Identify potential difficulties and try to find solutions, which can be included as TIPS.

Refine SSI Questions: Review the original questions and make changes based on the role playing and debriefing.

Preparation: Make a list of what preparation and materials will be needed to conduct this exercise.

Field Test: Exercises are never "Done." An ongoing process of field testing occurs every time that you conduct the exercise with a group. Through the post-exercise debriefing process, you can evaluate the exercise on the basis of whether it successfully elicited the desired information and whether the participants understood the relevance and significance of the findings.

4.6 ADAPTING & MASTERING EXERCISES: GROUP PROCESS

Exercises should always be adapted to the specific needs and situations of the organization. The process of adapting exercises, when done in a participatory manner, can also serve to strengthen facilitators' understanding and comfort levels by giving them the opportunity to role play and reflect on the exercises being prepared.

Here we present one sequence of steps that can be used to adapt exercises to the specific context in which they will be used. [NOTE: For more information on adapting exercises specifically to the field level, please see *Chapter 6: Preparing For Fieldwork* (pg. 47).]

Review the Relevance & Objectives: Review the relevance and objectives of the exercise, and adapt them to the overall workshop objectives and specific information being sought.

Review Steps: The group members write a summary, or outline of the exercise steps on cards, making any necessary changes to the original.

Decide Roles: Decide who will be the principle facilitator and the note taker for this exercise.

First Role Play: With one person playing the role of facilitator and the others playing participants, simulate conducting the exercise.

Constructive Criticism: Reflect on how the exercise worked and suggest changes to improve it. Facilitators can critique their own performance and then listen as the others give feedback [NOTE: See *Chapter 7: Working With Facilitators* (pg. 59) for more information on the Self-Critiquing Process.]

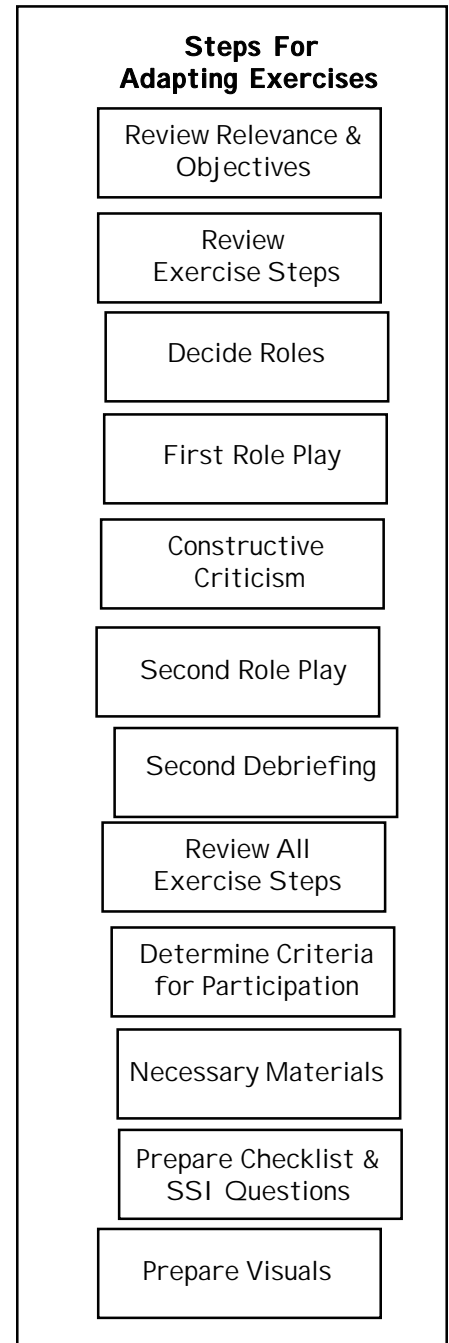
Second Role Play: Role play the exercise again, trying to incorporate the lessons learned from the self-critiquing process.

Debriefing: Once again reflect on how the exercise worked, keeping in mind the specific situation in which the exercise will be applied.

Review All the Steps: The entire group reviews the exercise steps.

Determine the Criteria for Participation: Decide how the participants will be chosen and what characteristics are required.

Materials: Make a list of all the materials and preparation needed.



4

PREPARING EXERCISES

Prepare a Checklist: As a group, prepare a checklist using the results generated from the simulations.

Prepare SSI Questions: Write the Semi-Structured Interview Questions, highlighting variations, striking similarities or patterns, and apparent contradictions.

Prepare Visuals: Decide how the exercise will be presented and conducted visually, and prepare any necessary materials (i.e., flip charts, checklists, etc.).

Overview: Principles & Best Practice For Preparing Exercises

1. Every guided self-assessment needs to be designed to address the specific needs of the organization or community group. Facilitators therefore should be able to adapt and create exercises that fit the context in which they will be used.
2. Participatory exercises rely on a diverse set of tools to elicit, organize, visualize, verify, analyze and interpret information.
3. Often it is necessary to combine multiple tools when designing exercises. The more comfortable you are in your understanding of these tools, the more creative you can be.
4. Exercises can be deconstructed down to their fundamental parts, or building blocks. These can be changed to create new exercises. This process of inventing exercises can itself be a participatory activity carried out by the facilitation team.
5. Exercises will always need to be adjusted to fit the participants, the goals or the situation. The process of adapting exercises, when done as a group process, can also serve to increase facilitators' understanding of and comfort levels with the exercises.

PLANNING A WORKSHOP

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5.1 PLANNING A WORKSHOP

Planning an organizational self-assessment workshop entails gathering the necessary materials, addressing logistical concerns, setting the overall schedule, and selecting and sequencing exercises. Some of this preparation needs to be done ahead of time with the facilitation team, while other aspects of the planning process are better addressed as a large group with all the participants.

No matter how well you plan, there will always be surprises along the way. In some ways, you can plan for these surprises by designing the workshop program to be flexible. Unexpected events and unanticipated critical issues emerging from the exercises are to be “expected.”

The more time you spend preparing for the workshop, the more effectively you will use the time available, and the more meaningful the information generated will be.

5.2 NECESSARY MATERIALS

The materials required depend on the exercises that you choose to conduct. However, below is a list of commonly used materials:

- Cards (multi-colored paper cut into halves or thirds)
- Scissors
- Large Rolls of Paper or Flip Charts
- Markers
- Pens, Pencils & Erasers
- Masking Tape
- Beans or Stones
- Scotch Tape for securing cards to posters
- Rubber Bands for bundling cards
- Notebooks or Loose Leaf Paper for taking notes
- Stapler & Staples for collating notes
- Paper clips
- Envelopes or folders for storing papers
- Calculator (optional)
- Computer & Printer (optional)
- Diskettes (if using a computer)
- Camera & Film (optional)

In This Chapter

- 5.1 Planning a Workshop
- 5.2 Necessary Materials
- 5.3 Logistical Issues
- 5.4 Workshop Program
- 5.5 Selecting & Sequencing Exercises
- 5.6 Designing the Preliminary Plan
- 5.7 Guiding Principles for Choosing & Sequencing Exercises
- 5.8 Choosing & Sequencing Exercises: Group Process
- 5.9 Example of Workshop Schedule I: Initial Exercises
- 5.10 Example of Workshop Schedule II: Community Level
- 5.11 Example of Workshop Schedule III: Exploring Critical Issues
- 5.12 Example of Workshop Schedule IV: Implications & Action Plans
- 5.13 Scaling Down the Assessment Process

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PLANNING A WORKSHOP

5.3 LOGISTICAL ISSUES

Some common logistical issues include the space in which the workshop will be taking place, refreshments and meals, transportation, lodging, circulation of information, note taking and data entry. Many of these concerns can be addressed by the participants. You may want to have them form small teams, or committees, that are charged with arranging these needs. [NOTE: See the *Responsibilities & Logistics* exercise (pg. 94) for more on how to form these task groups.]

5.4 WORKSHOP PROGRAM

A self- assessment workshop can be split up into six major phases. These include:

- Preparation
- Exercises
- Synthesis & Analysis
- Verification & Follow-up
- Implications & Action Plans
- Report Writing

These phases are not necessarily sequential; for example, periodic synthesis and analysis is needed before continuing with new exercises. When making an overall schedule, keep in mind how the phases work together.

It is also easy to underestimate the time each phase will require. Preparing the facilitators and designing the exercises can easily take a full week. Unforeseen events such as holidays, or unexpected critical issues may require more time than was scheduled. Often there is not enough time left at the report writing phase to do a sufficient job of capturing the findings. In order to avoid this, try to plan conservatively, leaving an extra day or two open. [NOTE: Please see the *Establishing the Workshop Program* exercise (pg. 93) for more on designing the overall workshop schedule as a group.]

5.5 SELECTING & SEQUENCING EXERCISES

During the preparation phase, the facilitation team needs to plan at least a tentative workshop schedule. This is accomplished by selecting, adapting and creating different exercises, and combining them together in a sequence to meet the specific objectives of the self-assessment.

Choosing & Sequencing Exercises

Start with Overview of the Organization

Build Trust Early in the Process

Identify Critical Issues

Gradually Deepen Analysis

Cross Check & Verify Information

Address Sensitive Issues towards End

Synthesize & Analyze Results

End with Workshop Overview/Conclusions

This selection and sequencing must be done for each new situation in which the exercises are to be applied. It is essential to understand that only the underlying principles of the process can be transferred from context to context. *All other elements of the methodology presented in this guide, including the choice and sequencing of exercises, must be adapted by the facilitators to fit each situation.*

Too often, however, there is a tendency to see the exercises as an end in and of themselves, rather than as a means to generate collaborative analysis of key issues. Inexperienced practitioners may lack the confidence to adapt the process to new circumstances or emerging situations. Others may have a tendency to use predetermined sequences with a rigid attitude. Some field teams can become obsessed with dealing with each exercise rather than allowing exercises to flow and innovating new exercises as required.

The challenge in planning an organizational self-assessment, therefore, is to provide enough “structure” to ensure coherence and rigor, while allowing the workshop to have enough flexibility to explore emerging issues. Each exercise is useful only if it addresses particular issues or questions, and these cannot be determined in advance. Usually, it is the workshop coordinator, or team leader, who ensures that the exercises are used flexibly. The facilitation team should understand that every organizational self-assessment will require its own adapted set and sequence of exercises.

5.6 DESIGNING THE PRELIMINARY PLAN

A number of factors will influence the design of the preliminary workshop plan. The most important of these are:

- Objectives of the organizational self-assessment
- Number of days and participants the local organization or community group is willing to commit to the process
- Time period over which the workshop is to be undertaken
- Number of facilitators on the team

Once these basic factors have been considered, there are no hard and fast rules about how to select and sequence the exercises. However, the following principles can guide the design of the preliminary workshop plan.

Every guided organizational self-assessment will require its own adapted set and sequence of exercises. Only the underlying principles of the process can be transferred from context to context.

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PLANNING A WORKSHOP

5.7 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CHOOSING & SEQUENCING EXERCISES

Start with general exercises that will provide an overview of:

- the organization, its purpose, available resources and the wider context
- the range of activities and services being undertaken by the organization and its main target groups
- the problems or issues that the organization members perceive they are facing

Select initial exercises that:

- Quickly build trust, enable facilitators to understand internal dynamics and reveal the characteristics of participants
- Help participants quickly become familiar and comfortable with the self-assessment methods and approaches

Select exercises that will identify critical issues within each of the four main dimensions of the organizational self-assessment:

- TO DO: Performance/Impact
- TO BE: Identity, Vision, Viability, Autonomy
- TO RELATE: Relationships
- TO MANAGE: Governance, Management, Systems, etc.

Progressively identify and prioritize critical issues that merit further exploration. Adapt or create exercises to address these emerging issues.

One of the strengths of the organizational self-assessment process is the way in which outcomes of one exercise flow into another. This continuity increases the relevance and reliability of the discussions, and allows further probing of key issues. Sequence exercises to allow participants to gradually and progressively deepen their understanding and analysis of complicated issues. Some issues may need to be broken down into various parts before participants can make an informed assessment.

Select exercises to cross check and verify important information relating to critical issues.

Conduct exercises that explore controversial or sensitive issues near the end of the workshop, when a higher level of trust has hopefully

been established between facilitators and organization members, as well as among participants.

Towards the end, include several exercises that synthesize critical issues. These enable participants to develop action plans.

Conclude the self-assessment process with general summary exercises, that outline the provisional results and conclusions. At this point data can be verified, errors identified, gaps filled and conclusions affirmed. The summary exercises can also generate a sense of ownership, which will be essential for moving from assessment to action.

5.8 CHOOSING & SEQUENCING EXERCISES: GROUP PROCESS

Choosing and sequencing exercises should be done by the facilitation team, with input from the local organization or community group members. The process of selecting exercises includes:

- Identifying the key information or areas to be explored, in relation to the overall workshop objectives
- Identifying what information is already available in other forms
- Deciding which exercises to use in order to elicit the desired information
- Designing a daily plan that is achievable in the time available

Here we present one possible process for helping the facilitation team choose and sequence exercises based on these elements. To prepare for this discussion, you will need to write down the names of the possible exercises on cards and prepare a large calendar with the workshop dates. This calendar can simply be each day written on a card that will be taped to the wall or placed on the floor. [NOTE: If you are selecting exercises for program or community-level assessment, please see *Chapter 6: Preparing for Fieldwork* (pg. 47) for an adapted version of this process.]

Review Organizational Themes: Revisit with the facilitators the different themes that can be covered in an organizational self-assessment (To Do, To Be, To Relate and To Manage).

Review Workshop Objectives: Looking at the workshop objectives, ask the facilitators to identify the key information necessary to reach these goals. Write their responses on cards. Then ask them to sort these cards into two categories, based on the availability of the information: “Organizational Level” and “Program (or Community) Level.”

Group Process for Choosing & Sequencing Exercises

Review Organizational Themes

Review Workshop Objectives

Identify Other Information Sources

Present Preliminary Agenda

Present Workshop Calendar

Prioritize Exercises

Set & Finalize the Agenda

5

PLANNING A WORKSHOP

Other Sources of Information: Take the cards from the “Organizational” column and place them in a row. Starting with the first item, ask the group to identify other sources of this information (i.e., reports, past assessment results, etc.) Write these on cards and place them underneath the information card. [NOTE: Simply because information is available from other sources does not necessarily eliminate it from the list. For example, an organizational self-assessment can be used to verify the accuracy of reports and deepen the analysis. However, this process can help prioritize information in the face of time limitations.]

Other Sources of Information				
Strengths & Weaknesses	Communication & Documentation	Self-Financing & Mobilizing Local Resources	Viability & Autonomy	Relationships with Other Organizations
1995 Assessment	Annual Reports	Financial Reports	Strategic Plan	Memorandums of Understanding
Annual Reports	Photographs		Financial Reports	
	Past newsletters		Annual Reports	

Present Preliminary Agenda: Display all the exercise cards and pull out some that seem to correspond with the objectives of the workshop. As a group, identify the exercises that will elicit the desired information, discussing ways to adapt or combine exercises. If needed, invent new exercises to meet the needs of the workshop. [NOTE: See *Chapter 4: Preparing Exercises* (pg. 21).] Make sure that the facilitators can justify their choices in relation to the workshop objectives.

Present the Calendar: Present the calendar and block out the days/times reserved for non-exercise related activities. These include travel, fieldwork, holidays and time off, synthesis and analysis sessions, and report writing. In the remaining time slots, begin to distribute the exercises in a logical order to test if the proposed agenda is realistic.

Prioritize Exercises: If the proposed list of exercises is too ambitious for the time available, the facilitators will need to prioritize. One way to do this is to have them sort the exercise cards into three columns: “Very Important,” “Important” and “Less Important.” Another way would be to give each facilitator ten beans or stones and ask them to distribute these “votes” among the various possible exercises. [NOTE: See *4.2 Toolkit for Participatory Exercises* (pg. 21).]

Set the Agenda: Once the facilitators have narrowed down the list of exercises, arrange them again on the calendar. Discuss as a group the possible sequences and make adjustments as necessary. Confirm that the proposed agenda will meet the needs of the organization as stated in the overall objectives.

Finalize the Agenda: Once the facilitators are in agreement that the agenda is reasonable and meets the objectives, present it to the organization members for discussion, changes and approval. Keep the agenda posted during the entire workshop.

5.9 EXAMPLE OF WORKSHOP SCHEDULE I: INITIAL EXERCISES

Here we present the first week's schedule of an organizational self-assessment workshop conducted in Mali (1999). The objectives of the assessment were to evaluate the intermediary organization's own development and level of autonomy while also assessing their efforts to strengthen the capacity of intervillage associations. The team of five facilitators and one team leader spent several days preparing preliminary objectives and a workshop schedule, which were then modified by the organization members.

Notice that the group split up into two sub-groups for the first week. Each sub-group was led by two members of the facilitation team, who took turns facilitating and taking notes. There were between six and eight participants in each group, and the team leader went back and forth between the two groups providing support.

The first week was designed to clarify the objectives and structure of the self-assessment, to elicit basic information about the organization and to begin exploring the critical issues affecting its performance and viability. Time was also set aside for building team spirit, addressing logistical questions and debriefing with the facilitation team. At the end of the week, one day was devoted to synthesizing and analyzing the findings thus far in order to determine the next steps necessary in the self-assessment process.

Please also notice that during the week, the team reduced the number of exercises that they conducted each day from seven to four. This was in response to feedback from the participants that the fast pace was not allowing them enough time to fully explore the issues that were emerging.

Whatever process you use, the following factors should be taken into consideration when prioritizing exercises:

Are certain exercises prerequisite for others?

Can exercises be adapted to elicit the information more efficiently?

Can the information be elicited in other ways at a later time?

What exercises are complementary to the community level assessment process?

5

PLANNING A WORKSHOP

Example Workshop Schedule I: Initial Exercises

Initial activities are designed to familiarize the participants with the participatory process, build trust and address logistical questions.

Start with exercises that provide an overview of the organization.

Select exercises that identify critical issues around the four main dimensions of an organizational self-assessment.

Sequence exercises to allow participants to progressively deepen their understanding and analysis of complicated issues.

Date	Time	Group A	Group B
Monday	Morning	Introductions & Ice Breakers	
		Hopes & Fears	
		Defining Workshop Objectives & Focus	
		Establishing the Workshop Program	
	Responsibilities & Logistics		
	Afternoon	A Common Understanding of Capacity Building & Organizational Assessment	
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators	
Tuesday	Morning	Review Schedule & Announcements	
		Purpose Mapping	
		Organizational Timeline	Activities Onion
	Afternoon	Timeline Analysis	Relationships Assessment
		Strengths & Weaknesses	Donor Assessment
	Closing		
Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Wednesday	Morning	Review Schedule & Announcements	
		History of Support	Activities Performance Assessment
	Afternoon	Transfer of Responsibilities	Viability Assessment
		Closing	
Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Thursday	Morning	Review Schedule & Announcements	
		Support/Self-Reliance Matrix	Threats to Viability
	Afternoon	Strengthening Village Capacity	Autonomy Assessment
		Closing	
Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Friday	All Day	Synthesis & Analysis	

PLANNING A WORKSHOP

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5.10 EXAMPLE OF WORKSHOP SCHEDULE II: COMMUNITY LEVEL

Once the initial exercises were completed, the organization members prepared to do fieldwork with the intervillage associations. [NOTE: Please see *Chapter 6: Preparing for Fieldwork* (pg. 47) for more information on this process.] The team split up to work in two areas and conducted the following exercises.

Example Workshop Schedule II: Community Level

Date	Time	Subgroup 1: Mission	Subgroup 2: History	Subgroup 3: Women
Sunday	Morning	Travel		
	Afternoon	Opening Meetings		
Monday	Morning	Purpose Mapping	Organizational Timeline	Strengths & Weaknesses
	Afternoon	Organizational Structure	Timeline Analysis	Information Flow
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Tuesday	Morning	Information Flow	Strengths & Weaknesses	Evolution of Organizational Capacities
	Afternoon	Viability Assessment & Threats to Viability	Autonomy Assessment	Trend Analysis: Women's Well-Being
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Wednesday	Morning	Evolution of Organizational Capacities	Transfer of Responsibilities	Program Results: Health
	Afternoon	Trend Analysis: Food Security	Program Results: Agriculture	Trend Analysis: Health
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Thursday	Morning	Class Villages by Capacity	Impact: Food Security	Impact: Health
	Afternoon	Activity Matrix & Support/Self-Reliance Matrix	Impact: Food Security (cont.)	Motivation of Female Leaders
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Friday	All Day	Synthesis & Analysis		

Repeat some exercises with other participants to verify and deepen important information relating to critical issues.

Conduct exercises that explore controversial or sensitive issues near the end of the workshop.

5

PLANNING A WORKSHOP

5.11 EXAMPLE OF WORKSHOP SCHEDULE III: EXPLORING CRITICAL ISSUES

The organization members then came back together after spending a week in the field. Several days of the third week were devoted to presenting and discussing the results of the community level self-assessment. Based on the themes that had emerged from the process thus far, the facilitators added four more exercises to the schedule before moving on to implications and action plans.

Example Workshop Schedule III: Exploring Critical Issues

Date	Time	Group A	Group B
Saturday	Morning	Presentations of Community Level Results	
Monday	All Day	Presentations of Community Level Results (cont.)	
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators	
Tuesday	Morning	Review Schedule & Announcements	
		Strengthening the Capacity of Women's Organizations	Strengthening Negotiation & Collaboration Capacities
	Afternoon	Planning & Evaluation Assessment	Mobilizing Local Resources/ Self-Financing
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators	

Progressively identify and prioritize critical issues that merit further exploration. Adapt or create exercises to address these emerging issues.

5.12 EXAMPLE OF WORKSHOP SCHEDULE IV: IMPLICATIONS & ACTION PLANS

Time was then devoted to reviewing all of the findings generated by the exercises, and to pulling out the major implications for the organization and for the intervillage associations.

Once the organization members had identified the implications, they prepared Capacity Trees for both their own organization and for each of the two intervillage associations. [NOTE: See the *Synthesis of Critical Issues* exercise (pg. 164) for more on Capacity Trees.] A meeting with representatives from the villages was held to discuss the implications and to develop action plans.

Example Workshop Schedule IV: Implications & Action Plans, part I

Date	Time	Organization Members	All Organization & Village Members	Small Groups
Wednesday	All Day	Preparation for Meeting		
Thursday	Morning		Introductions & Program Presentation	
			Synthesis of Critical Issues	
	Afternoon			Prioritization of Critical Issues
	Evening	Facilitators Meeting		
Friday	Morning		Priority Issues	
				Pyramids of Action
	Afternoon		Discussions of Action Plans	
	Evening	Facilitators Meeting		

After the intervillage associations developed their action plans, the intermediary organization went through the same process for themselves. While they were formulating their own action plan, the organization members also participated in an exercise designed to stimulate thought around how they could incorporate participatory methods into their regular monitoring and evaluation systems. In this way the group not only came up with a plan of how to strengthen their organizational capacities, but also how to continue to monitor their own organizational development in the future.

Near the end of the workshop, include several exercises that synthesize and prioritize critical issues to enable participants to develop action plans.

Example Workshop Schedule IV: Implications & Action Plans, part II

Date	Time	Organization Members
Friday	Afternoon	Appreciation of Participatory Exercises & Methods
Saturday	Morning	Prioritization of Critical Issues
	Afternoon	Pyramid of Action
		Strategies for Phasing Out

The summary exercises generate a sense of ownership, which will be essential for moving from assessment to action.

The final days of the self-assessment were then devoted to organizing all of the materials that had been generated during the workshop (visuals, notes, etc.) and to writing the report. [NOTE: Please see *Chapter 8: Analysis & Documentation* (pg. 69) for more on this process.]

5

PLANNING A WORKSHOP

5.13 SCALING DOWN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A full-fledged application of the organizational self-assessment process outlined in this guide could take considerable time and resources. Some of the organizational self-assessments using this comprehensive approach took over three weeks to complete and involved staff members, outside resource people and program participants. It was a full time, intensive process, particularly for the facilitation team who regularly met in the evenings or before morning sessions.

This is only one of many ways to go about a self-assessment. It is entirely possible (and indeed often more realistic) to focus the assessment on one or two critical issues affecting the organization, reducing the number of exercises and amount of time needed to complete the process. Once the organization members become comfortable using the methods, they may decide to use abbreviated versions of these exercises during planning or evaluation meetings, or with new program staff or participants.

When determining the scope of an assessment workshop, you may want to consider the following:

- WHY is the organization interested in self-assessment?
- WHAT are the perceived priority issues or themes to be addressed?
- What RESOURCES are available to conduct the self-assessment?
- How much TIME is available to undertake the process?
- What CONNECTIONS are there between the priority issues and other themes? Do these need to be addressed as well?

Overview: Principles & Best Practice For Planning a Workshop

1. Planning for an organizational self-assessment requires gathering the necessary materials, addressing logistical concerns, setting the agenda, selecting and sequencing exercises and choosing participants.
2. Every organizational self-assessment will require its own adapted set and sequence of exercises. Only the underlying principles of the process can be transferred from context to context.
3. The process of selecting exercises includes: identifying the key information or areas to be explored, identifying what information is already available in other forms, deciding which exercises will elicit the desired information and designing a daily plan that is achievable in the time available.
4. There are many different ways to use these tools and methods, depending on the needs and available resources of the organization. Developing the skills of organization members to use these methods helps to “institutionalize” the participatory assessment process and allows for greater flexibility in its application.

PREPARING FOR FIELDWORK

6.1 PREPARING FOR FIELDWORK

In order to verify and deepen the findings generated at the organization level, it is important to conduct exercises with community members. This is also an opportunity for the organization members to facilitate these exercises and for community groups to evaluate their own organizational development.

Much of the information in the previous chapter applies to conducting fieldwork as well. However, there are many aspects of adapting these methods to the community level that require special preparation.

Preparing to conduct participatory exercises with program participants entails many elements, including:

- **Logistical Questions:** Transportation, food and lodging, setting the dates, explaining the purpose of the participatory activities to local leaders in advance, etc.
- **Materials:** Making sure that all the teams have the materials they will need while in the field.
- **Participants:** Choosing the communities and deciding which participants to gather together.
- **Setting the Agenda:** Particularly if the team is splitting up to work with several communities, you will need to decide together what exercises to cover and any key information you want to gather.
- **Dividing Into Teams:** The facilitators will need to divide into well-balanced teams and then into sub-teams of two or three people each.
- **Adapting the Methods:** Translating key concepts into the local language, adapting tools to work for non-literate participants, etc.
- **Preparing Facilitators:** Most likely some of the organization members will be facilitating these exercises for the first time and will need to become comfortable with both the methods and their new role.

Be sure to leave plenty of time for this preparation. The more time facilitators have to become familiar and comfortable in their roles, the more effective their time spent with the program participants will be.

In This Chapter

- 6.1 Preparing for Fieldwork
- 6.2 Logistics
- 6.3 Materials
- 6.4 Choosing Participants
- 6.5 Setting the Agenda
- 6.6 Things to Remember When Setting the Agenda
- 6.7 Dividing Into Teams & Sub-Teams
- 6.8 Adapting Exercises to the Community Level & Preparing Facilitators

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PREPARING FOR FIELDWORK

6.2 LOGISTICS

Fieldwork presents many logistical challenges. It may be necessary to visit the workshop sites in advance in order to negotiate lodging, food and workspace. It is critical to the success of the fieldwork that community and organization members clearly understand and work together on the logistical arrangements for the team's visit. Some logistical issues to resolve include:

Conditions in the Field: Make sure that the team members understand in advance the conditions in the field, including sleeping arrangements, food, water availability and toilet facilities. This information will help the team prepare and pack appropriately.

Use Local Resources Whenever Possible: Make a list of local resources available to the team members, including bedding, chairs and utensils. If the community members agree to provide these materials, use them respectfully and appreciatively. Bringing too many outside supplies can be insulting to your hosts.

Food: Food is more than just another logistical concern. It can serve to build relationships and trust, or to cause tension and misunderstanding. Strive for equality and share meals with participants when possible. If some are traveling to participate in the workshop, make sure that arrangements have been made for feeding them. While food should not be presented as an incentive to participate, remember that people are contributing their time and energy to the process, which should be compensated by at least ensuring that everyone is adequately fed.

Workspaces: Locate venues for different types of work, including large areas for group meetings, private places for conducting exercises dealing with sensitive issues, spaces with walls or trees for displaying visuals, safe space for storing supplies and areas for meetings with the team or community members. Comfort issues such as shade from the sun and mats on the floor should be considered. Also remember to arrange for a light source for evening meetings.

Weather: When conducting exercises outside, wind can quickly scatter cards and extreme heat can drain participants and facilitators' energy. Depending on the season, plan for diverse weather possibilities, including strong wind, rain or extreme temperatures.

6.3 MATERIALS

Many of the same materials listed in the previous chapter [5.2 *Necessary Materials* (pg. 35)] are also needed in the field. However, when too many supplies are brought in from the outside, there is a danger that community members will see the self-assessment process as requiring outside resources. In order to help local participants take ownership of the process and recognize the possibility of conducting the exercises themselves, try to use local materials whenever possible.

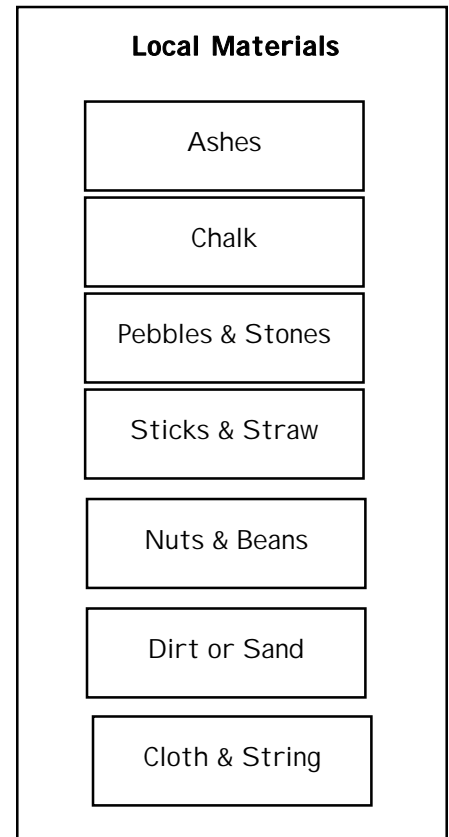
6.4 CHOOSING PARTICIPANTS

The choice of participants can greatly affect the quality of the self-assessment. No matter how well prepared or skilled a facilitator is, a workshop will not succeed without the right participants. This choice should be based on who in the community is best positioned to provide the right mix of knowledge and experience needed for each exercise. Diversity of perspectives, sensitivity to the issues and ability to fully participate should also be taken into account.

There is an important difference between *maximum participation* and *optimal participation*. Often it is argued that, if participation is the goal, then increased participation is always better. However, our experience has shown that organizations and communities benefit more from optimal participation, which seeks to match participants with the exercises or activities that will best use their skills, experiences and knowledge. Rather than trying to get everyone to participate in all phases of the self-assessment, it may be more effective to identify qualified and representative participants. The information generated during the exercises can be verified and completed using a broader reaching technique such as a community general meeting or a more detailed household survey. Synthesis and analysis sessions can also be opportunities for bringing more people into the process.

The guidelines presented below may help workshop organizers bring together participants in a way that both achieves the workshop goals and uses participants' time efficiently.

Identify Criteria for Each Exercise or Group: Who is best equipped to participate in the planned exercises? What skills, experiences or knowledge do they need? How many participants are needed? [NOTE: Most exercises work best with between six and 12 participants.] Also consider representation issues, such as gender and ethnic diversity. Try to make sure that traditionally marginalized members of the community are heard.



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PREPARING FOR FIELDWORK

Information Gathered About Participants

Name

Age & Gender

Position in
Community Group

Years with Program

Level of Literacy or
EducationAvailability during
Workshop

Work with Community Representatives: Explain the participation criteria (i.e., long history with the organization, familiarity with household situations, etc.) for the planned exercises to several members of the community group. Ask them to help identify participants with these characteristics. These representatives should also understand the overall goals of the workshop in order to explain it to the potential participants.

Make Cards for All Participants: Once all of the participants have come together, record information about each one on cards (see list for ideas). These cards can be used throughout the process to match participants with exercises.

Have the Representatives Group Cards: Once the community representatives with whom you have been working understand the criteria, ask them to use the cards to match the participants with the planned exercises.

Begin the Workshop with More General Exercises: This gives the organizers a chance to refine the distribution of participants and recruit more if needed.

Adjusting to Personality Issues: Participants with strong personalities can sometimes skew the results of an exercise by dominating the discussion. Their energy may be more constructively used in primarily objective activities such as mapping.

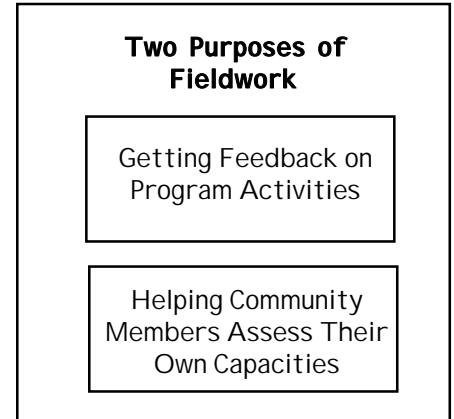
Sensitivity to Issues: It is also important to be aware of potentially sensitive issues for some participants. For example, a leader may not be comfortable participating in an exercise evaluating the quality of leadership in the community.

Literacy: While it is not necessary to be literate to participate in exercises, it can be helpful to have at least one or two literate participants in each group. They can help to facilitate and read cards back to the participants, shifting some of the control away from the facilitator. Literate participants can also help to verify the accuracy of the recorded information.

Flexibility: Try to be flexible when choosing and grouping participants. Remember that some will not be able to participate during the entire process, nor is it necessary to keep the same people grouped together. Monitor and adjust the distribution of participants throughout the whole workshop, based on feedback and direct observation.

6.5 SETTING THE AGENDA

To conduct fieldwork, the members of the intermediary organization who have been *participants* will most likely join the core facilitation team. Before leaving for the field, members of this expanded facilitation team need to decide what information they are seeking and what exercises will best achieve these goals. It is important to remember that the purpose of the fieldwork is two-fold. One, this is an opportunity for the intermediary organization to hear program participants' feedback on its support activities. But this could also be an opportunity for members of the community group to assess their own organizational ability to sustain the benefits and process. These two themes should guide the choice of exercises.



Once in the field, teams will most likely adjust their schedules in response to community members' expressed interests, unexpected outcomes of preliminary exercises, or time limitations. However, a general agenda helps the different teams to gather information in a coordinated fashion. This coordination is critical for making comparisons across communities, as well as making sure that the overall objectives are reached. The process of setting the agenda includes:

- Identifying the key information or areas to be explored, in relation to the overall workshop objectives
- Identifying what information is already available in other forms
- Deciding which exercises to use in order to elicit the desired information
- Designing a daily plan for the community level portion of the workshop

All of the facilitators and organization members participating in the workshop should be involved in setting the agenda for the fieldwork portion of the self-assessment. Here we present one model for facilitating this discussion. In order to prepare for this process, the core facilitation team will need to write the names of the possible exercises on cards and prepare a large calendar showing all of the days devoted to fieldwork. This calendar can simply be each day written on a card that will be taped to the wall or placed on the floor.

Review the Organizational Themes: Revisit with the group the different themes that can be covered through a self-assessment (To Do, To Be, To Relate, To Manage).

Review the Objectives: The overall self-assessment objectives should still be prominently displayed.

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PREPARING FOR FIELDWORK

Whatever process you decide to use, the following factors should be taken into consideration when prioritizing exercises:

Are certain exercises prerequisite for others?

Can some exercises be adapted to elicit the information more efficiently? (i.e., combining exercises).

Can the information be elicited in other ways at a later time?

What exercises are complementary to the workshop findings at the organizational level?

Identify the Key Information: Looking at the workshop objectives, ask the organization members to identify the key information necessary to reach these goals and write their responses on cards. Now have them sort the cards into two categories: “Organizational Level” and “Program (or Community) Level.” [NOTE: You may have already generated these lists with the core facilitation team during the overall preparation phase, in which case you can simply present the lists of desired information for group discussion and modifications.]

Other Available Sources of Information: Take the cards from the “Program” column and place them in a row. Starting with the first item, ask the group what other sources of information are available (i.e., reports, photos, testimonies, etc.) Write these on cards and place them underneath the information card. Repeat this process for each. [NOTE: Simply because information is available from other sources does not necessarily eliminate it from the list. However, this process can help prioritize information in the face of time limitations.]

Present Preliminary Agenda: Display all the exercise cards and pull out those that the facilitators previously identified as possibilities. Explain why the core facilitation team chose these exercises. At this point the entire group will discuss all the possible exercises and add/take away from the proposed list as appropriate. Make sure the group members can justify their decisions in relation to the objectives and list of available information.

Present the Calendar: Present the calendar and block out the days/times reserved for non-exercise related activities. These include travel time, the opening meeting, any foreseen interruptions (i.e., market days or holidays) and time set aside for synthesis and analysis. In the remaining time slots, begin to distribute the exercise cards in a logical order to see if the proposed agenda is realistic. Remember that the participants will be splitting into smaller groups to conduct different exercises simultaneously. We recommend scheduling no more than two exercises per day for each sub-group. [See the *Establishing a Workshop Program* exercise (pg. 93) for an example of a calendar.]

Prioritize the Exercises: If the proposed list of exercises is unrealistic, the group members will need to prioritize. One way to do this is to have them sort the exercise cards into three columns: “Very Important,” “Important” and “Less Important.” Another way would be to give each member ten beans or stones and ask them to distribute these “votes” among the various possible exercises.

PREPARING FOR FIELDWORK

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Set the Agenda: Once the organization members have narrowed down the list of exercises, arrange them again on the calendar. Discuss as a group the possible sequencing and make adjustments as necessary. Confirm that the proposed agenda will meet the needs of both the organization and the community participants.

Finalize the Agenda: Once everyone is in agreement that the agenda is reasonable and meets the workshop objectives, make sure that the schedule is recorded and distributed to everyone in the group.

Example Fieldwork Schedule

Date	Time	Subgroup 1: Mission	Subgroup 2: History	Subgroup 3: Women
Sunday	Morning	Travel		
	Afternoon	Opening Meetings		
Monday	Morning	Purpose Mapping	Organizational Timeline	Strengths & Weaknesses
	Afternoon	Organizational Structure	Timeline Analysis	Information Flow
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Tuesday	Morning	Information Flow	Strengths & Weaknesses	Evolution of Organizational Capacities
	Afternoon	Viability Assessment & Threats to Viability	Autonomy Assessment	Trend Analysis: Women's Well-Being
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Wednesday	Morning	Evolution of Organizational Capacities	Transfer of Responsibilities	Program Results: Health
	Afternoon	Trend Analysis: Food Security	Program Results: Agriculture	Trend Analysis: Health
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Thursday	Morning	Class Villages by Capacity	Impact: Food Security	Impact: Health
	Afternoon	Activity Matrix & Support/Self-Reliance Matrix	Impact: Food Security (cont.)	Motivation of Female Leaders
	Evening	Meeting with Facilitators		
Friday	All Day	Synthesis & Analysis		

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PREPARING FOR FIELDWORK

6.6 THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN SETTING THE AGENDA

- Keep in mind that the exercises may take longer to complete out in the field than they did with the intermediary organization members. Issues such as illiteracy, interruptions and inexperience of the facilitators and participants can prolong the sessions.
- The teams will most likely be splitting up into sub-teams to carry out several exercises at the same time. Make sure that this is reflected in the agenda.
- Each sub-team will often work with the same group of participants throughout the process, although this is not always necessary. If certain exercises require a particular type of participant (i.e., women, leaders, elders, etc.) you will have to make sure that the group participating in the exercises fits these criteria. It can be helpful to divide the teams into sub-teams around these characteristics (i.e., the women's group, the village leaders group, etc.) and then assign the exercises accordingly.

6.7 DIVIDING INTO TEAMS & SUB-TEAMS

Once the agenda is set, the expanded facilitation team will need to decide how it is going to divide in order to carry out the work. First, if the team will be conducting the exercises with multiple communities, they will need to divide into teams. Then, each team will divide into sub-teams according to the series of exercises they will conduct.

Make sure that inexperienced people are matched up with more experienced people, and that there are no major personality clashes.

To prepare for this process, make cards with the names of all the facilitators and all the participating communities. Also, prepare a flip chart with the criteria for choosing team members. This could include:

- Knowledge of the local language
- Knowledge of the area
- Experience and comfort with participatory methods
- Relationship with the leaders and community members
- Gender

To save time, a core group of people can prepare a preliminary team distribution ahead of time to present to the larger group.

Assess the Situation: Look at all the names of potential team members and the number of participating communities. Decide how many people will travel to each.

Create Balanced Teams: Informally assess each member based on the list of criteria. Begin placing the member cards underneath the location cards, trying to create balanced teams so that collectively each team meets all of the criteria. Keep in mind the importance of gender balance as well.

Sub-divide Teams: Once the preliminary teams have been identified, try to create sub-teams (2-3 people) out of the teams. Members of these sub-teams will conduct a series of exercises, taking turns facilitating, taking notes and supporting the process.

Assign Exercise Groups: Now try to assign each sub-team a series of exercises. Make sure that for each site, there is a sub-team that can carry out each of the proposed series of exercises. Make adjustments as necessary.

Finalize Teams & Sub-Teams: Once you have distributed all the members into sub-teams, go back and make sure that the original criteria are still being met. If this process has been done with a small group, it will be necessary to present these teams to the larger group.

6.8 ADAPTING EXERCISES TO THE COMMUNITY LEVEL & PREPARING FACILITATORS

As was said many times before, participatory exercises and methods will always need to be adapted to the specific situation, depending on the overall objectives, the time and resources available, etc. Preparing to conduct participatory exercises with program participants is no exception. Additionally, preparation for fieldwork can also pose the new challenges of language, relatively inexperienced facilitators and participants who are unfamiliar with the process. The steps proposed below can help facilitators become more comfortable in their roles and with the exercises, at the same time that they are adapting the methods to the needs of the community participants. [NOTE: For more on how to help people become effective facilitators, please see *Chapter 7: Working With Facilitators* (pg. 59).]

To prepare, facilitators should divide into their assigned sub-teams. If several sub-teams will be facilitating the same exercise under similar circumstances (language, types of participants, etc.), they should work together to adapt the exercise in order to ensure consistency.

Review the Relevance & Objectives: Review the relevance and objectives of the exercise and adapt them (if necessary) to the local context and needs.

The exercises presented in this guide not only need to be adapted to each situation, but also require good facilitation to be effective. If the organization members are unfamiliar with the exercises or the approach, be sure to allow sufficient time for preparation and training.

This investment of time will improve the quality of the results and help the organization incorporate the participatory process into their ongoing activities and systems.

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PREPARING FOR FIELDWORK

Review Steps: The group members write a summary, or outline, of the exercise steps on cards, making any necessary changes to the original exercise. Each member takes a turn explaining the process to the others.

First Simulation: With one person playing the role of facilitator and the others acting as participants, quickly simulate conducting the exercise.

Translate Key Concepts: Identify and translate the key concepts into the local language. This may include the relevance and objectives, the checklist, or larger ideas such as “Organizational Development.”

Decide on Roles: Each sub-team decides who will be the principle facilitator and the note taker for this exercise. [NOTE: These roles can change for each exercise that the sub-team conducts.]

Role Play in Local Language: Sub-team members role play the exercise in the local language. If several sub-teams are working together, choose one to facilitate while the other members play the role of participants.

Constructive Criticism: Members of the sub-team facilitating the exercise critique their own performance and then listen as the others give feedback. [NOTE: See 7.6 *Constructive Feedback & Self-Critique* (pg. 63) for more information on the Self-Critiquing Process.]

Second Role Play: Role play the exercise again, with a different group member facilitating.

Review Steps: The entire group reviews the exercise steps.

Prepare a Checklist: As a group, prepare a checklist in the local language.

Prepare SSI Questions: Write the Semi-Structured Interview Questions and translate them into the local language. Remember that SSI Questions should stimulate analysis and interpretation by highlighting extremes, variations, contradictions and patterns.

Materials: Make a list of all the materials and preparation needed for the exercise.

Prepare Visuals: Decide how the exercise will be presented and conducted visually, and prepare any necessary materials.

When role playing the exercise, organization members should try to give the responses they think will be given in a real life situation.

In this way, the team can generate a “checklist” of possible responses for key steps. When in the field, they can use this checklist to stimulate ideas among the participants.

Overview: Principles & Best Practice For Preparing For Fieldwork

1. In order to verify and deepen the findings generated at the organization level, it is important to conduct exercises with program participants. This is also an opportunity for the organization members to facilitate these exercises and for community groups to evaluate their own organizational development.
2. Make sure that facilitation teams are well-balanced and are capable of conducting all of their assigned exercises.
3. Participatory exercises always need to be adapted to the specific situation, depending on the overall objectives, the time and resources available, etc. In addition, preparation for fieldwork can also pose the new challenges of language, inexperienced facilitators and participants who may be unfamiliar with the process.
4. Participatory exercises not only need to be adapted to each situation, but also require good facilitation to be effective. If the organization members are unfamiliar with the exercises or the approach, be sure to allow sufficient time for preparation and training.

WORKING WITH FACILITATORS

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7.1 WORKING WITH FACILITATORS

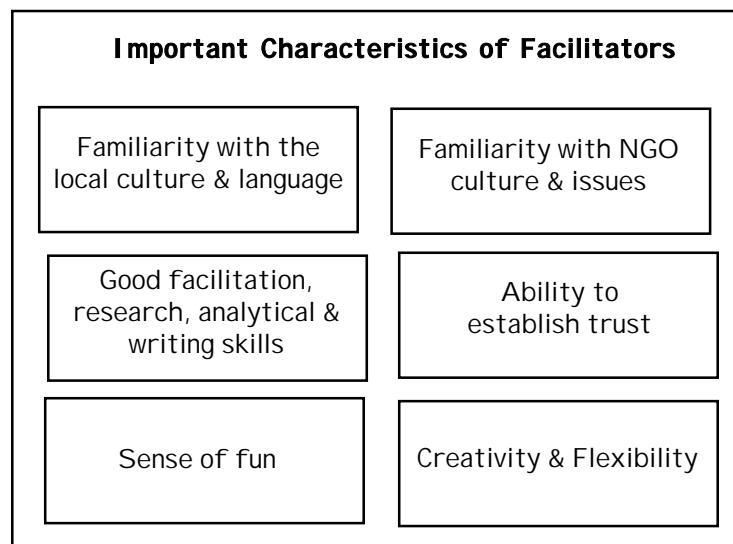
Capacity building workshops will most likely be conducted by a team of *local* facilitators led by a team leader. It is important that the facilitation team members are well selected, work well together, are comfortable with the tools as well as the facilitation process, and are open to constructive criticism and self-critique. This chapter discusses some key ideas and techniques to achieve these goals, as well as takes you through the process of debriefing with the team.

For a more indepth look at helping facilitators build their skills and work effectively together, we recommend Participatory Learning & Action: A Trainer's Guide which is listed in the *Recommended Resources* Appendix.

7.2 TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

Achieving a balance is an important part of building an effective team. Language skills, gender and experience should all be taken into consideration. Keep in mind that while some characteristics of good facilitators are inherent (i.e., a warm, open personality), many can be learned or enhanced through experience and practice (i.e., the ability to sense and respond to the mood and needs of a group). Rather than try to find team members with a particular skill set, remember that each person brings to the process his or her own unique experiences. It is important that the team leader recognizes these different gifts and assets, and helps the group to form in a way that takes advantage of this diversity.

You may also want to include both people affiliated with the organization and external resource people. Having different perspectives can enhance the team's ability to interpret results and identify critical issues.



In This Chapter

- 7.1 Working With Facilitators
- 7.2 Team Selection Process
- 7.3 Training Styles
- 7.4 Strengthening Facilitation Capacities
- 7.5 Stages of Facilitation Capacity Development
- 7.6 Constructive Feedback & Self-Critique
- 7.7 Maintaining & Monitoring Group Morale
- 7.8 Anticipating & Addressing Resistance to Change
- 7.9 Refining the Workshop Schedule

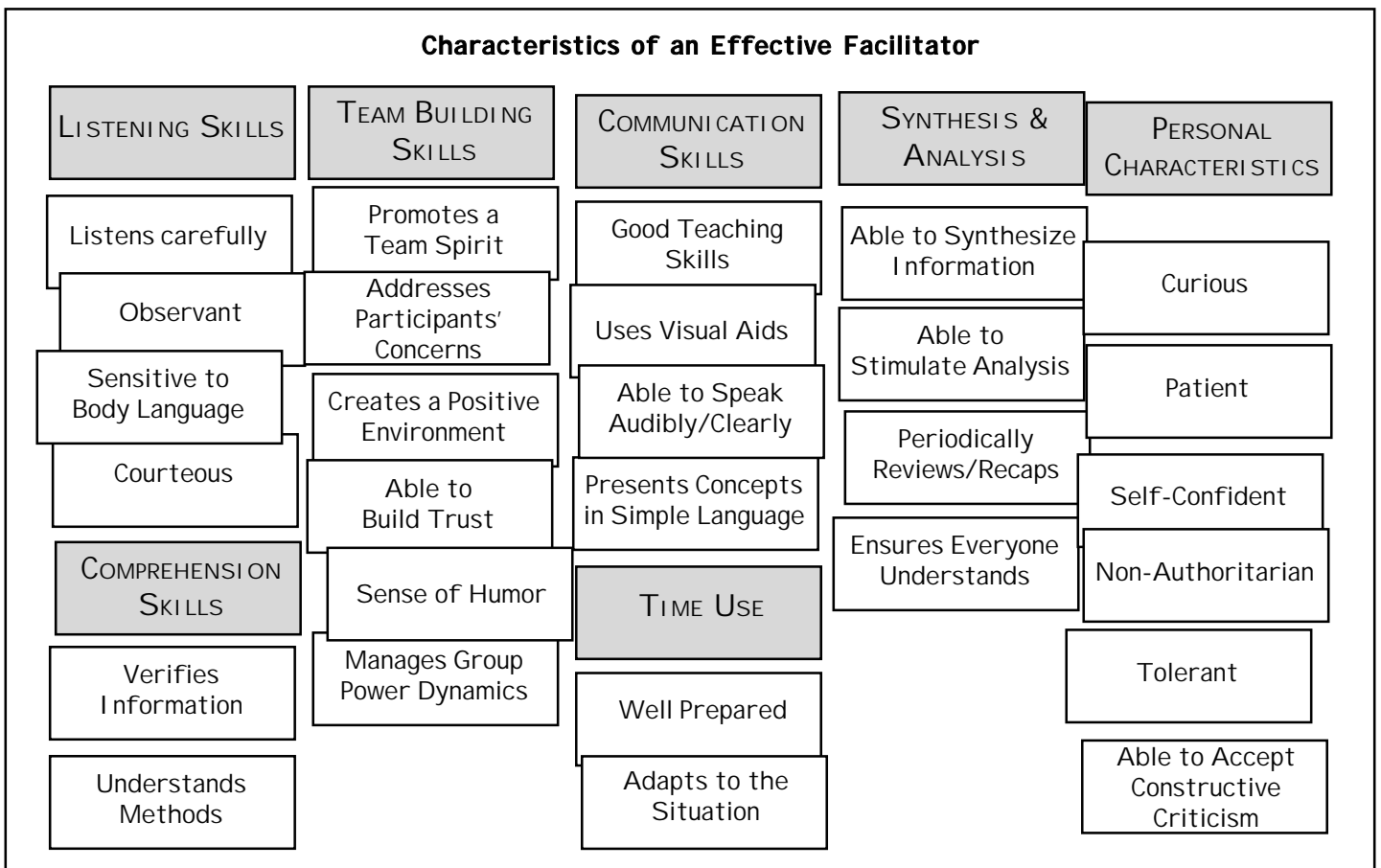
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WORKING WITH FACILITATORS

7.3 TRAINING STYLES

Once the facilitation team is formed, it is time to prepare for the workshop. The team leader’s role is to help the other members develop the skills and abilities necessary to effectively and sensitively apply participatory methods. Simply telling team members how to conduct exercises may seem like the most efficient way to prepare, especially when time is limited. However, this approach not only contradicts the underlying principles of participatory action learning, it also rarely leads to strong group building or a real understanding of participatory methodology. In addition, a conventional training approach is not sensitive to the fact that different people learn in different ways and at different rates.

The team leader should instead take the time to encourage reflection and creativity by maximizing facilitation team members’ participation in the training and by minimizing one-sided communication, such as lecturing. Remember that the team leader can be seen to hold more



authority, at least at the initial stages of the process. It is therefore even more important that the team leader be sensitive to how much he/she is dominating the learning process. The facilitation team may want to consider rotating the team leader (or coordinator) position among the members in order to reduce the chance for one person to dominate the entire proceedings, and to give other group members an opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

One effective technique for helping facilitators reflect on and improve their skills is to brainstorm as a group all the characteristics of an effective facilitator. The team leader may want to suggest others from a checklist to complete the team's list. Then, the facilitation team works together to group similar criteria into categories in order to identify broader characteristics. This brainstorming activity helps the team to generate its own list of criteria on which they will evaluate their performance during the workshop.

7.4 STRENGTHENING FACILITATION CAPACITIES

Preparing to facilitate a self-assessment is not simply a matter of designing an agenda or practicing using the specific tools. It is also an important opportunity for facilitation team members to deepen their understanding of the facilitator's role and to develop their abilities to effectively support a group learning process. Many of the team members may need to make a shift from a leadership or teaching mode to a more supportive, guiding and enabling one. This includes:

- Listening rather than talking
- Encouraging discovery rather than presenting information
- Being flexible and responsive rather than controlling

The facilitator's role is to help individuals, groups and communities identify their own needs, priorities and potential for change through collective action. He/she achieves this by:

- Getting information out there for the organization or community to examine and explore
- Helping participants analyze and interpret information
- Posing probing questions and clarifying results

No matter how much preparation they do, facilitators may still feel uncomfortable or unsure of themselves once they start working with participants. At best, the preparation period can give the team members a solid foundation on which to build. It is important to emphasize that developing and improving facilitation skills is a continuous,

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WORKING WITH FACILITATORS

Just like riding a bicycle or learning to swim, you can only learn to facilitate by practicing and learning from both your successes and mistakes.

hands-on process. Just like riding a bicycle or learning to swim, you can only learn to facilitate by practicing and learning from both your successes and mistakes.

7.5 STAGES OF FACILITATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Conducting an organizational self-assessment, or any type of intensive participatory activity, is an opportunity to strengthen the capacity of local facilitators who then can become resource people, conduct future workshops and train others. It is important to see the process as an apprenticeship during which less experienced facilitators can learn from those with more experience. Just as there is an evolutionary process in organizational development, there are also facilitation capacity stages that require different types of support and enable facilitators to work in different ways.

Embryonic: An individual is exposed to the participatory approach for the first time, perhaps as a member of an organization. His or her primary role at this stage is *participant*.

Emerging: After learning about participatory methods as a participant, an individual facilitates exercises with a group, for example at the community-level during an organizational self-assessment. He or she may need to follow a guide without adapting the exercises to the situation due to a lack of experience or confidence. At this stage, beginning facilitators need guidance from a more experienced person who can help them with both facilitation and in using the methods more effectively.

Growing: At this stage a facilitator may be a member of a facilitation team, taking on more responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating a participatory workshop. As a member of the team, he or she becomes more familiar and comfortable with adapting and creating exercises, and continues to develop his or her facilitation skills through regular feedback sessions.

Well Developed: A facilitator at this point has enough experience with participatory methods to take on more of a leadership role within a facilitation team. He or she can serve as a resource person for organizations and groups carrying out action learning activities. Facilitators at this stage can also develop their own tools and methods, relying less on written guides.

Mature: A “mature” facilitator is able to help others develop their facilitation skills. He or she may serve as a team leader and can

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mentor less experienced facilitators during participatory workshops. At this stage, a facilitator is very comfortable developing workshops tailored to specific situations, designing exercises and coordinating the process from preparation to action planning.

Just as organizations can more openly assess their capacity levels using the analogy of a growing tree, so can facilitators measure their skills using these developmental stages. Facilitators may be able to more easily give and receive constructive criticism when their abilities are assessed using this non-judgemental scale.

Roles & Responsibilities	Facilitation Development Stages				
	Embryonic	Emerging	Growing	Well Developed	Mature
Team Leader Trains & Mentors					Able to lead & train new facilitators
Facilitator Leads & Supports				Able to plan, adapt & create, some leadership	
Team Member Facilitates & Plans			Able to adapt, some planning & exercise creation		
Beginner Facilitates with Support		Able to facilitate with support, little adaptation			
Participant Exposure to Methods	Able to participate in exercises				

7.6 CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK & SELF-CRITIQUE

Developing facilitation skills, at any stage, is an ongoing, hands-on process that requires the ability to be self-critical and to accept feedback from others. Facilitation is learning centered; you help others learn while you grow as well. Really good facilitators are not those people who “know” how to facilitate; they are the ones who have the courage to continually try out new ideas and welcome both positive and critical feedback.

Once the workshop begins, regular review sessions should be held to help the facilitators reflect on the process, share ideas and exchange feedback. This is also the time to review the information generated, make adjustments to the workshop plan, and decide on the next steps. Effective team leaders encourage facilitators to do their own reflection and feedback.

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Steps for Debriefing with FacilitatorsSelf-Critique
(Strengths)Self-Critique
(Weaknesses)

Feedback

Reflecting on
WorkshopExamining
Critical Issues

One way to do this is to hold review meetings at the beginning, middle and/or end of each day of the workshop. Use this time to talk about how the team members felt before, during and after conducting particular exercises. Discuss any difficulties and how they were resolved, as well as what made the exercises successful. Then reflect on the process in general. Here we present one possible sequence for conducting these debriefing sessions.

Self Critique (Strengths): Going around the circle, the facilitators each reflect on the day and share some of the positive aspects of their own facilitation. Encourage them to identify how they have improved, particularly in light of previous feedback. [NOTE: For the criteria to use in the Self Critique process, the facilitators can refer to the Characteristics of an Effective Facilitator list generated by them, or adapted from pg. 60.]

Self Critique (Weaknesses): Go around the circle and have the facilitators list some things that could have been improved in their own facilitation. Facilitators should try to give specific examples of when they felt their facilitation could have been better and how they will work to improve these skills.

Feedback: Once each team member has critiqued his or her own performance, then they each hear feedback from the other members of the team. If the facilitators are working in pairs (i.e., one facilitates while the other takes notes), then the partners critique each other, starting with the positive and then suggesting ways to improve.

Reflecting on the Workshop: As a group discuss, how the workshop went that day. This discussion could include the morale level of the participants and facilitators, time management and the quality and relevance of the information generated. Try to cite specific examples whenever possible, as well as changes that need to be made.

Examining Critical Issues: What were the critical issues that emerged during the day? How do they fit in with the overall assessment? Were there any surprising results that need to be examined further?

7.7 MAINTAINING & MONITORING GROUP MORALE




Making sure that participants' energy and enthusiasm levels remain high throughout the self-assessment can be challenging. Even when time seems limited, facilitators need to set aside periodic breaks for fun "energizers." There are many games that can be played to get

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participants moving and laughing. Often the participants themselves come up with creative activities to conduct. Singing songs, dancing and exercising can also be effective energizers for a sluggish group. Several of the books listed in *Appendix 2: Recommended Resources* provide good ideas for group energizers and fun activities.

It is important to set up a process by which participants can regularly communicate their feelings about the workshop to the facilitation team. By taking a “mood reading” everyday, facilitators can quickly make adjustments to the schedule or facilitation style in response to participants’ expressed preferences. One effective way of monitoring the group’s mood is to create a “Mood Meter” poster. At the end of every day, participants can anonymously rate the session in different categories (for example: Facilitation, Participation and Content), using a simple scale such as Good, Fair, or Needs Improvement. This scale can be visual as well, with drawings of facial expressions or cups filled with different levels of liquid. There should also be a box or envelope where participants can leave more detailed comments and suggestions for the facilitators.

Mood Meter			
			
Facilitation	X X X	X X	X
Content	X X X X	X X	
Participation	X	X X X	X X

This feedback can be reviewed during the debriefing process, and a brief report should be given at the beginning of the next day’s session.

7.8 ANTICIPATING & ADDRESSING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

The self-assessment exercises described in this guide, if well facilitated, can identify critical issues requiring substantial changes to improve organizational performance and viability. Past experience indicates some changes are likely to be perceived as threatening to members of the organization, whose interests may be affected. Some members may be unwilling to take a critical look at their organization, thinking “we are working hard, and are doing all right...why make changes?” On the other hand, the process may reveal that the organization’s activities are not having the intended impact in terms of its purpose. Leaders within the organization, learning this, may become defensive. If care is not taken, they may criticize the methodology or the facilitators, or even abruptly end the assessment process.

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Facilitators of organizational self-assessments must learn how to anticipate resistance. This requires guiding the process to prevent strongly negative (or defensive) reactions that may block change. One may think that information generated by organizational members themselves, in a participatory way, will automatically be accepted, but this is not always the case. Like communities, organizations have different interest groups. Each group may have different perspectives. The facilitator must create a positive dynamic for improvement and avoid situations in which the analysis of organizational strengths and weaknesses generates strong resistance.

A key point to remember is that the leaders and decision-makers within the organization have to support the process, and endorse the results generated by the participants. Without their support, there is little chance that any recommended actions will be carried out. Here are some tips for facilitators to avoid potential resistance:

Meet with Leaders: Conduct preparatory meetings with leaders and key members before the self-assessment. Discuss the terms of reference and agree on the mandate. Explain the overall process, and emphasize that there must be a clear willingness and commitment of organizational members not only to participate, but to change. Good preparation and clear understandings beforehand will generate a higher level of trust.

Develop Guidelines Beforehand for Dealing with Sensitive Issues: Take the organization or community leaders aside beforehand and explain that the self-assessment may possibly reveal sensitive areas, including issues that may reflect critically on the organization and its leaders. Ask them about how they may react should this occur. Explain that, as a facilitator, you are there to *help* them become more effective, not to criticize them. Ask them what guidelines they would propose to deal with sensitive issues, should they arise. For example, they may request that you ask for permission to undertake exercises that address leadership or decision-making. There is nothing to be gained by surprising potentially sensitive exercises on leaders.

Start with “Safe” Exercises: Always start with more general and less threatening exercises. This will give participants more time to get used to the participatory process of dialogue and analysis, and generate a positive group dynamic. As understanding of, and trust in, the process is built, it will enable the participants to better address more sensitive issues later.

Use Your Own Best Judgment: If a very tense situation arises, it may be better to postpone the discussion. Use this pause to consult with key members of the organization or community about how best to proceed.

Ask Leaders to Encourage Openness: Ask the leaders to encourage the organization or community members to be frank and honest in expressing their opinions, without fear of negative consequences for speaking openly. You may decide to develop ground rules, such as nothing said during the assessment can be used against someone later, to create a safe environment for honest discussion. Ask participants to let go of the normal hierarchy of the organization by affirming the equality of every person in the process.

Share Reports with Leaders: Always ask the organization or community leaders to review assessment reports before they are made public, especially sections that contain critical or sensitive information. While participants may accept points of self-critique during internal sessions, they may be strongly concerned if such information is shared externally, especially with funders.

If signs of resistance or defensiveness do appear, look for the underlying causes by talking with group members privately about it. Try to identify whether the resistance is resulting from misperceptions, or whether there are real reasons that need to be addressed. Ultimately, if participants are unwilling to take a critical look at their organization, then the facilitator must accept this. At the reporting phase, this can be dealt with by presenting the recommendations of participants and facilitators separately.

7.9 REFINING THE WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Daily meetings with the facilitation team members provide an opportunity to refine the schedule based on feedback from the participants, emerging critical issues or time constraints. During the review session, the facilitators share their thoughts about the workshop process and identify the significant results of the exercises that they had conducted. The team then needs to adjust the workshop schedule in response to these observations. Some common adjustments are:

- **Over-Ambitious Schedule:** The participants may express a desire to slow down, or the facilitators may feel that they are rushing to complete the planned exercises which negatively affects their facilitation.

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- **Unexpected Results:** New exercises may need to be added to respond to unexpected issues that arise. Or, planned exercises may be unnecessary in light of workshop results.
- **Team Changes:** Teams may need to be re-formed due to absences, personal conflicts or participants' knowledge or experience.

Once the team has identified what changes need to be made to the next day's schedule, make a chart with columns for **WHAT**, **WHEN** and **WHO**. Then write on cards all the activities of the day, including breaks and meals, when they will occur and who will be responsible for carrying them out. This revised schedule should be presented to the participants, with explanations for any changes, at the beginning of the next day.

Overview: Principles & Best Practice For Working With Facilitators

1. Achieving a balance is an important part of building an effective team. Language skills, gender and experience should all be taken into consideration. Rather than trying to find team members with a particular skill set, remember that each person brings to the process his or her own unique experiences.
2. The team leader should take the time to encourage reflection and creativity by maximizing the facilitation team members' participation in the training and by minimizing one-sided communication.
3. The facilitator's role is to help individuals, groups and communities identify their own needs, priorities and potential for change.
4. Conducting an organizational self-assessment, or any type of intensive participatory activity, is an opportunity to strengthen the capacity of local facilitators who then can become resource people, conduct future workshops and eventually train others. It is important to see the process as an apprenticeship during which less experienced facilitators can learn from those with more experience.
5. Developing facilitation skills is an ongoing, hands-on process that requires the ability to be self-critical and to accept feedback from others. Really good facilitators are not those people who "know" how to facilitate; they are the ones who have the courage to continually try out new ideas and who welcome both positive and critical feedback.
6. Once the workshop begins, regular review sessions should be held to help the facilitators reflect on the process, share ideas and exchange feedback. Effective team leaders encourage facilitators to do their own reflection and feedback.
7. Certain recommended changes or implications that emerge from the self-assessment may be perceived as threatening to some organization members. In order to minimize this, it is critical to gain leaders' and decision makers' involvement and support.
8. Take time out for fun energizers, and make sure that there is a process in place by which participants can comfortably communicate their feedback about the workshop on a regular basis.

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8.1 SYNTHESIS & ANALYSIS

In order to translate the exercise results into useful and accurate information that will lead to action and organizational change, there needs to be an ongoing Synthesis & Analysis process. These periodic reflection sessions serve to:

- Summarize what has already been covered in the workshop
- Identify emerging trends and apparent inconsistencies
- Reinforce the participants' comprehension of both the methods and the results of the process
- Give participants an opportunity to discuss, confirm and interpret the main findings
- Identify key areas that require further exploration
- Highlight the underlying critical issues that must be addressed to improve the performance and viability of the organization

8.2 SYNTHESIS & ANALYSIS: GROUP PROCESS

The reflection process should include all the participants and facilitators, and needs to be conducted at both the intermediary organization and community levels. For each completed exercise, the facilitators of that exercise present the main findings and lead a discussion with the entire group. These sessions, which should be as visual and inclusive as possible, can include the following steps:

Reiterate the Relevance of the Exercise: This serves to clarify how the exercise contributes to achieving the overall assessment objectives.

Review the Objectives of the Exercise: Reviewing the objectives helps the group to understand and evaluate the exercise results.

Briefly Outline the Steps: Remember that the goal of the workshop is not only to conduct an organizational self-assessment, but also to strengthen participants' ability to apply participatory tools and methods. Quickly reviewing the steps of each exercise is part of integrating the participatory approach into ongoing organizational activities and systems.

Visually Present the Data: The facilitators present and explain the diagrams generated during the exercise.

In This Chapter

- 8.1 Synthesis & Analysis
- 8.2 Synthesis & Analysis: Group Process
- 8.3 Documentation
- 8.4 Capturing Exercise Findings
- 8.5 Recording Informal Information
- 8.6 Documenting Changes in Exercises
- 8.7 Documenting the Workshop Process
- 8.8 Systematic Organization
- 8.9 Writing the Report

Highlight the Main Findings: Using the diagrams, the facilitators can circle the key findings, including high or low scores, any significant divergence in perception, or information that either confirms or contradicts previous findings.

Discuss the Key Results in Relation to the Assessment Objectives:

This is an opportunity for all the participants to reflect on the key results in light of the overall objectives. Group members should discuss whether the results are accurate, relevant and what the possible explanations might be. Some findings may emerge that require further examination through subsequent exercises. Make sure that there is a note taker (ideally not a direct participant) who is recording the key points of the discussion.

Identify the Underlying Critical Issues: Once the discussion is concluded, the facilitators can hand out cards to the group members. Each person should write down the critical issues that he or she sees emerging from the findings. Make sure that people only write ONE issue or idea per card. If any participants are illiterate, break up into small groups, each with at least one note taker who can write the participants' ideas on cards. Facilitators and any external resource people should also write down the critical issues they identify. However, they should use a different color pen or card to distinguish their ideas from those of the organization members.

Once the cards have been filled out, they can all be collected and coded to the exercise being discussed.

8.3 DOCUMENTATION

Without an efficient and accurate documentation system, there is a high chance that important information and ideas will be lost. Documenting the findings and the process is critical to ensuring long-term learning and change, as well as helping the organization track its progress over time. It is also often important to be able to communicate the results of the assessment to key stakeholders, such as donors or program partners. Workshop documentation includes:

- Capturing the information generated during exercises
- Recording the informal information during the exercises, including discussions, body language and feedback from participants
- Documenting innovations in the self-assessment process, including adapted or invented exercises
- Recording the process, including daily schedules and participants' feedback

- Systematically organizing the entire body of information in a flexible and easily accessible manner
- Writing a report (or reports) as a group that meets the needs of the intermediary organization, the community groups and external interests

Documenting the process and findings should not be seen as a separate phase, but is a part of every stage of the workshop. In this chapter we present some hints and procedures that may help participants and facilitators effectively integrate documentation into the process.

8.4 CAPTURING EXERCISE FINDINGS

In order to accurately and completely capture the information generated during exercises, it is important to think about documentation needs before, during and after each exercise.

Before: Good preparation is the key to being able to successfully capture all of the significant information generated during an exercise. By preparing as much as possible ahead of time, the facilitator is free to more carefully record the participants' responses onto the visuals, and will have the materials needed to do so. Simply having the time to neatly write the participants' ideas on cards can make a huge difference. Likewise, having all the necessary materials allows the facilitator to clearly distinguish different "groups" of information (i.e., participants' contributions vs. those added from a checklist). Advance preparation can include:

- **Consistency:** From the very beginning of the workshop, develop a few simple documentation systems. For example, it may be decided that anything the facilitator adds will be written in green in order to be able to distinguish it from participants' contributions, written in black. Once these guidelines are decided upon, apply them consistently throughout the process.
- **Cards:** Make sure that you have enough cards in the necessary colors for the exercise.
- **Visuals:** Prepare the flip charts ahead of time with the visual tool(s) to be used. For example, if the exercise requires a matrix, draw the grid on the flip chart BEFORE the exercise begins. Likewise prepare any checklists or other visuals ahead of time.
- **Materials:** Gather together all the other necessary materials, including different colored markers or pens, ballots (if necessary), tape, etc.
- **Think About Documentation:** Think ahead of time about how the findings will be documented, what the documentation challenges may be and how they can be overcome.

- **Coding:** Assign each exercise a code [see 8.8 *Systematic Organization* (pg. 75)].
- **Think About Capturing Information:** Especially if exercises are being conducted using materials other than cards and flip chart paper (i.e. sticks and small stones on a dirt floor), plan ahead how the information generated will be captured and stored.

During: During the exercise, keep in mind that the visuals will have to be read and interpreted at a later time, perhaps by someone not even involved in the original exercise. Things to think about include:

- **Labels:** Clearly label each flip chart or poster with the name of the exercise, the date, the facilitator and the exercise code [see 8.8 *Systematic Organization* (pg. 75)]. You may also want to write how long the exercise took to complete and the number of participants.
- **Legends:** Make a legend somewhere on the flip chart that explains the significance of the different colors used, any codes or abbreviations, and a scale explaining scores.
- **Handwriting:** Ask participants, or whoever is writing the information on cards, to write neatly and put *only one idea* on each card. If any cards are difficult to read, rewrite them more clearly either during or directly following the exercise.
- **Translation:** If exercises are being conducted in a language other than the one being used to analyze and officially document the self-assessment findings, the participants' contributions will need to be translated. If possible, write the responses in the local language and then translate them (at least roughly) either below or on the back.
- **Coding:** Clearly label all cards with their ranks, categories or any other appropriate coding.
- **Highlighting:** Highlight significant results, circling high and low scores, areas of divergence, etc.

After: Once the exercise is complete, there are several possibilities for storing the information.

- **Storing the Flip Charts:** If you decide that you want to use the original diagrams to store the information, it is important to clearly and thoroughly label each card. Cards that have been taped to the flip charts during the exercises tend to fall off and get mixed up. Label the cards in a way that allows for "reconstruction." Another option is to copy the information directly onto the flip chart. Then carefully fold each flip chart and label them on the outside (name, date, exercise code, etc.). This will permit people to easily locate particular diagrams.

- **Transcribing the Information:** Another option is to transcribe the data into a notebook. You may want to create templates of some of the commonly used tools, such as grids or matrices. These can be quickly filled in with the data generated during each exercise and stored in a loose leaf binder or folder. You may still want to store the original diagrams in the manner described above, although these will be used only to confirm the accuracy of the recorded information if there is a question.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods. By using the original visuals, you are able to capture more of the process itself. However, it is a rather unstable system that can be awkward to deal with at the analysis and report writing stages. Transcribing the information allows for easy access to findings (they can all be stored in a single binder or folder) and more simple data entry. You can also keep the exercise outcomes and the notes together in one place this way. This method is, however, more time consuming, and there is a risk of errors or omissions. A combination of both systems may be the best choice.

8.5 RECORDING INFORMAL INFORMATION

In addition to the findings generated from each exercise, there is a host of other types of information that can also be important. These include body language and participants' attitudes, questions and responses, discussions and feedback/reflection. It is the note taker's responsibility to capture this informal information. Some important types of information to include in the notes are:

- **Identification:** Notes should be labeled with the name and code of the exercise, the date and duration time, and the page number (1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc.). Make sure that each page is marked with the exercise code in case of a mix-up.
- **Names:** Note down the names of the facilitator, the note taker and other facilitation team members involved (if any) as well as the names of all of the participants (if possible).
- **Key:** Indicate the meaning of any abbreviations.
- **What was SAID:** Try to record the speakers' ideas as they expressed them (in their own words). Identify questions with a "Q" and then responses to each question with an "R" (R1, R2 etc.).
- **What was DONE:** Note down any non-verbal information, including group dynamics (tension or cohesion) degree and quality of participation, body language of individual participants and any tendencies (i.e. certain participants who tend to dominate the discussion or who do not participate).

Optimal Documentation

Not everything that is said and done can be captured and analyzed, nor would it be useful to try. Often a note taker misses important ideas because he or she is trying to write down everything word for word. Effective documentation requires identifying the significant pieces of information and pulling out the key ideas.

Just like facilitation, note takers need to learn by doing. And just like facilitators, note takers can benefit from constructive feedback from the facilitation team members.

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Facilitators can help note takers by periodically taking time during the exercise to summarize key points, clarify ideas and highlight important findings.

- **What was SEEN:** Any visual information that the participants offered (drawings, symbols, etc.). Reproduce these in the notes and explain their significance.
- **Feedback & Reflection:** Meet with the facilitator and a few of the participants after the session to reflect briefly on the exercise. Record points regarding the quality of facilitation and participation, the relevance of the exercise and the accuracy of the outcomes. This is also an opportunity to share the notes with the participants to confirm that they are accurate and complete.
- **Note Taker's Impressions:** The note taker writes down his/her own impressions on the quality and accuracy of the process. Also, note any changes that were made to the exercise and how those adaptations impacted the process.

Find a safe way to store these notes that is easy to access. You may want to staple them together and keep them in folders, or put them all in a binder, clearly labeled. Also remember to start notes on a fresh page for each exercise and avoid taking notes on the back of a page used in a previous exercise.

8.6 DOCUMENTING CHANGES IN EXERCISES

Remember that the workshop is not only about evaluating an organization's capacity, it is also designed to enable participants to adapt and apply participatory tools and methods in an ongoing, long-term process of reflection and change. It is therefore important to document how the exercises were adapted to meet the specific needs of the organization. Most likely, in addition to a final report of the findings, the group will produce their own methodological "field guide," a combination of some of the exercises presented here and their own adaptations and inventions.

One way to capture these innovations is to make copies of the original exercise steps and then make the necessary changes on these sheets, both as facilitators prepare to conduct the exercise and once it is completed.

Just as important as **WHAT** was changed is **WHY** the alterations were made and their impact on the process. Briefly note in the margins why the team decided to make each change and how it affected the overall effectiveness of the exercise. This documentation should be kept with the notes and exercise results.

8.7 DOCUMENTING THE WORKSHOP PROCESS

Documenting the process itself helps the facilitators and participants learn from the experience for future participatory evaluations. It also provides a context for understanding how the results were derived. Process-oriented information that may be useful include:

- **Daily Schedules:** Including activities, their duration and who facilitated
- **Participants' Feedback:** Record the daily impressions and attitude of the participants about the overall assessment process [see 7.7 *Maintaining & Monitoring Group Morale* (pg. 64) for ways of eliciting feedback].
- **Notes from Debriefing:** Document the facilitation team's impressions of their own performance and the overall self-assessment process

8.8 SYSTEMATIC ORGANIZATION

Storing exercise findings, notes and process information in a way that is flexible and easily accessible can be quite a challenge. When organizing the information, whether in hard copy or on a computer, it is important to keep the following in mind:

Same Exercise, Different Group: Often the same (or similar) exercises will be used several times with different groups. The intermediary organization might conduct the *Purpose Mapping* exercise for themselves and then with two or three of their partner community groups. Likewise, several sub-groups from the same village may also conduct the same exercise (i.e., men and women). It is important to devise a coding system that makes it easy to identify not only the exercise used, but with whom it was conducted. One way to do this is to assign each larger group of participants a letter code, perhaps the first letter of the name of the organization or association. Then, within each larger group, identify codes for the different sub-groups (i.e., A for Mission, B for History and C for Women). Each exercise is then given a number based on the order in which it was conducted. For example, the first exercise that the women's group in Village R conducted would be coded R(C)1Purpose.

Grouping Information by Type: As we have already seen, there are several different types of information to capture during a self-assessment. Whether storing this information on a computer or in a notebook, you may want to create separate sections for:

- Exercises: tools and methods used
- Findings: exercise results and notes
- Synthesis/Analysis: notes from the reflection sessions, implication lists, etc.
- Process: daily schedules, debriefing notes, etc.
- Terms of Reference: Any documentation of objectives and expectations of the main stakeholders (internal and external)
- Reports: Report outline and sections

Storing Flip Charts: It is worth repeating the importance of labeling each flip chart on the outside once it has been folded or rolled for storage. You may want to keep visuals generated by different groups separate (i.e., all the intermediary organization's flip charts in a different box or pile from those of each community group). In addition to the diagrams produced during the exercises, there will also be a fair amount of process-oriented visuals (daily schedules, participants' feedback, etc.). These should also be labeled and stored separately.

Avoiding Duplication & Confusion: In the course of passing files from one computer or disk to the next (if information is being stored on a computer), or having multiple people using folders and visuals, things can easily become confusing. There may be doubts about which computer file is the most recent version, or pages from notebooks may be missing. To avoid some of this confusion, we suggest assigning one person the role of Documentation Coordinator. This person (ideally a person not directly participating in exercises) is in charge of making sure all documents are coded, ensuring that the most recent version of computer files are saved, and collecting/distributing exercise and process documentation. Ideally, the Documentation Coordinator will keep track of who has what visuals or notes, so that missing information can be tracked down. While he or she may not be the one who enters data into the computer in preparation for the final report, the coordinator can ensure that the information entered is accurate and complete.

8.9 WRITING THE REPORT

By the end of the workshop, the group will have generated a wealth of data. Synthesizing and presenting this information in a report is a critical and challenging task. Often this job is left to the very end and is carried out by only one or two people. However, writing the report should be integrated into the entire self-assessment process and be accomplished in an inclusive and participatory manner.

Here we present some steps that can be taken in order to increase the likelihood that the report will be written during the workshop and by the participants themselves. We also share some ideas on how to organize and present the information.

Enter Information as You Go: Ideally, the group will have a computer at its disposal during the workshop. Try to enter information into the computer as it is generated, and save often to backup disks. This may entail hiring a data entry person or spending evenings typing in notes and findings. One way to speed up the process is to create templates of the different tools (matrix, timeline, etc.) so that you can simply fill in the data for each exercise. [NOTE: Please see 8.8 *Systematic Organization* (pg. 75) for details on organizing files.]

Create an Outline: Work with the facilitation team to create an outline of the report. If possible, prepare this outline in advance during the preparation. This allows the facilitation team to identify which exercises will be needed to complete each section of the report. You can do this by brainstorming as a group all of the necessary types of information (not the data itself) and writing each on a card. Then try to sort these elements into groups and order them in a form of an outline. By using cards, the group can easily rearrange the different parts until a logical and coherent plan is decided upon. Some elements that can be included in the outline are:

- **Summary:** Basic summary of the overall process, findings and implications
- **Self-Assessment Objectives:** Presentation of the expectations and objectives of all the different stakeholders
- **Background:** Information regarding the larger context and history (i.e. economic and environmental situation in the region, history of the organization, etc.)
- **Methodology:** Explanation of the tools and methods used during the self-assessment, as well as any process-oriented information
- **Results:** These are not ALL the results, but a summary of the significant findings. They can be organized by exercise or by theme.
- **Interpretation:** How can the data generated be explained? What are the influential factors (internal and external)?
- **Implications:** What do the results mean? How do they impact or affect the organization? Multiple perspectives can be presented here (participants, facilitators, external resource people)
- **Recommendations:** Including the Action Plan and other recommendations from the different parties involved
- **Appendices:** These can include a Methodology Guide of the exercises used and/or more detailed exercise results

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Split up Tasks: Once the facilitation team has come up with a preliminary outline, they will need to present it to the larger group for input and acceptance. Once the final outline is decided on, identify the major sections and assign numbers to each. Within each large category, identify the smaller sections and assign secondary numbers (1.2, 1.2, 1.3...).

You can then use this outline to assign sections to group members. They may want to work in pairs or small groups. If possible, give report sections to groups with at least one person who was a part of the original exercise or exercises that generated the information. Then come up with a work schedule (deadlines for each section, review process, etc.) and give the group time to work on the report.

There will also need to be two or three people in charge of reviewing the sections written by the group members and making sure that all the parts of the report are complete and accurate. It is also at this time that the person in charge of documentation plays a crucial role in making sure that everyone has access to the necessary information.

Putting the Pieces Together: As group members begin to turn in their sections of the report, they will need to be reviewed and typed. Ask participants to write the outline code on each section that they submit. If someone is entering the parts of the report into the computer, save each one under its outline code followed by the name of the section (i.e., 1.1Executive or 2.1Methods). By doing this, the computer will automatically store the report in its proper order. You can also then easily identify missing sections.

Once the sections have been typed in, they can then be combined into one document and formatted into the report.

Writing Multiple Reports: If the self-assessment workshop is covering different levels of organizational development (i.e., intermediary organization and village association), it may be necessary to write different reports for each. Separating the information in this way can make it easier to write focused and succinct reports that meet the needs of all involved.

Sample Report Outline

- 1 Executive Summary
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Background
 - 3.1. Economic Situation in Region
 - 3.2. Environmental Situation in Region
 - 3.3. History of Organizational Involvement with Communities
- 4 Methodology
 - 4.1. Explanation of assessment methods
 - 4.2. Daily Schedule
- 5 General Findings
 - 5.1. Purpose & Vision
 - 5.2. Timeline
 - 5.3. Organizational Structure
 - 5.4. Strengths & Weaknesses
 - 5.5. Summary
- 6 Findings at the Organization Level
 - 6.1. Leadership
 - 6.2. Communication & Information
 - 6.3. Viability
 - 6.4. Autonomy/Transfer of Responsibility
 - 6.5. Summary
- 7 Findings at the Program Level
 - 7.1. Trends
 - 7.1.1. Tendencies: Food Security
 - 7.1.2. Tendencies: Health
 - 7.1.3. Tendencies: Women's Status
 - 7.1.4. Summary
 - 7.2. Results: Food Security
 - 7.2.1. Fundamental Problems
 - 7.2.2. Objectives
 - 7.2.3. Results
 - 7.2.4. Effects/Impact
 - 7.2.5. Summary
 - 7.3. Results: Health
 - 7.3.1. Fundamental Problems
 - 7.3.2. Objectives
 - 7.3.3. Results
 - 7.3.4. Effects/Impact
 - 7.3.5. Summary
 - 7.4. Results: Women's Status
 - 7.4.1. Fundamental Problems
 - 7.4.2. Objectives
 - 7.4.3. Results
 - 7.4.4. Effects/Impact
 - 7.4.5. Summary
- 8 Interpretation (Influential Factors)
- 9 Implications
 - 9.1. Organization Members' Point of View
 - 9.2. Facilitators/External Resource People's Point of View
 - 9.3. Village Association Members' Point of View
- 10 Recommendations
 - 10.1. Action Plans
 - 10.2. Recommendations from Facilitation Team

Overview: Principles & Best Practice For Analysis & Documentation

1. In order to translate the exercise results into useful and accurate information that will lead to action and organizational change, there needs to be an ongoing Synthesis & Analysis process. These sessions should be as visual and participatory as possible.
2. Documenting the findings and the process is critical to ensuring long-term learning and change, as well as helping the organization track its progress over time. It is often also important to be able to communicate the results to external stakeholders. Documenting the process and findings should not be seen as a separate phase, but is a part of every stage of the workshop.
3. In addition to the findings generated from each exercise, there are many other types of significant information. These can include body language and participants' attitudes, questions and responses, discussions and feedback/reflection. It is the note taker's responsibility to capture this informal information.
4. Remember that the workshop is not only about evaluating an organization's capacity, it is also designed to enable participants to adapt and apply participatory tools and methods in an ongoing process of reflection and change. It is therefore important to document how the exercises were adapted to meet the specific needs of the organization.
5. Documenting the process itself helps the facilitators and participants learn from the experience for future participatory evaluations. It also provides a context for understanding how the results were derived.
6. Writing the report should be accomplished in an inclusive and participatory manner.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES 9

9.1 NOT USING THESE EXERCISES

By now it should be clear that we hope that you will, in fact, NOT use these exercises. By that we mean that you will instead create your own guide by adapting the exercises presented here and by inventing new ones. This chapter, therefore, is meant to stimulate ideas and activities, and to give you a foundation on which you can build your understanding and experience.

With this in mind, we present a selection of exercises that have been field tested in a variety of settings, most notably in West Africa. These exercises are organized into the following categories:

- Introductory Exercises
- Key Concepts
- Baseline Information
- Activities, Performance & Impact
- Internal Organizational Issues
- Relationships
- Viability & Autonomy
- Larger Context
- Prioritization & Action

There is, of course, some overlap. For example, a major threat to viability could be a poor relationship with another organization. However, in general these groupings represent the overarching themes addressed by the different exercises.

9.2 QUICK REFERENCE LIST OF EXERCISES

The following charts are designed to facilitate exercise selection and sequencing. Listing the exercises in the order in which they appear in this guide, these charts summarize the main purpose of each exercise, any prerequisite exercises and suggestions of other exercises that explore related themes.

Please note that while most of the exercises are designed to be used with intermediary organization members, some are specifically meant to be conducted with community members. However, most exercises can be easily adapted to fit both contexts. See the **SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS** section of each exercise for the intended participant groups.

In This Chapter

- 9.1 NOT Using These Exercises
- 9.2 Quick Reference List of Exercises
- 9.3 Introductory Exercises
- 9.4 Key Concepts
- 9.5 Baseline Information
- 9.6 Activities, Performance & Impact
- 9.7 Internal Issues
- 9.8 Relationships
- 9.9 Viability & Autonomy
- 9.10 Larger Context
- 9.11 Prioritization & Action
- 9.12 Following These Exercises

9

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

9.3 INTRODUCTORY EXERCISES

These introductory exercises are designed to be used on the first day or two of the workshop to create a positive working environment and to resolve any practical or logistical matters.

These exercises should be conducted with all of the participants and facilitators together.

Introductory Exercises	Possible Uses	Prerequisite Exercises	Complementary Exercises
Introductions & Ice Breakers	To create a team spirit & to build trust	None	All Introductory Exercises
Hopes & Fears	To elicit participants' hopes & concerns	None	All Introductory Exercises
Defining Workshop Objectives & Focus	To define the scope & goals of the workshop	Hopes & Fears	All Introductory Exercises
Establishing the Workshop Program	To create a schedule for the workshop	None	All Introductory Exercises
Responsibilities & Logistics	To address logistical issues	Hopes & Fears	All Introductory Exercises

9.4 KEY CONCEPTS

After the introductory exercises, you will need to make sure that all of the workshop participants and facilitators have a clear, shared understanding of basic terms and concepts. The Key Concepts exercises are designed to stimulate discussion and develop common understandings of issues around Capacity Building and Organizational Development.

Key Concepts Exercises	Possible Uses	Prerequisite Exercises	Complementary Exercises
A Common Understanding of Capacity Building	To establish a shared concept of capacity	None	All Key Concept Exercises
Identifying Organizational Capacity Areas	To deepen understanding of the specific components of organizational capacity	A Common Understanding of Capacity Building	All Key Concept Exercises
A Common Understanding of Organizational Development	To establish a shared concept of organizational development	None	All Key Concept Exercises
A Common Understanding of Self-Assessment	To establish a clear understanding of what the process is designed to accomplish	A Common Understanding of Capacity Building	All Key Concept Exercises

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

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9.5 BASELINE INFORMATION

These exercises are designed to elicit basic information about the organization or the community that will be used throughout the entire workshop. Baseline Information exercises cover history, purpose, perceptions about the organization, and program participation.

Because these exercises deal with information about which the participants already have a great deal of expertise, they are also useful for generating enthusiasm about the process and for building team spirit.

Baseline Information Exercises	Possible Uses	Prerequisite	Complementary
Initial Assessment of Capacity Areas	To elicit initial perceptions of the organization's capacities and priorities	None	Identifying Organizational Capacity Areas
Organizational Timeline	To better understand the evolution of the organization	None	Timeline Analysis: Organizational Development Stages
Timeline Analysis: Organizational Development Stages	To deepen the understanding of the organization's development	Organizational Timeline	Organizational Timeline
Purpose Mapping	To elicit a clear organizational purpose statement	Organizational Timeline	Organizational Timeline, Timeline Analysis: Organizational Development Stages
Rolling Group Consensus Building on Purpose	To pull together diverse ideas into one shared understanding of the organization's purpose	Organizational Timeline	Organizational Timeline, Timeline Analysis: Organizational Development Stages
Strengths & Weaknesses	To elicit participants' perceptions of the critical issues to be addressed	Organizational Timeline & Purpose Mapping OR Rolling Group Consensus Building on Purpose	Organizational Timeline, Purpose Mapping, Rolling Group Consensus Building on Purpose
Social Map	To generate basic information necessary to conduct social analysis	None	Well-Being Ranking
Well-Being Ranking	To examine how socio-economic status impacts participation	Social Map	Social Map

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SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

9.6 ACTIVITIES, PERFORMANCE & IMPACT

These exercises help participants examine the organization’s activities in relation to its purpose and goals, the expressed needs of the communities and the root causes of the issues it is seeking to address.

Please note that some of these exercises are designed to be conducted with organization members and some are to be done in the field with program participants.

Activities, Performance & Impact Exercises	Possible Uses	Prerequisite Exercises	Complementary Exercises
Activity Matrix	To examine the organization’s program activities	None	Community Level Support/Self-Reliance, Activities Onion
History of Support	To assess whether program activities address fundamental issues	Activity Matrix	Activity Matrix, Community Level Support/Self-Reliance, Activities Onion
Activities Onion	To assess the relevance of the organization’s activities in relation to its purpose	Purpose Mapping OR Rolling Group Consensus Building on Purpose	Purpose-Problems-Impact-Objectives-Activities
Activities Performance Assessment	To assess the organization’s standards of effective performance	Activities Onion	Activities Onion, Purpose-Problems-Impact-Objectives-Activities
Purpose-Problems-Impact-Objectives-Activities	To assess the consistency among the organization’s purpose, goals and activities	Activities Onion	Activities Onion
Problem Identification & Prioritization	To determine whether program activities address participants’ priority issues	None	Activity Matrix, Activities Onion, Activities Performance Assessment
Problem Tree Analysis	To determine whether program activities address the root causes of problems	Problem Identification & Prioritization	Activity Matrix, Problem Identification & Prioritization

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

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9.7 INTERNAL ISSUES

These exercises deepen participants' understanding of the internal issues facing the organization. Some of these exercises, particularly those that deal with human aspects of the organization such as leadership, may touch on sensitive issues and should be carefully facilitated.

Internal Issues Exercises	Possible Uses	Prerequisite Exercises	Complementary Exercises
Organizational Structure	To develop a picture of the organization's structure	None	Decision-Making Analysis, Leadership Assessment
Decision-Making Analysis	To examine how decisions are made within the organization	Organizational Structure	Organizational Structure, Leadership Assessment
Leadership Assessment	To assess the quality of the organization's leadership	Organizational Structure, Decision-Making Analysis	Organizational Structure, Decision-Making Analysis
Management Efficiency Assessment	To assess the organization's management systems	Purpose-Problems-Impact-Objectives-Activities	Purpose-Problems-Impact-Objectives-Activities, Information Flow Analysis
Information Flow Analysis	To assess the organization's internal communication systems	Organizational Structure, Decision-Making Analysis	Management Efficiency Assessment, Decision-Making Analysis, Organizational Structure
Staff Training History & Analysis	To assess human resource development strategies	None	Management Efficiency Assessment

9.8 RELATIONSHIPS

Organizations do not operate in isolation. Helping organization members examine how they relate with other groups and agencies is an important component of assessing their performance and viability. These Relationships exercises are designed to help participants evaluate the organization's relationships in light of its purpose, goals and level of viability.

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SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

Relationships Exercises	Possible Uses	Prerequisite Exercises	Complementary Exercises
Relationships Assessment	To evaluate the organization's capacity to relate with other groups	None	All Relationships Exercises
Relationships with Community Groups	To assess whether the organization's relationships are consistent with its purpose & values	Relationships Assessment, History of Support	All Relationships Exercises
Donor Assessment	To evaluate the organization's ability to raise external funds	Relationships Assessment	All Relationships Exercises
Fundraising Strategy Assessment	To evaluate the organization's fundraising strategy	Relationships Assessment, Donor Assessment	All Relationships Exercises

9.9 VIABILITY & AUTONOMY

Part of assessing and strengthening capacity is to examine the long-range viability of the organization. This set of exercises helps participants identify what characteristics are necessary for an organization to be viable and autonomous, and to assess their organization using these criteria.

Viability & Autonomy Exercises	Possible Uses	Prerequisite Exercises	Complementary Exercises
Viability Assessment	To assess the organization's level of viability	None	Autonomy Assessment, Threats to Sustainability
Autonomy Assessment	To assess the organization's level of autonomy	None	Viability Assessment, Threats to Viability
Community Level Support/Self-Reliance	To assess the organization's strategy to promote self-reliance	Activity Matrix, History of Support	Activity Matrix, History of Support, Activities Onion
Transfer of Responsibilities	To examine the process of transferring responsibilities	None	Community Level Support/Self-Reliance
Threats to Viability	To identify the critical issues to address to strengthen viability	Viability Assessment	Viability Assessment, Autonomy Assessment

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

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9.10 LARGER CONTEXT

To fully understand the effectiveness of an organization's efforts, its activities need to be examined within the larger context. Exercises that look at trends can help organization and community members identify how the major issues are changing and whether the organization's activities are adequately responding.

Trends Exercises	Possible Uses	Prerequisite Exercises	Complementary Exercises
Trend Analysis: Women's Well-Being	To understand larger trends in women's well-being	None	All Activities, Performance & Impact Exercises
Trend Analysis: Renewable Natural Resources	To examine larger environmental trends	None	All Activities, Performance & Impact Exercises

9.11 PRIORITIZATION & ACTION

These exercises are used to summarize significant findings, identify and prioritize critical issues, and design reasonable action plans.

Prioritization & Action Exercises	Possible Uses	Prerequisite Exercises	Complementary Exercises
Synthesis of Critical Issues	To bring together results & to identify critical issues	Completed most exercises	All Prioritization & Action Exercises
Prioritization of Critical Issues	To prioritize the critical issues to address	Synthesis of Critical Issues	All Prioritization & Action Exercises
Identifying Capacity Areas	To identify capacity areas related to critical issues	Synthesis of Critical Issues	All Prioritization & Action Exercises
Prioritizing Capacity Areas	To prioritize capacities to address	Identifying Capacity Areas	All Prioritization & Action Exercises
A Baseline Assessment of Priority Capacity Areas	To establish a baseline used to measure progress	Identifying Capacity Areas	All Prioritization & Action Exercises
Visioning: Developing Capacity Indicators	To develop measurable objectives & indicators	A Baseline Assessment of Priority Capacity Areas	All Prioritization & Action Exercises
Formulating Support Activities & Action Plans	To outline actions for strengthening priority capacities	Visioning: Developing Capacity Indicators	All Prioritization & Action Exercises
Pyramid of Action: Assigning Roles	To identify short & long-term actions as well as levels of support needed	Formulating Support Activities & Action Plans	All Prioritization & Action Exercises



SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

9.12 FOLLOWING THESE EXERCISES

Each exercise in this guide is presented in a consistent format for easy use and adaptation. Suggestions for preparation, as well as prerequisite exercises, are listed in the large circle at the top of the page. The **RELEVANCE** statement summarizes the overarching purpose of the exercise, while the **OBJECTIVES** detail the specific information to be elicited. **SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS** guidelines are then presented, followed by the exercise **STEPS**. Notice that sometimes the steps are broken up into several sections by **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**. These questions can be used by the facilitator to stimulate analysis and discussion during and after the exercise.

We also provide examples of checklists and diagrams. These illustrations represent only one of many possible outcomes of each exercise, and should be used only to clarify the facilitator's understanding of the process.

Finally, the **TIPS** section attempts to share lessons learned and helpful hints about each exercise, drawing from field experience.

PARTICIPATORY EXERCISES FOR ASSESSING & STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

INTRODUCTORY EXERCISES	Purpose Mapping (106)	Decision-Making Analysis (132)	Transfer of Responsibilities (156)
Introductions & Ice Breakers (90)	Rolling Group Consensus Building on Purpose (108)	Leadership Assessment (134)	Threats to Viability (158)
Hopes & Fears (91)	Strengths & Weaknesses (110)	Management Efficiency Assessment (136)	TRENDS EXERCISES
Defining Workshop Objectives & Focus (92)	Social Map (112)	Information Flow Analysis (138)	Trend Analysis: Women's Well-Being (160)
Establishing a Workshop Program (93)	Well-Being Ranking (114)	Staff Training History & Analysis (140)	Trend Analysis: Renewable Natural Resources (162)
Responsibilities & Logistics (94)	ACTIVITIES, PERFORMANCE & IMPACT EXERCISES	RELATIONSHIPS EXERCISES	PRIORITIZATION & ACTION EXERCISES
KEY CONCEPTS EXERCISES	Activity Matrix (116)	Relationships Assessment (142)	Synthesis of Critical Issues (164)
A Common Understanding of Capacity Building (95)	History of Support (118)	Relationships with Community Groups (144)	Prioritization of Critical Issues (166)
Identifying Organizational Capacity Areas (96)	Activities Onion (120)	Donor Assessment (146)	Identifying Capacity Areas (168)
A Common Understanding of Organizational Development (97)	Activities Performance Assessment (122)	Fundraising Strategy Assessment (148)	Prioritizing Capacity Areas (170)
A Common Understanding of Self-Assessment (98)	Purpose-Problems-Impact-Objectives-Activities (124)	VIABILITY & AUTONOMY EXERCISES	A Baseline Assessment of Priority Capacity Areas (172)
BASELINE INFORMATION EXERCISES	Problem Identification & Prioritization (126)	Viability Assessment (150)	Visioning: Developing Capacity Indicators (174)
Initial Assessment of Capacity Areas (100)	Problem Tree Analysis (128)	Autonomy Assessment (152)	Formulating Support Activities & Action Plans (176)
Organizational Timeline (102)	INTERNAL ISSUES EXERCISES	Community Level Support/Self-Reliance (154)	Pyramid of Action: Assigning Roles (178)
Timeline Analysis: Organizational Development Stages (104)	Organizational Structure (130)		

INTRODUCTIONS & ICE BREAKERS

Have You...

- J** Prepared enough Puzzle Pieces for all the participants?
- J** Written Ice Breaker Questions on a flip chart & posted it on the wall?

Ice Breaker Questions

What is your name?

What is your role with the organization?

What is an adjective that describes you and begins with the first letter of your name (i.e. Smart Susan)?

Tell me about your family.

What is your favorite food?

Tell me one of your wishes or hopes.

RELEVANCE

To create a team spirit and to build trust among participants.

OBJECTIVES

- To give participants a chance to meet and get to know one another.
- To start the workshop on a fun and positive note.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Hand out a puzzle piece to each participant.
2. Participants walk around the room trying to find the person with the matching puzzle piece, but greeting each person they meet in the process.
3. When partners find each other, they sit down and exchange information using the list of Ice Breaker Questions posted on the wall.
4. Once everyone has exchanged information, each person presents his/her partner to the group.

INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS (SHORT VERSION)

1. Ask participants to pair up with someone they do not know.
2. Partners exchange information using the list of Ice Breaker Questions posted.
3. Once everyone has exchanged information, each person presents his/her partner to the group.

TIPS

- You can make puzzle pieces by drawing simple pictures or designs on cards and then cut them in half.
- At the end of the exercise, ask for a volunteer to try to name all of the participants and their chosen adjectives.
- Try to complete the exercise in less than a half an hour.
- Make up your own Ice Breaker Questions.

HOPES & FEARS

Have You...

- J** Gathered the necessary materials (cards, markers, tape, flip chart paper)?

RELEVANCE

To ensure that the participants' expectations correspond with the workshop objectives and to address any concerns about the process.

OBJECTIVES

- To give participants a chance to share and discuss their expectations and concerns.
- To decide as a group how to meet these expectations and address these concerns.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Hand out cards (color A) and have each participant write his/her expectations (or hopes) about the workshop. Participants may choose to work alone or in pairs.
2. Tape all the "hopes" cards on a flip chart, or lay them out on the floor in the middle of the circle.
3. Ask the participants to group these cards by common themes and then discuss the hopes presented.
4. Hand out new cards (color B) and have each participant write his/her concerns (or fears) about the process.
5. Again, ask participants to group cards with common themes together and discuss.
6. Secure the Hopes cards and the Fears cards to flip chart paper and post them on the wall.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Are there hopes or fears that were repeatedly mentioned?
- ? Are the expectations realistic? Are the concerns well founded?

TIPS

- Make sure that participants have enough cards so that they can write one idea on each.
- The hopes named during this workshop will later be compared with the workshop objectives to confirm that the objectives reflect the participants' expectations.
- Keep these lists posted during the rest of the workshop.

Hopes

To strengthen the relationship between our organization and the village groups

To develop an action plan to address the organization's capacity needs

To develop into a strong and viable organization

To develop a field guide that we can use to continue the process

To learn the practical aspects of Organizational Self-Assessment

Fears

That the exercises will raise unrealistic expectations

That the process may not have any meaningful impact

That the high cost of carrying out a workshop will prevent other organizations from assessing capacities

DEFINING WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES & FOCUS

Have You...

- J** Created a preliminary list of objectives with the facilitation team?
- J** Gathered together the needed materials (cards, markers, tape, flip chart paper)?

Workshop Objectives

General Objective:

The organization and our village level partner organizations will examine our strengths and weaknesses. This analysis will lead to both a short and long-term action plan.

Specific Objectives:

1. Analyze, for both the support organization and the village associations, the results, internal influences, effects and resulting long-term changes of program efforts.
2. Evaluate the performance, viability and strategies of the support organization and the village associations in light of their mission and context.
3. Evaluate the organizational capacity of each association as it relates to transfer of responsibilities and phasing out.
4. Learn and adapt participatory evaluation methodology.

RELEVANCE

To clearly define the scope of the workshop and to establish a collective set of goals.

OBJECTIVES

- To give the participants an opportunity to discuss and refine the objectives.
- To create a “checklist” of objectives to guide the process and choice of exercises.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Present the flip chart with the preliminary workshop objectives and explain the rationale behind them (i.e. terms of reference, perceived needs of the organization, etc.).
2. Guide the group in a discussion of the objectives, writing suggestions on cards and taping them next to the flip chart.
3. Clarify the group’s understanding of the suggestions and make the changes that are affirmed by the group.
4. Present the new list of objectives and confirm that the participants are in agreement.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Are the objectives realistic considering the available time, participants’ knowledge and other limiting factors?
- ? What is the level of consensus among the participants? What are the areas of divergence?

TIPS

- Create a list of preliminary objectives with the facilitation team in advance.
- When designing the list of objectives, take into consideration the needs and expectations of all the interested parties, including organization staff, donor agencies and community group members.
- Keep the objectives prominently posted during the rest of the workshop, and refer back to them when choosing exercises.
- Compare these objectives with the results of the *Hopes & Fears* exercise (pg. 91).

ESTABLISHING THE WORKSHOP PROGRAM

RELEVANCE

To create a calendar to guide the process in order to effectively use the time available.

OBJECTIVES

- To establish a general schedule for the process.
- To identify and estimate the time necessary for each phase.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Present the blank calendar and the list of phases to the participants.
2. Discuss with the participants any external factors that will affect the schedule (i.e. markets, celebrations, holidays or previous engagements). Mark these days and times on the calendar.
3. Review the different workshop phases and decide together how much time to designate for each. Use different colored cards or symbols to indicate the allocated time for each phase on the calendar.

TIPS

- Using colors or symbols to represent the different stages makes it easier for all participants (including non-literate participants) to grasp how the workshop time will be used.
- It is difficult to predict all the external factors that will influence the schedule. Leave an extra day for unexpected interruptions.
- Unforeseen questions and issues will emerge from the exercises that may be important to explore further. Allow enough time in the schedule to accommodate changes and additions to the program.
- Keep the schedule posted during the remainder of the workshop.

Have You...

- J** Prepared a blank calendar with all the dates of the workshop?
- J** Prepared a flip chart with the list of workshop phases and how they will be represented on the calendar?
- J** Gathered together the needed materials (cards, tape, flip chart paper, markers)?

Workshop Phases

Preparation

Exercises

Synthesis & Analysis

Verification & Follow-Up

Implications & Action Plans

Report Writing

Monday, June 7	Tuesday, June 8	Wednesday, June 9	Thursday, June 10	Friday, June 11
Preparation	Preparation	Exercises	Exercises	Exercises
Monday, June 14	Tuesday, June 15	Wednesday, June 16	Thursday, June 17	Friday, June 18
Synthesis	Preparation	Village Exercises	Village Exercises	Village Synthesis
Monday, June 21	Tuesday, June 22	Wednesday, June 23	Thursday, June 24	Friday, June 25
Synthesis	Synthesis	Follow-Up	Action Plans	Report Writing

RESPONSIBILITIES & LOGISTICS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Hopes & Fears* exercise?
- J** Prepared a flip chart with possible task groups?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart paper, markers, cards, tape)?

Some Practical Questions

Gathering Supplies

Transportation

Meals & Drinks

Circulation of Info

Note Taking

Data-Entry

Set-Up & Clean-Up

Task Groups

Planning & Facilitation

Sana, Peter & Fatou

Logistics

Alou & Zou

Documentation

Catheryn & Tsuamba

Group Dynamics

Sali & Mahawa

Monitoring & Sanctions

Hatta & Salim

RELEVANCE

To ensure that all the members of the group participate in the process and to establish procedural systems.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify and assign tasks to groups of participants.
- To discuss and resolve logistical questions.
- To establish ground rules for the process and positive ways of enforcing them.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Brainstorm a list of practical issues that will need to be addressed during the workshop. Group these into responsibility lists and assign them to different task groups.
2. Decide together which participants will be on each team and write their names by the appropriate task groups.
3. Decide as a group at what time the workshop will begin and end each day, as well as when to take breaks and meals. Write the daily schedule on a flip chart.
4. Referring to the *Hopes & Fears* lists, brainstorm any necessary ground rules. Write the rules suggested by the participants on cards and tape those that are affirmed by the group onto a flip chart. Decide together how the group will enforce these rules.

TIPS

- Observe the body language of the participants during these discussions to make sure that true consensus is being reached.
- Keep all flip charts posted on the wall during the workshop.

One way to enforce the Ground Rules is to adopt a "Soccer Referee" method with yellow and red cards. Members of the Monitoring and Sanctions team who observe someone breaking a rule can give that person a yellow card as a warning or a red card as an official sanction. When done in the spirit of fun, this can be an effective way to address inappropriate behavior without creating tension.

A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF CAPACITY BUILDING

RELEVANCE

The concept of capacity building is understood and used in many different ways. Without establishing a shared working definition, the facilitators and organization members risk working at cross-purposes.

OBJECTIVES

- To elicit participants' current understandings of capacity building.
- To clarify or deepen participants' understanding of capacity building.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Break participants into several small groups and ask them to discuss their understandings of capacity building. Participants should write on cards key words that capture the essence of their discussions.
2. Coming back together, each small group presents its key words to the full group. Tape the cards to a flip chart on the wall, grouping similar words or ideas together.
3. Display the different definitions of capacity building and ask a participant to read them out loud. Participants then identify key words or ideas from this list that correspond with their own. Underline these.
4. Identify key words or ideas that are found on one list but not the other. Circle and discuss these differences.
5. Out of this discussion, attempt to synthesize the two lists of definitions, creating a third list of key words and ideas that describe the shared understanding of capacity building.

TIPS

- Encourage participants to write down only key words or phrases on the cards, only one idea per card.
- Keep the final list of key words posted during the rest of the workshop.
- Learn from each workshop that you facilitate and try to incorporate new ideas into the prepared list of definitions.

Have You...

- J** Prepared a flip chart with different definitions of capacity building?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip charts, cards, markers, tape)?

What is Capacity Building?

Organizational capacity building is an explicit effort to improve (strengthen or enhance) an organization's performance in relation to its purpose, context, resources and viability. The aim is to develop a more effective, viable, autonomous and legitimate local organization by creating the conditions by which change can take place within the organization.

Capacity building is a self-managed process of organizational change by which leaders, members and other primary stakeholders learn to assess strengths, diagnose key organizational weaknesses, recognize priority issues and devise, apply and assess actions to address these issues.

Capacity building requires new skills and changes in individual behavior, and also in organizational behavior, in terms of systems, structures, procedures, culture, strategies and decision-making.

IDENTIFYING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AREAS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *A Common Understanding of Capacity Building* exercise?
- J** Prepared a checklist of capacity areas?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart paper, markers, cards, tape)?

RELEVANCE

Often organization members are unaware of the many capacities required of an effective and viable organization. This exercise helps to deepen participants' understanding of the specific components of organizational capacity.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop a shared understanding of capacity areas.
- To begin identifying key capacity areas affecting the organization's performance and viability.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

Organizational Capacity Areas		
LEGITIMACY & RECOGNITION	PERFORMANCE & RESULTS	RESOURCE MOBILIZATION
Official/Legal Recognition	Identify & Prioritize Problems	Systems for Raising Revenue
GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP	Acquire & Adapt New Practices	Mobilizing Human Capital
Broad-based Leadership	Implementation of Program Activities	Obtaining External Funding
Systems of Accountability	Monitoring & Evaluation	SYSTEMS & PROCEDURES
Representative Decision Making	Planning	Communication Systems
Mediation & Conflict Resolution	IDENTITY & VISION	Organizational Learning
RELATIONSHIPS	Shared Hopes & Commitment	Staff & Volunteer Evaluation
Collaboration with other groups	Clarity of Vision & Purpose	ADVOCACY
Linkages with External Agencies	Shared Values & Philosophy	Appropriate Policies
Negotiation for Services		Lobbying for Local Interests

STEPS

1. Ask participants to list the organization's main program sectors (i.e. agriculture, health, literacy, etc.). Write these sectors on cards (color A).
2. For each program sector named, ask the participants to list the major organizational tasks required to undertake these efforts. Write these tasks on cards (color B).
3. Discuss as a group the challenges or difficulties encountered in carrying out these tasks. Then ask participants to identify the necessary organizational skills and capabilities required to overcome these challenges and carry out these tasks. You may use the following question to guide the process: "What are all the capabilities that the organization needs to perform effectively, fulfill its mission and become self-sustaining?" Write these responses on cards (color C) and place them on the floor. Suggest other capacities from a checklist if needed.
4. Ask participants to group similar cards together. Once the cards have been sorted, decide together on a title for each group that summarizes the main theme. Write these titles on cards (color D) and place them at the top of each list.

A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RELEVANCE

An evolutionary understanding of organizational development is a critical concept for the self-assessment process.

OBJECTIVES

- To elicit participants' current understandings of organizational development.
- To present the different stages of organizational growth.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

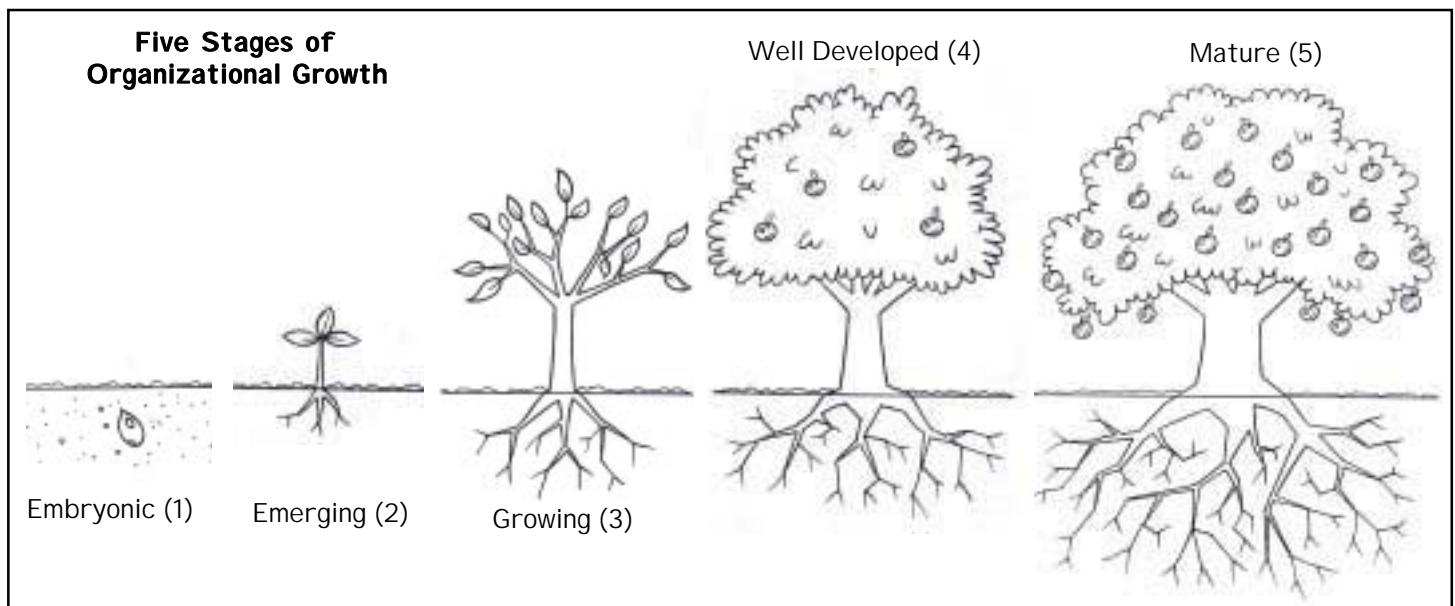
1. Ask the participants to share their understandings of organizational development, either in small groups or as a full group. Write key words and concepts on cards and tape them to the wall.
2. Present and explain the five visuals illustrating the different stages of organizational growth. Discuss how these relate to the participants' understandings of organizational development.

TIPS

- This tool tends to be more of a presentation than a participatory process. Participation can be increased by asking participants to explain the visuals and to compare their ideas with those presented.
- You may want to conduct the *Organizational Timeline* exercise (pg. 102) first, and then introduce the tree analogy. This will lead naturally into the *Timeline Analysis* exercise (pg. 104).

Have You...

- J** Prepared visuals with the five stages of organizational development?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?



A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

Have You...

- J** Prepared cards with the possible themes to be covered during the workshop?
- J** Drawn a large human figure?

RELEVANCE

To establish a clear understanding of the major organizational elements addressed in the self-assessment process. A complete assessment must consider not only what the organization does (activities), but also identity, relationships and management issues.

OBJECTIVES

- To deepen participants’ understanding of the major organizational dimensions, and the themes to be reviewed and addressed through organizational self-assessment.
- To clarify or deepen participants’ understanding of how the process can help them to develop their own, organization specific, capacity strengthening program and action plan.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

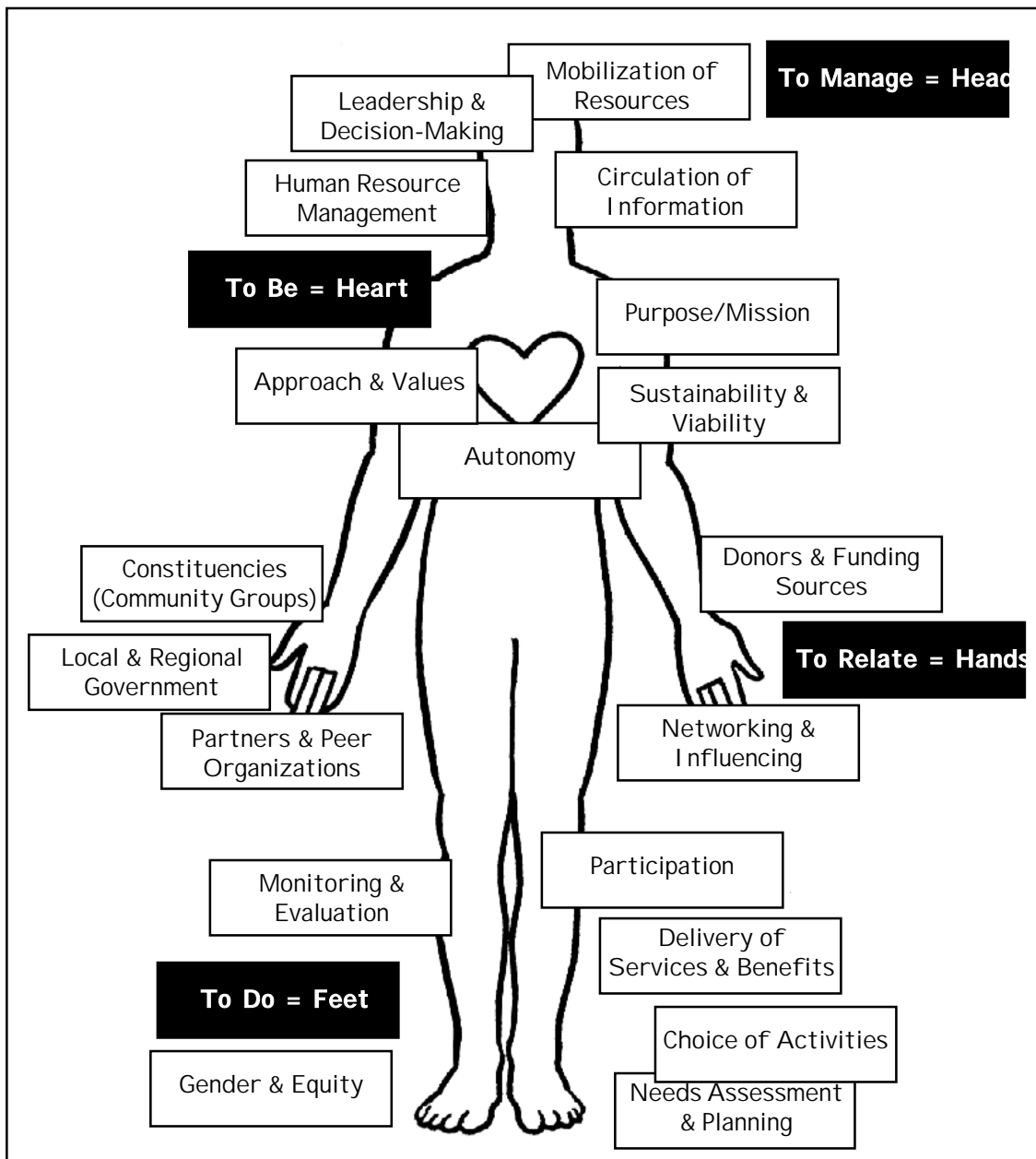
1. Present the idea that an organizational self-assessment should address many themes. These themes can be grouped into the broader categories: “To Do,” “To Be,” “To Relate” and “To Manage.” Give examples of themes to illustrate.

Dimensions & Themes of Organizational Self-Assessment

To Be	To Do (Organization Level)	To Do (Community Level)	To Manage	To Relate
Purpose/Mission	Delivery of Services & Benefits	Effects & Impacts	Human Resource Management	Constituencies (Community Groups)
Identity	Needs Assessment & Planning	Effectiveness	Financial Management	Local & Regional Government
Autonomy	Implementation	Participation	Organizational Learning & Change	Partners & Peer Organizations
Legitimacy & Recognition	Choice of Activities	Sustainability of Activities	Leadership & Decision-Making	Donors & Funding Sources
Approach & Values	Relevance of Activities	Relevance of Activities	Circulation of Information	Networking & Influencing
Sustainability & Viability	Strategies & Efficiency	Gender & Equity	Mobilization of Resources	Advocacy & Negotiation
	Monitoring & Evaluation			Technical/Support Services

A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF SELF-ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

- Using a drawing of a human figure, ask the participants to identify which parts of the body will be used to represent each of the organizational dimensions. For example, the hands could represent the “To Do” group while the heart might symbolize “To Be.”
- Present cards with all of the organizational self-assessment themes and ask the participants to suggest any that are missing. Write these suggestions on cards and add them to the list.
- Once all the cards are made, ask the participants to organize the themes by organizational dimensions, taping the cards to the appropriate part of the figure on the poster.



INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITY AREAS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Identifying Organizational Capacities* exercise?
- J** Displayed the diagrams of the *Five Stages of Organizational Development*?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip charts, cards, markers, ballots, tape)?

RELEVANCE

Through this exercise, participants share their initial perspectives about the organization's capacities and indicate which, in their view, merit deeper analysis. It also introduces the concept of scoring, an important tool in the process of organizational self-assessment.

OBJECTIVES

- To elicit participants' initial perceptions of the organization's capacities and needs.
- To identify some criteria and indicators for measuring these capacity areas.
- To generate results that will be used in selecting future exercises.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Review the capacity area cards generated in the *Identifying Organizational Capacities* exercise (pg. 96) and the diagrams of the *Five Stages of Organizational Development* (see pg. 97).
2. Assign each capacity area card a letter code (A,B,C...) and place them in order along the vertical axis of a grid on the floor or large flip chart. Along the horizontal axis, designate one column for each participant and one at the end for averages and/or totals.
3. Hand out ballots and ask participants to assign the organization a score (1 to 5) for each of the capacity areas. A score of 1 would indicate being at the Embryonic stage while a 5 would be Mature.
4. When all of the participants have completed their ballots, collect them and transfer the results to the grid. Calculate the totals and/or averages and write them in the last column.
5. As a group, identify capacity areas with a wide divergence in score and circle them. Taking the first of these, ask participants to discuss the criteria that they used when scoring this capacity. Write this criteria on cards and place them near the corresponding capacity card.
6. After agreeing on the criteria, hand out new ballots and ask participants to score this capacity again. If there continues to be a wide variation of scores, ask the group to come to a consensus. If only slight differences in scores remain, take the average. Write the final score on the card and repeat this process for the other capacities with divergent scores.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITY AREAS (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Which capacity areas received the highest average scores? Why?
- ? Which capacities were scored the lowest? Why? For each, give concrete examples illustrating these weaker capacities.
- ? What benefits does the organization enjoy from its stronger capacities? What are the consequences of the weaker capacity areas?
- ? **What capacity areas are most in need of strengthening to help the organization improve performance and become more viable?**

TIPS

- Use probing questions to ensure that a robust and objectively verifiable list of criteria or indicators is developed.

		Capacity Areas	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Averages
Information is accessible to all	Regular meetings with communities	(A) Representative Decision Making	3	4	3	3.3
	Regular staff meetings	Reports written regularly	(B) Communication Systems 3	2	2	4
		(C) Collaboration with other groups	3	3	3	3
		(D) Negotiation for Services	2	2	2	2
		(E) Identify & Prioritize Problems	3	4	4	3.6
		(F) Implementation of Activities	4	4	4	4
Contacts with local government	Up to date on current policies	(G) Lobbying for Local Interests 2	2	4	3	3
		(H) Clarity of Vision & Purpose	5	4	5	4.6
		(I) Systems for Raising Revenue	2	2	3	2.3
		(J) Mobilizing Human Capital	4	3	4	3.6
		(K) Monitoring & Evaluation	2	1	2	1.6

Scale	
1 = Embryonic	
2 = Emerging	
3 = Growing	
4 = Well Developed	
5 = Mature	

ORGANIZATIONAL TIMELINE

Have You...

- J** Prepared a timeline diagram?
- J** Prepared a flip chart with a checklist of key events?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, markers, cards, tape)?

Checklist of Key Events

Creation of the Organization

Changes in Staff & Leadership

Funding Changes

Program Evaluations & Assessments

Starting and Ending of Activities

Program Shifts in Strategy or Objectives

Key Trainings

Establishment of Relationships with External Groups

Gaining Legal Status

Changes in Organizational Systems & Procedures

RELEVANCE

To better understand the specific context for capacity-building work, to generate initial findings that will be deepened in subsequent exercises, and to assess the organization's capacity for learning and coping with change.

OBJECTIVES

- To enable the participants to produce a timeline indicating significant events, achievements, setbacks and changes in the history of the organization.
- To provide a reference point for later assessment of the impact of important changes on the organization's development.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Longest serving members of the organization, leaders, administrative staff and field staff

STEPS

1. Present the blank timeline diagram and explain that a timeline helps to outline an historical sequence of events over a period of many years or decades.
2. Present the checklist of key events to record on the timeline and ask participants to add other important types of events to the list.
3. Have participants list key events in their organization's history. Write these events and the year each took place on cards.
4. Ask the participants to indicate whether each event was "Positive," "Negative" or "Neutral." Positive events are those which improved performance or strengthen the organization. Negative events are those that set back performance or weakened the organization.
5. Tape these cards to the timeline, near the corresponding dates and in this order:
 - "Positive" events are placed above the horizontal line
 - "Negative" events are placed below the horizontal line
 - "Normal" or "Neutral" events are placed along the line[Criteria for sorting events into these three categories should be determined by the participants].

ORGANIZATIONAL TIMELINE (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Who was primarily responsible for creating your organization?
- ? Why did these people decide to do so? What was their purpose?
- ? Why did a particular setback happen?
- ? How did you expand to reach more groups?
- ? What brought about a change in the purpose of the organization?
- ? Why did a leader resign?
- ? How did you succeed in getting a major funding grant?
- ? What did you do with the funding received in year X?
- ? **What critical issues affecting your organization's performance or viability arise from the analysis of the timeline?**

The questions to ask during the Semi-Structured Interview depend on the events cited by the participants. The questions provided here should serve as examples only.

TIPS

- Often cards will fall off and get mixed up before you are able to capture the results. Code each card with the year of the event and whether it was positive, neutral or negative to avoid confusion.
- Leave plenty of room at the bottom of the timeline for the *Timeline Analysis* exercise (pg. 104).
- Tape several sheets of paper together to make the timeline large enough for all of the data.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
	Creation of the Organization		Joined regional NGO network	Started working in village #2	Village #2 formed group	Restructuring/ 2 new positions
+		Started working in village #1 Gained Legal Status	Hired Health Promoter	Village #1 formed group	Staff training on fundraising	
=		Hired 2 program staff	Program Evaluation			Village Group #1 changed name
-		Replacement of 1 staff member	Conflict with other local NGO	Major grant not renewed 2 staff members leave		

TIMELINE ANALYSIS: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STAGES

Have You...

- J Completed the *Organizational Timeline* exercise?
- J Displayed the timeline and the tree diagrams?
- J Gathered the necessary materials (cards, tape, markers)?

RELEVANCE

Identifying the organization's development stages will help to generate an initial perspective of the capacity areas that require strengthening.

OBJECTIVES

- To enable participants to identify the different stages of their organizational development.
- To establish a shared understanding of what capacity building means, based on actual organizational experience.
- To generate results that will be used in choosing exercises throughout the self-assessment process.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Same participants as the *Organizational Timeline* exercise

STEPS

1. Reintroduce the tree analogy to symbolize the stages of organizational growth and development [see *A Common Understanding of Organizational Development* (pg. 97)]. Discuss with the group how an organization at each stage would function.
2. Identify the main changes in the organization's capabilities over time and note the reasons for these changes, both positive and negative. Write each capacity on a card and paste each card on the timeline near the events that correspond with each capability. For example, the capacity *Mobilizing Resources* may be placed under the card indicating a staff training on fundraising. Use a different color card for these capacities to distinguish them from events.
3. Looking at the events and capacities, ask the participants to divide the timeline into organizational stages. Write these stages at the bottom of the timeline diagram. (Most likely the organization will not have passed through all five stages).

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

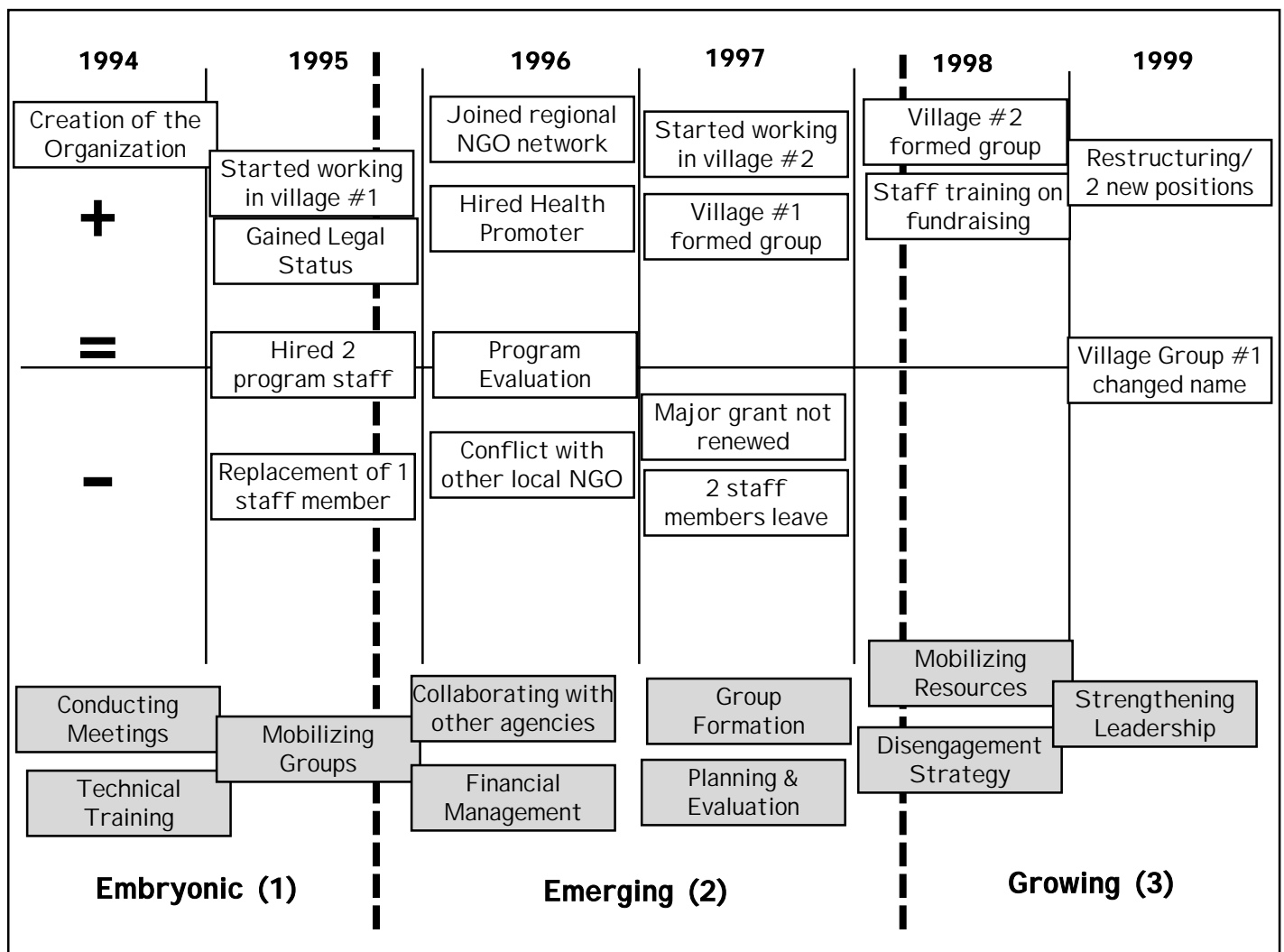
- ? What are the reasons or criteria leading you to divide the timeline into these stages?
- ? What are the main capacity areas that were developed in each stage?
- ? How did the organization strengthen the capacities listed in each stage of its development?

TIMELINE ANALYSIS (CONT.)

- ? What capacity areas have not yet been developed very well? Why?
- ? **What capacity areas are most in need of strengthening to help the organization move into the next stage of its development?**

TIPS

- Code the capacity cards with their corresponding stages of development before storing the diagram.
- Use different colored cards for the capacities to help distinguish them from the events.



PURPOSE MAPPING: KEY WORDS

Have You...

- J** Completed the *Organizational Timeline* exercise?
- J** Asked whether the organization has a formal purpose statement?
- J** Prepared a flip chart with the criteria for a well-formulated purpose statement?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, tape, markers)?

Criteria for a Well-Written Purpose Statement

Clearly stated, succinct and unambiguous

Specific and unique to the organization

Clearly addresses the problems or issues

Clearly indicates the specific group of people to be reached or served

Is realistic to accomplish

Has potential to inspire organization members

Outcomes can be evaluated or assessed

Clarity about the service or support the organization is to provide

Specifies geographic area to be covered

RELEVANCE

A clearly articulated purpose statement (or mission statement) is essential to drive the organization and to enable its members to assess their overall performance, identify critical issues and decide what capacities to strengthen.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the organization's purpose or mission statement.
- To verify to what extent organization members' practical understanding of their purpose corresponds with the formal purpose statement.
- To determine whether the organization's purpose statement is well formulated and meets the criteria of a good purpose statement (see checklist).

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants should represent different levels of the organization, including: board, leadership, managers, field staff and support staff.

STEPS

Scenario I: The organization has no official purpose statement

1. Divide participants into small groups and ask them to write on cards key words describing their organizational objectives. Clarify the distinction between *activities* and *objectives*. (Activities are what the organization does to reach its objectives).
2. Tape these cards to a flip chart and sort the key words into groups of similar or related ideas. Lead a discussion to reach consensus on whether all the key words are relevant and appropriate.
3. Ask each small group to construct a rough draft of a purpose statement based on their key words and discussion.
4. In plenary, ask the participants to present and compare the different purpose statements.
5. Present a checklist of criteria for a well-formulated purpose statement. Discuss the extent to which their statements meet these criteria.

NOTE: This is one of two possible exercises included in this guide that are designed to help clarify organizational purpose. See also *Rolling Group Consensus Building on Purpose* (pg. 108).

PURPOSE MAPPING (CONT.)

Scenario II: The organization already has a defined purpose statement

1. Divide participants into small groups and ask them to write on cards key words that reflect their understanding of the organization's purpose statement.
2. Tape these cards to a flip chart and sort the key words into groups of similar or related ideas. Lead a discussion with the group to reach consensus on whether all the key words are relevant and appropriate.
3. Using the agreed upon key words, ask the participants to articulate their organization's purpose.
4. Present the organization's official purpose statement and compare this with the version constructed by the participants.
5. Present a checklist of criteria for a well-formulated purpose statement and discuss to what extent either purpose statements meets these criteria.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? To what extent is there a common understanding among members of the organization's purpose?
- ? To what extent is there disagreement on the purpose or mission of the organization? In what ways does this divergence affect performance?
- ? How and why did you choose the key words that you did? How do they relate to the purpose of the organization?
- ? Does the agreed upon statement reflect the organization's official purpose?
- ? To what extent does your purpose statement meet the criteria of a good purpose statement?
- ? **What are the critical issues arising from this exercise that need to be addressed by the organization in order to improve its performance and viability?**

TIPS

- Make sure that people from all levels of the organization participate in this exercise.
- Be creative and add your own criteria to the checklist.
- Collect examples of other organizations' mission statements to share as examples.

In the context of this exercise, the words **"purpose"** and **"mission"** have the same meaning. Use the term most easily understood by the participants. A purpose (or mission) statement should clearly and specifically explain WHAT the organization seeks to accomplish.

A **"vision"** statement is broader in scope than a purpose statement and goes beyond describing WHAT the organization seeks to do. It also succinctly outlines HOW the organization will accomplish its purpose (in terms of strategy and process), its core VALUES and approach, and INDICATORS describing what the successful outcome will look like. If the facilitation team judges that there is a need to enable the organization members to clarify its vision, use the same process outlined in this exercise for developing a vision statement.

ROLLING GROUP CONSENSUS BUILDING ON PURPOSE

Have You...

- J** Asked whether the organization has a formal purpose statement?
- J** Completed the *Organizational Timeline* exercise?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, different colored cards, envelopes or boxes, tape, markers)?

In the context of this exercise, the words **“purpose”** and **“mission”** have the same meaning. Use the term most easily understood by the participants. A purpose (or mission) statement should clearly and specifically explain WHAT the organization seeks to accomplish.

A **“vision”** statement is broader in scope than a purpose statement and goes beyond describing WHAT the organization seeks to do. It also succinctly outlines HOW the organization will accomplish its purpose (in terms of strategy and process), its core VALUES and approach, and INDICATORS describing what the successful outcome will look like. If the facilitation team judges that there is a need to enable the organization members to clarify its vision, use the same process outlined in this exercise for developing a vision statement.

RELEVANCE

A clearly articulated purpose statement is essential to drive the organization and enable its members to assess their overall performance, identify critical issues and decide on what organizational capacities to strengthen. A rolling group exercise is a creative way to define key issues requiring consensus building and to build unity in a group with diverse opinions.

OBJECTIVES

- To help participants assess and reflect on their understandings of the organization’s purpose.
- To come to a consensus about the organization’s purpose.
- To evaluate the extent to which different organization members share a common understanding of, and are inspired by, their organizational purpose.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants should represent different levels of the organization, including: board, leadership, managers, field staff and support staff.

STEPS

1. Give each participant a large card (color A) and ask them to write down five points which are critical to describing the organization. These should relate to the activities, strategies and objectives of the organization that, if discontinued or changed, would alter the fundamental nature of the organization. Participants then choose partners and share their cards with each other.
2. Each pair agrees on and writes on a new card (color B) five points that represent their joint view. Each point must be negotiated, maintained, combined, modified or eliminated.
3. Ask participants to put their cards from step 1 (color A) into a box or envelope marked “Individual” or “A.”
4. Each pair now teams up with another pair (groups of four) and negotiates a common list of five key points to be written on a card (color C).
5. Pairs then put the cards from step 3 (color B) into a box or envelope marked “Pairs” or “B.”
6. The process of pairing groups and negotiating a common set of five points is repeated until only two groups remain. Continue collecting the cards of the previous groups.

ROLLING GROUP CONSENSUS BUILDING ON PURPOSE (CONT.)

7. When two groups remain, each group presents its list of five points in plenary.
8. Take the cards from each box or envelope, and tape them on to labeled flip charts. Ask the participants to walk around the room and examine the flip charts.

NOTE: This is one of two possible exercises included in this guide that are designed to help clarify organizational purpose. See also *Purpose Mapping: Key Words* (pg. 106).

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? To what extent is there a common understanding of the organization's core elements among members?
- ? To what extent is there disagreement about the core activities of the organization? In what ways does this divergence affect the organization's performance?
- ? Does the agreed upon set of core activities reflect the actual purpose of the organization?
- ? **What are the critical issues arising from this exercise that need to be addressed by the organization in order to improve its performance and viability?**

TIPS

- After each step, the cards from the previous step are collected to ensure the diversity of ideas is not lost.
- Present all the different colored cards on labeled flip charts to see what ideas were discarded in the process.

Individuals (A)	
Strengthening Capacity Alleviating Poverty Group Formation Leadership Training Revolving Credit Schemes	Leadership Training Sharing Knowledge Community Organizing Forming Village Groups Literacy Trainings
Empowerment Women's Development Supporting Village Groups Microcredit Programs Gender	Microcredit Schemes Advocacy Building Village Groups Health Outreach Women & Families
Equity Local Capacity Building Organize Exchange Visits Training Awareness Raising	Train Health Promoters Capacity Building Safe Motherhood Gender Trainings Women's Empowerment

Pairs (B)
Poverty Alleviation Group Formation Leadership Trainings Local Capacity Building Literacy Trainings
Empowerment Village Group Building Microcredit Health Training/Services Gender
Health Local Capacity Building Literacy Training Gender Trainings Education

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Have You...

- J Completed the *Organizational Timeline & Purpose Mapping* or *Rolling Group Consensus on Purpose* exercises?
- J Gathered the necessary materials (flip charts, different colored cards, markers, tape)?

Successes

Successfully supported the creation of two village associations

Recruited Qualified & Motivated Staff

Monitored Programs Regularly Using Participatory Methods

Documented & Learned from Program Experience

Provided Relevant & Effective Technical Training

Strengths

#1 Excellent Evaluation Systems

#2 Effective Training Strategy

#3 Strong Leadership Training Program in Communities

#4 Ability to Tap Into Outside Expertise/ Technical Resources

#5 Strong Documentation & Analysis

RELEVANCE

To elicit initial perceptions of critical issues to later compare with the results of subsequent exercises. This exercise permits the facilitators to incorporate a deeper analysis of these problems and related issues into the remaining exercises.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the organization's major successes and setbacks.
- To enable the participants to diagnose their organization's strengths and weaknesses, and to analyze their influencing factors.
- To identify and analyze the obstacles which, in the perspective of the participants, limit the organization's ability to overcome its weaknesses and to improve its performance and viability.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Leadership, program management staff and field staff

STEPS

1. Quickly review the Organizational Timeline and identify the major successes of the organization. Ask participants to give more examples of their organization's achievements and successes. Write these and the achievements from the timeline on cards (one per card, color A) and tape them to a flip chart labeled "Achievements" or "Successes."
2. Discuss as a group the positive qualities or *strengths* of the organization that contributed to the noted achievements. Write each quality named on a card (color B) and tape them to a flip chart labeled "Strengths."
3. Ask the participants to rank these strengths in order of importance (1 being the most important) and record the rank numbers on each card.
4. Present the three categories of strengths and weaknesses (see box), and confirm that the participants understand the differences. Divide the flip chart into three columns, one for each category, and ask the participants to sort the strengths into the three categories written at the top of each column.

Three Categories of Strengths & Weaknesses

Qualities related to internal organizational **systems, policies or strategies**

Qualities related to the organization's **relationships with external agencies**

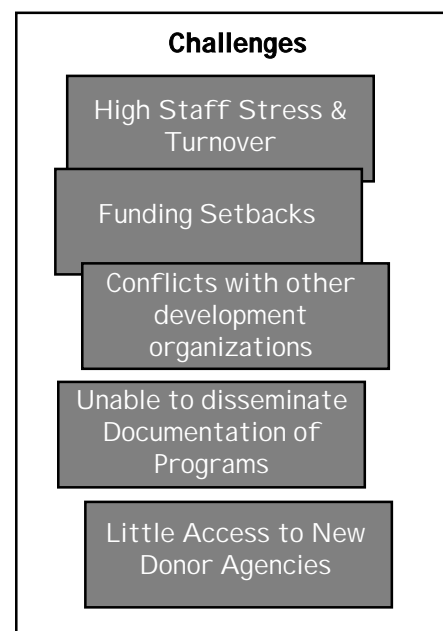
Qualities related to the organization's level of **technical or managerial competency**

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES (CONT.)

5. Again review the Organizational Timeline and ask the participants to identify the major setbacks. Have participants identify any other major problems that their organization is facing or has faced. Write these challenges on cards (one per card, color C) and tape them to a flip chart labeled “Challenges.”

Strengths		
Systems, Policies & Strategies	External Relationships	Technical/ Managerial
#2 Effective Training Strategy	#4 Ability to Tap Into Outside Expertise/ Technical Resources	#3 Strong Leadership Training Program in Communities
#5 Strong Documentation & Analysis		#1 Excellent Evaluation Systems

6. Discuss as a group the negative qualities or *weaknesses* that prevent the organization from overcoming these obstacles and becoming more effective. Write each quality on a card (color D) and tape them to a flip chart labeled “Weaknesses.”
7. Rank these factors in descending order of importance (1 being the most significant) and record the rank numbers on each card.
8. Again, divide a flip chart into three columns (see step 4) and ask the participants to categorize the weaknesses.

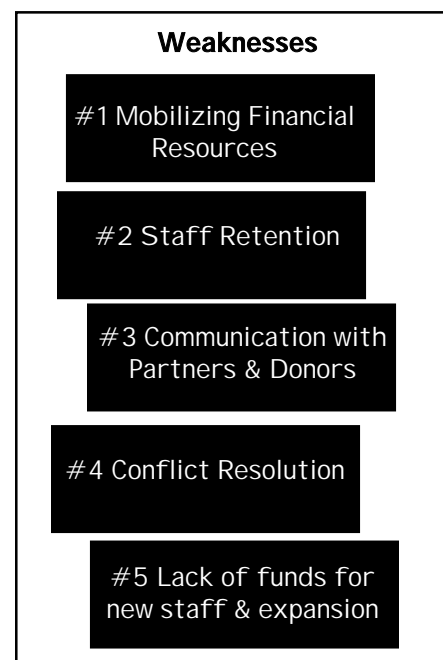


SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? For the most important strengths, how did the organization develop them? What were the internal and external factors that enabled the organization to become stronger?
- ? For the most significant weaknesses, why was the organization not able to overcome these obstacles? What were (or are) the internal or external factors that prevented the organization, until now, from overcoming these challenges?
- ? In which category are the most significant strengths and weaknesses?
- ? **From the analysis of this exercise, what are the most critical issues which your organization needs to resolve to improve its performance and viability?**

TIPS

- Ask participants to cite concrete examples of successes and setbacks first, then analyze the reasons why.
- Make sure to clearly label each card at the end of the session.



SOCIAL MAP

Have You...

- J** Prepared an area where the participants will draw their map (on a large sheet of paper or on the ground)?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (cards, markers, small stones, tape, objects to use as symbols such as sticks & leaves)?

RELEVANCE

To generate basic information necessary to conduct a social analysis with community members, and to measure the level of program participation.

OBJECTIVES

- To create a map which shows all of the households, enterprises, public buildings and spaces, neighborhoods and infrastructure in the village or community area.
- To generate a complete list of households in the village or community.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Choose community members who are very familiar with the village or area. At least some of the participants should be functionally literate.

STEPS

1. Clarify participants understanding of “household” (including widows, divorcées and other heads of households) and decide on a working definition for the term.
2. Take a walk with the participants and establish compass directions at the boundaries of the village or area. Locate the important infrastructure including roads, water sources, religious buildings, community leaders’ headquarters, etc.
3. Return to where you will be conducting the exercise and ask the participants to draw on the ground the boundaries of the area.
4. Ask the participants to name the facilities, natural resources and public spaces found in their community. Write these on cards (color A) and have the participants place these cards in the appropriate locations on the map. Participants can choose symbols (such as a book for a school, a cup for a well, etc.) and place these symbols on top of the cards.
5. Ask the participants to draw the different neighborhoods on the map. For each neighborhood, have the participants list the names of every head of household. Write each name on a card (color B) and ask the participants to place them on the map in the appropriate spots. These cards can be weighted down with small stones if necessary.

SOCIAL MAP (CONT.)

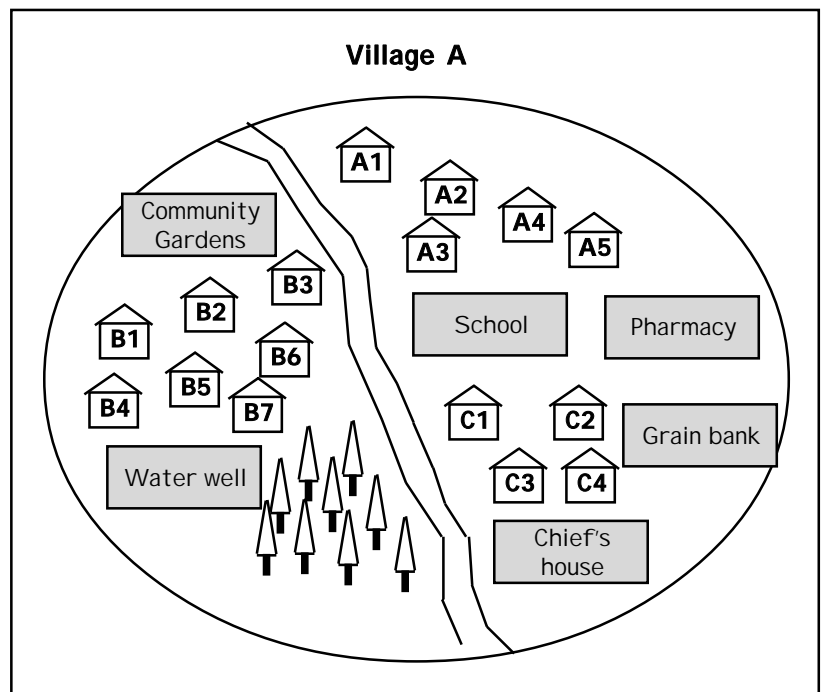
- Assign a letter code to each neighborhood. Then code each household card with the letter of its neighborhood and a number.
- If you have been conducting this exercise directly on the ground, it will be necessary to reproduce the social map on a large piece of paper. Make sure to include:
 - The name of the village or community
 - The names of the participants and the facilitator
 - The date of the exercise
 - Any legends or explanations of codes or symbols
 - A coded list of households and their neighborhoods

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? What structural elements have been added to the village in the last 10 years? How did these come into being?
- ? Are there households (or neighborhoods), facilities or other structural elements that have disappeared (shut down or left) in the last 10 years? Why did they leave?
- ? Who was the family that founded this community? In which neighborhood do their descendents live?
- ? Are there households with one or more member who has migrated elsewhere? How many?

TIPS

- If the community area is too large, a social map can be constructed for each neighborhood.
- The exercise can also be adapted to identify the number of married women, the number and gender of children in the village, the number and gender of program participants, or other demographic information.
- Make sure to include a legend explaining the different symbols and codes on the social map.
- In order to conserve space when drawing the map on a flip chart, it may be necessary to make a list of all the household names separately, assign codes to each and then mark only the codes on the map.



WELL-BEING RANKING

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Social Map* exercise?
- J** Prepared a matrix for sorting cards into wealth levels?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (household cards, flip chart, markers, tape)?

Characteristics of a Rich Household

Has food throughout the year

Owens goats & a cow

Able to send all children to school

Has many healthy children

Has safe place for storing grain

Farms fertile soil

RELEVANCE

To understand how the socioeconomic status of community members impacts their level of participation and the effectiveness of program activities. This information can be used to analyze the relationship between relatively “rich” and “poor” program participants, as well as to assess whether the program is reaching people in the poorest socioeconomic brackets.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the local criteria for defining “rich” and “poor” households.
- To identify the characteristics, the benefits and the resources of each socioeconomic class.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Select participants who know the community well and who can speak openly and honestly about the well-being of the households. Make sure that women are included in this exercise.

STEPS (1-2)

1. Ask the participants to name the characteristics of a “rich” household. Write each criteria on a card (color A).
2. Have participants now list the characteristics of “poor” households. Write these responses on cards (color B).

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-2)

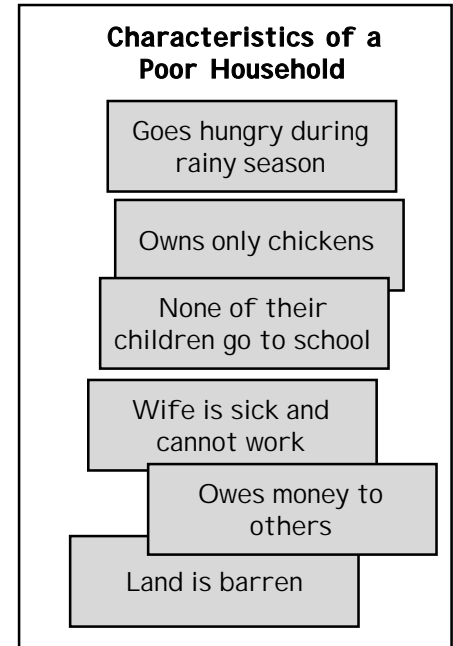
- ? What makes a household poor? What do they lack?
- ? What makes a household rich? What do they have?
- ? Ask specifics about the criteria. For example, if owning livestock is a characteristic of a wealthy family, how many and what types?

STEPS (3-10)

3. Read aloud the characteristics of a “rich” household and ask the participants to name the richest households in the community (those households that best meet this criteria). From the cards generated during the *Social Map* exercise (pg. 112), find the household cards for each family that is named and place these cards in a column labeled “Richest.”
4. Read aloud the characteristics of a “poor” household and ask the participants to name the poorest households in the community, using the criteria to measure their status. Find the cards for each household and place them in a column labeled “Poorest.”

WELL-BEING RANKING (CONT.)

5. Spread out the remaining household cards and ask the participants to identify the household that is closest in status to the “Richest” households. Place this card at the top of a third column labeled “Moderately Rich.”
6. Now ask the participants to identify the household from the cards remaining that comes closest in status to the “Poorest” households. Place this card at the bottom of a fourth column labeled “Moderately Poor.”
7. Have the participants sort the remaining cards into the two columns “Moderately Rich” or “Moderately Poor.”
8. Read aloud the names of all the “Richest” households and ask the participants to identify the three households that are the most well off in this group. Place these three cards at the top of the column. Then ask the participants to identify the three households that are the least well off, but still categorized as “Rich.” Place these cards at the bottom of the column. Repeat this ranking process for the remaining three columns.
9. In order to verify the accuracy of these groupings, read aloud the name of the household placed in last position in the “Richest” column and the name of the household at the top of the “Moderately Rich” column. Ask the participants to compare the two and explain the differences between their well being status. Allow the participants to modify the order of the cards if necessary.
10. Continue this verification process for the remaining columns, always taking the last card from one column and comparing it to the first card from the next column. Once all the cards have been sorted, code each card to indicate in which category and in what order it was placed (i.e. R1, MR3, MP2, P1).



SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? How do poor households respond or cope with their unmet needs?
How do members of poor households usually behave?
- ? How have rich households achieved their status? How do members of rich households tend to behave?

TIPS

- Try to elicit grades of wealth (i.e. six goats = rich, two goats = moderately rich...).
- Conduct the exercise in a discrete location rather than in public.

ACTIVITY MATRIX

Have You...

- J** Reviewed program reports and constructed a checklist of activities?
- J** Prepared a matrix?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (cards, flip chart, markers, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To get a quick overview of the scope and nature of the organization's program activities and to assess the underlying reasons for activities undertaken with each community or village.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the number of different community groups with which the organization works.
- To identify the types of activities undertaken with each group.
- To determine the most and least common organizational activities.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Field staff

STEPS

1. Ask the participants to list all the different villages or communities with which the organization works. Write these on cards (color A).
2. Under each card, list the different groups within each village or community whose efforts are supported by the organization. Write each group on a card (color B). Code each group card with its corresponding village or community and place the group cards along the horizontal axis of the matrix on the floor or wall.
3. Now ask the participants to identify the different types of activities supported by the organization. Suggest others from a checklist if necessary. Write all of these activities on cards (color C).
4. Have the participants sort the activity cards into three categories: "Most Important (or Beneficial)," "Important" and "Less Important." Then ask them to prioritize the cards within each category. Write the rank numbers on the cards and place them in descending order of importance along the vertical axis of the matrix.
5. For each group listed, place an X in the boxes that correspond with the types of activities undertaken with each group.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? What are the activities most often undertaken? Why?
- ? What are the activities least often undertaken? Why?
- ? Which groups engage in more activities than the rest? Why?
- ? Which groups engage in the least number of activities? Why?

ACTIVITY MATRIX (CONT.)

- ? How does the organization decide which activities to support for each group?
- ? **What critical issues arise from this analysis of activities which affect the performance and effectiveness of the organization?**

TIPS

- Clarify the difference between group activities and individual activities, and limit your analysis to group activities.
- To complete this exercise in a reasonable amount of time, restrict the group types within a range that can be analyzed.
- If the results are not going to be recorded soon after the exercise is complete, transfer the data directly onto the flip chart.

Activities	Women's Group (village A)	Men's Group (village A)	Women's Group (village B)	Men's Group (village B)
#1 Maize Farming	X	X	X	X
#2 Goat Rearing		X		X
#3 Groundnut Oil Processing	X		X	
#4 Weaving	X	X	X	
#5 Reading Circles			X	
#6 Microcredit Programs	X		X	
#7 Garri Production		X		X
#8 Family Gardens	X	X	X	X

HISTORY OF SUPPORT

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Activity Matrix* exercise?
- J** Prepared a checklist of different types of support activities?
- J** Prepared matrices for each community group?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To assess whether the support provided by the intermediary organization addresses communities' fundamental problems and achieves the desired impact. This exercise can also provide information to be compared with the results of community-level exercises.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop a timeline showing the evolution of the different types of support (services, materials, training, etc.) provided by the intermediary organization.
- To build on the findings of the *Activity Matrix* exercise by providing concrete examples of what support specific groups have received from the organization.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Field staff

Types of Support	
Technical Training	Follow-Up Visits
Management Training	Awareness Raising Workshops
Leadership Training	Group Discussions (health, ag, etc.)
Literacy & Numeracy Classes	Support for Evaluations
Loans	Logistical Support (i.e. transportation)
Funding Grants	Contact Support (external linkages)
Feasibility Studies	Information Support
Needs Assessment & Planning	Materials/Supplies
Support to Monitor Activities	

STEPS (1-5)

1. Review the different program activities named in the *Activity Matrix*. Ask participants to name the different types, or categories, of support provided to target groups in undertaking these activities. Give examples if necessary to illustrate possible categories. Suggest other types of support if necessary.
2. Write each type of support on a card (color A). Place these cards along the vertical axis of a matrix.
3. Select a group that has received support for a long period of time. If possible, choose one that will participate in the assessment. Write the name of the village or group on top of the matrix and determine the year that the organization first started working with them.
4. On the horizontal axis, designate one column for each year that the organization has worked with this village or group. Write the years at the top of the columns.
5. Taking the first support category, ask the participants to identify all the specific activities relating to this type of support, and the years that they were undertaken (i.e. leadership training workshop in 1995, materials for a well in 1997). Write these examples on cards (color B) and place them in the appropriate matrix boxes. Repeat the same process with the other support categories until the matrix is complete.

HISTORY OF SUPPORT (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-5)

- ? What patterns appear in the history of support matrix?
- ? To what types of support has the organization devoted the most time and resources? Why?
- ? Which categories are less present or absent? Why?
- ? Why did one type of support start when it did?
- ? Why did some types of support happen only once and then stop?
- ? What support should the organization have emphasized more, in retrospect?

STEPS (6)

6. If time allows, repeat steps 3-6 for more groups. Compare the matrices and discuss the implications.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Step 6)

- ? What is similar in the history of support across the villages or groups? Why? What is different? Why?
- ? To what extent is the level and intensity of support based on an effective needs assessment of the groups involved? What other factors contribute to program decisions about support?
- ? **Keeping the organizational purpose and impact goals in mind, what changes, if any, are necessary to achieve better results at the community level? Why has the organization not yet made these changes?**

Women's Group (village A)				
Types of Support	1996	1997	1998	1999
Technical Training	Traditional Birth Attendant Training		Traditional Birth Attendant Training	
Logistical Support (i.e. transportation)		Bus Trip to Research Center		
Materials/Supplies	TBA Birthing Kits to Participants	Building Supplies for Pharmacy	TBA Birthing Kits to Participants	Supplies for Pharmacy
Contact Support (external linkages)		Link with Ag. Research Center		
Group Discussions (health, ag, etc.)	Meeting with Women Leaders	Started Mother's Discussion Groups	Mother's Discussion Groups	Mother's Discussion Groups

ACTIVITIES ONION

Have You...

- J** Prepared a flip chart with an onion diagram?
- J** Prepared enough small squares of paper for each participant to have at least 15?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, small cards, markers, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To assess the relevance of the organization's activities in relation to its purpose.

OBJECTIVES

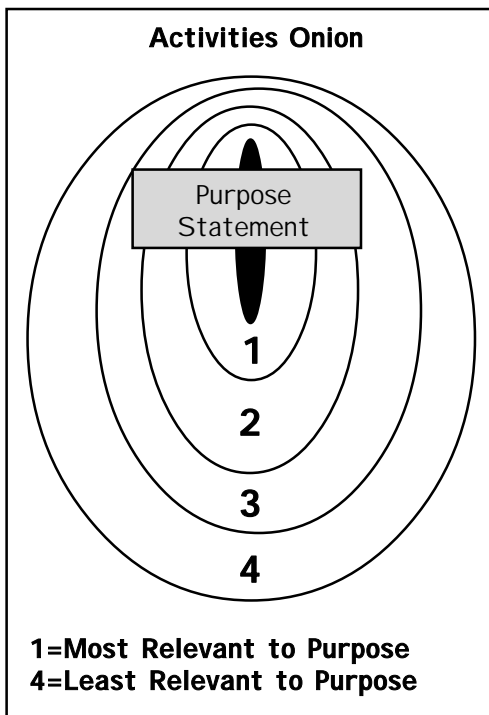
- To measure the relative contribution of each major program activity to achieving the goals of the organization.
- To identify which activities more directly lead to the desired impacts.
- To identify activities which are less relevant to the organization's mission and desired impact, yet take time and resources to carry out.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Field and program staff

STEPS

1. Ask the participants to list all the main activities of the organization and write them on cards. If you have already generated an activity list in a previous exercise, you may use this as a checklist.
2. Clarify the participants' understanding of each activity and assign each one a letter code (A,B,C...).
3. Present a large flip chart with a drawing of an onion cut in half. Explain that the center of the onion represents the core purpose of the organization, or the desired impact. Place a card with the purpose statement or desired impact in the center of the diagram.
4. Number the layers of the onion and explain that each layer signifies the relative connection between a program activity and the purpose or desired impact of the organization. Activities that have a strong, direct relationship would be found in a layer closer to the center than those that have a weaker relationship.
5. Give each participant small squares of paper (different colors for each participant if possible). Ask them to write the codes of the different activities on the pieces of paper.
6. Ask the participants to score each activity in relation to its role in achieving the organization's mission or desired impact (1 being closest to the core purpose). Tape all the coded papers in the corresponding layers of the onion.



ACTIVITIES ONION (CONT.)

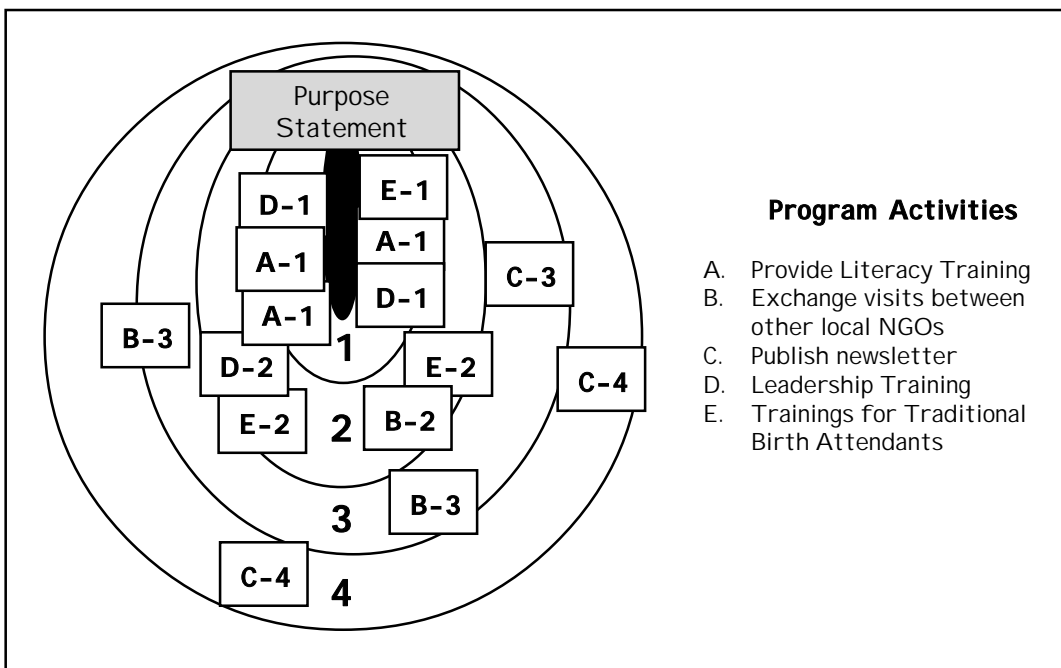
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? What program activities are closest to the organization's purpose?
- ? What activities are farthest from the organization's purpose?
- ? To what extent do the participants agree? For which activities is there a significant degree of disagreement?
- ? What criteria was used to place the activities in the diagram?
- ? Why does the organization support the activities found in layers farther away from the center? Is this an efficient use of resources and time?
- ? To what extent are the organizational activities well selected, in relation to the organization's purpose?
- ? **What critical issues arise relating to the selection and appropriateness of the organization's activities?**

Note: You can save time during the exercise by preparing packets of pre-coded cards to give to participants.

TIPS

- Because this exercise uses small pieces of paper, there is a strong chance that cards will be lost or mixed up when the diagram is folded and stored. To avoid losing data, transcribe the activity codes and scores directly onto the onion diagram at the end of the exercise.
- Make sure that the meanings of the codes and scores are recorded when documenting the results.



ACTIVITIES PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Have You...

- J** Completed the *Activities Onion* exercise?
- J** Prepared at least five grids for scoring?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, ballots, pencils)?

Elements of a Micro-Credit Program

Management Training

Leadership Training

Loan Disbursement

Local Savings Mobilization

Record Keeping

Encouraging Loan Repayment

Feasibility Studies

Monitoring

Impact Evaluation

RELEVANCE

To assess the organization's standards for effective performance and to identify performance issues that may require further inquiry.

OBJECTIVES

- To elicit and clarify the organization's criteria for assessing the performance of key activities.
- To enable the organization members to assess to what extent their main activities are performed effectively.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Field staff and managers

STEPS (1-5)

1. Using the *Activities Onion* as a guide, have the participants list all the *primary* program sectors (i.e. micro-credit, maternal/child health, agriculture, community organizing, etc.) in which the organization works. Write these on cards (color A).
2. Choose one of these sector cards and tape it to the top of a grid. Ask the participants to list the key elements or abilities necessary to work in this sector (i.e. technical knowledge, record keeping, leadership training, monitoring, mobilization of local resources, etc.). Write these on cards (color B) and tape them on the horizontal axis of the grid.
3. Decide on a scoring method (i.e. 1 to 5) and assign letter codes to each element (A,B,C...).
4. Hand out ballots and ask participants to score each element in terms of the organization's performance of each. Scores are written on the ballot next to the corresponding letters.
5. Collect the ballots and transfer the scores onto the grid. There should be one column for each participant and a column at the end for the totals and/or averages.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-5)

- ? To what extent are the activities in this sector performed effectively?
- ? Which elements have the highest performance scores? Which have the lowest? Discuss.
- ? What criteria did you use to score these elements?

ACTIVITIES PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

STEPS (6)

- Repeat steps 2-5 and the SSI questions for the other program sectors.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Which program sectors have the highest performance scores?
Which have the lowest? Why?
- ? Looking across all the sectors, what trends appear?
- ? What elements of program performance tend to be strong across all the sectors?
- ? What elements of program performance tend to be weak?
- ? **What critical issues need to be addressed in order to improve the overall performance of the organization?**

TIPS

- If there is confusion about the scoring process, ask the participants to give a score to only the first element on the list. Then discuss the criteria used before continuing to score the remaining elements.
- Collect all the ballots and mix them up before transcribing the scores onto the grid to guard participants' anonymity.
- Circle the low and high scores to highlight significant findings.

Program Sector Micro-Credit	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Participant #4	Averages
Management Training (A)	3	3	4	3	3.25
Leadership Training (B)	4	4	5	4	4.25
Loan Disbursement (C)	3	3	2	2	2.5
Local Savings Mobilization (D)	2	1	2	1	1.5
Record Keeping (E)	2	2	2	2	2
Encouraging Loan Repayment (F)	4	2	3	3	2.75
Feasibility Studies (G)	2	3	3	3	2.75
Monitoring (H)	3	2	3	3	2.75
Impact Evaluation (I)	2	2	3	2	2.25

PURPOSE-PROBLEMS-IMPACT-OBJECTIVES-ACTIVITIES

Have You...

- J Completed the *Activities Onion* exercise?
- J Prepared a matrix with the headings and key questions?
- J Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, markers, cards, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To determine the extent to which there is a logical consistency among the organization's purpose, desired impact, behavioral objectives and supporting activities. This exercise also helps participants to analyze their strategies for meeting goals and to identify critical gaps in the planning, monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

OBJECTIVES

- To clarify the organizational purpose, intended impacts, behavioral objectives and activities.
- To analyze the relationship and consistency among these elements.
- To assess the quality of the organization's planning, evaluation and monitoring systems.
- To verify that the fundamental problems being addressed by the organization and their intended impacts correspond with findings from exercises conducted at the community level.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Field staff and members most involved in planning and reporting

STEPS

1. Present the Purpose-Problems-Impact-Objectives-Activities Matrix to the participants and clarify the meaning of each concept. Explain the logical flow and relationship among the different columns.
2. As a group, answer the questions (writing responses on cards or directly onto the flip chart) and fill in the boxes of the matrix.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SSI Regarding Activities

- ? To what extent do you think the support activities are sufficient to bring about changes in behavior?
- ? What additional activities may be required to achieve these behavioral changes?
- ? What information does your organization collect to monitor its activities?
- ? What strategies has the organization developed to ensure that effective support activities are carried out?

SSI Regarding Changes in Behavior

- ? To what extent do you think the behavioral changes or adoption of new practices will bring about the desired effects or impact?

PURPOSE-PROBLEMS-IMPACT-OBJECTIVES-ACTIVITIES (CONT.)

- ? What other changes in practice or behavior may be necessary?
- ? What information does your organization collect to monitor progress made in changing behavior or practice?
- ? How is this information collected (tools and methods)? How often? Who is involved in this process?
- ? How is the collected information used in program management decisions?

SSI Regarding Impact

- ? To what extent does your organization collect information about the effects or impact of its program?
- ? How is this information collected (tools and methods)? How often? Who is involved in this process?
- ? How is this information used to make decisions about changes in program strategy?

SSI Regarding Fundamental Problems & Causes

- ? To what extent do you think your organization is helping to solve the fundamental problems faced by the primary target groups?
- ? To what extent do your program activities address the root causes of these fundamental problems?
- ? Which root causes does your organization NOT yet fully address? Why not?
- ? **What are the critical issues arising from this analysis that need to be addressed to improve the organization's effectiveness and performance?**

Purpose	Fundamental Problems	Desired Impacts	Behavioral Objectives	Support Activities
What is the organization's purpose?	What are the fundamental problems to address?	What measurable impact will the program achieve?	What measurable changes in behavior are required?	How will the organization bring about these changes?
Poverty alleviation through economic, political and social empowerment of women	Lack of access to credit Poor level of women's education Large family size Ill-health Lack of women's groups Lack of involvement in decision-making	Increased income earned & controlled by women Increased % of girls attending school Increased rate of literacy for women Women's control over their fertility Greater number of women's groups	Women will increase the volume & type of income generating activities Women will increase membership & involvement in groups Women will choose to practice some form of family planning	Awareness raising Technical training Leadership training Literacy classes Exchange visits Material & financial support (grants/loans) Logistical support

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION & PRIORITIZATION

Have You...

- J** Determined the sectors to be covered & prepared cards for each?
- J** Prepared a checklist of problems for each sector?
- J** Prepared a matrix?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To determine whether program activities are addressing the priority problems of the different target groups and the extent to which these problems are improving.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify priority problems in the village or program area.
- To examine the changes that have occurred in the recent past.
- To assess the level of seriousness of each problem from the points of view of community members.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants should represent the general “target groups” of the development program and be familiar with local issues.

Sectors & Problems	
Agriculture & Natural Resources	
Soil Infertility	Lack of Grain Storage
Erosion	Lack of Water
Lack of Fodder	Pest Control
Livestock Disease	
Health	
Infant/Child Malnutrition	Too many pregnancies
Clinic too far away/expensive	Waterborne diseases
Income	
Market is too far away	Lack of start-up funds
Lack of transportation	Lack of accounting skills

STEPS

1. Present a list of the different program sectors (i.e. Agriculture, Health, Education, etc.) in which the organization works. Starting at the top of the list, ask participants to name the major problems that fall under this sector. Help participants understand the difference between fundamental problems and the signs/symptoms of these problems. For example, low crop yields may be a sign of poor soil fertility. Suggest examples from a checklist to guide the discussion and to ensure that the list is as complete and accurate as possible. Write each response on a card.
2. If necessary, ask probing questions to confirm that the problems listed are seen by the community members as real and significant. Repeat the process for each program sector. If possible, use different colored cards for each sector.
3. Use the problem list from the first sector to illustrate the concept of “serious.” Give practical examples of a more trivial problem as compared with a serious problem. Elicit criteria for estimating levels of “seriousness” (i.e. number of people affected, severity of consequences, frequency).
4. Referring to these criteria, ask the participants to sort the problem cards in each sector into three categories: “Most Serious” “Serious,” and “Less Serious.” Discuss as a group the criteria to be used to sort these problem cards. Write codes (i.e. MS, S and LS) *on the back* of each to indicate its level of seriousness.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION & PRIORITIZATION (CONT.)

- Take all the cards from the first sector and shuffle them. Explain the three categories of change: “Getting WORSE,” “Staying the SAME” and “Getting BETTER.” Decide together on the time period in which you will measure change (i.e. 5 years). Ask participants to think about whether during this time period each problem has gotten WORSE, stayed the SAME or gotten BETTER. Sort the cards into these three groups and write codes on the cards corresponding with the appropriate category.
- On the vertical axis of a matrix, label three rows: “Getting WORSE,” “Staying the SAME” and “Getting BETTER.” On the horizontal axis, designate three columns: “MOST SERIOUS,” “SERIOUS” and “LESS SERIOUS.” Take the cards from the first sector and place them in the appropriate boxes on the matrix. Make matrices for each sector.
- Repeat this process for the remaining sectors.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? What are the reasons that certain problems are getting worse?
- ? What are the reasons that some problems are improving?
- ? For the problems that are improving, how have the organization’s activities contributed to this progress?
- ? What other factors have caused these problems to improve?
- ? Are the most serious problems getting better or worse?
- ? **What critical issues arise concerning the relevance and effectiveness of the organization’s program activities?**

TIPS

- There may be a tendency for participants to list hoped for solutions instead of real problems. For example, “lack of fertilizer” is an implicit solution to the real problem of declining soil fertility. Ask probing questions to get beyond the signs and possible solutions in order to identify the root of the issue.
- To avoid raising false expectations, clarify the objectives and purpose of the exercise at the beginning.

Agriculture	MOST SERIOUS	SERIOUS	LESS SERIOUS
Getting WORSE	Erosion Lack of Water	Lack of Fodder	
Staying the SAME			Pest Control
Getting BETTER	Soil Infertility	Livestock Disease	Lack of Grain Storage

PROBLEM TREE ANALYSIS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Problem Identification & Prioritization* exercise?
- J** Prepared a Problem Tree diagram?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To determine to what extent the organization's program activities address the root causes of the problems it seeks to alleviate and to verify that these targeted problems are fundamental to achieving the desired impact.

OBJECTIVES

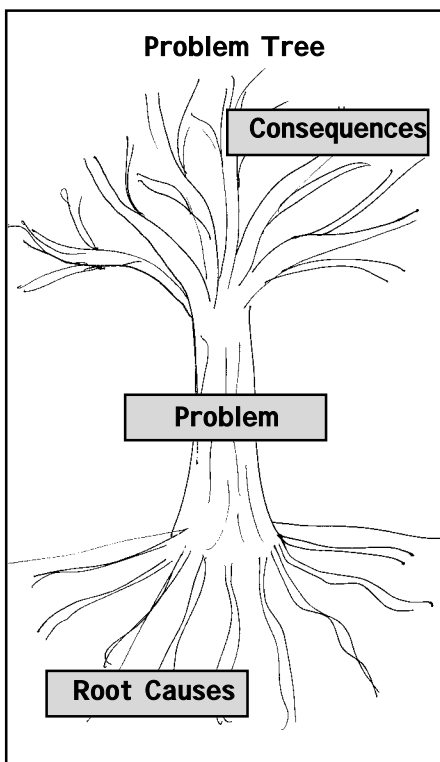
- To analyze the root causes of the community issues addressed by the organization.
- To identify the primary consequences of these problems.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants should represent the intermediary organization's primary "target groups." If possible, choose the same participants from the *Problem Identification & Prioritization* exercise.

STEPS

1. Present and explain the problem tree to the participants. Point out the different parts of the tree and what each represents:
 - Roots = the Root causes of the problem
 - Trunk = the Problem
 - Branches = the Consequences of the problem
2. Have a participant draw a tree with branches and roots. From the results of the *Problem Identification & Prioritization* exercise, ask the participants to choose a problem and write it on a card (color A). Tape the card to the trunk of the Problem Tree.
3. Ask the participants to list the root causes of this problem. Write each on a card (color B) and tape them to the roots of the Problem Tree.
4. Now ask the participants to name the consequences of the problem. Write these responses on cards (color C) and tape them to the branches of the Problem Tree.
5. Have the participants briefly discuss to what extent the organization's activities address the root causes of the problem. Clarify the difference between the root causes of the problem and the consequences.
6. Repeat the process with other problems. Once the participants understand the process, they can split up into pairs or small groups to work on different problem trees.



PROBLEM TREE ANALYSIS (CONT.)

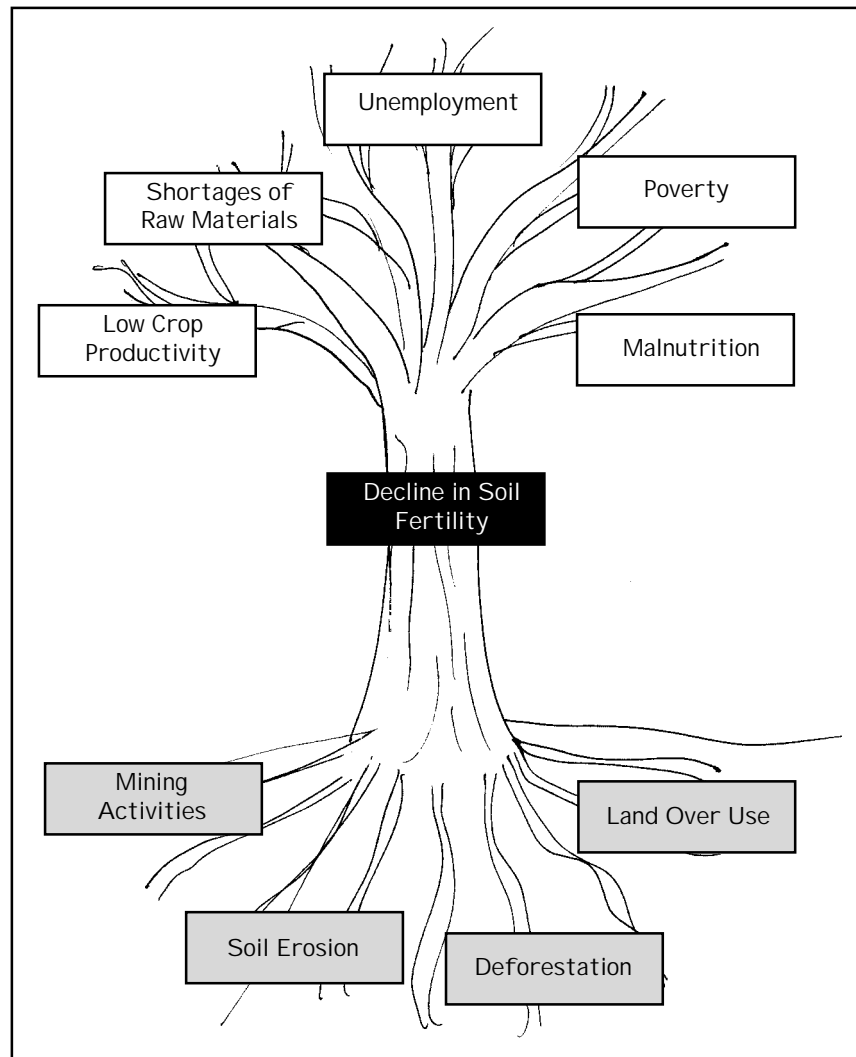
7. Display the Problem Trees and ask the participants to take a “walk through the forest.” Group members can briefly present their trees to one another.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? To what extent are the program activities addressing the root causes of the problems?
- ? Is the organization addressing the root causes in some sectors, but not in others? Why this difference?
- ? Does the organization distinguish between root causes of the problems it seeks to address and their consequences (or signs) in its planning and monitoring process?
- ? Do the indicators used by the organization to monitor progress adequately measure the changes in root causes of problems?
- ? **What are the critical issues that arise for the organization concerning the relevance and effectiveness of its activities?**

TIPS

- Make sure that each problem to be analyzed is clearly understood.
- If time is an issue, construct Problem Trees for only the Most Serious problems, or prepare blank tree diagrams in advance.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Have You...

- J** Reviewed the available documents on the organization's structure (charts, constitution, etc.)?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (cards, flip chart, markers, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To identify the power structure and key decision makers within the organization, as well as critical issues to be addressed.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the number and social characteristics of the people who work in the organization.
- To determine the leadership, supervision and accountability positions and mechanisms within the organization.
- To briefly examine gender dynamics within the structure of the organization.
- To develop an “organigram” outlining the organization’s structure.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Members from all levels of the organization

STEPS (1-5)

1. Ask the participants to make a list of all the people who work in the organization. Write each name on a large card (color A), with each person’s gender, approximate age and how long they have worked with the organization.
2. On the other side of each card, write the person’s:
 - position or job title
 - the date that the position was created
 - a brief description of roles and responsibilities
 - the number of years the person has held the position
3. Sort the cards in order of seniority (number of years each person has worked with the organization). Write the rank numbers on the cards.
4. Now ask the participants to sort the cards in order of influence and decision-making power. Write these rank numbers in another color on the cards.
5. While maintaining the second order, split the cards into two columns, male and female.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-5)

- ? What does this exercise reveal about the overall gender balance within your organization.
- ? To what extent do staff gender dynamics impact the organization’s performance and effectiveness?

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (CONT.)

- ? To what extent is the gender balance appropriate in terms of your organization's values and mission?
- ? To what extent is the influence or decision-making power more closely related to seniority and experience as compared to function and responsibility?

STEPS (6-8)

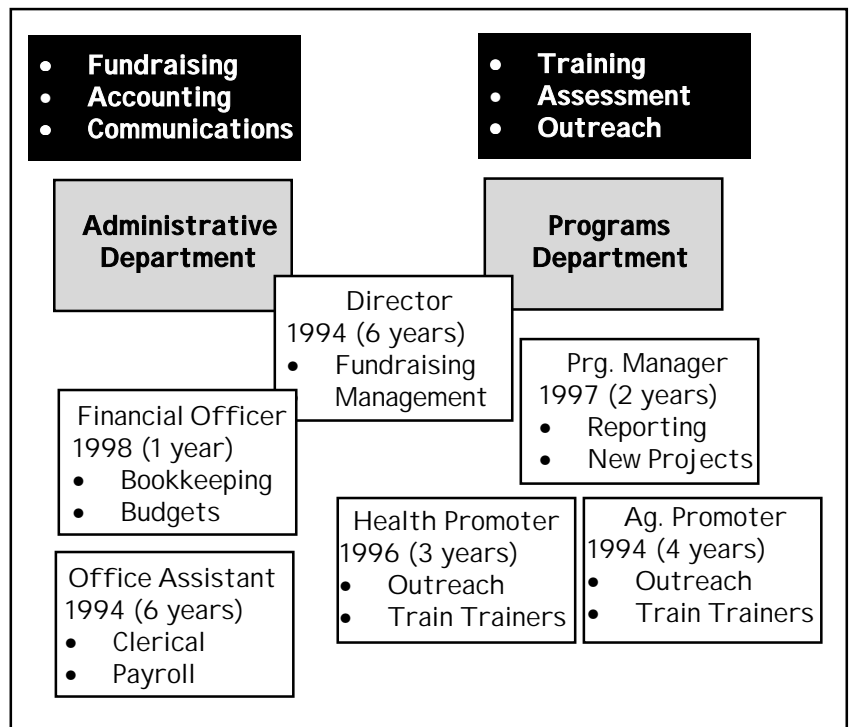
6. Ask the participants to list the various departments or groups that form the organization. Write each group on a card (color B) and tape the cards to a flip chart.
7. Turn the cards from the first part of the exercise over to reveal the job titles. Ask participants to tape each card under the appropriate department. Try to arrange the cards to reflect the leadership structure of the organization.
8. Identify as a group the key functions of each group and write these on cards (color C). Tape these next to each department cluster.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 6-8)

- ? To whom do the different people within each department report?
- ? How are people in each department supervised and held accountable for fulfilling their duties?
- ? How do the departments interact and work with one another?
- ? How are people recruited and selected to fill the various positions?
- ? **What critical issues arise from this analysis of the organizational structure?**

TIPS

- You can facilitate this exercise on the floor to rapidly rank and categorize the cards.
- Be sensitive to participants' body language and feelings during the rankings, particularly when participants rank themselves. Try to create an informal and humorous atmosphere.
- Make sure that all of the information is recorded on the cards before continuing to the next step.

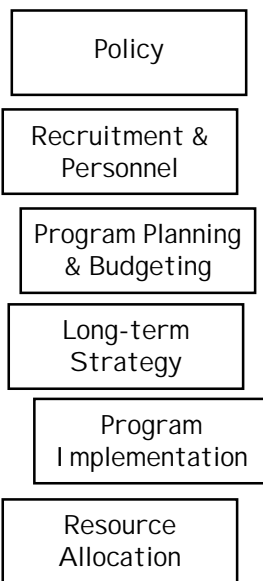


DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS

Have You...

- J** Completed the *Organizational Structure* exercise?
- J** Prepared cards of decision categories and types of decision-making processes?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

Decision Categories



RELEVANCE

The potential for organizational learning and change is heavily dependent on the attitude and openness of its decision-makers. It is important to assess the decision-making process and to compare the actual process to the official system, if any, outlined in the constitution, bylaws and/or organizational “organigram.”

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the key decision-makers at different levels and to determine what influence they have.
- To identify the types of decisions made within the organization.
- To assess the types of decision-making processes employed.
- To determine the degree of staff and program participant involvement in the decision-making process.

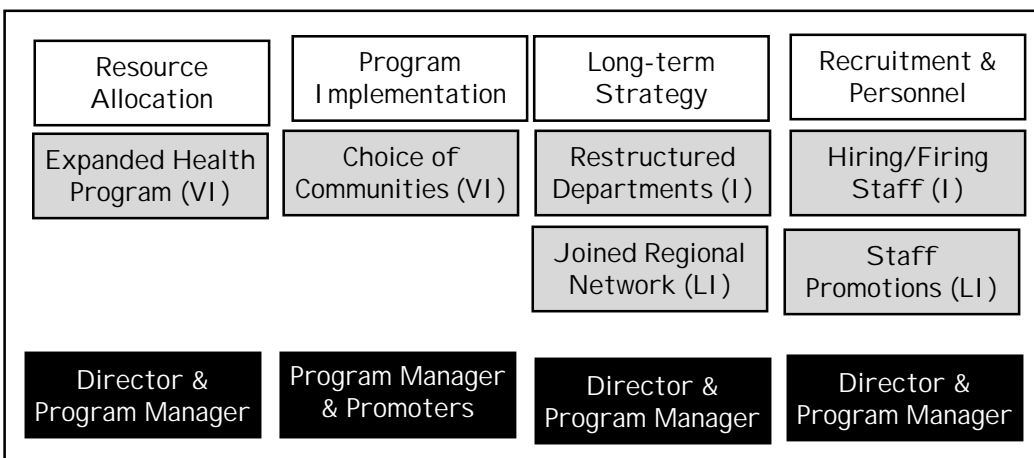
SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Representatives from different departments and levels of the organization

STEPS (1-5)

1. Review the organigram developed earlier and identify as a group the major decisions made by each department in the recent past (i.e. five years). Write each decision on a separate card (color A).
2. Sort the decision cards into three categories: “Very Important,” “Important” and “Less Important.” Code the cards accordingly.
3. Introduce and explain the different broad categories of decisions (see checklist). Each category should be written on a card (color B). Give examples to enhance the participants understanding and ask them to add other categories of decisions if they wish.

4. Tape the Decision Category cards to the top of a flip chart. Underneath each card, group the Major Decision cards into their corresponding categories. Code the cards by their categories.



DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS (CONT.)

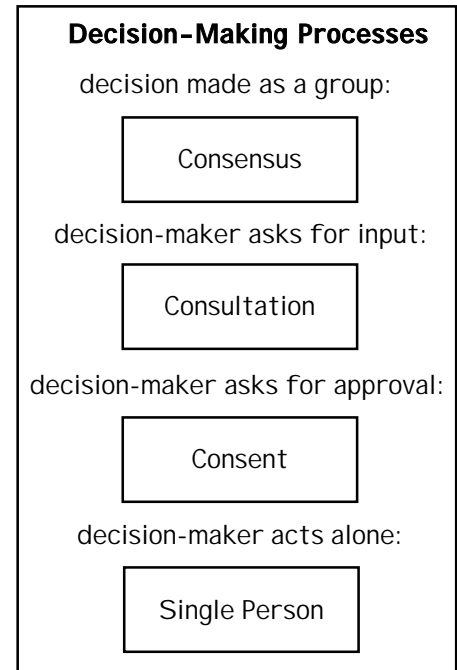
- Under each category, identify the primary people who were involved in making those decisions and write their names or position titles on cards to be placed at the bottom of each column.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-5)

- ? Who has the most input into decision-making?
- ? How does this pattern of decision-making affect the performance and effectiveness of the organization?
- ? How could this pattern of decision-making be improved?

STEPS (6-7)

- From each category, take some of the most important decisions and place them on the vertical axis of a matrix. Take the first decision on the list and ask participants to explain how the organization made this decision.
- Write the four types of decision making processes along the horizontal axis of the matrix. Fill in the matrix by matching up each decision with the corresponding type of decision making process used. Invent new categories if some decisions do not fit in one of the four types. Code each decision card with its corresponding process.



SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 6-7)

- ? What category of decision-making is the most common ?
- ? How does this pattern of decision-making affect the organization's performance and effectiveness?
- ? How could this pattern of decision-making be improved?
- ? **What critical issues arise that should be addressed ?**

	Consensus	Consultation	Consent	Single Person
Expanded Health Program (VI)		X		
Choice of Communities (VI)	X			
Restructured Departments (I)		X		
Hiring/Firing Staff (I)				X
Joined Regional Network (LI)		X		
Staff Promotions (LI)		X		

TIPS

- Avoid leading questions when dealing with this sensitive issue.

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

Have You...

- J** Completed the *Organizational Structure & Decision-Making Analysis* exercises?
- J** Consulted informally with leaders about this exercise?
- J** Prepared a grid for scoring?
- J** Prepared a checklist?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (cards, markers, tape, ballots, flip chart)?

Characteristics of an Effective Leader

Supportive

Motivated to serve

Able to accept feedback

Asks for input on decisions

Willing to compromise

Explains reasons behind decisions

Gives constructive criticism

Gives Positive feedback

Has long-range vision

Listens

RELEVANCE

The effectiveness of any organization is greatly determined by the quality of its leadership. An evaluation of the leadership is essential to any self-assessment process.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the characteristics of effective leaders.
- To enable members of the organization to assess their leaders based on the characteristics they have defined.
- To enable the leaders to learn about the perception of the organization's members about their strengths and weaknesses.
- To assess how the characteristics of the leaders affect the functions and performance of the organization.
- To determine what aspects of leadership could be improved to strengthen the overall performance and viability of the organization.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Representatives from all levels of the organization

STEPS

1. Lead a discussion to arrive at a common understanding of the term "leadership."
2. Review and agree on who the leaders of the organization are. Tape cards (color A) with their names or position titles along the horizontal axis of a grid. Under each card make one column for every participant and one column for totals and/or averages.
3. Brainstorm as a group the characteristics of an effective leader and write these qualities on cards (color B, one idea per card). Suggest others from a checklist if necessary.
4. Sort these characteristics by level of importance: "Very Important," "Important" and "Less Important." Tape them on the vertical axis of the grid in descending order. Ask participants to explain why some characteristics are more important than others.
5. Give each characteristic a letter code (A,B,C...) and decide as a group on a scoring system (i.e. a scale of 1 to 5). Give participants ballot sheets and ask them to score the first leader on the list for each characteristic, using the coding system on the ballots. Collect all the ballots and write the scores in the columns under the first leader's name. Tabulate the scores and write the totals and/or averages in the last column. Repeat the process for each leader.

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? To what extent is there consensus among participants about the scores?
- ? For what characteristics of effective leadership do the scores diverge the most? For each of these characteristics, what were the criteria used to decide on the scores?
- ? What can you deduce from the scores in general?
- ? In what areas do all the leaders score high? Score low?
- ? **What are the critical issues that emerge from this analysis of the organization's leadership?**
- ? **What are the potential areas of improvement that would enable the leadership to better serve the organization?**

TIPS

- Leaders should be present when defining characteristics, but may wish to leave during the scoring.
- This can be a highly sensitive exercise and should be conducted near the end of the process, after trust and rapport have hopefully been established between the facilitators and the participants.
- Always start with positive remarks in giving feedback and be very sensitive in the use of negative remarks, especially when the assessment affects individuals.

	Executive Director					Program Manager					Fundraising Director					
Asks for input on decisions	3	3	3	4	3.25	2	2	1	2	1.75	5	4	4	5	4.5	3.3
Supportive	4	4	5	5	4.5	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3.8
Delegates Responsibility	2	2	3	2	2.25	5	4	5	5	4.75	2	3	3	3	2.75	3.3
Has long-range vision	5	5	5	5	5	2	1	2	3	2	4	4	3	4	3.75	3.6
Willing to compromise	5	4	4	4	4.25	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	3.75	3.7
Able to accept feedback	4	5	4	4	4.25	3	3	2	3	2.75	3	3	3	3	3	3.3
Explains reasons behind decisions	4	4	3	4	3.75	5	4	5	4	4.5	3	4	2	4	3.25	3.8
Gives Positive feedback	4	5	5	4	4.5	3	3	3	4	3.25	3	3	3	3	3	3.6
Listens	4	5	5	4	4.5	3	2	3	3	2.75	4	4	3	4	3.75	3.7
Gives constructive criticism	4	5	4	5	4.5	4	5	5	5	4.75	4	4	4	4	4	4.4

MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Have You...

- J** Completed the *Purpose-Impact-Objectives-Activities Matrix*?
- J** Prepared a checklist ?
- J** Prepared a grid for scoring?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape, ballots, pencils)?

Elements of an Effective Management Strategy

Clear strategy for working with groups

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Disengagement Strategy

Ongoing Leadership Training

Efficient & transparent accounting systems

Clear definition of problem & scope

Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

Fair policies for resource allocation

Strategies for targeting those with most need

RELEVANCE

To explore participants' perceptions of effective management and to assess the organization's management efficiency (i.e. effective use of staff time, funding and materials).

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the main elements of an effective management strategy as it relates to the organization's purpose.
- To assess organizational performance in these areas.
- To identify critical issues related to improving efficiency and performance.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Members responsible for program management

STEPS

1. Identify again the core purpose of the organization [refer to the *Purpose-Impact-Objectives-Activities Matrix* (pg. 124)].
2. Decide whether to take a wide or narrow focus for the management assessment. For a wide focus, (i.e. poverty alleviation) brainstorm the major elements of an effective management strategy that relates to the core purpose of the organization. For a narrower focus (i.e. microcredit or food security) brainstorm the major elements of an effective management strategy that will generate the specific outcome desired. In either case, suggest additional elements from a checklist prepared in advance, if necessary. Write all the elements on cards and tape them to the vertical axis of a grid.
3. On the horizontal axis, make one column for each participant and leave one column at the end for totals and/or averages.
4. Decide on a scoring system (i.e. 1 to 5) and discuss what each score signifies. Write this scale on the flip chart for future reference. Assign each element a letter code (A,B,C...) and ask participants to score their organization's performance with regard to each element, writing their scores next to the corresponding letter on their ballots.
5. Once all the ballots are completed, collect them and transfer the scores to the flip chart.

MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Narrow Focus

An SSI can be conducted on a narrow focus, for example looking at management of micro-credit without regard to the larger poverty issue. This would entail investigating issues such as:

- ? Did you formally assess the opportunities or potential activities for loan provision?
- ? What is your management strategy regarding group formation? Do you provide leadership training?
- ? What is the policy for deciding how to distribute loans and for what amount?
- ? What is the loan repayment strategy? What is the rate of repayment?
- ? How efficient and transparent are your bookkeeping/accountability systems?

The SSI questions vary according to the core activity of the organization. Use these questions as examples only.

Broader Focus

An SSI can also be conducted with a broader focus, taking into consideration, for example, the larger organizational mission of poverty alleviation.

- ? What is the organization's concept of poverty? What criteria does the organization use to assess poverty? (local criteria generated by the target groups or conventional criteria?)
- ? How does the organization target its assistance to people? What strategies does the organization employ to ensure that its assistance reaches those with the most need?
- ? Has the organization conducted a poverty assessment in the villages or areas where it operates? If so, what tools and methods were used?
- ? What is the organization's analysis of the root causes of poverty in the areas where it works?
- ? Of all the root causes identified, which are the primary ones addressed by the organization?
- ? What tools and methods does the organization use to assess the impact of its activities?

Effective Management	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Averages
Comprehensive (A) Needs Assessment	4	4	5	4.7
Strategy for (B) working with groups	4	3	4	3.7
Disengagement Strategy (C)	1	2	2	1.7
Ongoing Leadership Training (D)	3	3	3	3
Fair policies for (E) resource allocation	3	4	3	3.3
Strategies for targeting those with most need (F)	2	3	3	2.7
Monitoring & (G) Evaluation Systems	4	3	4	3.7
Clear definition of problem (H)	3	3	3	3
Efficient & (I) transparent accounting systems	2	2	3	2.3

TIPS

- For maximum benefit, repeat this exercise for each of the main program sectors undertaken by the organization.

INFORMATION FLOW ANALYSIS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Decision-Making Analysis & Organizational Structure* exercises?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

RELEVANCE

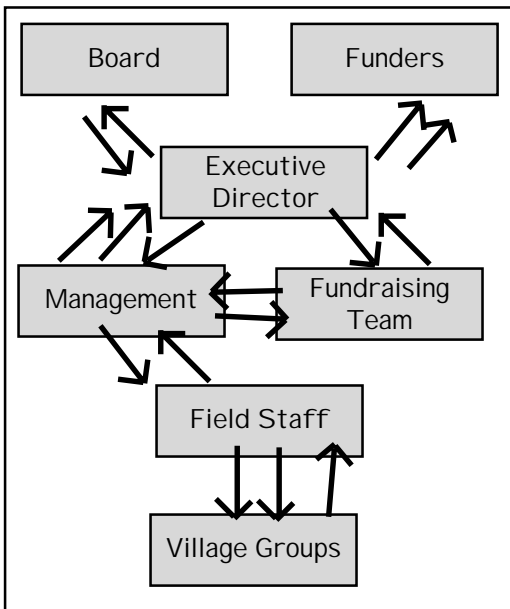
To assess whether the organization's communication systems work effectively, contributing to quality management and timely, informed decision-making.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the effectiveness of internal communication systems.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Representatives from different levels (or departments) of the organization



STEPS

1. Referring to the organigram created during the *Organizational Structure* exercise (pg. 130), ask participants to make a diagram that includes all levels of the organization and its key stakeholders (i.e. community groups and donors).
2. Ask participants to indicate the main information exchanges among the different sections of the organization, using different numbers or sizes of arrows to show direction and frequency of communication.
3. Choose one of the areas with significant communication flow (i.e. from the community groups to the organization). Ask participants to list **WHAT** types of information are received by one section from the other. Write these responses on cards (color A).
4. Then, ask participants to name **WHO** first receives this information. Write these responses on cards (color B).
5. Have the participants describe **HOW** this information is communicated to the primary receiver (i.e. written, oral, through meetings or interviews). Write these on cards (color C).
6. Ask participants to explain how this information is **STORED** and **MANAGED** by the primary receiver. Write these responses on cards (color D).
7. Finally, on cards (color E) write down how the information is **USED** (especially for decision-making and management).
8. Tape the cards to the matrix to visually present this analysis of how information flows from one structure to another. Identify positive features and problems in this system.

INFORMATION FLOW ANALYSIS (CONT.)

9. Repeat steps 3-8, but reverse the direction of information (i.e. now from the organization to the primary target group). Construct a second matrix to capture this information.
10. Now repeat the process for other major information exchanges on the diagram. If time is limited, select those exchanges identified as the most important by the participants. These could include:
 - Between funders and the director
 - Between field staff and managers
 - Between administrative staff and field staff

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? How balanced is the information flow within the organization? What tendencies appear in the overall pattern? (i.e. upward flow, downward flow?)
- ? To what extent are decision-makers obtaining high quality and timely information?
- ? How well is information used, stored and managed by the different departments of the organization?
- ? What are the bottlenecks or problem areas of the communication system?
- ? What changes could improve the effectiveness of the organization's communication system?
- ? **What are the critical issues arising from this analysis of the organization's information system?**

Communication Flow: From Field Staff to Program Office				
WHAT information is shared?	WHO receives it first?	HOW is it communicated?	How is it STORED?	How is it USED?
Progress Reports	Office Secretary	Written & Mailed	Filed in Office	Annual Reports
Training Schedules	Program Manager	Weekly Meetings	On chalkboard	Scheduling
Budgets	Executive Director	Written & Mailed	Filed in Office	Planning/Grants

STAFF TRAINING HISTORY & ANALYSIS

Have You...

- J** Prepared the training matrix & the list of changes/results?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To provide a framework for the organization members to reflect on their human resources development policy. This includes evaluating the relevance and impact of training on organizational learning and performance.

OBJECTIVES

- To create a list of staff who have received training and the types of training received over time.
- To determine the frequency of training given to staff.
- To assess to what extent the organization has procedures for assessing the training needs of its staff.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Training/human resources development officer (if any), leadership of the organization and other staff members

Types of Training	No. of Staff	Departments
Leadership (#1)	3	Management
Organizational Assessment (#2)	8	All Staff
Monitoring & Evaluation (#3)	5	Management & Field Staff
Gender Sensitivity (#4)	8	All Staff
Accounting Systems (#5)	2	Finance
Fundraising & Grants (#6)	2	Finance

STEPS (1-3)

1. Brainstorm all the types of training that staff members receive from the organization. Write these on cards (color A).
2. Relating the training to the purpose of the organization, ask the participants to rank the types of training in order of importance. Write the rank numbers on the cards and place the cards on the vertical axis of a matrix in descending order of importance.
3. On the horizontal axis of the matrix, designate a column for the Number of Staff Trained and one for their type of position. Fill in the matrix by writing, for each type of training, the number of staff trained each year and the department(s) of the staff trained.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-3)

- ? Are the trainings meant to enhance the capacity of staff? Are they used to reward staff?
- ? How does the organization assess staff training needs?

STEPS (4-6)

4. Review the history of staff training. Ask the participants to list the main changes in the organization's strategy, policies, systems or procedures that have resulted from each type of training. Write these on cards (color B).

STAFF TRAINING HISTORY & ANALYSIS (CONT.)

5. Have the participants rank these changes in order of importance, according to which contributed most to improving organizational performance or viability. Write the rank number on each card and place them in order of importance along the vertical axis of a second matrix.
6. Tape the types of training cards along the horizontal axis and fill in the matrix by matching up each organizational change with the training(s) that led to it.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 4-6)

- ? Which of the trainings had the most significant impact on the organization? The least significant? Explain.
- ? What happened after certain trainings that led to changes in the way the organization operated?

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the human resource development strategy?
- ? What has prevented the organization from overcoming some of the identified weaknesses in this area?
- ? **What critical issues arise that should be addressed in order to improve performance and increase viability?**

TIPS

- To avoid losing data generated from the first part of this exercise, it may be better to make a second set of training cards.

	Leadership (#1)	Organizational Assessment (#2)	Monitoring & Evaluation (#3)	Gender Sensitivity (#4)	Accounting Systems (#5)	Fundraising & Grants (#6)
Restructuring		X				
New Fundraising Strategy						X
Standardized Reporting System			X		X	X
Hired Female Ag. Trainer		X		X		
Redesigned Manager Role	X	X				
New Staff Evaluations			X	X		

RELATIONSHIPS ASSESSMENT

Have You...

- J Prepared a matrix?
- J Prepared a checklist of relationship categories?
- J Gathered the necessary materials (cards, flip chart, tape, markers)?

Relationship Categories

Community organizations

Supporters (in kind donations, time...)

Donors (grant funding only)

Bank/Loan Institutions

Technical Training Support

Local Government

Collaboration in the field

Information Exchange

Networking (peer organizations)

Joint Training/ Workshops

Capacity Building Support

Competition/Rivalry

RELEVANCE

This exercise helps participants identify ways to improve their working relationships with other organizations and groups.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the number and different types of outside agencies with which the organization interacts.
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of each relationship.
- To understand how the pattern of relationships has evolved over time.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Members involved in maintaining relationships with outside groups.

STEPS (1-4)

1. Ask participants to identify all the organizations or groups with whom they have had significant working relationships (past and present). Write each on a card (color A).
2. Have the participants rank these relationships in order of importance (in relation to the organization's performance and viability). Write the rank numbers on the cards and place these cards in descending order of importance along the vertical axis of a matrix.
3. Looking at the cards, ask the participants to identify the different types of relationships represented and write these on cards (color B). Suggest other types of relationships from the checklist if necessary. Place these cards along the horizontal axis of the matrix.
4. After clarifying the meaning of each type of relationship, fill out the matrix, placing an X in each box that matches the organization with the relevant type of relationship.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-4)

- ? What types of relationships does the organization engage in the most? The least? Why?
- ? What types of relationships are rated most important? Less important? Why?

STEPS (5-6)

5. Decide on a scoring system (see box) and score, as a group or individually, the quality of the current relationship with each organization. Write the score to the right of each X.

RELATIONSHIPS ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

6. Now score each relationship as it existed in the recent past. Write these scores to the left of each X in the matrix, using another color.

5 = **Excellent** almost no improvement required
 4 = **Very Satisfactory** only a little room for improvement
 3 = **Satisfactory** some room for significant improvement
 2 = **Unsatisfactory** much room for improvement
 1 = **Poor**, significant improvement required

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 5-6)

- ? Which relationships have improved over time?
- ? What criteria did you use to judge that the relationship has improved? Give examples.
- ? Explain what factors caused these relationships to improve (how and why?).
- ? Did the primary initiative for improving these relationships come from your organization or the other?
- ? Identify the relationships that have deteriorated or ended. Give examples of how these have declined.
- ? What underlying factors caused these relationships to worsen? Who is primarily responsible? Explain.
- ? **What are the critical issues concerning the organization's ability to relate to other organizations that need to be addressed in order to improve its performance and viability?**

TIPS

- This is a good exercise to conduct early in the self-assessment.
- If you see that the participants are naming a lot of organizations with whom they work (more than 15 or 20), it may be necessary to limit the scope in order to have enough time to finish the exercise.
- This is one of the few exercises in this guide that does not use the five stages of organizational development for scoring. A traditional assessment scale is more effective in this case.

	Donors (grant funding only)	Community organizations	Technical Training Support	Networking (peer organizations)	Competition/Rivalry
Organization #1	3 X 5				
Organization #2		3 X 4			
Organization #3				4 X 3	
Organization #4			3 X 3		
Organization #5					3 X 1
Organization #6		2 X 3			

Scores to left=3 years ago, Scores to right=present

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Relationships Assessment & History of Support* exercises?
- J** Prepared a timeline diagram?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

Checklist of Common Key Events

First Contact with Organization

Initial Meeting with Leaders

Establishment of Partnerships & Collaborative Agreements

Follow-up Visits

Successes & Positive Change

Problems & Misunderstandings

RELEVANCE

To determine whether the organization's relationships with community groups are consistent with its organizational values and mission.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the nature and quality of the organization's relationships with community groups.
- To determine to what extent the communities understand the organization's purpose, strategy and goals.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The first steps (1-3) should be conducted with community members, while the follow-up steps (4-5) should be done with members of the intermediary organization.

STEPS (1-3)

1. Ask the participants to list all the key events in the history of the community's relationship with the intermediary organization.
2. Write these events and the year each occurred on cards (color A). Ask probing questions to get a full list of events.
3. Have the participants sort the cards into positive, neutral and negative events. Tape the positive events above the timeline, the neutral events along the timeline and the negative events below the timeline.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-3)

- ? At the beginning, what did the organization tell you about their purpose and objectives? What is your understanding now about what the organization is trying to achieve and why it does this work?
- ? In establishing a collaborative relationship between your community (or group) and the organization, how were decisions about program activities reached?
- ? Historically, how would you judge the communication flow between your community (or group) and the organization?
- ? Looking at the timeline, what factors contributed to any problems, setbacks or misunderstandings? What factors helped to build trust and positive interactions?
- ? What specific changes in the organization's approach could improve the effectiveness of your collaboration?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS (CONT.)

ANALYSIS & FOLLOW-UP STEPS (4-5)

4. With members of the organization's staff, review the results from the first part of this exercise and other related community level exercises. Identify information that describes the nature and quality of the relationships with communities. Write each observation on a card.
5. Using this data, identify the healthy and strong aspects of these relationships with the organization's target groups and the areas that require improvement.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

? **From this analysis, what are the critical issues to address in order to improve the relationship between the organization and the community groups?**

TIPS

- This exercise can touch upon sensitive issues and should therefore be conducted towards the end of the process.
- To avoid bias, be careful in the choice of facilitators conducting the community level portion of this exercise. Include only those organization members who have no direct responsibility for working in the selected communities.
- Assure the participants that their input is confidential and explain the reasons behind the questions being asked.
- During fieldwork, observe the interactions between the organization staff and the community members.
- Code each event card with the year and whether it was categorized as positive, neutral or negative.

+	Village Leader Approached Promoter	Regular Staff Visits with Community Leaders	Established official Village Association	Gender Training for Association Members	Women's Group Formed & Elected Officers
	Agreed on Project Terms & Focus in Community		Program Evaluation with Community Members	Established Literacy Center & Regular Classes	
-		Conflict with neighboring village over land	Misunderstanding about Family Planning Services		
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999

DONOR ASSESSMENT

Have You...

- J Completed the *Relationships Assessment* exercise?
- J Prepared a grid for scoring donor agencies?
- J Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

Characteristics of an Ideal Donor

Provides substantial amount of funding

Long-term funding cycles

Considers more than one time grants

Flexible in use of funds

Willing to cover some overhead

Willing to work as a partner

Reasonable reporting requirements

Invests in capacity building

Provides other types of support

RELEVANCE

This exercise helps participants to assess the organization's ability to raise funds from external sources and to identify potential areas of improvement in their fundraising strategy.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the various donor agencies supporting the organization (past and present).
- To determine the main criteria of an ideal donor agency.
- To assess each of the organization's donor agencies according to this criteria.
- To identify ways to improve relationships with existing donors.
- To identify what types of new donors are most likely to enhance the organization's performance and viability.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Staff who are knowledgeable about and/or responsible for fundraising

STEPS

1. Review the results from the *Relationships Assessment* exercise (pg. 142) and identify all the donors/funders with whom the organization currently relates. Write these on cards (color A).
2. Identify all the donors/funders with whom the organization has worked in the past five to ten years and write these names on cards (color B).
3. Ask the participants to describe the characteristics of an ideal donor agency and write these criteria on cards (color C). Suggest other characteristics from a checklist if necessary.
4. Have the participants sort the criteria into three groups: "Very Important", "Important" and "Less Important."
5. Guarding this order, tape the criteria cards on the vertical axis of a grid and tape the donor cards along the horizontal axis.
6. Explain the scoring system (see box) and ask the participants to assign a score (either as a group or individually using ballots) to each donor agency for each of the characteristics listed. Write the scores in the appropriate boxes on the grid. In the last column, write the totals and/or averages for each.

DONOR ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Which donors have the highest scores for the most important criteria? Why?
- ? Which donors have the lowest overall scores? What are the main reasons?
- ? With which donors is there potential for improvement? Why and how?
- ? Among all the criteria listed, which have the lowest scores across the board? Which have the highest?
- ? **What are the critical issues to address to improve the pattern of the organization's relationships with donors?**

5 = **Excellent** almost no improvement required
 4 = **Very Satisfactory** only a little room for improvement
 3 = **Satisfactory** some room for significant improvement
 2 = **Unsatisfactory** much room for improvement
 1 = **Poor**, significant improvement required

TIPS

- Ask participants to give specific examples to justify their scores.
- Circle the high and low scores in different colors to highlight key findings.

Characteristics of an Ideal Donor	Donor A	Donor B	Donor C	Averages
<i>Most Important</i>				
Provides substantial amount of funding	1	2	4	2.3
Long-term funding cycles	4	2	2	2.7
Flexible in use of funds	3	5	2	3.3
Willing to cover some overhead	2	2	3	2.3
Willing to work as a partner	2	2	2	2
<i>Important</i>				
Invests in capacity building	2	3	4	3
Reasonable Reporting Requirements	2	2	1	1.7
<i>Less Important</i>				
Considers more than one time grants	4	4	3	3.7
Provides other types of support	1	1	3	1.7
Averages	2.3	2.7	2.7	

FUNDRAISING STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Relationships Assessment & Donor Assessment* exercises?
- J** Prepared a timeline for tracking donor relationships?
- J** Prepared a grid for scoring?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

Important Events in Donor Relationships

Initial Contact

Meetings between Key Individuals

Proposal Writing

Successes

Setback & Difficulties

Changes in Funding Levels or Funded Programs

RELEVANCE

To evaluate the organization's fundraising capabilities and to identify potential areas of improvement in the organization's ability to cultivate strong relationships with existing and potential donor agencies.

OBJECTIVES

- To verify and deepen the results from the *Donor Assessment* exercise (pg. 146).
- To construct a detailed history of how the relationship between the organization and several key donors evolved.
- To identify the elements of an effective fundraising/donor relationship building strategy.
- To assess the organization's current strategy in light of these elements.
- To identify the key internal factors hindering the organization's ability to improve its fundraising strategy.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Staff members who are knowledgeable about and/or responsible for fundraising. If possible, select participants who participated in the *Donor Assessment* exercise.

STEPS (1-3)

1. Review the results from the *Donor Assessment* exercise and ask the participants to select one of the most important donor agencies from the list.
2. Ask how the relationship with this donor evolved, including important events and the years they occurred.
3. Write each key event on a card (color A) and tape these cards to the timeline.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-3)

- ? How did you get to know this donor?
- ? Who in the organization has the primary responsibility for relating to this donor? Why?
- ? Who in the organization has the primary responsibility for writing funding proposals?
- ? How do you cultivate this relationship? What are the methods you use to maintain this relationship?
- ? How has the working relationship evolved over time?
- ? To what factors do you attribute your success in obtaining funds and generating a positive relationship?

FUNDRAISING STRATEGY ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

STEPS (4-7)

4. Ask the participants to list the characteristics of an effective fundraising strategy. Suggest additional elements from a checklist if necessary. Write each characteristic on a card (color B).
5. Have the participants sort these cards into three groups: “Most Important,” “Important” and “Less Important,” and then prioritize them within each category.
6. Tape these cards in descending order of importance along the vertical axis of a grid. On the horizontal axis, make column for each participant and one column for totals and/or averages.
7. Explain the scoring method (using the tree analogy) and assign each element a letter code (A,B,C...) Hand out ballots and ask the participants to give a score to the organization for each characteristic. Collect all the ballots and write the scores on the grid.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 4-7)

- ? For which elements of an effective fundraising strategy did the organization score the highest?
- ? How did the organization learn or acquire these abilities/strengths?
- ? What elements of an effective fundraising strategy have you assessed as being at the embryonic or emerging stage?
- ? Why has the organization not been able to develop these abilities?
- ? What are the main limiting factors that hinder progress in improving the organization’s fundraising strategy?
- ? **What are the critical issues to address to improve the organization’s fundraising and donor relationship building strategies?**

An Effective Fundraising Strategy	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Averages
<i>Most Important</i>				
Communication between field & grant writer (A)	4	4	3	3.7
Generate current data on outcomes & impact (B)	2	2	3	2.3
<i>Important</i>				
Proposals & Reports sent in on time (C)	2	2	2	2
Clear Budget for each program (D)	2	1	2	1.7
Staff Training on Grant Writing (E)	2	2	1	1.7
<i>Less Important</i>				
Access to donor (F) related information	4	4	4	4
Active in network for sharing (G) donor information	5	5	5	5

TIPS

- Ask participants to give specific examples to justify their scores.

VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

Have You...

- J** Prepared a checklist?
- J** Prepared a grid for scoring?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, ballots, markers, pencils, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To evaluate the organization's level of viability and to identify critical issues to address in order to help the organization become more self-sustaining.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the characteristics of a viable organization.
- To enable members to assess their organization according to these characteristics
- To identify key issues that need to be addressed in order to make the organization more self-sustaining.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Organization members from all levels or departments

STEPS

1. Clarify and develop a common understanding of the term "viability." Viability of an organization relates to:
 - Core costs being met
 - Ability to continue project after donor funding ends
 - Access to funds (diverse donor base, local resources)
 - Strategic Planning
 - Relationships with other organizations
 - Efficient financial management
2. Ask the participants to name the characteristics or qualities of a viable organization. Write each characteristic on a card. Suggest other qualities from a checklist if necessary.
3. Have the participants sort the cards into three groups: "Most Important," "Important" and "Less Important." Then prioritize the characteristics within each category.
4. Write the rank numbers on the cards and tape them in descending order of importance to the vertical axis of the grid. Along the horizontal axis there should be one column for each participant and one column at the end for totals and/or averages.
5. Explain the scoring scale (i.e. 1 to 5) and assign a letter code to each characteristic. Hand out ballots and ask participants to give their organization a score for each of the characteristics listed. Once all the ballots have been completed, collect them and write the scores on the grid.

Characteristics of a Viable Organization

Effective Leadership

Capacity to Raise Funds

Effective Strategic Plan

Effective Information Flow

Good Financial Management

High Level of Participation

Clear Goals & Objectives

Good Documentation

Quality Staff Training

VIABILITY ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? What factors have enabled the organization to score high for some of these characteristics?
- ? On average, to what extent does the organization meet the criteria of a viable organization?
- ? What factors have hindered the organization from becoming more self-sustaining?
- ? **What critical factors need to be addressed to help the organization become more viable?**

In this exercise, viable and self-sustaining are used interchangeably. Both terms mean reaching a stage where further development can occur without significant dependence on outside support, particularly funding.

TIPS

- If there are major inconsistencies among the scores of the different participants, ask them to explain how they assigned their scores to confirm that there is a shared understanding of the criteria. Give the participants an opportunity to change their scores before calculating the results.
- Ask the participants to justify their scores with concrete examples.
- To guard anonymity, collect all the ballots and mix them up before transferring the scores to the grid.

Characteristics of a Viable Organization	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Averages
<i>Most Important</i>				
#1 Effective Leadership (A)	3	3	4	3.3
#2 Capacity to Raise Funds (B)	2	2	2	2
#3 Effective Strategic Plan (C)	3	2	2	2.3
#4 High Level of Participants (D)	4	4	5	4.3
#5 Good Financial Management (E)	2	2	2	2
<i>Important</i>				
#6 Clear Goals & Objectives (F)	2	3	1	2
#7 Good Documentation (G)	2	2	1	1.7
<i>Less Important</i>				
#8 Effective Information Flow (H)	3	3	3	3
#9 Quality Staff Training (I)	2	3	3	2.7

AUTONOMY ASSESSMENT

Have You...

- J** Prepared a checklist with the characteristics of an autonomous organization?
- J** Prepared a grid for scoring?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, ballots, markers, pencils, tape)?

Characteristics of an Autonomous Organization

Locally generates income to cover core operating costs

Able to raise funds for larger projects

Purpose driven, not donor driven

Able to plan, monitor & evaluate programs

Financially sound

Able to make independent decisions

Good internal management

Able to access technical resources when needed

Able to form & maintain collaborative relationships

RELEVANCE

To assess the level of organizational autonomy and to identify critical issues which need to be addressed in order to heighten the organization's level of autonomy.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the characteristics of an autonomous organization.
- To enable members to assess the level of organizational autonomy according to these criteria.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Staff from all levels and departments of the organization

STEPS

1. Clarify and develop a common understanding of "autonomy."
2. Brainstorm the characteristics of an autonomous organization. Write each on a card. Suggest others from a checklist if necessary.
3. Have the participants sort the characteristics into three groups: "Most Important," "Important" and "Less Important," and then prioritize the characteristics within each category.
4. Number the cards and tape them in descending order of importance along the vertical axis of the grid. The horizontal axis should have one column for each participant and one column for totals and/or averages at the end.
5. Explain the scoring scale (i.e. 1 to 5) and assign a letter code to each characteristic (A,B,C...).
6. Ask participants to assess the organization on each of the characteristics listed by writing the scores next to the corresponding letters on their ballots.
7. Once all the ballots have been completed, collect them and write the scores on the grid. Calculate the totals and/or averages. Circle any significant findings (i.e. high and low scores).

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Why did you score the organization this way (looking at high and low scores)? Give specific examples.
- ? What factors have enabled the organization to score high in some of these characteristics?

AUTONOMY ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

- ? On average, to what extent does the organization meet the criteria of an autonomous organization?
- ? What factors have hindered the organization from becoming more autonomous?
- ? **What critical factors need to be addressed to help the organization become more autonomous?**

Organizational autonomy is the freedom to decide and act without being unduly influenced or controlled by outside forces.

TIPS

- If there are major inconsistencies among the scores of the different participants, ask them to explain their scores to confirm that there is a shared understanding of the criteria. Give the participants an opportunity to change their scores before calculating the results.
- Ask the participants to justify their scores with concrete examples.
- To guard anonymity, collect all the ballots and mix them up before transferring the scores to the grid.

Characteristics of an Autonomous Organization	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Averages
<i>Most Important</i>				
#1 Locally generates income to cover core operating costs (A)	3	3	4	3.3
#2 Financially sound (B)	2	2	2	2
#3 Able to raise funds for projects (C)	3	2	2	2.3
#4 Good internal management (D)	4	4	5	4.3
#5 Purpose driven, not donor driven (E)	2	2	2	2
<i>Important</i>				
#6 Able to plan, monitor & evaluate (F)	2	3	1	2
#7 Able to make (G) independent decisions	2	2	1	1.7
<i>Less Important</i>				
#8 Able to access technical resources when needed (H)	3	3	3	3
#9 Able to form & maintain collaborative relationships (I)	3	3	3	3

Scale
1=Embryonic, 2=Emerging, 3=Growing, 4=Well Developed, 5=Mature

COMMUNITY LEVEL SUPPORT/SELF-RELIANCE

Have You...

- J** Completed the *Activity Matrix & History of Support* exercises?
- J** Prepared a checklist & a matrix?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (matrices from past exercises, flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

Characteristics of Self-Reliant Community Partners

Able to cover core operating costs

Able to plan, monitor & evaluate programs

Able to access external resources

Able to form partnerships

Able to mobilize group members for collective action

Able to implement development programs

Able to elect representative leaders

RELEVANCE

To assess the effectiveness of the organization's strategy to promote self-reliance and strengthen the capacities of the community groups with which it works.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the extent to which the organization's support activities contribute to self-reliance among its partner groups or communities.
- To identify changes in the organization's approach that will improve efforts to strengthen community capacity.
- To understand the connection between creating self-reliance and the ability of the organization to achieve a wider impact.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Program and field staff

STEPS

1. Review the information from the *Activity Matrix* (pg. 116) and, if you have already recorded the results, take the cards with the groups or communities written on them. If you have not yet captured the information, rewrite the group names on new cards for this exercise (color A). Write the date the organization started working with each community or group on each card.
2. Assign each activity named in the *Activity Matrix* a letter code (A,B,C...). On each community or group card, write the codes that correspond with the activities undertaken.
3. Review the information from the *History of Support* exercise. Clarify the concept of support and discuss criteria for distinguishing among HIGH, MIDDLE and LOW levels of support (i.e. number of support visits, trainings or funding provided, etc.).
4. Sort the community or group cards into these three categories, based on the relative level of support they have received. Code each card *on the back* with its assigned level of support (for example: H-S, M-S, L-S).
5. Introduce the concept of self-reliance and ask the participants to list characteristics of group "self-reliance." Suggest other characteristics from a checklist if necessary. Write all of these characteristics on cards (color B).

COMMUNITY LEVEL SUPPORT/SELF-RELIANCE (CONT.)

- Referring to this list, identify criteria for distinguishing among HIGH, MEDIUM and LOW levels of self-reliance. Shuffle the cards and ask the participants to now sort them into these three categories of self-reliance, using the criteria established. Code each card *on the back* (using a different color marker) with its assigned level of self-reliance (for example: H-SR, M-SR, L-SR).
- On the vertical axis of a matrix, label three rows: “High Support,” “Medium Support” and “Low Support.” On the horizontal axis of the matrix, designate three columns: “High Self-Reliance,” “Medium Self-Reliance” and “Low Self-Reliance.” Place the cards in the appropriate boxes of the Support/Self-Reliance Matrix.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Which groups have high self-reliance, but received low or medium support from the organization? Explain these cases.
- ? Which groups received high levels of support but are low in self-reliance? Explain these cases.
- ? Why are some groups more self-reliant than others, despite receiving the same or less support than others?
- ? What are the factors other than the organization’s support that contribute to or detract from groups’ self-reliance? Considering these factors, to what extent is the high level of self-reliance for certain groups due to the organization’s support activities?
- ? How can you determine to what extent the organization is really contributing to self-reliance rather than creating dependency on services and assistance?
- ? To what extent does the current strategy for promoting self-reliance take into account the different needs of the target groups?
- ? To what extent does the organization have an effective strategy for promoting self-reliance among its target groups?
- ? **What critical issues arise in terms of the organization’s ability to promote self-reliance ?**

TIPS

- Write all the information on the back of cards to avoid influencing participants’ categorization of self-reliance.
- When recording the results, don’t forget to capture the information written on the back of the cards.

	HIGH Self-Reliance	MEDIUM Self-Reliance	LOW Self-Reliance
HIGH Support		Men’s Group (village A)	
MEDIUM Support			Women’s Group (village A)
LOW Support	Men’s Group (village B)	Women’s Group (village B)	

TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Have You...

- J** Prepared a checklist of responsibilities?
- J** Prepared a grid?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, small stones or beans, tape, calculator)?

Tasks & Responsibilities (Functional Literacy Program)

Fundraising

Choosing
Trainers

Scheduling
Trainings

Designing
Training Tools

Organizing
Participants

Follow-up

Evaluation

RELEVANCE

To identify the degree to which tasks and responsibilities have been transferred from the intermediary organization to the community group. This exercise helps to identify objectives and indicators for this transfer of responsibility and is essential for clarifying the exit strategy.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the degree of responsibility held by the different actors or interest groups.
- To assess the current level of transference of responsibility.
- To establish objectives and indicators for the continued transference of tasks and responsibilities, in response to the growing capacity of the community group.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants should include community leaders who have been involved with the program for a significant period of time and are familiar with the various actors in the process.

STEPS (1-5)

1. For each program sector addressed by the organization, ask participants to name all the major tasks and responsibilities necessary for running an effective and viable program. Suggest others from the checklist if necessary. Write each response on cards (color A) and tape them to the vertical axis of a matrix.
2. Have participants name all the major actors or interest groups who are directly involved in running the development program. These could include the village association, the intermediary organization, donors, technical support, etc. Suggest other interest groups if necessary. Place the cards for each actor in a row along the top of the matrix. Draw columns for each actor.
4. Explain that, for each task, there are ten beans (or stones) to distribute among the various actors. Ten beans represent the total amount of responsibility for each task. Verify that the participants understand this concept.
5. Take the first task on the list as an example. Ask the participants to distribute the ten beans among the different actors in a way that reflects their relative levels of responsibility currently. For example, if the task is shared equally between the community group and the intermediary organization, the participants would place five beans under each. Ask the participants to repeat Step 5 for the remaining tasks.

TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITIES (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (STEPS 1-5)

- ? Does the community have full responsibility for any tasks? Why or why not?
- ? Which responsibilities are shared? Why?
- ? In your opinion, which tasks and responsibilities are the most important to transfer to the community? What are the obstacles or challenges that prevent the transfer of these tasks?

STEPS (6-7)

6. Now repeat the process to reflect the situation in the recent past. Decide together on the time period for assessing change (i.e. 5 years). Move the task cards to the left in order to create space for another matrix section. Duplicate the actor cards and place them in the same order along the horizontal axis of the second section of the matrix (see diagram).

Tasks	PAST (1995)			PRESENT (1999)			FUTURE (2003)		
	Village Group	Local NGO	Local Gov.	Village Group	Local NGO	Local Gov.	Village Group	Local NGO	Local Gov.
Fundraising		XXXXX XXXXX			XXXXX XXXXX			XXXXX XXXXX	
Choosing Trainers		XXXXX X	XXXX		XXXXX X	XXXX	XXXXX	XXX	XX
Scheduling Trainings		XXXXX XXXXX		XXX	XXXXX XX		XXXXX XXXXX		
Follow-up		XXXXX XXXXX			XXXXX XXXXX		XXXXX	XXXXX	
Organizing Participants	XXXXX XXX	XX		XXXXX XXX	XX		XXXXX XXXXX		
Designing Training Tools		XXXXX X	XXXX		XXXXX XXX	XX	XXX	XXXXX	XX
Evaluation	XXXXX		XXXXX	XXXXX		XXXXX	XXXXX	XXX	XX
Totals	13	44	13	16	43	11	38	26	6
Percentages	18.5%	63%	18.5%	23%	61%	16%	54%	37%	9%
% Change from 1995	0	0	0	+4.5%	-2%	-2.5%	+35.5%	-26%	-9.5%

Have the participants place beans under each actor to reflect the past situation.

7. If time permits, ask the participants to envision what the situation will be like in the future. Create a third section on the matrix and repeat the process, having participants distribute the beans in a way that reflects their hopes for future distribution of responsibility.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 6-7)

- ? For which tasks has there been the largest transfer of responsibilities to the community? The smallest transfer? Why?
- ? Are the predictions realistic? What capacities must be strengthened in order to achieve this transference of responsibility?

THREATS TO VIABILITY

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Viability Assessment* exercise?
- J** Prepared a matrix for categorizing threats?
- J** Prepared a checklist of possible threats to viability?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

Threats to Viability

Donor Withdrawal of Support

Climatic Conditions

Lack of Qualified Personnel

Conflicts with other NGOs

Late arrival of funds from donor

Political Instability

Lack of Access to New Donors

Change in Donor Policies

RELEVANCE

To identify and prioritize the main issues to address in order to improve the viability of the organization.

OBJECTIVES

- To help participants identify and analyze the main threats to their organization's ability to become more self-sustaining.
- To identify critical issues that need to be addressed to strengthen the organization's ability to overcome these threats.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Organization members from all levels and departments

STEPS

1. Review the qualities of a sustainable organization and the scores given during the *Viability Assessment* exercise (pg. 150).
2. Clarify the meaning of "viability" and ensure that there is a common understanding. Organizational viability can relate to:
 - Core costs being met
 - Ability to continue project after donor funding ends
 - Access to funds (diverse donor base, local resources)
 - Strategic Planning
 - Relationships with other organizations
 - Efficient financial management
3. Clarify the term "threat." Emphasize that threats are **EXTERNAL** to the organization, but can lead to its downfall.
4. Ask participants to list key external threats to the viability of the organization. Write these threats on cards (color A). Suggest other possible threats from a checklist if necessary.
5. Discuss the difference between a *large* threat and a *small* threat to ensure a common understanding and acceptance of the criteria for each. Have the participants group the threats into these two categories based on their relative potential impact on the organization. Write codes on the cards to identify in which category they were placed (i.e. L and S).
6. Ask participants to explain why they categorized some threats as large and some as small. Then ask participants to prioritize the threats within each category.

THREATS TO VIABILITY (CONT.)

- Tape the cards to the vertical axis of the matrix in descending order of importance. On the horizontal axis, label one column “Partially within the organization’s control” and another column “Completely out of the organization’s control.” Mark an X in the column that corresponds with the nature of each threat listed.
- Identify which threats are both large and partially within the control of the organization. Ask the participants to think of ways the organization could address these threats and write their responses on cards (color B). Tape these cards to the side of the matrix.
- Ask the participants to identify the factors that affect the organization’s ability to address or control these threats. List them on cards (color C) and tape them to the bottom of the flip chart.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

? What are the critical issues the organization must resolve in order to overcome threats to its viability?

TIPS

- Agree on a clear definition of a threat before you begin.
- If the results are not going to be recorded soon after the exercise, code the cards with their appropriate categories to avoid losing information.

External Threats	Partially within our control	Completely out of our control	Ways to Address These Threats Seek to collaborate with other orgs. Communicate better with donors More staff training & development Participate more in NGO network
Climatic Conditions (L)		X	
Donor Withdrawal of Support (L)	X		
Conflicts with other NGOs (L)	X		
Lack of Qualified Personnel (L)	X		
Political Instability (L)		X	
Late arrival of funds from donor (S)		X	
Change in Donor Policies (S)		X	
Lack of Access to New Donors (S)	X		
Constraining Factors Staff workload too large/stressful Project tends to be donor driven Lack of local donor base			

TREND ANALYSIS: WOMEN'S WELL-BEING

Have You...

- J** Prepared a checklist of Well-Being indicators?
- J** Prepared a matrix for sorting the indicator cards?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, seeds or stones, tape)?

Indicators of Women's Well-Being

Time available for income generation

Income

Agricultural Production

Expenses

Reproductive & Maternal Health

Birth Spacing

Girls Attending School

Infant & Child Health

Time Spent doing Domestic Work

Vitality of Women's Groups

Quality & Number of female leaders

Participation in decision-making

Quality of gender relations (couples)

Mobility of women

Overall status & respect

RELEVANCE

To provide general information on trends in women's well-being in order to understand more clearly the context in which the organization is undertaking its activities. This exercise also assists organization members in assessing the extent to which their program activities are effective in promoting women's well-being in light of overall trends.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the major trends (both positive and negative) which have affected women's well-being.
- To identify the most important factors which have contributed to these larger tendencies.
- To assess the organization's activities within this context.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Select women who represent a variety of sub-groups in the community and who are knowledgeable about the local conditions of women's lives. Factors to consider include age, class and ethnic representation, and level of responsibility in the community.

STEPS

1. Ask participants to list the signs, or indicators, of women's well-being. Suggest other indicators from a checklist if necessary. Write all of the indicators listed on cards.
2. Ask the participants to sort the indicators into three groups, based on their relative impact on women's well-being: "Most Important," "Important" and "Less Important." Then ask them to prioritize within each category. Write the rank numbers on the cards.
3. Agree on a time period (i.e. 10 years ago to the present) over which to assess changes for each indicator of women's well-being. Use a well known past event (i.e. a drought or political event) to help participants understand the time period.
4. Explain the concept of evolutionary change, both positive and negative. Describe the three categories of change:
 - Positive change = the situation today is **BETTER** than it was at the beginning of the defined time period.
 - No change = the situation today is roughly the **SAME** as it was at the beginning of the defined time period.
 - Negative change = the situation today is **WORSE** than it was at the beginning of the defined time period.

TREND ANALYSIS: WOMEN'S WELL-BEING (CONT.)

- On the horizontal axis of the a matrix, label three columns: "BETTER," "SAME" and "WORSE." If participants cannot read, use arrows or different colors to indicate direction of change.
- Ask the participants to take each card and decide whether this indicator shows that the situation today is better, the same or worse than it was at the beginning of the defined time period. Place the cards in the appropriate columns and write a code on each card for future reference (i.e. up and down arrows). Ask the participants to justify their responses by illustrating these changes with concrete examples.
- To measure the degree of change, ask the participants to score each indicator in the "BETTER than before" column to assess the *degree* of change (see box for scale). Use seeds, stones or marks to visualize the degree of change, and write the scores on the cards for future reference. Repeat this process for the cards in the "WORSE than before" column.

1 seed = very little change
 2 seeds = a little change
 3 seeds = medium change
 4 seeds = fairly large change
 5 seeds = very large change

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Why were some indicators considered more important than others in terms of contributing to women's well-being?
- ? What contributions (if any) has the intermediary organization made to bring about positive change in these areas?
- ? To what extent have the negative trends been addressed?
- ? What activities would most improve women's well-being?
- ? **What critical issues arise from this analysis that should be addressed by the intermediary organization?**

TIPS

- Make sure that the terms are accurately translated into the local language and that the participants have a clear understanding of the concepts.
- This exercise can be adapted to assess trends for other community development topics, including food security, health and education.

	↑ BETTER than before	the SAME as before ↔	WORSE than before ↓	
XXX	Income #2	Reproductive Health #3	Agricultural Production #1	XXX
X	Mobility of women #12	Time doing #10 domestic work	Gender Relations (couples) #9	XX
XX	Birth Spacing #5	Time for earning income #8	Expenses #11	X
X	Vitality of #14 Women's Groups	Overall status & respect #13	Infant & Child Health #4	XX
X	Number of #15 female leaders	Decision-making at home #7		
XX	Girls Attending School #6			

TREND ANALYSIS: RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES

Have You...

- J** Prepared a checklist of renewable natural resources?
- J** Prepared a matrix for making comparisons over time?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, seeds or stones, tape)?

Renewable Natural Resources	
Food Security	Grass for Roofing
Rainfall	Cattle
Crop Production	Fruit Trees
Soil Fertility	Firewood
Water for Animals	Trees for Fencing
Drinking Water	Pasture Land

RELEVANCE

To determine to what extent the organization's activities are addressing the major, long-term natural resource management issues.

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the community members' perceptions about the state of local natural resources.
- To determine the major trends (both positive and negative) affecting the natural resource base.
- To determine the speed and extent of both positive and negative changes in the state of the natural resource base as they affect the long-term sustainability of the community's livelihoods.
- To identify the principle causes of these identified trends.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Community elders who are knowledgeable about the state of local renewable natural resources

STEPS

1. Ask the participants to list all the natural resources used by the community to support local livelihoods. Suggest resources from a checklist that might be overlooked (this checklist will vary depending on the local context). Write each resource on a card.
2. Place all the cards along the vertical axis of a matrix drawn on a flip chart or on the floor. On the horizontal axis label three columns: "Today," "10 Years Ago" and "20 Years Ago" (or use other agreed upon time periods). Use different colored cards or symbols to represent these three time periods.
3. Take the first natural resource on the list and ask the participants to determine during which of the three periods it was healthiest (according to criteria of abundance or quality). Ask the participants to place 10 seeds or stones in the box under that time period.
4. Using more seeds or stones, ask participants to score (0-9) the state of this resource during the remaining two time periods, as they compare to the optimal level. For example, if the resource is almost as abundant now as it was 20 years ago (optimal time), they would place 8 or 9 seeds under "Today." If there is a large difference between now and then, the participants might place only 2 or 3 seeds in the box. Repeat this process for the remaining resources on the list. Write the scores on the flip chart for future reference.

TREND ANALYSIS: RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? For each natural resource, what are the signs of change?
- ? Which natural resources have degraded the most? Which have improved? What are the main causes for these positive and negative trends?
- ? Why are certain natural resources changing more rapidly than others?
- ? To what extent is the speed of change related to the natural resource management practices of households and/or the community?
- ? What activities both inside and outside of the community are most responsible for the changes in natural resources? Why?
- ? To what extent are the intermediary organization's activities affecting the state of natural resources (both positively and negatively)?
- ? **What critical issues arise for the organization in light of these trends in the state of renewable natural resources?**

TIPS

- If you are conducting this exercise with a single-gender group, interview members of the opposite sex in advance to add natural resources to the checklist that might be overlooked.

Resources	Today	10 Years Ago	20 Years Ago
Food Security	XXX	XXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Rainfall	XXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Crop Production	XXX	XXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Soil Fertility	XX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Water for Animals	XX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Drinking Water	XXX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Pasture Land	X	XXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Grass for Roofing	XX	XXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Cattle	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX	XXXXXX
Fruit Trees	XX	XXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Firewood	XX	XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX
Trees for Fencing	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXX

SYNTHESIS OF CRITICAL ISSUES

Have You...

- J** Prepared "critical issues" cards?
- J** Prepared small cards of the main findings?
- J** Prepared a large flip chart with a Capacity Tree?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, tape, markers)?

Capacity Tree

- Roots = Capacities
- Ground = Weaknesses/ Internal Obstacles
- Trunk = Strengths
- Leaves = Program Results
- Fruits = Program Impacts
- Weather/Sky = External Forces (positive and negative)

RELEVANCE

To give participants an opportunity to bring together the results of the various exercises and to identify the critical issues that have emerged.

OBJECTIVES

- To summarize and affirm the main findings of the workshop.
- To review the organizational issues that have emerged, identify trends and analyze the relationships among issues.
- To synthesize the important findings from the exercises undertaken at the community level and with the intermediary organization.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants (including facilitation team members)

STEPS

1. Present the Capacity Tree diagram. Explain what the different parts of the tree represent (see box).
2. Using the cards prepared beforehand, present the main organizational *strengths* identified through the workshop exercises. If affirmed by the assembly, tape the cards to the trunk of the Capacity Tree. Ask the participants to discuss strengths about which there is disagreement and make changes until there is consensus.
3. Repeat the process for each section of the capacity tree. When cards are affirmed, tape them to the appropriate part of the tree.
4. Ask participants to examine the Capacity Tree and identify any linkages or important relationships among the different findings.
5. Present the critical issues cards generated by the participants during earlier Synthesis & Analysis sessions [see *Chapter 8 Analysis & Documentation* (pg. 69)]. (The facilitation team may want to synthesize these cards beforehand to speed up the process). Ensure that each is well understood and ask participants to try to identify the exercises that generated the findings.
6. Spread all the cards out on the floor. Ask participants to add any missing issues and then group similar cards together.
7. Once all the cards have been put into groups, have the participants give each group a title which summarizes the main themes addressed by the critical issues. Write these titles on cards (different color) and tape them to the top of each group. Display the list of critical issues next to the Capacity Tree for review.

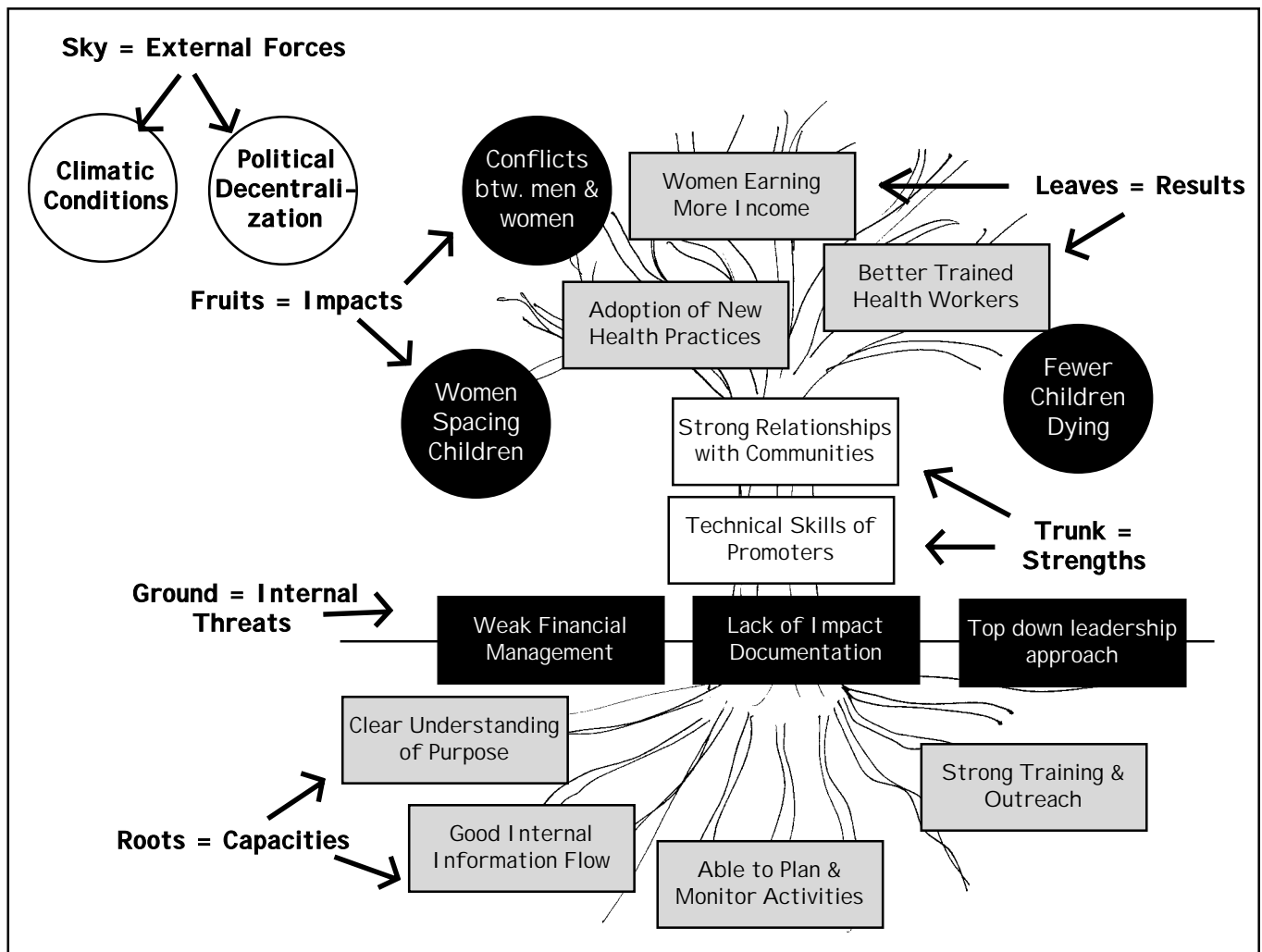
SYNTHESIS OF CRITICAL ISSUES (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Which of the groups of critical issues has the most cards? What is the significance of this?
- ? What linkages or relationships exist among the different critical issue themes? Do some issues create conditions that cause other sets of issues to emerge?
- ? What are the “bottleneck” issues that need to be addressed first in order to address other problems?

TIPS

- You can use different shapes and colors for each part of the Capacity Tree (i.e. yellow cards for fruits or red squares for internal threats).
- There may be critical issues cards that use different wording to address the same issue. Paperclip these cards together before the exercise, and write on the top card how many cards there are in the bundle.
- Clarify that the Capacity Tree and the Problem Tree are two different tools that use the same metaphor.



PRIORITIZATION OF CRITICAL ISSUES

Have You...

- J** Prepared a grid for all the critical issues?
- J** Written on flip charts the two questions for scoring?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, ballots, markers, pencils, tape)?

Question #1: What critical issues do you judge to be a priority for the organization to address in order to improve its performance and overall impact?

RELEVANCE

It is not feasible to address all the critical issues at once. This exercise helps the organization members come to a consensus on which issues should be addressed first.

OBJECTIVES

- To prioritize the critical issues on the basis of feasibility and potential impact on the organization's performance and viability.
- To facilitate a dialogue and negotiation process between and among the members of the organization and the facilitation team about the priority areas to address.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants (including facilitation team members)

STEPS (1-5)

1. Present a large matrix with all the critical issue cards taped to the vertical axis. Use the list generated during the *Synthesis of Critical Issues* (pg. 164) exercise if possible. Assign a letter code (A,B,C...) to each critical issue.
2. On the horizontal axis, designate one column for each organization member participating in the exercise. Leave a column for tallying their scores, then designate one column for each of the facilitation team members participating in the exercise. Leave a column for tallying these scores, then designate one column for totals. Label each section: Organization Members, Facilitators and Total.
3. Present the first question written on a flip chart (see box.) Clarify the participants' understanding of this question and elicit examples of potential improvements that could arise from addressing several critical issues.
4. Each participants gets five votes (or up to 10 votes if there are many issues). Participants can distribute their votes among the critical issues in any way they think best represents the organization's priorities. For example, one person might put all five votes on one critical issue while others might spread their votes among five issues, or put two on one and three on another.
5. Hand out ballots and ask the participants to vote by marking lines or dots on the ballot sheets next to the letter codes. Ask them to write on the top of the ballot whether they are an organization member or a facilitation team member. When all the participants have finished, collect the ballots and transfer the scores to the grid.

PRIORITIZATION OF CRITICAL ISSUES (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (1-5)

- ? What are the critical issues that most people agreed upon? Why are these issues seen as most important?
- ? What are the critical issues that received only a few votes? Why did some participants not vote for these issues while others did?
- ? What are the critical issues which received no votes at all? What are the main reasons?
- ? What are the critical issues identified as priorities by both the organization members and the facilitation team?
- ? For which issues is there a divergence in the scores? Why did each group vote the way that it did?

STEPS (6-7)

6. Hand out new ballots and repeat the prioritization process, using a second question as a guide (see box). You can either record these votes in another color on the same grid or create a second grid.
7. Discuss the results using similar SSI questions. Then allow the organization members time to arrive at a final consensus on the priority critical issues to address (not limited to performance or viability). These results are then presented and discussed by all.

Question #2: What critical issues do you judge to be a priority for the organization to address in order to strengthen its viability?

TIPS

- Make sure the participants understand that the second round of voting does not replace the first round, nor do their second votes need to be consistent with (or different from) the first round.
- The role of the facilitation team in this exercise is to give the organization members another perspective in a nonthreatening and constructive manner. The facilitator must stress that the organization members will have the final say.

Critical Issues	Organization Members					Total	Facilitators			Total	Total
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5		#1	#2	#3		
Lack of (A) Documentation						0					0
Lack of Impact Assessment (B)	xx	x		xx		5	xx	xxx	xx	7	12
Too few female leaders (C)						0		xx		2	2
Need to broaden donor base (D)	x	xxx	xx		x	7	xxx			3	10
Need to identify local resources (E)				xxx	xxxx	7			xxx	3	10
Disengagement Strategy (F)	xx	x	xxx			6				0	6
Communication Systems (G)						0				0	0
Vote count	5	5	5	5	5	25	5	5	5	25	40

IDENTIFYING CAPACITY AREAS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Synthesis of Critical Issues* exercise?
- J** Prepared a checklist of capacity areas?
- J** Prepared a flip chart with the discussion questions?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

What are the main reasons why the organization is currently facing this critical issue?

What obstacles or difficulties are preventing the organization from overcoming or making progress in addressing this issue?

Complete the phrase: "For the organization to better tackle this critical issue, it must strengthen its ability to..."

RELEVANCE

Identifying the capacity areas to strengthen is essential to designing an effective capacity building program.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the capacity areas that, if strengthened, would have the greatest impact on the critical issues affecting the organization's performance and viability.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants (including facilitation team members)

STEPS

1. Review the critical issues identified in previous exercises.
2. Divide the participants into small groups and assign each group a critical issue.
3. Have the groups write on cards (one idea per card, different colored cards for each question) their responses to three questions (see box).
4. Each small group presents its cards to the larger group. Participants discuss the results for each critical issue. Suggest other relevant capacities from a checklist if necessary. Code these cards to the corresponding issue.
5. After all the groups have presented and completed their capacity statements, gather the capacity cards and display them on the wall or on the floor. Ask the participants to group similar cards together.
6. Once the cards have been sorted, decide on a title for each group that summarizes the main theme. Write the titles on cards and place the title cards at the top of the lists.

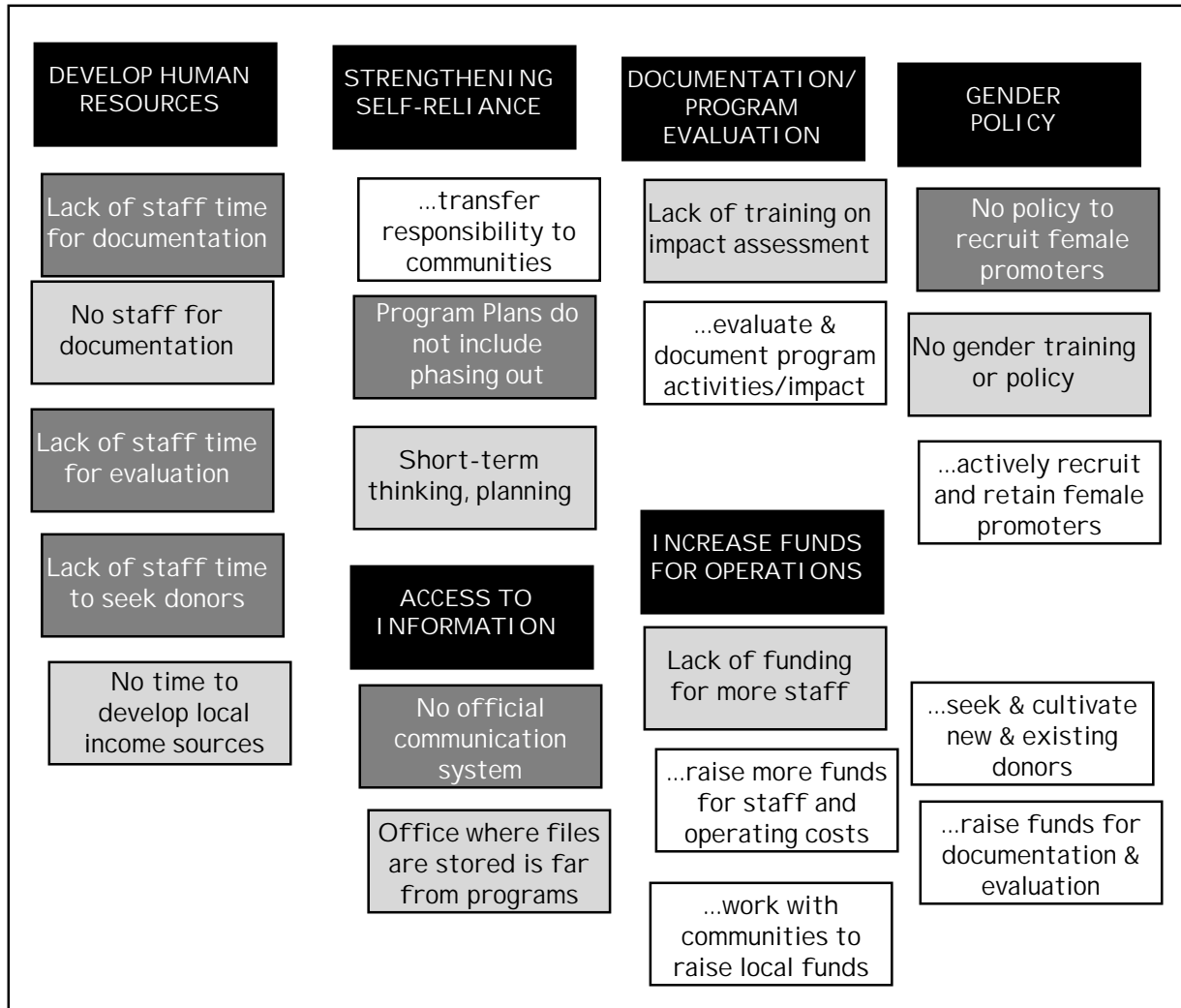
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Which capacities were identified by several of the groups? Why?
- ? Which capacities were identified by only one group? Do these capacities affect other critical issues faced by the organization?
- ? Which themes have the most capacity cards under them? Why?

IDENTIFYING CAPACITY AREAS (CONT.)

TIPS

- Make sure that the participants include capacities that enable communities or groups to be more involved in the development process.
- Technical capacities, such as the ability to identify, test and adapt appropriate technologies, may also be an important capacity area to introduce if overlooked.



PRIORITIZING CAPACITY AREAS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Identifying Capacity Areas* exercise?
- J** Prepared a grid?
- J** Prepared flip charts with the questions used to guide the scoring?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, ballots, markers, pencils, tape)?

RELEVANCE

If the capacity areas identified are quite numerous, it will not be possible to address all of them at once. This exercise helps the participants prioritize which capacity areas they need to devote their limited resources to strengthening.

OBJECTIVES

- To deepen the findings of the *Identifying Capacity Areas* exercise (pg. 168).
- To identify priority capacity areas to be addressed.
- To generate a list of capacities that will be included in the capacity strengthening program and the action plan.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants (including facilitation team members)

STEPS (1-6)

1. Review the list of capacities identified in the *Identifying Capacity Areas* exercise. Tape the title cards from the capacity groups along the vertical axis of a grid. Assign a letter code (A,B,C...) to each.
2. Ask the participants to identify any capacity groups that are strongly linked (i.e. one cannot be addressed without working on the other). Indicate this connection by either placing the cards together or by drawing lines on the flip chart connecting the cards.
3. On the horizontal axis, designate one column for each organization member participating in the exercise. Leave a column for tallying their scores, then designate one column for each of the facilitation team members. Leave a column for tallying these scores, then designate one column for totals. Label each section: Members, Facilitators and Total.
4. Present the first question (see box). Clarify the participants understanding of this question and elicit examples of potential improvements that could arise from addressing several capacity issues.
5. Each participant gets five votes. Participants can distribute their votes among the capacity areas in any way they think best represents the organization's priorities. One person might put all five votes on one capacity while others might spread their votes among five capacities, or put two on one and three on another.
6. Hand out ballots and ask the participants to distribute their votes by marking lines or dots next to the letter codes on the ballot sheet.

Question #1: What capacity areas do you judge to be a priority for the organization to address in order to improve its performance and overall impact?

PRIORITIZING CAPACITY AREAS (CONT.)

Have them write on the top of the ballot whether they are an organization member or a facilitation team member. When all the participants have finished, collect the ballots and transfer the scores to the grid.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Steps 1-6)

- ? What are the capacity areas that most people agreed upon? Why are these seen as important?
- ? What are the capacity areas that received only a few votes? Why did some not vote for these issues while others did?
- ? What are the capacity areas that received no votes at all? Why?
- ? What are the capacity areas that are identified as priorities by both the organization members and the facilitation team?
- ? For which capacity areas is there a divergence in scores? Why did each group vote the way that it did?

STEPS (7-8)

7. Hand out new ballots and repeat the prioritization process, using the second question as a guide (see box). You can either record the votes in another color on the same grid or create a second grid.
8. Discuss the results using the SSI questions, and then allow the organization members time to arrive at a final consensus on the priority capacity areas to address (not limited to performance or viability). These results are then presented and discussed by all.

Question #2: What capacity areas do you judge to be a priority for the organization to address in order to strengthen its viability?

TIPS

- Do not insist on this prioritization process if you meet with resistance. Continue with the subsequent exercises. Once the Action Plan is designed, it will usually become evident that it is unrealistic for the organization to undertake such an ambitious program.

Priority Capacities Ability to...	Organization Members						Facilitators				Total
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	Total	#1	#2	#3	Total	
DEVELOP HUMAN RESOURCES (A)	xx	x		x	xxx	8	xx	xxx	xx	7	15
STRENGTHENING SELF-RELIANCE (B)		x		xx		3	xxx			5	8
DOCUMENTATION/PROGRAM EVALUATION (C)			xx			2				0	2
GENDER POLICY (D)						0			xxx	3	3
ACCESS TO INFORMATION (E)						0				0	0
INCREASE FUNDS FOR OPERATIONS (F)	xxx	xxx	xx	xx	xx	12		xx	x	3	15

A BASELINE ASSESSMENT OF PRIORITY CAPACITY AREAS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Prioritizing Capacity Areas* exercise?
- J** Prepared two grids for scoring capacities?
- J** Displayed the *Five Stages of Organizational Development*?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, ballots, cards, markers, pencils, tape)?

RELEVANCE

To help the organization collectively establish a “baseline” for each priority capacity area. These will be used to develop capacity development objectives and action plans, as well as providing a basis for subsequent self-assessments.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop criteria and indicators for measuring each of the priority capacity areas.
- To identify the existing stage of development for each priority capacity area.
- To elicit information that will be used to develop action plans.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Present the priority capacity area cards and clarify participants’ understanding of each. Tape the cards to the vertical axis of a grid. On the horizontal axis, designate one column for each participant and one at the end for the final scores.
2. Review the *Five Stages of Organizational Development* based on the growing tree analogy and the scores for each stage (1 to 5).
3. Hand out ballots and ask participants to score the capacity areas based on at what evolutionary stage they think the organization is. Once all the ballots are completed, collect them and write the scores on the grid.
4. Ask participants to justify their scores by explaining the criteria they used to judge the organization’s capacity level. Write the criteria on cards and tape them on a flip chart.
5. Come to an agreement about the criteria to be used for the scoring process. Once there is consensus, keep the criteria lists taped to the wall and repeat the scoring exercise, this time based on the agreed upon criteria. Write the scores on a second grid.
6. Review the results. If there is significant divergence among the different participants’ scores, ask the group to try to agree upon the score for this capacity. For small differences, take the average.
7. Write the final scores in the last column of the matrix. These are the agreed upon capacity stages for each area (1 to 5).

A BASELINE ASSESSMENT OF PRIORITY CAPACITY AREAS (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? What capacity areas were scored the highest? Why do you think the organization has been able to make progress in these areas?
- ? What capacity areas have the lowest scores? What are the obstacles impeding the organization's growth in these areas?
- ? For which capacity areas was there a significant divergence of scores? Why this difference in perception?

TIPS

- This scoring exercise can be adapted to generate a more comprehensive needs assessment that covers all of the capacity areas required for the organization to achieve its mission. This can be a useful exercise to undertake soon after the beginning of the self-assessment process. It enables participants to get a clearer understanding of the different capacity areas to consider.
- Use probing questions to ensure that a robust and objectively verifiable list of criteria, or indicators, is developed.

Capacity Areas	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	Stages	
DEVELOP HUMAN RESOURCES	2	3	3	3	2	3	Scale 1=Embryonic 2=Emerging 3=Growing 4=Well Developed 5=Mature
STRENGTHENING SELF-RELIANCE	2	1	1	2	2	2	
INCREASE FUNDS FOR OPERATIONS	2	3	3	2	2	2.5	

DEVELOP HUMAN RESOURCES	STRENGTHENING SELF-RELIANCE	INCREASE FUNDS FOR OPERATIONS
Regular Staff Training	Community self-reliance objectives in program plans	Independence from donors
Performance Reviews	Responsibilities Transferred	Able to cover core operating costs
Enough people on staff	Community Capacity Growing	% of budget from local revenue
Level of turnover, stress levels		Fundraising strategy in place

VISIONING: DEVELOPING CAPACITY INDICATORS

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *A Baseline Assessment of Priority Capacity Areas* exercise?
- J** Prepared SSI questions for each capacity area?
- J** Displayed the *Five Stages of Organizational Development*?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, tape)?

See 3.5 *Locally Generated Indicators* (pg. 15) for more information & examples of indicators.

RELEVANCE

To elicit the basic information required to develop measurable objectives and indicators for the capacity strengthening program. The results from this exercise will help in generating a realistic Action Plan.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop a “vision” of what each priority capacity area would ideally look like at the mature stage of organizational development.
- To identify the changes in existing organizational practices, systems and procedures required to strengthen each priority area.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Choose one of the priority capacity areas on the list that, in your judgement, will be easier to address. Tape this card to the top of a flip chart.
2. Ask participants to imagine what this capacity area would look like at the Mature stage (5). They may want to complete the phrase: “At the mature stage in this capacity, our organization will be able to...” Record these statements on cards (color A) and tape these vision cards, or indicators, to the flip chart.
3. Ask participants to now list what changes in organizational procedure, practice or systems would be required to reach this level. Write these changes on cards (color B) and tape them to the flip chart along side the vision cards.
4. Split participants into pairs or small groups and assign each group a capacity area from the list. Ask them to undertake the same process for their capacity areas.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The SSI questions should be designed to help groups develop indicators for their capacity areas. For example, if the capacity area is Evaluation:

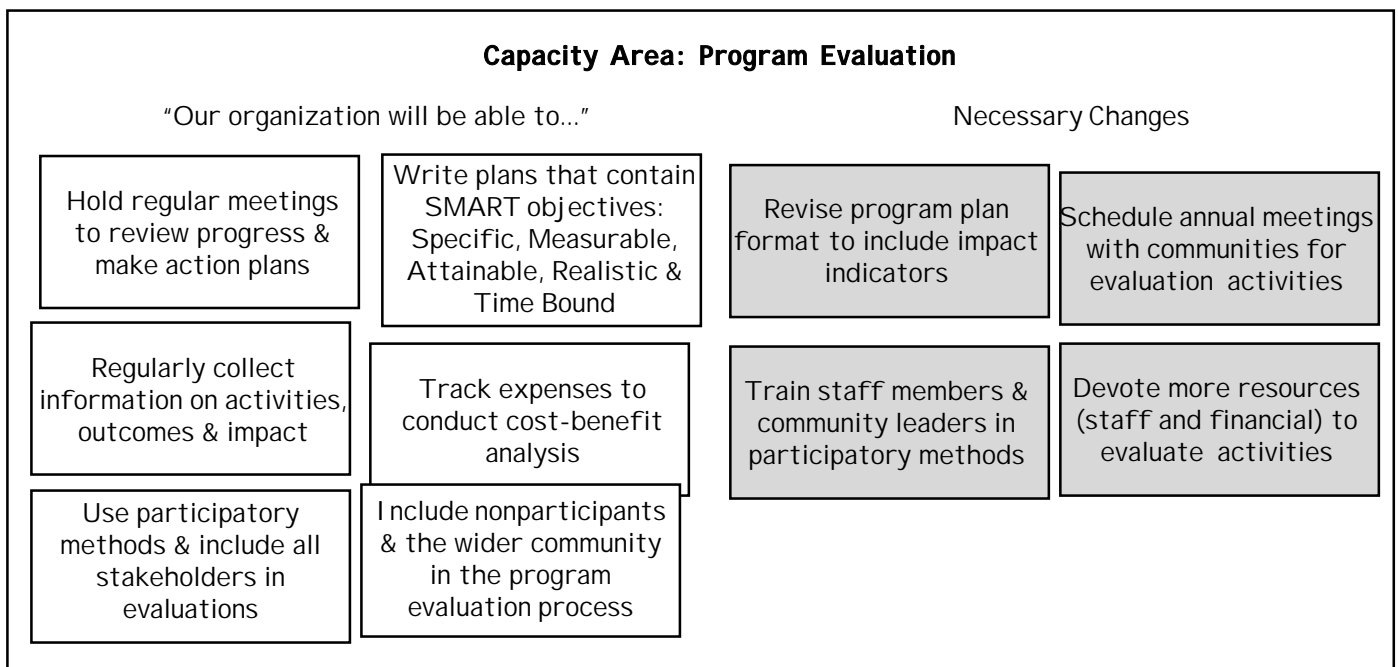
- ? What is evaluation?
- ? What are the various levels of evaluation?
- ? Who is involved in evaluation?
- ? What makes for effective evaluation? What are the professional standards of effective evaluation?

VISIONING: DEVELOPING CAPACITY INDICATORS (CONT.)

- ? What are all the stages of the evaluation process?
- ? What are all the elements or components of the evaluation process?

TIPS

- Writing good indicators for capacity areas is a challenging task. Limit the exercise to describing the future vision of what each capacity would look like at the mature stage of organizational development and what organizational changes are needed to reach that level. More work to refine these indicators and formulate realistic objectives can be done after the workshop.
- Note that it may not be realistic to reach the mature stage immediately. At a later time, indicators for intermediary levels of capacity development may need to be formulated.



Indicators for Intermediary Stages of Development: Program Evaluation

Embryonic	Emerging	Growing	Well Developed
Annual informal evaluation meetings with communities	One program undertakes an in-depth evaluation	Participatory methods are used in evaluations	Staff spend at least 10% of time on evaluation
Program plans contain some SMART objectives	Plans include some specific indicators to measure results	Programs track expenses consistently	Representatives of wider community involved in process
		All programs undertake some evaluation activities	All program plans include impact indicators

FORMULATING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES & ACTION PLANS

Have You...

- J** Displayed lists of Priority Critical Issues, Priority Capacity Areas & Indicators?
- J** Prepared a checklist of the elements of a good action plan?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, pencils, tape)?

Elements of a Good Action Plan

Contains specific activities required to achieve a given objective

Indicates the sequence in which the activities are to be undertaken

Indicates the staff time & number of people required

Indicates the resources & costs (materials, expenses, etc.) required

Indicates when each activity will be implemented & how long it will take

RELEVANCE

After identifying and prioritizing capacity areas, participants need to outline various forms of interventions, methods and activities that could be used to strengthen these capacities.

OBJECTIVES

- To formulate action plans that will help strengthen the organization in the priority capacity areas.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants

STEPS

1. Ask participants to list the main components, or elements, of a good action plan. Suggest other elements from a checklist if necessary. Write these elements on cards (color A) and tape them to a flip chart
2. Review the priority critical issues, priority capacity areas and indicators developed in previous exercises. Choose one capacity area and tape it to the top of another flip chart.
3. Ask the participants: *What interventions (methods, strategies and related activities) do you think will be needed to tackle this capacity issue?* Explain that the sum of these interventions will constitute an action plan for strengthening the capacity area. Write all of the proposed interventions (or actions) on cards (color B).
4. Ask the participants to sort the cards in order of implementation (what will be done first, second, etc.). Tape these in descending order on the flip chart.
5. In columns next to each action card, write WHO will be responsible for ensuring it gets done, WITH WHOM (who will help to implement it), WHEN it will be carried out, HOW LONG it will take to complete and RESOURCES required.
6. Now divide the participants into pairs or small groups. Assign each small group one or several capacity areas and their indicators. Have the small groups repeat the process for their assigned capacity areas.
7. Once the small groups have finished, bring them together to present their action plans. In plenary, discuss the results and make adjustments as needed.

FORMULATING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES & ACTION PLANS (CONT.)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? Do these action plans meet the criteria of a good action plan?
- ? Are there some activities that are found on more than one action plan?
How do the required interventions for the different capacity areas relate?
- ? Do these action plans seem realistic?

TIPS

- If the participants have not successfully prioritized the capacity areas in the previous exercises, they may discover that it is not realistic to carry out the action plans. If so, ask participants to prioritize the capacities once again, or spread the action plans over a longer time period.
- If the results are not going to be recorded immediately following the exercise, transcribe the data directly onto the flip charts to avoid losing the information.

Action Plan: Program Evaluation					
Activities	WHEN	HOW LONG	WHO	WITH WHOM	RESOURCES
Schedule meeting with community leaders	August 1999	2 days	Program Manager	Field Promoters	staff time, materials
Committee to revise program plan format	September 1999	2 months	Executive Director	committee members to be selected	staff time
Improve accounting system to track expenses by program & by sector	November 1999	1 month	Financial Officer	Executive Director	staff time
Hold workshop on participatory methods	January 2000	1 week	Outside Trainer	staff & communities	funds for hiring trainer, staff time, materials
Conduct Impact Assessments with community groups	February 2000	5 weeks	Program Manager	Field Promoters & communities	staff time, materials
Raise funds for increasing assessment capacity	by August 2000	3 year grant	Fundraising Director	Executive Director	staff time
Hire staff person for assessment & documentation	January 2001	search: 3 months	Executive Director	hiring team to be selected	funds for hiring process, staff time, salary

PYRAMID OF ACTION: ASSIGNING ROLES

Have You...

- J** Conducted the *Formulating Support Activities & Action Plans* exercise?
- J** Prepared a Pyramid of Action?
- J** Prepared a calendar?
- J** Displayed the Action Plans?
- J** Gathered the necessary materials (flip chart, cards, markers, pencils, tape)?

RELEVANCE

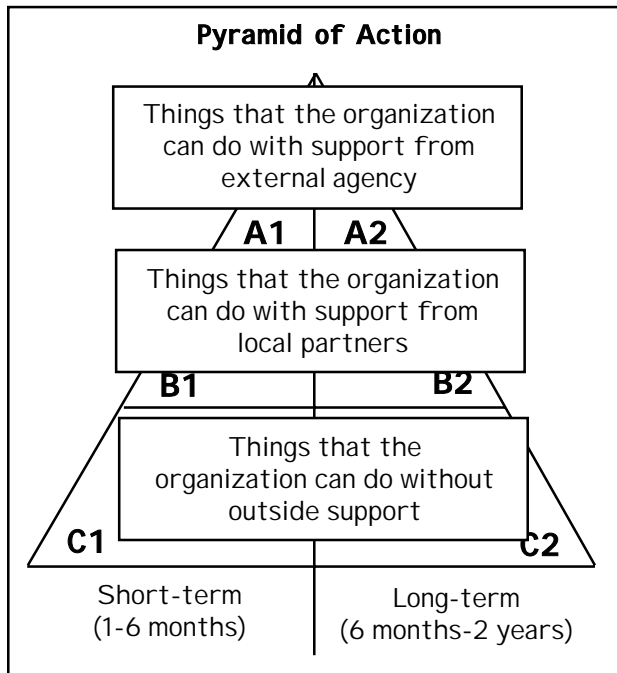
All capacity strengthening programs will consist of both short and long-term activities. Most programs will also require outside resource people and support. This exercise helps participants make one unified Action Plan that takes these factors into account, as well as assess how realistic their action plan is.

OBJECTIVES

- To synthesize the plans developed for each priority capacity area into one unified Action Plan.
- To assist members of the organization to identify the different actors involved in undertaking the Action Plan.
- To identify short and long-term activities.
- To enable the organization members to fit the activities of their Action Plan into their normal operational activities and programs.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

All participants



STEPS

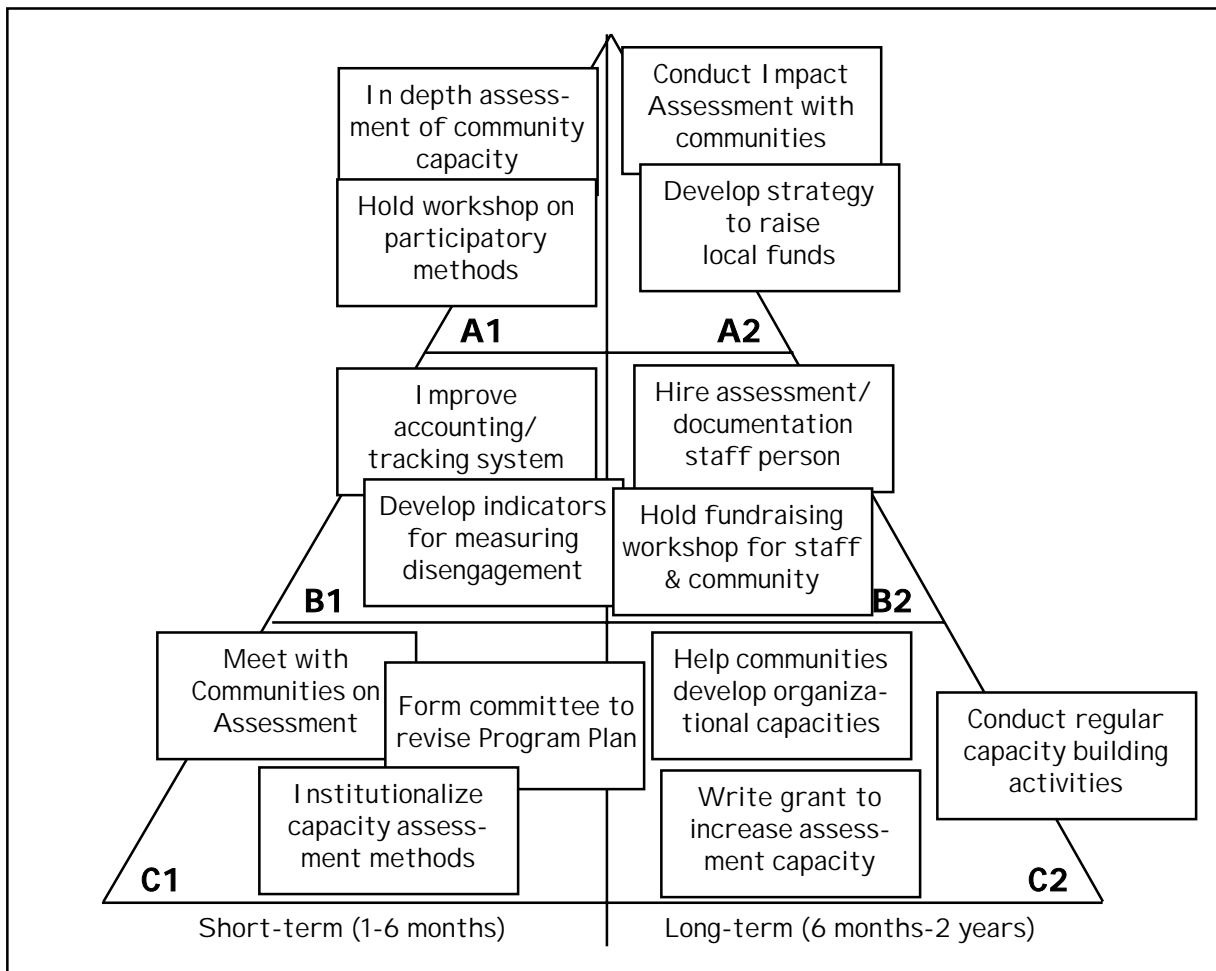
1. Present the Pyramid of Action diagram and explain the six different sections of the pyramid. Assign a code to each section (i.e. A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2).
2. Agree on the overall time period of the Action Plan (i.e. two years) and on the definition of short and long-term. Write these at the bottom of the pyramid.
3. Verify that the participants understand the division of roles and responsibilities represented by the different levels of the pyramid.
4. Divide the participants into the same small groups that made the action plans for each priority capacity area. If not already done, have the participants code the cards to the capacity area for which they were formulated. Ask each group to place their activity cards next to the Pyramid of Action by the sections that represent the level of support needed to achieve them.
5. As a group, eliminate any duplicates and synthesize similar activities. Then look at each section and decide together which actions need to be done in the short-term and which are long-term activities. Tape them in the corresponding sections of the pyramid.

PYRAMID OF ACTION: ASSIGNING ROLES (CONT.)

6. Ask participants if they think that the Action Plan is realistic. If not, make modifications, shift some cards from short-term to long-term, or eliminate some of the activities.
7. Ask the organization members to fill in a calendar with their normal schedule for undertaking major operational activities throughout the year. Place this calendar next to the Pyramid of Action.
8. Have the participants write the activities from the Action Plan onto their calendar. Make revisions or modifications as necessary to incorporate the capacity building activities into the work plan.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ? How much staff time can the organization shift from program work to organizational capacity building activities?
- ? What are the best periods in the program calendar to conduct capacity building activities? What periods are the worst?



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Capacity Building: an explicit intervention to improve an organization's performance in relation to its purpose, context, resources and sustainability. The aim is to develop a more effective, viable and autonomous local organization by creating the conditions in which change can take place from within the organization. Capacity building entails a self-managed process of organizational change, by which leaders and members learn to diagnose their organizational strengths and weaknesses, identify critical issues, and devise, apply and assess solutions.

Strengthening capacity requires not only new skills and changes in individual behavior, but also changes in organizational behavior. Therefore, investing only in training (or human capital) is not a sufficient capacity building strategy because it does not address critical organizational development issues (i.e. systems, structures, processes, etc.).

Community: a concept pertaining essentially to social relations, a group of people, less self-sufficient than society, but who have closer "associations" and deeper sympathy among members than society in general. Members of a community often share a common identity, tend to use a common language, have clear criteria for membership and understand the social boundaries within which they operate. There are social and psychological ties among members, and often a connection with a geographic area. While one of the functions of community is to promote common interest, relationships of dominance and dependency exist in communities as they do in all human organizations.

Community-Based Organization (CBO): an inclusive type of organization created and controlled by local people for their own benefit. These can be traditional organizations or more recently formed groups designed to help members meet their basic needs and further their common interests. Examples include self-help groups, savings and credit groups and village development committees.

Community Capacity: the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify and address social, economic, cultural and environmental issues affecting their members. Community capacity operates at the individual, group and organizational levels, and develops in stages. Community capacity requires supportive local organizational structures and processes.



APPENDICES

Community Development: a socio-political process undertaken by an organized group of people to improve the social, economic, cultural and/or environmental situation of their community.

Empowerment: capacity building contributes to local empowerment by changing the nature of relationships among community members and between community-based organizations and external agencies. Capacity building can empower traditionally marginalized groups (i.e. women, ethnic minorities, etc.) to more fully participate in community development and decision-making. Also, as members of CBOs learn to take initiatives, negotiate, mobilize local resources, diagnose problems, plan, evaluate and organize more effectively, they will acquire greater control over the local development process.

Institution: a stable and persistent pattern of norms and behaviors that serve some socially valued purpose. Most institutions are organizations that have acquired a special status and legitimacy for having satisfied people's needs over time.

Institutional Development: a continuation of organizational development that seeks to achieve legitimacy and sustainability.

Intermediary Organization: unlike community-based organizations, intermediary organizations are not set up by, controlled by or directly accountable to beneficiary groups. They are often legally registered organizations with professionally paid staff, and exist to further the interests of external constituencies. In the flow of development assistance from donors to intended beneficiaries, intermediary organizations perform a range of support roles, most often providing community development services such as credit, health care or agricultural extension.

Local: Locality implies a prevalence of face-to-face interpersonal relationships which creates opportunities for collective action, mutual assistance, and mobilizing and managing common resources. While the individual and household levels are the smallest unit of decision-making and collective action, they are not part of this concept of *local*. Decisions and actions related to sustainable development taken solely at this level are not likely to be effective or long lasting unless they are meshed with what other households and individuals are doing at the group, community or "local" level.

Organization: a structure of recognized and accepted roles which unites a group of individuals who are working towards a common purpose. These roles are joined in a logical fashion so that, taken together, they discharge the work required to meet the organizational purpose. Individuals within organizations occupy roles with specific responsibilities which are integrally linked to those of other members.

Organizational Development: a process of strengthening the capacity of organizations to be autonomous and effective in achieving their goals. It requires helping organizations identify the combination of system, structure, style and environmental factors that limit performance. It also entails helping the organization select the right mix of tools, methods and strategies to overcome these limiting factors.

Phasing Out: a process of changing the relationship between a community organization and an intermediary organization to a partnership between two independent organizations, characterized by support offered in both directions while working towards a common goal. Phasing out consists, among others, of a progressive reduction of support needed by and provided to the community organization.

Viability: for organizations, this means reaching a stage where further development can occur without undue dependence on outside support, particularly funding support. Organizational viability refers to core costs being met, access to funds, strategic planning, positive relationships with other organizations and efficient financial management.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 2: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Bunch, Roland. *Two Ears of Corn: A Guide to People-Centered Agricultural Improvement*. Oklahoma City: World Neighbors. 1982.

To order, contact:
World Neighbors
4127 NW 122nd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73120-8869
USA
telephone: (405) 752-9700
fax: (405) 752-9393
email: order@wn.org
www.wn.org

CRWRC. *Partnering to Build and Measure Organizational Capacity: Lessons from NGOs Around the World*. Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. 1997.

To order, contact:
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE
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fax: (616) 224-0806

Eade, Deborah. *Capacity Building: An Approach to People-Centred Development*. Oxford: Oxfam. 1997.

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email: bebc@bebc.co.uk

Fowler, Alan. *Striking a Balance: A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of Non-Governmental Organisations in International Development*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd. 1997.

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www.earthscan.co.uk

Fowler, Alan. *Participatory Self Assessment of NGO Capacity*. INTRAC Occasional Papers Series 10. Oxford: INTRAC. 1995.

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telephone: +44 (0) 1865-201-851
fax: +44 (0) 1865-201-852
email: intrac@gn.apc.org

IUCN. *An Approach to Assessing Progress Toward Sustainability Tools and Training Series*. Cambridge: IUCN. 1997.

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fax: +44 1223-277-175
www.iucn.org
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Pretty, J., I. Guijt, I. Scoones, J. Thompson. *A Trainer's Guide for Participatory Learning and Action*. London.: IIED. 1995.

To order, contact:
International Institute for Environment and Development
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telephone: +44 (0)171-388-2117
email: bookshop@iied.org
www.iied.org

Uphoff, Norman. *Local Institutions and Participation for Sustainable Development*. IIED Gatekeeper Series (SA31). London: IIED.

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World Neighbors. *Assessing & Strengthening the Sustainability of Community Development Organizations*. World Neighbors In Action. Oklahoma City: World Neighbors. 1999.

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