



4. Feedback and Capacity Planning Workshop

Notes

4.1 Introduction

Project planning and capacity building very often use rational or mechanical approaches. These methods try to clarify and analyse problems to design logical solutions or interventions. Benefits of methods like the Logical Framework are that they provide clear overview of higher goals and concrete activities, and that they give clear indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Downsides of rational and mechanical approaches are that they seem very complicated and very often do not allow for much flexibility. Participants of rational or mechanical design processes often complain of the dullness and lack of creativity in the process and results. It often does not inspire them and at times this seems to create some distance between the design and reality. Neither do they have build-in participation to create commitment and ownership of the plans.

In participatory capacity building of NGOs it is critical to create full participation and involvement in the process. Conducting events to assess, analyse and develop organisation's capacity already provides opportunities for organisational learning. These events must be highly creative and inspiring for participants to own the outcomes and directions of capacity building. Therefore we have chosen not to over-rationalise the processes. During the analysis our approach intends to simplify rather than to make things more complex.

In the feedback and planning workshop the participants present and interpret the assessment results from the assessment report. This allows them to prioritise the capacity areas that need most attention in capacity building. Next step in the workshop is to envision the future capacity: what do we want to see in place 3-5 years from now? The process continues with identifying blocks that keep the organisation reaching their envisioned capacity. This is followed by a session to develop strategic directions: new avenues of capacity building. The workshop ends with deciding on the first steps to start implementing the plan.

This feedback and planning workshop builds on the results from the capacity assessment of an organisation. The methods used in this workshop are based upon Technology of Participation[®] (ToP[®]) Group Facilitation Methods and the Participatory Strategic Planning process developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA).

This Feedback and Strategic Capacity Planning event is designed as a one-day workshop to do with an NGO. This section presents the preparations for the workshop and the steps for each session. It uses some of the materials in the Appendices and files on the PCB cd-rom.

4.2 Preparations and Program Overview

Preparing the NGO

We assume considerable time was spent with the NGO to discuss the whole process of Participatory Capacity Building. At least we expect the NGO to know the steps it will go through.

After the Participatory Capacity Assessment we assume the organisation has received the first PCA Report. Preferably this report has been discussed with the organisation, and a number of staff have been involved in analysing the implications.

For the feedback and capacity planning workshop again it is important to look at the composition of the Planning Team. Unlike with the assessment team this time it is most helpful to focus on technical and managerial staff only. Members of the planning team could be staff or board members of the organisation, both from junior and senior levels. Again the team should have a reasonable gender balance. The planning team should consist of 5 to 10 people, who will be most involved with the implementation of the capacity building.

Needed Materials

- 20+ empty flip charts
- Markers (brown, green, blue) for all participants
- At least 100 empty half sheets as empty cards for brainstorming
- "Sticky Wall" / or other means of presenting and grouping cards with ideas (e.g. using masking tape, adhesive spray mount etc.)
- Presentation Preparation Instructions copied for all participants (see appendix I. or PCB cd-rom).

Overview Sheets of Capacity Scores

Before the workshop the facilitator must prepare and copy the overview sheets of all capacity scores for this organisation (see appendix G. for outline of these sheets or the PCB cd-rom.)

These sheets consist of:

- An overview of the capacity and consensus scores for the 7 capacity areas, compared with other organisations from the cohort. *To be copied for all participants.*
- 7 separate sheets with all the capacity and consensus scores of the different capacity items within each capacity area. These tables include the actual statements that were used during the assessment to score the capacity in each of the items. *Sheet for HRM to be copied for all participants, other sheets to be copied only twice.*
- An interpretation sheet to clarify the standardised scores. *To be copied for all participants.*

One (experienced) group facilitator can easily facilitate this workshop. However it is helpful to have an assistant who can co-facilitate parts and who makes notes of the group discussions.

Flip charts to be prepared

- Workshop Program
- "Where are we now", "Next Steps", "Workshop Objectives" and "Ground Rules"
- Overview Score sheet for Human Resource Management to demonstrate a presentation of assessment results
- 7 sheets with empty frames for presentation of assessment results
- Overview of assessment results in all capacity areas, compared with peer organisations in the cohort, and general conclusions

Preparation of Consensus Workshop Method

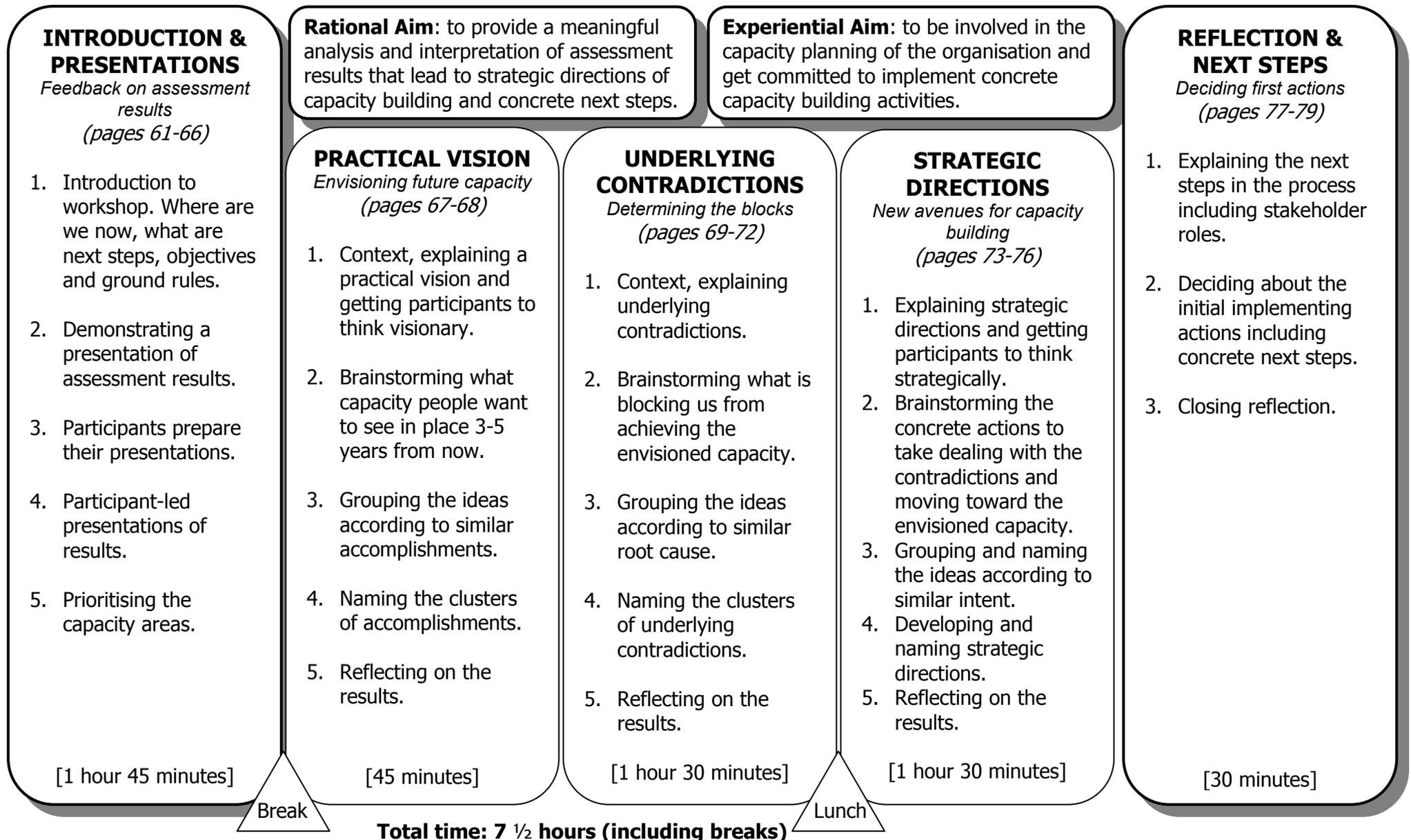
This concerns the sessions Underlying Contradictions and Strategic Directions:

- Prepare 8 coloured Symbol cards for grouping, tag-naming and naming the underlying contradictions;
- Prepare 9 empty 1/2 flip charts for the action arenas in strategic direction workshop: spray them with adhesive spray mount;
- Prepare 4 "arrow"-flip charts for naming the strategic directions;
- Make workshop instruction cards: "one idea per card", "write big", "3-7 words per idea";
- Make cards for introducing stories.

Program Overview

8.30	Welcome and Introduction
8.45	Presentation and Interpretation of PCA Scores
10.15	Break
10.45	Practical Vision: Envisioning the future
11.30	Underlying Contradictions: Determining the Blocks
13.00	Lunch
14.00	Strategic Directions: New Avenues for Capacity Building
15.30	Next steps and Closing Reflection
16.00	Closing

4.3 Overview: Feedback and Capacity Planning Workshop



4.3.1 Introduction to the Feedback and Planning Workshop

In this part, in 15 minutes, introduce to the group:

1. Where are we in the Capacity Assessment Process?
2. Next steps in the process
3. Workshop Objectives
4. Role of the Facilitator and Ground rules

1. Where are we?

Capacity was defined as the ability of individuals and organisations to perform functions effectively, efficiently and sustainably. Capacity is the power of something (a system, an organisation, a person) to perform or to produce.

Capacity Assessment workshop was performed to collect data about the organisation's capacity by groups discussions and individual 'scoring' of capacity areas. We used the Participatory Organisational Evaluation Tool (POET).

Capacity areas of NGOs that we looked at were:

- Human Resource Management: how you deal with staff
- Financial Resource Management: getting and dealing with money
- Equitable Participation: involvement of target groups
- Sustainability of Program Benefits: how your projects impact
- Partnering: effective liaisons with other stakeholders
- Organisational Learning: sharing and learning from information
- Strategic Management / Governance: looking at the bigger picture

Assessment Report was compiled by our organisation with a complete picture of the results, added with general conclusions on the capacity of the organisations.

2. Next steps

Feedback on results and Planning Capacity Building

Today's workshop has the following parts:

- Presentation of the assessment results by members of the group
- Interpretation of results and prioritising the capacity areas to focus on
- Envisioning the future capacity
- Identifying the underlying contradictions that block us from realising our vision of Capacity
- Developing Capacity Building Strategies
- Deciding on next steps for implementation

The capacity building process continues...

After this workshop the organisation will:

- Develop a concrete and realistic action plan for capacity building, based on identified internal and external resources;
- Start implementing the capacity plan assisted by our organisation and peer organisations;
- Sustain the capacity by ongoing monitoring and bench marking.

3. Workshop Objectives

- To share the assessment results with the organisation;
- To create greater insight and awareness about differences in opinions on capacity areas and enhance the level of consensus;
- To prioritise the areas of capacity that need most attention according to the NGO's objectives, internal structure and external environment;
- To create a broad vision on the future capacity, also related to capacities of peer organisations within the cohort;
- To explore and analyse the root causes of weaknesses in certain capacity areas and blocks that keep us from building capacity;
- To formulate implementing strategies to build the capacity based on real commitments;
- To explore internal and external resources to use for capacity building;
- To create initial steps to start implementing the capacity building plan;

To summarise this, the feedback and planning workshop intends to provide a meaningful analysis and interpretation of assessment results that lead to an appropriate, realistic and concrete capacity building plan.

4. Facilitator's role and Ground rules

Workshop facilitator

During this feedback and planning workshop the facilitator will lead some focused group discussions and brainstorm sessions. The role of the facilitator is to:

- Guide the group during the discussions by asking questions and probing;
- Contribute to the presentation or interpretation of assessment results when needed;
- Allow full participation of all assessment team members;
- Keep time and stay focused on the topics at hand, and to
- Clarify the questions and process whenever needed.

Ground rules

In order for the feedback and planning workshop to be successful the group needs to open for discussion and sharing of ideas.

Some ground rules for participants we would like to propose:

- Participate in the discussions
- Leave space for others to contribute
- Be open and sincere about the organisations capacity
- (add more ground rules from the group)

4.3.2 Presentation and Interpretation of Participatory Capacity Assessment Scores

CONTEXT

Objective of presenting and interpreting the assessment scores is to create more insight in the organisation's capacity.

Best way to do so is by having participants present the results themselves, which will make them more involved and helps them to present findings in their own words.

By the end of this part the group will have

- a clear overview of the most important assessment results;
- interpreted the results to allow feedback and give meaning;
- prioritised the most important capacity areas, based on the findings.

[5 minutes]

Rational Aim: To present and interpret the assessment results and to prioritise the capacity areas to focus on in planning.

Experiential Aim: To get involved in the capacity planning and to really understand the capacity of the organisation.

DEMONSTRATING A PRESENTATION

(page 64)

On beforehand the facilitator must prepare the sheets with overview of capacity scores.

1. Read and interpret HRM assessment results.
2. Look for 3 strongest and 3 weakest items and for areas of low consensus.
3. Brainstorm possible causes of strengths, weaknesses and items of low consensus.
4. Brainstorm specific recommendations in this capacity area.
5. Write most important items on cards.

[15 minutes]

PREPARE PRESENTATIONS

(page 65)

1. Participants sign up for capacity area to present.
2. Clarify assignment and hand out instructions and overview sheets.
3. Small group preparations: pairs or trios (or some individually) prepare their presentation flip charts.
4. Checking progress by clarifying process and emphasising on personal input of participants.

[20 minutes]

PRESENTING RESULTS

(page 66)

1. Each of 6 capacity areas to be presented by one participant: read flip chart (2.5 minutes).
2. Ask for questions of clarity.
3. Ask for any additions from the plenary.
4. Final presentation by facilitator of results of all capacity areas, compared to peer organisations in the cohort.

[35 minutes]

REFLECTION

(page 66)

1. Focus the group on the results by reading the most important causes and recommendations (½ sheets)
2. Which results are most surprising to you? Straightforward?
3. How do you see some capacity areas related to each other?
4. Which of the causes of weaknesses and strengths seem most important?
5. Which of the recommendations would be most effective?
6. Looking at the current reality of your organisation, which capacity areas seem to be most important to focus on?

[15 minutes]

Total time: 1 ½ hours

Demonstrating a presentation

Hand out copies of HRM capacity score sheet and interpretation sheet to all participants for them to read with you.

1. Prepare a copy of the HRM scores on flip chart (see example on the right upper side). Read total capacity score and the capacity scores for each item to the group. Explain the meaning of scores (refer to interpretation sheet): scores below 60 show a very weak capacity; between 60 and 70 refer to more or less acceptable level of capacity, which needs improvement; above 71 and particularly over 80 shows very strong capacity items.
2. Mark the capacity scores higher than 80 with a "+" and capacity scores below 70 with a "-". Write down 3 strongest and 3 weakest items (with their scores) on the presentation flip chart (see example on the right down side).
3. Look for areas of low consensus (put circle around any consensus score below 60) and write down the areas of low consensus, with the scores.
4. Ask group for possible reasons or causes for strong capacity items and write down.
5. Ask group for possible causes or reasons of weak capacity items and write down.
6. Ask group for possible causes or reasons for low consensus on capacity items and write down.
7. Ask group for specific recommendations in the area of Human Resource Management.
8. Reflect on most important causes for low capacity and recommendations and write these on 1/2 sheets.

(Time: 15 minutes)

Human Resource Management		Cap. Score	Cons. Score
Total Standardised Scores in this Capacity Area		77,31	81,96
Scores in this Capacity Area:			
Capacity Item:	Assessment Statement:	Cap. Score	Cons. Score
1. Staff training	<i>We routinely offer staff training.</i>	+ 88	55
2. Training effect	<i>Our staff training directly contributes to the achievement of our Organisation's priorities.</i>	70	66
3. Staff skills	<i>We have the appropriate staff skills to achieve our mission.</i>	73	75
4. Staff numbers	<i>We have the appropriate staff numbers to achieve our mission.</i>	- 65	62
5. Staff diversity	<i>Our staff reflects the diversity of our constituents.</i>	+ 92	67
<i>Effective:</i>			
<i>The following systems or practices help us to achieve desirable levels of staff retention:</i>			
6. Recruitment	<i>Recruitment</i>	+ 82	67
7. Compensation	<i>Compensation (salary and benefits)</i>	77	64
8. Person evaluation	<i>Personnel evaluation</i>	73	46
9. Promotion	<i>Promotion (professional advancement)</i>	- 63	44
10. Conflict resolution	<i>Grievance and conflict resolution policy</i>	75	62
11. Staffing	<i>Staffing (allocation of tasks and responsibilities)</i>	+ 85	69
12. Supervision	<i>Supervision</i>	+ 82	60
13. Superv. Interactions	<i>Supervisory practices enhance our staff's capacity to meet the Organisation's objectives.</i>	+ 80	100

Human Resource Management *Total scores: cap. 77, cons. 81*

Strong capacity items:

- Staff training (88)
- Staff diversity (92)
- Staffing (85)

Reasons or Causes:

- we look after staff
- we honour skills
- we are well organised - membership org.
- well defined roles & responsibilities

Weak capacity items:

- Staff numbers (65)
- Promotion opportunities
- Staff skills (73)

Reasons or Causes:

- low funded
- difficult to get funds
- "flat" organisation
- few different jobtypes
- new types of projects require new skills

Low consensus on:

- Staff training (55)
- Personnel evaluation (46)
- Conflict resolution (44)

Reasons or Causes:

- some people go for training more often
- personal grievances or conflicts
- not so well defined systems of evaluation

Recommendations:

- Do more research on career planning possibilities
- Hold staff meeting on conflict resolution policy

PREPARING THE PRESENTATIONS

1. Participants sign up for presentations

The presentations of assessment results will be prepared and performed by workshop participants. In principle, participants sign up to prepare presentations of their own choice. However, for the presentation is important to have people in the small groups that are well informed and knowledgeable on a certain capacity area. At least people should have a specific interest to work on a certain topic.

In general it works best to have people prepare presentations in pairs or trios. When there are less than 12 participants, facilitators may opt to have people prepare presentations individually or in pairs, preparing 2 presentations per group. When participant numbers fall short, the facilitator may also join presentations, however s/he should not make subjective interpretations or recommendations.

2. Give instructions

All small groups (or individuals) should prepare one presentation on the capacity area they signed up for.

1. Read and interpret the capacity assessment results.
2. Look for 3 strongest and 3 weakest items and for areas of low consensus.
3. Brainstorm possible causes of strengths, weaknesses and items of low consensus.
4. Brainstorm specific recommendations in this capacity area.

Hand out the instruction sheet (see appendix I. and PCB cd-rom) and the copied sheets with overview of capacity scores for each capacity area. For each group, prepare a flip charts with the outline for the presentation.

3. Small group preparations

Capacity Area	Total scores: cap. _____, cons. _____
<i>Strong capacity items:</i> ▪ ▪	<i>Reasons or Causes:</i>
<i>Weak capacity items:</i> ▪ ▪	<i>Reasons or Causes:</i>
<i>Low consensus on:</i> ▪ ▪	<i>Reasons or Causes:</i>
<i>Recommendations:</i> ▪ ▪	

4. Check progress

Participants have 20 minutes to prepare their presentation. Check with the groups or individuals if they understand the assignment.

Emphasise on the interpretation of the scores, refer to the interpretation sheet.

Refer to the assessment statements on the overview sheets to clarify particular Capacity Items.

Emphasise on personal interpretation of scores and concrete and real analysis of the results.

From each group have one participant prepare the actual presentation.

Presentation of assessment results

Small group representatives will present the assessment results of each of 6 capacity areas. Have participants simply read the flip charts, and wait for questions of clarity before further explanation. Take about 2.5 minutes for each presentation.

Ask for questions of clarity from the group. Emphasise clarification only to prevent debates. Ask for brief explanations.

Ask for any additions from the group for causes of strengths, weaknesses, low consensus and recommendations. There are no wrong answers. Emphasise on collection of different opinions as a foundation for planning capacity building. As a group: decide on most important causes for low capacity, low consensus and recommendations, and write these on 1/2 sheets.

Final presentation by facilitator of results of all capacity areas, compared to peer organisations in the cohort. Prepare a flip chart with general overview (see sheet with overview of scores). For example:

Example:

	Capacity Score	Cohort Means	Consensus Score	Cohort Means
1. Human Resource Management	77	75	80	76
2. Financial Resource Management	62	60	82	78
3. Equitable Participation	73	70	83	76
4. Sustainability of Program Benefits	65	75	71	78
5. Partnering	66	68	83	78
6. Organisational Learning	72	65	83	80
7. Governance / Strategic Management	77	68	88	75
Total average scores	71	68	82	77

Briefly present the ranking of the organisation within the cohort. Present general conclusions about the performance of the organisation compared to others: which areas are lower and which are higher than peer organisations? Ask for general reactions or clarification of position of organisation from the group.

(Time: 35 minutes)

Reflecting

After presenting and interpreting the results we must focus on specific capacity areas that are most important given the present situation of the organisation. Aim of this part is to come up with 2-5 capacity areas that really need most attention. This does not fully exclude other areas from capacity planning, but it will direct the thinking during visioning the future capacity and further analysis.

Conduct a focused conversation about the presented assessment results.

1. Focus the group on the results by reading the most important causes and recommendations (the 1/2 sheets that were written for each capacity area).
2. Which results are most surprising to you? What was more straightforward or common knowledge?
3. Looking at the results in different capacity areas, how do you see them related to each other?
4. Which of the mentioned causes of weaknesses is most pressing according to you?
5. Which of the mentioned reasons of strong capacity seems most important?
6. Which of the recommendations would be most effective?
7. Looking at the current reality of your organisation, which capacity areas seem to be most important to focus on? What are current problems that need to be solved in this area? How will influence the organisation?

(Time: 15 minutes)

4.3.3 Practical Vision: Envisioning the Future Capacity

<p>CONTEXT (page 68)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State the purpose or aim of the Vision Workshop. 2. Highlight the Workshop Question: <i>What capacity do we want to see in place 5 years from now?</i> 3. Briefly outline the process and time frame of the workshop. 4. Direct the group's thinking into the future by visualising or imaging in "their mind's eye". 5. Have people write their individual answers directly on a piece of paper. <p>[5 minutes]</p>	<p>Workshop Question: What capacity do we want to see in place 3-5 years from now?</p>			<p>RESOLVE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus the group on this consensus by reading all the title cards. 2. Which of these titles is most vivid for you? Which is hardest to imagine / fuzziest? 3. What is the significance of the change we have described? 4. Discuss the next steps. Next we will identify the obstacles that block this vision. <p>[10 minutes]</p>
	<p>Rational Aim: To identify the group's hopes and dreams on the future capacity.</p>	<p>Experiential Aim: To feel a common practical vision of the future.</p>	<p>BRAINSTORM (page 68)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have the people read through their ideas of what they see completed 3-5 years from now. Ask them to start the 5 most important ones. 2. Go around the room and get each person's idea, one at a time. 3. Write them directly on a flip chart, in their words, then go to the next person. (at least 25 should be brainstormed in total) 4. Ask for questions of clarity on the generated ideas. <p>[10 minutes]</p>	

Total time: 45 minutes

The Practical Vision: Context

The Practical vision provides an opportunity for individual participants to share with each other their hopes and aspirations for the future capacity of the organisation.

What a Vision is:

- Visions are dreams and hopes that are real to us. They are what we deeply believe must be in place. They exceed our grasp and often seem impossible to achieve. They require that people take a leap out beyond what is, to a future they imagine.
- Each participant carries some level of anticipation and hope for the future of a capacity, like pieces of a puzzle. Each individual's piece is needed to create the Shared Vision of the group.
- Sometimes the vision is very clear, other times it is more like feelings and difficult to state precisely.

What a Vision is not:

- A Vision is not a mission. The Mission is a statement of what the organisation is about – what business they are in.
- A Vision is not a goal. Goals are part of strategies and tactical accomplishments and are formed toward the end of the planning process. Goals are quantifiable, realistic and achievable.

How the Vision Functions

Our visions are extremely powerful and they motivate us. They emerge from the depth of our consciousness and when stated objectively, they fuel us with energy and endurance.

In the capacity building process the Vision will encourage people to think outside their box and think of changes that are needed for their organisation. Their vision will be based upon the assessment results, but also carries their deeper hopes and aspirations.

This session uses the "Vision Workshop", a session that is part of Technology of Participation® (ToP®) Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP), a process developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA).

Facilitating the Vision Workshop

In the context of the session lead the group into the future by some kind of visualisation or scenario building, to get people think visionary: *"Imagine it is 5 years from now and a documentary is being made to describe our successful organisation. Imagine you are hosting the documentation team. Lead the group through a series of questions, as they silently picture the answers in their imagination or mind's eye. Have them write their answers on a piece of paper. You can include questions about the priority capacity areas, number of staff, skills available, financial systems, events happening, stories being told, people who are involved, physical structures, economic or fiscal matters, how decisions are made, resources, the way target groups are involved, comparison of the capacity to peer NGOs etc."*

When brainstorming their ideas on flip chart, ask them to come up with hard ideas: specific things, rather than soft ideas. E.g. *All project officers skilled in facilitation methods, rather than more facilitation skills.*

Example of a visual outcome of this part:

Envisioned Capacity

- @ All project officers trained in facilitation skills
- # New financial system and procedures in place
- % 3 new computers for our secretariat
- & Sustainable funds from a variety of donors
- & 51 board mbrs gone through fund-raising course
- % New office in more convenient place (transport)
- @ All target groups trained in facilitation methods
- !! Ongoing staff reflection in monthly meetings
- <?> All staff have been chosen as staff person of the month at least once!
- (^) Membership of 5 networks established
- (^) Chosen as NGO of the year by Nango
- <?> New job descriptions and job performance proc
- <?> All staff have career plans and yearly follow up
- <?> Competitive Salaries that can hold staff
- % 2 new project cars to visit projects more often
- # Administrator has all invoices by end of month
- !! Rotating 'chair' of meetings to enhance part'n
- (^) Clear understand'ng of core business presented

What capacity do we want to see in place in 3-5 years?

- <?> Well managed, rewarded and motivated human resources
- (^) Well formulated, marketed successful corporate image
- % Enabling org'l environment established and kept in place
- # Well working financial system
- & Sustainable funds from various donors
- @ High levels of participation of Target groups
- !! High levels of participation in own organisation

4.3.4 Underlying Contradictions: Determining the Blocks

<p>CONTEXT (page 70)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State the purpose or aim of the Contradictions Workshop. 2. Highlight the Workshop Question: <i>What is blocking us from moving toward our envisioned capacity?</i> 3. Briefly outline the process and time frame of the workshop. 4. Introduce <i>Not "lack of"</i> or abstractions, but concrete blocks. Give examples. 5. Direct the group's thinking into the contradicting thinking with a story. <p>[10 minutes]</p>	<p>Workshop Question: <i>What is blocking us from moving toward our envisioned capacity?</i></p>		<p>RESOLVE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrange the titles with the cards under them – longest columns at the left & shortest at the right. Read the titles. 2. Which of these titles did you expect to see? Which was a surprise? 3. Which call for closer analysis and need more information to be assessed? 4. Discuss the next steps. <p>Next we will develop strategies to take away contradictions and move to our envisioned capacity.</p> <p>[15 minutes]</p>
	<p>Rational Aim: To identify obstacles to our envisioned capacity and analyse root causes.</p>	<p>Experiential Aim: To feel sure we have identified the real issues in the organisation.</p>	
<p>BRAINSTORM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individually list 8-10 obstacles that block us from our vision. List one for each column of the vision. Select 5 most important ideas. 2. Meet in mini-teams to share ideas and write each on a card. Also have them work from the initial cards with causes of low capacity. (35-45 are needed from the whole group.) Write 1 idea per card, write big and 3-7 words. 3. Pass up first round of clearest cards. <p>[15 minutes]</p>	<p>GROUP</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form 4-6 pairs that clearly go together. Look for issues, which share a common root cause. 2. Ask for cards that are different and develop clusters. 3. Discern the contradictions of each cluster by quickly naming the block with a 1-2 word tag name. 4. Mark remaining cards with tag and pass up. <p>[20 minutes]</p>	<p>NAME (page 70)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk through the largest cluster first. Ask: "what is dysfunctional? What has gone wrong?" 2. Give the cluster a 3-5 word name or title, which answers the Focus Question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Name the block</i> ▪ <i>How it blocks</i> ▪ <i>What it blocks</i> 3. Repeat naming process for remaining clusters, working to the smallest cluster. <p>[30 minutes]</p>	

Total time: 1 ½ hours

CONTRADICTION WORKSHOP: INTRODUCING STORIES

Introducing Not to use "lack of"

In the workshop context it is helpful to remind participants not to use the phrase "lack of". The following story is helpful to tell, after individual brainstorming but before the meeting in mini-teams to share ideas and write on cards.



"In this session, we are looking for patterns, attitudes, structures, and blocks, which we encounter. We are looking for what is there – not what is missing. It is like watering your plants. The water is running from the hose and it stops. Usually you don't just stare at the hose and shout, "There's no water!". However, you would turn and check to see if there's a kink in the hose or if someone stepped on it or if someone turned off the water. In this exercise we are looking for the kinks or blocks rather than announcing what is missing."

In place of "Lack Of", describe the situation with words like:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| ▪ Outdated | ▪ Unbalanced | ▪ Neglected |
| ▪ Fragmented | ▪ Unmotivated | ▪ Narrow |
| ▪ Overlapping | ▪ Conflicting | ▪ Obsolete |
| ▪ Inaccessible | ▪ Insecure | ▪ Weakened |
| ▪ Unrealistic | ▪ Disorganised | ▪ Devalued |
| ▪ Uncoordinated | ▪ Unclear | ▪ Pervasive |
| ▪ Reluctant | ▪ Restricted | ▪ Misused |
| ▪ Disjointed | ▪ Sporadic | ▪ Excessive |
| ▪ Confusing | ▪ Inflexible | ▪ Extensive |
| ▪ Debilitating | ▪ Discouraged | ▪ Biased |
| ▪ Undeveloped | ▪ Contradicting | ▪ Closed |

Introducing Naming

This following story is helpful to illustrate contradictions. It can be used after brainstorming and grouping as a context for the naming step.

"Once upon a time there were two villages connected by a single road. One village produced food for itself and its neighbour; the other provided both with hunting equipment. One day a huge dragon settled across the road, blocking travel between the two villages. Villagers attacked it with spears, which splintered against the beast's thick hide. They tried to lasso it, but the dragon's flames burned the ropes to ashes. Week after week they laboured, sacrificing many lives and finally giving up in despair. Their food was depleted and the supply of hunting equipment exhausted in the battle against the dragon. One day a young villager climbed a mountain to observe the dragon and discovered a remarkable thing; a farmer from a distant village was dumping garbage right under the dragon's nose. An envoy was soon dispatched to ask the farmer to move his dump to a remote field. The dragon relocated to this new feeding area, and the two villages were once again able to travel the road and serve each other."

When we look at naming the contradiction in this story:

- What is the block?
- How does it block?
- What does it block?

In the naming step we will name every cluster of cards in this way, naming the block, how it blocks and blocks.

Give an example to the group. E.g. *undeveloped governance skills in board hinder effective internal and external communications.*

THE UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS

Contradictions are to be found in the blocks and irritants that restrain organisations from building capacity. Discovering them changes one's perception and produces confidence. Underlying contradictions connect lacking capacity to negative patterns or behaviour in the organisation.

Facilitating the Underlying Contradictions Workshop

Context

- Refer to the presentation and interpretation of the assessment results: what were the priority capacity areas to focus on?
- The Contradictions Workshop asks the question:
What are the issues and obstacles that block our progress toward our shared envisioned future capacity?
- We try to look for a phrase that describes the current reality rather than the "lack of" something. Moreover we try to focus on blocks that are in our sphere of influence rather than items over which we have little direct influence.

Brainstorm

- Ask the group to brainstorm what they see as blocks or obstacles to achieving each of the vision elements, and also let them focus on the mentioned causes of weak capacity and low consensus. One side of the room can start elements that block the vision of capacity and the other side on the causes of weaknesses. For this referral ensure visibility of the vision elements and the ½ sheets with most important causes of low capacity or consensus.
- Push for being specific. One-word items such as *motivation, salaries or bad governance* etc. do not provide enough specific data. More helpful are phrases that point to examples, such as, *undeveloped staff moral*, rather than *motivation*.
- It is important to avoid pointing fingers of blame at people. It is a pattern of behaviour that we are looking for. Ask for real and objective examples in the scope of their organisation.

Group

- When sticking up the cards, ask for questions of clarity.
- Cluster the cards as they are organised, rather than placing them in columns. This acknowledges the interrelatedness of the brainstorm items.
- Pair and cluster by looking for items that share a common root cause, but within the cluster do not try to arrange a hierarchy.
- When placing symbol cards, name the arena of each cluster. That is, have the group tag name the block or common root cause for each cluster.

Name

- Introduce the naming story.
- What is the breakdown in this arena? What must we change if we are to move toward the vision?
- Look for a 3-5 word phrase that names the block, how it blocks capacity and what it is blocking, e.g. *undeveloped governance skills in board hinder effective internal and external communications*.
- When energy in the group is getting low, have names made in small teams and present to the group for consensus.

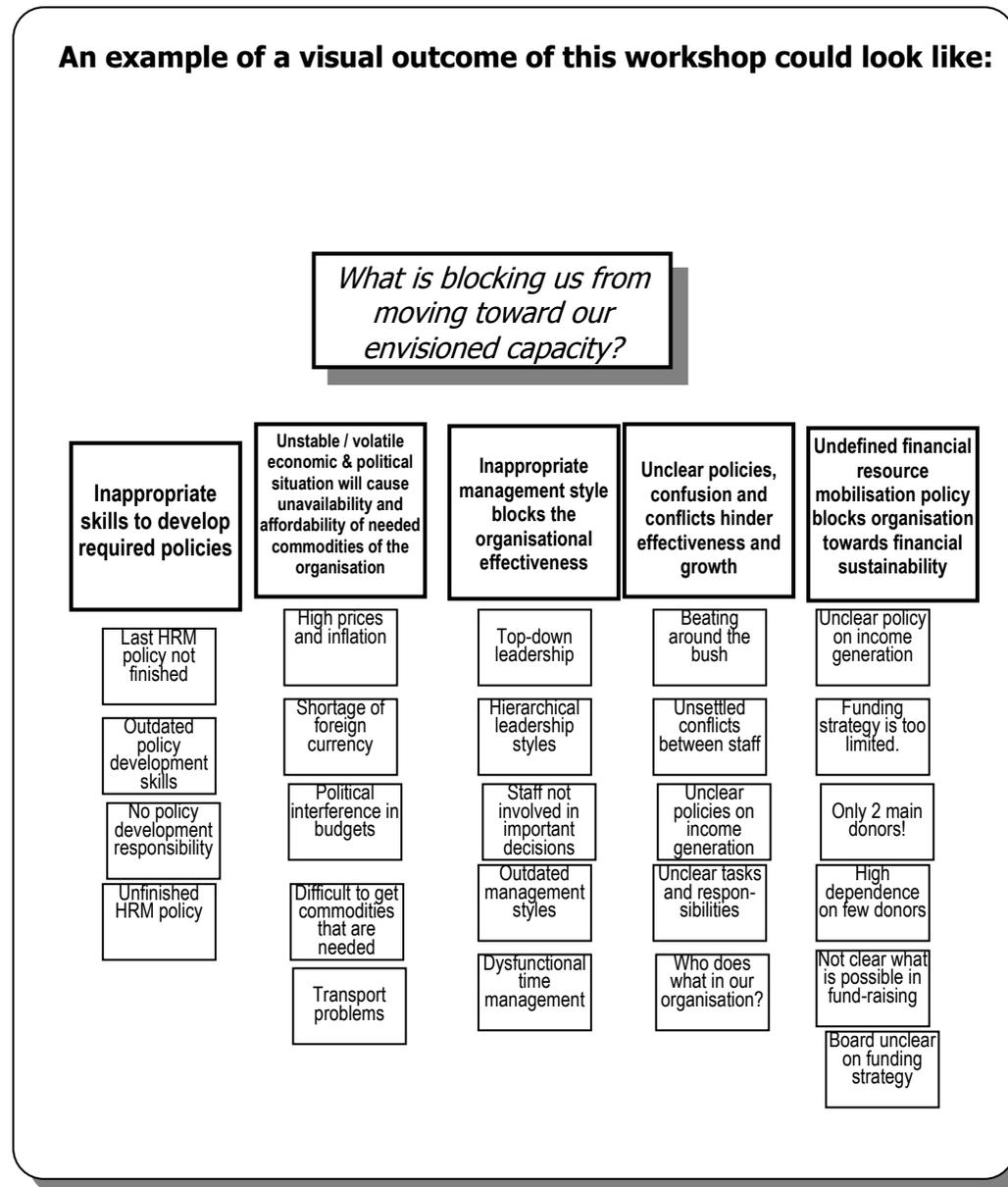
Resolve

- Read the workshop question and have the column titles read.
- Help the group step back and look at the whole. Are these our Underlying Contradictions? Is this what is blocking us?
- Which contradictions call for a deeper analysis?
- What kind of information do we need to make this closer assessment?
- Next we will come up with strategies how to take away the blocks and move to our envisioned capacity.

This session uses the "Underlying Contradictions Workshop", a session that is part of Technology of Participation® (ToP®) Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP), a process developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA).

UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS: VISUAL OVERVIEW

An example of a visual outcome of this workshop could look like:



4.3.5 Strategic Directions: New Avenues for Capacity Building

CONTEXT

(page 74)

1. State the purpose or aim of the Strategic Directions Workshop.
2. Highlight the Workshop Question: *How can we deal with our contradictions and move toward our envisioned future capacity?*
3. Briefly outline the process and time frame of the workshop.
4. Introduce Strategic Directions as part of capacity building.
5. Direct the group's Strategic Thinking with stories.

[15 minutes]

Workshop Question: *How can we deal with our contradictions and move toward our envisioned future capacity?*

Rational Aim: To identify new directions for capacity building, based on our priorities and organisational issues.

Experiential Aim: To feel shared directions for capacity building that are real to all.

BRAINSTORM

1. Individually list concrete actions that will lead to the intended capacity. Select 5 most important actions.
2. Meet in mini-teams to share ideas and write each on a card. Also have participants look at the ½ sheets with recommendations from the 1st session. (35-45 are needed from the whole group.) Write 1 idea per card, write big and 3-7 words.
3. Pass up first round of clearest cards.

[20 minutes]

GROUP

1. Form 4-6 pairs that clearly go together. Look for similar intent.
2. Ask for cards that are different and develop clusters in boxes (there may be fewer than 9 boxes with data in them).
3. Discern focus of each column by quickly giving a 1-2 word tag.
4. Mark remaining cards with tag and pass up.

[20 minutes]

NAME

(page 74)

1. Discern a strategic direction. Locate 2-4 boxes that together describe a common direction.
2. Group remaining boxes. Locate a second group of boxes and then a third group (or even 4th).
3. Name the strategic directions. Name all groups with 3-5 word phrases, beginning with an "ing"-word.

[20 minutes]

RESOLVE

(This part may be integrated with the next session)

1. Focus the group by reading all Strategic Directions.
2. Which action is the key thrust?
3. Which one supports the key thrust?
4. Which actions build on our strength?
5. Which venture new directions?
6. Where were the breakthroughs?
7. How have we dealt with the underlying contradictions?
8. How did we cover our priority capacity areas?

Next will be reflecting and deciding next steps.

[15 minutes]

Total time: 1 ½ hours

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS WORKSHOP: INTRODUCTIONS

Introducing Strategic Directions to start capacity building

In capacity building, many organisations focus on quick and tangible results that may not have long term impact. They look for instant solutions and continue business as usual.

Another way of looking at capacity building is the integrated or strategic approach. The organisation must try and formulate a limited number of capacity building directions, which will be walked along for 3-5 years. These directions will be quite broad or general, but they will hold a number of concrete ideas that are new and bold examples of doing things differently in the organisation. These strategic directions will integrate actions in different capacity areas to have both stronger and weaker areas complement each other. Strategic directions are not things an organisation can *do*. Many actions are needed to install a strategy.

Introducing Naming

In this session we first give quick names to the clusters of ideas in the action arenas. Later, 3-5 strategic directions will be named.

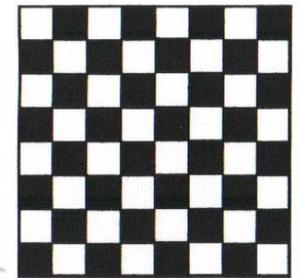
When starting to name the boxes and strategic directions it is helpful to use active verbs in the names: names that refer to action or movement. These may include "ing", words, such as *improving, developing, creating, enhancing, expanding, influencing, etc.*

It should also be reminded that some participants may be very keen and involved in getting the names right, while others may be lost. This is not a problem as long as everybody still 'buys into' the names (consensus!). Finding strategic names may be a difficult process, but it is important since the names of these strategies may remain on the wall for 3-5 years.

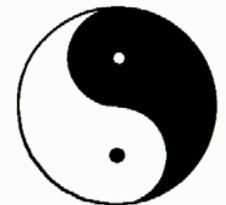
Directing Strategic Thinking

At the end of the context it we must direct the group to think strategically about directions to get to effective capacity building. Things that we have found helpful as guidelines when doing this workshop are:

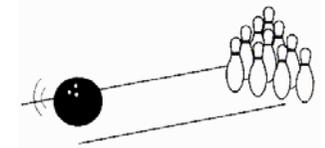
Down Board Thinking – This comes from the game of chess. They say that in chess you always want to be thinking down the board – "If he moves this way, I'll do this. If he moves that way, I'll do that". Real champions can think 7 moves down the board. It is about proactive thinking as opposed to be reactive. As we begin to look at most strategic moves we can make to get to capacity building, we must become proactive and consider many possible ways that might work in the future.



Yin/Yang – This is the Chinese symbol representing the concept of "Yes/And", rather than the western mode of thinking in "Either/Or" and "Black/White". What are bold actions to take to move through the contradictions? On the other hand we want to be conserving our present directions that do work.



Catalytic Actions – Just as you're looking to throw just one ball to knock down all the pins, we are looking for actions, which can impact more than one contradiction. We must see our organisational tasks and roles as interrelated and interdependent.



THE CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIES

Facilitating the Strategic Directions Workshop

Context

- The Workshop Question for the Strategic Directions Workshop is: *What creative and innovative actions will deal with the contradictions and move us to our envisioned capacity?*
- Introduce strategic directions to start capacity building
- Direct the groups into strategic thinking by introducing stories on pro-active thinking, bold and conserving methods and catalytic actions.

Brainstorm

- Have the group focus on concrete actions that the organisation can do over 2-3 years, trying to cover as many contradictions and elements from the vision. If the action is not apparent ask the writer to rephrase it into an action.
- Make sure every one can see the outcomes of the contradictions workshop and vision process. Have half of the group work on the list of contradictions and the other half with the vision results. Also have the group look at the initial most important recommendations from the ½ sheets that were made in the first session.
- Aim for 30-40 cards with actions of the whole group. Have participants write 1 idea per card, write big and 3-7 words per idea.
- Place the first round of cards randomly on the 9 boxes.

Group

- When sticking up the cards, ask for questions of clarity.
- In organising, look for common intent. The actions may be very different but if there is a common intent, they can be put together.
- Put symbols on the action arena sheets and have small groups put last round of cards in the particular action area it belongs.
- When all actions are clustered, name each box to state the action area, e.g. Skills Development.

Name

- Strategic Directions – Clear directions are important here. Ask the group to look for three action arenas that have strong relationships and put the boxes in one direction. Ask the group in one line to describe a focus of thrust or strategic direction in which they see themselves moving over the next 2-3 years.
- Move the boxes so people see what it looks like and talk about the focus they see. Allow for conversation about the new relationships.
- If there are two title cards created for each action arena, the second set can be moved around to the side of the 9 boxes rather than moving the large sheets of paper.
- When energy in the group is getting low, have names made in small teams and present to the group for consensus.
- Emphasise on the fact that consensus is only obtained on the strategic directions only and NOT on the distinct actions or activities. These are examples of the strategies, which still need to be concretised in Implementing Actions.

Resolve (This part may be integrated with the next session to save time)

- Read the workshop question and have the strategic directions read.
- Help the group step back and look at the whole. Are these our strategic directions? Will they address our contradictions? Will they move us to our vision and address items mentioned in the assessment presentations?
- Looking at each direction, ask which contradictions or vision elements it will address. Take note that one direction may tackle more than one contradiction. Is the initial prioritisation of capacity areas followed?
- After this session the group will reflect on the process and develop first steps for action.

This session uses the "Strategic Directions Workshop", a session that is part of Technology of Participation® (ToP®) Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP), a process developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA).

STRATEGIC INTERVENTION METHODS: VISUAL OVERVIEW

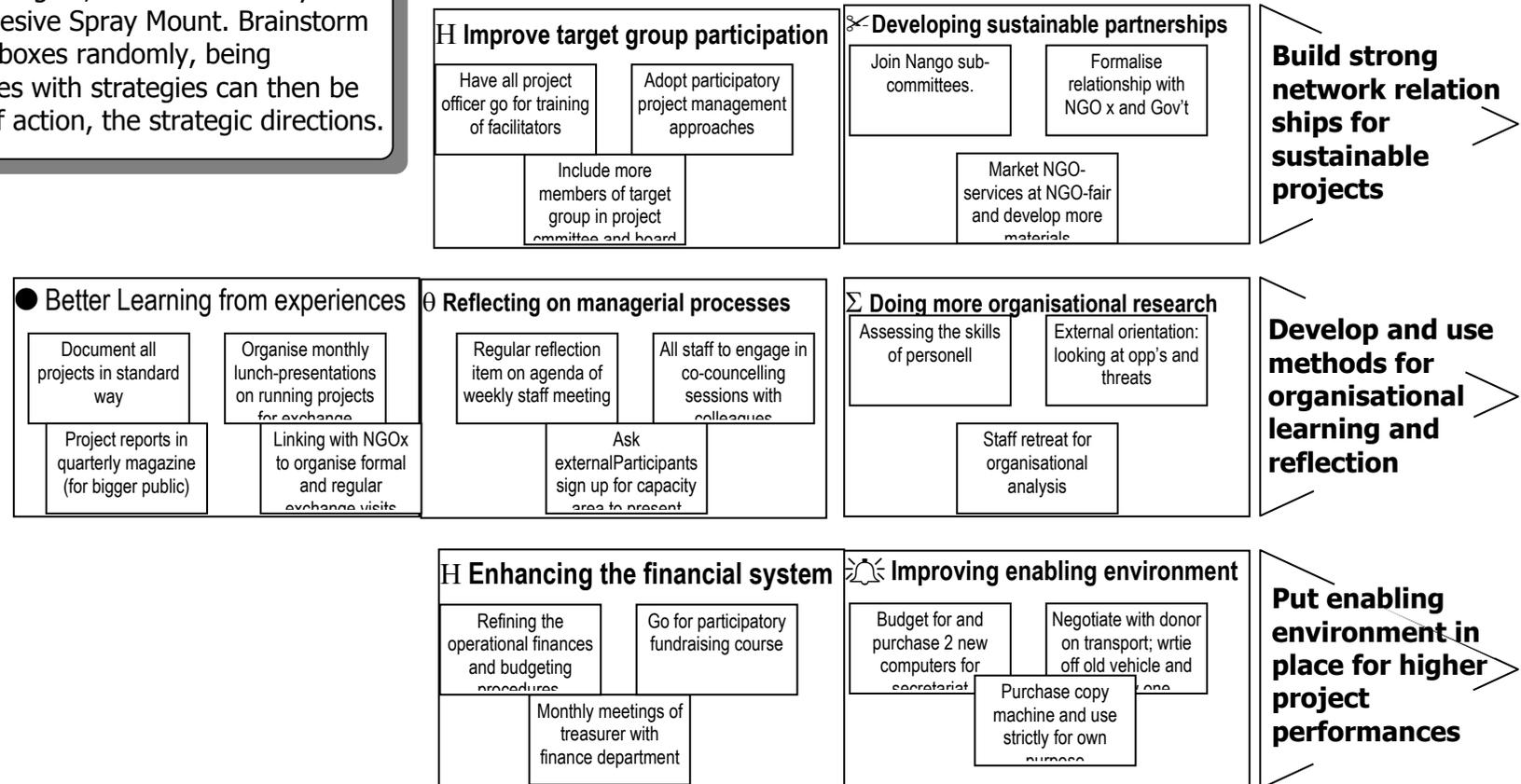
Practical Tips:

For this workshop it is crucial to use enough space to present the ideas. A helpful aid is the "Sticky Wall", a large piece of nylon fabric on which cards will stick when adhesive spray mount is applied.

For this particular session 9 flip charts may be put on the Sticky Wall, before starting. Again, these sheets may hold cards by applying adhesive Spray Mount. Brainstorm cards may be put in these boxes randomly, being organised later. These boxes with strategies can then be moved into 2-4 "thrusts" of action, the strategic directions.

An example of a visual outcome of this workshop could look like:

How can we deal with our contradictions and move toward our envisioned capacity?



4.3.6 Next Steps: Deciding on First Actions and Closing Reflection

In this part, in 30 minutes, facilitate a closing session covering the following items:

- The next steps in the process, and facilitator's role
- Zooming in on strategic directions: deciding first actions
- Closing reflection

1. Next steps in the process

This capacity assessment and capacity building may be part of a larger exercise undertaken to strengthen the NGO capacity of a sector. There may be 10-15 organisations part of the program. It is needed for each organisation to come up with individual capacity building plans that are based on their own available resources. The facilitating organisation may play a part in this by guiding this process and giving technical back up in how to develop implementation plans.

Next step will also be to try and find ways to co-ordinate all the different strategic directions of organisations to develop a collective capacity building plan. This might be done during a collective workshop for all participating NGOs.

Such a plan may consist of:

- Training in certain capacity areas
- Exchange of expertise between the different NGOs
- Technical assistance in developing management procedures, legal issues, financial administration etc.
- Co-ordination of advocacy and lobbying
- Facilitation of further capacity assessment, monitoring and evaluation etc.
- Any other assistance to build local capacity of NGOs.

Discuss possible funding strategies for implementation. However the organisation should also start implementing plans itself.

(Time: 3 minutes)

2. Deciding first implementing actions

The strategic directions that have been developed so far need to be transformed into implementation plans. However, this cannot be done without consulting other staff, management or even your board and linking it to other existing plans. In this session we want to focus on the steps that *can* be done to ensure implementation will start.

1. What were the capacity areas that we wanted to focus on? How did we capture them in the strategic directions?
2. Which action arenas (the boxes that form the strategic directions) can implemented very soon?
3. What are other activities the organisation is currently running to build the capacity? How do the strategic directions link to other plans of the organisation, such as a strategic plan, annual plans, project plans? (*See next page box "A"*)
4. What other types of assessment or organisational research would you like to see happening? What type of external assistance would you like to receive? (*See next page box "B"*)
5. Who need to be consulted before we can start making a concrete implementation plan? (*See next page box "C"*)
6. What are concrete steps we are taking to start implementing the capacity building plan? (*See next page box "D"*)
 - Including: How will we document this workshop? (options: facilitating organisation writes a short narrative, organisation types up all the flip charts and strategic directions, no documentation at all. Ownership of the results will be enhanced when organisation takes this commitment)

(Time: 20 minutes)

Actions: visual overview (example)

A

Current Capacity Building Activities

- Staff going to training: quarterly skills training
- Network meetings with other NGO
- Technical assistance of NGO x who does financial audits
- Donor x consulted ngo on capacity building, process still in infant stage.

Current plans to link to:

- Strategic plan (2002) needs to be consulted to look for overlap
- Working plans of project officers (quarterly, monthly) could have a capacity building chapter
- Annual plan, to be revised
- Skills training plan, 2004
- Career planning documents 1999

B

Other Organisational Research Needed

- SWOT analysis
- Appraisal of Organisational Culture
- Communication Styles and Team Building

External Assistance Needed

- Facilitate developing an implementation plan
- Facilitating a new 5-year strategic plan
- Financial assistance!

C

Consultation Needed with:

- Members of network abcd about the capacity assessment process. Proposal to do same exercise with all 7 network members
- Donors XYZ: to see how best to fit these new actions into existing proposals
- Executive committee: to appoint a capacity building co-ordinator within the organisation and to come up with a new time line for capacity building and develop a proposal for the board
- Board: to decide about the capacity building proposal and to be informed about their own role to play in capacity building.

D

Next Steps:

What	Who	When
Document this workshop	staff x	may-31
Consult network members	staff b	april 20
Hold NGO-feedback workshop	nango	june 1
Consult with donors	staf b	aug 10
Action planning workshop	nango	jul 10

Etc.

3. Closing Reflection

Facilitate a closing reflection to discuss the results and wrap up the meeting.

1. What were things we did today?
2. What words or phrases do you remember others saying?
3. Where were you most involved, did you feel excited?
4. When was energy low?
5. What new things about your organisation did you learn today?
6. What is the significance of today's work?
7. How will we all benefit from these results?
8. What worries you about our commitments?
9. What are you most looking forward to do with this plan?
10. Look at the workshop objectives: have they been achieved?
11. What will you tell your absent colleagues about this day?

Thank you very much for participating!

(Time: 7 minutes)