



FLYER | 1934

Visioning

Although the precise origins of visioning are unclear, it is a widely used tool for defining stakeholder aspirations and a vision of the future in the context of a development intervention.

WHAT IS IT?

- An exercise to imagine a vision of the future
- Stakeholder groups imagine a future scenario in which changes have resulted from the project
- It helps to make the identification of problems, and their solutions, explicit and visual

ADVANTAGES

- Transparency and participation encourages openness and trust among project partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Achieving consensus around a vision creates ownership and responsibility amongst stakeholders for achievement of the vision
- Encourages long-term aspirations and consideration of impact beyond the project lifetime
- The changes described in a vision may be unrelated to the project, but they can effectively illustrate the aspirations and priorities of the participants

HOW CAN IT BE USED FOR M&E?

- It can form a part of other monitoring and evaluation methods, such as Outcome Mapping or Participatory Impact Pathway Analysis, or it can be a standalone activity.
- Defining a project vision serves to reveal the expectations and aspirations of different stakeholder groups, thereby preventing misunderstandings and helping to identify any unrealistic expectations
- To identify the activities and responsibilities of stakeholders to achieve the project vision.
- If conducted at regular intervals throughout a project or program, visioning exercises can support a common understanding of the goals and anticipated results of a project or program
- If visions put forward by different stakeholder groups are found to diverge significantly, the process can support dialogue and negotiation towards agreed goals and objectives

THE VISIONING PROCESS

A typical visioning exercise might involve a facilitator asking the group to imagine waking up 5 years [or 10 years] from now.

How does your village look?

How has your life changed?



Participants are then asked to describe in detail the changes that they see.

Emphasis is placed on encouraging participants to imagine how they would like the future to look. The hoped for changes should be positive. A specific reference to the project can be made, asking participants to describe how the future might look if the project is successful.



Reporting back to the group

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

“We worked with groups of farmers and local authorities in Vietnam to develop a vision for the future if community-based fish culture proved to be successful in their village. The first time we tried the visioning process, we aimed to achieve a consensus around one vision that would represent all stakeholder groups. However, we found that the hopes and aspirations of different stakeholder groups were lost in the process. When we introduced visioning in the next village, different stakeholders worked in separate, small groups to develop a vision. Each group then used their vision to identify the activities they needed to complete in order to achieve their goals. They were then able to explain clearly the type of support they needed from other stakeholder groups.”

Natasja Sheriff, WorldFish Center

RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS

- This could be the first time that participants have been asked what they want. Some people can find it difficult to articulate or even imagine a hypothetical future
- Some participants may be more comfortable drawing or acting out their visions for the future. Unwritten and unspoken representations of visions can be a valid way of defining them

- Stakeholders may repeat project objectives as presented in project documents. Time should be taken to encourage stakeholders to define their own visions.
- It can be difficult to translate the vision into a strategy

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Very few resources are required for visioning. The process can easily be built into project meetings, at inception or at any point during the project
- A facilitator guides the group(s), and the vision is captured on paper and/or as a photograph. Other media can be used as required to create a nonverbal representation of the vision
- Allow plenty of time to complete the visioning exercise – approximately half a day. Participants may need time to think about their vision, possibly returning to the exercise over a number of days

REFERENCES

Overseas Development Institute (www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Tools/Toolkits/Communication/Visioning_scenarios.html).

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