

WHAT IS **PARTICIPATORY** PLANNING?

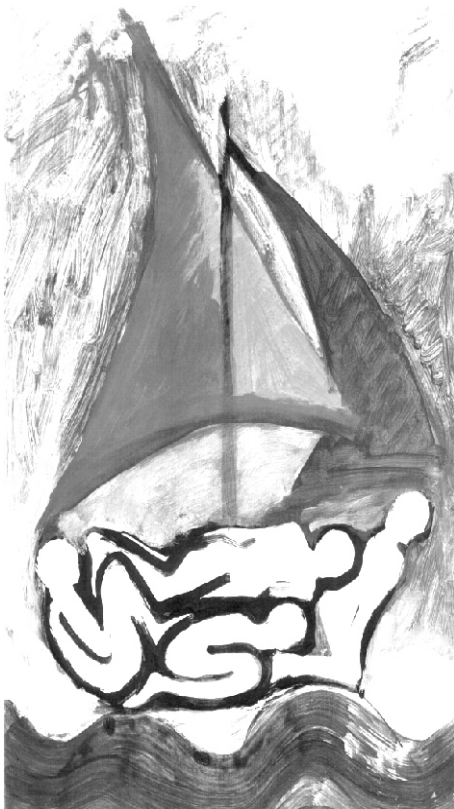


In the same series:

What is Conflict?
What is Interpersonal Communication?
What is Negotiation?
What is Ethnic Conflict?
What is Facilitation?
What is Decision Making?
What is Mediation?

This Brochure was developed by Partners Foundation for Local Development FPD, in cooperation with UN-HABITAT, in the frame of UN-HABITAT Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme in Serbia SIRP

Elaborated by Nicole Rata and Ana Vasilache
Graphic and Layout: Ioana Rata and Cristian Gabor
Cover by Nadina Pascariu



In Search Of Our Future.....	4
The Participatory Planning Process- Components And Tools.....	11
How To Design A Planning Process?	28

WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY PLANNING?

IN SEARCH OF OUR FUTURE

What is Planning?

What is Action Planning? What is Strategic Planning?

What is Development?

What is Sustainable Development?

What is Participation?

What is Participatory Planning?

THE PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESS- COMPONENTS AND TOOLS

Where We Are: Understanding the Present

Where We Want to Be: Defining the Future

How to Go There: Identifying the Solutions

HOW TO DESIGN A PLANNING PROCESS?

How to Arrange Planning Stages in a Logical Sequence?

What are the Planning Process Options?

What is the Role of the Facilitator in the Participatory Planning Process?

IN SEARCH OF OUR FUTURE

People come together for many reasons: to receive information, to discuss common concerns, to generate solutions to problems or to search for and plan their future.

More than 2000 years ago, Aristotle wrote in his well-known "Politika" that the one who is capable to foresee the future will be a leader and a master.

In this handbook we help you learn how to foresee the future by becoming a more knowledgeable planner, how to involve the others in the planning process, to work effectively together, in a focused search for solutions that would address your problems and help achieve your desired future.

So, let's start by defining some of the main concepts!

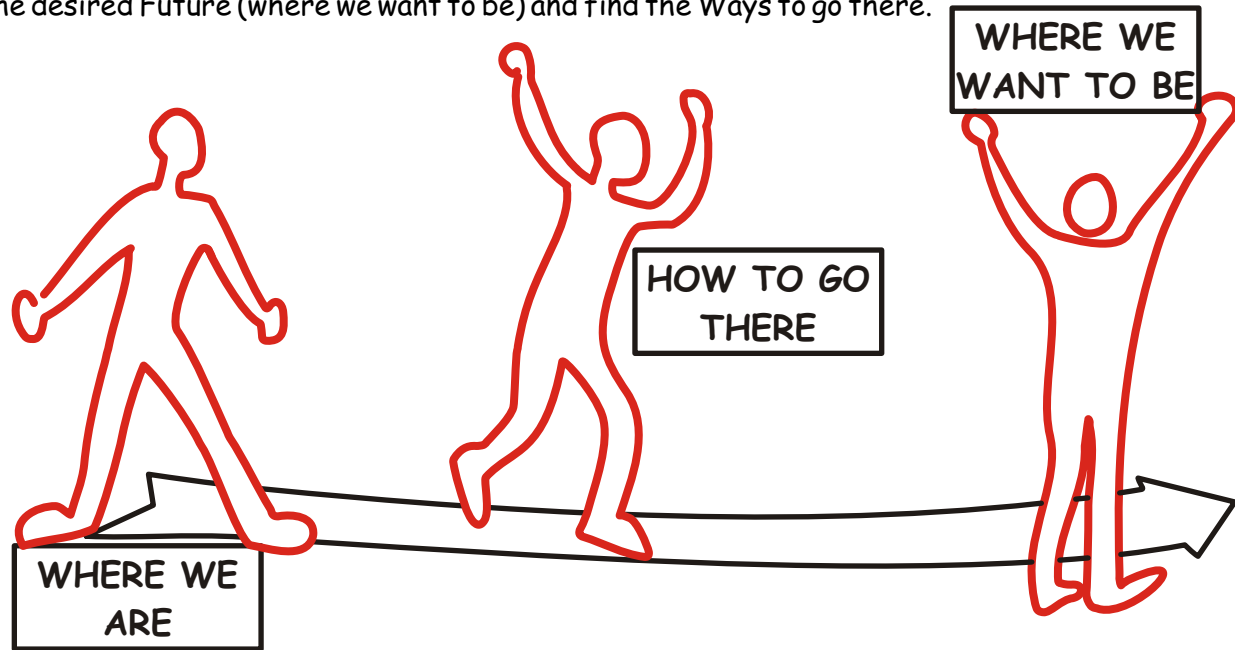
Do you have your own definitions? Write them down and compare them with what you will read further.



	Planning
	Action Planning
	Strategic Planning
	Development
	Sustainable Development
	Participation
	Participatory Planning

What is Planning?

Planning is a decision making process through which we analyze the Present (where we are), design the desired Future (where we want to be) and find the Ways to go there.



What is Action Planning? What is Strategic Planning?

The Planning processes are defined by:

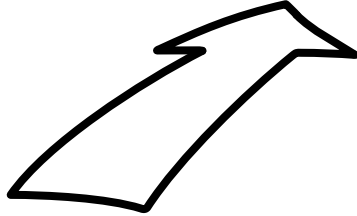
- The time frames they cover
- The degree of specificity, detail and clarity with which Present, Future and Solutions are described

Proximity in time to the problems of the present or the desired situations of the future increases the clarity with which we can see what road to take to go from where we are to where we want to be. Action planning includes short-term time frames and specific actions to solve immediate problems and achieve clear, detailed objectives or results.

Strategic planning includes long-term or medium-term time frames and more general activities to solve complex problems and achieve less specific, less detailed visions or strategic objectives

What is Development?

Development does not always mean growth. Development means to make something better than it was, to improve. Development means positive changes that can occur at different levels: personal, family, organizations, communities, countries or beyond.



But changes are not always positive. Many times they occur unexpectedly and may have negative effects. They are unplanned, unintended and even, in less fortunate situations, unmanageable.

Through Strategic Planning we want to control Development by defining the intended, positive and manageable changes and by trying to anticipate and minimize the negative, unintended and unmanageable changes that may occur in the process.

What is Sustainable Development?

There are many definitions of sustainable development but the most used is the one given in 1983 by the Brundtland Commission, a UN Commission called the World Commission on the Environment and Development:



"Sustainable Development is the Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs"

That means we have to develop our individual or global communities without using up or wearing out the resources we have.

That means we have to use and enhance, in a balanced way, the resources we have: the economic resources, the natural resources and the social resources. These three sectors are intricately connected: there are few parts of the environment that are not affected by human society or human economy. Likewise, society is very much dependent on the economy that moves goods and services where they are needed and the environment in which society exists.

Sustainable Development, Balanced and Integrated Development means also that improvements in one sector will trigger improvements in the other two or at least will not harm them.

What is Participation?

Participation is the process by which individuals and groups having diverse expertise, representing diverse interests and/or acting for the good of those affected, are involved in the planning process or in the implementation of the solutions.

Who is identifying those who will participate?

The initiators of the cities/towns planning processes, the local authorities, are the ones responsible to identify the individuals, interest groups or organizations to be involved and participate.

Who will participate?

We call them "stakeholders". They are persons, groups or organizations representatives, who have an interest in, or are affected by, the planning process results. Stakeholders can be different in the different stages of the planning process and they can have different types of power with which they can influence (in a positive or negative way) the planning process and its results.



How will they participate?

Stakeholders can participate in different ways, having different roles and power of influence on the planning process stages.



Information

The first basic level of participation is "being informed". Local authorities inform citizens, groups of interest or organizations on the planning process and its outcomes. Informed people can take better decisions and are more open to commit their involvement.



Consultation

Consultation is a two-way process: information is sent out and reactions, ideas or perceptions are collected. The authorities who start a consultation process should always explain what they will do with the collected data.



Decision Making

When involved in the decision making process, stakeholders are informed, consulted and invited as equal partners to take decisions in the different stages of the planning process. Authorities try to balance different perceptions and interests by inviting a large diversity of stakeholders. Many times this is a difficult process, especially when trying to involve those stakeholders belonging to marginalized and disadvantaged groups who do not have the skills to express and fight for their interest. Many times, before involving them into the decision making process, authorities have to work separately with these groups, to help them express their interest and preparing them to participate as equal partners in the planning process.

The deeper the involvement, the greater the control of the people, the commitment and the satisfaction!

What is Participatory Planning?

Participatory Planning is the process that

- Guides and supports the development process and results, in order to address the requirements and aspirations of the community
- Builds a mutually beneficial relationship between community members who work toward a common desired future by sharing responsibility, authority and accountability for activities and results.

During the Participatory Planning Process, community members may see different aspects of the problems or may desire to achieve different futures or may identify different solutions. But, in order to be successful they should have the willingness and the ability to work together, to constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that will go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible.

Some Questions occur frequently whenever we talk about Participatory Planning:

What are the Advantages of Participatory Planning?

When is Participatory Planning Appropriate to be used?

When is Participatory Planning Not Appropriate to be used?

What are the characteristics of an effective Participatory Planning Process?

Try and answer these questions before reading our answers!

A large, rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines, intended for writing answers. The box is located at the bottom of the page, below the list of questions.

What are the Advantages of Participatory Planning?



- Improves the flow and quality of information
- Builds trust among community members and local authorities
- Produces better decisions
- Has as result a greater commitment toward the implementation of what has been decided, meaning an easier, quicker implementation

When is Participatory Planning Appropriate to be used?



- Many parties are involved, but no one person or organization has the complete responsibility for solving the problems
- The problems are complex and negotiable
- Parties are willing to participate
- Time is available, timing is right

When is Participatory Planning Not Appropriate to be used?



- There is an emergency situation
- A principle is the focus of the problem or legal clarifications are needed
- The community is too polarized
- Parties believe they have a better option to solve their problems alone, than being included in the planning process
- Time is not available, timing is not right

What are the characteristics of an effective Participatory Planning Process?



- Includes all major stakeholders
- The main stakeholders participate in the process design as well as in the preparation of the solutions
- Stakeholders arrive to a common understanding and definition of the problems, objectives and solutions
- Decisions are made by consensus whenever possible
- The authorities leading the process act as facilitators and are committed to the participatory process
- Attention is paid to building positive relations among those involved
- Parties focus on interests and not on positions
- Implementation responsibilities are clearly identified

THE PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESS COMPONENTS AND TOOLS

The Participatory Planning Process, as all planning processes is defined through its three main components:

Where We Are: Understanding the Present

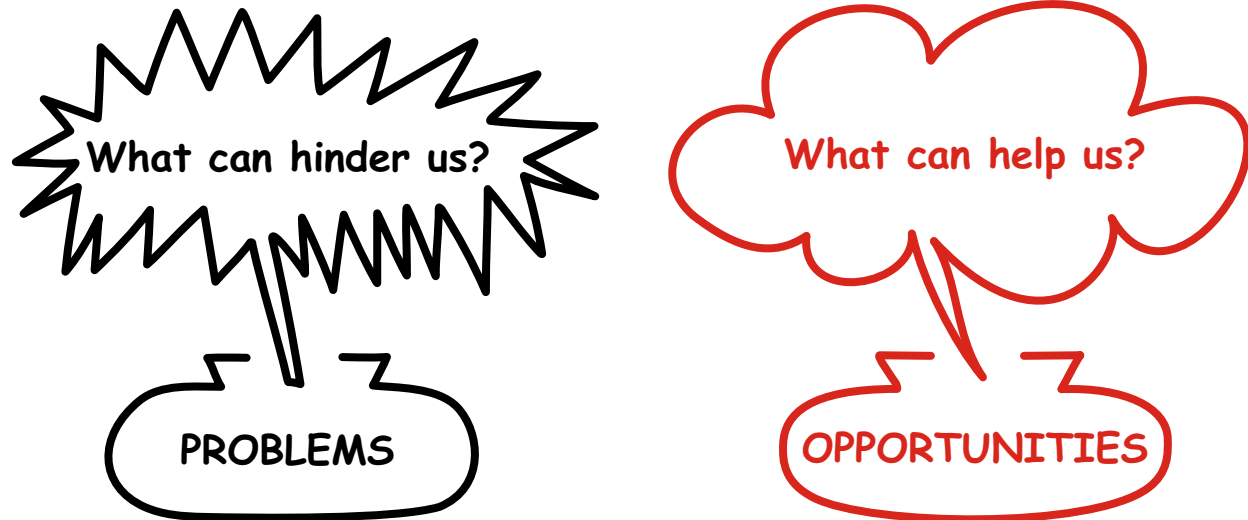
Where We Want to Be: Defining the Future

How to Go There: Identifying the Solutions

Let's describe them in detail:

Where We Are: Understanding the Present

Two questions are essential to understand the present:



Problems are unfavorable circumstances/ obstacles which prevent us from getting from where we are to where we want to be, prevent us from achieving our desired future. Problems are situations we want to change. Instead of the word "problem" people often use other words. Some of them have negative connotations, such as difficulties or obstacles; others are more neutral such as issues or situations, and others even have positive connotations, such as challenges or opportunities.

Opportunities are favorable or advantageous combinations of circumstances that could help us getting from where we are to where we want to be in our desired future.

Many problems can also be perceived as opportunities. An already used bottle of wine can be seen as half empty or half full!

Identifying and defining the real problem is one of the most important (and difficult) steps in the planning process. For this purpose we must:

- Avoid the risk of focusing on the symptoms because the real problems will persist
- Avoid the risk of focusing on the solutions because other useful solutions will be ignored or neglected

Defining the Problem

Two hikers are being chased by a grizzly bear. While on the run, one of the hikers reaches into his backpack and pulls out a pair of jogging shoes. The other hiker glances over and says: "Why bother? This bear can outrun you even with those on". His partner responds with "I don't need to outrun the bear, I just need to outrun you"

In Search of Solutions, David Quinlivan- Hall and Peter Renner

Could you remember a situation when you fell into the trap of identifying a Symptom as your real problem? Or when you fell into the trap of identifying a Solution as your real problem? Write them down:



Identifying real problems is both a Science and an Art.

Tools have been developed to help us identify the real problems. Here after are two of them:

1. The Dialogue with the Problem

The following questions will help you generate information in order to identify the “real” problems on which to focus your efforts to solve them.

What?

What is your Problem/Obstacle in achieving your desired future?

Why? (Causes)

Why is it a Problem? (Identify its causes and find an explanation for its existence, emergence or persistence)

Why? (Effects)

Why should the Problem be solved? What are the effects and consequences of this problem if not solved? (If this question does not have convincing answers, there may not be a problem worth pursuing)

When?

When is it a Problem? Identify the conditions under which the problem reveals itself.

Where?

Where is it a Problem? Specify areas that are affected by the problem.

Whose?

Whose Problem is it? Who are suffering most from the effects of the problem?

So, What is the Problem?

Re-state the problem based on the answers to previous questions. It is very important that the problem statement is:

Clear

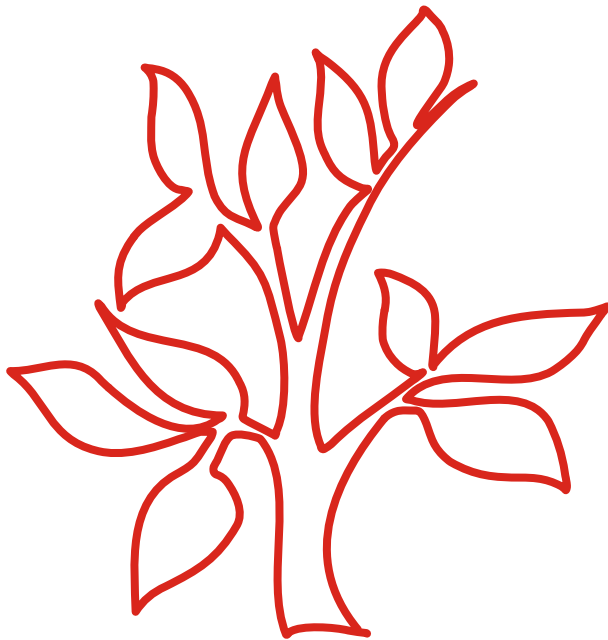
Would someone from outside the community understand it?

Concise

Could you in 1-3 minutes explain it to a very busy and important stakeholder?

Complete

Does it include all the information: why, when and where it occurs and whose problem it is?



2. Problem Tree

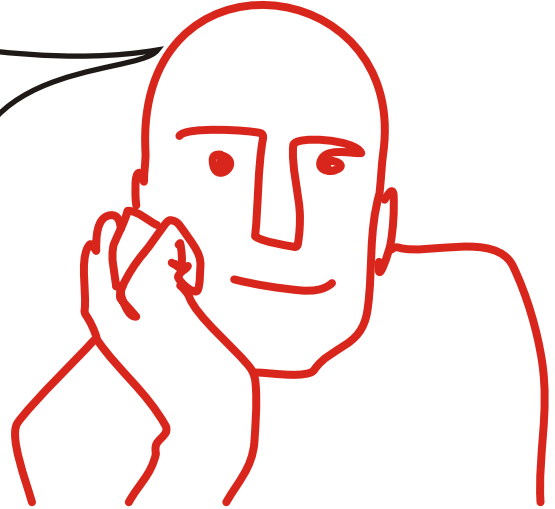
This tool assists you in understanding the context and interrelationship among problems by identifying the major, focal problems and their main causal relationships with the other problems. The output is a graphical hierarchical arrangement of problems differentiated according to "causes" and "effects" starting from the core, focal problem. This diagram can be obtained by generating and arranging a list of problems or by starting from a core problem and asking five times "why".

Example of a "Problem Tree"



Where We Want to Be: the Future Vision and Objectives

The Vision is the description of a distant desired Future, including the changes we want to make in order to live better, solve existing problems and use existing opportunities. Recent studies have shown that we are more likely to make changes if we can see them as steps toward an imagined Guiding Star.



Citizens can use visioning in order to create an image that can help and guide them in changing their city for better. The visioning process has many benefits:

- Generates better communication and helps building consensus within the community by organizing collective thought and action
- Creates a sense of ownership by giving to people opportunities to dream and express what they really want
- Supports innovation and creativity by focusing peoples' minds on the desired future and not on the ways to getting there
- Prepares ground for implementation, as participants will like to see their Vision become reality over a period of years

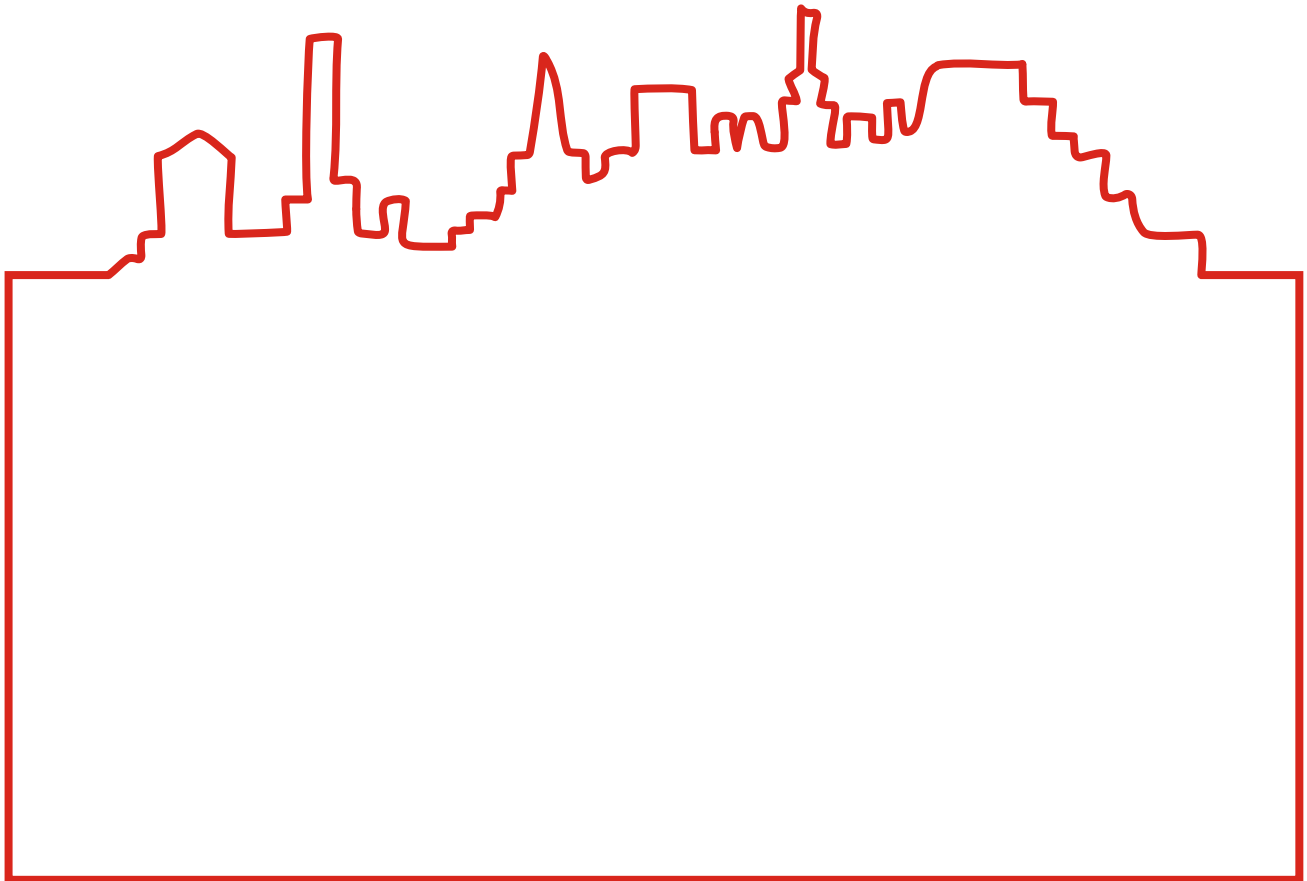
Visioning engages peoples' analytical skills, as well as their feelings and intuition, by using different ways to portray the possible future. A Vision statement should include big thoughts in carefully chosen, inspiring words. A Vision statement can be shorter or longer, depending of what you need. Short Visions are in the form of slogans, few words and/or images that people can easily remember; long Visions are texts that inspire.

Close your eyes and imagine you are walking through your city ten years from now.

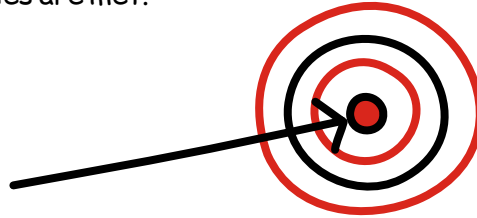
- What do you see?
- How does your city differ from what it was ten years ago?
- What are people doing and how do they look?
- What positive changes have occurred?
- What opportunities did you take advantage from?



Make a drawing of what did you see during your imaginary walk!



The Objective also describes the desired future (closer in time or less complex than the Vision) when the problems are solved and /or opportunities are met.

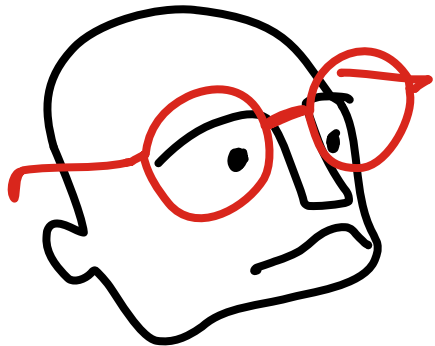


Objectives can be defined in two ways:

1. Starting from Problem definition: by turning the problem negative statement into a positive one, describing the desired situation when the problem was solved, the obstacle was removed or the opportunity was met.
2. Starting from Vision: by identifying specific fields in the Vision and making a more detailed description of these fields, as desired steps to be achieved on the way toward the Vision.

Depending on the degree of specificity and clarity, the Objectives can be Strategic Objectives, Program Objectives or Project Objectives that are all descriptions of the desired Future, closer and closer to the present time and, therefore more and more specific and clear.

In order to be effective, Objectives statements need to be, to the extent possible:



Specific

Measurable

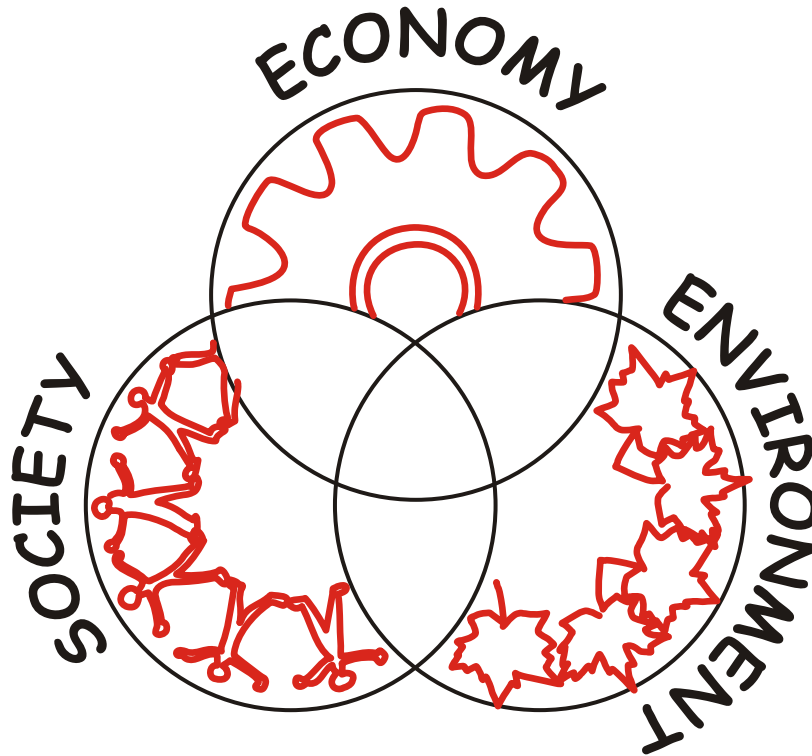
Attainable (or **A**greed by all those interested or affected)

Relevant (or **R**ealistic)

Time bounded

Integrated Objectives

Strategic Objectives should include aspects of all three main legs of the community Development: Economy, Society and Environment.

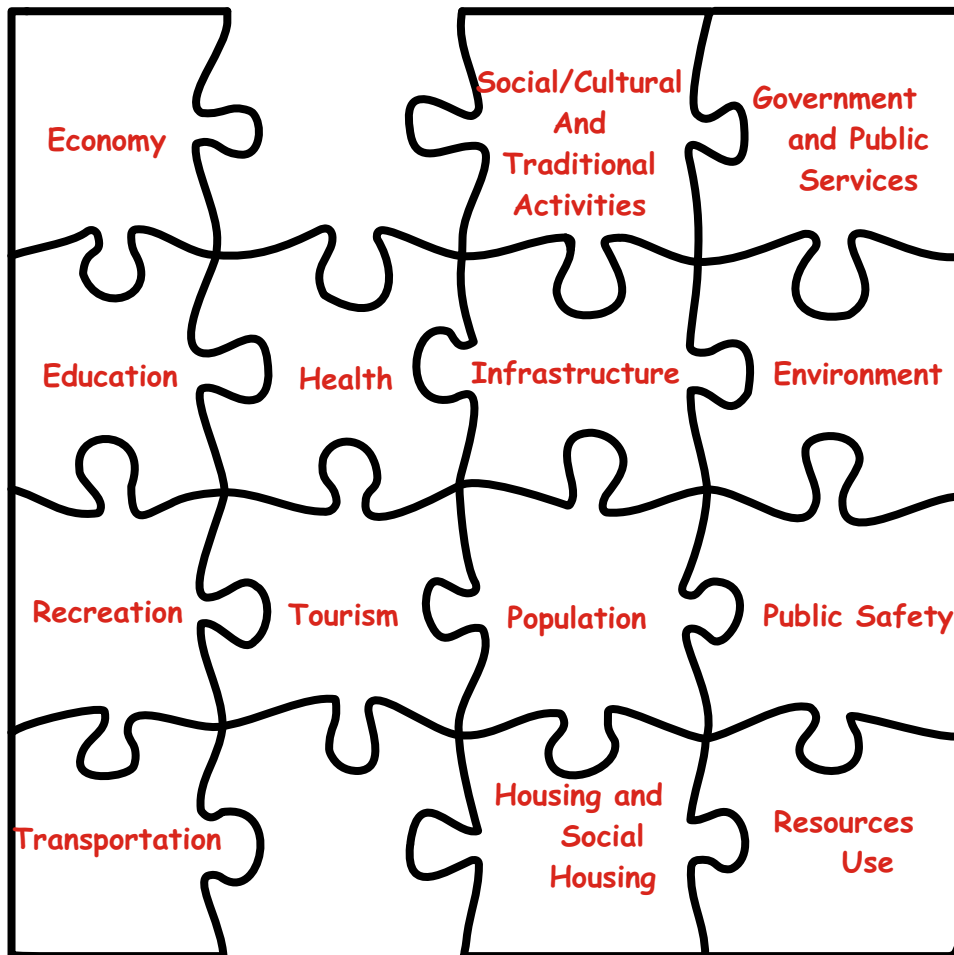


When an Objective is elaborated for a non-overlapped area, sometimes there is a risk that this Objective is achieved at the expense of the other two areas. When an Objective is elaborated for an overlapped area this is an Integrated Objective, including in its statement the idea that, if achieved, it will impact positively on the other two areas, or at least it will not harm their development.

Areas of Development

Some Strategic Plans focus on the three main areas of Development: Economy, Society and Environment. Other Strategic Plans use more break-down areas of Development, depending on the community circumstances.

The list below represents, in alphabetic order, some of the areas that people are concerned about in their communities, when planning its development:



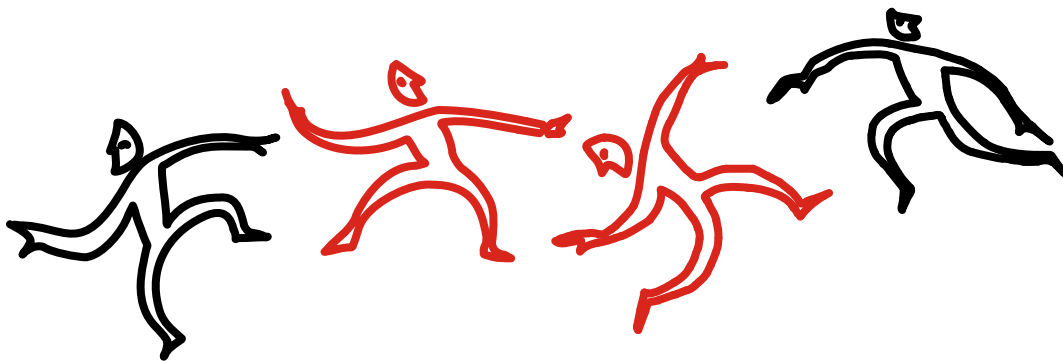
It is important to remember that the Strategic Objectives identification very much depend on who are preparing them. Civic groups tend to include more objectives relating to government or citizens' involvement. Economic development groups tend to include more objectives relating to business aspects. Environmental groups tend to include more objectives relating to environment protection. This is why it is important to include all members and groups within a community in the planning process.

If all views are represented the result will be more Balanced Integrated Objectives, addressing two or all three aspects of the community development: economy, society and environment.

Examples of Strategic Integrated Objectives

- Tourism Development, by making effective and sustainable use of city's natural and cultural resources
- Establishment of Associations that can support local partnerships for the benefit of the economic development of the community
- Value added increased in the areas of agriculture, forestry, crafts and small industry, by taking into account the sustainability of natural resources
- Increased capacity of the local government to take a leading and proactive role in local economic development that would benefit all community members

Horezu, Romania, Local Economic Development Strategic Objectives, 2004



How to Go There: the Solutions

Strategies: Programs, Projects, Activities

The Strategies define the routes to go from where we are to where we want to be in the future. Strategies can be formed by

- Sets of Programs that define how to achieve Strategic Objectives
- Sets of Projects that define how to achieve Programs Objectives
- Sets of Activities that define how to achieve Projects Objectives

A Program is composed of a series of Projects in order to achieve the Program Objective. Strategies to achieve Strategic Objectives are composed of sets of Programs.

A Project is composed of a set of Activities in order to achieve the Project Objective. Strategies to achieve Programs Objectives are composed of sets of Projects.

An Activity is a physical and/or intellectual work effort to be done in order to have an outcome (specific result). Strategies to achieve Projects Objectives are composed of sets of Activities.



In order to be implemented, a strategy, a program, a project or an activity should have:

- The commitment, support or acceptance of key stakeholders
- Access to specific resources: human, material, informational (technically and financially achievable)
- Time Schedule (duration, correlation with other strategies, programs, projects or activities)

Tools to generate ideas for Alternative Strategies:

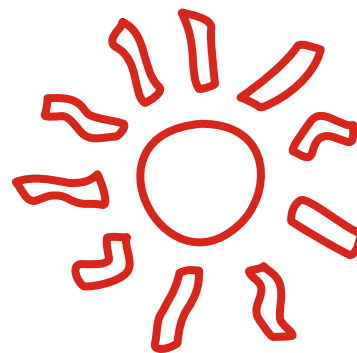
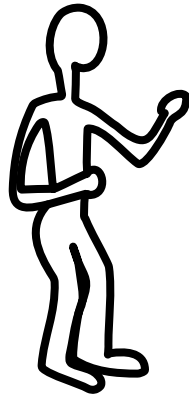
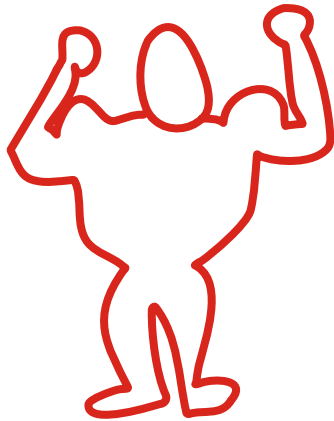
1. **SWOT Analysis**
2. **Force Field Analysis**

1. SWOT Analysis

In order to elaborate Strategies to achieve the desired Future, you have to:

Step 1

Identify Internal and External Factors that help or hinder your achievement of the desired Future:



- Internal Factors: **STRENGTHS** that help and **WEAKNESSES** that hinder

- External Factors: **OPPORTUNITIES** that help and **THREATS** that hinder

Step 2

Elaborate Strategies by combining the SWOT Analysis results

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	S-O Strategies	W-O Strategies
Threats	S-T Strategies	W-T Strategies

- **S-O** Strategies: How could we use our Strengths in order to meet Opportunities?
- **W-O** Strategies: How could we overcome our Weaknesses by using Opportunities?
- **S-T** Strategies: How could we use our Strengths in order to avoid Threats?
- **W-T** Strategies: How could we minimize/ overcome our Weaknesses and reduce our vulnerability to Threats?

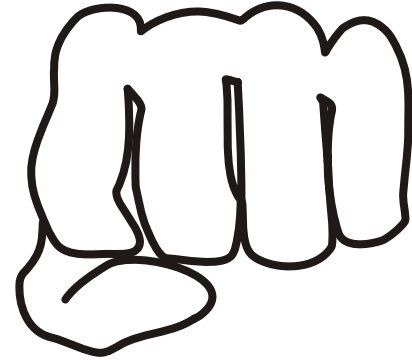
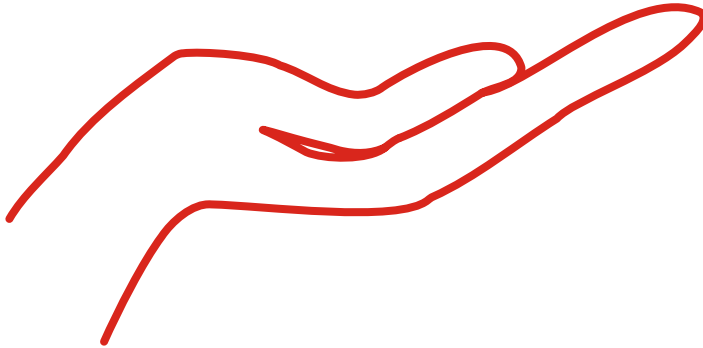
2. Force Field Analysis

In order to elaborate Strategies to achieve the desired Future, you have to:

Step 1

Identify Positive and Negative forces that will help you or hinder you in achieving the desired Future. Analyze these Forces by giving a percentage (the total should be 100%) based on the following criteria:

- Impact for achieving the objective
- The extent to which they are under your control and easy to influence



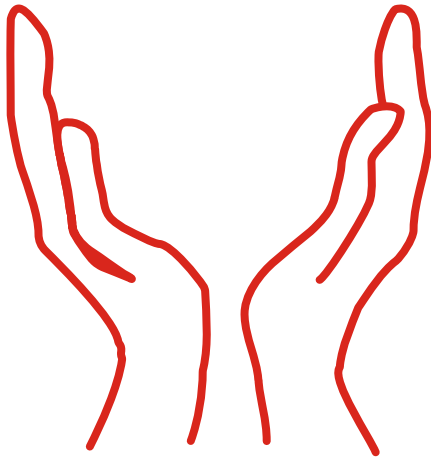
%	+ FORCES	- FORCES	%
	→	←	
	→	←	
100%	→	←	100%

Step 2

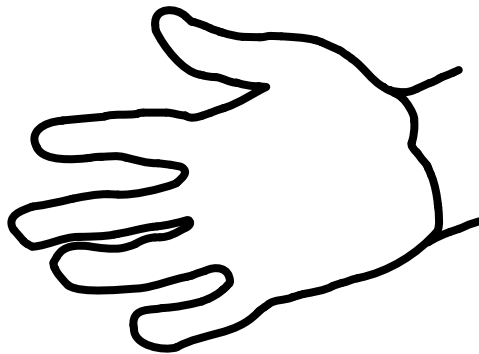
Elaborate Strategies through which you influence the forces by

- Strengthening the (+) forces
- Reducing or removing the (-) forces
- Changing the directions of the forces from (-) to (+)

STRENGTHENING



REDUCING



CHANGING



Alternative Strategies should be evaluated in order to determine which one is the most appropriate. The following are possible evaluation criteria:

- Commitment of key stakeholders
- Under the control of the planning team members, responsible for strategy implementation
- Important Impact relating to the objectives' achievement, such as contribution to reduction of social inequalities
- Resources availability

Example of Strategies: Programs and Project Ideas

Strategic Objective

Tourism Development by Making Sustainable and Effective Use of Horezu's Natural and Cultural Resources

Elaboration of a long-term tourism development strategy through the participation of interested parties, which takes into account the existing opportunities

- Make an inventory of houses and families and of those interested in running bed and breakfast businesses or other boarding services
- Create an action group "Tourism in Horezu" for the monitoring of the strategy implementation
- Create an association/chamber of tourism staffed with personnel qualified in tourism management , to initiate and organize training activities, quality promotion, certification and monitoring of tourism activities, and joint promotion programs for members.
- Creation of an attractive urban image
- Improve public spaces in the center of the city (buildings, facades, window-shops)
- Preserve the traditional architecture (e.g. potters' houses in the Potters' neighborhood)
Involve inhabitants and local volunteer groups in activities of gardening, cleaning, improvement of parks and other public spaces (e.g. pools).
- Diversification and expansion of tourism activities, based on the existing potential
- Create a tourism agency and a tourist information point located centrally
- Create an Internet site for Horezu
- Facilitate access to training in tourism for existing and potential bed and breakfast administrators

- Create new events or promote existing events to attract tourists throughout the year, not only during the summer season (e.g. new events such as: an autumn edition of the pottery fair; camps for training in pottery or other crafts; weekend packages of services; existing events such as: the eco-ethno film festival; the gypsy fair)
 - Expand existing tourist facilities (increase number of houses providing bed and breakfast; diversify by developing various local specialties.
 - Create possibilities of spending time during bad weather: evening parties - traditional weddings; hunting; skiing; fishing; craft school (pottery; bee-breeding; dances, plum distillery); traditional foods that can be trademarked HOREZU; traditional restaurant where you can eat, drink local food and drinks and takeaway the vessels.
 - Identify new camping areas and tourist itineraries and improve the existing ones (e.g. organizing an environmental friendly camping area in the the village of Roman by the riverside)
 - Develop mountain trails and maps with local tourist attractions monasteries, churches, pottery workshops, bee breeding and honey, various itineraries combining these attractions to suit clients of different interests and preferences
 - Increase attractiveness of mountain area accompanied by enforcement of environment protection regulations e.g. through creation of a natural park
- Increased local capacity to access special international/national programs and external funds to support tourism development
- Attract high quality training providers to offer a training program on writing project proposals for local government, NGOs and private sector representatives
 - Develop special classes for adult education and for vocational education of students at the local high school (subjects like marketing, customer relations, general management, business development for micro, small and medium size enterprises), exchanges in Romania and abroad.
 - Develop projects to access additional funds (national and EU) such as Ministry of Tourism
 - Program for infrastructure development

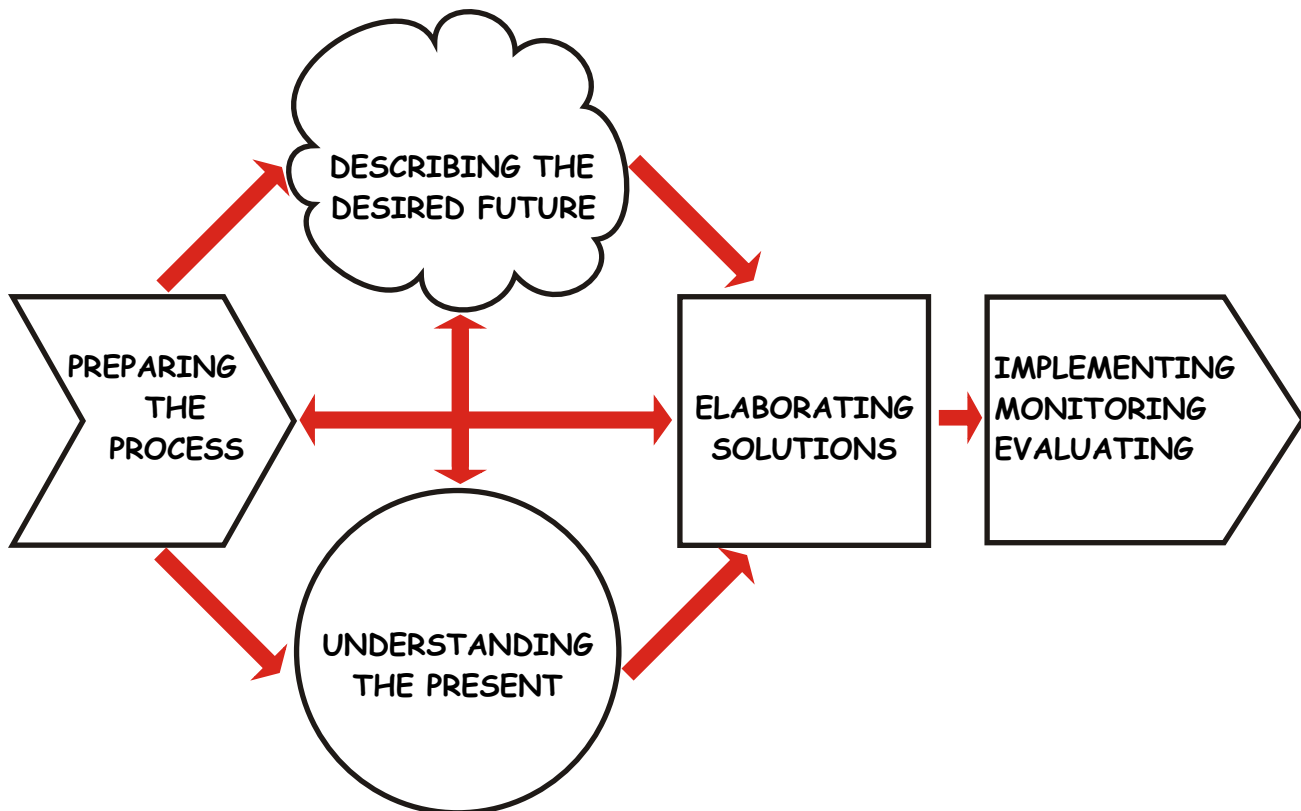
Horezu, Romania, Local Economic Development Strategic Plan, 2004

HOW TO DESIGN A PLANNING PROCESS?

How to Arrange Planning Stages in a Logical Sequence?

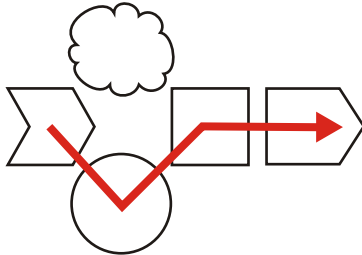
The main Stages of a Planning Process are:

- Preparing the process planning the planning process steps
- Understanding Where We Are - the Present having an awareness of the Problems and Opportunities, identifying the real Problems and Opportunities
- Describing Where We Want to Be - the desired Future elaborating the Vision or Objectives
- Elaborating How to Go There the Solutions Strategies (Programs, Projects, and Activities) to achieve the desired Future, by using Opportunities and solving the Problems
- Implementing the Solution, Monitoring and Evaluating

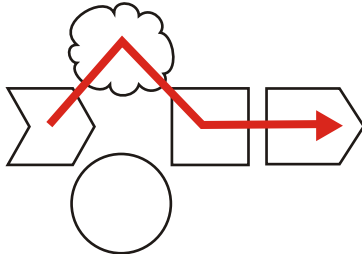


What are the Planning Process Options?

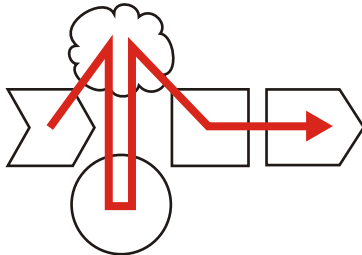
The Planning Process Stages logical sequence can be designed in different ways, depending on the context, the time available, and the complexity of the problems to be addressed.



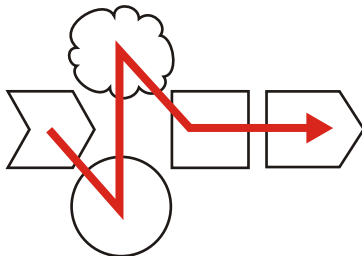
- If the Present situation has urgent problems, the Planning process may have the following logical sequence: Understand the Present (by identifying the urgent Problems), Elaborate Solutions to solve them and Implement Solutions.



- If the Desired Future is clear, the Planning Process may have the following logical sequence: Describe Desired Future, Elaborate Solutions to achieve it and Implement Solutions.



- If the Planning Process is long term and focused on a larger area (cities or regions) the Planning Process may have the following logical sequence: Describe Desired Future (Vision elaboration), Understand the Present (by identifying obstacles to achieve the Vision), Describe Desired Future (Objectives elaboration, based on identified Problems), Elaborate Solutions to achieve them and Implement Solutions.



- If the Planning Process is for the medium-term, the Planning Process may have the following logical sequence: Understand the Present (by identifying Problems), Describe Desired Future (Objectives elaboration, based on identified Problems), Elaborate Solutions to achieve them and Implement Solutions.

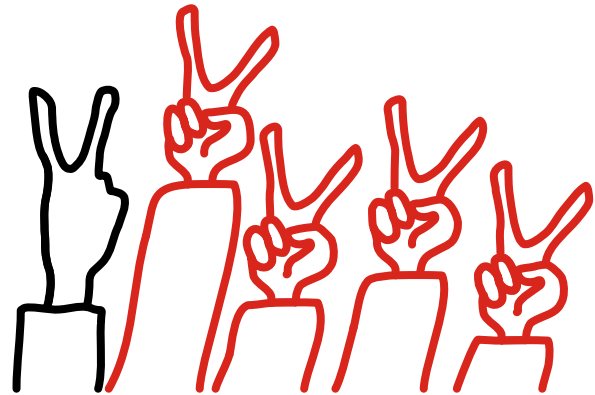
These are only a few examples. The Planning Process may have many other options, by combining the main stages in different ways and by taking our thinking from the general to the specific.

What is Facilitator role in the Participatory Planning Process?

Have you ever experienced difficult situations during a Participatory Planning process? Sounds familiar?

- Heated and ineffective discussions among group members with different opinions
- Members of the group wanting to impose their own opinion and not open in listening to others'
- Everybody talking at the same time in a hectic way
- Jumping to solutions before analyzing the problems thoroughly
- Taking decisions without giving each group member the chance to express their opinion

We are sure you have experienced many other difficult situations. Think for a moment and add your ideas:



Do you have a solution to overcome all these obstacles?

We believe that there is a solution: someone who can help us work more effectively in a group and avoid conflicting situations.

This is the Facilitator, whose main role is to help us work together in an effective way in order to achieve our common goal. The Facilitator is a neutral person accepted by all group members, who does not have a decision making authority but is responsible for the group processes, creating the appropriate framework for equal participation of all group members in the discussions and decision making.

The Facilitator is responsible for the quality of the planning process and not for the quality of the planning content. Informed and competent Group members assure the content quality. Skilled Facilitators help them work together in an effective way.

What processes is the Facilitator responsible for, in order to make groups work in an effective way and achieve their common goal?

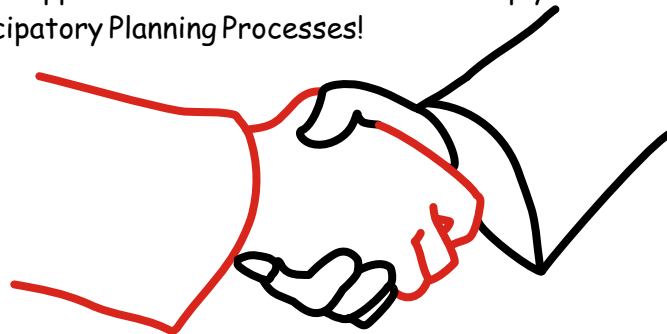
- **Team Building Process**
- The Facilitator encourages the group members to know each other better, to cooperate and develop positive relations, to work together to achieve their common goal
- **Group Communication process**
- The Facilitator helps overcoming communication obstacles, avoid misunderstandings and conflict escalation
- **Group Decision Making Process**
- The Facilitator helps building consensus throughout the planning process, supporting effective decision making
- **Participatory Planning Process**
- The Facilitator designs and guides the group to follow the logical path of the planning process stages

The first three processes are described in the "What is Facilitation" Handbook.

The fourth is described in this Handbook. By reading it you can improve your knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts. However, your planning skills will not improve just by reading. You will learn only by doing, by applying what you have read about in concrete experiences.

We encourage you to start solving your community problems, plan your common future and guide your development, through participatory processes!

If need, ask for the support of skilled Facilitators to help you successfully initiate, design and conduct these Participatory Planning Processes!





UN-HABITAT

UN-HABITAT
Settlement and Integration of Refugees
Programme in Serbia SIRP



FPDL Partners Foundation for Local Development

Member of
Partners for
Democratic
Change
International

