

NEAR NEIGHBOURS TOOLKIT



Vision Development

Whatever your project's activity is, the people who run, manage and fund it will need clarity on what you are trying to achieve. This is particularly crucial for the beneficiaries of the project, as without a clear vision of your work you may be unable to deliver what they need. This toolkit aims to help you develop a clear vision for your project and engage with different stakeholders while developing it.

This toolkit contains a number of simple and easy to use tools that will help you develop, explore, revisit and evaluate your project's vision.

WHAT IS A VISION?

- A vision is the goal that your work hopes to accomplish, both in the short and long term. In other words, it is how you describe the impact you want to bring to the communities you work for.
- Even for long established projects, it's good to periodically revisit and evolve their vision to reaffirm why they exist.
- A vision works to energise and motivate people, provide direction and gain commitment from people involved.
- An easily understood vision that is owned by the key people involved is usually the starting point that leads to effective written plans, fundraising, management and delivery to projects and their beneficiaries.



The vision is what you want to see happen tomorrow
e.g. a world where young people flourish



The mission is what you are doing today to make it happen
e.g. we are educating young people to achieve their educational goals.

You need a plan to make your vision a reality.

INCLUSIVE VISION DEVELOPMENT:

Things to consider to make sure your vision development process is inclusive:

- **Consensus.** It is important to include everyone in a vision development exercise, and it is good to agree at the start that no one will be criticised for what they suggest or contribute. Everyone's contribution must be valued.
- **Words or Pictures.** It is important to remember that not everyone is good with numbers, words and writing. A fun way of getting around this is to ask people to draw an image of what they mean e.g. involving a community nurse in a project might be shown by drawing a red cross or a stick figure of a nurse (see '*Other Vision Development Tools*' on Page 4).
- **Accessibility.** If people in your project have learning difficulties, a sensory or other impairment, why not pair them with someone who has complementary skills to help them get the best from the vision development process. However, all they may need is accessibility and equipment to manage on their own, so ensure that you give them the option to choose what is best for them.
- **Jargon Busting.** Encourage people not to use jargon and acronyms. Keeping your visionary language simple should help everyone involved to understand your project's vision.
- **Assistance.** If you can't reach agreement on your vision initially, you might decide to seek help from someone outside your group or project who might help you to agree on a final vision at a later date.
- **Ownership.** Once your project vision is agreed, share it! Add it to your website, social media accounts, or simply post it on a wall for everyone in your team to see and own it themselves. Why not try translating it into other languages as well?
- **Involvement.** You might ask some or all of the individuals from among your project beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, management, commissioners and funders to contribute to your vision development exercise.

THE 7 W'S VISION DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Introduction

Successfully used by individuals, faith and secular groups, communities, and statutory agencies across the UK and abroad, this simple seven-question tool provides a framework for vision development. The resulting answers may become the basis of a written action plan

See also Toolkits on Applications for Funding:

www.near-neighbours.org.uk/s/CUF_3520_a_NN_Toolkit_Applications_for_funding_V7b.pdf

The 7 W's are the basic questions that every funder and decision maker will ask about your project.

The following 7 "W" questions can be answered individually and then shared with others or answered as part of a group exercise. Asking someone you trust, who is not part of your project, to act as a facilitator may help you to get more out of the vision development process.

If you cannot answer a "W" question don't worry. You are simply identifying part of the process that you need to explore further and are thus participating in active research!

THE 7 W'S VISION DEVELOPMENT TOOL (continued)

By keeping the results of this exercise on file and regularly reviewing them, possibly as part of an annual report process, you will be able to check on how you are developing your project's vision.

You may want to print and copy this guide for individuals to work from.

The Questions

W1. Who are the people who will benefit from the project and those working with you, e.g. volunteers, paid staff, management, faith congregation, partner agencies?

Also identify the people who are not currently part of the project who you might need to attract in the future.

W2. What are your aims? (these are bullet-point descriptions of what you want to do in your project)

What is the nature of the group that underpins your aim? Are you a group of neighbours, a constituted group or an independent charity, a limited company or other?

W3. Why do you want to do your project/activity? Confirm the need for your project; are you sure that someone locally isn't already doing what you want to do? Have you done any research, or identified the need for your project's activity? Include any reports, statistics, local community views, press cuttings etc.

W4. Where is your project to take place, e.g. on the street, in a faith building, across a district?

Add information on the locality and what it is like, such as the type of housing, access to services and opportunities, green spaces and play facilities. Try not to use negative stereotypes, because communities can often be unfairly labelled. Instead note down the positive aspects as well as the challenges experienced in the community.

W5. When do you want to carry out your project, including timescales, opening hours; and contingency plans if you don't meet expected timescales?

W6. With what resources will your project be carried out?

How much money will you need and where might it come from? What resources will you use - including people, equipment, buildings and transport?

W7. Work out how your project will actually be achieved. For example: how many people will you help? How will you support volunteers? Have you set any targets? How will you monitor success? Also use this section to add in any other work or solutions you have thought about that will be needed for your project.

Notes to the 7 W's:

When you have finished answering the 7 W's, ensure that all who have participated are thanked for their input and given a written record of what you agreed and information on the work resulting from it. This exercise might be all the information you need to start work, or it might highlight what you have to do to get to the point of starting.

Faith based organisations may wish to accompany this process with prayer and seek spiritual input throughout their vision development.

OTHER VISION DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

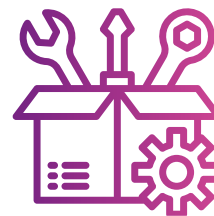
1. Impact and Evaluation toolkit:

A vision development exercise is a powerful tool to use when engaging in the planning of your project. Making your goals clear is essential to any successful project delivery, as it serves to motivate and energise people, provide direct and gain commitment from people involved in accomplishing your plans and targets. As part of this, you will also want to know if you are achieving your vision.

In partnership with Allchurches Trust (now the Benefact Trust), our sister charity Church Urban Fund have developed an Impact & Evaluation Toolkit, which Near Neighbours have adapted to be applicable across different faith and community organisations and groups. It is a simple and easy-to-use toolkit designed to help you think thoroughly about your vision, objectives and the impact you want your project to have. The toolkit helps you consider realistic ways to assess the impact you are making, and select the right evaluation tools for your particular project, nevertheless, it helps you reflect on the information you collect in fruitful ways.

The toolkit address 5 main sections:

1. Principles: Why and How to evaluate?
2. Planning and setting objectives
3. Selecting indicators and data collection methods
4. Storytelling
5. Using your evaluation data well



The main purpose of this toolkit is to equip and encourage you to first think about the kind of impact you want to have. It also helps you to: think about how to measure that impact; choose and apply quantitative and qualitative tools for gathering data; and use the evaluation data you have produced effectively.

You can access the toolkit from the following link:

www.near-neighbours.org.uk/s/Impact-and-Monitoring-Toolkit-v3.pdf

OTHER VISION DEVELOPMENT TOOLS (continued)

2. Project Reflection Workshop

Church Urban Fund, our sister charity, together with the New Economics Foundation, developed a more advanced vision development tool called a "Project Reflection Workshop" to be used by projects that have been operating for some years. Near Neighbours has adapted and updated this resource.

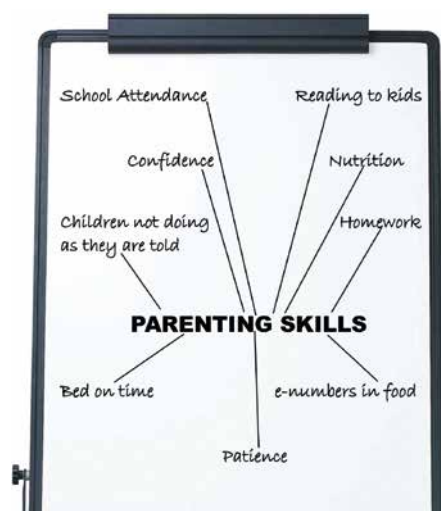
- It is designed to help projects that are already underway to reassess their work, and answer the kinds of questions a new or existing funder would ask, to help the project continue.
- It uses a timeline to look at how the project has developed and where it might go in the future. This is surprisingly simple to use and a powerful tool for many different kinds of project.
- You will ideally need an external facilitator, comfortable seating, and enough wall space to hang 5 adjoining flip chart sheets for your timeline.
- The workshop could also be done online

Use the following link to access it:

www.near-neighbours.org.uk/s/Project-reflection-Workshop.pdf

3. The Ideas Spider & Mind Maps

One of the most basic vision development tools is a large sheet of paper, in the centre of which is written the motivating issue. Using this, a group of interested people can think of ideas, all of which are written on the chart that are linked with a line drawn to the central issue. This is sometimes called an Ideas Spider or Mind Map.



Notes to the Ideas Spider & Mind Maps

To make it more interactive, you might ask those in attendance to write or draw their own ideas on the paper themselves. This might also be done by getting them to write the idea on a post-it- note and then placing this on the map.

A limitation of this exercise is that the words/pictures on the map will often need interpreting after the event. This can be done by writing a fuller description of what each word meant on another large piece of paper after the event or in a follow up session. You might divide the words and their descriptions under various headings for ease of understanding e.g.

To Find Out | Already Achieved | Work in Progress | Currently Not Possible

Taking a digital photograph of the flip chart and giving each person a copy as a record is useful and comparatively cheap if reproduced digitally or on a photocopier.

OTHER VISION DEVELOPMENT TOOLS (continued)

4. SWOT Analysis

This tool helps recognise the qualities and hindrances that contribute or threaten a successful fundraising strategy. SWOT Analysis looks at four important components (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) to consider when setting up or planning a fundraising strategy. The SWOT Analysis considers whether the strengths can offer opportunities and alternately, if the weaknesses can be overcome to develop these opportunities further.

However the SWOT Analysis does not provide solutions nor offer alternative ideas, rather it provides ideas for you to choose from. It also does not prioritise issues.

Read more here:

What is SWOT Analysis - <https://instagantt.com/templates/what-is-swot-analysis>

5. PEST & PESTEL Analysis

PEST refers to Political, Economic, Social, and Technological' factors - external forces which may affect the fundraising plan. More recently the growing importance of environmental and legal factors have encouraged widespread use of an updated version of the PEST framework – PESTEL.

Read more here:

PEST and PESTEL analysis - <https://strategicmanagementinsight.com/tools/pest-pestel-analysis>

NEAR NEIGHBOURS

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