

# Discovery

Planning for Action and Making a Difference

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**Tearfund**

100 Church Road  
Teddington  
Middlesex  
TW11 8QE

Tel: 020 8977 9144

Email: [discovery@tearfund.org](mailto:discovery@tearfund.org)

Web: [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)

**Mosaic Creative**

Bill Crooks and Jackie Mouradian

Tel: 0118 9611359

Mob: 07946 344347

Email: [bill@mosaic.uk.net](mailto:bill@mosaic.uk.net)

Web: [www.mosaic.uk.net](http://www.mosaic.uk.net)

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# **Discovery**

**By Bill Crooks and Jackie Mouradian**

**Introduction**

**Toolkit 1**

**Toolkit 2**

**Toolkit 3**

**Toolkit 4**

**Toolkit 5 - Planning for Action**

**Toolkit 6** **and Making a Difference**



**Included in this toolkit:**

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## **Introduction**

This pack is divided into two halves. The first half consists of planning activities and then Making a Difference consists of monitoring and evaluation activities.

Each of these sections starts with simple activities and moves on to more comprehensive ones which may take a bit longer

## The Objectives of this Toolkit

1. To be able to put together a clear plan for making a project happen with the community, and which can also form the basis for a funding request to a potential donor.
2. To have a clear idea of what the different roles and responsibilities are for achieving this project.
3. To be able to share the project plan and ideas with the wider community and church in an easily presentable form.
4. To understand what monitoring and evaluation is, and some simple tools for doing it.

## About The Activities

There are five key sections in this toolkit:

1. Hot Air Balloon - This is a fun and memorable way to check the project plan
2. Washing Line - This helps participants look at their different roles in setting up and running a project with the community
3. Scenario Activity - imagining the project in 6 months' time
4. Putting it all together - putting all the different ideas together into a simple plan which can be used to guide a project and also apply for funding.
5. Making a difference - a comprehensive guide to understanding what monitoring and evaluation is all about.

## Checklist for Planning

This checklist is important for making sure we have thought through everything before we start to plan or start a project.

- Do we have a survey of community needs, using a range of different sources of information and tools?
- Do we have a list of the top 3 priorities which the community sees as important and can be addressed using the skills and experience of the group?
- Do we have a list of all the skills, knowledge and resources the group and community has available to support the project?
- Do we have a record of the dreams and ideas the community has about the sort of future they would like to see?



- Do we have an initial idea of when the project or initiative might start and how long it might run for?
- Do we have the full support of the church and its leadership?
- Are there any areas that require additional research such as health and safety and CRB checks ?





## **10** Toolkit 5: Planning for Action

## **The Hot Air Balloon**

### **Purpose:**

To help participants plan a project in a fun and memorable way. Also it can be used as a way of reviewing a project to see if all the risks and assumptions have been thought about.

### **Contents:**

- Step by step guide
- Balloons
- Hot Air Balloon template
- Hot Air Balloon worked example

## Step by Step Guide

Step 1: Print off the blank hot air balloon and worked examples from the disk and use the blank balloon to show how the balloon can be used for planning a project. Talk through the worked example on the laminated card.



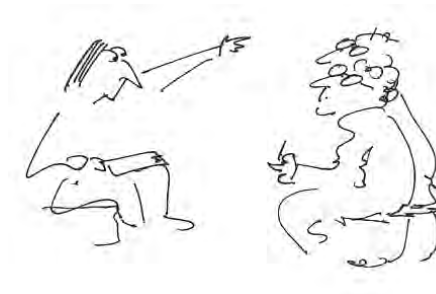
Step 2: Give everyone post-its and get them to brainstorm each part of the balloon, which relates to the project they want to do.

Step 3: Using the card, get them to discuss what factors may blow their project off course and what might hold them back



Step 4: Discuss how these threats could be addressed

Step 5: Once everyone has agreed the different parts of the balloon make photocopies so everybody has their own copy of what was discussed



## Tips for running this session

**Time required:** 30 mins - 45 mins

**Materials:**

Balloons (helium if possible), pens, string

**Tips:**

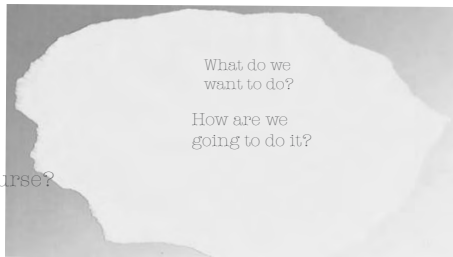
You can either use the handout of the blank balloon for people to fill in or for a bit of fun get them to write on the actual balloon with marker pen.

When you demonstrate the example, one option is to use a helium balloon and write on post-its to describe different aspects of the balloon.

This activity can be used as a very easy way into project planning for groups that find this sort of thing a bit difficult.



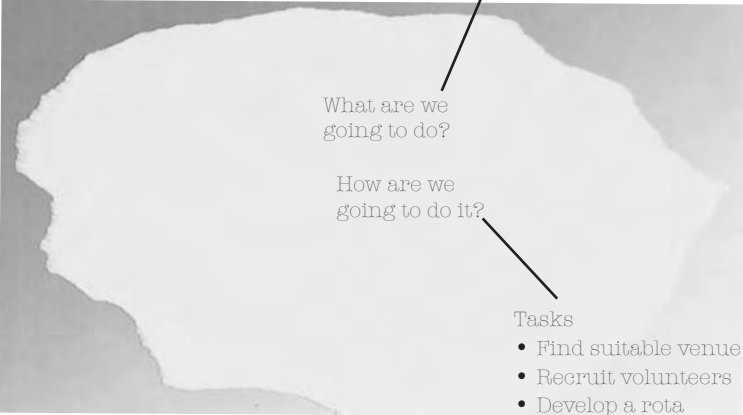
What could blow us off course?



Who should be on board?

What could hold us back?

Provide an after school club for the area which encourages a wide range of ethnic groups to attend



What are we going to do?

How are we going to do it?

Tasks

- Find suitable venue and book it
- Recruit volunteers
- Develop a rota
- Advertise the after school club with community leaders from different ethnic groups



### **What could blow us off course?**

- Dependent on short term funding grants
- Volunteer burn out
- Racial tension between ethnic groups

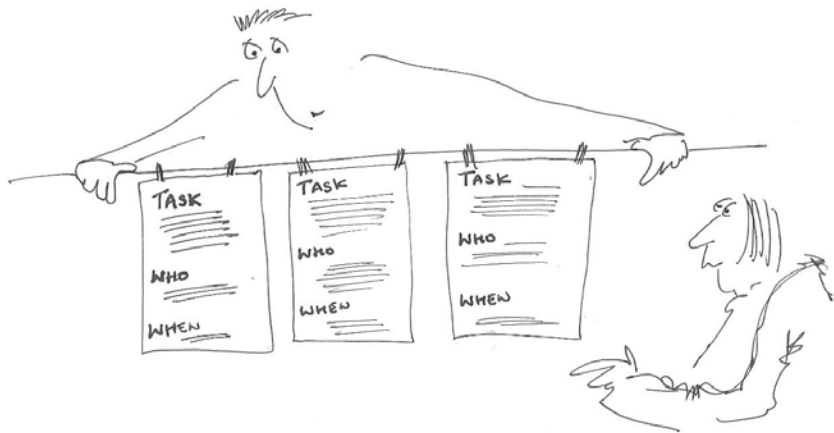
### **Who needs to be on board?**

- Parents and children from different ethnic groups
- Volunteers
- Community leaders
- Local council

### **What could hold us back?**

- Lack of children because of poor advertising
- Lack of volunteers
- Lack of long term provision





## **The Washing Line**

### **Purpose:**

To help the participants look at their different roles and functions in setting up and running a project with the community, as well as test this is a project they really want to do as a group.

### **Contents:**

- Step by step guide
- Template for looking at roles and tasks
- Scenario guide

## Step by Step Guide

Step 1: Print off the washing line cards from the disk and laminate them if you want to. List the aim, objectives, activities that are required to achieve this project on the cards

Step 2: Place the activities on the washing line in the order in which they will be done

Step 3: Discuss how each of them will be carried out and what skills and experience is needed to do them

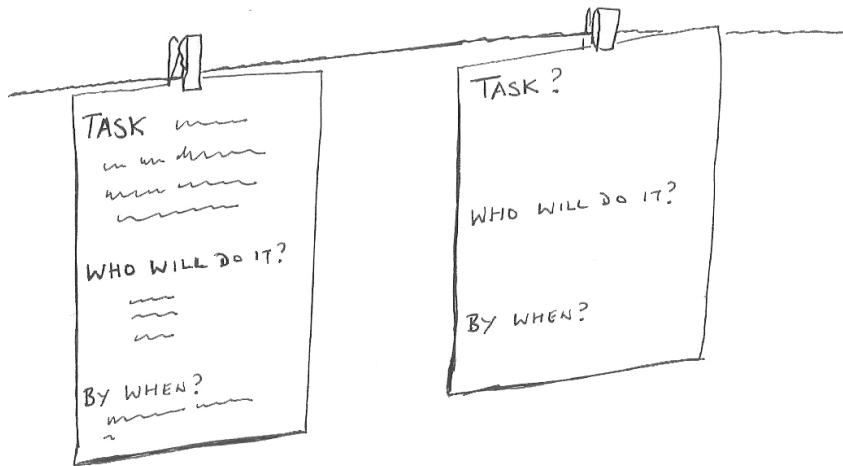


Step 4: Discuss who is best suited to do which activity and by when

Step 5: Use the scenario guide to role play 6 months after the project has started to gain additional insights into other things that might need to be considered in planning the project



## The Washing Line



## Template of roles and responsibilities

If you don't do the washing line, you can print this off from the disk or copy it on to a flip chart and use this for discussion

Activity	Timing	Skills and experience required	Who
1.  2.  3.  4.  5.  6.			





## Scenario Activity - How did it go?

### Purpose:

To check whether the initiative is really what the group wanted to do and to identify any problems that you might not have thought about.

NB

Point of Stoer  
Creeen Geardail  
Cluas Dear  
Aghnacramo  
R. nan Cloan  
Eilean Chrona  
Dulken  
Craighnessa Bay  
Oldary Island  
Culken  
Dulken  
Droghda  
Loch Poll  
Neski  
Eastachulla Bay  
Rubbha 2  
Meal Mór  
Eil. 4 Shrivheilbh  
Rubbha 1  
Upper 1  
Rubbha 3  
Scourie M  
Rubbha 4 an t-Sionnach  
Handa Island  
Ru

**Time required:** 30 - 45 mins

**Materials required:** Flip chart and marker pens

**Essential steps:**

1. Explain to the group that we are going to imagine we are different members of the initiative looking back after six months. The typical members might be a beneficiary, a volunteer, a church leader, a local council member.
2. Allocate different roles to the group and get them to reflect back for 10 mins on what the experience is like from their perspective.
3. Feedback from the different members on the flip chart.
4. Identify any new insights or problems that need to be taken on board for planning the initiative or event.

Tips from experience so far: This can be a challenging activity for people to do and needs clear explanation and time to get into role.

## Scenarios for 6 months' time

### **Beneficiary**

You've been coming to this project for 6 months, and you're going to describe all the things that you find really good about it as well as some of the concerns and challenges.

### **Church Leader**

You have been supporting the idea of this project for 12 months before it started, and you have seen how hard the group has worked to set the project up and run it for 6 months. You will share what you think this project has done for the church and its relationship with the community, and its impact on the group running it.

### **Volunteer**

You joined the project three months ago and you will share with the group how it's been for the short time that you've been in it – in particular how you've been received by the other volunteers and how your skills and experience has been used.

### **Member of the Project Team**

You have been involved with this project for 12 months during the planning and design, and the last 6 months of helping to run it. Share with the group some of the joys and challenges of the last 18 months.

### **Council Member**

You have been involved in providing advice and support to this project for the last 18 months. Share with the group your impressions of this project of how it is making a difference to the community and the potential for working with this group on other initiatives.

### Questions to reflect on

1. What were some of the positive things shared from each scenario that demonstrate the project is on the right track?
2. What were some of the negative things shared from each scenario which highlight some things that might need to be addressed in the project plan?





## **Putting it all together**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this pack is to provide a more comprehensive structure for planning a project which is useful for the project staff and for submitting to funders for grants.

### **Contents:**

- Step by step guides (part 1 & 2)
- Worked examples
- Definition cards
- Template cards for planning a project
- Summary card

## Putting it all together summary



Our gifts, talents, experience and motivation

Defining and exploring the problem we feel is most important to address and we have the capacity to address



How we would like to solve the problem using lots of creative ideas

Breaking the dream down into manageable chunks that we can do together to make a difference





## Step by Step Guide Part 2



Step 1: Clarify the problem the group has agreed to address

Step 2: Review the dream the group has decided will solve this problem

Step 3: Turn the dream into a broad statement which becomes a project aim

Step 4: Break the aim into 3 or 4 simple objectives



Step 5: make a list of the activities which will achieve each of the objectives

Step 6: Look at each of the activities and try to see how much each might cost, both in terms of money and people's time

Step 7: Add up the financial cost of each of the activities and this will give you a budget



Step 8: When you're happy with your plan, you can write it up using the action plan in the facilitator's guide

## Definitions

### **Aim**

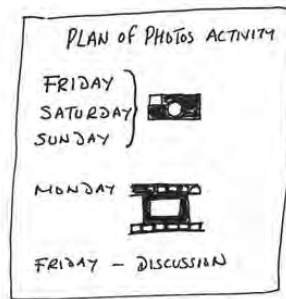
The overall purpose or reason for the project. It states how the church should apply its vision for the community

### **Objectives**

These are the practical and realistic ways in which the aim is going to be achieved

### **Activities**

These are the tasks that need to be done to achieve each of the objectives



## Aim

The overall purpose or reason for the project. It states how the church should apply its vision for the community.



The aim should be broad, long term and could be achieved by a number of different projects if appropriate.

### Examples

‘To improve the quality of life for the elderly on the estate’

‘To help provide advice and support to the unemployed’

## Objectives

These are the practical and realistic ways in which the aim is going to be achieved. They are often described as SMART

Specific (have clear focus)

Measurable (easy to determine when they have been achieved eg numbers of people reached by a service or activity as well as quality of the change)

Attainable (realistic targets rather than impossible ideals)

Results-orientated (focusing on results rather than methods or processes)

Time-specific (have a clear end date)

The following examples and templates can be printed from the disk:

‘To ensure 50 elderly people receive a weekly visitor by the end of the year’

‘To provide 30 elderly people with fresh fruit and vegetables each month by the end of the year’

## Activities

These are the tasks that need to be done to achieve each of the objectives.

Example:

‘To provide 30 elderly people with fresh fruit and vegetables each month by the end of the year’



## Tasks

1. Survey the number of elderly people who would like fresh fruit and veg delivered.
2. Advertise for volunteers to deliver the vegetables on a regular basis.
3. Brief the volunteers and put together a rota for sending requirements list and delivering vegetables
4. Send round list for the elderly to tick their requirements
5. Set up good source of vegetable supplies to support the project.
6. Regularly review the numbers of elderly receiving the vegetables to see if you reach your target of 30 people.

## Fun Activity - A romantic night out

Look at the example below and try your own version as a way of learning how the planning process works.

### **Aim**

To enhance a relationship

### **Objectives**

To have eaten in a really good atmospheric restaurant

To have had good, meaningful, loving conversations

### **Activities (tasks)**

Find a mutually compatible time

Book restaurant

Buy flowers

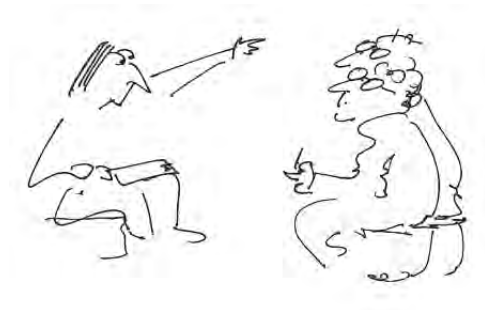
Quiet romantic walk to the restaurant

### **Budget**

Cost of restaurant

Cost of flowers

Taxi for return home





## Fun Activity 2 - The Football Match

### **Aim:**

To win this game

### **Objectives**

To score at least 3 goals

To ensure no-one is sent off

To ensure no-one gets injured  
and the team is fit

### **Activities**

Shooting practice to improve scoring ability

Practise set pieces

Remind players of the rules and how to manage their emotions

Regular training including flexibility exercises and massage

### **Budget**

Hire swimming pool and gym for fitness training

Employ massage therapist

Anger management seminar



## Template

Name of Project.....

Aim

Objectives

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Activities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

## Template

Name of Project.....

List of activities	Estimated # of hours/days of volunteers or paid staff	Financial cost of each activity if appropriate
1.  2.  3.  4.  5.  6.		
Totals		



## **Making a difference**

There are 3 questions you need to ask:

Did we do what we said we would do?

Did we make a difference?

Could we have used our skills,  
experience and money differently?

NB

Point of Stoer  
Cirean Geardail  
R. nan Oisain  
Fìlean Chrona  
Oldary Island  
Easrachalla Bay  
Culkein

Handa Island  
Scourie Bay  
Scourie M  
Rubh'Àrd an t-Sionnach  
Upper I  
Eil. a' Bhreitheinib  
Rubha a'  
Meal Mòr

S

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These three questions we need to ask at key stages during the life of the project as a way of monitoring how it is going. We also need to ask these questions at the end of the project as a form of evaluation.

A key principle in asking all these questions is to involve as many different interested groups as possible such as the beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, local council or statutory bodies. As far as possible it is really good to get the beneficiaries involved in not only gathering the information but also analysing it and drawing conclusions about how the project is done.

## Sources for monitoring and evaluating a project

The following table is useful for thinking through the different tools and sources of information that can be used to answer the 3 key questions.

<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Sources of information</b>
Did we do what we said we would do?	Focus groups with beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, local authorities
Did we make a difference?	Timeline Mapping Collecting stories of change
Could we have used our skills, experiences and money differently?	Spectrum lines Ranking

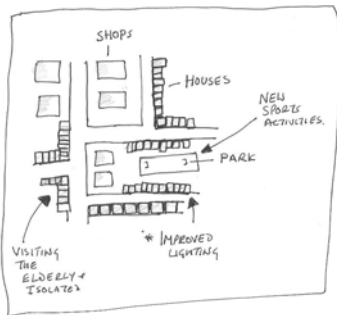
## Activity 1: Evaluating using mapping

### **Purpose:**

To discover what are the biggest changes in the community as a result of our project

**Time Required:** 30 mins

**Materials required:** Large pieces of paper, marker pens, flipchart





**Essential steps:**

1. Split into groups of 7-8
2. Give a large piece of paper to each group and ask them to draw a map of the area, marking roads, main features and good areas as in pack 2
3. Groups feedback on flipcharts
4. Ask groups to brainstorm what are the biggest changes of the area and draw on the map. Discuss which changes are as a result of the project
5. Each group then has 4 votes to allocate to what they think are the biggest changes
6. Groups feedback and record results on flipchart

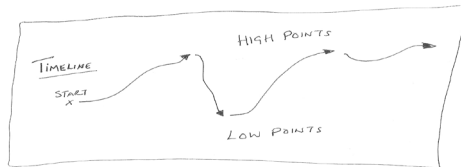
## **Activity 2: Evaluating our project using a timeline**

### **Purpose:**

To evaluate our project using a timeline

**Time required:** 1 hour

**Materials required:** Up to 10 metres of lining paper, marker pens, post-its, pictures from magazines



## Essential steps

1. Roll the paper out onto trestle tables or on the floor and explain that one end of the paper represents one year, 5 years or 10 years ago.
2. The group draws a line from the start of the project to the present day. In doing this, they need to mark on the key events, both positive and negative, of that period.
3. Encourage the group to draw or stick pictures to symbolise the positive and negative experiences.
4. When the line is complete, get the group to discuss what contributed to the positive and negative experiences. Get the group to explore what they have learnt and what they would do differently in the next period of time.

### **Activity 3: Collecting stories of significant change**

This is a method that can be used in small groups with the following steps:

1. Break the group into pairs and get the pairs to discuss a story they have which reflects a change the project has brought to the community.
2. Get each pair to give their story a title and to write a brief description of the story as well as saying why they think the story is important. (Use the template on the reverse side of this card)
3. Get each person in the group to share their story and place the titles of each story and the reason why they are important on sheets of paper on a wall.

4. Group the stories into common themes and discuss which stories reflect the significant change that has happened for people in this community.

5. Write out the most significant stories that the group has selected in full and the reasons why everybody feels that they reflect the most significant change. These can be included in a final report.

6. These could be displayed in the church or local community centre.



## **Activity 4: Using spectrum lines with focus groups**

Spectrum lines is an activity which is a good way of finding out how each individual feels about an issue and can lead to some good discussions around any differences of opinion.

On a piece of paper or card, write “strongly agree” and stick it on one wall. On another piece of paper or card write “strongly disagree” and stick that on the opposite wall.

Tell participants to imagine a line running from one wall to the other and they are to put themselves on that line according to how they feel about the following statements:

- The changes that have occurred as a result of this project are really obvious
- There is some improvement in people’s lives
- The morale during the project has been really awful
- The way the project was planned was really ad hoc

## Spectrum Lines



- The best thing about the project is the relationship building
- The worst thing about the project is the admin
- The volunteers are the craziest people around

When facilitating this exercise for evaluations, try as much as possible to get people to give practical examples to support where they are standing and these can be recorded on a flipchart and used as part of a report.

## **Activity 5: SWOT analysis**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this tool is to review how a particular activity or project has gone and what considerations need to be given to make it better in the future.

<b>Strengths</b> Things we are doing well and can build on	<b>Weaknesses</b> Things that need to be improved
<b>Opportunities</b> Things we can go for to improve what we do	<b>Threats</b> Things that will undermine the progress of what we want to do





### Tips for doing a SWOT Analysis

1. Break the group into small groups (works best if you divide the group according to different stakeholders, eg beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, church members etc.)
2. Get each group to draw a picture of a form of transport which best represents how they think the project has gone
3. Print off the SWOT cards from the disk and give each group all parts of the SWOT on coloured cards and get them to brainstorm their thoughts and opinions using post-its on to the appropriate cards.
4. Get each group to present their mode of transport picture and their SWOT analysis to the whole group
5. As a group discuss the common themes and write them up on a flip chart Discuss what short term actions need to be carried out to improve the project (next 6 months)
6. Make a plan for meeting up to discuss long term actions (12-18 months) Celebrate the achievements highlighted in the SWOT and have a good time

## 10 top tips for setting up an evaluation

1. Review the project plan and agree the key questions that need to be asked
2. Agree a timescale in which the evaluation needs to be done and for how many days
3. Decide who will carry out the evaluation - a team, a mixture of internal, external, peer agency etc.
4. Agree which combination of methods of information gathering are most appropriate eg: questionnaires, focus groups, SWOT, timeline, ranking, mapping, most significant stories of change
5. Identify and notify key stakeholders who will be contacted for their opinion about the project

6. Review appropriate project documentation at the start of the evaluation which should include monitoring reports, records, case studies
7. Make sure everyone in the project is aware of the evaluation taking place and its purpose
8. Make sure there are plenty of examples to back up statements of change
9. Think about who needs the evaluation report and in what format (cartoons, photos, dvd clips, posters etc).
10. Take time to celebrate the results

## **Activity 6: Learning more about how to evaluate a project**

### **Purpose:**

This includes materials for a more comprehensive approach to doing an evaluation of a project

### **Contents:**

- Step by step guide
- Warm up activity
- Holiday question card
- Definitions and terms
- Small group activities
- Checklist of indicators for small projects
- Holiday postcards
- Planning and monitoring project guides
- You will need some string



## Step by Step Guide



Step 1: You will need to print off “Making a Difference” from the disk. Then do the warm up activity using questions about how people plan and review their holidays

Step 2: Use string and labels to look at the planning cycle and key definitions

Step 4: Use cards of a project example and get participants to do their own version

Step 3: Use the example of the holiday to illustrate the key terms and definitions



## Warm up Activity

### Instructions

Put the questions below on cards or flipchart paper and invite the group in pairs to discuss them and if possible write their answers down and share with the group after 20 mins.



Questions for small group discussion:

What sort of holiday do you need?

What things do you need to make this happen?

When it's over how do you know it's been a success?

## How to measure the progress of a project: Step by step guide part 2

Step 1: Brainstorm “How do we know we are having a good holiday?” What indicators would tell us this?



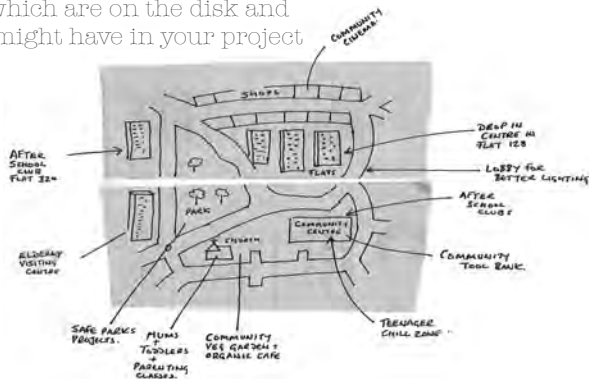
Step 2: Print off the postcards from the disk. Invite the participants to come and select postcards which are about facts and figures and those which are about feelings and experiences

Step 3: Place the 2 groups of postcards on a wall or flipchart paper



Step 4: Discuss the differences between facts and figures and feelings and experiences and how these might relate to our own projects

Step 5: Look at the different definitions for qualitative and quantitative indicators which are on the disk and think about which ones you might have in your project



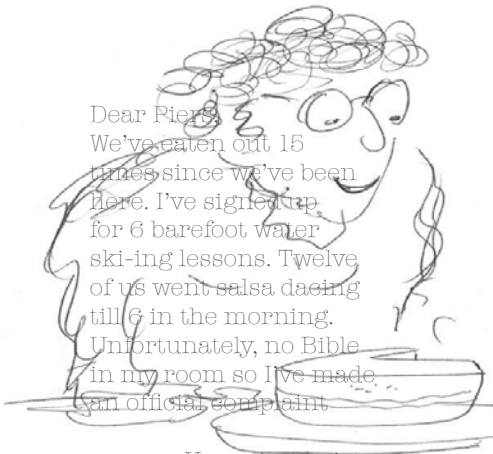


Here are two examples of postcards from the disk



Dear Wendy,  
I feel really refreshed  
and relaxed since you  
came here. It's just  
what I needed - it's the  
best experience yet.

love Damon



Dear Piers,  
We've eaten out 15  
times since we've been  
here. I've signed up  
for 6 barefoot water  
ski-ing lessons. Twelve  
of us went salsa dancing  
till 6 in the morning.  
Unfortunately, no Bible  
in my room so I've made  
an official complaint.

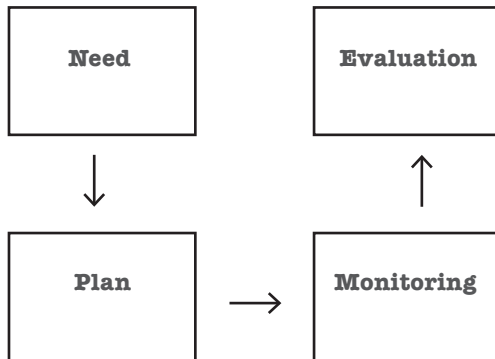
Yours in Christ  
Tim



## How to use the Card Sets

1. Place the string on the floor in a large circle and place the card set definitions around the string as per the diagram on the following pages
2. Talk through the different definitions and make links to participants' own examples of holidays
3. Pull out the worked example of a holiday set of cards to highlight the key points and definitions
4. Work through the example to do with the elderly to demonstrate how this might look in a small project
5. Get the participants to do their own set of cards, thinking about their own project or a project they know of

## How to use the Card Sets



## Example

**Identify the need** (This gives you the aim and purpose of the project)

- What need is this project trying to address?
- How were these needs identified and understood? (This is based on gathering specific information from the community)

**Plan of Action** (Objectives)

- What can your project deliver to achieve the aim (SMART objectives)
- What do you hope will change as a result of this project (outcomes)
- What indicators do we need to look for? (eg numbers of people attending or skills learnt or confidence built)

**Monitoring** (this looks at progress against the objectives)

- Is the project run in an effective way? Is there regular attendance?
- Are they satisfied?
- What do they like most?
- What would they like to see improve?
- Is there anything we should be doing differently?

**Evaluation** (achievement of objectives and impact)

- Has there been any change in people's lives? (outcomes)
- Do you have any evidence of change?
- Have there been any unexpected or surprising changes? What would you do differently next time?

## Holiday

### Identify the need

Sun, fun, relaxation and good company (Aim to have a good holiday in the sun)

### Plan of Action

- To travel to top holiday resort in Spain in June.
- Visit at least one good restaurant a day with excellent food and wine
- Plan to visit five places of interest which family and friends can enjoy.
- Learn to water-ski by the end of the holiday

### Monitoring

- Are we finding good restaurants?
- Have we got enough sun cream? (Is anybody burnt?)
- Can we stand on one ski yet?
- Is everyone getting on with each other?
- Is it sunny?
- Are we trying to do too many activities?

### Evaluation

- Everyone has a suntan
- Everyone is so relaxed they don't want to come home
- Grandpa can ski barefoot
- Next time we would go for longer!

## Elderly Project

### Identify the need

Old people are isolated and lonely on a housing estate  
(Their needs are companionship, and support with everyday tasks such as shopping and cleaning)

### Plan of Action

- Regular visits
- Homes cleaned on a weekly basis
- Rota of people to buy shopping
- Programme of social events

### Monitoring

- Are visits regular and consistent?
- Do the elderly find the visits helpful?
- Are their houses clean and in good order?
- Are the social events really what they want?

### Evaluation

- The elderly do not feel isolated any more
- Their houses are clean and well stocked with fresh food
- They are meeting each other through the social events
- They are starting to plan their own social events

## **Spiritual Reflection - Walking on Water**

Discovery is about bringing positive change to a community and hopefully transforming families and individuals. This can involve taking a risk and demands courage and faith to perhaps take on something new or meet with people we may not like or have a prejudice against.

This spiritual reflection encourages us to take a risk, in the assurance that God is faithful and will guide and help us through the difficult challenges we might face.

If you want to, you can split this reflection into sections under the headings, Seeing the Wind, Walking on Water and Focus on Jesus.



Read Mark 6: vs 45-56  
Use the laminated cards to talk through the story

70

B

C

D



## Questions

### Seeing the Wind

1. What aspects of this project do you fear most or keep you from trusting God? How can these be addressed practically and spiritually?

2. What is one step you could take today to address these fears?

3. What experiences have you had where God has enabled you to take a risk?



## Walking on water

1. How have the challenges and problems you have faced in the past had an effect on your spiritual growth?
2. In what ways do you think the project team can grow through the challenges of this project?
3. How do we create time and space to reflect on the challenges and pray about them?



## Focus on Christ

1. What things help us to step out and take a risk?
2. In what ways can we encourage each other?



## Reflections

Storms have a way of teaching what nothing else can

It is hard enough to get out of the boat when the wind is calm and the water's smooth. But in life that is rarely the case.

It is in the act of facing the storm that you discover what lies inside you and decide what lies before you..

The other disciples treasured safety over growth - they did not want to risk brokenness or failure.

Our lives are not about self-preservation and fulfillment but are to be acts of courage and service

God loves you in your boat - but what could be out there for you if you trusted him more?



It was Peter's willingness to risk failure that helped him to grow. If you want to walk on water, you have to be willing to get your feet wet first, then you discover it is worth the risk

When you take on a challenge, it builds the core of who you are, even if you don't perform flawlessly. When we become more focused on the overwhelming nature of the storm than the overwhelming presence of God, we are in trouble

Sometimes, when all the props and crutches in your life get stripped away and you find you have only God, you discover that God is enough.

Peter knew the joy and freedom of experiencing God's power after taking an enormous risk. Peter knew the glory of being lifted up by Jesus in a moment of desperate need. When you fail, Jesus will be there to pick you up - you will not fail alone.





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