Stage 3:
Dreaming dreams and planning for action
Overview of Stage 3: Dreaming dreams and planning for action

Aim of this stage:
To help people realise their dreams through developing practical action plans.

Stage 3 is made up of the following four parts:

1. Dreaming dreams
2. Clarifying what to do next
3. Planning for action
4. Learning and reflection

As with Stage 2: Envisioning the community, there are Bible studies throughout this stage which should be used with the church or the church and community as appropriate.

Part 1: Dreaming dreams

Aim of Part 1:
To allow some time for everyone to dream about the best way to meet the needs that have been identified in the community.

If you would like to do this exercise together with a Bible study, use the study on page 113.

Introduction to dreaming

This part seeks to provide an opportunity for participants to dream about some solutions to the problems they have understood and analysed in the previous stages. There is always a danger that once we identify a need, we leap straight into planning the solution. In our experience it is good to give some time to dream around the problem so as to give space for finding other solutions you might not have thought about. It also allows us to be open to God’s leading and prompting about the way forward. We also need time to decide the most appropriate approach to addressing the problem we have identified.

This stage includes materials to enable participants to visualise their dream so that it can be shared and communicated with others before getting into the details of a project plan.

Case Study:
In a remote part of Kenya some Maasai tribes people did a similar programme to Umoja where they dreamed about having their own phone line. The facilitator tried to dissuade them from pursuing such an unrealistic dream. However, within 18 months they had secured the provision of a mobile phone mast from one of the major network providers. They now have amazing coverage and a source for charging their phones.
Part 1: Dreaming dreams

Step-by-step guide

1. Find a place that is relaxing and comfortable.

2. Explain to the group they are going to spend the whole session dreaming about the perfect solution to one or more of the needs they have identified in the community.

3. Invite the participants to find somewhere in the room or place you have chosen, make themselves comfortable and encourage them to dream. Tell them how long they have to dream.

4. After one hour, or however long you have chosen, ask the people to write or draw their dreams on some cards.

5. Divide the participants into small groups and invite them to do a role play of the dreams they have come up with or produce some drawings which they could share with each other.

6. As a large group, discuss the common themes of the dreams and explore how they can be ranked or combined to be one common dream.

Bible study

Hope for the future

Read Zechariah 8:3-23

This passage is about the Lord’s promise to bless Jerusalem. He paints a picture of how Jerusalem will be blessed.

1. Ask the participants to list the blessings or draw a picture of Jerusalem in the future.

2. Then ask them to draw a picture of how they would like their own community to look in the future.

3. Break them into twos or threes to share their pictures with each other. Then invite some of them to share their picture with the whole group.
Part 2: Clarifying what to do next

Aim of Part 2:
The aim is to help the group think through in more detail the community project they want to do. This is so that there is a clear understanding of what is involved and so there is ownership by the church and the community.

Key steps
1. If appropriate, do the Bible study on Isaiah 65.
2. Use the “dream triangle” to brainstorm the different approaches needed to achieve the dream.
3. Use the “going to market” exercise to see if everybody is in agreement and to gather any new insights that may benefit the project.

Helpful guidance and advice
- The facilitator should help the community reflect on some of the problems they have identified and dream about possible solutions.
- Some communities have taken their community dream picture and turned it into a beautifully made picture which is then hung up somewhere where all the community can regularly see it, to act as an inspiration and motivation for change.
- The facilitator needs to help the community think through any potential harm or risks a new project might have on the environment or other communities. For example, a community dam could potentially deplete water from other communities in the area.
- The facilitator might also need to get the community to reflect on how their dream fits with the values of the church and the community.
Part 2: Clarifying what to do next

**Step 1: Bible study**

Isaiah’s vision

Read Isaiah 65:17-25

In the middle of some very serious warnings to Israel, God speaks through Isaiah to give this inspirational prophecy of the future.

1. What are the changes that God promises to bring about?
2. What bad things will stop happening?
3. What good things will start to happen?
4. What hopes do you have for your community?
5. What parts of Isaiah’s vision would you most like to see be made reality in your community?
6. Do you have other hopes and dreams for your community? What are they?
7. How does the knowledge that God will one day fulfil all his promises change what you do now?

_KEY POINT:_ God promised to bring about incredible change for the people of Israel, and he promises to do so for our communities too.

**Step 2: The dream triangle**

Once the group have agreed a dream for the future, get them to brainstorm a range of approaches for making the dream happen. Then group the different approaches according to the questions on the triangle below. It might be useful to have a large triangle drawn so that everybody can see the different ideas. This helps the whole group to prioritise what approach they could do best by themselves.

- **Do we need any outside help and what does it consist of?**
  - For example: advice from local authorities or organisations on water and sanitation and agriculture

- **What other community groups do we need to work with and what resources can they share with us?**
  - For example: other denominations or religions who can share their experience and resources such as buildings and equipment

- **What can we do by ourselves and with what resources?**
  - For example: dig wells, plant fields, build storehouses with our own labour and materials
Part 2: Clarifying what to do next

Step 3: Going to market

Purpose
This activity is designed to discover how committed people are to the idea of an initiative or project. Look at the descriptions below and either draw them or write them on cards and place them around the room. Ask participants to stand where they think they are at present with regard to how they feel about the project.

1. Still at home - not interested in going (not interested in the project).
2. On the way to the bus stop (think it is a good idea but not really committed).
3. Getting on the bus (committed but still needs some more information).
4. On the bus enjoying the view from the window (committed to it and motivated).
5. Walking round the market enjoying the atmosphere and the people (fully committed and ready to take on the challenge).

When everyone has stood somewhere, ask some of them to explain why they are standing where they are. Then ask them what would help them move from where they are to a more committed place. These additional insights can be really helpful for uncovering things the group might not have thought of and can be used to clarify certain aspects of the project that people want to do.

This exercise can be done at various points during the project to find out if people are still as committed as they were at the beginning or if anything has changed.

Part 3: Planning for action

Aim of Part 3:
To help the community set goals and develop an action plan.

Key steps
1. Do the Bible study on "Walking on water" if appropriate.
2. Plan your project by doing the minibus exercise.
3. Use the planning table to turn the minibus exercise into a plan.
4. Use the washing line activity to plan which activities should happen when.
5. Test the plan using scenarios.
6. Review the different planning tables.
7. Think about the best group structure for running the project.
Part 3: Planning for action

### Step 1: Bible study

#### Walking on the water

**Umoja** is about bringing positive change to a community and 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 Bible study 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 Bible study into three sections: Seeing the wind, Walking on water and Focus on Jesus.

#### Seeing the wind

1. What aspects of this project do you fear most or keep you from trusting God?
2. How can these be addressed practically and spiritually?
3. What is one step you could take today to address these fears?
4. 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 affect 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 Jesus

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

#### Prayer

We pray that you will have the strength to stick it out over the long haul - not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory-strength God gives. It strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy, thanking the Father who makes us strong enough to take part in everything bright and beautiful that he has for us.

Colossians 1:11 (The Message)

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Write the following quotes on pieces of paper and place them around the room. Alternatively, write them on a blackboard. Invite people to choose one quote they find helpful and share it with the rest of the group, saying why they like it and what it might mean for them in practice. If reading them would be difficult for people, ask someone to read them out and invite people to choose one.

- If you want to walk on water, you have to be prepared to get your feet wet first, then you discover it is worth taking that step.
- When you take on a challenge it builds your character even if you do not perform perfectly.
- God loves you in your boat - but what could be out there for you if you trusted him more?
- Peter knew the glory of being saved by Jesus in a moment of desperate need. When you fail, Jesus will be there to pick you up - you will not fail alone.
- When we become more focused on the strength of the storm than the presence of God, we are in trouble.
- It is in the act of facing the storm that you discover what lies inside you and decide what lies before you.
- We have a choice as to how we are going to respond to the storms of life - to endure them or embrace them - are we going to be open to opportunities that come in the storms or just hang on?
Part 3: Planning for action

**Step 2: The minibus exercise**

This exercise has been done earlier with the church as part of their envisioning training. It might be useful to repeat it again to help the community begin to think about the key steps in planning a project. The fact the church has already done it once will give them confidence in doing it with the community.

Example:

1. **What do we want to do?**
   - Youth income generating project

2. **Why do we want to do it?**
   - Young people need an income and a sense of fulfilment

3. **How are we going to do it?**
   - Identify things young people could do to generate money
   - Organise a small committee
   - Train the committee in skills and knowledge

4. **What resources do we have?**
   - Young people

5. **Who needs to be on board?**
   - Young people
   - Youth workers
   - Local community leaders
   - Local church leaders

6. **What could hold us back?**
   - Lack of motivation in young people
   - Lack of support for young people by church leaders
   - Lack of cooperation from local leadership

7. **What could get in our way?**
   - Change in market prices
   - Lack of commitment from the group
   - Failure to manage accounts properly

**Structuring your plan**

One way to structure your plan is to use the following headings:

1. **What is it we are going to do?**
   These are things we can do practically to achieve the aim. For example, it could be running skills workshops for women and orphans to learn ways of making money through selling crafts or improved methods of agriculture.

2. **Why do we want to do this?**
   This is the overall direction of what a project wants to achieve and is linked to a broader vision. Just as the minibus needs to have a direction for the journey, so our project needs an aim. This could be wanting to help increase the income of vulnerable women and orphans in the community or improve water and sanitation in the community.

3. **How are we going to do it?**
   These are the tasks that people involved in the project will have to do to make sure it meets its objectives. For example, finding a suitable person to teach widows and orphans basic business skills, or organising a venue to run the training in.

4. **What resources do we have?**
   It is important to consider all the different available resources we have to use for this project. This could include people’s labour, time, experience or skills, as well as natural resources, relationships with other organisations, money and prayer. It is also important to consider which resources are at risk or declining, and whether the project idea will make this situation better or worse.

5. **Who should be on board?**
   This considers all the different people who should be involved in the design, operation and evaluation of the project. This should include the beneficiaries as well as project staff, church leaders and members of the local authorities.

6. **What could hold us back?**
   This looks at the things that could possibly stop the project from getting off the ground. This might be opposition from other members of the community, lack of funding or lack of skills and experience.

7. **What could get in our way?**
   This is about all the things that could disrupt the project after it has started. These could be local conflicts, unseasonal weather, sickness amongst members of the project or government policies.

8. **Budget**
   Once you have looked at all the different activities that are needed to do the project, it is a good idea to look at how much these activities might cost.
Part 3: Planning for action

**Step 3: Project planning tables**

Use the following tables to convert the information from the minibus exercise into a plan which can be used in a project document and also for raising funds from donors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Project</th>
<th>What is it we are going to do?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do we want to do this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How are we going to do it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) Who is going to do what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) When shall we start?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) What do we need to prepare?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) When shall we start to prepare?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v) How much will it cost?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How much time will it take?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How much money will it cost?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 4: Planning roles and responsibilities**

**Introduction**

At the start of the project it is important to clarify what all the different tasks are and who is going to do them. An important part of this is prioritising which tasks need to be done first.

**Prioritising activity**

To introduce the importance of prioritising, get the group to discuss the following riddle. Follow this activity by doing the washing line activity.

"A man has three items: a hyena, some sweet potato leaves and a goat. All are equally precious to him. He has to cross a wide river, but the boat can only take him and one item. If the hyena is left alone with the goat, the goat will be eaten. If the goat is left alone with the sweet potato leaves, the leaves will be eaten. How can the man get all three items across the river safely?"

You can get the community to act out this riddle and try and work out solutions.

(The solution is: Journey 1: Take goat; Return journey: come back empty; Journey 2: take hyena; return journey: bring back goat; Journey 3: take leaves; return journey: come back empty; Journey 4: take over goat.)

This exercise can help the community reflect on priorities. The community’s resources, like the boat, may be too small to do everything at once, so there is a need to prioritise. Things may best be done in a certain order. Doing some things first may have negative consequences on other aspects of community life. For example, cutting down all the nearby trees for housing and to grow crops may improve some things, but will lead to lower rainfall and poor crops in the long-term.
Part 3: Planning for action

The washing line activity

Introduction

This activity tries to help participants visualise all the different things they need to do in order to complete the project. By visualising the different activities on cards, it is possible then to have a group discussion around which order things should be done.

Step-by-step guide

1. List the aim, objectives and activities that are required to achieve this project on some cards and put them on a washing line or piece of string.

2. Re-arrange the activities on the washing line in the order in which they will be done.

3. Discuss how each of the activities will be carried out and what skills and experience is needed to do them.

4. Discuss who is the best person to do each activity and by when.

5. Use the scenario guide on page 128 to gain additional insights into other factors that might need to be considered in planning the project.

Planning activities

When you have decided what you are going to do and how you are going to do it, the following table is a useful tool for organising what you are going to do and when.

Task planning table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Task 1</th>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>Task 3</th>
<th>Task 4</th>
<th>Task 5</th>
<th>Task 6</th>
<th>Task 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start</td>
<td>Start</td>
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<td>Finish</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 3: Planning for action

Step 5: Scenarios

Another useful exercise is to imagine the project has been running for six months and the following people are role played as if they are looking back and describing their feelings about how things went. Give people ten minutes to think about their role and then invite them back to the group to share their thoughts. As a group notice which reflections highlight fears which might need to be addressed in the current project plan. Also note which feelings are about the good things the project will achieve and check that these are planned for in the project plan.

1. Community member

You have been coming to this project for six months and you are going to describe all the things that you find really good about it as well as some of the concerns and challenges.

2. Church leader

You have been supporting this project from the start and you have seen how hard the group has worked to set it up and run it for six 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.

3. Participating community member

For the last three months you have been helping with the project. You will share with the group how it has been for the short time you have been involved. In particular, you will share how you have been received by the other people working on the project and how your skills and experience have been used.

4. Member of the local co-ordination group

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

Step 6: Reviewing the plans

Having done the scenarios, and fed any new insights into the plans, as a final check, it is useful to review all the project plans as a group to make sure everything has been covered and everyone has a clear understanding as to what they need to do.

Step 7: Structure for running the project

When thinking about running a project or series of projects, it is important to think about how it will be supported by a group of people. Below there are a number of different structures which might be considered appropriate. The local co-ordination group may fit into any of the structures below or might nominate a small group to become one of them on their behalf.

a) Project working group

This is a group that is formed for the duration of the project. It may be appropriate that there are a number of project working groups to support different projects across the community. These different community project groups would be accountable to the LCG. At the most basic level, it needs to have a nominated co-ordinator or leader who makes sure the group works well. They are responsible for arranging the meetings, delegating tasks and reviewing how the project is going.

b) Project committee

This is a group that is more formal with specific roles and functions, and has potential to oversee a number of projects over a considerable length of time.

The roles may include that of a co-ordinator or chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer and group members. It may also look to elect new members and have some form of constitution. In some cases, the project committee may oversee a series of sub-committees which are responsible for specific projects, such as sub-committees for water and sanitation, schools, livestock and health.

c) Community based organisation

This is a group with a legal entity which should have a constitution and elected members and a structure of different positions. This is more formal but has the advantage of being legally recognised so that it can apply for funds from statutory bodies or international agencies. This may be the outcome of a project committee working successfully over a number of years. (See pages 170-174 for more on setting up and running a community based organisation.)

Reflection

What do you think is the most appropriate structure for your community at this time?

Do you need to create a new structure or can you work with the structure you already have?
Part 4: Learning and reflection

This part is important as the church and community need to review and reflect back on what has worked well and what could have been done better in the way they have learnt and worked together.

Reflecting on Part 1: Dreaming dreams
1. How well did we organise the "Dreaming dreams" with the community?
2. What worked best and what should we do better next time?

Reflecting on Part 2: Clarifying what to do next
1. Is there a common understanding of the main problems facing the community?
2. How well have we as a community prioritised the needs we want to address?

Reflecting on Part 3: Planning for action
1. How well did we plan together?
2. Are the plans that we have drawn up realistic and achievable?
3. How are we going to measure the progress of the things we have decided to do?