



Participatory
Action
Learning for
Sustainability

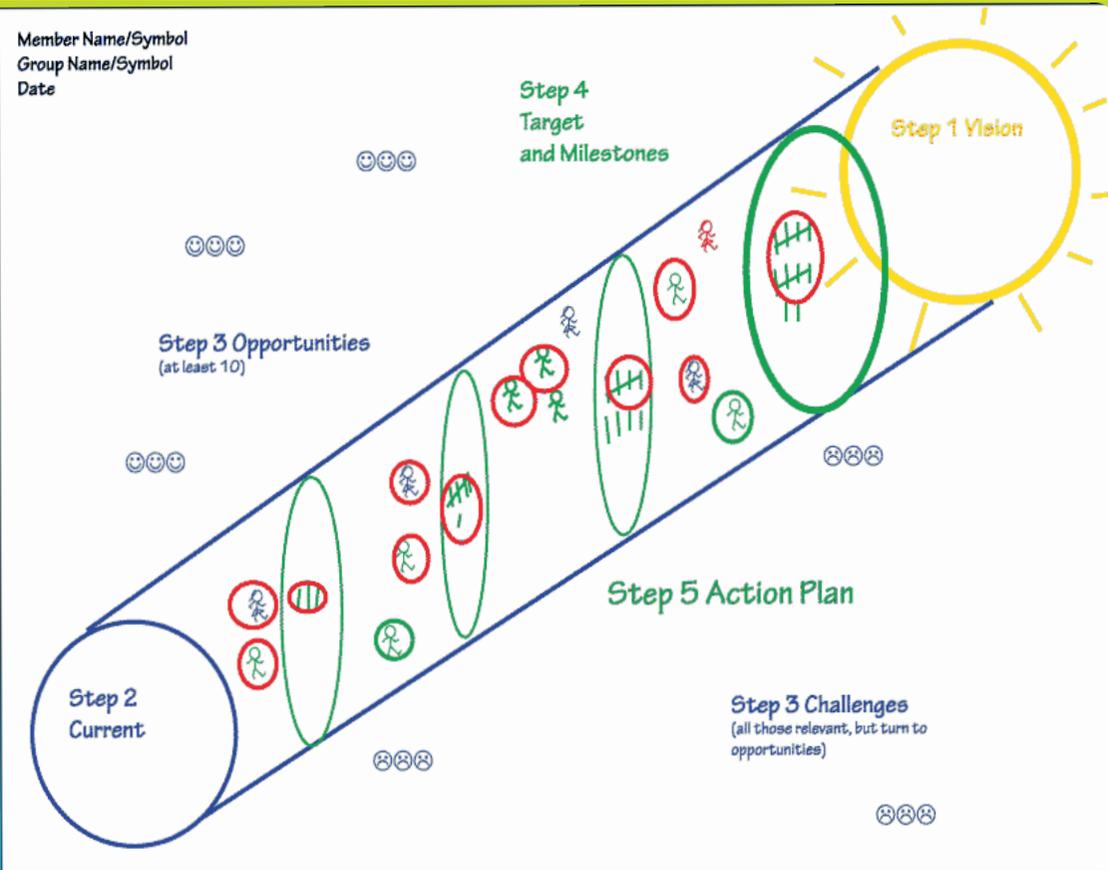


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TOOL 2
VISION JOURNEY

Toolkit for
GYEM Ethiopia



Introduction



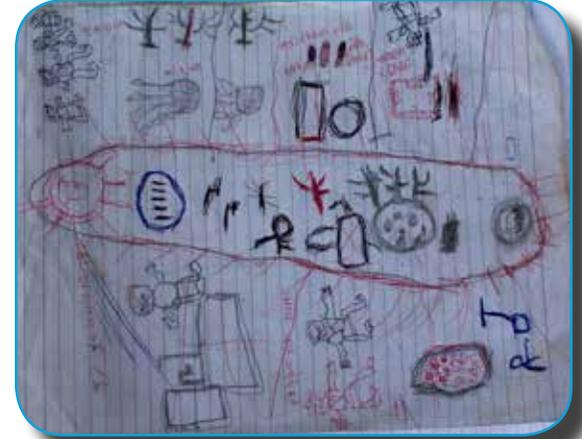
Horticulture is a means to an end - improving horticulture production gives increased income to achieve our broader visions for ourselves and our families.

We need to start our road to the future somewhere - to start to have faith in the possibilities of progress and change and to develop the habit of visioning, planning and assessing our progress.

In this session we learn a planning tool - called a Vision Journey. This has helped many farmers (women and youth as well as men) to use money from horticulture and other activities to achieve parts of their vision - higher education for children, better houses, buying land, setting up new businesses, buying cars (that women as well as men can drive).

For this first vision journey, we start with something very concrete and simple. We choose something important from our Vision Drawing that we think we can achieve in a specific timeframe and with significant progress in one year.

Later we can then use the same tool for other things. Once the basic principles and process have been learned, it is possible to then move on to bigger and more ambitious dreams.



Aims

The Vision Journey tool produces a plan to help people work towards one realisable element of their vision from the Soulmate or other Visioning Exercise (See Tool 1 in this Toolkit). Often this is a small business, a house improvement or sending children to school - as part of the longer term vision.

It clarifies the role of horticulture in the wider development process and ways in which farmers and cooperatives can work together to achieve their respective visions.

The Vision Journey tool can itself be developed into a quantified business plan. Or used as an introduction to more advanced business training. In particular the much more detailed cash flow and opportunity/risk analysis in the Multilane Livelihood Vision Calendar.



For individual farmers and staff

- introduces basic planning principles and steps
- clarifies the vision, and the importance of horticulture in achieving the vision
- identifies people's current position in relation to that vision
- introduces the importance of setting realistic timebound targets with tracked milestones and actions
- brainstorms and shares as many opportunities and challenges as possible
- introduces and reinforces a culture of planning and reflexive learning
 - reinforces basic drawing and analytical skills.

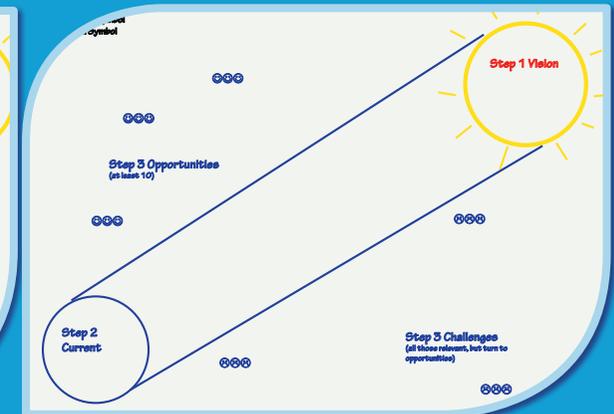
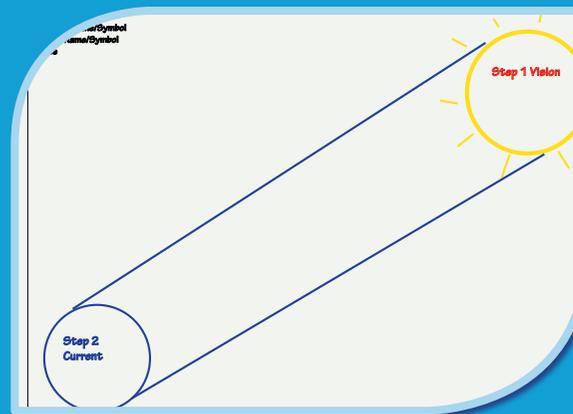
For organisations

- increases understanding of people's wider visions and how these relate to cooperative horticulture production targets.
- clarifies current baseline situation and how people themselves can plan to achieve them.
- increases understanding of opportunities and challenges and possible roles for the organisation.
- increases understanding of the similarities and differences between women, youth and men from different backgrounds and as individual people.
- improves participatory skills of staff and communication with women and men farmers with whom they work.

Steps

This Vision Journey is drawn on the next double page after your Vision.

Remember to put the date in the top left hand corner.



1 first circle – future

Draw a large circle at the top right hand corner of your page.

This represents the future. Here you put a key thing from among those in your soulmate vision dream.

It is a large circle at the top because it is like a sun and you are reaching for the sky.

It is the vision that will inspire you to pick yourself up, and continue to move forward if you fall and stumble on the rocks along the road.

2 second circle and lines - present and linking road

Draw a second large circle at the bottom left hand corner of the flipchart. This is drawn in black and represents the present situation.

Draw two straight black lines to link both circles. This represents your road from the present (bottom) to the future (top). The road is straight and upwards, because this is how you hope you will reach up to your vision.

In the bottom circle draw how your current starting situation is for the thing in your vision eg if the vision is a house, how is your house now.

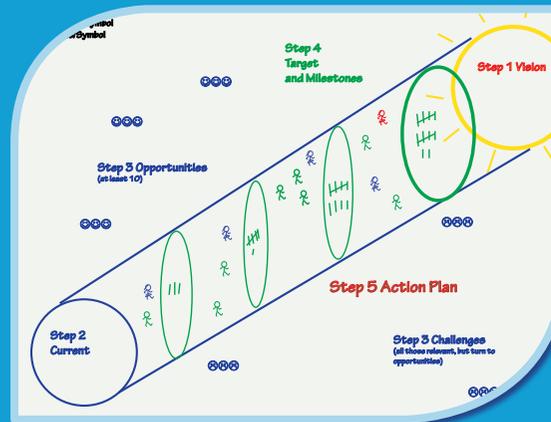
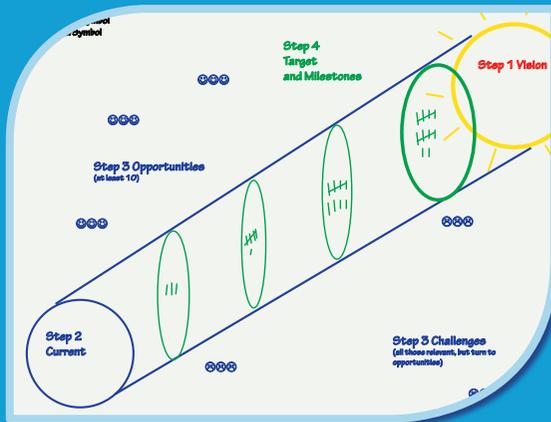
3 opportunities and constraints

On either side outside the road draw:

- at least 10 opportunities at the top of the road - the things which will help you up if you fall down. The more opportunities you think of, the quicker you will advance.
- at least 10 constraints go under the road because these are the things which can drag you down. It is important to foresee as many of these as possible in order to avoid them.

The things which are most under your control nearest the road. The things which you cannot control go furthest from the road.

If challenges are many then try to identify corresponding opportunities that can help you address them eg mosquito nets for malaria.



4 SMART target and milestones

Every journey starts with small steps. Your vision is a long term dream. Now you need to plan realistic timebound steps - given your opportunities and challenges.

Draw a circle with a thick green line next to the vision. This is your 'SMART' 1 year target. Put symbols in green to indicate what you think you can achieve in 1 year towards your vision.

Then put 3 - 5 thin green circles along the road as milestones - what you can achieve by specific times. The first circle should represent about 1 month's time. The rest are 'monitoring points' you will aim for like harvest, Eid/Xmas.

Leave enough space in between the circles - that is where you will put the actions.

5 Action plan

Now you need to think about the actions needed to move from one milestone to the next - to make sure you seize opportunities and avoid the challenges.

Put symbols for the different actions in green - if you are making assumptions that your family members will help, be sure to make this clear - and think how they will be persuaded and rewarded.

Revise the milestones and target if necessary. You may also think about further opportunities and challenges as you reflect in more depth.

Monitoring

The drawing of the Vision Journey follows the generic PALS colour coding:

- The inspiring vision is drawn in red.
- The current situation and road lines are in black.
- The plan - the target, milestones and actions - are drawn in green. They are currently 'unripe'.

The aim is to make very visible the progress and achievements through the amount of red replacing the green.

Farmers will track their progress in implementing their plan by circling the green achievements and/or actions with red as ripe fruits. Opportunities that are attained can also be ringed in red. Challenges that are successfully overcome can be crossed out in red.

Some things may be achieved more quickly than anticipated. Things that go slower and are not achieved or done by the expected time should be redrawn in green to the next milestone.

Things that will never work out, or are no longer necessary, should be circled or crossed out in blue to represent the perished fruits.

All the individual achievements, and also learning on opportunities and challenges, should be discussed within families and groups. They can also be quantified on group Vision Journeys.

Facilitation overview

Participant preparation

Participants need the vision from the Soulmate Visioning exercise, their notebook diary and 4 different coloured pens if these are not provided by the organisers.
Song from Session 1 homework

Facilitator preparation

Familiarise yourself with the tool and draw your own Vision Journey
Prepare an introductory explanation from the overview above - make sure this is brief and to the point.
Read Guidelines for Interactive Tool facilitation in Facilitation Guide.
Put up a blank flipchart at the front of the room for the participants to progressively develop - this time the facilitator must not hold the pen.
Make sure the seating arrangements are appropriate for people to sit comfortably in groups while doing individual drawings. And that there are passageways for people to come up and contribute from the front.
Seat yourself now to the side, not at the front.

Materials/ prepared inputs

Notebook diaries with coloured pens.
A blank flipchart for the front of the room and coloured markers placed for people to come up and draw.

Timing 3 hours with healthbreak

Pairwise introduction - discussion of what participants learned in the previous session, experience of sharing at home and progress on the song (15 minutes see Facilitation Guide).
Plenary feedback focusing particularly on any need for clarification (15 minutes)
Welcome back and brief overview of session (5 minutes).
Interactive presentation and individual drawing of the Vision Journey in notebook diaries. (1 hour).
Facilitator wrap up including homework (15 minutes)
Recap on steps for pictorial manual at the back of the notebooks (15 minutes)
Finishing song (5 minutes)

Outputs

Individual Vision Journeys with milestones and actions for the next 12 months in notebook diaries. These are then tracked over time.

Homework for participants

To complete their vision journey, building on the inputs from others
To share what they have learned and the Vision Journey Tool with at least 2 people before the next meeting
To bring their Notebook Diary and coloured pens to the next meeting
To develop a Vision Journey song with their friends

Homework for facilitator

Monitoring should not be done at this stage as it detracts from champion ownership and empowerment, but make notes on possible vision indicators that the organisation might decide to track eg increases in incomes, changes in property ownership of women and youth, women driving - among many other possibilities.
Feedback the outcomes to your colleagues.

Facilitation Guide

Brief introduction
5 minutes.

Interactive Tool presentation and individual drawing
1 hour.

Facilitator Wrap Up and homework
15 minutes

Once the feedback from the pairwise exercise has finished, the facilitator should give a brief explanation of the Vision Journey as indicated in the narrative above. Stress that although this tool still uses mostly drawings, it will be a serious plan where numbers and financial calculations can be added. Many farmers worldwide have already used and benefitted - building beautiful houses with solar power and shining roofs, saving to send children to university and setting up successful businesses. BUT KEEP THINGS VERY BRIEF. Explain in more detail as you go through the steps.

People draw individually but it is good to sit in informal groups - putting together those who have most difficulty in one group and the most advanced in another to enable the facilitator to easily give necessary support to each. It is best that those who have initial difficulties can encourage each other rather than feeling dominated. Also that those who are more advanced can move ahead quickly with more complex analysis to add to the discussion later. Possibly also separating men and women if one is likely to dominate the other.

Sit at the side and go through the basic steps - step by step - interactively. Invite people to come up and draw each step of the framework. They should first indicate with their hand what they will put. Other participants are asked if they agree. Then the step is drawn on the flipchart. This both reinforces learning, and avoids making a mess and having to keep changing the flipchart. As things are drawn at the front, people draw the framework and their own plan in individual notebook diaries. And remember the applause!

Invite suggestions on examples at each stage. But do not to draw specific symbols because then people will just copy those - like good children - not think for themselves like adults. Then they will not have anything they themselves can take seriously and implement as their own plan. It is best to give non-stereotypical examples - like women getting a car or lorry or becoming an airline pilot as well as common ones like building a house. Gender issues should also be raised, continuing from discussions on the vision - like who owns the house or car and make sure people put symbols eg for joint ownership.

Go slowly giving time for people to draw in their notebooks. Do not touch the pen yourself. Make sure everyone is engaged all the time - either through taking their own analysis further or helping and discussing with others who are at the same understanding level. VERY IMPORTANT - EVERYONE MUST DRAW EVERYTHING FOR THEMSELVES. NO ONE SHOULD EVER TOUCH THE PEN FOR ANYONE ELSE. If given space and a bit of time, encouraged and not patronised or laughed at, even very old women who never held a pen are drawing in about 15 minutes, and then become very comfortable and even expert after a few sessions.

Key points which may need continually emphasising are:

the importance of doing a serious plan that they will really implement. They should put all cash amounts and calculations and make sure these make sense. Or they won't succeed. Participants are adults. So they should do a plan like adults. A children's simple drawing is not enough. Push them to put as much detail as possible.

the importance of identifying as many opportunities and challenges as possible - particularly ones over which they may have some control. That deep reflection and brainstorming will really help people advance. It may be very useful to discuss with neighbours on this.

the need to separate out the milestone targets from the actions needed to attain them. That is important for future tracking and monitoring - it is the actions that people can control, not necessarily whether they fulfil the targets. They will track which actions are successful and which are not, and revise their targets accordingly.

The facilitator gives a brief wrap up - outlining different dimensions of a vision and opportunities which have come up. The facilitator could also start to discuss some important gender and/or youth issues elements that have yet not come up - without imposing their own view. The best way is to refer to issues that are known from research, or mentioned by champions elsewhere.

Explain the homework - sharing the tool and helping others at home draw their own plan and/or working on a Vision Journey song.

Issues from experience

As with all PALS tools, it is important to start simple and help participants develop their own confidence in analysis. People must feel they own this first vision journey as their own.

This first vision journey is often the first time people have thought much about planning for anything in the future. It is very important not to overload it with too many details. The degree of detail at this stage will depend very much on:

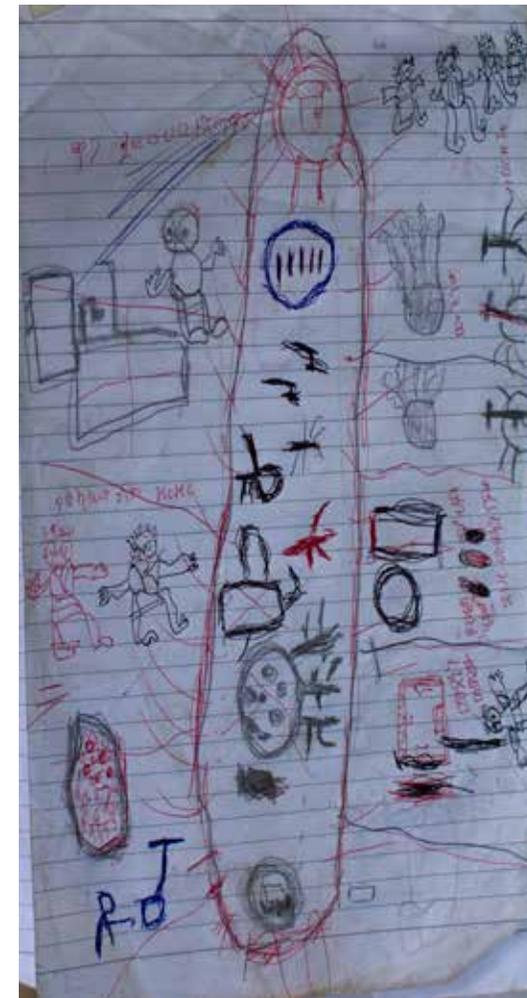
- the outcomes of the soulmate visioning exercise which provides the vision
- how seriously the participants take the exercise - this depends also how serious the facilitator themselves are. Even people who have never held a pen before can use their brain and do a plan with simple calculations. People who have formal schooling can do plans as detailed as are done with cash flow charts etc but related to a vision ad with SWOT analysis.
- the degree to which this has developed people's drawing and participatory skills so that they can draw further detail
- the numbers of participants per facilitator and the level of previous experience they have with gender and/or participatory methods.

Do continue to reinforce gender and youth equality issues - raising questions about stereotypes, roles, ownership, rights etc. But keep this light at this stage and do not insist. Strategise how you can achieve consensus referring to what participants themselves say and/or questioning whether visions can really be achieved without women, youth and men happily working together. Give examples from research or your experience elsewhere. But do not lecture with your own views or you will lose people. FACIPULATE!

This is also the time to comment on/ give any suggestions about changes in process or participation eg the need to have norms on mobile phones/people not interrupting each other.

There could be a slot here for norm setting - it will be more useful and participatory at this stage than doing this at the beginning. But often no specific norm-setting is necessary if it is just clear that everyone is expected to behave like respectful and responsible adults.

Good facilitation from the back means that there should be little for the facilitator to add. Briefly summarise the action conclusions, comparing these to the checklist below, or previous exercises from your own experience.



The example above was drawn by a woman who could not read and write one day previously. It does not exactly follow all the steps above. But there is a lot of thinking and analysis. This woman then went on to learn numbers in the following days. She also shared with her family and neighbours and spoke very forcefully about the importance of visioning and planning at the community meeting. It is the thinking and inspiration to share and speak in public that is the aim at this state. Details of the tool can be tightened up later on the Multilane Highway.

Facilitation Checklist

At this stage facilitation should not be too directive:

- **everyone should be having fun and drawing their own diagrams for themselves, and understand the importance of drawing**
- **people should be convinced of the importance of planning and understand the basic principles and steps outlined above**
- those with no formal education should be enjoying drawing, confidently sharing their ideas with everyone else and understand basic steps
- those with higher levels of education should be pushed as far as possible to take things seriously, and have detailed cash amounts and calculations for a serious implementation plan - not just childlike drawings

The main things to check are that everyone:

- is using two consecutive pages to give enough space for lots of drawing, and these pages come at the front of the Notebook after the Vision
- is drawing the right way up and to top right from bottom left - often people are sitting opposite each other and copying and may draw up-side-down
- has visions that are reasonably realistic in a few years
- understands the difference between the vision and current circles
- are putting on people and considering gender issues: who owns what, who contributes what and who gets what
- has at least 10 opportunities and challenges, adding opportunities to balance challenges
- has the one year target circle, with logically spaced timebound milestones with enough whitespace in-between to put the action steps
- **comes away inspired with dreams of the future, but with a realistic target and with some immediate action steps**

Remember the homework for sharing and thinking about songs. Starting with their families and children. BUT NO ONE SHOULD DRAW FOR THEM AT HOME AND THIS SHOULD BE CHECKED NEXT TIME. WITH A BIT OF PRACTICE EVERYONE CAN DO IT. OTHERWISE IT WILL NOT BE THEIR OWN PLAN.

At some point either at the end of Session 2, or before the Community Day Meeting, participants should draw the basic steps in simplified form at the back of their Notebook Diaries. Looking something very like the diagram below.

What they share with others are the steps. So that those people do their own plan themselves.

Then everyone shares their ideas. In that way the champions learn and benefit from teaching others. Peer sharing is not just a charitable and unsustainable chore.

