Overview

This tool helps participants to plan through the steps needed to reach certain goals, especially building on from where they have already reached. This encourages a development approach that therefore uses their own contributions, assets, strengths and prior achievements to reach the next step, target or goal. By using the visual of making a bridge to cross a river, experience simply shows that it can be more engaging then simply using a chart or planning template to achieve the same result.

Instructions

- As the facilitator, draw two banks of a river.
- Then ask the group to consider their achievements to date, or strengths, assets and contributions that they already have. These are written on the left bank.
- Next, ask them to think of a time in the future (weeks, months, years) and to consider what they would like to have achieved by then. They write this on the right bank.
- Then explain that the stepping stones (or parts of the bridge) represent the practical steps that are needed to achieve their aims. Ask them to write these over the top. Do ask appropriate questions to ensure the bridge doesn’t have any gaps or holes in it, and the path is logical.
- Keep a copy for yourself and leave them with a copy they can refer back to.

Activities

2009-2011

- Educated 15 children so they can now attend government school
- Completed building 2 classroom block
- Provided 80 school meals

By 2013 Outputs

- Educated 60 children
- Have capacity for 100 children in programme
- Start health outreach to 500 members of the community
Go Deeper
- Once the separate “steps” have been established, add information to them such as who will be responsible, by when, what budget they have, etc.

Top Tips
- It is important that you look out for quieter members of the group who may have important opinions but are afraid to share them.
- Be careful not to raise the expectations of the group. They may think that by asking them about their needs you are going to be able to help. Make it clear what the purpose is and which steps will require outside assistance.
- It is often useful to have a note taker for this exercise.
- IF You are using this as an exercise to plan a project you can title the right bank: ‘Objectives’; and the steps ‘Outputs’ or ‘Activities’ depending. You encourage the group to put details and quantities on their points as well (see example).