



3. The Project: step by step

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 About management

Management is defined, in simple terms as the skill or practice of controlling, directing or planning something; "The act of directing, or managing for a purpose". In other words, it is the effort of planning, organising and mobilising people and resources for a given purpose. In the case of project management, we are talking about the capacities and skills that make the project feasible and real.

Project management is a tool for better work to bring about change, especially in voluntary organisations and youth associations. The shift of accent from political education to training has been accompanied by a proliferation of offers and requests for training around management: time management, project management, organisational management, team management, conflict management, financial management, etc. The growing symbiosis between the business and the non-governmental and non-profit oriented sectors of the last decade has indeed put pressure on NGOs to be performing, efficient and professionally managed. Similarly, business management has "imported" words and concepts that have first appeared in the third sector, the most obvious being 'empowerment'. This should not mislead us into thinking that the two sectors are using these terms

for the same things. Even if the vocabulary seems to be the same, the meaning and implications are often very different.

This is not to say that NGOs must not be efficiently and professionally managed. They should, and not least because they often use public money which should be optimised. There are indeed many areas in NGO management which require the same and sometimes higher level of specialisation and expertise than in the business field. However, when we speak about training and preparing project managers, we are talking about more than technical management skills. Remember, the project is first of all to carry out change, to make a difference. And this implies project leadership that is able to lead and follow according to what is most pertinent in the light of the project needs.

In youth and social work, the project manager is responsible for managing the material and human resources and for leading the project to the expected result.

Project managers are centipedes - they have to be good team workers, good communicators, good time-mangers, good fund raisers, good motivators, negotiators ... But first of all they have to remain human beings.

A project manager must be:

- **An organiser**, with capacity to understand, plan and co-ordinate efforts and resources to meet the objectives
- **A strategist**, able to set clear long and short-term objectives, keeping these in mind together with the reasons for the project's existence
- **A motivator**, with skills and attitudes enabling him/her to motivate and commit people to the project or to participate in it (workers, volunteers, young people)
- **A fund-raiser**, with knowledge and confidence to apply for funds to administer and account for them with integrity and competence
- **An activist**, in the meaning of someone able to spot initiatives and to organise ideas into meaningful social actions with clear values evolving over time
- **A visionary**, someone able to imagine social innovation and change
- **A community worker** with particular concern for the affairs of the community or/and organisation he/she are involved in,
- **A social worker**, capable of caring for people without replacing them, i.e. instilling in them the motivation and confidence to take part in shaping their own future and realising their projects,
- **A teacher and a learner** capable of empowering people while at the same time being able to learn from the experiences and use that for the organisation, project or community – monitoring and evaluating a process in relation to the objectives, changing plans and ultimately objectives in relation to the circumstances



The list could be more complete – in your organisation or project, which functions or qualities are the most important? Also, these qualities are not necessarily needed in all types of projects. Very often they are not concentrated on one person but rather spread and assumed by different people in one or more teams. Nevertheless, it is clear that a lot of this has to do with more than just “know-how” or skills. It is also about knowledge and the capacity to use it, about ways of being and working with people, of using experience and learning from experience. In other words, it is also very much about attitudes. These, however, can not pretend to be taught or explained in a training manual. They are acquired, developed, reviewed and adjusted through practice or in real training situations.

What is “managing a project”?

Nearly everyone is involved in high-level management all the time. Anyone who can get three children dressed, breakfasted and off to school and get to work on time, despite having to rely on public transport, is a superb manager. Anyone who can plan and produce a dinner for 12 can manage complex administrative and task functions. Anyone who can survive on social security is a financial manager. *People simply need the confidence to transfer these skills to other situations. (Adirondack, 1992)*

Management, at its basic, can be defined as, ensuring a project makes the most effective and efficient use of resources in order to achieve agreed objectives.

– What needs managing?

It is helpful to distinguish between:

- people’s individual responsibility for managing their own work,
- responsibility for managing the organisation (setting and monitoring long and medium term objectives and developing policies); e.g. the board of an international youth organisation,
- responsibility for the day to ‘day management’ (what the organisation does, how it does it and how well the work is done), the people who do the work and resources e.g. The secretary general of the international youth organisation and their team,
- responsibility for managing a team or a project; e.g. a team that runs a specific project organised by the youth organisation.

– Who manages?

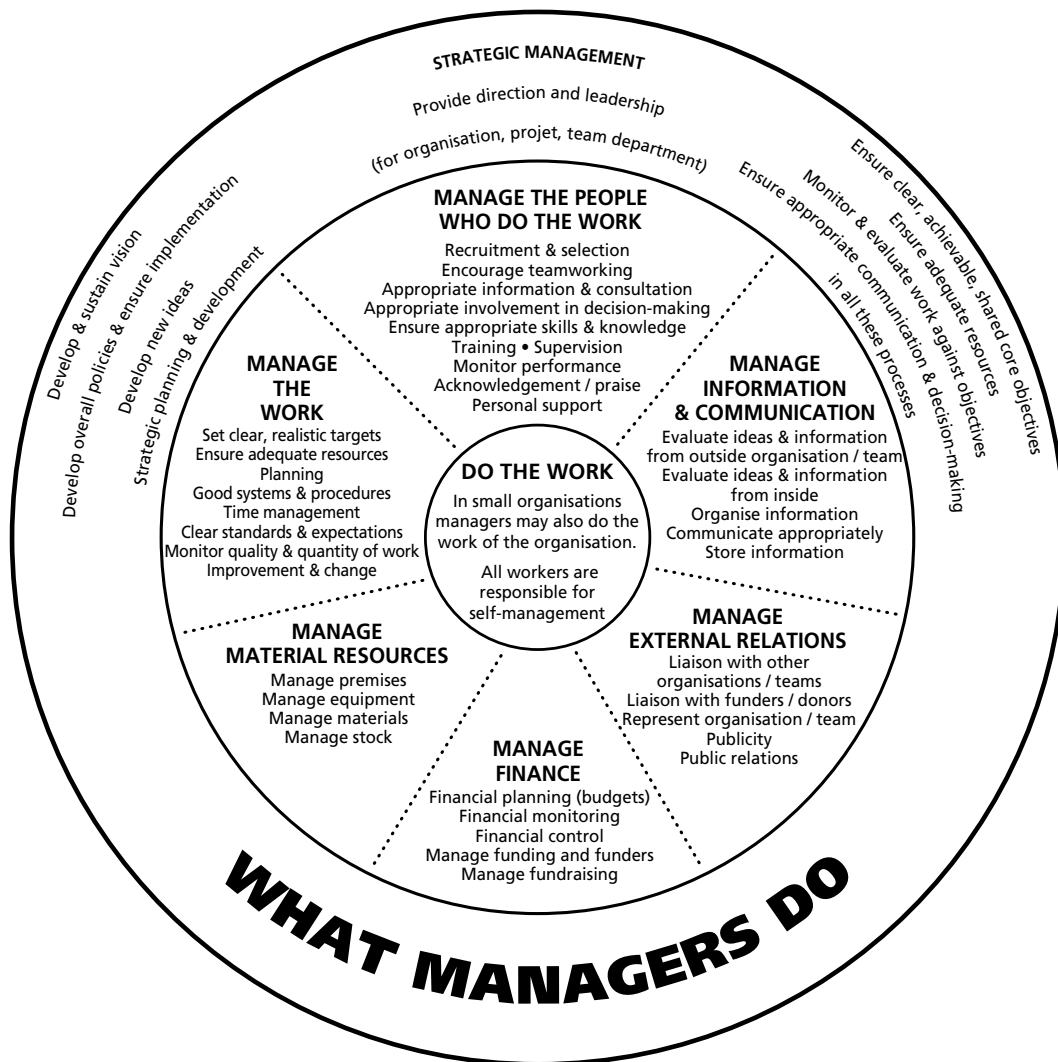
Most projects, nowadays are managed by a team. Youth work projects are not anymore the hard work of an individual youth worker but a collective effort of a group composed of different people, with different capacities, expectations, experiences, backgrounds and cultures. “Teams are now seen as solutions to problems of external adaptation, responding to complexity by bringing together a diversity of perspectives while responding to dynamic changes by encouraging team to make decisions at the front line where the action is” (Schneider and Barsoux, 1997).

8 reasons why projects succeed

1. The organisational structure is suited to the project team.
2. The project team participates in planning.
3. The project team is committed to establishing schedules.
4. The project team is committed to establishing realistic budgets.
5. The project makes proper use of network planning techniques and does not let the plan become an end at itself.
6. The project team works with bureaucracy, politics and procedures and not against them.
7. The project team agree on specific and realistic project goals.
8. The target public is involved from the start of the project.



- What managers do?



Source: from page 3, Sandy Adirondak 'Just about managing? Effective management for voluntary organisations and community groups', 3rd ed., 1998, ISBN 1-872582-17-6 © Sandy Adirondak and London Voluntary Service Council.



8 reasons why some projects fail...

1. Inadequate authority.
2. Lack of project team participation and planning.
3. Lack of project team participation in problem solving.
4. Inadequate communication skills.
5. Inadequate technical skills.
6. Inadequate administrative skills.
7. Unrealistic project schedules.
8. Unclear project goals.



Four factors in a successful project!

Successful project management is about connecting together four different and sometimes conflicting factors.

The need or problem	The idea and vision
Projects work best when the people developing them understand and appreciate the needs and problems they have to tackle. It is important to properly evaluate the need or problem. What is its root causes? What are the symptoms? What is the scale of it? For whom it is a problem?	Projects need a vision to unite all their activities and efforts. It is from the vision that strategies, objectives and work plans flow. The big idea behind the project should be clear enough to show how the project will make a significant and sustainable difference to the needs or the problems
The opportunity for the project	The capacity
Projects need to have or to create the space in which to operate. Projects need to be actively supported and backed with more than just money. There must be support for the project from key people and an active participation from the target group.	Projects need the right balance of skills, energy, resources and organisation to get up and going and deliver results. They need to be designed so that they are able to make an impact and create results.

All of these factors need to be looked at and evaluated equally in the design of the project. Too much focus on one or two factors can lead to others being ignored.

3.1.2 Proposing a Model

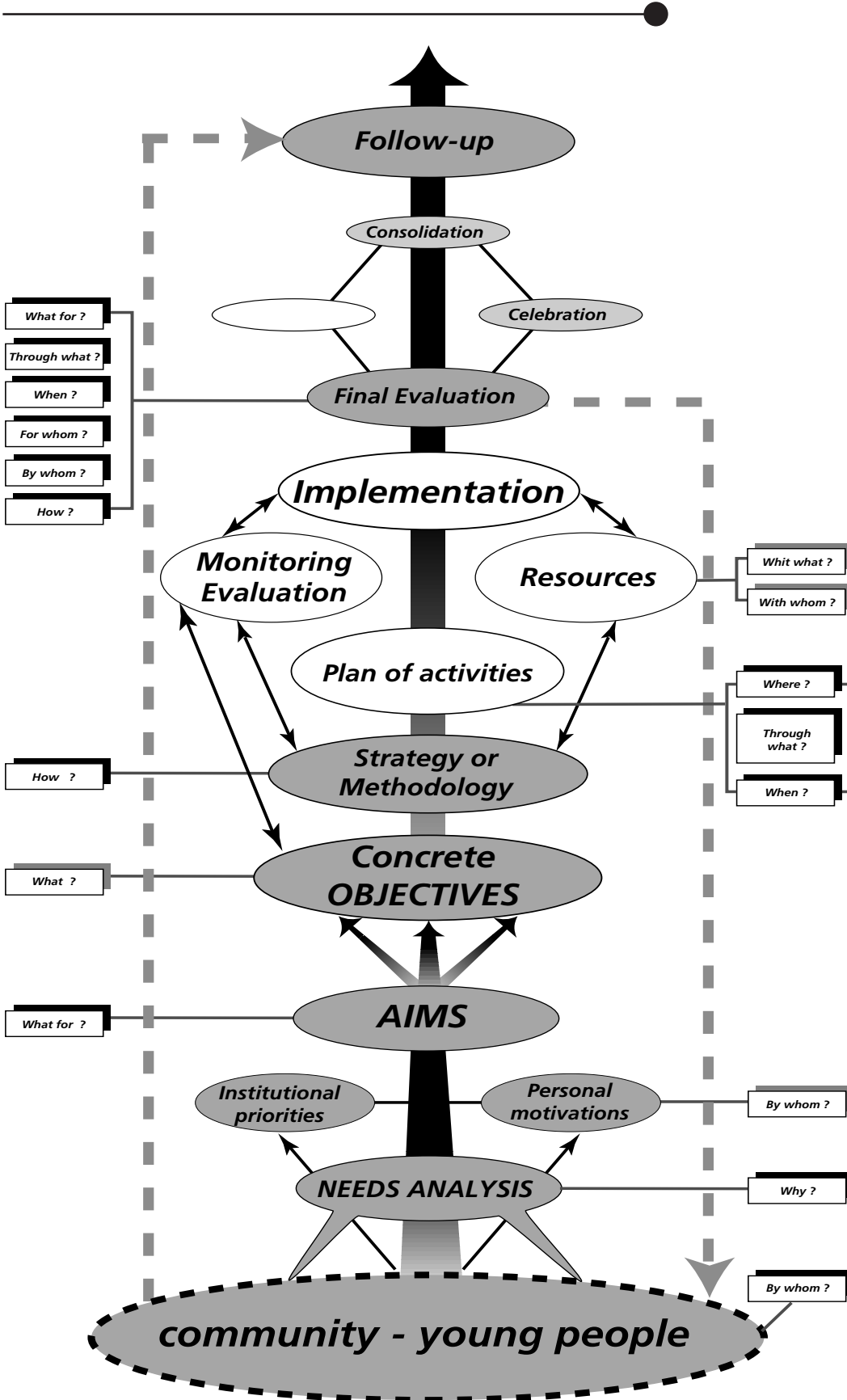
There are many ways to plan and manage a project, probably as many as there are project managers. There are also many more schemes to explain the different steps in project planning than the ones presented in the previous chapter. All of them are valid and have their pros and cons. After all, the purpose of developing project planning skills and attitudes can be simply expressed as:

Allowing those in charge of the project, project manager or the managing team, to be in control of the project. This will enable them to change plans, to adapt to unexpected situations, to take advantage of new opportunities. And, above all, to know why they do what they do. This way, they control, master and steer the project instead of being lead by the project, by deadlines and by requests from different directions.

The scheme we are going to follow in this chapter is not better and is not worse than any of the others. We have used it for some years

now in different training activities and certainly in running many projects. The actual scheme still builds on one adopted by the team of the first LTTC of the European Youth Centre back in 1990 and adapted as a result of various contributions. We have chosen it after comparing it with others (see Chapter 2.3) and having concluded that it is both understandable, logical (to us) and flexible. You should use it and read it exactly as said above: as a tool to help you plan and understand your project at each step and to help you get the most out of your efforts and of your colleagues or young people involved. If you'd rather change the scheme, please feel free to do so, skipping some parts or adding others, according to your needs.

Below, you will find the proposed scheme and a step by step explanation of each graphic element, some indications on how to proceed with a training on project management (*"Suggestions for training"*), how to formulate an application form (*"Putting it down in the application form"*) and a concrete example of an international youth project (*"Let's go to Ban Uppa!"*). To help your reading, the Coyote in the margin will show you where in the chapter to find the different graphic elements.





3.1.3 Definition – Implementation – Evaluation

A simple and commonly used way of imagining the project is dividing it into three major moments: definition, implementation and evaluation.

Definition

The definition is all the early planning and preparatory work – from the needs analysis, to the definition of objectives and identification of activities and necessary resources. This is all the “invisible” work that is carried out even before the project starts. This is where the project takes shape and where its fate is decided. The work in this phase should include:

- A needs analysis of the social reality
- An analysis of the organisation's or promoters capacities and interests
- A pre-definition of aims and concrete objectives
- An identification of possible/probable activities
- The needs for evaluation
- The calendar of the project
- The potential resources
- The people in charge of the project
- The partners
- Writing an outline of the project
- Possibly applying for funds

Implementation

The implementation phase often overlaps with the definition because many tasks that are already part of the project take place while some definition work is still going on. The implementation phase must consider:

- The actual activities and how they inter-connect,
- The management of the resources: human, financial and technical,
- The communication and public relations strategy,
- The process for evaluation, feed-back and regulation,
- Accounting and record-keeping,
- The way to involve people, especially young people and generally the surrounding community.

Evaluation

Evaluation is part of the project plan and comes mostly at the end of the project even though we consider also the need for intermediate evaluations. In fact, the project is not finished with the end of the activities: just as one part of

the definition is “invisible” to the public, so is very often the evaluation and the different tasks related to it:

- Evaluation procedures: i.e. checking what has been achieved and what was not achieved,
- The impact on the community and on the organisation,
- The follow-up measures to be considered,
- Thanking and “celebrating” with the people involved,
- Writing documentation,
- Sending financial reports, closing the accounts.

One of the advantages of seeing the project management in these three phases is that it considers the full time span of the project – including the evaluation. As we know, the difficulty of many projects is not in the carrying out of the activities but rather in completing the different tasks enumerated under “evaluation”. Its limit is that the phases are partly artificial: the overlap is quite high. In fact, they influence each other so much that it may be difficult to distinguish what is where. Still, no one can do a project without... preparation, implementation and evaluation.

The project planning grid in the graphic has been designed so as to provide a visual understanding of these three main moments – even though they are artificial.

3.1.4 The “W question” grid – or the “Laswell method”

Why, What for? Who? When and Where are the classic five questions that help in clarifying the ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ of the project. Especially in training on project management training, the “Ws” are useful because they help trainees in clarifying their thoughts and actions. At the same time they help distinguish and understand the different step in project planning (e.g. difference between needs analysis and aims).

The complete list of ‘Ws’ is also extremely useful for imagining or preparing an application, especially if there is no pre-defined form. At the end of the day, regardless of the institution, those are the questions that any potential sponsor or supporter needs to have answers to.

We have added the ‘W’ questions to the side of the project grid graphic. They complement each other.



3.2 Defining the Project

3.2.1 Introducing the community

Most youth projects are also community projects in the sense that they address themselves to a community or to a group of young people. The community may be larger (one may consider the “national” community) and the target group may be very narrow and specific, that will depend on the scope of the project and its aims. What is important to remember, when thinking of the community, is that the project is done:

- For the (young) people
- With the (young) people
- By the (young) people

The project is not done just for the sake of the organisation, of the sponsors or of the project leader. Nor it is to make money. The project, as an organised effort for social change, intends to bring something new to people. Something that is missing. Something that is needed. Something important. Hence the starting point is always the community. At this stage it is important to think: what is our relation to the people affected by this project? What do I know of them? What do they know of me? What kind of stereotypes or prejudices must we face? How can we get over that?

The people, the community, are the *‘raison d’être’* of the project. How to involve them from the start is probably the most important question in the definition phase. It will determine not just the success or failure, but also its general social value.



Let’s go to Ban Uppa! ... and look at a concrete example of a youth project:

We will be following the story of Ban Uppa! during this chapter, as an example of project management; to put the theory into the light of practice.

We’ll start our journey in Banville, a small and still young town in the outskirts of a large

city, with a large section of the population being of immigrant background, mostly commuters to jobs in the city or neighbouring industrial sites. The youth population is proportionally higher than the national average. There is a shortage of jobs, the level of success at school is lower than the national average. It is a community with a bad media image, known mostly for its social instability, youth delinquency and petty crimes associated with drug-trafficking.

We work at Ban Uppa! – a local association formed two years ago by students and teachers who were concerned by the lack of cultural opportunities for the young people. The association – whose main purpose is to provide alternatives for a healthy life style and the cultural and social development of young people – has been mostly active in organising after school sports activities, as well as cultural events in the neighbourhood. Most of the activities are directed at young people, but some are addressed to the population in general.

We are two social and youth work students doing our practice at Ban Uppa! and entrusted with developing the work and activities with the young people. The Board of Ban Uppa! has encouraged us to design all the projects and activities that may be beneficial for young people.



3.2.2 Needs analysis

Why?

Why is the project necessary?

Why is it relevant?

Why should everybody be interested in it?

3.2.2.1 Social analysis

Whether we call it social reality or the community – or society at large⁴ – the project we embark on should reflect the needs, conditions and specificities of the target group(s) it addresses and should be coherent with it.

⁴ The focus will depend very much on the social and geographical scope that the project addresses. It can be from a neighborhood (e.g. creating a youth centre where young people can meet in the evenings) to a very wide reality, such as Europe (e.g. creating a network of youth centres to influence European youth policy). This depends obviously on the type of issue addressed by the project.



Truly speaking, most of the time we have the idea and afterwards the project appears (it is *our* idea). "God wants; Man dreams; the project is born..." paraphrasing Fernando Pessoa. On a less poetical note, we often seem to anticipate the needs and – by connecting odd factors – see the opportunity and need for a project.

Very often it is good like that. Still, many ideas and dreams remain just that because somehow they did not find the right echo in the reality they intended to address. However, the worse cases are when ill-conceived ideas, end up being implemented, sometimes against the interests of the people whom they are supposed to serve, and often with their apathy, if not alienation, simply by not reflecting the needs of the community. The difference is how much they reflect the needs of the society or the group the project seeks to address.

Needs analysis reminds us that no matter how wonderful our idea may be, how important and crucial our role may seem, nothing makes sense if it is not needed. In market terms: don't bother generating a supply if there is no demand for it. The approach of generating first a need so that there is demand is, in the social field, too risky to be taken as a valid principle. We are talking of committing limited resources, we are talking of people, we are talking of participation, citizenship and autonomy of young people.

Needs analysis includes the social, political and economic conditions existing in the area of the project that make the project necessary. It can be linked to the situation of a target group or to the general social situation of a community. The social analysis is crucial because it should determine the social aims and objectives of the project as well as the programme of action adopted. On the other hand, a project, especially when dealing with social exclusion, should be anchored in a local context and aim to bring about change or improvement of the situation. The social analysis will contribute also to the identification of the target group.

The needs analysis involves checking:

- What is needed or wished from/for/by the young people concerned?...
- How much of a priority does it represent?...

- Is it wanted by the community and the young people?...
- Is it different from what is already being done?
- Does it make sense within its own context?
- What change may be pursued by the project?

In order to get positive answers to these questions – or at least to know how to handle them – the following questions and clues may be of help:

- Who identified those needs as being a priority? People from the outside or people from inside the community?
- Has the same thing been done before in the same community or in the neighbourhood? What difference would a new project make? How would it not fall into the same pitfalls of previous projects?
- Who has been consulted about the opportunity of such a project? How does it fit with the public authorities and private initiatives in the area?
- To which extent does it take into account the aspirations, needs and wishes of the people that it seeks to help? How have we involved them or consulted them in our needs analysis?

DON'T:

- Start your project against influential people in the community! (You may be sabotaged)
- Think that you know everything!
- Do it *for* young people, do it *with* them!
- Do it only because it is fashionable!
- Get stuck in passivity, fatalism or pessimism!

Needs analysis





DO:

- Ask the opinion of those involved in the project!
- Ask several people's opinion including potential partners, sponsors, or simply those whose support you may need (at least you will not have them against you)!
- Think about the social dynamics the project could kick off (negative and positive)!
- Look for results of similar projects elsewhere (did it work?)
- Remember that there is no objective analysis
- Do it when it needs to be done!
- Dare to go against the tide!



Let's go to Ban Uppa! ...

We have been asked by the board to start identifying a project that will be our flagship project and that brings something new to the organisation and to the town. Since there are many young people and delinquency is talked about all over, the board would be happy if the project would somehow address the issue.

Delinquency is indeed a serious problem, and is also damaging for the image of the young people. But we wonder whether it is really a problem of sociability and education of the youngsters (mostly boys) or whether it is a symptom resulting from other problems, namely unemployment, poverty and the presence of drugs.

We decide:

- To go out to where young people meet and listen to what they say about it;
- To organise an informal meeting to discuss that with the young people;
- To talk with the school staff and the local police;
- To talk with the Parents Association;
- To have a meeting with other local (youth) associations.

Needs analysis



Putting it down in the application form

- In many application forms, the needs analysis is spread through different parts and questions.
- Most often, however, the needs analysis is what you have to write at the beginning about the context of the project or the background of the application. Some sponsors/funders may ask specifically what is your needs analysis, how it was done or, more commonly, what changes will the project bring
- Remember that few things are obvious to many people! Often you do need to explain things, even if it may seem obvious to you. Make sure that the analysis that you bring up in the application form somehow fits or is in accordance with the funding priorities of your sponsor! And, as always when applying for funds, save yourself from present and future troubles: be truthful!





**Needs
analysis**



Suggestions for training

The following questions have been used for individual and group work at several courses with a strong project management dimension.



Importance of the project

- a) Why is the project necessary and important?
- b) In which community/social context is it placed?
- c) What are the problems faced by the youth/community?
 - How, and by whom, were they identified?
 - What are the causes of those problems?
 - What are the priorities, the main needs?
Why those priorities?
- d) What is the relationship with the empowerment of young people and improving their situation?
- e) What is the project going to aim to change?
- f) What is realistic and achievable?
- g) Has it been done before?
Is it being done by someone else?
What is innovative in it?

Personal motivations and competence

- a) Why are you undertaking the project?
What do you expect to gain/learn/get out of the project?
- b) What competence or expertise do you have for it?
What are the values that drive you to do that?
- c) Are your interests and values compatible with the project's aims and public?
With those of your organisation?

Organisation's role and aims

- a) How far does the project fit your organisation's aims, values, traditions and experience?
- b) What experience does your organisation have with that kind of project?
- c) Is your organisation fully behind the project?
What benefits can it get from it?
What are the risks for the organisation?

As you progress through the questions, do take written notes of what answers you found and of questions that you don't yet know how to answer.



3.2.2.2 Institutional priorities and values *By Whom?*

A single individual rarely carries a project. In European youth work practice, the projects are usually run in the framework of an organisation or institution. Each organisation has its own aims and objectives, its own values and its own experience. The project ought to fit somehow those aims and values and reflect them, otherwise the organisation might see no reason to invest in the project and a conflict is likely to arise sooner or later between the institution, the project worker and the project itself.

Finding the right organisation for the project is also important. Bear in mind that not all organisations can deal with everything; there are also local institutions which have particular tasks (e.g. school or police). Interfering in their field of competence may not bring positive changes. The values, practice and experience of the organisation are naturally going to condition the type of project to be undertaken and the methodology to be adopted. It will also influence its scale: a small organisation is more likely to support a small project than a very large one.

Even if the project idea comes from the organisation, there is always an implicit or explicit negotiation process between the organisation's interests, values and priorities and the needs expressed by the community. They have to meet in some way.

For example, the organisation aims at educating young people to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The experience of the organisation is likely also to influence the shaping of the programme and the working methods adopted as well as the choice of a target group (*for whom*). The values of the organisation should also be taken into account, not least because there is an expectation for it (previous experience, image in the community, coherence, etc.).



Let's go to Ban Uppa! ...

We, Matto and Dali, two youth workers/trainees, have talked with the young people and other partners in the community and think that delinquency seems to be the consequence of unemployment, drug

abuse (people steal to buy drugs) and a general social degradation that leads to a careless attitude towards others. We think that whatever project we come up with, it should address the question of self-esteem and of drugs. It should, we feel, give young people opportunities to experience and do positive things. Somehow, to break the circle of violence, exclusion and bad image and to offer motivating alternatives (for example travelling abroad).

This happens to be very much in line with the experiences at Ban Uppa!, whose board has been looking for ways to address those issues. When meeting with colleagues and the board, we have received a lot of support and advice. We were also told, however, that the organisation existed for the whole community and therefore it would be important for the project to help restore the image and relationship between the youngsters and the rest of the community. And in no way should the project be moralising or stigmatising: too many young people have problems, there was no point in pointing the finger at anyone. We were given the green light to proceed and submit a project idea.



DO:

- Ask your organisation's board what they think about the idea! Listen to their suggestions!
- Talk with other workers or volunteers in the organisation (they may have similar projects, you may need their help)!
- Respect and value what the organisation will gain from it!
- Seek commitments from the institution, not just words!
- Make use of the organisation's resources and experience!
- Check if the organisation is the right one to carry that project, and vice-versa!
- Check if the image of the organisation may hinder the project (and how to overcome that).



Personal motivations



DON'T:

- Start your project without other people and/or organisation to back you up!
- Change the project to the point that it is not yours anymore!
- Run over other people in their roles and competencies!
- Be afraid to introduce changes if they make sense and are within the scope of the project!
- Be afraid to share work and responsibilities with others
- Let contradictions between your organisation's values and your project practice persist!

Putting it down in the application form



- The organisation is often presented within the general context of the project, even though administrative details are usually requested separately. If your organisation is not very well known to the funder, make sure to provide some brief information about how close it is to the subject of the project or to the target group. You may also want to show that it is credible by giving examples of previous successful projects. Show clearly the link between the project and the organisation!
– No organisation has the duty to be active in all fronts!
- Do not send too much information or publicity, unless requested.

3.2.2.3 Personal motivations

Any youth worker has his/her own motivations for starting a project. These can be professional motivations (try new approaches, desire to progress in a career) but they can also be personal (being particularly concerned with the issues being dealt with in the project, desire to travel abroad...).

Being clear about it means also to legitimise personal involvement or motivation. We do not do a project only for others, we also do it for ourselves. Even if we are driven by pure philanthropy or altruism, it is still our desire to help or serve that drives us. We should not venture in to the project only because of our own interests. But it is fair to also take them into account.

While motivations do not have to be made explicit in the project presentation, they should be clear for the youth worker because they will influence his/her motivation to keep on working and their degree of involvement or commitment. It is also easier for the person involved to:

- Identify possible conflicts of interest
- Safeguard the possibility of meeting expectations
- Possibly prioritise expectations
- Get the support of others to realise those motivations.

The motivations are also usually associated with our proximity to the target group or the subject. This may be important in some cases because it may help legitimise our involvement and the project as such (e.g. I am also a young person who has been a victim of delinquency). This may at least show a capacity to mobilise people to be involved in the project.

Close to the motivations is the competence of the project manager to actually deal with the project. Although strictly speaking this is part of the 'resources' section, the fact is that before venturing into a project one should make a self-evaluation of the competencies needed or of the extra skills it requires (it may make it easier to invite others to the team).

But if there are too many specific competencies needed they may come from the organisation, or have to be acquired somewhere else (and thus cost money...).



DO:

- Follow extra training if needed (a good opportunity for self-development)
- Discuss your professional objectives with the organisation!
- Admit that you and your colleagues also have egos and needs.
- Identify what makes you happy in the project (that is what you will want to safeguard)!
- Use the project as an opportunity for professional development and innovation.

DON'T:

- Pretend you know more than you do!
- Be embarrassed to pursue your personal or professional aims.
- Lie to yourself about why you are doing the project.
- Be afraid to ask for help.
- Use people or an organisation for purely personal objectives.

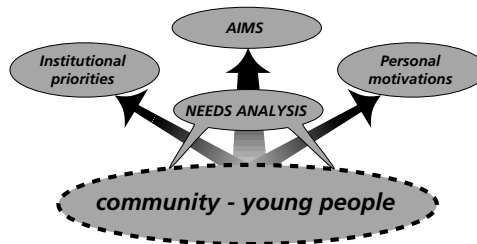
Putting it down in the application form

No application form will ask you about your personal motivations, the credibility of the organisation being the most important criterion to decide the capacity to carry out the project.

But often the sponsors do want to know who is in charge of the project, how the person/s was/were recruited, etc. Here you have an interest to show that those in charge of the project

- are competent
- have some affinity to the theme or the organisation (insofar as it does not prevent them from having an outsider's view)
- are motivated and can be seconded by other people for concrete tasks or functions

If in doubt, don't write much! Write only when it helps the application, otherwise it can also be damaging!



In Ban Uppa!...: Matto and Dali's motivations

Both of us are finishing our youth and community worker studies. We want to have a good result from the experience because we believe it will be easier for us to get a job. Matto was actually born in Banville and has always lived here. He feels it is time something useful is done with young people in his community and he feels proud to work there. He knows the people at Ban Uppa! and thinks

that if the project works he could possibly work there on a regular basis. Dali comes from not very far away, but she does not feel Banville is her home. Mostly she wants to acquire competence and experience in a 'tough area' which, as a woman, is even more important if she is confronted with male colleagues.

Both of us are young people and, like our colleagues in Ban Uppa!, we feel that nobody really cares for the young people because no-one is ready to take them seriously.

Personal motivations





3.2.3 Defining the aims What for?

From the needs analysis we now know why the project is important.

The organisation has also chosen, within the whole complex reality of Banville, to give priority to a certain type of project having to do with self-esteem and healthy life-styles.

We now know what Matto and Dali are looking for and what drives them.

This should lead us to identify what we are going to make the project for – what its aims are, what it sets out to achieve in the long term.

Defining the aims is the first effort of rationalisation and concentration of efforts, because by reading them one should get a general picture of: the issues addressed, the target group(s), the methodology, the promoter, the geographical scope, the change that the project intends bring about.

The aims reflect the first priority of the project. Aims are often defined as overall objectives or goals: what the project or organisation would achieve if it was 100% successful. It defines why the project exists, its purpose and reason for being. The aims are similar to the mission statement (for those familiar with Anglo-Saxon terminology).

The aims provide also the educational, ideological and operational framework of the whole project. Whatever activities we decide to undertake, whatever methodologies we opt for, they should be compatible with the aims. The aims should not change during the project: a change of aims would mean a change of project altogether!

It is common for some people and within some contexts to distinguish between social aims and educational aims. The distinction is not always useful or necessary. Nevertheless, to define them may help us to better understand what we are talking about.

Social aims

The changes in the social environment or situation of the target group concerned that the project intends to promote (e.g. take young people in Banville out of social exclusion or combat delinquency).

Educational aims

While the social aims aim to bring changes in the social environment, the educational objectives aim at promoting changes in the individual people or target group concerned. In

other words, what will the young people learn, how will they be empowered and what for (e.g. learn about the risks of drugs or HIV...).

Suggestions for training

The following questions have been used for individual and group work at several course with a strong project management dimension

- What is your project for?
- What changes does the project pursue in the social/political environment (country, region, community, target group, organisation) concerned by the project?
- How does it intend to respond to the global objectives of the youth programme or organisation that it is part of?
- What would it seek to achieve if it were 100% successful?

The aims should be condensed and expressed in one or very few sentences that contain the essence of the project and can be read almost independently from the rest of the project.

Defining aims



In Ban Uppa!...: The Aims for Matto and Dali



We are now in the final stage of our project research. We have consulted, we have checked, and we have discussed with each other. The impression that we have is that young people in Banville are indeed de-motivated and some tend to fall easily into the trap of delinquency and violence, probably because the future seems grim to them. The presence of drugs makes the whole problem much bigger. Besides a very acute health problem, it stigmatises the whole neighbourhood and contributes to the rise in delinquency. And it has also brought about conflict in the families.

We think that they should focus on raising young people's self-esteem, offering them healthier alternatives and being clear about drugs. This is what we think that we can do best.

*When making our presentation to the board of Ban Uppa!, we defined the aims of our project as **To provide young people from Banville with healthy alternatives for their leisure time and to prevent drug addiction in the neighbourhood by raising their self-esteem their social participation and mental mobility.***

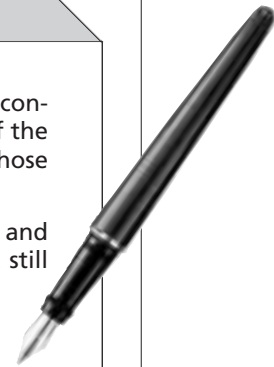


Putting it down in the application form

- Some forms will ask you for the aims, but most commonly they ask about the objectives and then it is the writer's duty to make sure that the aims are presented as an umbrella to the objectives. In other cases, the question may come from the description of the organisation's priorities.



- But most often, the aims should be written as the logical step or consequence after the presentation of the context/needs analysis of the project. The aims represent a priority in that sea of needs; in those short sentences it is important that it all becomes clear
- The struggle will always come between how much to be specific and how far to remain general. The aims are global objectives, but still they should identify:
 - The target group addressed;
 - The issue to be dealt with or the changes proposed;
 - The area concerned by the project (e.g. a city, a district, the whole country...);
 - Some indication about the methodology or/and about the values transmitted.
- The aims do not need to mention the dates, nor the how – nor even the activities (except in rare situations). That will be dealt with in other parts.



3.2.4 The concrete objectives What?

Law of project management No.1

"One advantage of fuzzy project objectives is that they avoid the embarrassment of estimating the corresponding costs."

A project is defined in the first place by the time (projects have a beginning and an end) and by the objectives: by what is set to be achieved or done through the project in that time frame.

Defining the objectives is crucial to making the project realistic and achievable. By reading the project's objectives one should have a fairly clear idea of what will be concretely done or achieved by the project.

The objectives are a translation into practice of the project's aims. While the aims are general and far reaching, the objectives are concrete and if possible precise. Objectives should be defined so that they are:

- **Concrete.** What exactly are you going to try to achieve? How many people will be involved or concerned? How many activities? What specific issues are going to be addressed? What competencies will people acquire? What will be changed after the project as a result of it? What will be produced?

- **Multiple.** One project must and can be broken down into several objectives. This has *several* advantages: it allows easier planning and control of each objective and of all the potential that the project has to offer. Furthermore, during the evaluations, it is easier to evaluate the results if the objectives are broken down. It helps to think in terms of what will be achieved as direct results and indirect results; of educational and social objectives; of objectives for the institutions and for the participants; etc.

- **Assessable.** The more concrete the projects are, the easier it is to evaluate them. If the objective was to reach 500 people, I can have an estimate of how many people have been reached, and to which extent I succeeded or not. If I just wanted 'to reach as many people as possible', the evaluation will be much harder and vague, because (hopefully) I will always manage to reach someone. At least some objectives should be defined so that they can be measurable.

- **Timed.** The objectives may be distributed in time: short-term, medium-term and long-term, depending on the project. But in any case all objectives must be set against an expected time for achievement.

Concrete objectives





- **Realistic.** The potential for motivation and empowerment that the project may bring along will not be realised if the objectives are not achievable. Setting too high objectives may impress on paper but most of the time your “bluff” is called and, in any case, it will show up in the evaluation. It is preferable to set lower, concrete and achievable objectives, where the achievement is noticeable and where you take the risk of achieving more than stated.
- **Flexible.** The objectives and the whole project plan are an exercise in preparing and foreseeing several activities towards a common aim. As the project implementation starts, regular evaluations and check-ups are needed, formally or informally. As a result, some adjustments may be needed, including possible revising or updating of some objectives (especially when some depend on the success of previous ones). Flexible objectives does not mean that they can change all the time, but that for the sake of realism and efficiency some changes are introduced, consciously. If the whole point of project planning is helping us stay in charge of the project, then it is better to adopt conscious changes – being able to weigh up possible alternatives – than being forced to adopt them, without choice or reflection about the impact on the rest of the project.
- **Recognisable in the activities.** Objectives are different from the activities. They represent what one wants to reach, achieve or realise with the project. They are different from the activities in the sense that the activities are the way to reach the objective(s). All activities should be aiming to reach one or more objectives. All objectives should be directly or indirectly identifiable in one or more activities. Be aware of activities for which you find no correspondence in the objectives and vice-versa!

Objectives are not an end in themselves; the project is the end goal. Between the arguments among those favouring objectives (results) and those favouring process (quality of human and social relations) we would stress the fact that the improvement or development in the quality of human relations – including social relations and attitudes to learning, for example – can and should themselves be translated into objectives. Objectives are not only things to be produced, they are first of all targets to be reached. Material and immaterial.

Are your objectives
SMART?

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Timed

DO:

- Negotiate/discuss your objectives with those concerned (target group, partners, colleagues).
- Get second opinions about the way they are formulated and defined.
- Ask yourself if they can ever be evaluated, how and when.
- Consider that if they are not clear for you they will not be to the others either.
- Write things down and use the objectives in your communication and presentations (it is not only a fund-raising exercise)

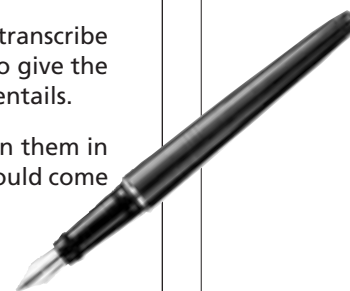
DON'T:

- Hesitate to review your objectives if you can justify it!
- Confuse the objectives with the activities.
- Define objectives that you do not plan to achieve.
- Define only ideal, un-measurable objectives.
- Become a slave of project formalism! A project should live, and ultimately die. So, you may and even must introduce changes (make sure you are aware of it!).



Putting it down in the application form

- Most forms would ask you simply what the objectives of the project are. Others will ask you what you expect to achieve and others, sometimes cumulatively, will ask you what results you expect as a result of the project.
- Once you have identified the objectives it should not be difficult to transcribe them into any application form. If they are SMART, they will suffice to give the reader/evaluator a clear picture of what you want to do and what it entails.
- The objectives should be simple and clear to understand. Don't drown them in paragraphs of literature. If there are explanations to be made they should come in the needs analysis or else they should be kept short.
- Avoid repetition.
- Don't expect the reader to know and guess what you want to do. Be clear. If you want to produce a book and teach people to read it, say so!
- If you have the feeling that forms are repetitive (e.g. asking aims, objectives, programme, results expected...), make sure that you fill them all in, even if you have the feeling of repeating yourself. If needed seek clarification from the institution.
- Make sure it makes sense with the analysis you made, with the organisation that carries the project and the aims; that it is coherent.
- Bear in mind that the people evaluating project applications are normally experienced in projects themselves. And therefore they would know that often what counts most as the real impression is the objectives. Their formulation often reflects everything else. So, do take your time to define them appropriately.



In Ban Uppa!...: **Matto and Dali wrote** **an application form!**

Here is an extract: Aims and objectives of your project

General aim:

To provide young people from Banville with healthy alternatives for their leisure time and to prevent drug addiction in the neighbourhood by raising their self-esteem and social participation.

Concrete objectives

- *To initiate a public campaign about the risk of drugs among young people;*
- *To provide and organise cultural youth activities for the week-ends in Banville;*

- *To have a team doing detached street work two evenings a week between May and October.*
- *To create and train a group of 8 young people to act as peer educators and leaders in their schools.*
- *To reduce by one third the number of delinquency acts and criminal activities in the space of one year.*
- *To generate synergies and partnerships between the police and school departments and the youth workers of Ban Uppa! in as far as prevention policies are concerned.*
- *To support young people in developing meaningful activities raising their image in the neighbourhood.*
- *To establish close contacts with similar youth groups in at least two other European countries with a view to developing youth exchanges.*

Concrete objectives





Suggestions for training

So, concretely, what exactly are you going to try to achieve with your project...

- To respond to the needs identified?
- To stay within the aims?
- To educate your target group?
- To make the project realistic?
- What are the core objectives?
- Can you identify objectives in the long, medium and short-term?

- How/when do you think you can evaluate them?

- Which objectives can be changed? Which ones should not?

- Can you relate your objectives to different (alternative) activities?

- How and when will you be able to check if the objectives have been reached?

- *Is it clear, by reading your aims and objectives... That there is a coherence between aims and objectives?*

3.2.5 Strategy and methodology How?

Yes, but... **how** are we going to do that?

The methodology is the social, educational or organisational process through which the objectives will be pursued in a coherent manner; the way in which the different activities will build up on each other to reach the objectives.

Methodology and working methods are often confused and confusing, but it is important to try to keep the distinction. The methodology has more to do with a global approach and concept; the working methods are usually specific to an activity, they are more the *modus operandi* to do certain things or pursue concrete objectives or steps. The methodology determines the type of activities to be organised and their sequence. The working methods usually refer to one of the many ways of doing things in an activity.

The methodology is often not visible, even though it can be made explicit. If my objective is to win over drug dealers, I have several possible methodologies, such as: get them all arrested; get the customers away from them; get all the customers arrested or get drugs legalised, for example. The methodology is usually determined by:

- The experience and expertise of the organisation and carriers (we focus on what we are good at: organising holiday camps and small group activities, for example);
- The philosophy and values of the organisation and the project (for example, we favour a direct personal approach that values the individual person rather than large scale events);
- The calendar and the time available;
- The type of public and social environment we address (from small local group to an anonymous national audience);
- Our own approaches to young people, education and projects.

The methodology is important because it guides the planning and organisation of the project. The same methodology allows for various alternatives in terms of activities, but it gives a first indication of how the objectives will be pursued.

It is also important that the strategy or methodology may be explained and understood by other people, especially your partners and participants. People need to understand the process that you invite them to go through in order to benefit from it, contribute to it or change it if needed. Confusion about the methodology will usually result in flaws in the programme and in difficulties in presenting or weighing up alternatives.

The most important elements to take into account when we talk about methodology are:

- The means available (instead of a TV campaign, we can only afford a poster campaign);
- *Coherence*. The different components of our programme have to make sense as a whole,





and to respect the framework provided by the aims and objectives. They also have to be coherent in their timing (for example, first information, then training).

- *Consistency.* Despite the flexibility that makes the project a “living” entity, what we do has to be consistent with what we stand for or what we state as being our values. For example, my project of running a campaign against tax evasion will be in serious trouble if people find out that we are evading taxes ourselves... In the educational field – even if non-formal education – consistency between speech and practice are extremely important.

DO:

- Consider alternatives to the plan and process of the activities proposed.
- Try to anticipate side effects or reactions to the sequence of events.
- Think if your participants or target group understand the process you propose them.
- Think about the approaches and values that should be visible in the way the project is planned and organised.

DON'T:

- Just put activities together hoping that they will build on each other by accident.
- Get confused if it seems too complicated. But make sure that your plan makes sense and that you can explain it.
- Confuse methodology and methods. Some people use the terms alternatively, but that should not be the case if you know what is meant by them.

- *Effectiveness.* Whatever you decide to undertake in the form of concrete activities must strive for effectiveness. Not only to make the best out of usually scarce resources, but also to actually get the best out of the potential generated by the project. The methodology should secure for example that synergies are pursued, that results are available at the best moment, that the evaluations are made in a way and at a time where the results can still be used, etc.



In Ban Uppa!...: Matto and Dali...

- *So, how are we going to go about this?...*
- *Well, we have to:*
 - *Organise activities for their spare time, like sports or a youth café...maybe camping out one week-end...*
 - *We have to ask the young people what they want, but first we must show them that we are ready to offer something... to give a good example.*
 - *We also have to address the issue of drugs in a very clear manner...*
 - *But if we want to raise their self-esteem and social participation... we need to involve them and support them. Maybe they can actually do the work on drugs themselves. We can form a group...*
 - *But this means that we need to train and support them!*
 - *I think I have got it:*
 - *We can organise some social activities like the camping and we open the youth café. This will get us to know more young people and to identify those that are most interested in working with us.*
 - *We can also organise informal discussions about Banville and violence. Just to get a feeling of what kind of solutions young people envisage.*
 - *We can organise some leadership courses for those that are most interested in working with us – some kind of peer group education stuff... in those course they should design what activities they want to carry out.*

Strategy and methodology





- *We can have a group preparing a campaign about drugs... for the schools and for the families...*
- *And we can then start organising a programme of activities for the summer holidays. I don't know what they may be interested in, but probably a youth exchange is a good idea for some. The sports festival interested quite a few.*
- *This is good because it brings in the media and for once there may be positive reports about these youngsters*
- *We must look for ways to support the peer group leaders, both financial and motivational. Need to see what Ban Uppa can do!*
- *We must contact the city about twin cities abroad. This could be a good start to establishing contacts with similar projects and, possibly, start enquiring about the feasibility of youth exchanges.*
- *Yes, that can be important in motivating the peers! I am sure that they would really like to travel! All young people do!...*
- *So, first we get them interested. Then we consult them. We train the peer leaders. We do the campaign. By then we should have enough contacts and gained their confidence to engage on the youth exchange and on the sports festival. We get them in the media. We involve them in Ban Uppa.*
- *This may be a great project! We need to foresee some kind of youth party or festival towards the end. It would be good to have their opinion on our work.*
- *Sorry, Dali. This is not our project. This is their project!*

3.2.6 Planning an activity

**What?
When?
Where?
Through what?**

All that has been mentioned above in the project must now be practically put together in a plan, with a calendar, assignment of activities to place, etc.

The plan of activities is the part that is the most visible to the public at large. It is also what we will think of the most when we think of what the project consists of. The activities are the means through which we will try to get results for our project.

Of course each single activity may have its specific function and value. But what gives it a special relevance is that it is part of a project. Because it is a project, the activities need to be thought out and planned in relation to each other. Similarly, the results of the previous ones will influence the subsequent ones. The activities are the ways to carry out the project, to pursue the objectives, there are always different and alternative activities imaginable for each objective (whose choice may be fundamentally determined by the methodology).

3.2.6.1 Planning and timing

Law of project management No.2

"A carelessly planned project will take three times longer to complete than expected. A carefully planned project will take twice as long"

The most important and delicate issue in the planning of the activities is time. Of course the financial, material and human resources are equally determining, but the most common problem of the project planner and manager is time. Because the activities are usually connected in some way, a delay in one may cause delays in all of them or may hinder the synergies between them.

When drawing up your plan of activities, consider:

- A starting date and a closing date for the project (a project has a beginning and an end).
- That preparatory activities are also part of the project, and therefore part of the calendar of activities. You must at least put them in your schedule.
- Checking that each objective defined is defined and can be effectively pursued in some activity. Check also if each activity corresponds to an objective.



- Interaction between activities. How are the results of one activity going to be used in the following? Which activities depend on others?
- What does each activity need as preparation? That may have to be taken up separately as an activity of its own.
- Does the plan and calendar correspond to the reality around you? Does it take into account institutional schedules (e.g. school holidays)? Does it fit with imposed deadlines (for applying, for finishing reports...)?
- Is it manageable? Is it feasible?
- Are you taking into account any previous evaluation of similar projects or activities to know what may work better?
- What is the margin left for contingencies? Which alternatives have you considered? What will happen if an activity is cancelled?

Time plans and calendars

You can use a calendar for planning your project. It should have as many months as those

in your actual project. You can also put the different activities into perspective by writing the different activities and under each month what needs to be done for each of them.

There is often a myriad of small tasks and jobs to do beforehand, which are usually not taken into account (e.g. applying for funds, contacting partners, checking the interest of young people, informing the media about it, booking places, etc.)

Similarly, even after everything has been closed, there are many tasks remaining: doing the accounts, thanking people, writing reports, doing the evaluation, producing the documentation, planning the follow-up etc.

In a project's plan of activities you should imagine a succession of parabolic curves (activities) that partly overlap. This represents better the tasks-in-time dimension of a project. Failure to realise that usually leads to cancelled activities, postponed projects or... never ending projects.

DO:

- Check what may already be planned in the community for the same period.
- Consider what public and private institutions may be eager to fund or support.
- Do not put all the activities together in one calendar or plan and check if it is realistic.
- Consider time for planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation! And for writing the reports, too!
- Think of time for regular evaluations and check-points.
- Do a complete work timetable for yourself, even if the public will need to see the activities timetable only.
- A check list of objectives vs. activities. You may need to review one or the other

DON'T:

- Make your project dependent on one single activity.
- Overestimate time! Most likely you will miss it!
- Put too many activities in one single period!
- Overestimate your capacities. You also need energy and periods to recover!
- Stay forever at the level of planning! You also need to start organising and implementing.
- Forget the perfect plan does not exist.

Plan of activities





Suggestions for training

1. What are the different parts of your project?
2. What is actually going to happen?
 - When are you going to do what?
 - With whom are you going to do it (colleagues, partners, participants)?
 - What is your role in each of the activities?
 - Who do you need to help/support/assist you?
 - How are they going to be prepared?
3. How does it fit into a coherent plan? (What is the role of each activity?)
 - What are you going to start with?
 - What are you going to finish with?
 - Which activities are the core of your project?
 - Which activities are secondary?
4. Are all your objectives covered by the activities?
5. How flexible is your plan? How clear is it?
6. How realistic is it? Where are you going to get the support for it? What do you need as support (resources)? What are you going to do to get that support?
7. Do you seriously believe in your plan?



Putting it down in the application form



- Most forms have a specific question about the activities or the programme. In any case, most often (and most unfortunately!) you probably need to make an application for each activity. But whether it is the programme of activities of a whole project or the programme of one activity, you should provide sufficient indication and information about when, where, for whom, with whom... at least the parts that are visible. And you should also include some preparation and evaluation activities unless you know that is pointless or if it may harm your chances for support (e.g. because those activities would be outside the time scope of the project).

- Most important: make sure that the information is correct and compatible with the budget (e.g., if you mention that you will hire a video professional to film the show, make sure that the show is part of the programme and that the fee for the video operator is shown in the budget). Anything less usually shows poor preparation.



In Ban Uppa!...:

Way up!

A New project of Ban Uppa!
by Dali and Matto

Draft Plan

*of activities
(Comments welcome!)*

- Feb-March:** _____ *Contacting sponsors and funding institutions, foreign partners and contacts Preparation of week-end out*
- April:** _____ *Finalising the project and writing applications
Camping out in the mountains during Easter holidays
Preparation meeting with the youth exchange leaders.
Setting up of the "Youth exchange task force"*
- May:** _____ *Opening of the Up Café in the evenings from Thursday to Sunday. Informal activities and discussions with young people*
- June:** _____ *Preparation of leadership course for peer-group leaders*
- July:** _____ *Sports festival*
- August:** _____ *Youth exchange (hosting the youth exchange with the twin cities)*
- September:** _____ *Leadership course
Reviewing the project in function of the results achieved*
- October-December:** _____ *Campaign about drugs. In the school classes. With families in the cultural centre. Evaluation meeting of the youth exchange*
- December:** _____ *Of course we'll have also a New Year's party!...*
- January-February:** _____ *A lot more to come... wait and see!...
... But the project finishes in July, when we finish our internship! Kindly send us you comments and suggestions!*

Dali & Matto

3.3 Implementing the Project

With what? With whom? When? Where? How?

The project is more than a simple idea that aspires to become true. The project is an idea that has been transformed and made feasible by a careful planning process and that will be implemented.

After the planning, it is time to start working on it. Truly speaking these two phases often overlap, because some planning is already implementation.

But if we take the project as being what is described in the plan of activities, then it is clear that some day those activities will have to be prepared and run.

We will address only two aspects of the implementation because they seem to us those most