**Handout 1.8: VISIONING TOOL TO USE WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

**Participatory Tools for Engaging with the Community**

**Visioning Tool**

**What is it useful for?**

Visioning is basically a process by which a community envisions the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it. It brings people together to develop a shared image of what they want their community to become. One of the best ways of arriving at these long-term community goals and for achieving them is through community-visioning projects and processes.

Such a process brings together all interest groups and sectors of a community to jointly identify problems, evaluate changing conditions and build collective approaches to improve the quality of life in the community. For communities that live in or adjacent to MPAs, this provides an opportunity for them to incorporate aspirations for their community along with contributions that MPAs can make in terms of achieving those aspirations particularly in regards to livelihoods, food security, protection of cultural/historical sites and values, and biodiversity protection.

In some cases, community vision relates to a neighborhood or a specific area; in others to a village, town, city or even a region including multiple cities, towns and villages; it may even refer to non- spatial community development objectives; or may relate to an MPA alone or an MPA as a part of the geographic context the community is considering. A vision is the overall image of what the community wants to be and how it wants to look at some point in the future.

The essence of the visioning processes is providing the condition for networking and allowing the diverse groups to come together and interact. This often leads to the discovery of new, formerly hidden, leaders or project champions. Therefore community visioning is as much about the quality of the process as about the quality of the outcome. This is important to remember because the success of a visioning process can set the tone for future engagement with community members. For many participants in a visioning workshop, it is the first, and maybe the only, time when they are involved in such an intensive collaborative process. If the visioning workshop is done properly, it is very likely that many of the participants will stay involved in the further planning and implementation process in regards to management planning for an MPA, and thus contributes to a local culture of participation.

It should be mentioned that women are often the most vulnerable and underrepresented sector within communities. Gender inequality and norms of masculine behavior in the household and community may be key contributing factors to poverty and result in poor bargaining power of women as well as men producers. Allowing women’s voices to heard on their own can bring about a new way to look at visioning and inform MPA managers. Failure to analyze and address gender inequalities result in misguided projects and programs, and certainly the development of a vision that doesn’t represent the whole community. It has proven that make a concerted effort to include women in creating a vision for the future is effective for starting to change gender inequalities, strengthening negotiation power of marginalized stakeholders and promoting collaboration, equity and respect between community members.

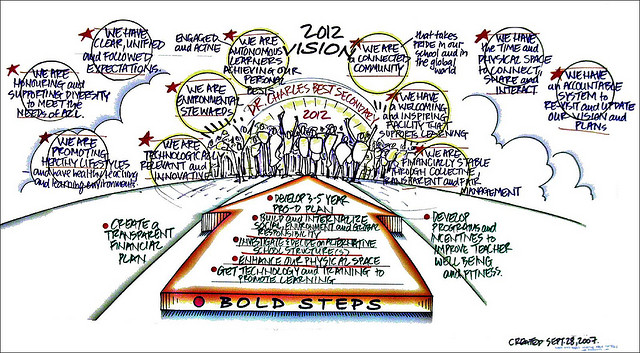
A vision is a useful tool on which to focus hopes and aspirations, framing project and setting priorities. The vision describes where community members would like themselves to be in the next 10, 20 or 30 years in terms of the key areas relating to the quality of life, such as e.g. education, employment prospects or, infrastructure. Visioning can also help frame the collective future vision that both MPA managers and the communities have for what can be achieved through effective management of the MPA.

**Suggested steps**

1. First, as the facilitating team, determine what the visioning process is for. Is it for what the community would like to see as a future state of their own community – livelihoods, infrastructure, access to resources, education? Or, with the newly established Gyaros Naturas 2000 MPA site, a vision for what that MPA can achieve in terms of livelihoods, food security, protection of cultural/historical sites and values, and biodiversity protection.
2. Clearly articulate to the community what the purpose of the session is, how much time you are allotting, and allow for Q&A.
3. On a large flip chart, on the left hand side, have the participants list/draw all of the assets that make up their community, or the assets of the MPA, depending on what your focus for the vision is going to be. Use symbols for each of the assets.
4. Then the participants should describe the current state of each of these assets – using a visual depiction of some sort next to each symbol on the left hand side of the flip chart.
5. Move to the right hand side of the flip chart and have the participants re-describe and re-draw each of these assets based on how they would like to see them either 5 or 10 years down the road (future state).
6. 6. In the middle of the flip chart leave in alley way which they are going to use to describe a critical step or trigger point for making that leap from the current to future state.
7. Once the graphic depiction is complete, have an informal debriefing discussion on how realistic the future state is given the current state AND what change each individual is willing to make, no matter how big or small, to realize that future state. You might also want to discuss the MPA’s role and contribution in helping to achieve that future state.

**points to remember**

* *Local ownership of the vision* is the first ingredient for success, and can only be achieved through an inclusive visioning process. Every community has unique qualities that should help to deepen and shape the community’s vision.
* For ‘start-up’ visioning, in the early stage of the planning process, the golden rule is that participants are ‘empty-handed’ (thus coming with no old plans, prior visions, reports of any kind; also no laptops or smart phones to surf the web).
* In the initial phase of the visioning process, participants should be encouraged to develop varied or multiple visions, to enlarge the perspectives. Only later on, in the planning process, there will be a need to merge different elements into one coherent vision that has the best chances for implementation.
* Constructive and open-minded collaborative leaders/ facilitators are listening more than talking. They are *posing rather than answering questions*, thus enabling the visioning process.
* A good way to involve all visioning participants is *to allow all kind of expressions* to illustrate their ideas and contributions to the vision.
* People can participate far more effectively if information is presented visually rather than verbally and if they can also present their own ideas in a non-verbal way. Hidden artistic talent might come to the surface and bring greater quality to the visualization of the visions.

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