



‘Yes we can’

Change mindsets and lives with the VCA methodology
The Hunger Project



MDF Training & Consultancy
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Tsokonombwe anatha mtunda ndikudumphna.

Malawian proverb meaning:

This animal called Tsokonombwe covered a long distance in small jumps.



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Preface.

When I joined The Hunger Project in 2017, I came in with a strong passion for public speaking and leadership development. I always looked out for opportunities to motivate and influence people for something bigger than their current realities. When I participated in a Vision, Commitment and Action (VCA) workshop for the first time at the Namayumba Epicenter in Uganda, I immediately got hooked!

The VCA method is like a light bulb that sparks off creativity for both the facilitator and the workshop participants. The first time I facilitated a workshop for a group of 30 district officials using the VCA method, I didn't know it would turn out to be one of the most successful workshops I have ever facilitated. The participants attentively listened as I took them through a guided meditation session that was aimed at supporting them visualize the future of their community in relation to ending hunger and poverty. This session triggered an endless flow of creative juices that latter culminated into the commitment by the district to offer 5 acres of land to support the construction of a community Centre. A commitment which was crucial for the journey to ending hunger and poverty in their district. This immediate success continues to inspire me as a facilitator and convinced me that this VCA method really works.

I am therefore happy and proud to present this VCA toolkit, a collaborative work from VCA facilitators from all over the world. From Bangladesh to Mexico and from Malawi to Senegal. Based on my personal experience, my advice to anyone who wants to use the VCA toolkit is that you need to personally test and appreciate the methodology before sharing it with others. Because you can never convince anyone about the success of this method until you believe in it yourself. Just like you can't facilitate community led development if you don't believe in the unlimited resourcefulness and wisdom of the people in the communities you work with. Your mindset as well as your own story will help your audience to emotionally connect in a deeper and more meaningful way.

Naikaali Irene Ssentongo
Head of Programs
The Hunger Project Uganda

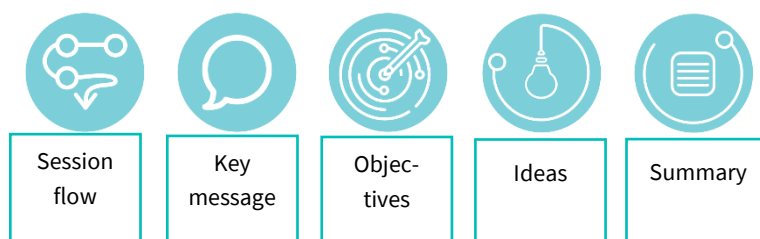
How to use this manual.

This manual is elaborated by The Hunger Project (THP), presenting the VCA methodology, which has been successfully used in many countries all over the world to build and strengthen the social capital necessary for all sustainable change. The VCA methodology was originally developed and tested in Bangladesh. It has since been used and finetuned by hundreds of local experts and almost half a million volunteers who have applied the VCA in their own communities in many different countries, ranging from Mexico to Mozambique. This manual is an attempt to produce a first 'universal' version from the rich tapestry of locally adapted and proven successful materials. As we move forward, we hope to include more examples from other practitioners in future versions.

The partnership of THP with the Her Choice Alliance has strengthened the wish to develop this manual as a tool to share the VCA methodology with other organisations who equally aim to strengthen the capacity and voice of local communities to take the lead in their own development. The manual does not claim to be the only methodology that leads to sustainable change. However, based on the experience with the methodology, we are convinced that it integrates several elements that – if used in a systematic way – contribute to create enthusiasm and liberate the energy necessary for sustainable change from within.

This manual is suitable for people and organisations who want to achieve a better world. It is written for facilitators working with THP as well as other organisations who (want to) work with communities, teams, organisations and individuals to take their destiny in their own hands. Since the VCA methodology is used in workshop settings with groups, the intended users of the manual are facilitators and not individuals wanting to work alone.

This manual is an elaborated version of the shortened manual (presented in the form of an interactive pdf) that summarises the VCA methodology and its steps, and includes a brief video on the topic by a VCA facilitator. The document is written in such a way that it first provides an understanding of what the VCA methodology entails. Subsequently, it outlines different sessions of a typical VCA workshop with detailed steps and exercises to take participants through the process in an interactive way. We also offer suggestions of methods to use and different approaches for exercises. Every chapter has a brief summary offering instant ideas of the key elements. We have used symbols throughout the document to indicate different parts.



Depending on your level of experience as a facilitator of workshops, some parts of the manual might be more interesting than others. Nevertheless, we encourage you to go through all of the material to reinforce your understanding of the methodology and have clear ideas on how to facilitate a VCA workshop for the first time. If you do not yet have facilitation experience, we highly recommend first running a workshop together with an experienced colleague or participating in a training of trainers/facilitators.

We believe that working in an interactive and participatory way leads to social transformation, and we hope that this manual inspires you to work with your community partners to contribute to our shared vision of a better world for all!

1 Change your mindset – change your life.

Who doesn't want to have a great life? Who doesn't dream of being happy and healthy? People achieve great things: they construct houses, create their own businesses, have healthy children, produce healthy food, achieve degrees, have great jobs, and earn the income that they need to lead the life that they want. If people can achieve these things, then why don't we all live in health, happiness and peace? Why do people stay stuck in situations of helplessness, dependency, status quo, and in the worst case poverty and hunger? Why do some thrive while others do not?

Much depends on agency and mindset. In social science, **agency** is defined as the capacity of individuals to act independently and make their own free choices. It is the ability to make effective choices and transform them into desired outcomes, as well as the capacity of persons to transform existing states of affairs. However, there are also factors that influence agency both positively and negatively, such as culture, social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, ability, customs, etc¹. Your opportunities in life can differ depending on where you were born, whether you are male or female, if your family is wealthy or poor, or if your parents are literate or not. However, the situations or circumstances in which people find themselves do not have to be static. Identifying what is missing in one's life or situation is a realisation that can cause change. Indeed, although we all deal with limiting factors of different sorts, one crucial element at the basis of any desired change is our mindset.

Mindset has everything to do with perspectives. Our foundational beliefs, attitudes and biases naturally affect the way in which we process information and experience the world around us, and it influences our success or failure. Two types of mindsets can be distinguished: a *limited* mindset and a *leadership* mindset. With a limited mindset, a person believes that situations and abilities are unchangeable ('I am poor and hungry, always have been and always will be'). People with a limited mindset stick to foundational beliefs, attitudes and biases like gender discrimination, deprivation, resignation, negative traditional practices, unproductive farming systems and practices, and trivial excuses that hinder change. With a *leadership* mindset, a person believes that situations and abilities can be developed and strengthened based on commitment and action² ('I am poor, and no longer will be'). People with a leadership mindset question foundational beliefs, attitudes and biases that hinder change.




¹ Sources: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agency_\(sociology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agency_(sociology)) and World Development Report 2012 'Gender and Equality' p. 176

² Source: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-mindset-2795025>

Obviously, a mindset shift doesn't happen overnight, and **resistance to change** is a stubborn enemy for many people. It is simply human nature to counteract any changes and maintain the status quo. In a VCA workshop, the facilitators role is to help participants to be aware that man is slow to change. This provides stability in life but change is also necessary to prevent stagnation. During a VCA workshop, you can discuss in groups or in plenary the reasons why people resist to change and the excuses people make to hinder change (see the box and image below).

Reasons why people resist to change.

- Fear of exposure of weaknesses.
- Fear that changes may make someone else look better.
- Fear that changes may appear as though someone (like a woman, or a young person) cannot do the job well.
- The excuse of being too busy to evaluate the necessity for change.
- Erroneous thinking that there is no need to change.
- Erroneous thinking that no one else can do it as well; therefore there should be no change.
- Lack of faith and trust.
- Fear of failure – changes may be unsuccessful.
- Changes may result in the appearance of “loss of control”.
- Laziness, preferring to stay in one’s comfort zone.
- Fear of taking risks.
- Unwillingness to see the potential in others’ capabilities to make changes.
- Making others feel awkward and self-conscious if change is implemented.
- Focus on what one has to give up rather than on the vision and purpose.
- Feeling alone in the midst of change (even if everyone else in the situation is experiencing the same change).





The VCA methodology is a mind-altering tool that requires a new paradigm that transforms people to meet the needs of an ever changing and developing society. A first step is to be aware of our mindset and our resistance to change. Being aware helps people to develop a leadership mindset, create commitment and take the responsibility and action required for change. The VCA methodology leads people through this process of examining their own mindset and helps them to make their dreams reality! Once we are convinced that we can be agents change for ourself and those around us, the world can change: ‘yes we can!’.

There are countless examples of people who made their dreams reality, who defeated their circumstances and took change in their own hands. Maybe you are such an example yourself, because you defeated the odds and are now a great facilitator. Maybe this applies to your parents, because they managed to get you into a certain school. Maybe your neighbour is, because she set up her own business while also raising her children on her own. Maybe it is your village chief, who is now fiercely fighting for women rights. Maybe it is a community you know, because they managed to build their own water well. There are many examples, and we encourage you to look for examples around you, from your own country and region, so that your participants can easily identify with them.



Chapter 1 summarized.

People achieve great things, but why do people stay stuck in situations of helplessness, dependency, status quo, and in the worst case poverty and hunger? Much depends on agency and mindset. Agency is the capacity to make effective choices and transform them into desired outcomes, and although we cannot neglect limiting factors of different sorts, situations do not have to be static. A crucial element at the basis of any desired change is our mindset, which relates to perspectives and beliefs. We can have a limited mindset, believing that we are helpless, that things will always be the way they are and that if a person is born poor they will die poor. We can also have a leadership mindset, believing in opportunities and taking responsibility for our own life. If we want to achieve change, we need to be aware of our limited beliefs, biases and convictions and release resistance to change. And from there develop a leadership mindset, have commitment and take responsible action to change the world of ourself and those around us, as described by some examples enumerated in the last part of the chapter.



Picture: Benin - credits Johannes Odé

2 VCA workshop: change mindsets for change

2.1 What is VCA?

VCA stands for vision, commitment and action. It is a process to change people's mindset or consciousness from an attitude of helplessness and dependency towards one of 'yes I/we can' and self-reliance, taking destiny into our own hands.

To achieve any change, the three elements are essential. A vision is a declaration of the future that people want to fulfil personally or in a group or community that is so inspiring that you will do everything to achieve it. The vision gives you a good feeling, and if you imagine this future it truly makes you happy. The vision is related to a future that people want themselves, rather than what someone else imposes on them. For this future to be achieved, commitment is needed to take responsibility, remain focused and undertake practical action, reflecting the third element. Linked to these three key elements are the sense of leadership to set direction for oneself and others, create an inspiring vision and take steps towards that vision. This requires a change in mindset: the decision that you can change your own life and those of others.

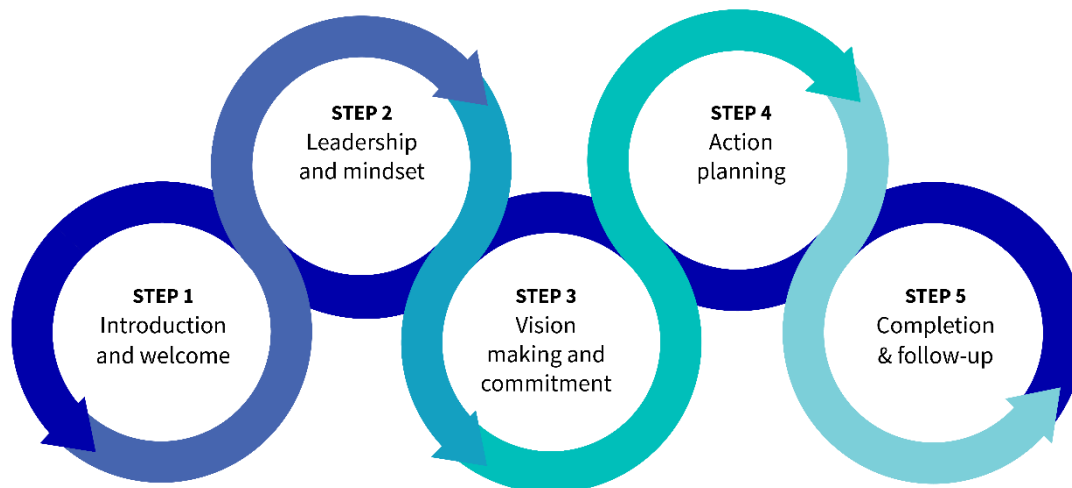
The VCA methodology is needs-based, practical and results-oriented. The goal is to facilitate a mindset shift in people, to switch on the light in them, helping them to realise that they can make the change they desire for themselves, their households, communities and countries.

2.2 How to use VCA.

The VCA methodology can be used in a workshop setting with groups of different sizes, from all levels of society like communities, villages, teams, organisations, strategic partners, students, unions, organisations and governments, women's groups as well as individuals. The elements remain the same, but the examples used, entry level, speed, language and methods can be adapted to the specific group, hence making it a flexible tool. You can use it when a specific need is already identified, like access to water, improve health, increase food security, access to education, or sustainable increased income. You can also use it when such a need is not identified by a community, individual or team, thus starting with a blank page.

The duration of a VCA workshop is not fixed, and it can last from 3 to 80 hours depending on the group with which you work. For example, THP has used successfully the VCA methodology in decennia-long work with rural communities. Some workshops lasted three days, and others three hours.

For these workshops, a certain flow is suggested to take people through the different elements towards their action plan. The flow is summarised in the image below and further explained in chapter 4.



2.3 Who can use VCA?

The VCA can be used on many occasions and with different groups. It is essential that the facilitator of the VCA workshop knows the group (gender, education, level of seniority, language), their needs or struggles, and what space there is for change. A workshop facilitator needs to have several skills, like the ability to listen with patience, ask the right questions and establish a safe environment as a basis of trust needed for people to open up to new ideas.

We strongly suggest working with facilitators who know the language, customs and social relationships of the participants. To give an example, THP has always worked with facilitators from the communities where they initiated VCA workshops who live in the same community and 'practice what they preach' in the workshop. Hence, their function is to truly set an example and inspire participants to also change their mindsets.

The facilitator of a VCA workshop plays a crucial role. He/she has to be able to inspire every participant to create a vision of a better future that truly speaks to people's mind, heart and soul. If possible, it would be ideal if the facilitator has experienced the VCA steps him-/herself so that he/she can share from experience the impact that it has had on their own life. It is crucial that the facilitator can convince participants that this future vision is possible through commitment, and strengthen the confidence of the participants in their own capability to take the necessary action to create this future. Other elements that make VCA successful and sustainable are explained in chapter 3.



Chapter 2 summarised.

In this chapter, we have explained what VCA is, how to use it and who can use it.

What is VCA: VCA stands for vision, commitment and action, as the three key elements necessary to achieve any change. The goal of a VCA workshop is to facilitate a mind shift in people to take their destiny in their own hands and achieve the change that they want for themselves, their households, communities, and countries.

How to use VCA: The VCA methodology can be used in a workshop setting with groups of different sizes and from all levels of society, and with a duration varying from a couple of hours to several days. The flow of the workshop is always the same, although the methods and examples differ depending on the context. The typical flow contains five steps: 1) introduction and welcome; 2) leadership and mindset; 3) vision making and commitment; 4) action; and 5) completion and follow-up.

Who can use VCA: The VCA can be used on many occasions and with different groups. It is essential that the facilitator knows the group, speaks their language, knows their customs, and preferably originates and lives in the same community. He/she has to be able to inspire every participant to create a vision of a better future that truly speaks to people's mind, heart and soul.



3 How to make a VCA workshop successful and results sustainable.

A good VCA workshop results from the combination of various aspects, including logistics, content, and facilitation style. One single aspect does not determine the quality of the workshop, but rather all of them together result in a workshop that influences a participant's life and will be remembered and re-used for a long time. The workshop cycle explains the various elements to consider before, during and after a workshop to make it successful and its results sustainable!

3.1 The workshop cycle.

For any workshop to achieve **sustainable** results, it is important to follow certain steps. Before a workshop, three steps have to be undertaken, starting with a **context analysis** and followed by the **design** and **preparation** of the workshop. These three steps can be carried out by the facilitator or the organisation initiating the workshop. The fourth step is the actual **implementation** by the facilitator. The final two steps after the training are the **evaluation** and **follow-up**, which again can be carried out by the facilitator or the initiating organisation. The important aspect is that all of the steps are completed and it is clear who is responsible for them. We will now explain the steps in detail.



My notes...

3.2 Before a VCA workshop: context analysis, design and preparation.

Failing to prepare is preparing to fail. This is very true for workshops, which underlines the importance of the first three steps explained in this chapter.

3.2.1 Context analysis.

Certain questions need to be clarified before a decision is made to do a VCA workshop. This is the first step, which we call 'context analysis'. This step can include carrying out a first visit to a community, calling a business department, meeting with a team within an NGO, or talking to teachers at a university, student leaders or others to answer preparatory context and logistical questions. The answers to these questions help to effectively design and prepare the workshop.

Context questions.

- Why is this workshop requested and by whom?
- Who are the leaders among the community/group/team (official and unofficial)?
- What is already being done to improve lives in the community?
- What needs have not (yet) been addressed and why? What are the gaps that need to be addressed? You could decide to undertake a thorough needs analysis in a participatory way to develop a problem tree and translate it into an objective tree¹. This gives a very thorough understanding of the existing needs and could be a basis for a VCA workshop and even a strategic plan!
- What existing structures and (thematic) groups in the community can be involved in the VCA workshop?
- How can we work together to empower even more people?
- Who will be the participants and what is their entry level (education, language, literacy)?
- Are there any resource persons or heroes with whom we can work as examples to inspire participants?
- Who could be possible coordinators for follow-up actions? This can also be established in the workshop, although you need to think of this in advance.



Logistical questions.

- Is there a venue that is suitable for a workshop?
- Is there a catering possibility?
- Is there a possibility for lodging (if necessary)?
- Do we need transport?

3.2.2 Design of the workshop.

The second step in the preparatory phase before the workshop is the design, which entails the following elements:

- Decide the specific **group of participants**, their number, entry level, gender, social status, and language.
- Plan the **date and length** of the workshop. Consider household chores and other tasks of participants; for example, if it is planting or cropping season, the availability of participants will be influenced.
- Make the workshop **agenda** for participants with names of sessions and their duration (see annex 1 for an example).
- Establish the **budget** if necessary.
- Develop a **logistics** plan.
- Choose the **facilitator**(s), if it will be someone other than yourself. Again, we strongly suggest working with local facilitators. Furthermore, think about providing support to the main facilitator: one person who can be in charge of logistical issues and another one to be co-facilitator or the person in continuous contact with the main facilitator

to discuss themes and times. This is particularly useful with large groups. You could also decide to give roles to participants (see session 1 in chapter 4).

- Identify **resource persons** (heroes) who could be visited during the workshop and who can tell their life story, or in a video or Zoom call during the workshop.
- Develop the **workshop outline** with session plans for/with/by the facilitators.

The workshop outline includes session plans for each session, explaining the objectives, topics, key message, methods, materials and suggested duration. The outline is adapted to the specific group of participants that you have identified in the context analysis. The group you will work with influences the language, methods and materials that you use to ensure that the workshop is inclusive and participatory, enabling the participants' reflection.

Criteria for choosing workshop methods.

- **Participation level:** sometimes people can reflect individually, at other moments in plenary and in smaller or larger groups.
- **Stage of group development:** at the beginning of a workshop, the bonding is not yet always established, whereas at the end this is more strongly the case, thus making it easier for people to work in larger groups.
- **Group dynamics:** ensure that one person does not dominate others by sometimes doing things in plenary, and at other times in small groups. You can give dominant people a task to focus on (such as writing on the chart).
- **Gender:** if there is a mixed group of men and women, are mixed groups allowed, including touching (in energizers)? The same thinking applies for hierarchy, although you can decide at the start of the workshop that there is no hierarchy in the workshop and that participants and facilitators are all at the same level.
- **Fun:** methods can be fun so that people relax, relish and remember the workshop in a positive way.

It is important to vary the methods that you use so that you maintain the attention and energy of the group.

Furthermore, given that different people like different methods based on their learning styles, make sure that you know your methods! We suggest methods with the session outlines In Chapter 4, and we offer some more ideas in Chapter 5!



3.2.3 Preparation.

Ample time must be allowed for this stage, since preparation can be a very time-consuming process.

- Prepare **workshop materials** like visuals, readers, handouts, posters, markers, paper (see annex 3 for material checklist). Translate them if necessary and order them in time.
- Consider **certificates**: people are proud to have certificates!
- Verify **IT facilities** and arrange audio-visual equipment if necessary.
- When using IT, be prepared for power cuts: have **plan B** in place!
- Prepare the workshop **venue** to create a conducive workshop environment. Preferably a place that is sufficiently large to have fresh air circulating, space to put up posters and flips charts, comfortable chairs or cushions to sit on, good light, and with little distraction/disturbance from outside.
- Organise the **seating** arrangements, preferably in a circle so that all participants can see each other. See what options you have to organise small groups in the room, in break-out rooms or outside, space for games, walls or floor space to display papers and posters.
- Organise **refreshments**, like drinks, healthy and nutritious food, sweets.
- Verify specific **women's needs**. The day-to-day responsibilities of household work can be very distracting. If possible, organise a crèche or day-care centre with play toys, and allow mothers to come along with a babysitter. In this way, mothers will be less distracted by their babies and can concentrate better on the workshop.

You can make your own 'to do' checklist so that no item or action is forgotten!

3.3 During a VCA workshop: implementing the workshop and the role of the facilitator.

As the facilitator, you want the workshop to be a pleasant experience for all. You play a crucial role in ensuring this, and hence the success of the workshop. First of all, you are responsible for creating an open, safe and constructive ambiance to allow all participants to express themselves. Your role is to guide participants through the process of the workshop. In order to achieve the goal of social transformation, the workshop needs to be participatory. The way in which you communicate as a facilitator has a strong influence on the level of participation. It's important to remember that a truly participatory workshop is one where both the facilitator(s) and participants work together as a team to ensure a successful workshop!

3.3.1 Crucial elements to be a good facilitator.

You play a crucial role as a facilitator. Although you have already made your workshop outline and will execute the workshop in line with your workshop outline, more is expected from you for the workshop to be successful and results sustainable. Below we provide an overview of all that is expected of you, organised around four themes. Go through the list and see what you already have and what you need to strengthen. Our advice is: practice, practice, practice and learn from others!

Have a constructive and open attitude.

1. Have a **positive constructive attitude**: be animated and excited about the material and content. Show that you enjoy the workshop!
2. Have an **open attitude**: look at all participants, keep distance to keep contact, maintain eye contact and keep your hands out of your pockets.
3. **Evaluate** during and at the end of the workshop. Especially in case the workshop lasts several days, do a short evaluation at the end of each workshop day. You should do this in a participatory manner and use varying methods, depending on the level of participants. Session 5 in chapter 5 will give you some ideas for evaluations and annex 5 provides a format for an 'end of the workshop' evaluation.
4. **Assess yourself** during and at the end of the workshop: be aware of your own energy, thoughts and feelings at all times, and how can it help (or not) your facilitation. Use participants' feedback, your own checklist, a colleague or observer.
5. Implement the workshop in line with the workshop outline and session plans.



Communicate to encourage inclusive participation.

6. **Encourage all** participants – especially the quiet ones and women – to share their stories and speak up to build confidence and leadership. Encourage shy ones to speak and dominant ones to listen.
7. **Create a safe environment** and set ground rules at the start of the workshop (see session 1 in chapter 4).
8. Lead participants by asking (open) **questions** and regularly summarise and consolidate the information being shared. Make sure that what you ask is clear, and that you are making your point. Ask with real curiosity instead of asking to hear the answer that you want. Ask for different opinions. You are a facilitator, not a teacher or lecturer (see image below)!
9. **Acknowledge** and thank each participant for their contribution. No answer is incorrect!
10. **Do not interrupt** unless conflict emerges. Do not take sides.

Make the process and learnings stick.

- 11. **Visualise** with key words, drawings, and images. People remember more when they see instead of only hearing words.
- 12. Use **examples** that speak to participants' mind and context and which can be applied to their and your own experience. Ask for participants' experiences and examples.
- 13. Propose that participants keep a **workbook** that can help them to remember the vision, their words of commitment and the actions that they will undertake as a basis for the follow-up (see annex 6 for an example).
- 14. **Celebrate** achievements throughout the workshop!



Manage time, energy and space.

- 15. Depending on the space and type of conversation, **move** all around the space. Include movement at different moments during the workshop to keep energy up and attention high.
- 16. **Manage time and energy** for each session in a flexible way: if any session needs to go on longer, ask participants' permission and create space it in the schedule. Stick to the breaks and if the kitchen is delayed share, this with participants and look for a shared solution. Read the participants' energy, and when you perceive it to be low ask them to consider taking a break or doing an energiser (see examples of energisers

in chapter 5).

- 17. **Arrange the workshop space** and include the participants to leave the space after each day "as good as they want to see it" for the next session, with the purpose of making it "our space



VS.

- Stands in front of students
- Focus on subject
- Presents information
- Transfers his/her knowledge and skills
- Is in control
- One directional from teacher to student
- Tells
- Provides the right answers
- Desired outcome set by teacher
- Teaching environment creates power difference
- Works in education, often with youth

- Stands next to participants
- Focus on process
- Guides process
- Helps participants find their own knowledge and skills
- Shares control with the group
- Multidirectional between facilitator and participants and between participants
- Helps discover
- Provides the right questions
- Outcome depends on the group and context
- Facilitation environment empowers participants
- Works in varies environments, often with adults

3.4 After a VCA workshop: evaluate and follow-up.

After the workshop, you will organise the workshop room and all of the materials, possibly with help of the participants. Then take a moment to go through the evaluations and elaborate your workshop report. You do not have to do this immediately, and giving yourself a small break is allowed. But don't wait too long, otherwise your own impressions and learnings disappear.

3.4.1 Evaluation and workshop report.

Evaluating the workshop is necessary to improve your performance as a facilitator, as well as the participants' growth and the workshop itself. Evaluations should be done during and after a workshop. Therefore, it is mentioned as a separate step, also because it is often neglected. However, nowadays results monitoring is becoming increasingly important. Evaluation is the quality control part of the workshop providing feedback on the facilitator's performance, the quality of the design and the delivery of the workshop activities. The outcome of an evaluation shows whether the objectives of the workshop have been achieved, and if not, why not. Depending on the results, topics to be covered in future workshop sessions and refresher workshops can be chosen. Conclusions could then be drawn if the workshop programme needs modifying and next steps suggested. We strongly suggest that you to write a (short) workshop report with these findings. Decide on a format that you and possible colleagues can use for all workshop reports.

Do your facilitator self-assessment: strong points and elements to improve?



3.4.2 Follow-up and monitoring change.

This step is important and often overlooked, as the period after the workshop is where the real change is going to happen. Participants now start working on their action plan, and perhaps they need some help or encouragement. For example, this could be a reminder through a WhatsApp group or a regular call. It might also be the case that other needs are identified during the follow-up, like further training or coaching on themes like citizenship rights and duties, planning, financial management, resource mobilisation and other topics.

During the workshop or even in your context analysis, you can reflect on possibilities for this follow-up. Thus, it is useful to continue communicating with the participants after the workshop, by either post, phone calls or personal visits. If any information is promised to the participants, it should be posted or emailed to them without delay. However, also make sure before, during and after the workshop that the process that follow-up is a two-way responsibility and commitment.

Indicators to monitor change.

To monitor change after a VCA workshop or a series of workshops, time is needed first of all, because real change does not happen overnight. In order to measure change, you can make use of indicators. You can develop these indicators together with participants during the workshop. We give you some suggestions in the box below.

Indicators to monitor change.

- Proportion of individuals reporting the ability to change their communities
- # Community-initiated projects
- # Youth-initiated projects
- # Women-initiated projects
- Proportion of community members who perceive leaders to be successful in addressing community concerns
- Presence of a community development plan
- Proportion of women serving in executive positions on committees
- Presence of a youth in community committees





Chapter 3 summarized.

A good VCA workshop is the result of the combination of various aspects like logistics, content, and style of facilitation. No single aspect determines the quality of the workshop, but rather all of them put together result in a workshop that affects a participant's life and will be remembered and re-used for a long time. The workshop cycle explains the six steps to consider before, during and after a workshop to make it successful and results sustainable!

Before the workshop: you start with the step 1, a *context analysis*, where you ask questions to better understand the 'why' of the workshop, the possible participants, existing structures and activities in place and logistical matters. From there, you continue with step 2: the *design* of the workshop, in which you decide on the content to translate into the workshop plan, select your (co)facilitator(s) preferably from the same region or community and make a logistics plan considering participants' needs and wishes. Step 3 before a workshop is the *preparation*, where you arrange all the materials and logistics in detail.

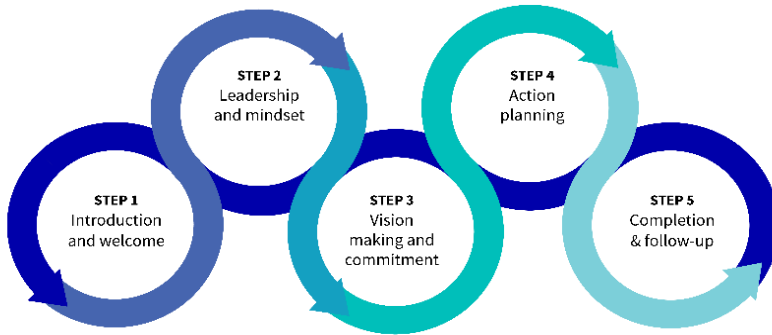
During the workshop: this is where you *implement* all that you have prepared using your workshop plan (step 4). In this phase it is essential to create a safe learning environment for all of the participants and inspire and guide them towards their own vision, commitment and practical action plan using interactive workshop methods to enhance active participation of all. Your role as a facilitator is essential in this phase. You have to be constructive, open, empathetic, inclusive, and keep an eye on all of your participants so that the workshop is a pleasant experience for all. Celebrate wins, whether small or large. Make sure that you assess satisfaction at the end of each day and when you close the workshop. You manage time and energy of all and keep a flexible, positive and constructive attitude at all times. Remember: you are a facilitator, not a teacher! Make sure that you know the difference.

After the workshop: after having celebrated the achievement, you wind down and choose a moment to write your *evaluation* report (step 5). Since your participants start implementing their action plan to achieve their vision after the workshop, make sure that you organize *follow-up* (step 6) through SMS, WhatsApp messages, visits or any other activity that you have decided together during or even before the VCA workshop. Keep in touch with them, encourage them and help them to keep their motivation high, although this is a shared responsibility, of course.



4 Sessions in a typical VCA workshop.

In this chapter, we will take you through a typical VCA workshop. This workshop has five sessions. For each session, we start with a brief overview with the objective, topics and flow (order), key message(s) and suggested duration. The latter depends on the number of participants, their level, and their relationship, and for this example we have a group of 20 participants in mind. Subsequently, we take you through the session and give you step-by-step ideas and methods how you can take your participants through the session. You do not have to do it exactly this way if you want to adapt it. We strongly suggest to make the workshop your own, as you have to feel comfortable with the content, methods and flow. Since this is not a blueprint that fits all situations, we highly recommend that you adapt our suggestions to your specific context.



4.1 Session 1: Introduction and welcome.

1. Introduction & Welcome

Key message

You are all welcome and we are all at the same level!

After the session participants:

- ▶ Feel welcome
- ▶ Feel at ease with the tone of the workshop
- ▶ Feel safe to share and learn

Topics & flow

- Presentation of the facilitator, the organisation and the participants
- Expectations of the participants
- Objectives of the workshop
- Program of the workshop
- Rules and roles setting
- Logistics

90
min

4.1.1 Presentation of the facilitator, organisation and participants.

Start by briefly introducing yourself with an enthusiastic tone and body language. Maybe tell a story about how you became VCA facilitator and what motivates you to facilitate this workshop. To make it



closer and more personal, and create a safe space, include something about you, your life story, which can tell more about who you are without showing off.

Briefly explain the organisation (i.e., THP) that is making this workshop possible. Keep it brief and enthusiastic. Then ask participants to introduce themselves in a participatory way. The time necessary for this depends on how well they know each other and the group size. If you encourage people to move around, it creates more energy from the start. It helps people to ground themselves and have fun at the same time.

Examples of participatory participant presentations.



Introduction walk

Let people walk around, if you clap your hands they must stop and turn towards the person standing closest to them, briefly exchange their names and their favourite hobby. After a few seconds, clap again so that people restart moving. Repeat for several rounds. Make it fast and keep energy up. This is followed by a brief plenary where you ask for example whether people have met someone new and heard similar or different hobbies.

Throw the ball

Stand in a circle with a ball (it can be a paper-made ball or another throwable object), and ask the catcher to introduce themselves, presenting their name and a hobby that has to be mimicked. Give the example, i.e. "I'm John and I like to dance", showing your dance moves. All participants mimic the move. Then throw the ball to another person who tries to repeat the previous person's name and then presents him-/herself, their name and hobby.



4.1.2 Participants' expectations and intentions.

You want to know why participants are present in the workshop. For this purpose, you can ask the following questions:

- What motivated you to come to this workshop?
- What will you contribute to the workshop?

- What do you want to take out of this workshop?

Asking their expectations and intentions has several advantages: you get to know them better, they get to know each other better and people warm up. Also, asking about their intentions helps you to verify their attitude: are they interested in merely consuming and staying in their comfort zone, or are they open minded and ready to learn new things and to stretch themselves a bit. Your interactive and participatory way of facilitating will encourage them to be in their stretch zone. Verifying their expectations helps you to see whether there are any expectations that cannot be met which you have to explain. There are different ways to collect participants' expectations and intentions, which depends again on their level and the size of the group. You can decide to mix the presentation of participants by asking about their expectations and intentions.

Ideas for expectation and intention inventory.

- Ask people to write their expectation in a few key words on a post-it/card/flipchart, let them say it out loud, ask for similar expectations, collect them and put them on a wall/flipchart/floor/table.
- Ask people to draw their expectation on a post-it/card/flipchart, let them show their image and explain, ask for similar expectations, collect them and put them on a wall/flipchart/floor/table.
- Stand in a circle and ask people's expectation. Once one has given an answer, ask others to share that expectation by raising their hand or taking a step forward.
- Ask in plenary what the participants' expectations are and write them on a flipchart (or ask a participant to do this).



4.1.3 Objectives of the workshop.

Compare the expectations of the participants with the objectives of the workshop and visualise them on cards or a flipchart, which you can keep in the room for the duration of the workshop. Formulate the expected results and objectives in a way that directly speaks to the participants. We provide suggestions in the box below, which should be adapted to your participants.



Suggested objectives of the workshop.

Concretely, by the end of this workshop you will walk away with:

1. A (shared) vision for a better future for you, your family and community.
2. A strong commitment to undertake action for this future.
3. A clear action plan.
4. Confidence in your capacities that you can take action to realise this future happen (yes I can!).



4.1.4 Programme of the workshop.

Present the programme of the workshop combined with a visual programme that is placed on the wall or the floor so that it stays with you. A nice way to do this is by making a drawing of for example a road, on which you place the different stops along the way.



4.1.5 Ground rules and role-setting.

Ask participants their suggestions about how we should all behave during the workshop (our *rules*) and write them on a flipchart or cards. You can also come up with your own ideas, although the risk is that it is top-down, and you want to create this shared responsibility between you and the participants to ensure the workshop's success. When asking their suggestions, underline the importance of an open, learning attitude. You can also decide to distribute roles in the group to create even more ownership and participation! Ideas for rules and roles are given in the boxes below.



Ideas for rules.

- Pay attention to what others are sharing.
- Be open to new ideas and accept different viewpoints.
- Learn additional or new information from co-participants.
- Acknowledge and appreciate others' abilities.
- Be non-judgmental about others' experiences and points of view.
- Other rules (phone use, laptop use, respect timing).

NB: you could also draw symbols for the roles!

Ideas for roles.



Our roles table	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Energizer <i>to keep energy up</i>	Name		
Time keeper <i>to ensure timely breaks</i>	Name		
Shepherd <i>to bring people back after breaks</i>	Name		
Logistician <i>communicates with the kitchen</i>	Name		
Village chief(s) <i>help manage the group, sanctions if rules are not respected</i>	Name		

You could optionally distribute attributes to each person who takes up a role, or write their roles on a nametag, a crown or whatever creative idea you have. Make it fun and interactive. You can refer to this later on in the session on leadership when a person takes up one of the roles here (s)he might also take a more challenging task in the community!

4.1.6 Logistics.

Briefly explain the logistics (housekeeping) of the workshop:

- Timetable (you can write this on a chart and put it on the wall).
- Where lunch and other breaks will be taken.
- If you use a participant workbook, distribute it now and explain the use to the participants. At the end of each day, you can ask them to complete it. It is for their own use, not to give to the facilitator! Therefore, it is not an exam. It is for themselves to capture learning!
- Other logistics details you want to share with them.



4.2 Session 2: Leadership and mindset.



4.2.1 Introduction: leadership for life.

Start this session with discussions in pairs. Ask participants to reflect on the following questions:

1. Who is a leader who inspires you?
2. Why does he/she inspire you? What did he/she achieve?
3. What are his/her characteristics?
4. What are qualities of a good leader?

Write these questions on cards, a board or chart so that they remain visible. Verify whether the questions are clear. Give a start sign for the discussion. Let participants discuss this with their neighbour for ten minutes, and if they want, they can move to another part of the workshop area.

When the time is up, invite the participants to return to the plenary and ask them to share the results of their discussion. Let them first share about the person who inspires them (Q1) and why (Q2). Ask if this person is an international 'far-away' person or someone from nearby, from among their community, family or friends. Ask a few examples, then ask about the characteristics of this person (Q3) and the qualities of a good leader (Q4). Capture their answers on a chart: for example, you can draw a person (or ask someone of the group to do this). Write the characteristics of this person in and around the drawing on the chart. Make sure that all participants contribute. *Alternative: depending on your group's level and size, you can also let them do this work in smaller groups and present their drawing.*

When you finish this discussion, ask the participants: which of these characteristics do you also have yourself? You can collect their answers in different ways:

1. Distribute round stickers, two per person and ask people to put a sticker next to two characteristics that they have (thus give them two stickers).
2. They can use a marker, pen or pencil to put a cross next to a characteristic or a line under it.
3. If people cannot write or read, just ask them to think about the characteristics and mention the one that they recognise in themselves in plenary.

When all participants have finished, do a short debriefing: what do you take away from this exercise?

In our families, communities and countries, we have individual leaders such as parents, neighbours, village chiefs, businesswomen as well as leadership groups such as health animators, women's groups, CBOs. It is important to take away that regardless of your status, no matter if you are educated or not, we are all leaders, far and near, women and men. All of us possess leadership skills. Let us celebrate that by clapping hands, singing a song, or doing a little dance.

4.2.2 Identifying resistance to change.

We have just seen which persons inspire you as a leader and what they achieved. Recall their answers, which you possibly wrote on a flipchart. If there was not an example from a person from their own community, share your example that fits the participants. If there was an example from their community, take that example and refresh people's minds. Then ask participants to reflect on this question: what did the person have or do to achieve this? Lead a short discussion on this using the participants' answers, then finalise the discussion by asking: what can we conclude about this? The key message here is that for change to happen we need to have a leadership mindset. Because change does not just happen, you need to have a vision and belief in it and undertake action. However, it is possible that people are resistant to change, they have limiting beliefs and a limited mindset. Let us look together into this resistance to change. Options are to discuss the following questions in plenary or work in smaller groups (give them 20 minutes to work on their answers) and let people share their ideas in plenary through writing or drawing on a chart, making a song, a poem or a sketch. The questions to answer are:



1. Why do people resist change? List 10 reasons.
2. What are some of the excuses people make to hinder change? List 10 excuses.
3. What are specific limiting beliefs and practices you have yourself or you see in your community? List 10 beliefs or practices. If you think it fits your group of participants, you can also do the exercise 'woman is...man is' detailed in the box below. This exercise helps to clarify stereotype beliefs around categories like women and men in a community or society.

You can compare their answers to questions with elements from the examples in the box and image from Chapter 1 (page 9). Write some key answers on chart. Conclude by saying that it is important to realize that some of our convictions create an unequal society, where people are deprived of change because of discrimination and unequal power relations due to class, ethnicity, age and gender. For example, women not having access to resources, youth not allowed to participate in decision making about community matters. Unequal power relations are reinforced and perpetuated by institutions such as family, media, religion, state, market and so on. If we understand this it will help us to analyse the impact of inequity on our own life. And if we want to achieve change, we need to be aware of our limited beliefs, biases and convictions and release resistance in order to create a more equal society and inclusive positive change. Let us have a closer look at how we can reverse resistance to .

Woman is...Man is....

This exercise helps participants to identify stereotypes and beliefs around gender. You can also use other categories like youth, old woman, old man, disabled, different ethnicities or other categories existing in a community for this exercise.



Ask participants to stand in a circle around you. You are in the middle holding a light ball. You throw the ball to someone and ask 'woman is...?' or 'man is...'. The participant who receives the ball immediately answers the first thing that comes to his/her mind. For example, 'woman is...shy' or 'man is...strong'. Ask one volunteer to write down the responses of the participants on the board or chart paper. Repeat this exercise until you have an adequate list of words describing beliefs around women and men. Stop the exercise and go through the list of words. Encourage the participants to reflect on these words. You can challenge them by asking: are these beliefs really true? Can we also turn this belief around? You can use the approach presented in the session 'addressing resistance to change' to challenge limiting beliefs.

4.2.3 Addressing resistance to change.



So, we have just looked into our resistance to change, which originate from our limited beliefs and practices. Ask participants how we can reverse this resistance and write their ideas on a chart (try to have at least 5 ideas). Then continue saying that in order to address this resistance, we can challenge and analyse the limited beliefs and practices through asking ourselves a few questions. To begin, isolate a limiting thought (belief) for inquiry, based on the previous session. Explain the four questions listed below that you have to go through one by one³. Begin by repeating the original thought (belief), then ask yourself each question:

1. Is this thought true?

The answer to this question is just one syllable: either *yes* or *no*. If your answer shows up as a *yes*, move to question two. If it's a *no*, then experience that *no* for a moment and then move to question three.

2. Can you absolutely know that it is true?

If your answer to question one is *yes*, ask yourself 'can I absolutely know that it's true? Take this opportunity to look again. Shine the flashlight on that belief again, and see what reveals itself to you.

3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?

Witness the feelings, body sensations, and behaviors that arise when you believe that thought. Notice and report the answers to any of the following:

- What images do you see, past or future, and what emotions or physical sensations arise as you witness those images?
- How did you treat the other person?
- How did you treat yourself?

4. Who would you be without that thought?

Return to the original thought. Take a moment to reflect, observe, and experience the situation again, this time without the thought. Who or what you would be without the thought? How would you see or feel about the other person? Drop all of your judgements. Notice what is revealed.

After these four questions, take the original thought again and **turn it around**. Ask the question: 'Is the opposite true or truer than the original thought?'. Consider how each turnaround you find is as true as or truer than the original thought. Find at least three specific, genuine examples of how each turnaround is true for you. This is not about blaming yourself or others or feeling guilty. It is about discovering alternatives that can bring you peace and insight, that helps you to look at something in a different way. And to help us altering beliefs that stem from our past which are deeply influencing our perception of the present. Go through an example with the participants. You can take an example from their own answers from the previous session and go through the questions in plenary or use the example presented below.

Thought: women cannot be leaders in our community.

1. Is it true? Yes or No. When no, move to question 3.	Yes, it is not in our culture that women can be leaders
2. Can I absolutely know that it is true? Yes or no.	Yes, it is the way it is.
3. How do I react, what happens, when I believe that thought? What images do you see, past or future, and what emotions or physical sensations arise as you witness those images? How did you treat the other person? How did you treat yourself?	When I believe it, I obey men in our community and society. It makes me feel sad, but I keep it to myself. Because I cannot do anything about it. I treat myself the way I am supposed to do according to our culture. I do not have any choice.
4. Who would you be without that thought?	I would be so free and happy. I would be a leader!
5. Turn the thought around	Women can be leaders in our community Women and men can be leaders in our community Men allow women to be leaders in our community

³ This approach is based on *The Work* of Byron Katie (source <https://thework.com/instruction-the-work-byron-katie/>). It is often used successfully with long term problems and has been effective at dealing with problems that stem from our past, deeply influencing our perception of the present (source <https://appreciatingpeople.co.uk/the-work-of-byron-katie/>)

Depending on the size and capacities of the group you could decide to let them work individually on a limiting belief, in couples or in small groups. It works best if people first try it individually and go through all the steps. If possible, they write their answers in their notebook or on a piece of paper (or you can preprint the table with the question and hand it to them). Silence is helpful for people to really go inward and reflect. Give them at least 20 minutes to work on one limited thought. Then ask who wants to share in plenary. It is important that people do not laugh about or criticize what others share, it is a sensitive topic and the ones who speak are courageous and should be encouraged positively. Ask a few examples to share in plenary and invite people to help each other with turning thoughts around towards helping thoughts. Conclude by saying that we are often stuck to limiting beliefs. However, these are thoughts which we can transform into new thoughts which can then become new beliefs. There is not one thought that is the absolute truth! Different thoughts and different truths exist. What I believe does not have to be the same as what another person believes. Through questioning our beliefs, we empower ourselves to create new thoughts, and therefore new beliefs which lead to new behavior and therefore to change!

4.2.4 Creating a leadership mindset for change.

Based on the previous exercise, you will now take the group through a couple of questions in plenary or in small groups.



1. What are the expected benefits of change? Identify 10 benefits.
2. What are mindsets, attitudes, behaviours, practices and beliefs that we need to change to boost our development? List 10 elements.

If they work in small groups give them 20 minutes to work on their answers. Again, you can ask them to present it in a creative way. Then let them present their ideas in plenary and collect their answers on the different questions. Based on their answers on the second question, strengthen their awareness on different types of mindset. Explain that there are two types of mindsets: a limited mindset and a leadership mindset (see the boxed below). Ask people first what a limited mindset means to them, collect a few answers. Ask what people understand by a leadership mindset, and collect a few answers. Explain to them the different types of mindset.

a **limited** mindset

With this mindset, a person believes that situations and abilities are unchangeable (i.e. I am poor and hungry, always have been and always will be. Or 'I cannot do this, the government/donors/others have to help me because I am poor). With a limited mindset, you do not take responsibility for your own life, but you make yourself helpless and depending on others. People and communities with limited mindsets behave in a reactive way, complaining, waiting for others to come and save them, accusing others of causing their problems and making the government responsible to take action. They are not organised, not motivated, do not collaborate with each other and simply wait.

a **leadership** mindset

With this mindset, a person believes that situations and abilities can be developed and strengthened through commitment and action (i.e. I am poor, and I no longer will be!). With a leadership mindset, you take responsibility for your life and those around you, you take destiny in your own hands and are committed to change, small or large. People and communities with a leadership mindset behave in a proactive way, take destiny in their own hands, are responsible, active, optimistic, and organised. They use their resources, know and show their results and keep on going.

Then place two cards on the floor. One card says, 'I cannot', and the other says 'I can'. Place them on an imaginary line, with one card on each end of the line. Ask people to position themselves: what mindset do you have now? They move towards that mindset on the floor. See where people are standing and let them express themselves.



Invite several people standing along the line to explain why they selected that spot. Then explain the notions of a limited and a leadership mindset. The key message is that we are all leaders and we can achieve change with a leadership mindset. Moreover, we all have a social responsibility to develop our communities. If you are holding the workshop with students, it might be that most of their educational expenses are either paid by their parents, by the government, or with tax money raised by citizens including the poorest. This means that the students are indebted to the society. This conversation leads to a realization on the part of the participants that they have a responsibility to their fellow citizens and to the larger society. Thus, they have to have a leadership mindset!

Finalize the session by sharing some motivational mindset messages (see box). Ask them which one speaks the most to their minds. Close this session by applauding together. Tell them that the next session is about developing their own vision.

Motivational mindset' messages.

- The better your mindset, the more time and energy you will devote to **self-improvement** and the stronger your skill set will become.
- Move with **positivity**. If you spend time worrying about what's not working and what's gone wrong you cripple progress.
- Engage in **positive self-talk**. The message you tell yourself will encourage and motivate you, or they limit you because they are negative.
- Never speak down about yourself. It dampens your self-belief. Speak as though you **belief in yourself** and others are likely to follow suit.
- It is tempting to compare your progress to that of others and to rate your own contribution against others. This is a mistake that will set you back. **Do not compare.**
- Dwelling on your past mistakes or being anxious about the future are huge sources of stress. Allow yourself to be full **present in the moment.**
- Monitoring your thoughts incites productive thinking and enhances your **focus**. It keeps our mind occupied. ("Don't make your mind stay idle").
- **Overcome your fears**. All of us have fears. Fear of uncertainty, fear of public speaking, fear of risk. All our fears do prevent us from growing.



4.3 Session 3: Vision-making and commitment.

3. Vision making and commitment

300
min



Key message

We can all create our vision for a better future and are responsible ourselves to achieve this vision!



Topics & flow

- Introduction to vision
- Make your own (shared) vision
- Assess the vision
- Confirm commitment to achieve the vision



After the session participants:

- ▶ Can explain what a vision entails
- ▶ Understand that they can change conditions towards self-sufficiency and sustainability
- ▶ Develop a vision of a future to take them to a new level in the quality of their lives
- ▶ Committed themselves to achieve the vision

4.3.1 Introduction to vision.



Ask participants to reflect again on the leaders who they mentioned in the previous section: what did they achieve? Ask a few examples. They achieved their visions of a better future for themselves and their communities. To help people to understand what a vision is, you can do the following exercise with them. Divide them in two groups and give them 45 minutes to formulate their answers to the six questions below. If you want you can also let them find a creative way to present their answers. If you have a small group you could also decide to work in these questions in plenary.

Group 1 questions	What is a vision? What is its meaning? Why is it important? List what happens when an individual does not have a vision (at least 5) Mention 5 things that happen when an individual has a vision (at least 5) What should one consider before setting a vision?
Group 2 questions	What is a vision? What is its meaning? Why is it important? List what happens when a group does not have a vision (at least 5) Mention 5 things that happen when a group has a vision (at least 5) What should a group or community consider before setting a vision?

Take some time to discuss their answers. Explain that the vision is an expression of the future, it is thinking beyond the immediate challenges that we face on a daily basis. Continue by asking participants the following questions (write them on cards or a chart):

- Do you know exactly what you will be doing in five years' time?

- Where will you be? What will you have? How will your family be?

Collect some answers. Explain that whether we know it or not, we all have an idea, a vision of the future that gives rise to our everyday actions. Sometimes people do not understand how important it is to create a vision for the future. They believe that it is like an unrealistic dream, ignoring the hard reality, or they see the future in terms of a negative vision and think things like: 'it will only be worse' or 'things will never change'. This kind of thinking belongs to the limited mindset! Thus, you can create a vision of the future that you want, the leadership mindset, or you can adopt a vision that is keeping you where you are now. What do you want?

Explain what a vision is. It is a **statement of the future** that:

1. Is possible to realise through our own power and commitment.
2. Inspires us to put aside our fears, break the resignation and take action.
3. Drives us to go beyond conflicts that can divide us and unites in favour of goals that are worth our best effort.
4. Builds our confidence to commit to our own destiny, our new future and better quality of life.

Explain **the four rules** that apply to a vision (written on cards or on chart):

1. A vision is **not political**: it is about human issues, not political issues.
2. A vision entails **a positive desirable shared future for all**: not for the lucky few, but for every child, woman and man with equal opportunities for development and growth.
3. A vision entails change that can be **achieved with our own resources**. A future that comes from recognising our own wealth, our cultural heritage, our ancestral wisdom, our strength, our traditions, which enhance the dignity of the human being, and the recognition of our experts.
4. A vision entails change that can be achieved **by ourselves and together** through unity and concerted action: children, women and men work together to achieve the vision. It is not only achieved by the government, a few large NGOs, banks or corporations, but rather by all of us working together with a common vision. We can solve our own issues: this not up to external people and organisations. Partnerships are welcome but let us start with our own efforts.

You can finalise the session by sharing one or more motivational messages around vision that you think fit your group. Maybe you put them on a chart and ask people which one speaks most to them to take with them forever.

Motivational vision messages.



- Be optimistic; think that great things are coming. No matter what you are currently going through, **there is so much to look forward to**.
- Set a large and specific goal. This will motivate you much more than small goals. **A big goal has a big effect** and can create a lot of motivation.
- In life, **always think back to your life's vision**.
- When one door of happiness closes, **another door opens**, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.
- If you think down, you will go down. **If you think up, you will go up**. You'll always travel in the direction of your thinking
- In life, sometimes life closes doors because it is **time to move forward**. And that's good because we often won't move unless circumstances force us to.

4.3.2 Make your own (shared) vision.

Tell participants that we are going to develop a vision. Take the participants through the visioning exercise. You can do the exercise on an individual basis or in groups. We give you three different options to choose from. For all of the options, you must decide whether you want to come up with one shared vision for the whole group or for small groups to work with their own vision first.



Ideas for the vision-making exercise.



1. Group drawing

Organise people in groups of five and give them a chart and markers. Ask them to draw their ideal village/community/team/organisation. Ask them to make the drawing as vivid and specific as possible including people in their desired future, i.e. women teaching, people walking to a health centre nearby. Don't worry: there is always drawing talent in the group. People are also allowed to write keywords in the drawing. Include different wishes in the shared vision. Give them at least half an hour for the drawing. When they have finished, organise a gallery: put all the visions on the wall/floor, and let people first walk around and look at the drawings. Then ask one representative of each group to explain their vision.

2. Guided open visualisation

Ask all participants to sit comfortably and close their eyes if they feel comfortable doing so. Start the story by asking: 'Imagine your family/community ten years from now. What do you see yourselves doing? What do you see others doing? How do you feel? Where are you? How do you look? What do you do? What do you see in the environment?' Let people reflect in silence for a few moments, possibly with soft music, then gently ask them to open their eyes. There are different options: let them write what they saw in their note book first and then put them in groups of five to discuss their visions and make one vision out of it in a drawing or mind map. Give them 30 minutes for this exercise.

3. Guided assisted visualisation

Ask participants to sit comfortably and close their eyes, if they feel comfortable doing so. Then paint a picture, for example of a beautiful village on a beautiful day. The sky is blue, the sun is coming up and the wind is softly blowing. Make the picture as vivid as possible, include schools, health centre, provisions of food, trees and produce, equality, which are linked to current issues in the village/community. Describe it very vividly and invite people to see themselves in this picture. How do they feel? What do they see? Let them think about that for a few moments. Then slowly take them back to the room. Ask them what they saw, how they felt. Make a drawing based on what people are saying, to make their vision visible. If you cannot draw, ask someone to help you out, there are always talents in a group. Take 30 minutes for this exercise.



4.3.3 Assess the vision.



Ask participants to look at the different vision(s). Ask about different components of the vision, and list them on a flip chart in a table. For example, all children go to school falls under 'education', women being able deliver their babies in a health centre in the community (health), women going to work (income), men and women sharing household chores (equity), people having a roof above their head (housing), people having enough food (food security), a green community with many trees (environment), people working together (collaboration). First, put all in the vision column, then ask for each element what the current undesired situation is and let them detail that a little more, as well as listing it in the table.

Current situation	Desired future situation (vision)
<p><u>Education</u> Only a few children go to school in a community nearby. This keeps our children illiterate and uneducated and therefore they are not prepared for a better future.</p>	<p><u>Education</u> A functional school where all children go to school.</p>
<p><u>Health</u> Women have to walk 20 km to get to the nearest health centre to deliver their babies. This causes women to die.</p>	<p><u>Health</u> A functional health centre where women can deliver their babies in a health centre in the community.</p>
<p><u>Food security</u> Drought, leading to food shortage, illness and death.</p>	<p><u>Food security</u> Abundant crops so that people have enough food.</p>
<p><u>Income</u> Women do not earn money; they do not have paid jobs. This leads to an insufficient average income per family, and people cannot take care of their basic needs</p>	<p><u>Income</u> Women earn money, and they have paid jobs. Now families have enough income to cover their basic needs.</p>
<p><u>Water and sanitation</u> There is no water in the community. Women walk for an hour to fetch it.</p>	<p><u>Water and sanitation</u> People have access to clean drinking water. Women can fetch it water nearby.</p>

Discussing each of these components in more detail helps participants to vividly see their vision, and feel in their heart what it is they really want. Often components in a vision at the community level include access to healthcare, water and sanitation, education, income and food security. If you like, you can link their vision elements to the Sustainable Development Goals.⁴

4.3.4 Commitment to achieve the vision.



Now that we have developed our vision, and really feel *why* we want to achieve it, let us take the analysis of our vision a step further. Ask participants why they are not in the desired situation. What is missing for that? Why is there the lack of a school? Why is a health centre not yet there? Usually, people blame others for that. However, let us see what we can do ourselves! If we stay in our limited mindset and mainly look at others to help us, then we will never get to the desired situation. Thus, now that we have made our vision for the future, let us look into this major question: who will transform the vision into reality? How will we achieve this? The questions we need to answer together are: what can we do as individuals? What can we achieve collectively as a community? And what can we achieve if we work in a coordinated manner (community, government and other non-government entities)? Draw the following table on a chart:

⁴ For more information, visit <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Vision element	Individual	Collective	Coordinates
<u>Education</u> A functional school where all children go to school.			
<u>Health</u> A functional health centre where women can deliver their babies in a health centre in the community.			
<u>Food security</u> Abundant crops so that people have enough food.			
<u>Income</u> Women earn money, and they have paid jobs. Now families have enough income to cover their basic needs.			
<u>Water and sanitation</u> People have access to clean drinking water. Women can fetch it water nearby.			

Based on the answers of the participants, tick marks are given against each element of the vision. From the analysis, it becomes clear that for almost every element, individual initiative is essential.

After this exercise, ask several series of questions to take participants to a deeper level of analysis. The first questions are:

- What does the analysis tell us?
- What does the board/exercise tell us?
- Is the vision a pipe dream?
- Is it achievable?

What you want to achieve with these questions is that participants realise that their vision is achievable. Write the word **achievable** on a card and stick it on a chart. From there you take them a step further with a second series of questions:

- Would it take an arm and a leg to realise our vision?
- Would we need a lot of money to start implementing the vision?
- Do we have to wait for donors or the government to come up with the big money?
- Or can we start with what we have ourselves?

What you want to achieve with this second series of questions is that participants realise that they can start with what they have and that their vision is affordable. Write the word **affordable** on a card and stick it on a chart.

Now you ask a last series of questions:

- Who does achieve the vision largely depend on?

What you want to achieve with this question is that participants start to realise that it largely depends on themselves and that they have to take the responsibility, provide the leadership and be the key to change. Thus, we have to start with ourselves, we are responsible for change to happen. Write the words **'I am the key'** on a card and stick it on a chart. Then ask the last question:

- If the vision is not a pipe dream and is achievable and largely depends on me, do we take the responsibility?

What you want to achieve with this question is that participants express their commitment to take the responsibility for their vision. You can help them with probing questions like: are you ready and willing to take responsibility? Is there anything blocking you from committing yourself to achieving the vision? While it can seem like a challenge, with a leadership mindset, a spirit of optimism, pride, courage, resilience and determination, we can create this future! It is all about this commitment. Write the sentence **'I take responsibility'** on a card and stick it next to the other cards on

the chart. Look at the four cards that you have put next to each other on the chart and read them out loud: our vision is achievable and affordable; I am the key and I take responsibility for our vision to happen. Ask participants if they agree with it, and if they do to raise hands and even stand up. Tell them that this is all about being committed to achieve our vision. To help participants really grasp what commitment is, you can ask the following questions in plenary and collect their answers on flip. Or you can let them work in three groups and let them all answer question 1, 2 and 3 plus 2 other questions, i.e.: group 1 question 4 and 7; group 2 question 5 and 8 and group 3 question 6 and 9. You can give them the questions on cards, or on a flipchart.

1. What is commitment?
2. What is its meaning?
3. Why is it important?
4. List what happens when an individual does not have commitment (at least 5)
5. List what happens when a group does not have commitment (at least 5)
6. List what happens when a community does not have commitment (at least 5)
7. Mention 3 things that happen when an individual has commitment
8. Mention 3 things that happen when a group has commitment
9. Mention 3 things that happen when a community has commitment

Ask for a few reactions in plenary, or if groupwork was done, compare their answers. Then link them to your definition of commitment (on the chart): it is the power of an individual to transform vision into reality. Can you remember a time when your commitment helped you to achieve extraordinary things? Ask for a few answers. Thus, we need commitment to create breakthroughs. Choose some of the statements below that fit your group the best and speaks to their minds, write them on a chart or handout and let someone read them out aloud:

- The power of an individual to transform their vision into reality.
- The force that keeps us going when people tell us we cannot or when we think we cannot (the limited mindset!).
- The force that keeps us moving forward no matter which obstacles we face.
- The force that unleashes our power to get things done.
- The force that makes an ordinary person extraordinary.
- The strength of a boxer who rises from the ground once again.
- The strength of a recently widowed woman setting up her business and raising her own children.
- The strength of a farmer working his land again after all his harvest was destroyed by heavy rains.
- The strength of a marathon runner running another 10 km when he has no more strength left.
- The conviction of a soldier going to the front line without being certain that he will return alive.
- The devotion of a missionary saying goodbye to their own comfort to go somewhere else to make someone else's life better.

What can help us to remind ourselves of the commitment to achieve our vision? Ask for a few ideas in plenary, then show them one or more motivational messages and ask them which one speaks most to their minds.

Motivational commitment messages.



- What you do every day will turn into a **habit**. Choose habits that will lead you to success and repeat them every day. With time, they will become automatic.
- Not every day will be good. Some days we'll succeed, some days we'll fail. But keep trying and **don't give up**. One breakthrough can change all.
- We easily want to give up or quit when things don't go our way. But don't forget, **success only come after you have tried and failed many times**.
- "**Success is no accident**. It is hard work , perseverance, learning, sacrifice, studying and most of all , loving what you are doing"- Pele
- **Believe** that you can succeed. Never let any person, any fear, doubt, any negative voice or thought, keep you from becoming who you want to be.
- **Great things take time**. Stay patient and stay positive. Everything is going to come together, maybe not today but eventually.
- When you are **inspired**, you will not mind the challenges life throws at you, you will rather feel empowered to act on your dreams. Inspire yourself.
- Always remember that we all at certain times in our lives find ourselves broken, true strength is found in picking up the pieces. **Keep strong!!!**
- Look at anyone successful in business; do not think things got to where they were without **taking risk**. They took a risk to start a new venture.
- Take risk and chances because later in life, you will look back and know that you lived your life like you wanted to, and that **it was all worth it**.

To finalise the session, propose a celebration activity (see two options below and feel free to create your own idea).

Ideas for creating and enhancing commitment.



Option 1: Everyone thinks of a name, symbol, or colour that they want to use to remind themselves of their commitment. Give them 1 minute to think about it and write/draw it on a card (optional). Then ask the names, symbols and colours and write them on a chart or ask them to show the cards and explain their word, symbol or colour. When they have finished, ask people to walk around and high five all other participants as a way to confirm their commitment in a joyous way. Celebrate commitment.

Option 2: You can decide to create a commitment song/dance together or in small groups (this works better for the shy people). Let people brainstorm about what commitment means to them and create a song, then let them present and give all groups a big applause. Celebrate commitment!

Now that we have set the stage, in next session we will look into planning action to transform our vision into our reality.

4.4 Session 4: Action to make the vision a reality.

4. Action to make the vision a reality

Key message

Step by step we can make our vision become reality!

After the session participants:

- ▶ Can explain the different steps to make an action plan
- ▶ Have a clear action plan and budget
- ▶ Are committed to their part of the action plan

Topics & flow

- Introduction to action planning, principles and steps
- Five steps in action planning
- Step 1: Clarify the vision components
- Step 2: Enumerate priorities
- Step 3: Identify actions
- Step 4: Map actors and resources
- Step 5: make action plan and budget

4.4.1 Introduction to action planning, principles and steps.

Having created our vision, now we will look at what we need to do to make it a reality. This might seem like an overwhelming task. Perhaps we are used to the government or organisations coming and doing things for us. However, as we discussed earlier in this workshop, we do not need to wait for others to come and save us. The power to create our future is already within us, and within each person in our community. Let us look now at how we will use our power and resources to accomplish our vision, which we will do step by step.



Divide people into groups. Each group receives the following six questions:

1. What is action?
2. What is its meaning?
3. Why is it important?
4. What happens when there is no action? (mention at least 5 results)
5. What happens when action is taken? (mention at least 5 results)
6. What are the principles of action taking?

Give each group 30 minutes to discuss the questions. Then share in plenary going through each question and their answers. Avoid too much repetition and look for how one group adds to another and so on. Take 30 minutes for the plenary discussion, then conclude by sharing the motivational messages.

Motivational action messages.



- Take action on your plan: **do something every day** to move towards your goal. Ask yourself what you can accomplish today that will act as a tangible step toward your life goal.
- Resolve in advance that you will **persist** until you succeed.
- Focus on trying to better yourself with **small steps**. No one is perfect but anyone can make the decision to be a better person.
- Doing something and getting it wrong is ten times more productive than doing nothing. Every success has a trail of failures behind it. **If at first you don't succeed, try again.**
- Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear and doubt, don't sit and think. **Go out and do.**
- Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must **begin with a single step**.
- When you **set a goal** you make a decision to act upon what you want. This gives you a direction to focus on one that is measurable and has an end point.
- A thousand disappointments in the past cannot equal the power of one positive action right now. **Stay focused, don't lose hope, go ahead.**
- Choose a small action to do every day and focus on that action until it is completed; **focusing on small goals can prevent you from being overwhelmed.**

Before going into the steps of action planning to realise our vision, it is useful to share the **seven principles of action** (on cards or on a poster):

1. **Self-reliance:** People who succeed those who have the strength of mind to realise that you can only develop with what you have, not with what you don't have.
2. **Integrity:** Integrity means honesty, and even living with human dignity. It means having your actions match your principles.
3. **Creativity:** Human creativity is the most important principle, as what separates us from animals. Our deepest human urge is to use our creativity, and we must do so think in new ways and challenge the old ways of thinking.
4. **Group formation:** Every successful effort that we have studied begins by people forming groups where decisions are taken together. Generally, people who work together in the same trade make the best groups.
5. **Partnership:** This means everyone working together as equals. Women and men must work as partners, likewise rich and poor. We must make government officials our partners.
6. **Participation:** Gender sensitivity, respect for all ideas and opinions, being all inclusive thus not allowing only men to talk at meetings, or participate in decision making as well as in contributions such as levies and communal labour.
7. **Accountability and transparency:** Being sincere, responsible and answerable to the use of all resources (material and financial) committed to you care. Making all undertakings open and clear.

Discuss the principles briefly with the participants. What do they of these principles? Which ones seems very logic or easy? Which ones more challenging?

Explain that to get from the vision to an action plan, it is necessary to go through five steps. Share the steps, write them steps on cards or chart to keep it visual throughout the session.

Step 1: **Clarify** the vision components

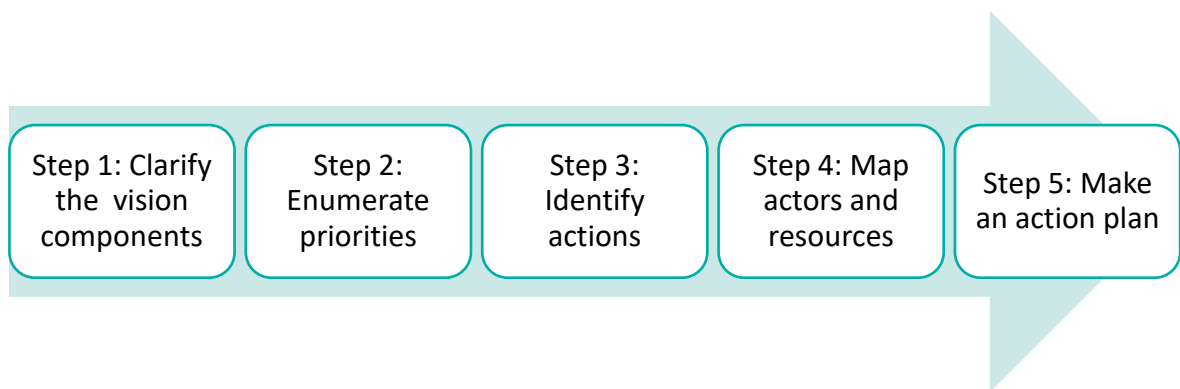
Step 2: **Enumerate** priorities

Step 3: **Identify** actions

Step 4: **Map** actors and resources

Step 5: **Make** the action plan

Tell participants that we will now go through each of these steps.



4.4.2 Step 1: Clarify the vision components.

Using the result of the previous step (the elements of the vision) let participants discuss the components either in plenary or small groups to get a very clear picture of the situation. Ask them the following questions (write on cards or chart):



- Why is this component important to our village/community?
- How many people in our village/community are affected by the current situation?
- How many of them are women and men? How many are girls and boys?

4.4.3 Step 2: Enumerate priorities.

Based on step 1, ask participants if there is a component of the vision that they perceive to be the most urgent. It is important to ask this because it is often not possible to work on all of the components of the vision at once (see reminder below). Therefore, it helps to see which component is of the highest priority and start to focus on this one first. How can you establish the priorities? There are different options:



1. Do a plenary and ask the following questions:
 - A. Is it more important to have a functional school or the health of our women?
 - B. Which is more urgent? What are the consequences of not having...?
 - C. Or: what is the easiest for us to work on?
 - D. Then, work with the participants to make a list of what people define as priorities.
2. You can also let people vote, using stickers, post-its, stones, voices, or positioning.

Reminder for the facilitator.

Kindly note that in your context analysis (see 3.2.1) you have normally verified what is already been done and which structures exist in the community. If there is yet some form of organisation with existing structures that work well and you have these structures represented in your group of participants, then it might be possible to work on several or all of the components of the vision in the workshop and undertake the action planning for each component. We continue the following steps in this session working on one component of the vision only. If you pursue working in groups, explain every step in plenary, give an example, and let them work in their groups. Always guide groups if necessary, so walk around, give them all the materials, verify understanding and assist them where necessary.



Components of our (vision)	Priority
<u>Education</u> A functional school where all children go to school.	
<u>Health</u> A functional health centre where women can deliver their babies in a health centre in the community.	
<u>Food security</u> Abundant crops so that people have enough food.	
<u>Income</u> Women earn money, and have paid jobs. Now families have enough income to cover their basic needs.	
<u>Water and sanitation</u> People have access to clean drinking water. Women can fetch it water nearby.	

You also undertake an analysis with the participants on the question: **what is missing?** Why is there the lack of a school? Why do we not have a health centre? Usually, people blame others for that. However, let us see what we can do ourselves! Let us answer the question: what is missing that prevents us from having these elements? Land? Materials? Who could provide them? Who do we need to work with to get these things? This is what we will do in the following steps.

4.4.4 Step 3: Identify actions.

Ask the question: can we achieve our vision immediately? Explain that it takes time to achieve this: just like building a house, to achieve a vision you take step-by-step action. We have to look at what needs to be done first, and then what next in small steps until you reach the vision. Therefore, for each element in the vision, or the one that we now have selected as a priority, we can identify the small steps needed to achieve the vision. It is important to really make the steps small, that we look at the low hanging fruit and avoid big steps that will block us to move forward.



If we take education as an example, our vision is to have a functional school where all children can attend. Let us put this on top of a chart. What actions are necessary to achieve this? Ask people to state the actions, verify whether they are clear to all and write them on the chart (or ask someone else to do this). When they are finished, ask them to put them in a logical order.

Education: a functional primary school where all children go to school.

Action identification

Actions:

1. Find a terrain
2. Clear the terrain
3. Make a building plan
4. Gather the materials
5. Build the school
6. Select teachers
7. Pay for children's school fees
8. Pay the teachers

(Nb: maybe other small actions could be added, this is not an exhaustive example).

Explain that the group needs to do this brainstorming on actions for all components of our vision. It is possible to do this in plenary with the participants or let them work in groups and then present it to others. Depending on the group size, you can do a plenary presentation, a merry-go-round or poster presentation where one representative of each group stays with their poster and other group members visit other groups to look at the poster and listen to the explanation. When the presentations are finished, take a moment to debrief. How did this go? Did they come up with actions? Are they ready for the next step? Give yourselves a big applause!

4.4.5 Step 4: Map actors and resources.



It is now important to decide who has to do these activities to achieve the vision and with which resources. We already identified what we can do ourselves, collectively and with others in a coordinated way (see the table elaborated during the commitment part (see 4.3.3). Thus, we start by looking at what we can do ourselves, **individually** and with our families. Then there are actions that we can undertake **collectively** as a group or team. Do you know examples of groups working together to achieve change in your community? Ask for a few examples. Once you have a group, you may find that you have enough voice and power to enter a partnership with others such as government officers, banks, and even international organisations (see the example of the Ghanaian community who built a water pump with a partnership in chapter 1). We call these coordinates. Now let us complete the previous table with information on actors and resources (see example next page) by answering the following questions (ask them one by one, not all at once):

1. Which actions require individual, collective and coordinated efforts? Start by writing individual names in the 'me' column.
2. Which groups are our village/community/organisation interested in and could support in different actions? Let us list them, as well as paying specific attention to women. Are there local NGOs or other actors who are involved in this work? Then have a look at which group could be involved in which action and list their names in the 'collective' column.
3. Who else do you need to work with to make this vision a reality? Are there actions that need coordinates to be involved? List their names in the 'coordinates' column.
4. What resources do you have that you can put to use for a better future?
5. What other resources are available in your village/community (land, building experts, building material)? Who can provide these? Write their names in the table.
6. What other information can you get from the key actors involved in this issue (contacts with organisations, diaspora)?

Education: a functional primary school where all children go to school.

Actor and resource mapping

Actions	Me	Collective	Coordinates
1. Find a terrain			
2. Clear the terrain			
3. Make a building plan			
4. Gather the materials			
5. Build the school			
6. Select teachers			
7. Pay children's school fees			
8. Pay the teachers			

This is a very important step. Let us celebrate this achievement!

4.4.6 Step 5: action plan.

Encourage participants: we are almost there! What is still missing to make our action plan? We need to decide the when, who and how. In other words what is our time frame, who are responsible persons for the actions and which approach will we use for the action.



Education: a functional primary school where all children go to school.

Action plan

Actions (What)	Start date (By when)	End date	Responsible (Who)	Resources (With what)	Approach (How)
1. Find a terrain					
2. Clear the terrain					
3. Make a building plan					
4. Gather the materials					
5. Build the school					
6. Select teachers					
7. Pay children's school fees					
8. Pay the teachers					

Based on this action plan, an activity budget is needed to guide the group to implement their planned or initiated project. You can decide to work on this in the current workshop which will take quite some time (which we did not include in the timetable). Therefore, we suggest to select a small group who will work on the activity budget and who will then share it with the group at another moment in the very near future, shortly after the workshop. The activity budget should take into account the following:

- Total quantities of material resources required and their estimated cost;
- Human resource requirements – skilled and unskilled labour – man hours or contracts and expected cost;
- Provision of contingencies to meet high inflation (like 10% or 20% of total cost).

Education: a functional primary school where all children go to school.

Activity budget

Action	Resource(s) required	Quantity	Man hours	Unit cost	Total cost
1. Find a terrain					
2. Clear the terrain					
3. Make a building plan					
4. Gather the materials					
5. Build the school					
6. Select teachers					
7. Pay children's school fees					
8. Pay the teachers					

Tell participants very enthusiastically that they have finished the most important steps! We started with our vision and look what we now have! Recall the action motivational messages and the principles of action. Now we really can celebrate. Put on some music, or initiate a dance, making sure that people really celebrate their action plan!

4.5 Session 5: Follow-up and conclusion of the workshop.



4.5.1 Follow-up.

We are now at the final part of our workshop! And it is important to take a bit of time to decide on how to follow-up what we achieved and finalize the workshop in a celebrative mood. Let us look into the follow-up first.



Having developed the action plan to achieve the vision, how do we move forward? Undertake a discussion with participants:

1. When will we meet again? Where? How often?
2. Who will coordinate action?
3. Will we make a committee? Who will be in this committee? Will members be elected?
4. Do we need any support? From whom?

Make sure you or anyone else in the group captures the conclusions on a chart and include this in the workshop report!

4.5.2 Recapitulating our journey.

Say congratulations to everyone! We have travelled quite a journey together. Now it is time to celebrate our achievement and look into the follow-up of this workshop. Let us first shortly debrief (recapitulate) about what we've achieved! Let us take a look at our landscape/roadmap again. Where did we start? Take the participants through the landscape and ask them what they recall about each part. You can also ask them in which part of the journey they felt most excited. They can place a sticker or draw a symbol on the landscape. Another option is to ask the participants to make a mind map of all of the elements of the workshop (then give them a little more time). Conclude by encouraging participants again with the journey that they have started here! New leaders have been born, a vision has been developed, we have committed ourselves to change and we have established a concrete action plan (with a budget or not yet).



4.5.3 Verifying workshop objectives and participants' expectations.

Ask participants to look back at the four objectives of the workshop as well as their own expectations. Ask them if the objectives have been met. You can do this in different ways either in plenary or in pairs.



- Use stickers: give four stickers, if an objective has been achieved, they place one sticker, and if not, no sticker. If it has been partly achieved, they use half a sticker.
- Use markers: if an objective has been achieved, put a dot, a 'v', tick.
- Make some noise for each objective achieved.
- For their own expectations, they can take their expectation and place it on a continuum from 0-100. If their expectation was met 100%, they place it at the very end, and if it was achieved for 50%, they place it in the middle. Ask for a few opinions.

Ideas for personal action plan development.



Option 1: Ask participants to look into their workbook. Maybe they completed the learning for every day, maybe they did not. Now you want them to think about their personal action plan, looking at the space at the bottom in their workbook. Ask them: what are they going to do differently after the workshop? Let them take a few moments to complete it in writing. After a few minutes, ask them to share their action plan with their neighbour. Give them 3 minutes to do this. When the time is up, ask for their attention and invite some people to share their personal actions. Capture this with keywords on the chart.

Option 2: Ask in plenary what was the main insight or lesson people will take away from the workshop. Then ask them to reflect about their personal action points (one or two): what will they do differently after the workshop? They can either discuss this with their neighbour or you can ask them to share this in plenary. Capture this with keywords on the chart.

4.5.4 Personal learning and action plan.



Tell participants that VCA is a continuous process for people to take initiatives which can take years. And that they have now done a first huge important step which they can repeat every year or at different moments in time. Now you would like to know what participants are taking away from the workshop and their personal actions, because real change happens in real life! You can let participants develop their action plan in several ways based on their workbook (see Annex 6).

- They can work on it individually first and then share in couples or small groups.
- You could introduce the buddy system whereby people in duo's support each other after the workshop. If you think this could be helpful for the group, let them go to someone they want to work with and share their action plans between them.
- Let them write their action plan in key words on a card

Then ask who wants to share in plenary, in a quick and active way. Celebrate their action plans by applauding each and every one of them, reinforcing their commitment to change and the fact that they are leaders! Refer to their symbol of commitment made earlier in the workshop. Let them take it with them!

4.5.5 Evaluation.




We suggest that you carry out short evaluations throughout the workshop to measure people's appreciation and to be able to adjust things along the way. At the end of the workshop, you want to do an evaluation of the whole workshop as well. We give you a few ideas for evaluations during the workshop and at the end in the box below.



Ideas for workshop evaluation methods.

- **Draw feeling:** Ask participants to draw how they feel about the day. Invite a few people to share.
- **Statue feeling:** Ask participants to show with their body how they feel about the day. Invite a few people to share.
- **Images:** Maybe you have a stack of image cards, whereby each person can take one card that represents how they feel about the workshop. Let them show their card and share their feeling.
- **Chair:** Place a chair in the middle, and ask people to position themselves, whereby the distance with the chair shows their level of satisfaction with the session/day/workshop. The closer they are, the more happy! Invite a few people to share.
- **Use coloured cartons:** Green for happy, orange for not so happy. Ask people how they feel about the session/day/workshop. Invite a few people to share.
- **Ball:** Throw a ball (a real or imaginary one, or a ball of wool). Ask people to share their appreciation of the day. They can state one word or sentence then throw the ball to another person.
- **Backpack:** Ask the participants to stick a regular-sized piece of paper on their back. They could use each other's help in sticking the paper. The participants have to write on each other's papers something that one has observed or felt about the specific person and they could choose to write their names. Encourage the participants to write positive things about each other. When everyone has finished writing, ask them to return to the circle and ask everyone to read their paper aloud to the group.
- **Faces:** Draw a table like the one shown. At the end of the session/day/workshop, people can choose the face corresponding to their appreciation. You can change questions, and add one or two more, but not too many 😊.



How do you appreciate:			
the content of the workshop			
the facilitation of the workshop			
your own participation			
Logistics			

At the end of the workshop, you really want to capture the appreciation of the participants. You want to know what they think about the content, the facilitation, their own participation and logistics, what they liked and what could be improved, not only for yourself, but also for monitoring purposes. Therefore, you can ask people to complete a form asking for their opinion. If people cannot read and write, find another way to capture their opinion on paper. An example of a simple evaluation form can be found in annex 5.

4.5.6 Celebration.

Begin by stating that this is the final session of the workshop, and that you are so honored to have worked with them, an amazing group of people. Take some time to share a few words on the following (decide what is applicable, you do not have to do all!):



- Acknowledge the training team's learning during the workshop.
- Acknowledge the support of the village chief (perhaps it is protocol is that he/she also says a few words here).
- Acknowledge each member of the workshop team, including invisible support staff.
- Acknowledge each participant by giving each of them a certificate (and a group picture) or let them give them to each other. You can also share words of praise or let them do this between themselves: 'I think you are an amazing leader because....'. Make sure you thank them all in person.
- End with an appropriate song, group picture, dance.
- Distribute sweets to mark the successful completion of the workshop.

Reminder for the facilitator.

Kindly note that this session sometimes takes a bit longer, it all depends on the size of your group, which is of course true for all the workshop sessions. The timing giving is an indication and you can adapt it and use it in a flexible way. However we strongly urge you not to rush through this session or skip it. It is key for the sustainability of the workshop results to end it in a proper and positive way!



Picture: Senegal - credits Johannes Odé



Chapter 4 summarized.

This chapter has taken you through a typical VCA workshop with five sessions, each of which starts with a brief overview of the objectives, topics and flow, key message, and duration, followed by step-by-step ideas about how you can take your participants through the session. Since this is not a blueprint that fits all situations, we highly recommend that you adapt our suggestions to your specific context.

Session 1: Introduction and welcome.

This is where you set the tone for the whole workshop. Your attitude has to be constructive and open, and the methods that you use should stimulate participation and interaction. You start with a presentation of yourself, the organization and the participants. After this warming up, you continue by identifying expectations, compare them with the objectives of the workshop and link them to the program of the workshop. You then set rules and roles together and confirm logistics.

Key message: you are all welcome and we are all at the same level.

Take aways:

- *Participants people feel welcome*
- *Participants are at ease with the tone of the workshop and*
- *Participants feel safe to share and learn*

Session 2: Leadership and mindset.

This is where you introduce the concepts of leadership and mindset that are key for achieving change. Let the participants reflect on leadership examples from their own environment and identify characteristics of leaders that they also possess. From there, you can take them through looking at the difference between a limited and a leadership mindset. You then take them through identifying resistance to change and how to address this resistance. Again, you are constructive and use interactive methods to enhance participation. At the end of the session, you want them to walk away with the feeling that they are all leaders and that a leadership mindset is the key to change.

Key message: we are all leaders. To achieve change we need to overcome our obstacles and create a leadership mindset. Take aways:

- *Participants can explain the notion of leadership*
- *Participants can explain the difference between a limited and a leadership mindset*
- *Participants have identified resistance to change and how to address this*

Session 3: Vision making and commitment.

This is where you start by guiding participants towards their own desired realizable future. First you discuss with them what a vision is and why it is important. Then they make their own vision using methods that suit their level. Once their vision is made, you analyze it with them, looking into the different elements of the vision and compare the desired situation to the actual situation. This helps them to realize even more why they want to achieve change. The final part of the session is all about commitment to their vision. Take them through a participatory process of creating a song, or finding a symbol to confirm their commitment to make their vision reality themselves, instead of waiting for someone else to do so. At the end of this session, you want them to walk away with their own vision for a better future and the commitment to achieve it!

Key message: we can all create our vision for a better future and are responsible ourselves to achieve this vision.

Take aways:

- *Participants can explain what a vision entails*
- *Participants understand that they can change conditions towards self-sufficiency and sustainability*
- *Participants developed a vision of a future to take them to a new level in the quality of their lives*
- *Participants committed themselves to achieve the vision*

Session 4: Action planning to achieve your vision.

Here you take participants by the hand to come up with a clear action plan to achieve their vision. Explain what an action plan is, and why it is necessary, the seven key principles and the five steps of an action plan. You then take them through these steps. In the *first* step, participants clarify the different vision components to understand again the necessity and the intended community actors in the vision. In the *second* step, you guide participants to enumerate priorities based on their vision. Maybe they want a school, a water well, a health clinic or something else. Discuss with them what should come first. Together you can look at what is missing to identify concrete actions to undertake for each priority area, starting with the first priority. When this third step is finished, it is necessary to identify resources and actors for the actions. Ask them what they can do and offer individually, as a group and in partnership with others. The *fifth* and final step in this session is the action plan: for each action, a responsible person or group is identified, as well as the timing. By the end of this session, you want your participants to know exactly what an action plan is and how to make it. They walk away with their own action plan and commitment for their part in the plan and the realization of the vision. They should now be convinced that step by step they can make our vision become reality!

Key message step by step we can make our vision become reality.

Take aways:

- *Participants can explain the different steps to make an action plan*
- *Participants have developed a clear action plan and budget*
- *Participants are committed to their part of the plan*

Session 5: Follow-up and conclusion of the workshop.

Now it is time to finalize the workshop which is crucial for the success and sustainability of the workshop results. Together with participants, you look back and celebrate everything that they have done! Verify with them whether their expectations and intentions have been materialized and if the workshop objectives have been achieved. Give the participants time to look into their main lessons learned, their personal and collective actions that they will apply after the workshop. You can let them share this and again celebrate their personal and collective achievements! A final part is to evaluate the workshop: what did they like and what could be improved? We gave different ideas on how to do this. And then: celebrate the end of the workshop! Maybe you can give them a certificate, do a collective dance, or sing a group song. Make it fun and participatory so that people walk away with a very happy feeling, convinced that they can achieve their vision of the future and celebrate each step along the way!

Key message: yes we can achieve our vision and celebrate each step on the way.

Take aways:

- *Participants have a clear plan for follow-up and have their personal action plan.*
- *Participants have evaluated to workshop and have confidence in themselves*
- *Participants leave the workshop excited!*



5 Inspiration: best practices.

5.1 Tips for visualisation.

When I listen, I remember 20%

When I see, I remember 60%

When I do, I remember 80%

Instead of using mainly your voice and gestures, it is highly recommended to also visualise what comes out of the group discussions. If you visualise every step in the workshop, the process remains visible throughout the workshop and the results are clear. Depending on the level of your participants, you can use keywords, icons, images and drawings. Did you know that two out of every three persons learn through images and drawings? People remember faces, landscapes and villages more easily because it helps them to paint a picture in their head. Thus, you can help your participants to remember content better by using keywords, icons, images, and drawings to illustrate key messages or certain highlights of a session.

- Use post-its or cards where people can write on.
- Let people draw themselves their vision or action plan or other details to stimulate their creativity.
- You can prepare specific visual elements that you want to use before the workshop:
 - Write/draw a poster with the objectives (session 1).
 - Find and print images of heroes or leaders who could serve as examples (session 2).
 - Draw the principles to make action sustainable (session 5).



Flipcharts, posters, or large pieces of paper are ideal for writing down key points of a session or summarising content. In annex 4, you can find a checklist with tips and steps on how to make flipcharts or posters attractive. The examples show how a simple arrow or container can already help in explaining the structure or key points. Spend some time trying out, also if you think you cannot draw. Figure out what is the core of what you want to convey and visualise it using the steps in the annex. You can prepare it on A4 paper before placing it on a chart.

When you facilitate the workshop online, you can use PowerPoint to present content and visuals as well as other tools for group work. If you use PowerPoint, here are some tips:

- **K.I.S.S.:** Keep it short and simple, by using keywords, icons and images and explaining yourself briefly. The Noun Project offers you 3 million icons for free.
- **K.I.L.L.:** keep it large and legible. Again, use keywords and a readable font size (if you use PowerPoint font size 24 in general is good). Make a simple and nice format. For example, you could use Canva, an online tool that helps you to design in a visually very attractive way, or simply the software of your computer.

5.2 Workshop method examples.

During the workshop, you can choose different methods to convey your message and achieve results together with participants. Below is a suggestion of methods that you can use. Since there are so many methods to choose from, this list is far from extensive, although it gives you some ideas to make your workshop interactive and keep your group interested in every session.

Think – pair – share	Each person considers the topic/question and writes down some ideas/answers. He/she joins with one other participant for discussion. This provides a good basis for wider discussion and allows the shy ones to participate easily.
'Buzz' groups	Working in small groups, people discuss an issue for a brief moment.
Round	Every person takes a turn to make a statement. Useful topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One thing I need to know about ... • Something that I learned today • One important point (about the topic) ...
Hero	A person comes to share his/her achievement, having experience with turning a vision into a certain action. Groups discuss the story or ask questions to the 'hero'.
Field visit/village walk	It can also be nice to visit a hero, or take a walk through the village/community for the visioning session.
Group discussion/work	Groups (up to six people) talk about a topic or work on an assignment. A set of questions from the facilitator helps to structure the discussion and focus the group. The larger the group, the more difficult it is for everyone to participate actively. You can think of distributing roles in the group to help equal participation. Keep an eye on people who tend to dominate discussions.
Continuum	Everyone cooperates to form a line according to the question, like their ages, the number of times they have attended a workshop, how much they agree with a statement. It makes people move physically.
'Tell your partner'	In pairs, each person explains a topic/concept/ answer to someone else, like equality or leadership. The partner has to listen, then ask questions.
Role play	Groups/pairs/individuals 'act out' information on a specific topic, often in front of the group. For instance, someone can act as if he/she is living their envisioned life. If they lack confidence, they can work in pairs without 'performing' in front of the whole group. Set a time limit for each group. It is important to allow time for participants to de-role/debrief.

Brainstorming	Everyone thinks of as many different ideas as possible. All ideas are accepted and recorded without comment. The ideas are evaluated after a set time period or when inspiration ends. This can be done when the action plan is formed and it is not clear yet which steps are needed to take.
Matching	This activity is one way to divide a large group into pairs. Members of the group are given cards, which contain pictures of leaders or names of leaders. They must find the person who has the right name that corresponds with the picture. In finding their partners, they come across a range of leaders and have to think about who they are. This activity can only be done with small groups. Reporting back about who the leader is and what the pair knows about this person widens the learning.
Mind maps	A topic is written or drawn on large papers. The group suggests and organises ideas, presenting them visually, often in clusters. When numbers are large, this activity is better carried out in groups with a display of the results at the end.
Energisers	These are always good to use in between sessions, or at any moment when energy is low. See chapter 5.3 for ideas and ask participants to come up with ideas. For example, change your way of applauding every time, make it really energetic, create songs, tell jokes (make sure these respect all people present and their families).

5.3 Resources and links.

Below we provide some links to sources of information for energisers, visualisation and online workshop tools. The list is not extensive, so feel free to add your own.

Energisers:

- [Session Lab](#): large group icebreakers, games and energisers.
- [HIV/Aids Alliance: 100 ways to energise](#) (downloadable pdf). [French version](#), Spanish version.

Visualisation:

- [Canva](#): a free, graphic design platform with templates to make attractive presentations, posters and documents.
- [The Noun project](#): 3 million icons for free in black and white. First register for free, then enter a word such as 'ball', 'partnership' or 'mindset' and options will be shown for you to choose the that icon you want. Click on 'basic download' and continue, then click again on basic download and choose PNG at the bottom of the page. Of course, you can also be inspired about how to draw based on the icon as an example.
- [Genially](#): helps with creating presentations, infographics, and interactive images.

Online workshop tools:

- [Mural](#): white wall with many options like organising information and enabling groups to work with lists, flowcharts, diagrams, frameworks, methods and drawings, post-its in different sizes, colours and formats. You can also import slides, pictures, documents.
- [Jamboard google](#): white board with post-its in different sizes, colours and formats, options to write, draw and indicate.
- [Padlet](#): a free online tool that is best described as an online notice board.
- [Mentimeter](#): great for quizzes and word clouds.
- [Kahoot](#): a game-based learning platform.
- [Quizizz](#): free quizzes that can be used in group format and self-paced.
- [Genially](#): helps in creating games.

For many of the tools suggested, you have to create an account, which always has free options. Enjoy experimenting!



Chapter 5 summarized.

In this chapter we give you some best practices and tips for visualization and interactive methods and provide you with resources and links. Visualization is key in any workshop, because people remember much more when they can see the process and the result of the workshop. Think about flipcharts and big posters with drawings, pictures, symbols, cards that you can print or make yourself. Also make participants visualize their group or individual work. In Annex 4 we give you step by step tips to make your own visuals. Throughout the manual we give you suggestions for methods and in this chapter, we provide you with an overview of additional methods you could use. We describe how and when you can use it to make your workshop interactive and therefore make the results stick. Try out new methods to enlarge your method toolbox! And maybe you have new ones you can add to the list. Finally, you can find resources and links for energizers, visualization aids, and online workshop tools in case you facilitate online workshop. There is much to choose from and enough opportunities for visual, interactive and fun VCA workshops!

ANNEXES.



Annex 1 VCA workshop agenda examples.

Below is a suggested agenda that can be followed while conducting a VCA workshop. It is based on the timings in this manual and can be adopted to your particular workshop!

Session	Topic	Duration
1.	Introduction and welcome	1 ½ hours
2.	Leadership and mindset	5 hours
3.	Vision-making and commitment	5 hours
4.	Action to make the vision a reality	6 hours
5.	Completion of the workshop	3 hours

Depending on the needs and level of the group, the sessions can be elongated or shortened. Always include breaks in the sessions for coffee and lunch during normal lunch time. You can make a detailed agenda including the breaks, starting time and finishing time, the name and contact of the facilitator and the workshop location. You could decide to distribute this agenda to participants before or during the workshop. You could also decide to leave out the exact timing if you want to be very flexible. Depending on the time schedule and other activities that participants have, the workshop can be spread out over several days. See an example below and adapt the agenda according to your circumstances. You could start a topic one day and continue with it the following day.

DAY	SESSION AND TOPIC	DURATION
Day I	Introduction and welcome	1 ½ hours
	Leadership and mindset	5 hours
Day II	Vision-making and commitment	5 hours
Day III	Action to make the vision a reality	6 hours
Day IV	Completion of the workshop	3 hours

Annex 2 One-pager for VCA workshop facilitators.



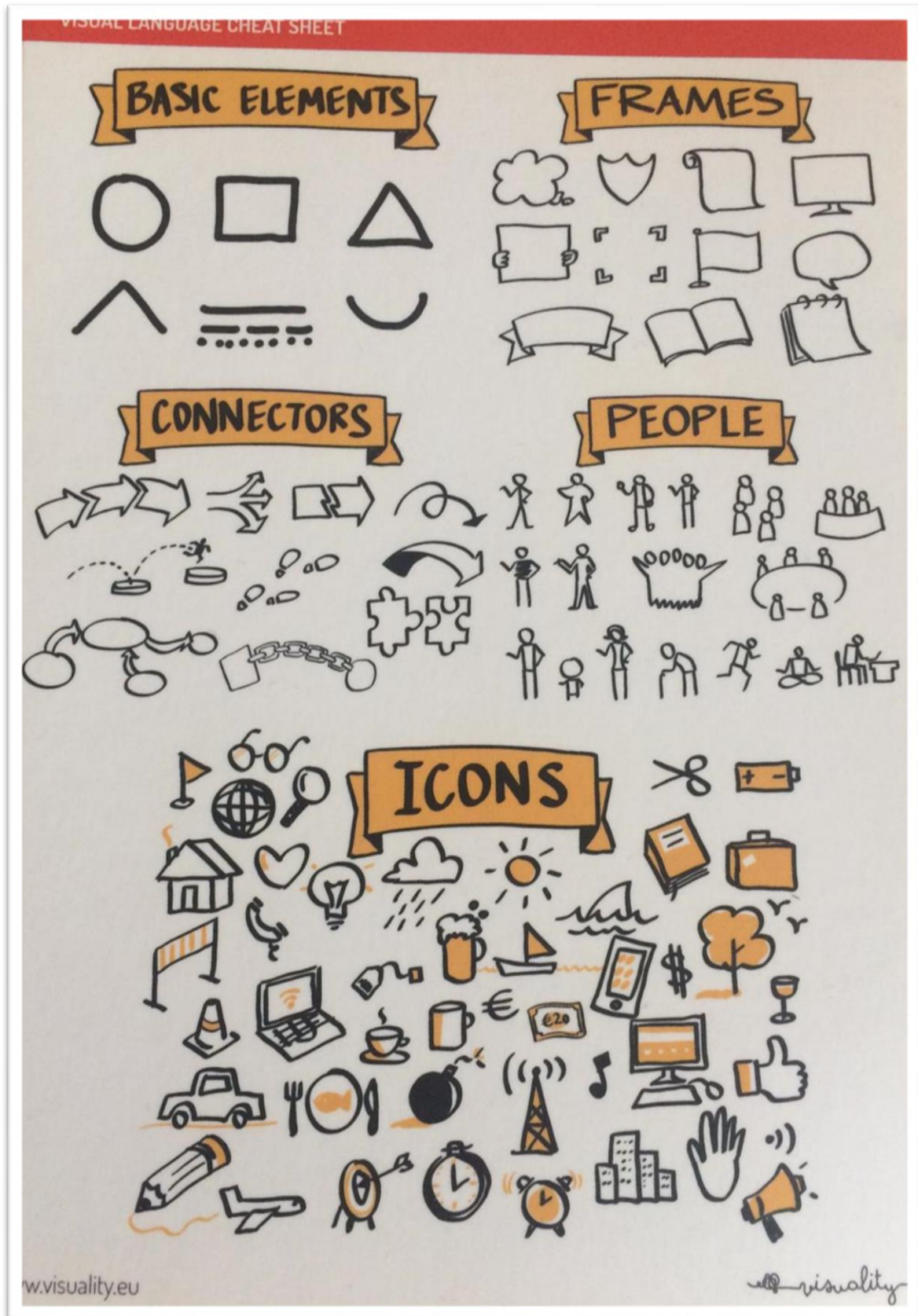
Annex 3 Workshop material checklist.

This list has suggestions and all items are not compulsory. Choose the ones that are essential for your workshop context and check off the checklist so that nothing is forgotten!

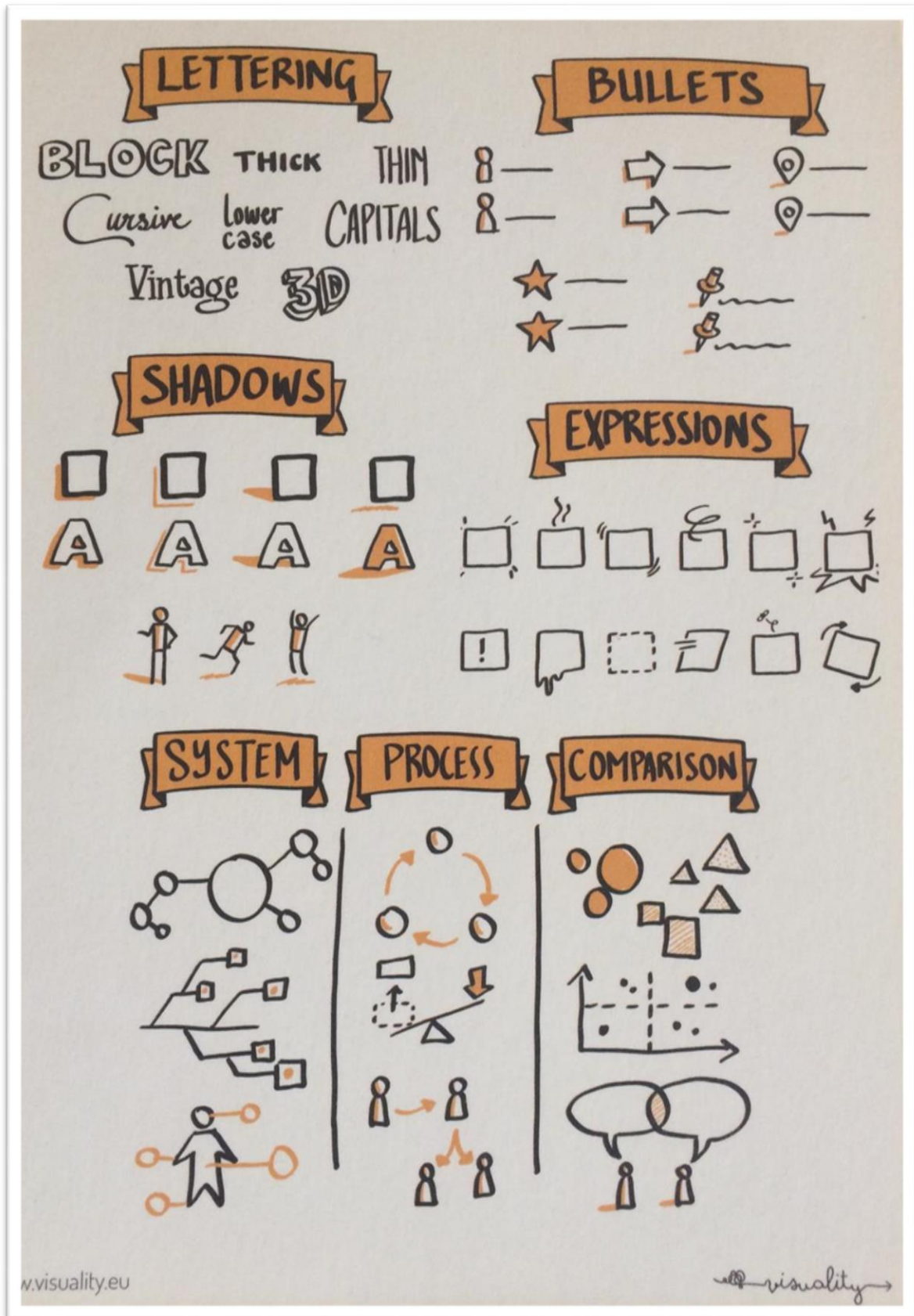
Flip chart paper	Markers in different colours (black, green, blue, red)	Stapler and staples
Flip chart stand	Tape/scotch	Name tags for participants (you can also use scotch or stickers)
Brown paper	Sticky gum	Banner of organisation/workshop
Post-its in different sizes and colours	Pens and pencils	Laptop and screen in case you want to present and all cables for power supply
Cards in different sizes and colours	Scissors	Printer in case you want to print (handouts, group picture, action plan.) and all cables for power supply
Posters	Audio device to play music or musical instruments	Healthy food and snacks (i.e. pure chocolate, nuts, dried fruit or sweets for the happy energy)
Handouts	Case studies of heroes	Water
Ball (or make one with paper)	Other funny attributes like hats, dolls that you can use	Wool, cord or string
Stickers in different colours and forms	Empty A4 paper for your own and participants use	Kits for participants: Bag, pen(cil), note pad, sweets, water, folder for documents
Certificate for participants	Picture paper for group picture print	
Space for other materials you need to take:		

Annex 4 Visualisation steps.

Prepare	
1. Choose a subject	Write the title on top of your flipchart or keep space for it
2. Brainstorm keywords (write them on large post-its to help you)	Less is more
3. Choose a pattern/ structure	Order your notes Keep white space
4. Check which keywords you can draw	Keep it simple. Use... ...your imagination ...cards and booklets ...Google (icon, vector, the Noun Project)
Draw	
1. Write mainly with black	Meaning and use of colours: Black: neutral, night, text, containers, lines, shadow (grey is also very useful for shadows) Blue: cool, soft, water, air, clouds, process, businesses, healing, assertive, text, containers Green: friendliness, nature, growth, development, flora, soft letters, nature, landscapes Brown: earth, nature, animals, landscapes, letters, containers Red: danger, anger, love, blood, passion, highlight, underline, titles Orange: friendliness, energy, light, summer, autumn, fun, starts, bullets, underline Purple: combines cool blue and red passion, spirituality, important labels, headings, bullets Yellow: light, sun, intellect, only use to highlight
2. Use colour to highlight	
3. Insert other elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persons (i.e. potato people) ● Speech/think bubbles ● Containers (to give extra meaning to text) ● Arrows (to indicate flow, process, direction, point, link) ● Bullet points
4. Finalise your drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Put a frame around it ● Sign the flipchart
Tips:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practice! ● Draw first on A4



The visual language cheat sheet of [Visuality](http://www.visuality.eu)



Annex 5 Evaluation format.

<p>VCA workshop Place: Date: Name of the facilitator(s): Please write your comments below to assist us in finding out how useful the workshop has been, and how we can help you to bring your community/team forward. You do not have to fill in your name, it is anonymous.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>			
1. What did you find most useful about the workshop? Why?			
2. What did you find least useful about the workshop? Why?			
3. How did you appreciate the...	Not so good	Good	Excellent
a) content			
b) methodology			
c) facilitators and resource persons			
d) Please provide comments about your appreciation:			
4. What have you learned in the workshop?			
5. How do you plan to apply this in your daily life?			
6. How would you like to see this being taken forward?			
Any other comments?			

If required, please add extra sheet.

Annex 6 Participant workbook.

Complete this workbook for yourself so that you capture your most important learnings on each session. This helps you to make your own action plan by the end of the workshop. The workbook is not a test, you do not give it to the facilitator, it is for you!

Name:	My takeaways
Session 1: Introduction & welcome	
Session 2: Leadership & mindset	
Session 3: Vision-making & commitment	
Session 4: Actions to make vision a reality	
Session 5: Completion	
My action plan	I commit myself to:

