



A 'Mi Parque' beneficiary takes part in a community workshop in Chile.

HANDBOOK 1

MODULE 2

Tools for Effective Project Planning in Community Development



Download Resources

As you complete this module, refer to '**Resource 2 - Checklist for Situational Analysis**', '**Resource 3 - SWOT Analysis**', '**Resource 4 - 5C Analysis**' and '**Resource 5 - Scope Analysis**' which can be found as downloads alongside this module on our website. Use these resources as templates when you are planning your own project.

Situational Analysis

In this module we explore the first step of the project planning process, a Situational Analysis. This process serves to identify the context of your work, the broad project goals and the important relationships you need to be aware of. In order to be strategic, efficient and effective, it is essential to undertake a thorough and structured process of analysis.

Taking the time to understand your context will help strengthen every future step of your project planning and design. A thorough situational analysis also ensures that your project team shares a common understanding of the over-arching goals of your project, essential to staying on track.

What is a Situational Analysis?

A Situational Analysis is a 5-step process that progressively focusses your understanding of the community in relation to the local problem you are choosing to address. This allows you to assess the broad societal context of your community, and then apply this to your organisation’s project.



Understanding the general context of your community

Understanding the context means understanding the current circumstances within which your organisation is working, or is seeking to work in. Whilst you might already have an idea of the type of project you want to run or the type of problem you want to solve, it’s best to start with a general analysis of your context. Consider the questions on the following pages as a guide – you may need to modify them for your specific community.



Helpful Hint

Whilst being as accurate as possible when answering these questions is helpful, at this stage, estimations will often suffice.

Population Profile	How many people are in the community?	
	What is the age distribution of these people?	0-5yrs = % 6-15yrs = % 15-60yrs = % Over 60yrs = %
	What is the (estimated) percentage of men and women?	Males = % Females = %
	What ethnic groups are represented in the community? What is their distribution (as an estimated percentage)? Do people in the community tend to separate based upon ethnicity, or do they assimilate well?	X = % Y = % Z = %
	What languages do people in your community speak? What is their distribution (as an estimated percentage)? Generally, how well can people from different language groups communicate together? Is there a predominant shared language?	X = % Y = % Z = %

Education Profile	What are the literacy rates of your community?	
	What percentage of community members graduate primary school?	= %
	What percentage of community members graduate secondary school?	= %
	What percentage of community members graduate university?	= %
	What percentage of community members have skilled employment?	= %

Economic Profile	What percentage of the population have access to housing?	= %
	What percentage of the population have stable access to food?	= %
	What kind of jobs do people have in your community? For example: Manufacturing, agriculture, hospitality etc.	
	What are the key areas of economic growth in your community?	

Environmental Profile	What type of environment is your community located in? For example: Tropical, dry, jungle, city etc.
	How big is the geographical area covered by your community?
	How easy is it to access different areas of your community?
	How far away is the closest hospital/secondary school/major metropolitan area? How easy are they to travel to?

Political Profile	What are the current major political issues?
	What are the political priorities of the current government?
	How is the government viewed within the community?
	How well do local government representatives function and work together with national government, law enforcement and other public departments?

Cultural Profile	What are the major cultural values of the community?
	Are there any major cultural conflicts between different sectors of the community?
	Are there distinct gender roles within your community? Do cultural norms marginalise women from certain jobs and activities?

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Identifying the challenges within the community

Now that you have a broad understanding of what your community looks like, it's time to identify the major challenges that community members are facing. At this stage, it is helpful to consult the local community either through workshops, surveys or interviews to ensure that you have accounted for problems from their perspective (see our **Participatory Development Course** for guides about how to run these workshops). Throughout this process, it is also really important that you don't engage tunnel vision – don't only look through the lens of your organisation when identifying problems. For example, if you are a healthcare organisation, don't simply look at healthcare problems. Try to think laterally and holistically.

Try to be as broad as possible when identifying challenges. At this stage, your aim is to identify the over-arching problems your community faces, rather than detailed and specific challenges.

When identifying the major challenges within your community, asking the following questions is helpful:

- How severe is it?
- What are some of the broad causes?
- What are the broad groups of people who are affected by this problem?



Example: Broad Challenges experienced by many communities

- Poor quality of education for local secondary students
- Domestic violence amongst young married women
- Lack of economic opportunity for unskilled rural workers

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Assessing your organisations capacity

Once you've identified the major challenges experienced within the community, it's time to assess the capacity of your organisation in order to identify the best opportunity for your organisation to help. This will assist you in maximising the efficacy of your organisation's work. This process can be challenging, but it's important to get this critical reflection out of the way right at the start of your project planning process. There is no point planning an amazing project, only to realise that you don't have the skills, knowledge or resources to execute it.

Staff: Qualifications and experiences

How many people work for your organisation?

What is the technical experience and qualification of each staff member?

Has your organisation undertaken any previous development projects?

- What type of projects were these?
- What types of specific interventions did you provide?

Relationships: Organisations, businesses and government bodies

Does your organisation have existing relationships with the community from previous projects? Which broad areas of the community do you have existing relationships with?

For example: children, women, farmers, manufacturers.

What external businesses, organisations or government bodies does your organisation have existing relationships with?

- Could you draw upon these relationships for certain types of projects?

Obstacles and insufficiencies

What are the major obstacles or insufficiencies of your organisation and your staff members?

The aim of this process is to identify the strengths (and weaknesses) of your organisation in order to choose the broad community challenge that your organisation is best suited to tackle. Using a SWOT-Analysis can be particularly helpful when completing this step (see page 15 for a detailed explanation of this tool).

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Choosing a broad project goal

Now that you have identified the major challenges in the community and the capacities of your organisation, it's time to choose the broad problem your organisation is best suited to address. Choose the broad project goal that allows you to maximise the strengths of your organisation and minimise its weaknesses. The key to choosing a project goal at this stage of your planning process is being broad, really broad. Some examples might include:



Examples: Broad Project Goals

- Improving education levels amongst youth within the community
- Improving the economic opportunities for women within the community
- Improving access to fresh water in the community
- Improving access to housing for homeless people in your community
- Decreasing maternal mortality in the community
- Decreasing rates of domestic violence within your community

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Reassessing the context relevant to your problem

Finally, now that you have identified the broad goal of your project, it's time to re-assess the context (or the situation) through the lens of this specific goal and problem. This final step is an opportunity for you to be more specific about the type of information you need to best understand your problem. We will use an example of a Domestic Violence project on the following page to demonstrate how to reassess the context of your project relevant to your specific goal and problem.



Download Resource

You can find a template for this tool in; '**Resource 2 - Checklist for Situational Analysis**' which can be found as a download alongside this module on our website. Use this resource as a guide when planning your own project.



Example: Reassessing Domestic Violence in the Community

In this example, you can see the specific questions that might help a community nonprofit reassess the local context relevant to their goal of preventing domestic violence. It is important that you create your own questions that are relevant to the broad project goal that your organisation has chosen in step 4. The examples here are only relevant to a domestic violence project.

When completing this step, try to draw upon any existing information from other NGOs or online government data banks to gain a more accurate understanding of your context. Now is the time to be more specific about the data you collect and the analysis you complete.

<p>REASSESSING CONTEXT</p> <p>Domestic Violence Within the Community</p>	<p>What is the estimated incidence of domestic violence in the community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any national, state or regional data available from exiting research?
	<p>Who are the people suffering from domestic violence in the community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender? • Age? • Ethnicity? • Education status?
	<p>Who are the perpetrators of domestic violence in the community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender? • Age? • Relationship with victim? • Status?
	<p>Where does domestic violence normally occur?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the family home, in public or in other geographical places?
	<p>How do people view domestic violence in the community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do people recognise it as a problem? • What are the cultural norms surrounding the topic of domestic violence? • What are the prevailing norms about masculinity? Specifically, within the family?
	<p>Are there any services currently offered to support people suffering domestic violence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These could be government initiatives or those provided by other NGOs
	<p>Are there any laws preventing domestic violence in the community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these laws enforced? • Whose responsibility is it to enforce these laws?
	<p>Are there any current political movements surrounding domestic violence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there groups currently lobbying for change? • Is there a current political debate surrounding domestic violence?
	<p>What are the major obstacles or challenges related to decreasing incidences of domestic violence in the community?</p>

Tools to assist you when undertaking a Situational Analysis

The questions you need to ask and the information you need to gather when completing a Situational Analysis are different for every context, problem and organisation. Unfortunately, there is no set framework to follow. One of the biggest problems organisations have when completing a Situational Analysis is coming up with the right questions to ask to help complete a thorough analysis.

To help with this, you can use one of the following tools to ensure that your analysis is thorough and complete.

SWOT Analysis

5C Analysis

SCOPE Analysis

These tools can be used interchangeably throughout every stage of your situational analysis. All three tools cover similar types of questions, but in different ways. As such, you don't necessarily need to use all three. It is best to choose one that you feel most comfortable with and use that one to assist your analysis. You can then take the information you generate by using these tools and input it into your broader Situational Analysis that we explored above.



Helpful Hint

A helpful exercise can be to get different members of your organisation to complete the same tool individually and then compare results as a group. This can raise some interesting questions and help ensure your Situational Analysis is thorough and takes different viewpoints into account.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Useful for:

Identifying the best type of project for your organisation by analysing your internal capacities (strengths and weaknesses) and your external environment (opportunities and threats). This tool is generally most useful for step-3 of your situational analysis.

How it works:

- Strengths - Internal aspects of your organisation that you believe are your advantages.
- Weaknesses - Internal aspects of your organisation that you believe require development.
- Opportunities - Factors external to your organisation that may contribute to your project's success or amplify your organisation's strengths.
- Threats - actors external to your organisation that may cause problems or present risks to your project.

The SWOT analysis is a two-step process:

1. Identify your organisation's internal strengths and weaknesses: Think about the people, experience, qualifications and resources your organisation has and how your organisation can most (or least) efficiently use them to support your community. Place these on the left-hand side of your analysis.
2. Identify the external opportunities and threats to the work of your organisation: Think about the relationships you have with other people or groups within the community, the political environment and factors you have little or no control over, like the natural environment, broader political narrative and robust cultural norms.

Results:

After completing your SWOT analysis, you should have a clearer understanding of how your organisation can best use the resources it has to maximise the benefits to local community-members. By reflecting upon your organisations capacity within your specific context, you can choose projects that have the best chance of success.



SWOT Analysis



Example: SWOT Analysis exploring the capacity of a Domestic Violence prevention organisation in Uruguay to run a series of social support workshops for women in a rural community.

STRENGTHS

- Our organisation has experience supporting victims of domestic violence
- We have already secured a long-term donor

OPPORTUNITIES

- Government grants currently available for Domestic Violence programs offering social support
- We have a strong relationship with another NGO that supports women in the community

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORG

WEAKNESSES

- We only have 3 staff members available for this project
- We have never worked in this community before
- We lack a formal guide for conducting workshops with local women

THREATS

- Males in this community may be suspicious of our intentions given this will be our first project in this region
- Existing gendered power dynamics in this community may limit our access to local women



Download Resource

You can find a template for this tool in; **'Resource 3 - SWOT Analysis'** which can be found as a download alongside this module on our website. Use this resource as a guide when planning your own community development project.

SWOT Analysis



Example: More uses for the SWOT Analysis

Whilst the SWOT Analysis is generally best used during step-3 of the Situational Analysis process when assessing your organisation’s capacity, it can also be used in step-5 to assess your chosen problem within your community’s context. Instead of putting your organisation in the middle, place ‘the community’ in the middle. This way, you can identify the communities strengths (things that your community already does well relating to the problem), its weaknesses (areas the community does poorly related to the problem), its opportunities (broader external opportunities like new laws that might help the community overcome the problem) and threats (broader external factors that could or are negatively impacting upon the problem like cultural assumptions and economic barriers). This can process be particularly helpful in identifying specific ‘opportunities’ for your organisation to best support your communities ‘weaknesses’.



5C Analysis

Company, Competitors, Customers, Collaborators, Climate

Useful for:

Undertaking a more detailed analysis of the internal capacities and the external factors in the project environment. This tool is most useful when assessing the context and the problem in steps 2, 4 and 5, rather than your organisation specifically.

How it works:

5C identifies specific opportunities and challenges that a project might face. It is a widely used business tool that has been adapted for the nonprofit sector.

- **Company**— This involves identifying the organisation's vision, strategies, objectives, capabilities, technology, and culture, as well as understanding the existing and potential problems and opportunities within the organisation.
- **Customers (Beneficiaries)** — This involves defining the target beneficiaries; their behaviour, their number/size, what support they need, how they consume support and their preferred methods of accepting support.
- **Competitors**— This involves a critical analysis of the environment in which the organisation operates; knowing the strengths, weaknesses, positioning, market share, and upcoming initiatives of other NGO and government programs related to your cause.
- **Collaborators**— This involves identifying the agencies, suppliers, governments, and business partners that can partner with your NGO in achieving its mission. Make sure you identify their capabilities, performances, and issues to maximise the benefits of collaboration and better foresee potential problems.
- **Climate**— This involves the evaluation of the macro-environmental factors affecting the organisation. A PESTEL-Analysis can be used to analyse political, economic, social/cultural, technological, environmental, and legal scenarios. A detailed explanation of this tool can be found in **Module 4** on page 32.

Results:

A deepened understanding of the broader community context and how this interacts with the problem that your organization seeks to solve.



Download Resource

You can find a template for this tool in; '**Resource 4 - 5C Analysis**' which can be found as a download alongside this module on our website. Use this resource as a guide when planning your own community development project.

SCOPE Analysis

Situation, Core Competencies, Obstacles, Prospects, Expectation

Useful for:

Creating a more detailed strategy for the future of your organisation. It is often used as an alternative to the SWOT-Analysis to permit a more in-depth analysis. The SCOPE Analysis works best in Step-5 when applied to a specific problem, rather than broader organisational and contextual factors. It helps take your problem-solving a step further, identifying the prospects of success and expectations of outcomes.

How it works:

SCOPE focuses on the specific opportunities and challenges of a given project from a broader internal and external perspective. It's important to be more specific than you might have been for the other tools above.

- Situation – This is essentially a summary of step 5 that briefly identifies key elements of the problem within the context of your community.
- Core Competencies – These are the key capacities that your organisation does best. Don't be shy. These should be unique to your organisation, not generalised to the problem. Try to be as specific as possible. This is about identifying the BEST ways that your organisation can help your community.
- Obstacles – These can be both internal and external to your organisation and should reflect the key challenges that your organisation needs to overcome in order to help solve the problem.
- Prospects – These are the 'opportunities' for your organisation to improve your impact by taking advantage of your 'Core Competencies' within the 'Situation'.
- Expectations – Here is a chance to engage your inner fortune teller. You need to realistically anticipate what will happen in your community over your project cycle that might have an impact on your project. Will there be an election? Is it rainy season? How would this impact upon your project? Think of both positive and negative impacts.

Results:

SCOPE helps to guide effective use of internal resources and focus your competencies upon solving a problem within the community.

**Download
Resource**

You can find a template for this tool in; '**Resource 5 - SCOPE Analysis**' which can be found as a download alongside this module on our website. Use this resource as a guide when planning your own project.

Finishing up

An in-depth analysis of the internal and external factors that might influence the progress and success of your project will aid the planning process in a multitude of ways. It will ultimately make it easier to identify priorities, adapt planning to the context, and provide adequate resources.

Use these tools intermittently throughout your Situational Analysis to ensure it is as thorough as possible. Remember to work as a team, consult with the community and be as creative as possible. After completing your Situational Analysis, you're ready to move on to setting realistic goals using the Problem and Objective Tree tools in **Module 3**.

This resource was produced by Grassroots Collective.

This is Module 2 of our 9-part handbook for project planning. Find the full handbook at: www.thegrassrootscollective.org/grassroots-hub

Have a question about project planning for community development or want to learn about how we can support your organisation on its mission? Contact us at: info@thegrassrootscollective.org

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