

VISION GALLERY EXERCISE

We are using this exercise with our "village" groupings (issue-based clusters) to help us envision goals that may feed our strategizing exercises. Total duration : 80 minutes.

PURPOSE/USES

- To help people develop a vision of where we want to go (long-range goals) in order to develop a strategy, then choose the tactics to get there.
- To stretch people's imagination in envisioning the kind of society we would like to create, going beyond vague values to specific features.
- To facilitate the group's development of a common vision and clarify the values we share.
- To help us discover our own ideas and how much vision we have in common with others.

MATERIALS

Large sheets of newsprint and/or construction paper, lots of markers or crayons, masking tape, and smooth floor or table space.

STEPS

1. "Our village once we have succeeded" (10 min. maximum)

We will brainstorm at the beginning to trigger visionary thinking on the theme: "Our village once we have succeeded with our issue"

- Explain that we will build a vision of what our village would look like once our goal of [PLACE YOUR ISSUE HERE] has been achieved.
- Tell the group you want to brainstorm a few ideas on how different things may look. Use the flip chart to write down the ideas (or ask someone else from the group to do the writing)
- Ask the group to think about what would be the changes once that goal has been reached and what it would mean for village life.
- If you need to prod the group a little bit, here are some helpful questions you might want to ask. Use only a sample, not all of them. A brainstorm is supposed to be quick. Tell participants we just want uninhibited ideas at this point. Discourage back-and-forth discussions.
 - Would our village look different if we were successful in achieving our goal?
 - What about women's lives, men's lives, children's lives?
 - Police? Defence? Schools? Food culture? Artistic life? Political life?
 - What about the environment, transportation, safety, etc.
 - Would there be new buildings or would they somehow be adapted?
 - What kinds of decision-making processes, social relationships would exist?
 - What new roles, new jobs would exist?
 - How would the physical village be used?
 - What other change would we see in the day to day life? What would these look like?

2. Creating an individual vision

(15 min.)

Then, for the next 10-15 minutes, ask individuals to spend time alone, sketching their personal visions by writing, outlining, diagramming or drawing.

- Ask people to spend a few minutes on their own to draw, sketch, diagram, write about the changes that success in achieving our goal would bring.
- People may want to work on many features of their vision simultaneously, such as government, defence, economic system, family structure and recreation; or they can focus on a question like "What might this community look like ten years from now if really good changes kept happening?"
- Encourage each to think creatively. Assume no constraints on money or power.
- Distribute or point out the availability of markers, paper, etc. Tell people they can also use things from the environment (plants, flowers, scrap magazines, objects) — whatever they wish, really — to illustrate their vision.
- Tell them that after about ten minutes, we will gather again to build a collective vision.
- Monitor the time, roam, support the skills/ideas of people. Give them warnings before time runs out.

3. Building the collective village

(30 min.)

The next 30 minutes are spent in the village, pooling participants' visions and expressing a common one on a large sheet of paper.

- Call the group together and explain that we now want to build a collective exhibit of the village we envision once our issue has been successfully resolved.
- Point to a large-enough section of the wall (or floor), with flip chart paper laid out, where they can start putting together the village.
- Each small group posts its composite utopia on the wall/floor in the main meeting room, creating a "vision gallery".

4. Touring the Vision Gallery

(20 min.)

Once the time is up, we now ask the "villages" (clusters) to tour the other village visions in our brand new "Vision Gallery".

- Ask the different villages to gather now as a big group. If villages are still very busy, complement them on the work done and say the new society is still very much a work in progress but we now need to move on and see what the others have done.
- Explain that each village will now tour the others and see what their vision looks like. Encourage questions about the work itself, and about the process of coming to that vision.
- When our village is being visited, we will present our work and what it means.

As adapted by Nancy Pearson and Philippe Duhamel for the New Tactics Project's Asia Regional Training Workshop in Chiang Mai, Thailand, August 2005. Built from information by George Lakey of www.trainingforchange.org, itself adapted from Resource Manual for a Living Revolution, by Virginia Coover, Ellen Deacon, Charles Esser, and Christopher Moore, published by New Society Publishers and now out of print. This tool has been tested cross culturally and worked well with many groups, including Thai lesbians, Russian environmentalists, U.S. high school students, English anarchists, etc.

In an organization, you might propose this vision exercise as part of devising a campaign for change. A facilitator can encourage those most motivated to find each other and create a task force to pull the common ideas together, back them up with research, and present them to a constituency or as demands to power holders.