



Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

Activity Sheet
January 2018

Creating a Strategic Plan for your Organization

(Part I – Introduction to Strategic Planning)

Introduction

Strategic planning is a systematic process in which organizations create a roadmap for their overarching goals and activities for the next three to five years. Creating a strategic vision helps organizations unite around what they would like to do based on where they would like to go. Planning the future is one of the first steps in helping an organization to focus its efforts and understand what difference it is trying to make in the world.

Developing a strategic plan involves a number of steps, and one of the most important is to have the right people contributing to its creation. Identifying the key stakeholders who should help create a strategic plan, as well as how much time and effort is put into a strategic plan, will determine how successful the outcome will be.

Objectives of this Activity

- 1) To introduce key concepts relating to strategic planning and why planning is important
- 2) To provide basic steps in creating an organizational strategic plan
- 3) To provide references for strategic planning

Time Required for Activity: 2-3 hours

Steps to Creating a Strategic Plan

- 1) *Identify key stakeholders* that need to be invited to create a strategic plan. Key stakeholders should include those people that can contribute to or will be affected by the strategic plan. Ideally the group should be no more than 30 people.
- 2) *Identify a facilitator* who can direct the strategic planning process and does not have strong personal opinions about the outcome. The facilitator(s) should consider stakeholders' perspectives and suggestions in the final document. Strategic plans usually last for 3-5 years, and need to be revisited annually to confirm that organizational goals and objectives are being met.
- 3) *Create a vision and mission statement.* A vision statement informs your team and your stakeholders about work towards a common long-term goal. A vision statement should be concise: no longer than a sentence or a few paragraphs. Your entire team and organization should be able to repeat back and understand the vision statement. When creating a vision statement, it may help to identify core values of the organization first, and then use these to craft a statement that includes what your organization hopes to achieve. An example of a vision statement: "A world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development, and participation" (Save the Children, www.savethechildren.org)



A “Mission Statement” is “unchanged over time, indicates which target audiences will be served and how, and communicates a sense of direction for the organization” (<http://www.robertstover.com/steps-in-strategic-planning-process/>) An example of a Mission Statement: “We strengthen rural communities to build healthy farming and food systems from the ground up” (Groundswell International, www.groundswellinternational.org).

For step-by-step instructions on creating a vision and mission statement, for your organization, please see the INGENAES Activity Sheet “Developing Values, Mission and Vision” http://ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/ING-Activity-Sheet-2016_03-Our-Values-Mission-and-Vision-Henderson.pdf

To continue with the Strategic Planning process – see [Part 2](#) of “Creating a Strategic Plan for your Organization”.



Photo: Mission statement ideas clustered in similar groups. © J. Henderson 2016

References

INGENAES “Organizational Capacity Building Workshops”: <http://ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/Organizational-Capacity-Building-Workshop-PowerPoint-Slides.pdf>. Kumaran, M., University of Florida, 2016.

INGENAES “Our Values, Mission and Vision”: http://ingenaes.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/ING-Activity-Sheet-2016_03-Our-Values-Mission-and-Vision-Henderson.pdf

“Seven Simple Steps in Strategic Planning”: Stover, R., 2018. <http://www.robertstover.com/steps-in-strategic-planning-process/>



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