

In Australia during the 1980's the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Housing built a number of estates for blue-collar workers living in Regional centres of New South Wales. With the changing economic base of Australia, the jobs have been gradually disappearing, leaving the estates either bereft of residents, or more commonly, housing the new poor. Whereas twenty years ago approximately 80% of tenants were employed, today over 90% are on some form of Government benefits. This new reality is driving a change in the Department's focus from 'Asset Development' to 'Community Development'. As with many social development funding agencies, the Department has been grappling with how to systematise its new community development funding. This article outlines its use of LogFrames, and the methodology it has developed to enable groups to complete them.

Common to development programs, a principle problem for a funding agency has been defining 'why' a particular project should be funded. As one of a number of strategies, the Department traditionally allocated a few thousand dollars for 'Social and Community' projects. However, while small in nature there was no formal method of either identifying which projects might be of value, or how to assess the worth of a project once carried out. An example being how community coordinators or committed residents might come up with an idea such as 'let's put on a Christmas Party for the kids'. While it might be an admirable idea, the project, or action, is not in any way linked to achieving a particular goal. At the end of the day, there is no method of identifying whether a Christmas party for the kids actually contributed to improving long-term community wellbeing or not. The challenge was to formalise such projects, to provide some form of accountability, even though small in nature. In considering this problem, the international development industry seemed to offer a solution with the LogFrame. However, as many existing practitioners can confirm, LogFrames seem not only difficult to complete but almost arcane in nature. To get residents and estate coordinators to complete a LogFrame for a Christmas Party appeared to be problematic.

In considering this problem, there seemed to be a relationship between the concept of a LogFrame, and the structure of the group decision-making system known as

**Table 1: Basic LogFrame outline**

Goal	...the overall vision or goal to which the project addresses	The limit of direct control by the project manager
Objective (or Purpose)	...the purpose, or objective of the project, which contributes to reaching...	
Outcome	...an outcome which will contribute to...	
Action	Action which will result in...	

the 'Technology of Participation'<sup>1</sup>. The LogFrame consists of a series of activities with a causal relationship between each other. This is usually described as in Table 1, while an outline of the decision-making system 'Technology of Participation' is described in Table 2

**Table 2: Decision making system in the 'Technology of Participation'**

What is: The Goal or vision?	
What are: The obstacles or blockages to achieving that vision?	↓
What might be: Strategies to overcome the blockages?	↓
What might be: Specific actions to realise the strategies?	↓

The major difference between the two systems being that the 'ToP' system works on a series of questions, rather than defining what will occur as a series of statements. It also works from defining the goal or vision as being the starting point, not the action. It can also be seen that the ToP system results in the 'objective' part of the equation being a negative rather than a positive, however this can be easily remedied once the questioning process has been carried out. How this works can be seen in the example of a series of questions carried out with a group of older residents who were wanting to do a survey to find out

<sup>1</sup> Laura J Spencer *Winning through Participation* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt publishing Co. 1989

**Table 3: Example of the ToP questioning carried out in a workshop format**

What is: The Goal or vision?	To carry out a kids survey
What are: The obstacles or blockages to achieving that vision?	No knowledge of how to go about doing such a thing
What might be: Strategies to overcome the blockages?	Engage a kids survey specialist to run a training workshop
What might be: Specific actions to realise the strategies?	Find a kids survey specialist; talk to the school principle, council; put out a question on the Internet.

what activities interested kids. This particular goal emanated as an activity to be carried out from a workshop with residents and agencies, in which 'bored kids having nothing to do' was considered to be a major issue to be tackled. This provided the project with a 'super goal'.

**Table 4: Example of the subsequent LogFrame causal hierarchy developed from the ToP questions**

Super goal	Active and engaged kids
Goal	To carry out a kids survey
Purpose of project	To find out how to put together a kids survey
Outcome of project	A workshop with a kids survey specialist
Actions	Find and engage a specialist in 'Kids Surveys'

This LogFrame then became the basis by the residents for a funding application for the specialist to attend and lead the workshop.

Once the basic causal linkages in the LogFrame were prepared in this manner, the group found it quite easy to contribute to the 'indicators of success' and 'Risks' to complete the funding application.

As well as making the completion of the LogFrame almost automatic, it promotes a 'bottom up' approach to program or project development. Rather than the estate coordinator coming up with a solution to the problem, and then trying to fit it into a LogFrame format, the answers to the questions are from residents themselves.