**A Field Guide to Community Based Adaptation: Field Assignment 1, Chapter 1**

Tim Magee

**Example of Field Assignment 1**

**Field Assignment 1. Step 4: Creating a Simple Project Outline.**

**Project Outline Showing the Results of the Participatory Needs Assessment**

**What’s the real problem?**

This example project is based upon four communities in the highlands of Guatemala. 33 women from an association of women weavers in four remote villages in Comalapa, Guatemala participated in a needs assessment. Each woman was able to voice needs and then vote on them with 10 beans. These 33 women were representative of 100 families—25 in each of the 4 villages—that my NGO hopes to work with on a new project. The needs they described were improved health and development for their children, better school participation for their children and increased food security, and were expressed as the following problems.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Table 1.4. The full list of needs/problems and the vote results** | **Votes out of 330** |
| Stunting—lack of physical and mental development in children caused by: | 81 |
|  Chronic diarrhea in children  |
|  Chronic under-nutrition  |
| Shortage of family food for four months preceding the corn harvest | 74 |
| Increasingly reduced crop harvests | 70 |
| The need for more weaving work and more income | 50 |
| Poor school attendance and performance for their children  | 35 |
| Micro-businesses effected by women’s inability to read and write | 20 |

Since I wanted to develop a simple project, I chose only the top two visible and compelling problems and only two underlying causes. We decided to design a project that would address food security, health, hygiene and nutrition in order to tackle the overarching challenge of stunting—poor physical and mental development in children. I also kept the problem definitions and underlying causes very short, simple, to the point, and did not embed multiple ideas. My problem statement is a very simple aggregation of the problems, underlying causes and negative impacts—without the addition of grant proposal type project introductions.

**Simple project outline of problems/causes/impacts:**

**Problems:**

* Chronic diarrhea in children
* Chronic under-nutrition

**Underlying Causes:**

* Lack of knowledge of health, hygiene and family nutrition
* Overall shortage of food and specifically for the four months preceding the corn harvest

**Their negative impacts:**

Stunting – lack of physical and mental development in children that affects participation in family/community activities. This restricts the children’s ability to attend and concentrate in school, leading to a reduction in their ability to develop and prosper as adults. The challenges also reduce the ability of adults to lead the productive, meaningful, prosperous lives they need to leave the cycle of poverty and contribute to the development of their communities.

**Problem Statement:**

300 small children and their 100 families in four Guatemalan villages are frequently ill with chronic diarrhea caused by little knowledge of health and hygiene, are chronically undernourished caused by little knowledge of nutrition and less than 12 months of family food reserves. These challenges contribute to stunting and restrict the children’s ability to attend and concentrate in school, leading to a reduction in their ability to develop and prosper as adults. These challenges also reduce the ability of adults to lead the productive, meaningful, prosperous lives they need to leave the cycle of poverty and contribute to the development of their communities.

Copyright © 2012, Tim Magee. All rights reserved.