

What is strategic planning?

Strategic planning is the process of determining or figuring out what a group/organization intends to be in the future and how it will get there. In strategic planning we're planning for **CHANGE**. Strategic planning involves fundamental choices about:

Defining the current situation

Envisioning the future we want

Clarifying key vision elements

Identifying priorities and opportunities and obstacles to achieving the vision

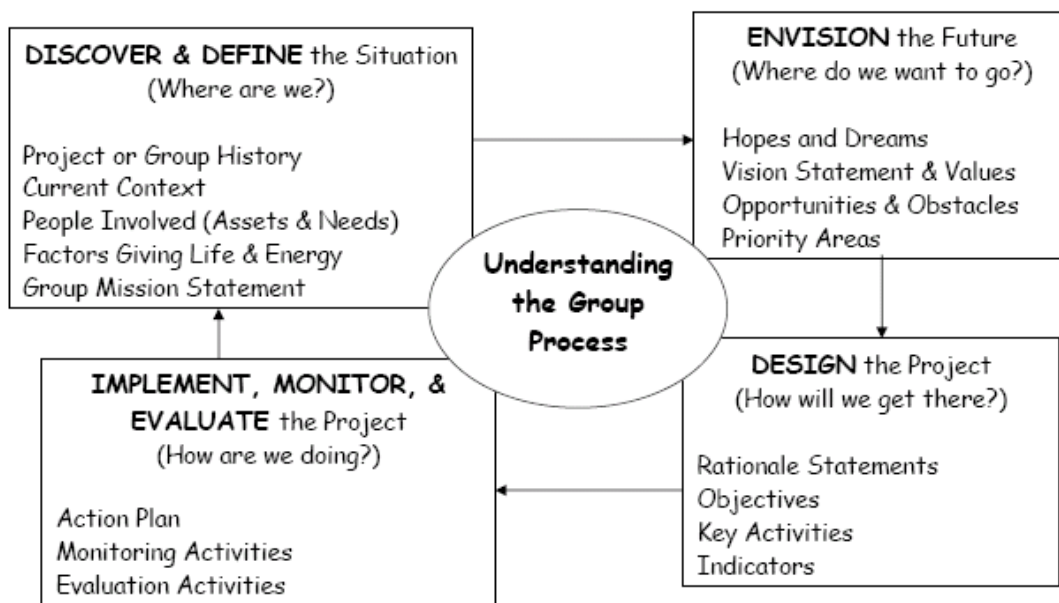
Creating objectives and innovative, practical activities that will lead us to the vision

Planning for resources needed to carry out the activities

Strategic planning is a means for **charting a course of action** and gives us a better understanding of what we are capable of doing and what we need to improve or modify in relation to our desired future state. Strategic plans are essential in **setting direction** and **focusing resources**. The plans are **not cast in stone**; they need to be reviewed at least once a year to see if the course we charted is still the one we want to follow. Strategic plans usually cover a three to five-year time period.

*If you want to walk fast, walk alone. If you want to walk far, walk together.
—African proverb*

Don't measure with a micrometer what you cut with a chainsaw.



SMART plans

Specific – "Yes/No" test: "12 months from now, will we know if this project was accomplished?" If yes, how? If no, make the project more specific.

Measurable & Meaningful – How will the difference this project made show up and what numbers will be different? How deeply do we care about it?

Aggressive & Attainable – Is this a stretch for us? Can we get the people, input, resources needed?

Relevant & Realistic – Is this a priority? Can we take it on, given our other commitments?

Timely – Is now the right time in our organization's evolution and development?

Source: Heifer International North America Program