Addressing disputes and conflicts over the tenure of natural resources

Supporting the resolution of tenure-related disputes

Text-only version

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In this lesson

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- describe the main approaches to resolution of disputes over the tenure of natural resources;
- identify different types of institutions for dispute resolution; and
- provide examples of ways to facilitate effective and accessible dispute resolution.

INTRODUCTION

Competition over land, forests and fisheries often result in disputes which, in some cases, can trigger conflict.

Effective and legitimate ways must be found to settle disputes and reduce their capacity to trigger broader, violent conflict.

This lesson will introduce a range of **dispute resolution mechanisms** that can contribute to a coherent dispute resolution system.

We will review their relative advantages and drawbacks depending on the specific context and we will also consider what can be done to ensure such mechanisms are effective, accessible and affordable.

The main features of an enabling policy and legislative environment to ensure effective dispute resolution will also be reviewed.

TYPES OF DISPUTES

Natural resource ownership and use can cause a variety of disputes.

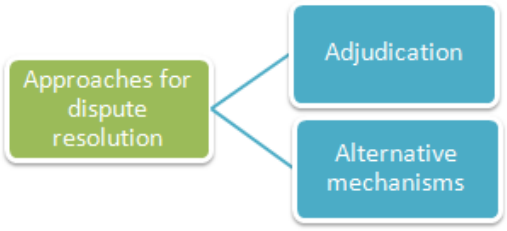
These can take place within or between families, between individuals or communities and private companies, or they can be claims against the state.

Disputes can arise over a number of issues, such as inheritance, boundaries or transactions.

FOR EXAMPLE

- Two families of a community disagreeing over boundaries.
- Fishers forcibly displaced for the construction of a tourist resort.
- Forest users denied access to forest resources after granting of logging concessions.

The most common forms of dispute related to tenure of natural resources can be resolved through two fundamentally different approaches:

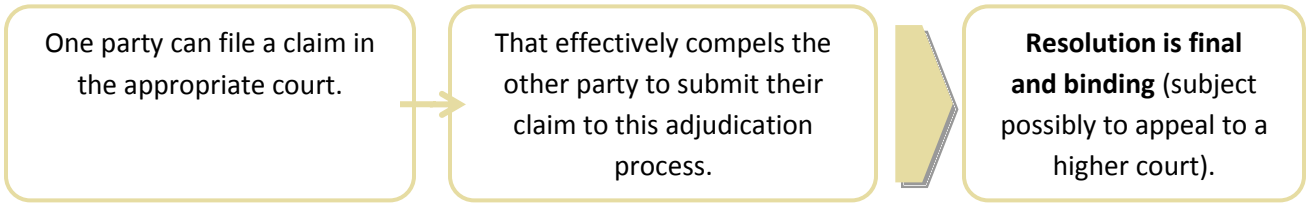


- the first approach is **adjudication**, or judging;
- the second approach includes a range of **alternative dispute resolution mechanisms**.

APPROACHES TO DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Adjudication

Adjudication relies upon an **authoritative decision-maker** to prescribe the resolution of a dispute based on compliance with the law. Adjudication is typically implemented by the courts maintained by the state.



The process of taking a case through court is known as **litigation**.

Alternative mechanisms

Alternative dispute resolution refers to a range of possible approaches that rely upon **consent of the parties**. They share the following characteristics:

Alternative dispute resolution approaches do not require that the resolution be the result of application of the law to the facts of the dispute.

These approaches allow and encourage compromise, which often produces different results than application of the rules.

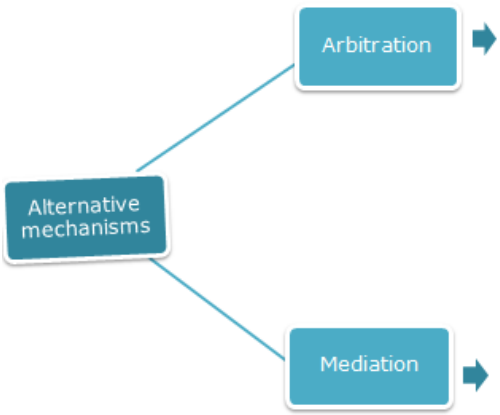
Also, both parties must voluntarily submit themselves to alternative dispute resolution processes.

Their participation is not typically compelled by law, though a court may sometimes order the parties to attempt to arrive at a mediated solution before proceeding to adjudication.

Refer to Voluntary Guidelines – 21.3

"States should strengthen and develop alternative forms of dispute resolution especially at the local level (…)".

Alternative dispute resolution includes, among other things, arbitration and mediation.



The parties agree on an **arbitrator** who promises to **reach a decision** that is fair in all circumstances. The parties may agree to binding arbitration, or they may only agree to the process, reserving the right to decide whether or not to agree to the result once they see it.

The parties request a **mediator** to help them agree to a compromise. The mediator has **no authority to 'decide'** the dispute in terms of whether it is binding or non-binding. The dispute must be resolved through the negotiated agreement of the parties. The law remains in the background in such discussions, but can affect the outcome because it is the default solution if these processes fail.

Both arbitrated and mediated results, if properly documented, can be enforced by a court of law.

Alternative dispute resolution is not always an option, as it is shown by the two following examples.

EXAMPLE 1

Two families of the same community have a dispute about settling a boundary.

In small communities, where parties must continue to interact, it is not advisable to have an outright winner and an outright loser, as is the case with adjudication.

So, as in this example, alternative dispute resolution methods, including mediation, could be the preferred option to achieve an agreement.

EXAMPLE 2

Forest users excluded from access to forest resources claim their rights against a big private company.

Alternative dispute resolution methods are not the preferred option in cases of evident power imbalance between parties.

In such cases, adjudication is preferred, since the court should apply the law regardless of power relationships.

Compared to adjudication, alternative dispute resolution methods allow parties to have more control over the selection of the individual who will decide or mediate the dispute, along with more confidentiality. These methods are more flexible in their procedures, tend to be more expeditious and are usually less expensive than adjudication.

Alternative methods permit remedies that are generally unavailable in the courts, such as selling, leasing, dividing or swapping resources.

Alternative methods highlight existing power relationships, while the court should act as a leveller, applying the law regardless of power relationships.

Typically, adjudication provides clear outcomes, with an outright winner and an outright loser.

Let's have a more in-depth look at the differences between the two approaches…

↘ Confidentiality and control

Alternative dispute resolution allows parties more control over the process and more confidentiality.

A preference for confidentiality and the desire of some parties to have greater control over the selection of the individual(s) who will decide or mediate their dispute may lead them to choose alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

The public nature of litigation processes might cause some embarrassment to parties if certain facts about them are disclosed or publicized.

↘ Power relationships

The court should act as a leveller, applying the law regardless of power relationships, whereas alternative dispute resolution does not claim to 'level the playing field'. However, it is important to be aware that:

- the cost of litigation and the varied capacities of the parties render this 'levelling' illusory in many situations; and

- unlike adjudication, in alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, when the parties bargain, they bargain from their positions of strength or weakness.

↘ Time and cost

Adjudication typically requires more time and money.

It can take a long time – often several months to a year – before a court gets round to hearing a case after the original dispute occurred and proceedings have started. In addition, court action can be expensive involving the hiring of solicitors and often barristers.

Alternative dispute resolution tends to be more expeditious than adjudication and, typically, less expensive. Alternative methods also provide greater access than the courts do, to self-funding opportunities.

↘ Flexibility

Mediation and other alternative methods that are more flexible in their procedures are better able to respond effectively to different types of situations.

Adjudication of disputes by application of national law is usually reserved for state actors. Mediation is more flexible in terms of who can do it. Especially in post-conflict situations, it is common for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other actors to be asked to take an active role in mediating land disputes.

However, mediation models have their limitations; for example, they are not suitable in situations where one party is the state or a government official.

↘ Clear outcomes

Litigation usually results in an outright winner and an outright loser.

However, litigation is unlikely to provide sustainable solutions where alternative livelihoods are limited and disputants are unlikely to move elsewhere.

At the same time, it is important that alternative dispute resolution, like all dispute resolution mechanisms, produces reasonably predictable outcomes and provides parties with some assurance that similar disputes result in similar outcomes. Otherwise, it can be perceived to lack coherence, coordination and sustainability.

↘ Redress mechanism

With litigation, there are quite limited forms of redress compared to what can be agreed to using a non-court method.

Often only financial damages and an award of costs are available through litigation. However, court jurisprudence does have the advantage of providing a reasonable expectation for what claimants will receive.

Embedding a mediation system in land administration rather than judicial administration allows for remedies that are usually unavailable in the courts, such as selling, leasing, dividing or swapping land.

↘ Accessibility

Physical access may be an issue for both adjudication and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms – including for security reasons in conflict situations.

Rural populations are more likely to be affected by impeded access to adjudication processes as courts tend to be situated in towns or cities.

↘ Capacity, corruption and credibility

Lack of capacity or corruption in the court system can contribute to backlogs and other inefficiencies.

Capacity and vested interests can have an impact on local conflict resolution mechanisms. These mechanisms are often compromised during conflict, but can quickly regain credibility after conflict ceases.

↘ Enforcement

Institutions must be capable of monitoring compliance and enforcing sanctions.

Mediation is important where coercive enforcement of legal determinations is inappropriate or unlikely to prevent conflict.

DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEM

Adjudication and alternative dispute resolution can be effectively combined in one system that bridges traditional dispute resolution mechanisms and the courts.

FOR EXAMPLE

In **post-conflict Cambodia**, the Government created a Cadastral Commission (CC) as a mechanism to deal with the land disputes which were endemic throughout the country.

The CC operates at national, provincial and district levels as an administrative dispute resolution mechanism which can resolve disputes by conciliation. The upper levels, beginning with the national followed by the provincial CCs, are also empowered to decide the cases they cannot resolve through conciliation.

An **integrated systematic approach** to dispute resolution can facilitate fair and equitable conclusions to resource claims disputes. An integrated systematic approach involves a **range of institutions**, from local level forms of dispute settlement to national specialized tribunals and commissions. They may use adjudication or alternative dispute resolution approaches or a mixture of both. In an integrated system:

- Local mechanisms incorporating traditional institutions and reconciliation ceremonies may be used to fill the gaps left by the formal judicial system.
- Similarly, civil courts can play an important complementary role to local customary processes, including by documenting agreements.

Establishing an integrated dispute resolution system

Establishing and maintaining an effective system involves choosing from a set of options regarding jurisdiction, rules of evidence, handing down decisions and enforcing and supervising decisions.

In considering different options, it is important to remember that an integrated system:

- must be capable of effectively **addressing the full range of tenure disputes and conflicts** present within a unified framework;
- should rely on systematic processes and procedures with **clear roles and responsibilities** at national and local levels;
- will seek to recognize, support and **build on existing local customary systems and institutions**, rather than trying to introduce foreign ideas and institutions that do not resonate with society.

An **assessment** of institutions and mechanisms already in place should help to establish current capacities and effectiveness, including who has to access to them and who uses them.

Other potential options should also be considered to **replace or supplement existing** institutional frameworks and **dispute resolution mechanisms** as part of a coherent system.

INSTITUTIONS AND MECHANISMS FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION

What types of **institutions and mechanisms** exist for dispute resolution?

Options range from local level forms of dispute settlement to national specialized tribunals and commissions.

They may use adjudication or alternative dispute resolution approaches or a mixture of both.

Community, including **customary dispute resolution institutions**, will often be the first line of defense to protect resource rights, especially if the dispute is

between community members. These institutions are diverse. They may be similar to courts, but more often involve a process similar to arbitration and seek solutions through compromises that allow the parties to have continued social interaction.

Often disputes which have not yet resulted in dispossession or other illegal acts can be dealt with in such fora.

FOR EXAMPLE

Women often pursue their civil property claims through community-based resolution systems because they are cheaper and more accessible (i.e. geographically and in terms of procedures). At the same time, it is important to consider that some traditional mechanisms can also disadvantage women when their rights are not recognized, in contravention of national equality laws.

▶ **Drawbacks and considerations**

These institutions will not be effective when one of the disputants is **not a community member** and so does not recognize the authority of community institutions; e.g. where the private sector is involved.

It is important that **civil law recognizes the validity** of resolutions arising from mediation, at least among members of the community. Public and documented forms of agreement are crucial to the sustainability of rights determinations..

Civil institutions

The **police or local officials** are often the first resort of someone threatened with dispossession. Their effectiveness will depend a great deal on their impartiality.

In practice, civil institutions usually only react effectively after a dispossession has taken place, and this is an important limitation on their effectiveness.

It may also be possible to take a dispute before a **religious authority**, if the parties are of the same faith.

Courts and tribunals

Many countries deal with land disputes in their regular **courts of jurisdiction**. Mainly for efficiency reasons, many others have adopted specialized judicial institutions, typically called **land courts** or **tribunals** to deal with disputes. They may be national or local and in some cases can themselves use

alternative dispute resolution rather than adjudication. Land courts and tribunals can:

- deal with **recurring problems** stemming from handling technical claims in the regular courts;
- ensure **judicial expertise** on land issues and develop consistent jurisprudence allowing reasonable expectations for future claimants;
- **streamline processes** in the face of backlogs in the courts.

Another option to increase efficiency is to introduce a **specialized court** to address a **particular issue**.

FOR EXAMPLE

In France, an agricultural land tenure court was established to deal with the transition from agriculture to other uses and claims on land left fallow.

Permanent tribunals have also been established in a number of countries to address the situation of specific groups.

FOR EXAMPLE

New Zealand's Waitangi Tribunal is a permanent commission of inquiry charged with making recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to those actions of the Crown which breach the promises made in the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi.

Commissions can play an important role in resolving disputes over natural resources, particularly in post-conflict countries. Commissions may be permanent or temporary and can have particular roles.

For example, commissions can be created to:

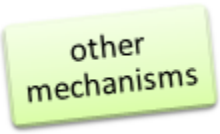
… fill the gap left by a **damaged or compromised judicial system**, particularly in confused post-conflict situations. Their mandate is usually mediation and arbitration rather than the winner-take-all solutions associated with court judgments and decisions.

…deal with the situation of **specific groups**. They are useful for fact finding and negotiating resolutions.

…deal with an **explosive** dispute or conflict. They are useful for addressing issues arising from past and ongoing injustices.

In **post-conflict situations**, commissions can be created to take the opportunity for fundamental reforms in policy and law. They can deal with natural resource **issues that have contributed to conflict** in the past and may threaten future conflict if left unresolved.
Commissions can also be created to insulate key tasks from negative influences; in particular, the management and allocation of public lands from **political and corrupt influences**.

You can find more on commissions here.



Other dispute resolution institutions, mechanisms and processes using mediation, or other forms of alternative dispute resolution reliant upon the consent of parties, can take the form of:

- **implementing agencies** capable of resolving disputes within their technical remit;
- land mediation or dispute resolution **offices**;
- **task forces** with independent representatives from all communities and development agencies;
- **divisional level committees**, comprising government representatives, opposition parties, civil society and donors to monitor and mediate land and resource disputes;
- corporate grievance and **dispute settlement mechanisms** that allow affected parties to raise whatever problems they may have with a company, with a clear process for resolution;
- **transboundary dispute resolution mechanisms and institutions**, which may include mediation by a trusted third party such as the United Nations (UN) or regional intergovernmental organization (IGO).

Finally, interim measures can contribute to an atmosphere of good faith and a constructive spirit in mediation and subsequent implementation processes.

Examples include:

- moratoriums on land transfers and on implementation of proposed development projects to protect land and other resources claimed by communities from environmental degradation or

alienation to third parties; or

- early land transfers back to communities made incrementally as milestones in negotiation processes are reached.

FOR EXAMPLE

The Government of British Columbia in Canada has allowed First Nations to create companies to which land can be transferred before it becomes part of a formal treaty settlement..

Every type of dispute may have its related

	Resolution mechanism	Why
A dispute between pastoralists and farmers over access to water points.	**Mediation** by a trusted third party supported by a development agency/NGO.	Mediation can be useful in settling disputes at local community level.
Grievances of an indigenous population against a government for past misappropriation of the territories they traditionally inhabit and use.	A **specialist commission** or tribunal to facilitate negotiation of restitution/compensation for the affected population.	Special commissions created to deal with the situation of specific groups are useful for addressing issues arising from past injustices.
Disputes between returnees after a civil war and those occupying their homes and farms.	A **commission** operating as a mass claims processing mechanism.	Commissions for restitution may be established to deal with restitution cases through legal decision-making where legal precedent is clear.

FACILITATING EFFECTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Are dispute resolution systems always capable of delivering effective and accessible services?

Read these brief stories….

"I had to travel from my village to the city to file my claim to the provincial court and had to pay a high fee. Many months have passed, but the judgement has not been completed yet…."

"The local court allows only written submissions, but many poor individuals cannot read or write and the courts and the government do not provide any kind of legal assistance."

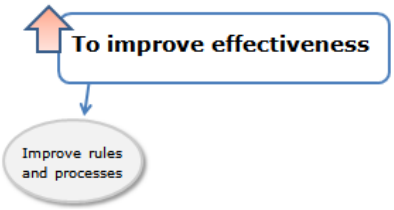
"I tried to resolve my dispute with my neighbour using alternative dispute resolution, but I did not get as much compensation as I expected and there does not seem to be a way to enforce the decision. I am now in a worse position financially, because the process cost me money."

A range of factors, including poor records of rights and cumbersome court procedures, often result in major **backlogs in formal procedures**.

Alternative dispute resolution **may also be rendered weak** for external factors such as violent conflict or internal problems such as gaps or contradictions in laws or inadequate enforcement mechanisms.

Dispute resolution services may also be complicated, costly or physically inaccessible.

▶ **How can effectiveness and accessibility of the system and public awareness be improved?**

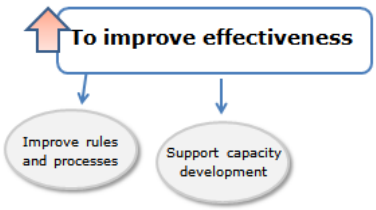


Disputes may be resolved relatively quickly where **rules are simple and clear** and the proofs required are not too burdensome.

In order to promote credibility and trust in the system, processes must respect principles of **transparency, participation, representation and fairness**.

Clarity regarding procedures for submission of evidence and argument, standards of proof, appeal, review and adoption of decisions, and rights of third party interveners is essential.

Addressing corruption in the judiciary and court systems and **building on legitimate and effective local-level solutions** as the basis for national policies in post-conflict settings, where possible, may improve effectiveness.

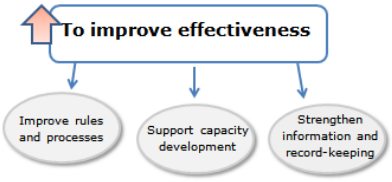


Capacity development should involve:

- **Courts** – It should be ensured that judicial authorities have the skills and competences to provide equitable service.
- **Alternative dispute resolutions mechanisms** – Legal

recognition of customary institutions makes dispute resolution more accessible to society, but it needs to be done carefully to avoid conflicts with other sources of law. A balance needs to be struck between using mediators/negotiators with local expertise on the one hand, and ensuring objectivity on the other.

- **Communities** – Building local capacity to mediate between individuals of communities also helps resolve existing conflicts and prevents new ones from emerging.
- **Civil society** – Strengthening civil society mediation capacity also helps to increase the number of skilled individuals available to assist in dispute resolution between different parties.



Measures to strengthen information and record-keeping as part of a coherent dispute resolution system include:

- supporting **data collection**, fact finding and research, and legal analysis;
- improving **records** including through registering and titling;
- standardizing **claims procedures** including through a common claims intake, registration process and database. Claims evaluation processes and referral to the appropriate part of the system are essential. A land claims registry can be a useful institution here.

FOR EXAMPLE

Claims procedures introduced by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) project in Timor-Leste, which are free of charge to participants and decentralized, have helped to resolve and minimize disputes at the time property claims are demarcated, adjudicated and recorded.
(Source: USAID, 2011)

Methods for ensuring that dispute resolution services are accessible to all men and women regardless of ethnic group or socio-economic background, include:

Simplifying procedures

Accessibility is improved by allowing plain language submissions or submissions in local languages, or by receiving traditional evidence via reports based on oral interviews with claimants and/or oral evidence from claimants at hearings.

Addressing geographic barriers

Supporting legal awareness and capacity development

Paralegal and legal aid programs supporting land and natural resource rights are particularly useful tools. Developing the capacity of the weakest stakeholders can help reduce power imbalances.

Monitoring accessibility and efficiency

Judicial authorities should seek regular feedback through surveys and focus groups. Users should have the means of addressing complaints either within the implementing agency or externally, such as through an independent review or an ombudsman.

Widespread **publicizing of rules, procedures and their effectiveness** contributes to accessibility of dispute resolution services and may also prevent disputes arising in the first place. Explanatory materials should be publicized in applicable languages and inform users of their rights and responsibilities.

➲ Ways to inform and facilitate discussions include community forums, focus group discussions, workshops/seminars and the media (including radio, video, websites and mobile phones).

FOR EXAMPLE

A multicountry programme encouraged competing users to maintain traditional, cooperative practices. In Mali, farmers posted radio bulletins when harvesting was finished to inform grazers that they could cross farmland without trampling crops.

(*Source: OECD, 2005)*

➲ Transboundary approaches can be effective in allowing exchange of experience between communities across borders.

FOR EXAMPLE

A gathering of pastoralist leaders from across Kenya and Ethiopia allowed delegates to strengthen cross-border ties and discuss ways to work productively with their governments to decrease tensions between communities.
(*Source: www.pastoralists.org*)

FINDING VIABLE COMPROMISE

A major challenge is to resolve conflicting claims without creating grievances and resentments that will cause repercussions in the future. A by-the-book, winner-takes-all solution may create future problems.
In seeking to resolve disputes it may, therefore, be preferable to seek **compromises with which all parties can live**.
Reaching and documenting agreement in such cases can be facilitated or mediated (rather than adjudicated) by a **third party** actor, such as an IGO or NGO.
Such agreements are most appropriate when there are fundamental differences between the parties as to the applicable law and the legitimacy of the rules urged by the opposing party.

The agreement should be **set out in writing** and signed by representatives of the contending parties (the more the better), witnessed by the mediating actor/organization, and conserved through deposit of copies in multiple official repositories.

➲ The losing party may be provided with a **compensation and/or resettlement**, such as alternative land or resettlement assistance. Where the other interest holder cannot provide compensation, the government may be willing to put other resources (such as nearby state land) on the table to facilitate agreement.

FOR EXAMPLE

Land compensation in South Africa
In the South African restitution programme, where return of land itself is not a possibility, the government often assumes part or all of the burden of compensating the claimant.

➲ A resource may be divided when two reasonable claims are made upon it. **Land sharing** (**partition**) is easiest when the resource is extensive.

Partition is also possible, even if painful, for smallholdings. Because household landholdings often consist of several small plots, such partition may involve dividing those plots between two households, rather than the partition of each plot.

FOR EXAMPLE

Resource sharing

Seasonal access to relatively limited point resources, such as water-holes along pastoralist migration routes that may be reserved for pastoralists to meet their needs, while allowing farmers to cultivate much of the area simultaneously. Such resource-sharing arrangements are common in customary contexts.

Similarly, projects to conserve natural resources will often permit local people to continue gathering non-timber forest products or even hunt for personal consumption without undermining conservation objectives.

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Whatever the preferred forms of dispute resolution in a particular situation, they should be backed by an appropriately comprehensive policy and legislative framework and administrative infrastructure. This infrastructure should be capable of resolving difficult cases and those that fall outside the jurisdiction of the mediation process or other forms of alternative dispute resolution.

➘ **Rights awareness and capacity development** are also crucial to ensure that people are aware of laws and policies that affect them and are able to access the mechanisms designed to protect their rights.

➘ Facilitating **dialogue** is also an important element of an enabling framework that promotes broader reconciliation. Comprehensive dialogue programs at national, regional or local levels can help resolve land disputes and pave the way for acceptable legal or institutional reforms.

➘ Principles of **equality, non-discrimination and clarity** should underpin all relevant legislation and policy since people's confidence in the system is an important precondition for resolving disputes and

If you want to know more about measures to address policy and legislative framework and administrative infrastructure to prevent and mitigate disputes and conflicts, see:

Lesson 4: Options for policy and legal reform

THINK ABOUT YOUR COUNTRY

This lesson has set out a range of dispute resolution mechanisms that can contribute to a coherent dispute resolution system.

Now try to focus on the specific situation of your country. You may wish to work through the following questions to help you apply what you have learned to your own country situation..

- What kind of dispute resolution institutions, mechanisms and processes are available? Which are most used, by whom and why?
- Do they make up a coherent dispute resolution system? Are there any gaps or contradictions?
- Are relationships between different institutions clearly defined; for example, in terms of competences?
- How effective and accessible are they in practice? Are gender issues given adequate weight, for example?
- Might other potential options be more effective or appropriate to the situation at hand?
- If so, is it possible to introduce them? What are the challenges (e.g. popular perceptions, political will, funds)? How might these be overcome?
- Are policy or legislative changes needed to ensure that more effective dispute resolution can take place?

SUMMARY

This lesson has examined the different dispute resolution institutions and mechanisms that can contribute to a coherent dispute resolution system.

There are two fundamental options: **adjudication**, or judging, and **alternative dispute resolution** which includes, among other things, mediation and arbitration.

Adjudication relies upon an authoritative decision-maker to prescribe the resolution of a dispute based on compliance with the law. Alternative methods refer to a range of possible approaches that rely upon

consent of the parties. The two approaches have relative advantages and drawbacks depending on the specific context.

An **integrated systematic approach** to dispute resolution is likely to incorporate some or all of the following institutions, mechanisms and processes:

- community, including customary dispute resolution institutions;
- civil and religious institutions;
- courts and tribunals;
- commissions.

The system needs to be effective and accessible and should be backed by an enabling policy and legislative environment and administrative infrastructure.

All the methodologies presented in this lesson surface **different worldviews and perspectives**.

They also provide occasions for stakeholders to **explore the differences between those perspectives** and support the conversation as they work toward harmonizing those differences. That's especially important in international development contexts where people with very different perspectives are working together.

In the next screen, you will view an example that illustrates the power of stories, showing how they can help us visualize possibilities and methodologies.

Each of these methodologies has elements that can be used in combination or as part of others. You may find it useful to combine, vary, and adapt them to accomplish different goals and work in different situations.

A good story always gives us a glimpse of what's possible. Even true stories stimulate our imaginations and suggest what else might be possible...

EXAMPLE: The KMdev story

In 2006 the **KM4Dev community** (**www.km4dev.org/**) spontaneously started a conversation about a topic that had come up 4 years before and had been a top vote-getter in a community poll in 2005. It was a topic that just wouldn't go away because that year it was discussed on three separate occasions on the community's e-mail list.

Each round had numerous contributions including questions, experiences, proposals, resources, warnings, and opinions from many different organizations and from all over the world. Some members discussed it in the middle of the year during a face-to-face meeting.

One member of the community gathered the e-mail discussion and created a "frequently asked questions" page on a wiki.

Later the story was written up and published in a **journal article** (**www.bellanet.org/files/KM4Dev%20PDF_7.pdf**). Those recurring discussions and interactions eventually led to this e-learning Module. The hot topic? Knowledge sharing for development.

CREATING A VISION THROUGH STORYTELLING

Telling stories is probably the oldest participatory visioning method that exists.

The story about KM4Dev illustrates the **power of stories**, showing how they can:

- make abstract ideas like "knowledge sharing" more concrete and accessible to more people;
- help us visualize future possibilities and methodologies; and
- help us map out how to get from our current situation to where we want to be in the **future.**

Coming up with collective stories is the most effective way to create a common vision. You can use stories to **develop a vision of knowledge sharing** in your organization that can help you visualize how to get there.

A **vision** gives an organization, project, or community its **sense of shared purpose and direction**. Planning for an organizational strategy often begins with articulating a common vision. The most powerful, unifying, and practical visions are:

- concrete and specific, providing a clear mental picture;
- bold, challenging, exciting;
- worth investing the time, energy, and resources to accomplish; and
- attainable.

 Creating a vision for knowledge sharing is important because it can help understand the differences with existing ways of working.

INVOLVING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Convincing yourself that knowledge sharing is possible and that it's a good thing is just the first step. You need to involve the people who should share knowledge. And it turns out **you have to get the right people together to envision how knowledge sharing can work in your organization**.

The people you involve in knowledge sharing conversations will determine the outcomes in important ways.

Here is what you should consider:

Who should you involve in knowledge sharing activities?

Who can help you achieve your knowledge sharing goals?

- invite people who are already talking about knowledge sharing;
- invite some who haven't been involved yet but who might have a vested interest in how knowledge is shared;

- seek diversity in terms of age, gender, educational background, and job roles;
- consider inviting people who may represent the organization's natural partners; and
- involve decision-makers.

Who tells a story and who they tell it to can be as important as the story itself.

VISIONING TOOLS

The process of **capturing a collective story** needs to be **visible** enough so the group's **collective memory is "owned" by everyone**, yet flexible enough to note story variants and to reflect revisions. To facilitate visioning activities, you should carefully plan the meeting interactions.

In **face-to-face interactions**, consider using a combination of the following equipment:

- flip charts or white boards where a group can look at notes or diagrams together;
- writing materials (pens, chalk, etc.);
- drawing and art materials (colored pens, colored paper, scissors, magazines for pictures, etc.);
- sticky notes (paper of different sizes that can be moved as needed);
- index cards, tape, pinboards, pins; and
- video or audio recording devices.

For **distributed groups**, you can use e-mail, phone calls, conference calls, and other technologies to bring people into the visioning process. In a fully distributed environment the process will take place more slowly than the face-to-face process.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING VISIONING METHODS

Which of the following tools are appropriate for visioning knowledge sharing, lectures or two-way communication methods, such as facilitated face-to-face meetings, telephone conferences, E-mail exchanges and casual one-to-one conversations?

All of the other tools can be used for visioning knowledge sharing, with careful attention to planning and design of the interactions. Lectures do not enable people to develop a common vision, as they do not enable a two-way communication.

What methods would you use to develop a shared vision in this following scenario situation?

Scenario

You've just been seconded into a 25-person unit at a large NGO headquarters. You're tasked with envisioning, developing, and implementing a knowledge sharing and learning strategy that is seen as key to the survival of the unit and its future contribution to the organization's mission.

The unit's new director asked for a preliminary assessment of the unit's services and culture. The assessment found that many individuals in the parent organization's country-based missions are providing related or overlapping services, but they report independently so there is redundancy.

There are budget and time pressures. There is also concern that the unit's skills set is falling behind relative to other NGOs. Not only do you need to develop a strategy to share knowledge in a systematic way, you also want to re-energize the unit. So you start with developing a shared vision of what's possible to guide the strategy.

In the rest of this lesson, you will learn in detail some of the most useful visioning approaches and how to use them.

When using storytelling methods to create a shared vision it is important to **combine** them with the **rigor of other visioning methods of inquiry**. Rigorous inquiry requires a disciplined effort and a commitment to finding the truth of a matter.

	What it is	Types of expected outcomes
Storytelling	An organization's commonly told stories - their successes, memorable stories notable events - suggest possible links between the unit's past, present, and future. A new vision would be conveyed in a new story.	Mutual knowledge about how we do things and what's possible is shared through stories. Springboard and other knowledge-sharing stories are organizational tools for leading change.
Future Story	Imagining a future possibility and telling its story in the present, as if we are there, draws on our natural skills for asking "What if?" to explore what that possibility might be like and whether it's both desirable and attainable.	Telling several plausible stories about the future expands the range of possibilities we are considering. Showing how we got "there" from "here" surfaces stakeholder assumptions about paths forward and what each one would require.
Appreciative Inquiry	In every organization, something works. By telling stories about what worked exceptionally well in the past, we can discover the essential qualities	By reflecting on our best experiences of what worked well, we shift from thinking about problems and how to fix them into excitement about real possibilities,

	that were present in order to do more of that in the future, thus appreciating those valuable "assets".	knowing we've done it before. Attitudes about change become more positive, optimistic, and expansive.
Scenario Building	When we have to make an important decision even though there are many uncertainties, we can systematically explore plausible future scenarios in order to understand the implications of how the decision might play out in each of them.	There are many stories we could tell about the future, and we want to identify the ones that matter in order to make better decisions. By identifying the critical uncertainties we have a structured way to craft and think about plausible scenarios.
Outcome Mapping	This is a comprehensive process for designing, monitoring, and evaluating programs in terms of desired changes in behaviors, relationships, actions, and activities in the partners the program wants to influence. Visioning is the first step in the design stage.	The focus here is on the desired changes (behaviors, skills, relationships, activities) that would result from a successful program, rather than directly on its impacts. By defining outcomes in this way, they can be more easily monitored and evaluated.

STORYTELLING - INTRODUCTION

"Stories are central to human intelligence and memory... From stories, we learn to imagine a course of action, imagine its effects on others, and decide whether or not to do it... A good story defines relationships, a sequence of events, cause and effect, and a priority among items - and those elements are likely to be remembered as a complex whole."

The Science of Stories, Harvard Business Review, May-June 1998.

Stories are the most compact form of knowledge.

They help us **remember**, **share**, and l**earn** from past experiences. In the next chapters you will learn about what stories are and how you can build effective ones.

Storytelling is an element of all of the other visioning methods presented in this lesson.

This story below was told by Steve Denning when he worked at World Bank and it is an example of a "**springboard story**". Denning told the story to suggest that the World Bank imagine how it could

provide new services and knowledge sharing far beyond its traditional business of loans for development.

Scenario

In June 1995, a health worker in Kamana, Zambia logged onto the **Center for Disease Control** (**www.cdc.gov/**) website and got the answer to a question on how to treat malaria. This happened in 1995, long before the Web was a household word, in a very small village in one of the least developed countries in the world. The most striking part is this: the **Bank** (**www.worldbank.org/**) isn't in the story. Our organization doesn't have its know-how and experience organized and accessible so that a rural Zambian health worker can find and use it. But just imagine if it had!

A **springboard story** is one that "*enables a leap in understanding by the audience so as to grasp how an organization or community or complex system may change*". (*Steve Denning*)

The key to a springboard story is that the **predicament is familiar to the audience** and is **similar to problem** they are grappling with. At the same time, there's **enough difference to capture their attention and spark their imagination**. The springboard is that "ah-ha!" moment when the listener thinks, "Oh! That's great. We could do something like that ourselves!" And then the mental wheels start turning.

STORYTELLING - WHAT ARE STORIES?

Stories are told around us all the time: we just have to listen carefully for them.

We all develop a lot of skill in crafting and interpreting stories. We also exert pressure on each other to tell "complete" or "proper" stories.

Saying "that story doesn't make sense" means that a fundamental logic flaw has been detected. People will tell counter-stories when they hear a story that sounds misleading. Some stories are told as if "everybody knows them" and other stories are whispered as if they should stay secret.

Stories are humanity's most natural form of knowledge sharing

You can use storytelling to visualize knowledge sharing and learning in many different ways. And **part of your knowledge sharing strategy might be to encourage storytelling as a key practice**.

Consider the following about how stories are pervasive in knowledge sharing:

- much knowledge sharing takes place through stories;

- in a community of practice, stories are local explanations of what works and why;
- stories reveal experiences, possibilities, and obstacles to knowledge sharing;
- stories carry enough context to make ideas more meaningful; and
- new stories can spread new ideas (such as a vision of knowledge sharing).

Stories help us explore "What-if" and "What could be"

Because telling a story activates our imaginations, it **suggests what is possible**. Stories are flexible and have been put to every imaginable purpose, from wooing a lover to instilling values in our children or proposing solutions to technical problems. Many professions use specialized stories, from deciding guilt or innocence in a court of law to arriving at a medical diagnosis.

Stories can also be put to work helping us imagine and then build new futures that include more knowledge sharing and learning.

If you listen carefully, stories that circulate in your organization will tell you how things work and suggest a vision of how they could work.

Stories can be formal or informal

Although stories are common in the informal sphere of an organization, many organizations formalize the gathering and telling of stories for particular purposes. All the methods described in this lesson use storytelling in a somewhat formal, intentional way, combining it with other activities.

Stories are told by everyone

Who tells stories

Everyone in your organization is involved in telling stories. If you listen carefully, you will hear informal stories that define your organization's culture or tell you what some people see as barriers to knowledge sharing. In some people's stories, you may even glimpse a possible future that includes more knowledge sharing.

For more formal storytelling to achieve specific purposes, you may want to identify and involve a range of stakeholders. Who creates, who tells, and who is listening to the story matters.

Stories suggest what is possible

Because telling a story **activates our imaginations**, it suggests what is possible.

Stories are **flexible** and have been put to every imaginable purpose, from wooing a lover to instilling values in our children or proposing solutions to technical problems. Many professions use specialized stories, from deciding guilt or innocence in a court of law to arriving at a medical diagnosis.

Stories can also be put to work helping us **imagine and then build new futures that include more knowledge sharing and learning**. Storytelling is an element of all of the other methods presented in this lesson.

STORYTELLING - SPECIAL PURPOSE STORIES

There are many different kinds of stories. Each one of them can inspire you or others to do different things.

Objective	Story features and outcomes
↘ **To *communicate* a complex idea and spark action**	***Story characteristics*** Tell a story that is true, has a single protagonist who is prototypical of your audience, focuses on a positive outcome, and can be told in a minimalist fashion. Frame your story so it really captures the audience's attention. Example: the springboard story at the beginning of this topic. ***Knowledge sharing outcomes*** People will "get" the idea and be stimulated to spring into action. ***Typical phrases*** "Just think…" "Just imagine…" "What if…"
↘ ***To get* people working together in a group or community**	***Story characteristics*** Tell a story that is moving, interesting to the listeners, on a subject about which the listeners also have stories, and is told with context. This embodies the idea of knowledge sharing in a story. ***Knowledge sharing outcomes*** Your audience will be ready to work together more collaboratively. ***Typical phrases*** "That reminds me of…"
↘ ***To neutralize* negative gossip**	***Story characteristics*** Tell a story that is true and that reveals humor or incongruity about the gossip or bad news, about the author of the bad news, or about the storyteller. Your story should be amusing or satirical and be a blend of truth and caring for the object of the humor. ***Knowledge sharing outcomes***

Your audience will realize that the gossip or the bad news is either untrue or unreasonable.

Typical phrases
"You've got to be kidding!", "That's funny!", "I'd never thought about it like that before!"

↘ ***To share*** **information and knowledge**

Story characteristics
Tell a story that includes a problem, the setting, the solution and the explanation. It should capture the granularity of the relevant area of knowledge, reflect multiple perspectives, and focus on the difficulties and how they were dealt with.

Knowledge sharing outcomes
Your audience will understand how to do something and why, such as using a tool in a new way.

Typical phrases
"We'd better watch for that in future!"

STORYTELLING - OUTCOMES

What are the outcomes the storytelling approach produces?

Stories are easy to make up, so multiple stories about a potential future are easy to generate. Once you've selected some that represent a vision, they are memorable and easy to pass along.

If a story communicates something that makes sense to people, it is likely to be remembered and retold. The main benefit of storytelling is that **stories make it easy for a vision to be understood and then spread widely**.

TIP: Storytelling

Since stories are so commonplace, there is almost always a story that is appropriate in a situation. You have to know **what story is relevant and how to tell it**. Some stories are inherently eyewitness accounts, so they require you to "have been there" to be able to tell them. Other stories are so well-known, anybody can tell them.

Ask yourself: Do the stories you hear about a knowledge sharing vision make sense? Do they fit the situation and circumstances? Can the stories be repeated easily without prompting? This means people have taken the stories in and made them their own. Are the stories told often to the appropriate people so the vision is widely shared?

Remember that stories you tell will continue to travel through the informal network long after the end of your initiative.

STORYTELLING - THE STRUCTURE OF A STORY

To **sketch out the basic structure** of the story you want to tell, you can use a **story spine**[1] or backbone then flesh it out with details.

	Function		Story spine elements
①	Set the context and indicate the beginning of the story.	→	Once upon a time... Or not too long ago...
②	Make the context rich in relevant detail (especially in terms of repeated activities or recurring events).	→	And every time...
③	Suggest how conditions have changed so that the listener must now pay attention to the events that follow.	→	But then one day...
④	Describe a series of events that occurred in some cause-and-effect sequence.	→	Because of that... (repeat three times or as often as necessary)
⑤	Indicate that the story has come to a conclusion.	→	Until finally...
⑥	Describe how conditions have changed from the original context.	→	And ever since then...
⑦	Offer an explanation or insight derived from the story.	→	And the moral of the story is... (optional)

EXAMPLE: Story spine

In the context of knowledge sharing, a story spine might be applied to future possibilities or to stories about how the current situation came about. For example, how did our knowledge sharing initiative come about?

[1] ***Story spine*** - a mnemonic device or checklist that helps us tell more complete stories.

To use the story spine, you use the spine elements in the order given to begin sentences in a story.

For example:
Not too long ago**, it seemed like it would take months for volunteer staff in our country-based missions to figure out the role our unit plays in the organization. **And every time** a new person joined the team, we would hear the same old complaints - followed by the same old proposals. **But then one day**, we had the opportunity to... **And because of that... Until finally... And since then....

After telling or writing a draft using the story spine, you can revise it to make the language more natural and intuitive, dropping the explicit words from the story spine.

Once you have an initial version, try it out on others to see which parts work well and which need to be refined. As you practice and polish the story, the story spine will fall into the background.

FUTURE STORY - INTRODUCTION

When you can imagine **what success would look like** for a specific action or program at a particular time **in the future**, you're creating a vision of your desired outcome or future. Then you can look back and tell the **story of how you can get there**.

Involving a group in imagining what that desired future would be like for each of them, paints a richer picture, with more detail and diversity. It generates excitement and involvement in the future story they're creating and helps them **map out how they might get there**, which is essential to **later commitment to action**.

Future stories take the basic elements of storytelling, leap into an imagined future and use the power of storytelling to explore possibilities and plausible routes to that new destination.

Scenario: Future story

You invite a dozen people to participate in a morning-long session to develop a **vision** for how the **unit's newsletter** can become a **primary tool for knowledge sharing** that helps very busy people in the field in the country-based missions, meets the needs of the unit's staff, and provides informal reports to the parent organization.

In preparation for the morning you've held some conversations with partners in the field and brought quotes and stories from their e-mails in a handout.

You try a couple of different exercises to spark their imaginations and evoke stories. After they've jotted down the basic ideas for the stories, you ask them to sit together and work in pairs. When the participants have seated themselves with their partners, you ask them to tell each other their stories.

1 ***Question 1***
Imagine it's six months from now and everyone's raving about how good, useful, and even fun the newsletter is. Everybody eagerly awaits each new issue and forwards it widely.

What's it like? What makes it a great read? What kinds of stories and features does it have? How do you use it yourself? What makes you happy to contribute to it?

2 ***Question 2***
Tell a story about a day in the life of a person in the field who hears about something in the newsletter that solves an immediate problem.

What happens? What does she do with that new information or knowledge? How does it change how she works? Who does she share it with?

3 ***Question 3***
Tell a story about a day in the life of the newsletter editor.

- How does he keep his finger on the pulse of the unit and the country-based missions to know what's happening and what's important?
- How does he find, encourage, and reward contributors?
- How does he collect and then select stories?
- How does he make them available later on in an organized way?
- Is there one central editor or a network of people who share that role?

4 ***Question 4***
At the annual awards and recognition dinner for your parent organization, you're thrilled to accept the award for best newsletter of the year. In your speech, you tell a story about why it's such a great newsletter and how that came to be.

After the pairs have shared their stories, they join up in larger groups and retell the most compelling ones. Finally, the best ones are shared with the whole group and you capture the most important elements to use later in crafting a vision. You distribute the handout that you produced by asking some of these questions to a few partners in the field.

You read two of the stories out loud and let people scan the others. Then the group does a debrief that surfaces many different issues.

They review the elements and ideas, including different audiences, topics, authors, production methods, technologies, uses, and the like.

Their stories about how to get there from here identify new potential resources and contributions. Some of the stories told that day are actually included in a future edition of the newsletter!

FUTURE STORY - METHOD DESCRIPTION

We all love to dream and helping others see and join our dream is an important part of making it happen. What makes a future story work?

Elements that make future stories successful:

▶ **They are positive**

Stories about the future need to be attractive to encourage action toward making them happen. It's in our nature to be drawn to things that are attractive.

▶ **They create a clear picture**

The destination must be seen in order to entice us to travel the road.

▶ **They are told in the present tense**

When a story is told as if it exists already its power is magnified.

▶ **They are short enough to keep it in mind**

We have to remember it in enough detail to tell it to others.

▶ **They are based on reality**

Stories that are built from what exists today become grounded in reality even if the story describes something that does not exist today. We are practical people who need to feel the story can happen. And beginning with today helps us feel the trip is possible.

▶ **They are credible**

Listeners must feel they can be a part of the story. Two things help to make this possible:
the story is based on a reality that the listeners know already; and
creating the story together is a powerful way to gain credibility when working in an organization.

▶ **They are energizing**

The listener must step beyond credibility and see themselves in the story. It must call the listener to action.

FUTURE STORY - OUTCOMES

What are the outcomes the storytelling approach produces?

Constructing and telling future stories creates a sense of immediacy and possibility about a future state.

TIP: Future Story

A few things to keep in mind regarding future stories:

- without grounding the future story in the present situation, it can become a fantasy or wishful thinking;
- sooner or later it is crucial to subject future stories to a "reality check" to see if they make sense and seem attainable; a blue sky anything is possible attitude is helpful early on, but when stories are going to be shared, and discussed widely, some inappropriate variants might be discarded;
- involving the right people, including distant partners, is essential to developing a useful vision of knowledge sharing based on different visions of the future;
- and a clear view of the present and a compelling picture of the desired future will create a structural tension to propel you along the path to achieving your vision, even if you don't know all the details of how you'll do it yet.

It also develops common understandings of the present, its potential, and possible trajectories toward desired futures.

Variants to the future story approaches

A Tree of Means and Ends is a visual technique where a group draws a diagram that turns the analysis of a core problem and its causes and effects into a statement about the main objective, the ways to achieve it, and the ends that motivate them to pursue it. It is similar to a future story in that it activates the imagination to leap into a desired future, but it uses a visual strategy rather than a narrative one.

I Have a Dream! starts with a provocative idea and explores its implications. This technique focuses more on the implications and consequences of an imagined future rather than a strict exploration of the cause and effect chain that leads between the present and that imagined future. The dream that a group explores could be generated by the group itself or by a facilitator working with a leadership group.

The Ideal Scenario Tapestry brings together a collection of vision drawings using real or imaginary life forms or scenes to provoke a conversation about a future landscape. Conversations about how that landscape might make sense are used to generate a vision.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY - INTRODUCTION

In every organization some things work and some don’t. You can manage changing conditions by identifying what's already working and then analyze how to do more of it. This is the essence of Appreciative Inquiry. **Rather than solving problems, you focus on what's working and increase (appreciate) its use in your organization**.

Appreciative Inquiry can be a useful methodology for increasing knowledge sharing by appreciating what knowledge sharing has already been occurring.

Appreciative Inquiry is based on the belief that **the way you conduct an inquiry affects the outcome**. If you inquire into problems, you are likely to find more of them. But if you try to **do more of what is already working,** you are likely to **find more of what is good**. That gives you the basis to construct and develop more positive outcomes.

Appreciative inquiry was adopted from work done by earlier action research theorists and practitioners and further developed by David Cooperrider of Case Western Reserve University and Suresh Srivatsva in the 1980s.

Appreciative Inquiry assumes that people and organizations are full of strengths, capabilities, and resources - assets. Once those assets are identified, they can be amplified and leveraged.

Scenario: Appreciative Inquiry

You listen to people in your unit and realize there's a lot of positive work going on, but it's not showing up in the formal reporting or meetings. It's in the informal lore that the work is shared very haphazardly - and it's really valuable. You want to build on it and make it more visible.

You decide to use Appreciative Inquiry, a method you've learned that **identifies what's already working well so the organization can do more of it in different contexts**. You discuss using appreciative inquiry with several colleagues in your unit and in the field. They're excited!

Your small group decides to try a series of focused **one-on-one interviews** over the next two weeks to **draw out stories of successful knowledge sharing**. To make it possible to **involve as many people as possible**, they'll use Skype, e-mail, and other channels instead of everybody meeting in person.

You identify a dozen people who will then invite at least one other. They will take turns **interviewing each other.**

Here is what you do next:

- → You tell them to think back to a time when they experienced excitement in sharing knowledge with colleagues, when everyone was learning just what they needed to know at just the right time in the face of a big challenge or new opportunity. It may have been in response to a difficult problem, developing a new opportunity, or launching a new project.
- → You ask them to interview their partner to draw out their story so they can tell it later. Then they switch and do a second interview.
- → You tell them to write down each other's stories. Share their drafts to feel their story has been well understood and captured. Then ask them to send them back to you.

After you've collected all the stories from the field:

→ You get a small team together to look for the common patterns in these stories. The stories are amazing! They cover many kinds of knowledge sharing activities, from after action reviews to World Cafes.

→ To do more of what worked, you want to identify the characteristics when knowledge sharing went well. The team looks for the best parts, the highlights, the quotable quotes in the stories. These will help you build a list of the successful circumstances.

→ Then you and your team craft "provocative propositions" for a vision of knowledge sharing and circulate them widely for comment and refinement.

Comparison: Problem-solving and Appreciative Inquiry

The table below illustrates the differences between the assumptions and the process flow of problem-solving and appreciative inquiry.

Problem-solving	Appreciative Inquiry
"Felt Need" Identification of Problem	Appreciating and Valuing The Best of "What Is"
Analysis of Causes	Envisioning "What Might Be"
Analysis of Possible Solutions	Dialoguing "What Should Be"
Action Planning (Treatment)	Innovating "What Will Be"
Basic Assumption: An organization is a problem to be solved	Basic Assumption: An organization is a mystery to be embraced

Source: Sue Annis Hammond, The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry, Thin Book Publishing, 1996, p. 24.

Who is involved in Appreciative Inquiry?

In appreciative inquiry, the word "appreciative" means to celebrate and to increase in value.

In the process, you should include people who can identify positive experiences from the past and build on those experiences to increase their value in the organization.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY - 5-D MODEL

An Appreciative Inquiry process uses a cycle of 5 steps known as the 5-D model.

Define	establish the focus and scope of the inquiry through conversations with the process sponsor or the advocate for change. This is generally done before the larger group is engaged in the process. It may take hours or days of planning to complete. Think of the initial step in the appreciative inquiry scenario you looked at.
Discover	elicit stories of the organization or system at its best, usually beginning with interviews in pairs, capturing the stories and then sharing them with larger groups. The Discover step is the one illustrated in the appreciative inquiry interviews in the scenario. Discover can be done simultaneously in a face-to-face meeting, or more incrementally in a series of working sessions. This is the core of the methodology. It can be done at a distance, if necessary.
Dream	collect the wisdom of the stories and use it to imagine the future - representing it in any of several forms. (for more information see ***Annex 1***: "**5-D Model's 3rd step**")
Design	using elements of the stories and dreams that have been gathered, small groups think of steps that lead to a future based on the best of the past and the present.
Destiny *(or* ***Deliver****):*	the implementation (execution) of the proposed design, according to the resources available in the organization or system.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY - OUTCOMES

What are the outcomes the appreciative inquiry approach produces?

Using Appreciative Inquiry leads to a **series of positive statements made as if they were already happening**. Because those are grounded in what has happened in the past, **it's easy for people to imagine them happening in the future**. Then they can grow into it by doing more of what they already know how to do.

Variants to the Appreciative Inquiry approaches

Three Wishes is an exercise to help participants think about their preferred future. Ask each person to write down three personal wishes and three wishes for their organization. "If you visited yourself five years from now, what would you like to see?"

Vision Circle is a group visioning exercise in which participants sit in a circle facing outwards, with their eyes closed. Participants quietly visualize an ideal future that includes individual and group strengths and accomplishments. Invite someone chosen at random to share his or her vision. Others then join in one at a time (at random or by going around the circle). Each person repeats the statements already heard and add new elements to the vision.

Goal or Vision Tree is a group representation of the priorities of goals. It would be used instead of writing provocative propositions. Using colored paper, ask the group to construct a tree where each goal is represented by a piece of fruit. The larger pieces of fruit can represent more important goals. Those goals that are harder to reach and require more planning and effort are placed at the top of the tree. Thus a small piece of fruit near the bottom branches represents a less important goal which is nonetheless, easy to achieve. The tree can be enriched by listing the key strengths of the group as its roots, and the core principles and activities of the group as its trunk.

Participants **gain a greater appreciation for what's already working**. They have an experience of focusing on what went right, which can crowd out insolvable problems. Because problem solving is so ingrained in most organizations, the shift to what works may be subtle for many participants. It needs to be made explicit and practiced to change behavior over time.

An appreciative inquiry process is useful whenever an organization or system is seeking to transform the way it works, building on its existing strengths.

Keep in Mind	Risks
⇒ ensure the inquiry process is facilitated by someone who has observed it already or had hands-on training. Because it is a fundamentally positive process, people tend to join in and support an effort that they see as genuine;	⇒ to focus on "assets" or on "the positive" in such a way that genuine obstacles or barriers that deserve study are ignored; and
⇒ appreciative inquiry is a flexible process, so the basic idea can be adapted to small questions as well as large ones and it can be carried out face-to-face as well as at a distance; and	⇒ to carry out the inquiry without conviction or legitimacy. Unconscious negative assumptions leak out so that the process backfires and people become cynical about it.
⇒ appreciative inquiry may be especially appropriate for envisioning a future that emphasizes knowledge sharing activities because	

knowledge sharing is subtle and the attitudes that block it may be pervasive.

SCENARIO BUILDING - INTRODUCTION

Scenario Building (or Scenario Planning) is a methodology that is particularly useful for **making decisions when future conditions are uncertain**.

It's a method for **identifying the critical uncertainties** in an issue or decision and then developing plausible stories or scenarios to explore the implications of various courses of action.

The following scenario will give you an idea about how to use scenario building.

Scenario building

You're thinking about what roles news will play in your knowledge sharing vision and strategy. Dying newspapers work to reinvent themselves in the new media ecology. In natural disasters, ordinary people frantically send out photos, videos, texts, and tweets in a barrage of near-instantaneous coverage.

What's the role of expertise and editing? When is organizational message coherence important and when does it get in the way? The old models are being turned inside out and sideways.

Your head is spinning with possibilities and trade-offs.

"Do you continue to focus on policy and program reporting? Do you share breaking news from the field?"

What kinds of "news" are especially important for your unit and for the country-based missions now and in the next few years?

Or would it be better to find ways to encourage more blogging and tweeting and then curate the best into ongoing news streams?

Should you keep your very limited resources in the quarterly print newsletters for donors and your parent organization?

Curators cull, select, and present material for a specific purpose or effect. Your unit knows newsletters but has only spotty experience with social media.
How can you be prepared for such different possibilities and futures?

You decide to adopt the scenario building method to think through several possible futures and convene a meeting with your communications team.

See *Annex 2* for the final result of your teamwork

Scenario Building: Step

1	The team starts **by identifying the issue**. After a wide-ranging discussion, they settle on "how to share news about programs, practices, and results with a primary audience of people in the field who are already overwhelmed with work but need more up-do-date, actionable information".
2.	They **shorten the issue** to: "Providing curated news from and for the field, using technologies appropriate to the situation".
3.	They **brainstorm a list of driving forces and trends** affecting news gathering, sharing, and presentation for international development and relief work. They identify which of the many driving forces are uncertainties, as opposed to givens or things that will happen regardless. They want to **focus on the very few critical uncertainties that bear directly on the issue.**
4.	After much discussion, they come up with **two critical uncertainties**: Will news that headquarters continues to gather, organize, synthesize, and distribute serve everyone's needs better than people in country-based missions and in the unit's communities of practice simply posting to their blogs, Flickr, YouTube, and twittering? Print is the only medium everyone uses, but mobiles are almost everywhere. Every day some of your people use on-line news, blogs, forums, and more. To include everybody, do you stick to print newsletters or do you try small pilot projects with other technologies and media?
5.	For simplicity, they boil the uncertainties down to: **multiple technologies** **centralized** — **distributed** **single technology** These produce four different but plausible quadrants of uncertainty**. Each of these far corners is a logical future to explore in order to understand its implications and knowledge sharing challenges.**
6.	Lastly, you and your team **develop scenarios for each quadrant, written in the present tense, relevant to the defining issue and plausible given the assumptions.** They are almost caricatures, with memorable titles.

Although developing these scenarios is seen as quite an achievement, it's not the end of the process.

The scenarios stimulate important conversations about knowledge sharing in your unit. There are further discussions about your unit's closest partners, the desired outcomes over the next few years, and the

organizational resources required for each possible future.

Scenario building has proven to be a **valuable tool for thinking through the implications of various decisions.**

SCENARIO BUILDING - METHOD DESCRIPTION

Scenario Building is a structured method for **constructing stories or scenarios that describe the outer limits of plausible futures**. Its purpose is to **make the most important trends or driving forces visible** so that planners can recognize and anticipate how they might play out. These are the steps to follow when using scenario building.

1. Identify the issue or the decision to be made and the period of time you're focused on. The more clearly defined the focus, the better the result.

2. Identify the trends and primary driving forces at work in the present. These might include social or organizational dynamics, economic and funding issues, political issues, and technology issues. Examples of them are:

    - a change in organizational direction;
    - continued funding;
    - availability of technology resources;
    - successful partnerships; and
    - staff turnover or stability.

    Some may be givens, but many are uncertainties.

3. Cluster or sort these to come up with the critical uncertainties, those that are key to the issue at hand. This may take back and forth effort.

4. Simplify the clusters to come up with two different dimensions of uncertainty.

5. Use those two different dimensions to form a 2 by 2 matrix with four different but plausible quadrants of uncertainty. Each of these is a logical future.

6. Craft stories or scenarios for each dimension, written in the present tense, give each a memorable title and make it consistent and plausible, given two dimensions of uncertainty you've chosen. The scenarios don't have to be consistent with each other or fit together. The

purpose of the activity is not to tell four different stories and then predict which one will come true. Rather, this is a **visioning method to think through the implications of possible choices across all scenarios** so you can make better decisions in the midst of uncertainty.

⑦ Use the scenarios to explore in more detail at what might happen in each possible future so you better understand the implications of various choices.

⑧ Make decisions that play out well across several scenarios, rather than picking any one of the four.

SCENARIO BUILDING - OUTCOMES

What are the outcomes the Scenario Building approach produces?

The discussions and stories that occur around the scenarios **reveal important information about an organization's present** as well as **suggesting resources, activities, or developments that may be needed in the future**.

In some cases the stories that are invented in response to a scenario are the beginnings of action plans. In other cases the stories serve as a framework against which to consider organizational plans and initiatives.

The Future, Backward (**www.cognitive-edge.com/method.php?mid=10**) is a method that simplifies the construction of future scenarios by imagining the "best possible" and the "worst possible" futures.

It was developed as an alternative to scenario planning and is designed to increase the number of perspectives that a group can take both in understanding their past and of the range of possible futures.

Some of the scenarios and responses that are produced by a scenario building process are worth disseminating to an organization's partners, clients or funders.

TIP: Scenario Building

This methodology is most appropriate when very different outcomes seem to have roughly equal probabilities of occurring and don't fall into neat categories of "good", "bad", "desirable", and "undesirable".

This process is useful for stretching people's thinking about possible futures beyond their existing perspective. It will reveal how people in different roles or with different points of view will respond to a proposed scenario in different ways. That can help an organization prepare for a specific outcome as well as reveal the "lay of the land" regardless of the outcome. Therefore it does not address an "implementation phase" as such.

Scenario building can take considerable time and effort to do well. It is usually used for what are called "long fuse, big bang" problems - those where the results of decisions will take a long time to see and that will have a large impact.

OUTCOME MAPPING - INTRODUCTION

Outcome Mapping is a **planning and evaluation methodology** that focuses on **outcomes as behavioral change, rather than impacts alone**.

EXAMPLE

In the case of a water quality evaluation program, the evaluation would focus on the how well people were trained to maintain filters, if they knew when to get expert help, and the like, instead of evaluating the number of filters installed and the reductions in contaminants.

The following scenario will give you an idea about how to use outcome mapping.

Scenario: Outcome mapping

Some of your colleagues use outcome mapping as a methodology for planning, monitoring, and evaluating large-scale programs. You're intrigued because it focuses on desired changes in behavior, relationships, activities, and actions, rather than impacts.

You want to stimulate more knowledge sharing in the field, which will mean changes in behaviors, relationships, and so on. You're not sure that the full outcome mapping approach is necessary for your situation, so you want to try out just the first few steps on a small project. You decide to develop a vision and mission statement for revitalizing the newsletter that emphasizes behavioral outcomes.

You talk with your team about boundary partner organizations to invite to participate. These are people in other organizations your people interact with and whom you'd like to influence through more knowledge sharing. Then you send an e-mail to gather everyone's ideas.

While you've deliberately asked about "gathering and reporting news" and "revitalized news activities", many of the responses focus on a vision of the newsletter because it's the main vehicle for program news at present.

Here you can read some of the issues mentioned in the responses you received:

- the attitudes and motivations of newsletter contributors and how they would change in order to achieve the vision;

- the description of changes in audience: how their needs are changing and some of the many sources of information they are drawing on;
- a mention of the technology infrastructure that is needed to move toward the vision; and
- one person's vision of total success includes a community of practice for newsletter contributors. They would raise editorial standards, share resources, reflect on how the newsletter's audience was evolving, and learn together how to support it.

You take all the good suggestions and craft a draft vision statement to discuss and refine at the monthly meeting.

OUTCOME MAPPING - METHOD DESCRIPTION

Outcome Mapping has three stages:

1. **intentional design**;
2. **outcome and performance monitoring; and**
3. **evaluation planning.**

Intentional design includes seven steps and developing the vision statement is the first one of them. It provides an inspirational focus to motivate and reminder of the ultimate purpose of what the team works on every day.

The vision statement answers the "Why?" of what the program wants to accomplish.

The **vision statement focuses on the changes in the behaviors, relationships, activities, or actions the program intends to achieve**.

Who is Involved in Outcome Mapping?

The process should be **as participatory as possible**, involving a full range of stakeholders **including boundary partners**. Those are the individuals, groups, or organizations with whom the program interacts directly and with whom the program anticipates opportunities for influence.

Generally, a program does not have more than four or five types of boundary partners, drawn from broad categories such as local communities, government officials and policymakers, private sector organizations, academic and research institutes, and international institutions. A boundary partner is the actor in whom the program truly wants to encourage a specific change in behavior or actions.

Boundary partners: actors program interacts with directly

Steps involved in developing the vision statement

- **Conduct a discussion to bring out a shared understanding of the outcomes desired**

  Ask one of the participants: "In a few sentences, what is this program supposed to accomplish?" Then ask everyone, "Is this how you see it? Does this fit with our organization's objectives?"

- **Identify characteristics of what it would be like if the program were successful in three o five years**

  Ask each participant to write down the characteristics of what it would be like if this program were wildly successful in three to five years. What would be different? What are your dreams of success for it? What changes would you like to help make happen?

- **Review and discuss characteristics of success**

  In the group, review and discuss these characteristics of success. Write them on flip charts so the group can see them.

- **Draft a vision statement**

  During a break, the facilitator or volunteer drafts a vision statement from the ideas and language participants have offered.

- **Review statement with the group**

  The facilitator reads through the draft statement to the group and asks them to pay attention to

where there is jargon, politically charged or culturally insensitive language, confusing ideas, and so on. The first reading is without interruption so that everyone gets a sense of the whole statement.

- **Discuss alternatives with the group**
  During the second reading, the facilitator asks participants to raise their hands when there is a problem with jargon, insensitive language, and the like. At each interruption, participants discuss the problem area and try to find alternative language to resolve it. It's often best to have someone other than the facilitator read the statement the second and subsequent times.

- **Incorporate everyone's intentions in the vision statement**
  The process continues until all the problem areas have been resolved and the vision statement contains everyone's intentions.

- **Finalize and approve the vision statement**
  At the end of the process the facilitator reads the revised vision statement to the group. If it's complete, the group will feel satisfaction and readily approve it.

 These steps can be followed either in person or they can be adapted for a distributed environment.

OUTCOME MAPPING - METHOD DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), developed the vision statement shown in the example below as part of its Strategy and Results Framework:

To reduce poverty and hunger, improve human health and nutrition, and enhance ecosystem resilience through high-quality international agricultural research, partnership, and leadership.

Example: Outcome mapping

Around the world, people working in and supporting telecentres are able to access the information, resources, and relationships they need to support community development.

Where there is sufficient connectivity, telecentre activists participate enthusiastically in online communities - developing friendships, getting or providing answers, organizing and promoting events,

engaging in discussions and debates, swapping resources, and sharing learning and experiences through e-mail, blogs, images, video, and podcasts. Content flows between websites, e-mail groups, and print materials, as well as between different language communities.

People working at different levels, in different sectors, and within different parts of the telecentre ecosystem - from grassroots to global, private to public, and practitioner to donor - come to know and understand each other, build trust, and find ways to collaborate and coordinate.
Activists share the practical tools and processes they develop in their day-to-day work in such a way that all members of the telecentre ecosystem can adapt, localize, or build on them - and then share alike so that others can do the same, creating a cycle of innovation.

People are inspired to join the community. They are welcomed, connected, and supported. Activists build on each others' efforts and learn from each others' experiences. They are able to contribute to helping poor, marginalized, and remote communities in their efforts to gain political, social, and economic power.

Source: *Telecentre.org's vision statement for knowledge sharing*
(**www.telecentre.org/profiles/blogs/2086278:BlogPost:5279**)

OUTCOME MAPPING - OUTCOMES

What does the Outcome Mapping approach produces?

The vision and mission statements developed in the intentional design stage of outcome mapping provide the inspirational focus for what the organization wants to accomplish in its day-to-day work.

They are stated in terms of the desired behaviors, actions, and activities that the program will produce. They then lead to further steps in the design stage where outcome challenges and progress markers are developed.

TIP: Outcome mapping

Describing program outcomes in terms of changes in behavior, relationships, actions, and activities may be new to participants. It's a different way of looking at impacts. It focuses on all the contributions that are needed to achieve the impacts.
Outcome mapping as a methodology is most often used for large programs. It provides a structured framework for program design, outcome and performance monitoring, and evaluation. However, parts of it can be used for smaller projects where you want to think through how to influence changes in behavior to achieve a new goal.

CHOOSING A VISIONING METHOD

Each of the visioning methods in this lesson was developed for specific purposes. **Storytelling is a common thread in all of them**. Therefore you should listen for stories that reveal different beliefs about knowledge sharing in every setting and every method.

Here are suggestions about when you can use each of the other methods.

- ✓ **Future Story**: use it if you have a general goal but don't know what that possible future looks like or how to get there.
  By telling a detailed, compelling story about the future you want, you **open up your imagination to explore it, walk around in it, and see how it feels**. Then, by thinking backward from that future **to identify the necessary steps to get there**, you can chart a course to follow. The result is much greater clarity about the vision and strategies for achieving it.

- ✓ **Appreciative Inquiry**: use it if you want to energize people and bring out their best.
  The heart of the method is **to recall a time in the past that went exceptionally well and that relates to your current focus**. This **focuses** everyone's attention **on positive outcomes and future possibilities** rather than problem solving, imagined obstacles, or why change is impossible. The stories of those best experiences are then harvested to distill their essential elements. Those elements are the basis for a positive vision of the future that's grounded in past experience.

- ✓ **Scenario Building**: consider it if you have to make a decision that will have big consequences but you won't know the outcome for some time.
  It gives you a **disciplined way to explore plausible futures and understand the implications of possible actions**. Scenario Building takes time, effort, and some skill to do well. It's most generally used for large-scale issues, but you can use it for personal issues as well. The result is plausible scenarios based on critical uncertainties that can give you foresight into the future. They don't predict what will happen. Rather, they are thinking tools.

- ✓ **Outcome Mapping**: try its intentional design stage if you want to focus on the necessary changes required to make your proposed program successful.
  Instead of declaring the impacts you want to achieve in the future, **describe the desired changes in behavior, relationships, actions, and activities on the part of all relevant actors**. Be sure to include "boundary partners", those individuals, groups, and organizations with whom the program interacts directly and whom you want to influence through the program. You can use the Outcome Mapping method to **develop a behaviorally based vision statement** for your project or program without using the full-blown process for performance monitoring and evaluation

CHOOSING A VISIONING METHOD - ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

When choosing a particular method, there are some organizational factors to keep in mind:

- if **detailed planning is the norm** in your organization, a **detailed process** for reaching a vision may be very important;
- ask yourself if the **method is appropriate** for the scale of your organization or your project. Implementing knowledge sharing and learning in a small department or for a small pilot project involves working at a different scale than a project that spans multiple organizations and countries or one that involves large investments; and
- pay attention to your **intuition and to early reactions from colleagues** as you select a method. Some methods may not be **compatible with your organization's culture**. You may know that without being able to explain it.

CHOOSING A VISIONING METHOD - ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

When selecting a particular method, you should consider benefits and costs.

▲ Benefits

- try some visioning methods on your own to think through which might work best. Visualize the outcomes of using different methods for developing your vision;
- consider whether the process is worth the time and effort or whether the likely outcome is the kind of thing you are seeking; and
- some methods both help develop a vision and initiate knowledge sharing activities or behaviors. They result in a vision and participants actively share knowledge in the process.

▼ Cost and time

- whether you have the necessary skills and staffing resources or whether you need to get them;
- whether you can involve the right partners and stakeholders in your organizations or outside of it, if appropriate; and
- whether you will be able to get people's time and attention. Sometimes smaller chunks of time are available but longer periods are not. Similarly, it may be easier to get smaller groups together than large ones.

- You may get people's attention by inviting them to a planning and visioning process and then obtain a deeper commitment by demonstrating knowledge sharing in action.
- Often you can engage small groups at different times when convening a larger group all at once or in the same place would be impossible. It may take some ingenuity to conduct a visioning process with the right people at the right time. Often people's "lack of time" excuse is a symptom that a well-designed knowledge sharing strategy could help solve.

CHOOSING A VISIONING METHOD - FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many of the strategies you learned about were designed for organizational change. Although increasing knowledge sharing and learning can have large-scale impacts, the focus in this unit has been on applying these techniques for the design of knowledge sharing and learning specifically.

Some aspects of a knowledge sharing and learning strategy lend themselves to a "pilot project then scale up" approach, while others require significant up-front planning and investment.

EXAMPLE:

Some communities of practice start with something so simple as an invitation to a group of acquaintances for an informal lunch or a conference call on Skype. The likelihood that a community will form may become evident after one conversation. Others might require a carefully sequenced series of technology investments.

SUMMARY

- Stories are powerful tools that can help you make abstract ideas more concrete, visualize future possibilities and map out the way to the future. Stories can also help you develop a vision of knowledge sharing and the way to get there.
- Storytelling is a method that can help you create a shared vision for knowledge sharing through the stories you or others in your organization tell.

- To create a shared vision you need to combine storytelling with other visioning methods, namely future story, appreciative inquiry, scenario building, and outcome mapping. These methods provide further rigor to the visioning process.
- Future story enables you to envision what success would look like for a specific action or program at a particular time in the future. In doing so, future story helps map out the path to that future.
- Appreciative inquiry helps you identify what is already working well in your organization and how to do more of it.
- Scenario building is a method for identifying critical uncertainties of future situations, and exploring the implications of various courses of action.
- Outcome mapping in its vision statement step focuses on the changes in the behaviors, relationships, activities, or actions the program intends to achieve and it provides the inspirational focus for what the organization wants to accomplish in its   day-to-day work.
- To select your visioning method you should consider your organization’s culture, the type of project you are working on, your intuition and your colleagues’ feedback.

ANNEX 1

Participatory Visioning Methods Appreciative Inquiry – 5-D Model's 3rd step: DREAM

Dream is where wisdom from the stories is harvested and common themes are identified. The Dream process concludes with representing the desired future so it can be shared. This might be a collage, poem, drawing, song, mission statement or the like.

A common method is to craft "**provocative propositions**." These are bold statements about what could be -- real possibilities for the future -- written as if they are already happening in the present.

Provocative propositions are:

- **provocative** - they stretch and challenge common routines and assumptions;
- **grounded** - there are examples from the past that show the ideal is a real possibility;
- **desired** - the organization would want the results; and
- **affirmative** - they are stated in the affirmative and in bold terms.

These propositions, stated in the present tense, become a written vision of the desired future the organization wants to attain.

EXAMPLE: Provocative Proposition

This example of provocative propositions is from **MYRADA** (http://myrada.org/myrada/), a South Indian development organization, and their work with Appreciative Inquiry. The positive path: using appreciative inquiry in rural Indian communities.

Our organization has a clear and evolving vision and mission that we have consistently achieved by adopting innovative strategies and best practices. IMARK – Knowledge Sharing for Development
We have dedicated and professional staff who are vision-oriented and exhibit admirable leadership.
Our good administration is accountable, transparent and extraordinarily efficient.
The participation of people's institutions, effective networking and advanced communication systems sustain our energy and lead us to continual success-making the villages in which we work better places for all to live.

Example's Source: Sue Annis Hammond, The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry, Thin Book Publishing, 1996, pp. 34, 56-57

ANNEX 2

Participatory Visioning Methods Scenario Building – Introduction

Multiple Technologies

CENTRALIZED		DISTRIBUTED
Many Mouths, One Voice Headquarters staff blog and some use Twitter to announce new blog postings, headlines about important news, and the like. What used to go into the newsletter is now online in a variety of formats: monthly event calendars, weekly one-page e-mail bulletins, daily news and opinion blogs that invite comments, and more. The quarterly print newsletter for donors still wins awards.	**Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom** People in the field share news with their colleagues early and often. Some compile great collections of bookmarks to share. Others tweet all the time, asking questions, sharing ideas, passing news along. The community of practice group blog is more reflective but always lively. It's a buzzy, blooming garden of news, views, and tidbits with lots of energy. But it's hard to find the patterns and longer story lines in all this hot news of the moment.	
Tried and True Monthly print newsletters and occasional bulletins provide a regular rhythm of communications and keep your far-flung audience up to date with unit news. People in the field are recruited as contributors, but headquarters shoulders the responsibility for production, doing what they do best and leaving people in the field free to do their work. The newsletters tie the unit together and provide an ongoing overview of what's happening.	**31 Flavors** Each country-based mission and every community of practice has an informal newsletter. These come out at different times, in different formats, for different audiences. Mostly they're in print -- either handed out, faxed, or mailed to people -- but some are e-mailed or posted to online forums. It's the best way to stay loosely informed and coordinated with so much going on.	

Single technology