Speaking for ourselves:
pastoralist development dialogue

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Development

Ben Irwin, Semalign Belay (SOS Sahel) and Duncan Macqueen (IIED) have prepared this tool, from the work of the SOS Sahel Ethiopia programme with pastoralist communities. The tool draws directly from a study by Irwin and Belay (2004).

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Summary

"Pastoralist Development Dialogue" is a tool for marginalized communities, in our case pastoralists and other forest dependent communities. These communities are marginalized on account of incompatibilities between their traditional way of life and the push and pressure of modern development and change. The tool helps communities to express their priority needs and constraints in the language of development professionals. The language is that of the sustainable livelihoods approach. The first part of this paper describes the tool methodology. The second part refers to the tool development process, learning and impact. The field example is based on working with Ethiopian pastoralist communities linked to SOS Sahel's Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project.

What is 'Pastoralist Development Dialogue'?

Pastoralist Development Dialogue is a twofold process involving;

(i) the development of skills of communities to represent themselves though the development and application of livelihoods analysis tools.

(ii) the creation of appropriate opportunities through which to demonstrate and enact new representation skills.

The tool has a number of critical uses or aims. It helps to clarify the nature of livelihood problems faced by marginalised groups. It enables common understanding and ownership of those problems. It reduces dependency on outside agencies in developing solutions to community problems. The tool seeks to create a bridge between traditional cultural and resource management systems of the past and opportunities for positive development in the future. We have developed the tool to respond to the desire of pastoralist groups to manage their own lives and resources, through their own institutions. The tool is designed to equip and enable pastoralist institutions and communities to act as equal development partners, in the transition processes that are affecting them.

The process of developing this Pastoralist Development Dialogue tool has involved two working phases, made up of twelve sequential stages. These are listed below. (see Figure 1):
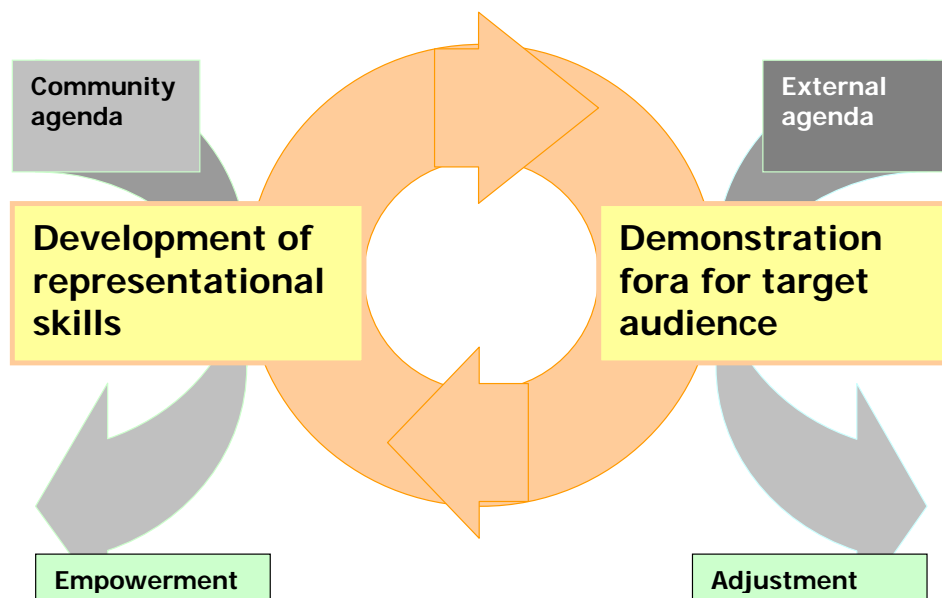
PHASE 1. *Development of representational skills : Pastoralist Development Dialogue*
- Getting started – understanding of the sustainable livelihoods framework
- Familiarization – building good relationships with the community
- Introduction of sustainable livelihood framework – focus on capital assests
- Drawing capital assets to create a physical tool
- Problem identification related to capital assets
- Solution identification and categorization related to capital assets
- Sustainability / feasibility assessment related capital assets
- Action plan development

PHASE 2. *Demonstration opportunities for target audience : Presentation Events*
- Identification of target audience
- Selection of venue for presentation
- Demonstration event to target audience
- Review

Figure 1. Pastoralist Development Dialogue

The Pastoralist Development Dialogue tool is designed to fortify communities to rebuff or reshape the agendas of external development agencies, as well as present their own development agenda, in a coherent development language.

Why is Pastoralist Development Dialogue necessary in pastoralist and other marginalised communities? : Challenging Marginalisation

In common with many other marginalised groups, pastoralists are highly vulnerable to misrepresentation or non-representation within development processes. Suffering from negative effects of inappropriate modern development, and ignored or simply missed out of land use and natural resource policy debate and formulation, the future sustainability of pastoralist livelihoods and pastoral lands hangs in the balance (Boku and Irwin 2003).

This situation is common to pastoralist peoples across Africa, and is very relevant in Ethiopia. Despite theoretical protection of pastoralist land rights under the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Government of Ethiopia, 1995), there is a catalogue of recent examples of inappropriate and contradictory policy applications. Examples range from the enforced quotas of participants for the SG2000 improved seed and fertiliser agricultural package[1], to pastoral land appropriation under the guise of investment policy[2]. Such examples clearly demonstrate the powerless position of pastoral communities in their own development, as well as the development that is going on around them.

As a consequence, pastoralists are recognised as highly marginalised in Ethiopia (Lister, 2004). This marginalisation is most clearly manifest in the exclusion from policy discussion, policy formulation and policy implementation. Specific policies and development strategies which have a direct impact on pastoral livelihoods, but have not adequately engaged with pastoralists in their discussion, formulation and implementation. These include;

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[1] This government extension package, appropriate for rainfed high production areas, was introduced as a blanket approach across Ethiopia. Results in the Borana drylands were predictably poor. The case demonstrates two important issues. The first is the singular view that improved crop based agriculture is the solution to rural poverty. The second is the lack of understanding and appreciation of pastoral production systems as functional landuse systems.
[2] Large tracks of pastoral land have been assigned to investors, for activities such as ranch holding, despite community protestation.

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- Pastoral Area Development Policy;
- Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- Agricultural Development Policy;
- Land Certification / Tenure Policy,
- Investment Policy (specifically land allocation).

Focusing in on the issue of marginalisation. Marginalisation of pastoralist groups in Ethiopia involves a number of common and or reoccurring elements: These can be summarised as;
- Rapid change / develop pressure – with few local institutions able to respond to the pace at which responses are required
- Inadequate information and communication – limited consultations without adequate pre-briefing or time to prepare a response
- Unbalanced dialogue processes – agendas and subject material of consultations set by outside agencies rather than driven by concerns from within the community
- Lack of accountability to pastoralist communities in effecting and reviewing change

We propose that each of these aspects of marginalisation will be addressed through establishing a Pastoralist Development Dialogue. This can be achieved by working with communities through the twofold process set out above;
- (i)   the (pre-emptive) development of representational skills
- (ii)   the community driven establishment of development events for target audiences.

The tool "Pastoralist Development Dialogue" has been designed to achieve this twofold process, and to reduce marginalisation as a result.

To be able to implement this tool in the field the following minimum preconditions are necessary:
- Coherent and stable community structures
- A facilitator familiar / trained with the use of the tool
- Significant periods of time when community groups can meet to undertake tool development (we recommend that the facilitator should stay with the community group for a period of at least one month)
- An understanding of the problems of marginalisation and a commitment to address them
- Acceptance of development actors that they need to listen to communities

What stages does 'Pastoralist Development Dialogue' involve? : Critical Issues in this Action Research

This section of the document gives a detailed description of the Pastoralist Development Dialogue tool. The name was chosen in order to emphasize, the importance of two way dialogue, and dialogue coming from within the community. The basis of the tool is developed from thinking that people's livelihoods are derived from each, and a combination of all, the five capital assets (Natural Capital, Human Capital, Physical Capital, Social Capital, and Financial Capital) as set out in the Sustainable Livelihoods framework (DfID 2000). These assets are shaped by external factors which either facilitate or limit access to, and use of them. The tool follows a stepwise process of; identifying community held capital assets, identifying problems associated with each capital asset, identifying solutions for those problems (in relation to their capital assets), action planning and assessment (again in relation to their capital assets), and presentation livelihood issues to target development actors (Government Offices / NGOs).

The result of the work is the emergence of a wide-ranging tool, which can be adapted and used in different aspects of livelihoods analysis, planning and presentation.

Detailed description of the steps in tool use

PHASE 1 – development of representational skills: Pastoralist Development Dialogue.

Stages 1 – 8
Stage 1. Getting started – understanding the sustainable livelihoods framework
Objectives
Develop a clear understanding of the sustainable livelihoods framework among the field team.
Steps to follow
- o Review relevant materials on sustainable livelihoods and participatory field methodologies
- o Plan the field methodology. The methodology needs to be simple and flexible so as to accommodate lessons from the field experience, as they are learnt.
- o Train facilitators
- o Identify community groups and structures to work with.
- o Develop tentative field work plan

Stage 2. Familiarization – building good relationships with the community
Objectives
Develop good communication and rapport with the community, based on mutual trust and respect.
Introduce the idea of working together to develop a Pastoralist Development Dialogue tool.
Steps to follow
- o Community contact meeting; minimum three days before the main introductory meeting, visit the village; ask / invite the community to attend Pastoralist Development Dialogue discussion meeting. Check for local information and communication channels so that the information is relayed through out the community.
- o Hold Pastoralist Development Dialogue discussion meeting. Arrive on/ before time. Invite elders to open the meeting by blessing (use the local norms)
- o Introduce the field team; the facilitator introduces him/herself and asks team members to introduce themselves. Adding a little additional information about yourself de-formalises introductions and shows initial openness.
- o Ask the community to introduce themselves.
- o Introduce your organization, mission of the organization, area of specialty, operational areas, history, and future directions (be brief and informative).
- o Clearly and briefly explain the objectives of the meeting using the local language of the community.
- o Briefly explain the idea of a Pastoralist Development Dialogue tool, what it is, what it might do, and the potential benefits (role plays are useful here)
- o Clearly explain methodology and methods of developing the tool (explain that communities will not receive any material incentives for the considerable time they will need to invest in the tool development process).
- o Encourage participants to ask, comment, and highlight their feelings and views. Allow the community to decide their level of involvement and commitment. If they are not interested or able to work with you seek another group.
- o Negotiate time; the overall process of developing a Pastoralist Development Dialogue tool and the skills of tool use, requires continued periodic engagement, which in turn requires the community to invest considerable time. Work in community time.
- o Group formation; ask community to select a group(s) who will develop and use the tool to represent and present the community's livelihood issues. An important point to note here is that, if appropriate, it is recommended to relate group selection with existing community institution structures.

Stage 3. Introduction of sustainable livelihood framework to community group
Objectives
Introduce community to the sustainable livelihoods framework
Introduce the community group to the different language (sustainable livelihoods framework) used by development professionals, and explain the ideas behind why it is important for them to understand this, and be able to use it.
Steps to follow
- o Introduce the objectives of the meeting
- o Briefly explain the sustainable livelihoods framework with a focus on capital assets
- o Unpack the capital assets pentagon in to the separate assets, and facilitate detailed discussion on each individual asset, their components and elements
- o Ask community group to discuss their capital assets based on their own ideas and understanding of what capital assets they have. Identification of assets can be done in brainstorming sessions.
- o Facilitate the group to score each capital asset in terms of how much the community has of that particular asset
- o Conclude meeting by reflecting on the fulfilment of meeting objectives
- o Propose thinking tasks in preparation of next meeting / stage

Stage 4. Drawing Capital Assets to create a physical tool
Objectives
Visualize capital assets based on the community group's own ideas and understanding
For explanation and presentation of the community's capital assets
Develop capital assets cards
Steps to follow
- o Organize necessary materials for drawing
- o Introduce and discuss the idea of drawing in order to represent capital assets
- o Ask community group to draw objects and or items that represent each Capital Asset on separate cards
- o Ask community group to present their drawings to each other and select the best representative cards for each Capital Asset
- o Explain that these can now be made into capital asset cards, to create a physical tool. Agree how you will do this, including the adding of comparative pictures as mirror images of the communities diagrams
- o Copy, scan, print and laminate, to produce sets of capital asset cards
- o Pack the cards into a bag and hand over the tool
- o Repeat above steps to develop representative drawings for Vulnerability context and Political influence, Add these two new cards to the tool kit
- o Discussion on relationships between asset cards and influence cards (monitor understanding) [3]
- o Propose thinking tasks in preparation of next meeting / stage
(see Figure on page 8)

Stage 5. Problem identification related to Capital Assets
Objectives
Identify community livelihood problems associated with each capital asset
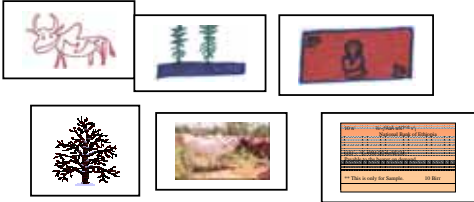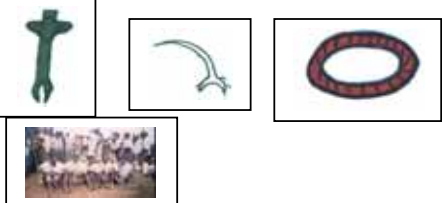Learn to use the Capital Asset cards
Steps to follow
- o Introduce the Capital Asset cards as the basis of the Pastoralist Development Dialogue tool.
- o Facilitate community sub-groups to present capital assets to each other.
- o Introduce the idea of identifying problems linked to each Capital Asset
- o Ask communities to arrange asset cards on the ground

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[3] In our field experience the community group actually dropped the vulnerability and policy influence cards as they found that most of the capital asset discussions inherently involves and is influenced by the real life vulnerability context and policy influence.
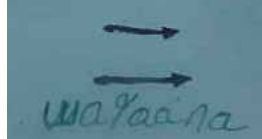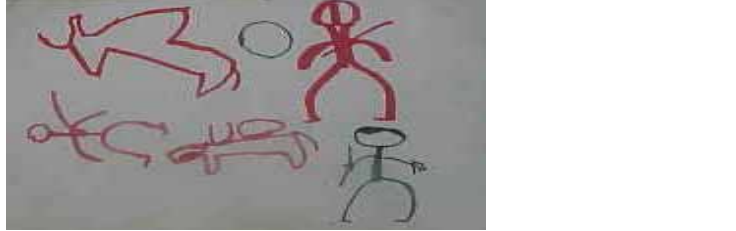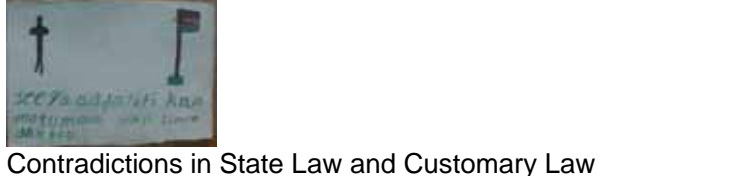
- o Facilitate identification of problems for each asset
- o Encourage communities to visualize problems (drawing)
- o Place drawn problems along the side the corresponding capital asset
- o Ask the community to present (to each other) what is now displayed on the ground (this action is part of initial building of presentation skills

(see Figure on page 9)

Figure 2. Visualised Capital Assets

NATURAL CAPITAL	
	Natural capital comprises forests, wild animals, water, climate, soil grass, and more generally Natural Resources,
HUMAN CAPITAL	
	Community identified Human capital primarily as health (visualized by a capsule), physical fitness (visualized by a fat man), knowledge and skill (visualized by a maize crop). The explanation for representing knowledge and skill by a maize crop is that unless someone has the knowledge and skill of farming it will be not possible to expect good harvest.
PHYSICAL CAPITAL	
	Physical capital (infrastructure) comprises houses used for different purposes, roads, schools, and water points.
FINANCIAL CAPITAL	
	Financial capital is represented by a 10 birr Note, a livestock which is source of their finance, and crops which can also be converted to money by selling
SOCIAL CAPITAL	
	The community visualized social capital by three objects each describing a Borana traditional institution the Gadda.

Figure 3. Problem identified in relation to Capital Assets

Assets	Problems identified
Natural Capital	 Forest Fire Conflict Drought
Human Capital	 Lack of Knowledge Lack of Skill
Financial Capital	 Animal Health
Physical Capital	 Lack of Road No Health Post No Flour Mill No Grain Store No Market
Social Capital	 Contradictions in State Law and Customary Law

Stage 6. Solution identification and categorization in relation to capital asset
Objectives
Identify solutions for problems associated with each capital asset
Relate solutions to capital assets that the community have.
Steps to follow
- o Ask community group to lay down asset cards, and associated problems on the ground
- o Facilitate group to brainstorm to identify potential solutions for each identified problem
- o Ask communities to categorize solutions based on their capacity to implement the suggested solutions. Three categories can be used:
  - I. Solutions that can be fully addressed by community using their internal resources (capital assets in hand)
  - II. Solutions that can be addressed by internal community resources with some external assistance (cost sharing arrangement)
  - III. Solutions that can only be addressed by external assistance with minimum input from the community

Stage 7. Sustainability / feasibility assessment related to capital assets
Objectives
Assess the feasibility and workability of a proposed / potential solution - development activity
Steps to follow
- o Ask community group to lay down asset cards. In this exercise the asset cards are used to assess feasibility in terms of the use of capital assets as part of the solution. Financial Capital is used to weigh costs, Natural Capital to determine impact on the environment and available natural resources, Physical Capital in terms of available infrastructure such as markets, Social Capital looks at who will manage the development plan and compatibility with existing social values and government policies, and Human Capital measures technical complexity and labour requirements
- o Select solution to work on
- o Ask communities to draw three columns on the ground to build a matrix, column headings are; resources needed / resources available in the community / resources required from outside the community
- o Facilitate the community to carry out an assessment of the solution either by discussion of factors or by simple scoring
(see Figure 4. 0n page 11)

Stage 8. Action plan development
Objectives
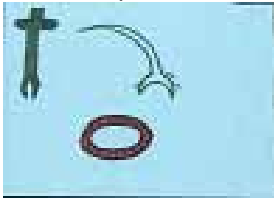Mobilize internal and external resources to achieve livelihood solutions
Develop action plans
Steps to follow
- o Select a solution to work on
- o Ask community to lay down asset cards
- o Ask community to draw three columns on the ground
- o Title the new columns; when, where, and how
- o Facilitate the community to decide when, where, and how
- o Discuss and develop the detail of an action plan
- o Decide implementation strategy in relation to solution category (Stage 6)
- o Agree timing and monitoring systems
- o Brainstorm potential partners who can support implementation (as needed)

Figure 4. Project screening - a flour mill - using Sustainability/ Feasibility Assessment

Activity Assessed - Flour Mill				
Sustainability Criteria	What the activity needs	What they have	What they need	Score
Materials / Environmental Impact (Natural Capital)	• Poles • Stones • Sands • Land	• Poles • Stones • Sands • Land	_	3
Technical complexity - knowledge / labour (Human Capital)	• Skilled Labour • Unskilled labour	• Unskilled labour	• Skilled labour	2
Cost / Capital items (Financial Capital)	40,000 Grinder	5,000	35,000	2
Infrastructure (Physical Capital)	Local Market	Local Market	-	3
Compatibility to existing management systems (Social Capital)	Group management	Good social asset of communal management and use of resources	-	3
Risks/vulnerability/policy				
Total				13

Additional notes on Sustainability - Feasibility Assessment
A risks section is included in order to capture less specific criteria. General questions concerning issues such as drought risk, service availability (i.e. vet services), and market potential etc, are considered under this section. The question to ask is what are the associated risks of the proposed activity and can they be avoided / solved)?. Risk is scored as high / medium / low

Table 1. Assessment matrix for proposed activity : scoring

Sustainability criteria	High	Medium	Low
Cost	1	2	3
Technical Complexity	1	2	3
Market for Products	3	2	1
Environmental Impact	1	2	3
Compatibility to existing social and political systems	3	2	1

Assessing a proposed solution by scoring, and analysing what the score means in terms of accepting (going ahead), or rejecting (refusing funding) the solution is the purpose of using this stage (stage 7) within the tool. In this stage the 5 capital assets were adjusted to be used as 5 Sustainability Criteria. Each had a highest positive score of 3 and a lowest negative of 1. Therefore the maximum positive score achievable is 15 – and the mid point score is 7.

Once scoring had been carried out, a more informed decision can be made, by the community, about whether to undertake and or move forward with the assessed activity. As a general rule and guide scores can be interpreted as below:
  o Activities scoring lower than 7 – think carefully about rejecting the activity
  o Activities scoring between 7 and 10 - think carefully rejecting the activity as there are obviously risks and negative aspects to the proposed activity - careful consideration and analysis of the sustainability issues (justifications and reasoning and risks) highlighted during discussions.
  o Activities scoring between 11 and 13 should probably be funded but with careful consideration and analysis of the sustainability issues (justifications and reasoning and risks) highlighted in the assessment
  o Activities scoring between 13 and 15 should be funded / carried out

Whilst making decisions it is critical to refer and reflect on the justifications and reasoning given whilst scoring. This information is particularly useful for making decisions concerning activities that achieve a mid point score and are therefore not obvious whether to accept or reject. The justification and reasoning sections also provide useful information concerning how to go about implementing an activity, what areas might need focus, and what potential pitfalls should be avoided.

PHASE 2 – Demonstration opportunities for target audience: presentation opportunities.

Stages 9 - 12
Stage 9. Identification of target audience
Objectives
Select the group of decision makers who you wish to influence
Steps to follow
- o Facilitate community discussion
- o Discuss options and opportunities
- o Match relevant development actors to proposed solutions – action plans

Stage 10. Select the venue for presentation
Objectives
Chose a location and venue that is accessible to the target audience and convenient affordable to the community
Steps to follow
- o Facilitate community discussion
- o Discuss options and opportunities
- o Decide appropriate venue

Stage 11. Demonstration event to target audience
Objectives
Communicate with the external development actors using development language
Seek external assistance
Establish Pastoralist Development Dialogue
Steps to follow
- o Build presentation skills of the communities (practice makes perfect)
- o Invite appropriate institutions and potential partners (previously identified)
- o Facilitate the selection of facilitator from the community who will moderate the presentation
- o Record what went right, wrong, comments, reactions, and analyses with the group
- o Discuss presentation impact and what next

Stage 12. Review
Objectives
Learn and improve presentation skills
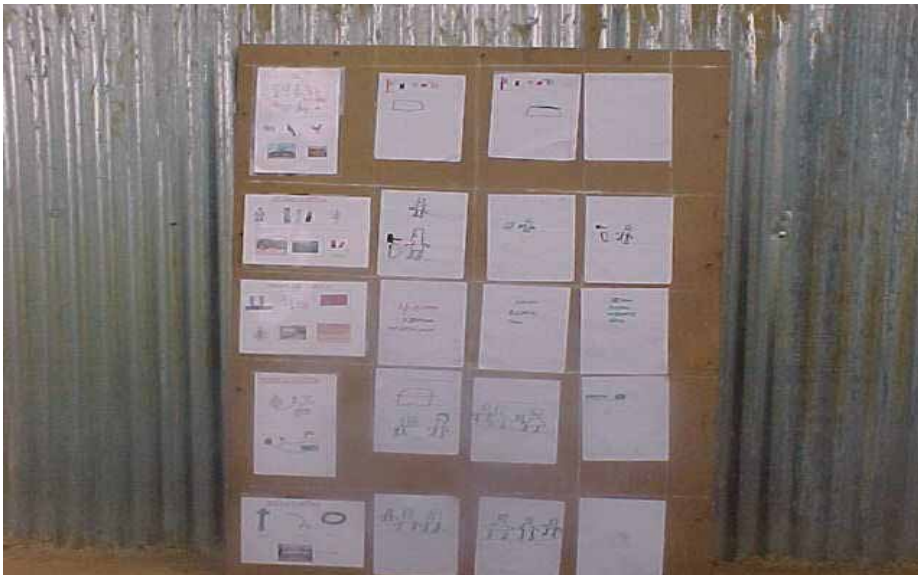Follow up on decision made during presentation event
Steps to follow
- o Facilitate review and reflection meeting
- o Assess impacts and results of the presentation event
- o Brainstorm improved presentation techniques
- o Decide follow up activities and next steps

Figure 5. Problem identification displayed on a presentation board

Figure 6. Project Proposal on presentation board

List of Figures and Tables

References

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