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**Step 1** Discovery

## Identify the problem/challenge: 60 minutes

In Step One you decide which problem you are going to focus on for the whole cycle. Avoid problems that you can do nothing about or that you will not have the required resources to solve. **TIP**: Use the methods opposite to help better understand/describe the problem.

## What is the problem/challenge?

What is the story behind the problem/challenge?

Suggested methods:

Get Started Check Around Break It Down Break Free Evaluate & Select

🕓 ± 15 min 🛛 🚨 3+

## THE TIME MACHINE

TO IDENTIFY THE JOURNEY THAT LED TO A PARTICULAR SITUATION OR PROBLEM.

## How?

- Draw a horizontal line.
  Write the situation at the furthest point on the right (e.g. 'the product isn't selling') and highlight the main 'verb', e.g., 'isn't
- selling'.**3.** Ask what happened right before. Write the answer to the left and highlight the main 'verb' again.
- **4.** Continue until you have an overview of all the events that led up to a situation.

#### Result

A sequence of events showing the probable causes and their effects.

Get Started Check Around Break It Down Break Free Evaluate & Select

## UNPEELING THE ONION

TO EXPLORE THE BOUNDARIES OF A SITUATION, AN IDEA OR A PROBLEM.

## How?

- Take a large sheet of paper and draw a circle to represent the centre of the onion.
- Inside the circle, write down a situation, problem or idea whose boundaries you want to explore (e.g. my cat seems stressed).
- Draw a circle around the first circle and write down the most direct and immediate concepts that describe the main situation or idea (e.g. "food", "movement"), or are related to it.
- Add more layers to your onion. The concepts furthest from the core will be the relevant to the main situation or idea.

#### Result

A complete onion containing categories showing which concepts are closely related to your topic and which are not.

Get Started Check Around Break It Down Break Free Evaluate & Select

## © ± 15 min ≗ 3+ THE GREAT PIE

TO VISUALISE THE ELEMENTS OF A SITUATION OR PROBLEM AND THEIR IMPORTANCE AS A WHOLE.

## How?

- Think of a situation, a problem or an idea as being 100% of the big pie (e.g. water pollution in the river "x").
   Draw a large sizele (the big pie) and around it write all
- Draw a large circle (the big pie) and around it write all the elements that describe it and are related to it (e.g. neighbouring inhabitants, industries).
- a. Assign a percentage to each element in terms of importance and draw the slices of the pie accordingly (it doesn't have to be totally accurate as long as the slices are in line with the percentages).

## Result

A visual reflection on the priority or importance of the elements of a situation.

Get Started Check Around Break It Down Break Free Evaluate & Select

🕓 ± 60 min 🛛 🐣 3+

## THE BIG WHY

To identify the motivation of the relevant actors/ stakeholders in order to predict their willingness to use/invest/purchase your solution or idea.

## How?

- 1. Pre-select 3 potentially good ideas.
- Plot each idea as a 'journey' or as activities, and highlight who is involved in each step, e.g. investors, parents, lawyers, organisations, products, etc.
- Highlight those that are crucial to each step and discuss with your team if those actors/stakeholders remain motivated throughout the whole journey. What would be the
- motivation? 4. How many steps does it take before the motivation becomes unclear? How many steps can it take for the motivation to be lost? Add red dots to those steps.
- Repeat steps 2 to 4 with the other two ideas and make the final count. The idea with the least red dots is the best one.

## Result

A selection of ideas based on tracing the underlying motivation of the actors/stakeholders involved in an idea.

Derived from The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. ABN 63 942 912 684, CRICOS Provider No: 00025B and techniques from the card set 75 Tools For Creative Thinking (www.75toolsforcreativethinking.com)







Ideate

Brainstorm solutions: 30 minutes	
You are now moving into the second stage of the Action Research cycle.	
Imagine as many solutions as possible to the problem you wish to solve. You might need to break down the solutions into smaller strategies, or you might have more than one solution.	
At the same time, think about what kinds of data you could collect to show whether your solution has worked or not.	





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**Step 2** Interpret

# Develop the action plan : 30 minutes

In Step Two you will develop a plan to solve the problem you have identified in Step One. TIP: Choose one or more of the solutions from your brainstorming

What can we do to achieve this objective/target (your strategy)?	Who will be responsible for implementing this strategy?	What local resources (people or materials) might be useful	When will this strategy be implemented?	How will you measure success? What are your indicators?	What data will you need to tell if you have attained your target?	Where will you get this data?







**Step 3** Experimentation

# Implement the plan : 3 weeks

In Step Three you will try to implement the plan you developed in Step Two

## TIPS:

- it is a good idea to try out one idea first rather than trying to do a lot of new things all at the same time;
- even if your strategy doesn't seem to work, keep records of what you did and collect data about it;
- talk to your colleagues about what you are trying to do; and

• keep a record of any questions or problems, take photos, record video, interview participants and write notes

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**Step 4** Evolution

# What happened: 30 mins

In Step Four examine what happened during your Action Research

The important part of this template and step is describing your results in as much detail as possible. The first three columns of this template use information from your Action Plan.

From your Action Plan (i.e. from Step 2)	From your Action Plan (i.e. from Step 2)		Results
What did you do to solve your problem? What was your strategy? (how/way to solve the problem)	How did you measure success?	What evidence did you use?	Did this work? Why/Why not?





Image: Non-Step 5    Evolution	
<b>Reflect on what happened: 15 mins</b> Step Five is very important because it is here that you reflect on your success or difficulty with solving your problem.	
Reflecting on your actions will help you think about improving your solutions. Reflect on both your strategies and the results of implementing the strategies by answering these questions:	Do you need to collect more or different types of data?
Why were your strategies successful or not successful?	
	If your strategy did work what would you do to improve it further to use again?
How did outside/internal factors impact on the implementation of your plan?	
	How did the strategy help you achieve your target to solve the problem?
What would you do differently next time?	
	What else do you have to do to achieve the target?

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**Step 6** Evolution

# Use results to update and modify plan: 15 mins

In Step Six of the Action Research Cycle you begin to consider how you can continue with the cycle through modifying and updating or changing your plan.

Use all the information you have collected in each of the previous stages to help you decide what to do next.

Are you going to create a new plan? Or develop a modified plan? How will the new plan be different from the original plan?

Will you continue to work on the same problem? Or modify the existing problem? Or work on a new problem? Why have you made this decision?

What have you learned from doing the first five steps of the Action Research cycle?

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Step 7 Share

# Share results with colleagues and others: 30 mins

• Sharing your results with others will help others learn about your work and the Action Research process;

• Action Research can become part of your professional learning done in clusters and with other groups;

• sharing the Action Research process with others may result in a more sustainable use of this process;

• clusters or groups may want to undertake an Action Research project together after hearing about the individual projects completed;

• sharing your results with your community will show the community that they can take ownership of their problems and find solutions to them; and

List all parts of the project that you would share with others? For example, data collection methods, results, strategies you used.	Who do you want to share information with? Be specific – who, where and when?	How? What is the best way to pass on this information? Develop a plan for the sharing.