

COMMUNITY MURAL

A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO MOBILISING COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION



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The first step towards getting somewhere is
to decide that you are not going to
stay where you are



In 2006, Live and Learn Environmental Education conducted research into perceptions of environmental issues in several Maldivian communities. The research suggests that there are a range of issues that have significant impact on people's health, well being and livelihoods. Each island in the Maldives is unique, and hence each island identified different environmental issues, however several issues emerged as the most significant and therefore priority issues for the Island communities:

- Water (quality & quantity)
- Waste (solid & sewage, collection, treatment & disposal),
- Beach erosion (minimisation), and
- Health (links to water).

It is often difficult for an outsider or visiting 'expert' to understand the important environmental issues in

a community, this environmental education toolkit acknowledges the need for communities to identify their own environmental issues that they consider to be significant. The process of identifying and exploring the impacts of environmental issues on the community is central to the learning outcomes in this toolkit. Instead of focusing on a predetermined issue, this toolkit guides the community toward a focus on the issues which the participants determine to be important.

The Mural Toolkit is primarily written for facilitators, in-order for them to work with community members to identify and explore environmental issues and to develop a community action project. The project is focused on developing a community mural (artwork), and is intended to model and lead the way toward further community action on environmental issues.

It will be an advantage for the facilitator of this project to have previous training or experience in leading a group through participatory learning and planning methods. However, it is intended that this resource will be provided to prospective facilitators with training and support where possible. In the Maldives this training will be provided by Live and Learn Environmental Education.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this toolkit is to empower community involvement in environmental management by taking part in participatory learning, decision making, planning and action. The focus is on creating a mural, which serves as a first step and model for mobilizing further community action.

WHAT IS A MURAL?

A *mural* is an artwork painted on a permanent surface such as a wall or fence, or perhaps even on a structure like a rainwater tank. Murals are usually painted in a prominent position where they can be viewed by the public. Murals can be made by a group of people who work together to make the artwork as a team. Murals are BIG and colorful– the bigger and more colorful the better!

Why use a mural to take action for the environment?

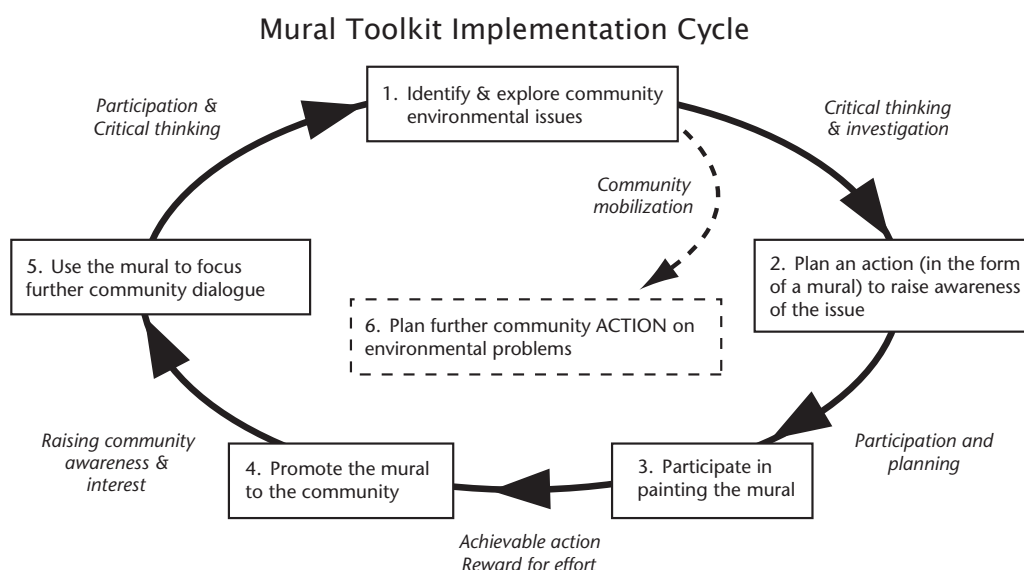
This toolkit is intended to assist communities to *mobilize action* toward solving environmental problems. The mural is an effective way to make



a start by involving people in first steps that are *achievable and rewarding*. Environmental issues can sometimes seem too big or too difficult to handle, or sometimes they are just taken for granted and don't enter our minds. Mural projects are very enjoyable and the results can be appreciated by everyone.

The mural toolkit models an approach that can be replicated to empower the community to take further action. Participants in the project will develop knowledge and skills in participatory decision making and planning, and learn about specific environmental issues. The diagram below illustrates the implementation cycle and potential of the mural project to extend to further action.

The development of a community mural is a way of taking a first step to solve an environmental problem, involving people and creating an environment for change.



STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT:

- 1 Form a group to take on the mural project. It will be an advantage to include people from various different backgrounds (or other groups) in your community. [Activity # 1]
- 2 *Think, share ideas and learn.* Activities encourage participants to think critically about environmental issues in their community and examine how they impact on people's livelihoods, health and well being.
[Activities # 2 – # 4]



- 3 *Investigation & research.* Seek expert advice or research literature on the issue in order to gain a better understanding. [Activity #5]
- 4 *Planning for Action!* Participants will plan a mural, involving various members of the community. They will also learn communication skills, such as how to promote a *main message* – which will be the focus of the mural.
[Activities # 6 - # 9]
- 5 *Create the mural!* This step will require all participants to work together; everyone will take pride and feel ownership of the final result.



- 6 *Promoting the mural.* This will raise awareness of the issue in the community. The mural will continue to speak its message long after it is painted.
- 7 *Mobilize the community.* The final activities in this toolkit are about mobilizing the community into taking the next steps – action toward finding real solutions to environmental problems.



The toolkit should be implemented as a step-by-step process as described above. However these steps can be organized into meeting 'sessions' coordinated by the facilitator.

STEPS	ACTIVITIES	SESSIONS
Step 1 Form a group to undertake the project	Activity 1 'Who should be involved'	First session (45 minutes)
Step 2 Identify and explore community environmental problems	Activity 2 'Island Map'	Second session (3 – 4 hours)
	Activity 3 'Chain of events'	
	Activity 4 'Ranking the issues'	
Step 3	Investigation & research	
Step 4 Planning for Action	Activity 5 'Develop a shared goal'	Third session (3 hours)
	Activity 6 'Communicating the main message'	
	Activity 7 'Tasks & responsibilities'	
	Activity 8 'Design your mural'	Fourth session (2 hours)
Step 5 Create the mural & the message	Paint the mural (no guided activity)	Work in progress (dependant on project)
Step 6 Promote the mural & the message	Promote & celebrate completion of the mural (no guided activity)	Celebration & promotion (dependant on event)
Step 7 Mobilize the community	Activity 9 'Reflection & evaluation'	Fifth session (45 minutes)
	'Taking the next steps' Repeat of the process	Sessions and times dependant on future plans

LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE MURAL TOOLKIT

After participating in the mural toolkit activities, people can:

- Identify environmental problems in their community;
- Explain the links between environmental problems and people's health and well being;
- Develop and express informed opinions about an environmental issue;
- Work effectively in a team;
- Communicate a message to raise awareness in the broader community;
- Identify opportunities for further action, and
- Feel a sense of achievement and have fun!

STEP

1

FORM A GROUP TO UNDERTAKE THE MURAL PROJECT

Although you may already have a group of people who are ready to take on the Mural Project, you are strongly encouraged to involve other people from your community. Participation of a range of people will increase the groups' capacity to think creatively, broaden the skills base, share the work load and encourage people to feel 'ownership' of the mural project.

It may be useful to involve leaders from your community – these are the people who already have the power and capacity to get things done. Depending on what you want to do, you may need their support or permission. Ask them for support and involve them where you can.



Activity 1 – Who should be involved?

Objectives:

- Involve key people from the community who may benefit from or provide benefits to the project
- Encourage equitable participation and networking in the community

Time: 45 minutes

Materials needed: Paper, pens

What to do:

1. Divide into small groups (5-8 members)
2. In each group identify 5 key members of the community who could be involved in the mural project

3. Each group should report their recommendations to the whole group
4. The whole group should make a final decision on who else to involve in the project
discuss why you want their participation
generate ideas about how they can be involved
5. Record this information in a table see worksheet in Attachment #1 (example below)
6. Invite these people to a meeting to seek their support and involvement in the mural project. Explain the concept of the mural project to the new group members. Emphasize that the mural is a learning project about community empowerment and environmental management.

Person / organization	Why we want them to be involved	How will we involve them?
<i>E.g. Island Office</i>	<i>We need their permission to paint on a Government building. They may be able to help promote the project when it's completed. Maybe they can help us to obtain a ladder?</i>	<i>Invite a representative to be part of our mural planning team.</i>

STEP 2

IDENTIFY & EXPLORE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Activity 2: “Island Map”

Objectives:

- Identify environmental problems in the community
- Listen to and consider a range of peoples views and work collaboratively

Time: 1- 2 hours

Materials needed: Marker pens (provided), large pieces of paper (one sheet per group)

What to do:

1. Divide the group into smaller groups of 5-8 members.
2. Identify a leader, a recorder and a note taker for each group, and distribute the paper
3. Each group should construct a map of the island. Include the following on the map: Housing, Mosque, Wells, Waste Dumps, Swamps, etc.
4. Each group should make a list of environmental issues that are important in the community (e.g. water supply, pollution, waste, erosion, loss of native species etc). Highlight places on the map where these issues are relevant (e.g. water supply may be marked in residential areas).
5. When the maps are completed, groups should present their map to the whole group, explaining the environmental issues and where they occur.



6. As a group, discuss the following:

- How does living on a Small Island affect these issues?
- Which issues do you think are the most important? Why?
- How do these issues affect people’s livelihoods?

Activity 3: “Chain of events”

Objectives:

- Explain the links between environmental problems and people’s health, livelihood and well being;
- Encourage participants to listen to other peoples views and work collaboratively

Time: 1 hour

Materials needed: Marker pens (provided), large pieces of paper (one sheet per group)

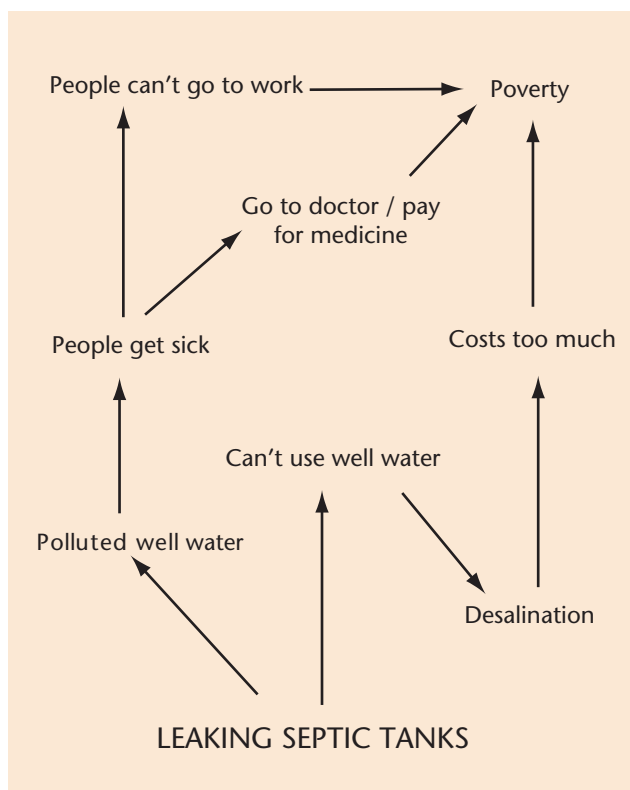
What to do:

1. Divide the group into smaller groups of 5-8 members.
2. Groups select *one* environmental issue (*see activity one*) and write it at the bottom of a large piece of paper (or blackboard)
3. Ask each group to consider the following question: *What does this environmental issue lead to?* Write one impact on the sheet of paper above the issue (with an arrow connecting to the issue).



- Ask each group to consider a further question: *what further impacts does this impact lead to?* Write these impacts on the paper and connect them with arrows. Continue with these questions until each impact is linked with a chain of connected events.

For example:



- When the diagrams are completed, each group should discuss their diagram with the whole group.
- As a group discuss the following:
 - Are these diagrams realistic in your community? Why?
 - How aware are community members of the links between the environment and their health and livelihoods?
 - What actions have been taken in the community to solve these problems?

Activity 4 – Ranking the Issues

Objectives:

- Encourage participants to express their opinions on an environmental problem;
- Critically reflect on environmental issues
- Make decisions about the relative priority of issues considering a variety of arguments and points of view

Time: 1 hour

Materials needed: Several sets of cards (one set per group) with one environmental issue written on each card. (E.g. solid waste management, beach erosion, contaminated well water, sea level rise (global warming), Dengue Fever, Conservation of the natural swamp, limited water resources). Choose a selection of these, or other issues raised in the previous activities.

What to do:

- Divide the group into smaller groups of 5-8 members and provide each group with a set of cards.
- Tell the groups that the activity involves a moral dilemma: they must place the environmental issues in order from most important to least important. Each group is required to reach a consensus on their decision.
- When each group has reached consensus (or agreed to disagree), ask the first small group to present their ranking of issues to the whole group – they must put forward an argument to support their ranking.
- Allow other groups to ask questions. Then give each group time to reconsider their own order of ranking.
- Each group will have a turn at presenting their ranking (and argument). Each time allow the other groups to reflect on the arguments and change their ranking (if they want to).
- As a group discuss the following:
 - Did your group change its ranking during this activity? Why?
 - What were the strongest arguments that influenced your decisions?
 - Did you feel that you could have a say in your group? As an individual would you have made the ranking differently?
 - What were the benefits of having a range of different people participating in this activity?
- Ask the group if they would like to use the number 1 ranked issue to be the focus of the mural project. If participants do not agree on the issue, then allow participants to vote on a range of options (e.g. out of the 3 top ranked issues).

STEP 3

INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH

Activity 5 – Investigate the issue

Objectives:

- Undertake research into an environmental issue
- Consider the opinions of experts on the environmental issue

Time: Variable

Materials needed: An expert or reports / published information about the environmental issue that you have identified. Possible sources of information and contacts are listed on the next page.

What to do:

1. Consider the available options for obtaining more information relating to the environmental issue that you have identified as the focus for the mural. Try to obtain sources of information that relate to the local situation. For example:
 - Invite an expert to speak to the group about the issue
 - Identify an expert who you can email with a series of questions regarding the issue
 - Consult technical papers or reports written about the issue
 - Search for information about the issue on the internet (but be mindful that anyone can place

material on the internet so it may not always be reliable, also bear in mind its applicability to the Maldives context)

2. As a group discuss the main ideas from the information that you have collected on the issue. In particular consider the following:
 - Who was the source of the information and is it likely to contain any bias or inaccuracies?
 - Are there any alternative points of view or conflicting information?
 - Do I agree with it? Is it valid in the local situation?
3. If you have the skills or equipment available, consider undertaking some of your own research work. For example you could investigate waste management practices by carrying out a community survey, or investigate water quality by carrying out some simple water quality testing.

Contacts and sources of information regarding environmental issues

- Live and Learn Environmental Education
- Ministry of Environment Energy and Water (MEEW)
- Maldives Water and Sanitation Authority



STEP

4

PLANNING FOR ACTION -
PARTICIPATION IS THE KEY!

There will be significant amount of organizing and planning required *before* your group actually picks up a paint brush. Activities 6 – 9 will assist your group to develop goals, involve people and create a plan of action.

The activities are designed to assist your group to develop an effective mural project, however they are also about learning *how* to conduct a participatory planning process. This process can easily be applied to other action projects in your community. It is important not to miss these steps – even if you think that the Mural project doesn't require this level of planning. Most of the learning that occurs through the planning activities concerns the *process* of planning – and is not just about the outcome.

Why participatory planning?

- Participation in decision making is empowering to communities, it provides people with an opportunity to realize their own potential
- Participation allows a community to take full advantage of the diverse knowledge, skills and experiences that it contains
- Participation in decision making allows the needs of everyone in the community to be considered, a lack of participation raises the potential for certain groups to be disadvantaged (e.g. women and youth)
- Empowerment through participation is particularly important in the Maldives, where long distances between islands make the provision of centralized services and resources difficult. Participation increases local determination of decisions and can create better outcomes for the community
- Participation in decision making involves real learning, where people critically think about issues and solutions, enhancing the capacity of the community to respond to future challenges
- Participation allows fairness and transparency in decision making and helps to maintain a peaceful society

Activity 6 – Develop a shared vision

Objectives:

- Identify the value of having a shared vision to guide group action
- Develop a shared goal through equitable participation from the group

Time: 1 hour

Materials needed: Pens & paper

What to do:

1. Introductory game:

Stand in a circle, each person holding the hand of the person standing next to them. Tell the group to choose a corner of the room (this must be done in silence and participants are not allowed to tell anyone else which corner they've chosen). When they have all chosen a corner explain the following: *Everyone in the circle is in the same community, represented by linking hands (this is a rule!). You are not allowed to let go of the people standing next to you. On the count of three I want you to move to the corner of the room that you have selected...1, 2, 3, - go!*

When the dust settles, ask the group: *Did you get to the place that you wanted to go? Who did get where they wanted to go? How? How did you feel if you were pulled into someone else's corner? Did the group have a shared goal?*

Allow the group to repeat the activity, this time encourage them to have a discussion and work out a shared goal before they start. Repeat the exercise when they are ready. Ask the group: *Did you get to where you wanted to go this time? What was the advantage of having a shared goal?*

2. Refer to the issue identified in Activity 4 to be the focus of the shared vision. Explain to participants that the object of this activity is to work together as a group to develop a shared vision for the mural project. The vision will be expressed as a "vision statement"

The vision statement is one sentence that captures the vision.

Divide participants into small groups and ask

each group to produce one or more vision statements. Use the following prompts to assist the brainstorm:

- What do you want the situation to be like in the future?
- Who will be involved?
- Who will benefit?

When each group has prepared a vision statement, ask them to explain and share it with the whole group. Collate a list of vision statements and allow participants to choose the one that is most favored.

Activity 7 – Communication for change

The mural is intended to communicate a message to an audience that will contribute toward achieving the vision (as described in the previous activity). In order for the mural to make an impact it is important to consider the following:

- **THE MAIN MESSAGE:** What is the main message that you want to communicate to the audience? If the audience walks away from the mural and remembers only one thing from it, what would this one thing be? The main message is the biggest consideration when designing the artwork or writing in the mural.
- **SUPPORTING MESSAGES:** It is often beneficial to have several supporting messages that combine to provide the overall main message in the mural. These messages or ideas support the main message and are optional inclusions in the mural.



- **THE AUDIENCE:** Who is the mural message targeted at? This will affect decisions about the artwork, writing and placement of the mural. For example a mural aimed at parents might be placed on the wall of school.
- **MOTIVATING FACTORS:** What will motivate the audience to look at and consider the message in the mural? What message could motivate the audience to take action based on what they have seen? For example a message targeted at adult home owners might include images about saving money connected with taking action on an environmental issue.
- **PROPOSED ACTION:** What do you want the audience to do after viewing the mural? You should consider the value of not just highlighting a problem, but also directing the audience to an action that could contribute to solving the problem. For example, in addition to messages about the problems associated with contaminated well water, a mural could highlight an action such as increasing the storage of rainwater so that it is always available for drinking.

Objectives:

- Explore the concepts of main message, supporting messages, audience, motivating factors and proposed actions.
- Review example murals to identify the above concepts
- Create a communication plan based on the above concepts

Time: 1 hour

Materials needed: Communicating a message worksheet (appendix 2), example CHSE mural

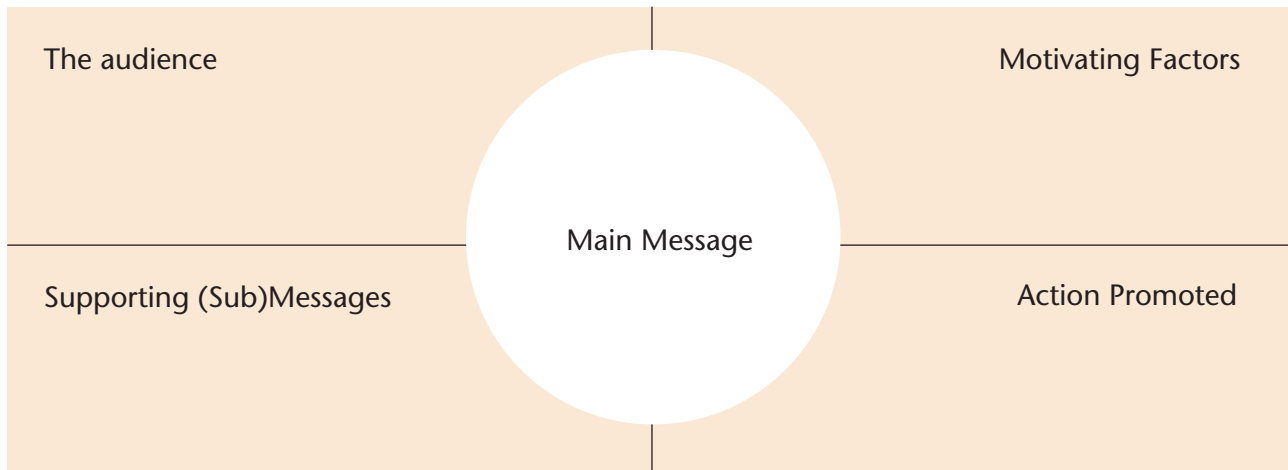
What to do:

1. Examine the mural created by CHSE students (see next page). As a group discuss and identify the following: *the main message of this mural, sub-messages that support the main message, the intended audience, motivating factors and proposed actions.* Create a large version of the 'communicating a message' diagram on a white board or black board and work together to complete it. Alternatively this could be done as a small group exercise.
2. Divide the group into 2 or 3 small groups and provide each a copy of the 'communicating a message' worksheet. Display the 'vision statement' and reflect on what it means (see activity 5). Explain that the purpose of this activity is to create a

communication plan for the mural, which includes a main message, supporting messages, audience, motivating factors and proposed actions. Give the groups time to create a communication plan using the sheets.

- When each group is finished, ask them to present their communication plan. When all groups have presented their ideas, choose one of the ideas or a combination of them to be the communication plan for the mural.

For example:





Activity 8: Design your Mural

Objectives:

- Design the appearance of the mural based on communicating a main message
- Work collaboratively

Time: Variable

Materials needed: pencils, mural design worksheets

What to do:

1. Instruct the group that their task is to work together to produce a draft design or concept for the mural
2. Tell the group that they will work together without the support of an 'external facilitator'
3. Remind the group to keep focused on the main message that has been identified. (Remember the importance of the shared vision!).
4. Explain that it will be up to the group to determine how they will work together to create a mural concept. For example they may want to produce many concepts and then choose the best one, or they may decide to ask a small team to produce a number of concepts to bring back to the group.



Activity 9 - Planning for Action

Objective:

- Develop a practical plan for organizing the logistics of creating a mural
- Utilize participatory planning processes

Time: 1 hour

Materials needed: Pens & paper, planning chart (see appendix 3)

What to do:

1. Work as a group to develop an action planning chart. Ensure that everyone the group has a role to play. Remember to reflect on the overall vision statement when developing the tasks. See example below. A planning chart is included as Attachment # 3.
2. Identify the tasks that need to be completed
3. Decide who in the group will do each task
4. Decide when the task needs to be completed
5. Determine the resources (e.g. equipment) that will be needed
6. Use the action planning chart to regularly review progress and make updates as necessary

Goal Statement:

Task	Responsibility	Due Date	Resources
E.g. Borrow a ladder from the store	Shihab	Monday 27th Feb	Ladder

STEP

5

CREATE THE MURAL & THE MESSAGE

By now you should have a good plan to follow - how you paint the mural is up to your group and your creativity! Plan to involve as many people as possible in painting the mural. Don't leave all the work to just one artist in the group. Murals painted by people who don't have much artistic 'talent' or experience can be

just as effective. You might be surprised about the hidden talents that some people have! Alternatively you could have someone who is a talented artist to draw the shapes, and the other members of the group could fill in the colours.



STEP 6

PROMOTE THE MURAL & THE MESSAGE

Completion of the mural should be cause for celebration, when taking any community action it is important to recognize the achievements of the group! This is also an opportunity to focus the attention of the broader community on the mural and the message that it promotes. You are also encouraged to use the media to further broaden the 'reach' of the message in your mural.

Some ideas for celebrating and promoting the mural:

- Invite special guests and the general community to a grand 'unveiling'
- Ask a high profile person to 'launch' the mural
- Invite experts from the field associated with the 'main message' of the mural to talk to community at the launch
- Organize entertainment – singing, dancing, drama or food around the theme (or message) of the mural
- Ask media (TVM, Radio etc...) to report on the mural and about its message
- Have a day of action along the theme of the mural. For example if your mural is about waste management, organize an Island clean up day where everyone is encouraged to be involved.





MOBILIZE THE COMMUNITY

After celebrating the launch of the mural, it is time to reflect on the journey that you have traveled in order to realize this community action. The following activities allow your group to reflect on the lessons that you have learned and encourage you to apply your skills in participatory planning to a new community action project.

Activity 10: Reflection & evaluation

Objectives:

- Reflect on the past in order to plan for the future
- Develop listening skills

Time: 45 minutes

Materials needed: Copies of the reflection sheet

What to do:

1. Invite the people associated with the mural project to a meeting. Divide the participants into pairs.
2. Ask each person to close their eyes and think about the activities that they have been involved with while creating the mural. (Give a couple of minutes to do this)
3. Provide each pair with a 2 copies of the 'reflection sheet' (appendices # 4)
 - *Because of the mural project, I know ...*
 - *Because of the mural project, I can...*
 - *Because of the mural project, I feel...*
 - *Because of the mural project, I will...*

Explain what is meant by each statement. The first statement relates to *knowledge* gained, the second to *skills*, the third to *feelings and values* and the final question relates to how the project may have influenced participants *future actions or behaviors*.
4. Ask the pairs to interview each other (using the statements on the reflection sheet). The interviewee must finish each statement read out by the interviewer, who will write down the responses. The interviewer should be instructed to listen very carefully and write down the thoughts of their partner without interrupting.
5. When everyone has finished the exercise, ask for volunteers to share their 'reflections' with the whole group

6. Ask participants to fill out the project evaluation form, see attachment # 5
7. Please collect the evaluation forms and return them to Live and Learn Environmental Education
- Address

TAKING THE NEXT STEPS

The mural project is a *model* demonstrating a process by which your community can be mobilized into action. Hopefully the process of developing the mural has provided opportunities for your group members and community to learn about environmental issues and to become empowered to take actions.

The next steps are up to your group and community. The process that was used to develop the model can be replicated to address another new or related issue, and to take a new course of community action:

STEP ONE: Form a group to take on a new project. It will be an advantage to include people from various different backgrounds (or other groups) in your community. [Activity # 1]

STEP TWO: Think, share ideas and learn! Critically think about another or related environmental problems in the community and examine how it impacts on people's livelihoods, health and well being. [Activities # 2 – # 4]

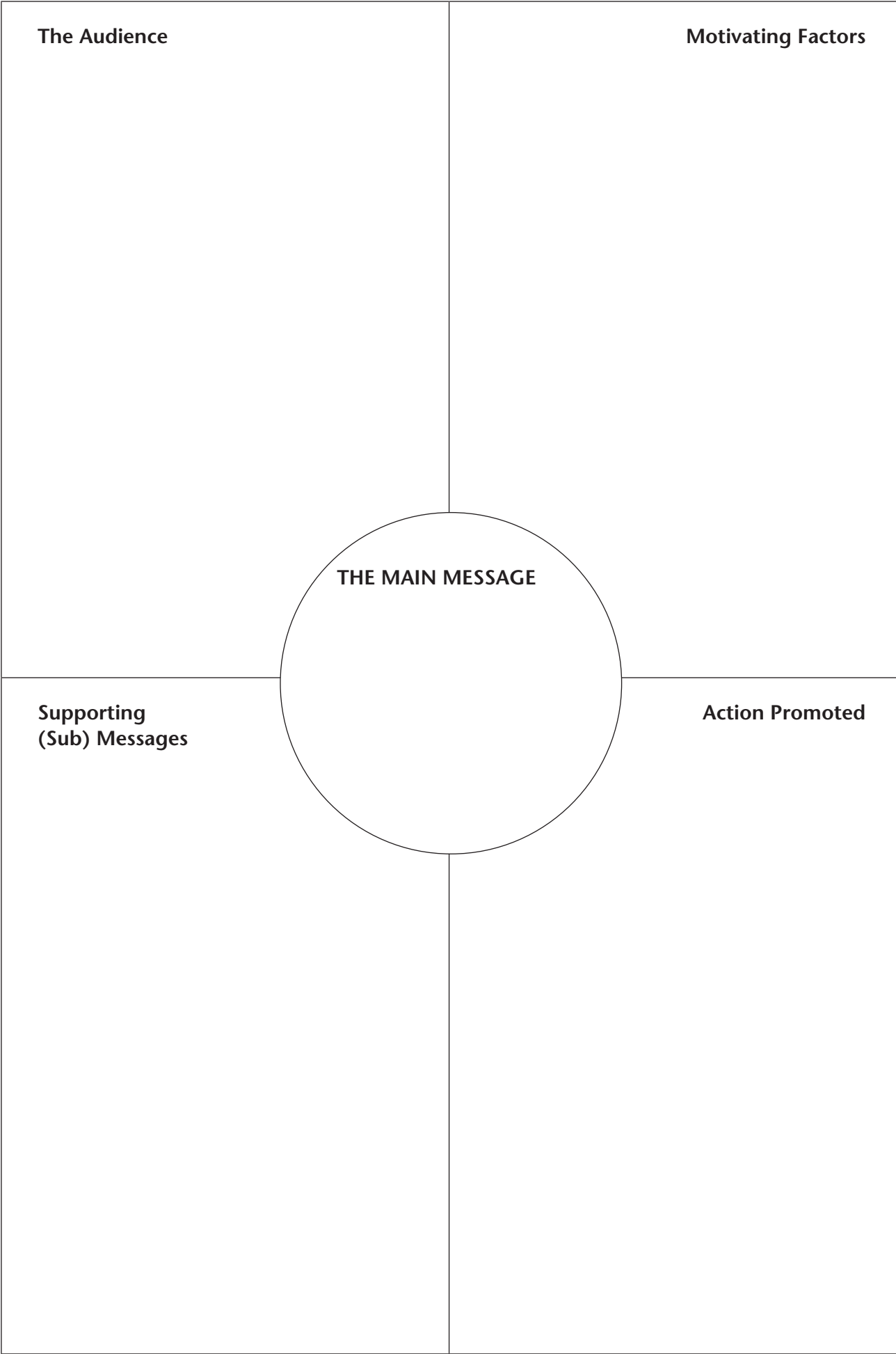
STEP THREE: Investigation & research. Seek expert advice or research literature on the issue in order to gain a better understanding. [Activitie # 5]

STEP THREE: Planning for Action! Participants will plan further action, involving various members of the community. [Activities # 6 - # 9]

STEP FOUR: Take action! This step will require all participants to work together; everyone will take pride and feel ownership of the final result.

STEP FIVE: Promoting the results of your action. This will raise awareness of the issue in the community.

Person / organization	Why we want them to be involved	How will we involve them?

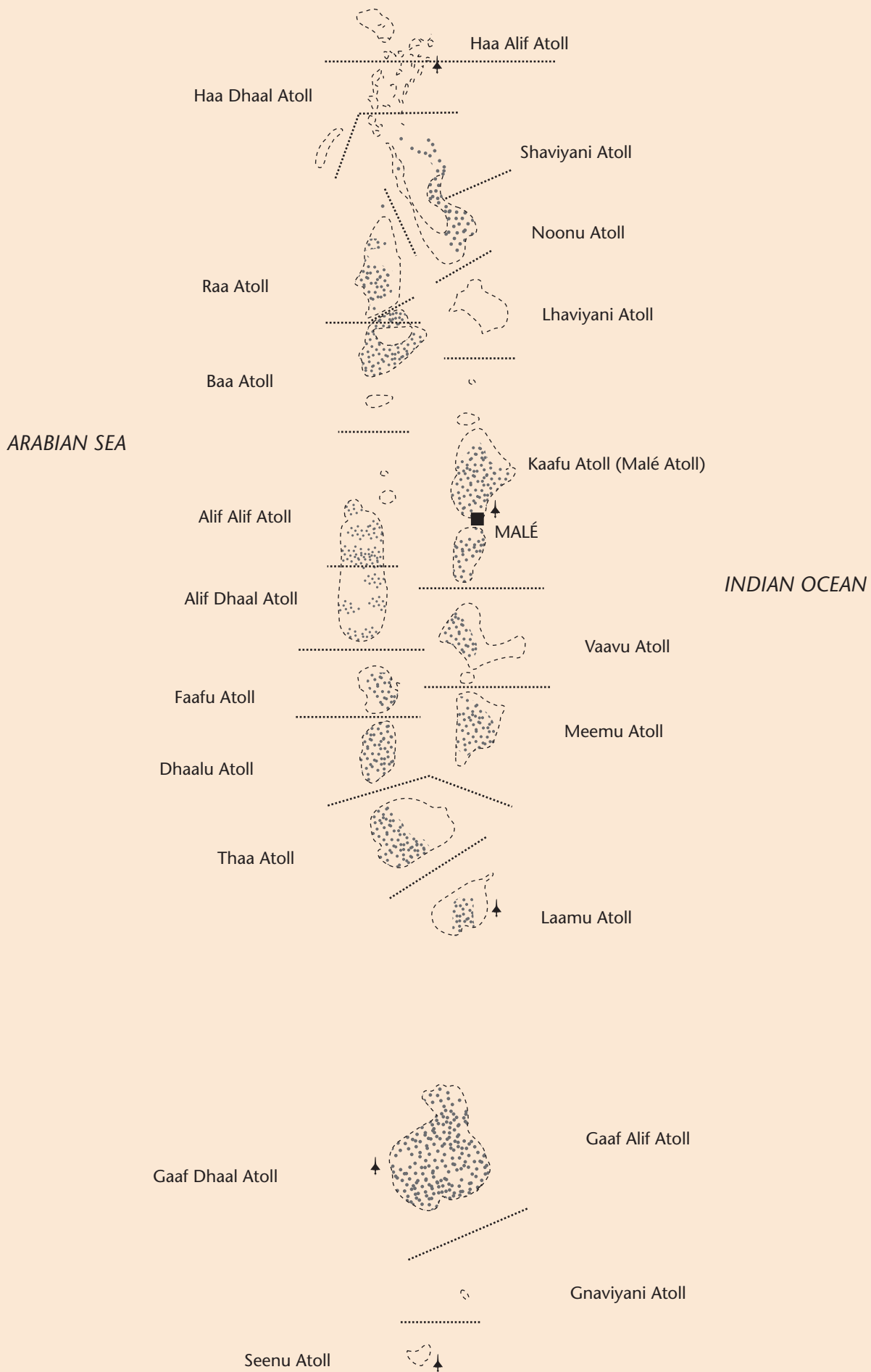


VISION STATEMENT:			
Task/ROLE	Responsibility	Due Date	Resources

Main Message:	Target Audience:
DRAFT DESIGN:	

Main Message:	Target Audience:
DRAFT DESIGN:	

Name:	Date:
<i>Because of the mural project, I know ...</i>	
<i>Because of the mural project, I can...</i>	
<i>Because of the mural project, I feel...</i>	
<i>Because of the mural project, I will...</i>	



*The fisherman
needs to know the sea
to catch the fish*



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