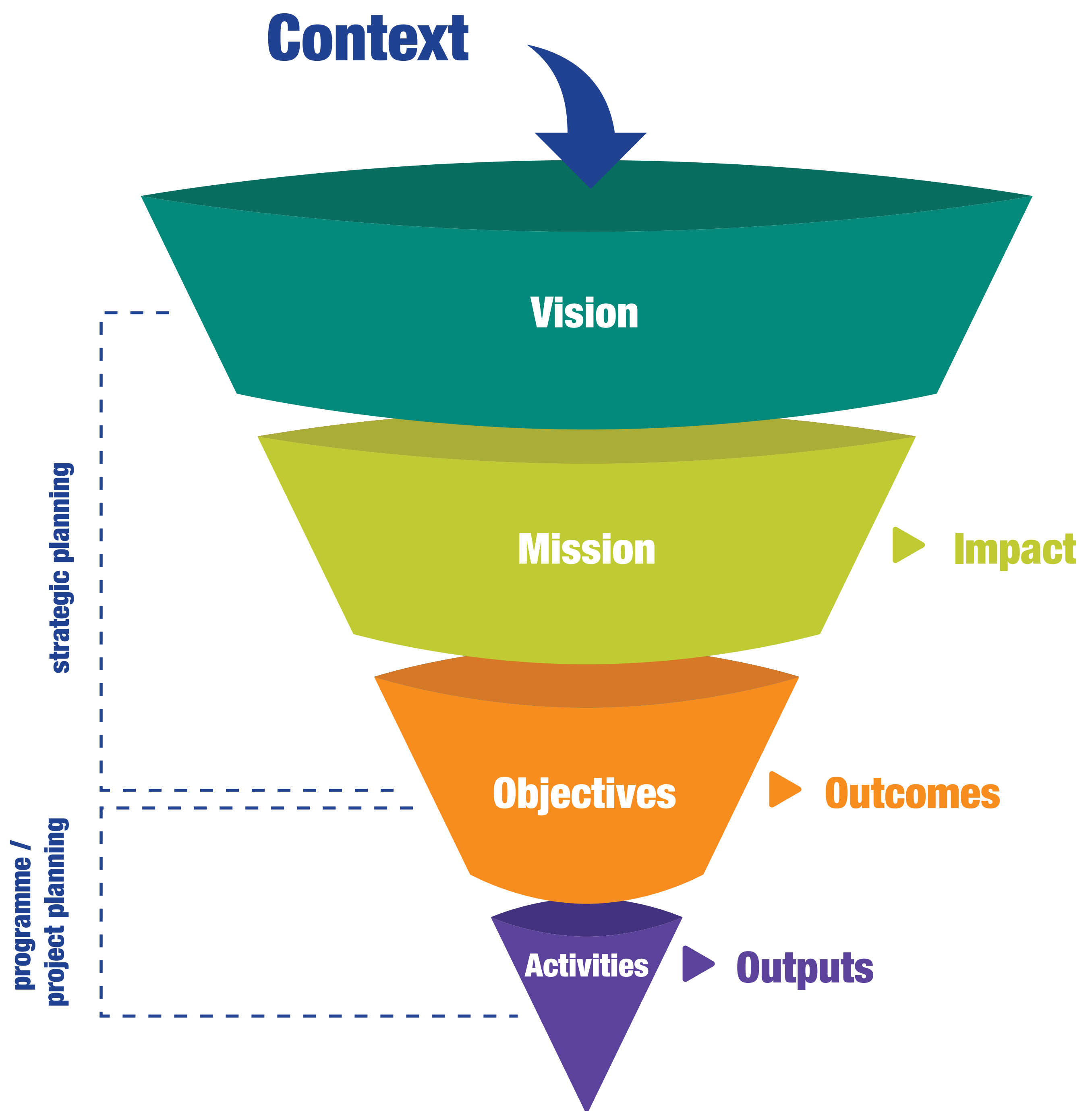# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

When we talk about goals, we link projects to the 'bigger picture' – the strategic direction we have set and what we want to achieve. Projects and programmes help us to get there. The vision, mission, objectives and activities (projects) follow logically from each other. This is how we form a strategy that is coherent (ie. forming a unified whole) – a puzzle that fits together with a logical link ('golden thread'), running through it.

Context

strategic planning

programme / project planning

Vision

Mission ▶ **Impact**

Objectives ▶ **Outcomes**

Activities ▶ **Outputs**

CREATING A HEALTHY ORGANISATION

Many community workers, especially in the Eastern Cape know a lot about growing food and a healthy garden. An organisation is also a living eco-system and if you know how to grow a healthy garden, you will know how to grow a healthy organisation. Both need to have similar elements.

Healthy Garden

Ground

The Essentials of an Organisation (essentials of a healthy garden)

Good Soil | Intentions
This is the FOUNDATION - the intentions and motivation that fertilises or deplete an organisation.

Good Seeds | Strategy
A STRATEGY AND GOOD PLAN including Vision, Mission and Objectives and Activities (projects).

Protection | Governance
A Constitution / Founding Document and practice of GOOD GOVERNANCE, protecting the organisation.

Good Gardeners | Team
The TEAM responsible for the organisation and its programmes and projects (Leadership/ Management).

Earthworms / Bees | Partners
(Enablers - Symbiotic Relationships)
Supportive relationships (PARTNERS) that add value to the organisation and its work.

Water / Air | Systems
The SYSTEMS that facilitate flow of information, flow, resourcing and accountability. *(Information, Communication)*.

Sun / Energy | Culture
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE including group dynamics, communication, conflict and learning.

Tools | Resources and Assets
The RESOURCES and ASSETS we have and need and how we look after them.

Source: Organisational Development (OD) and Management Training Manual, Elamanzi / Ikhala Trust 2013.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Traditional leadership models are based on Kurt Lewin's extensive research from the 1930s which identified three dominant leadership styles:
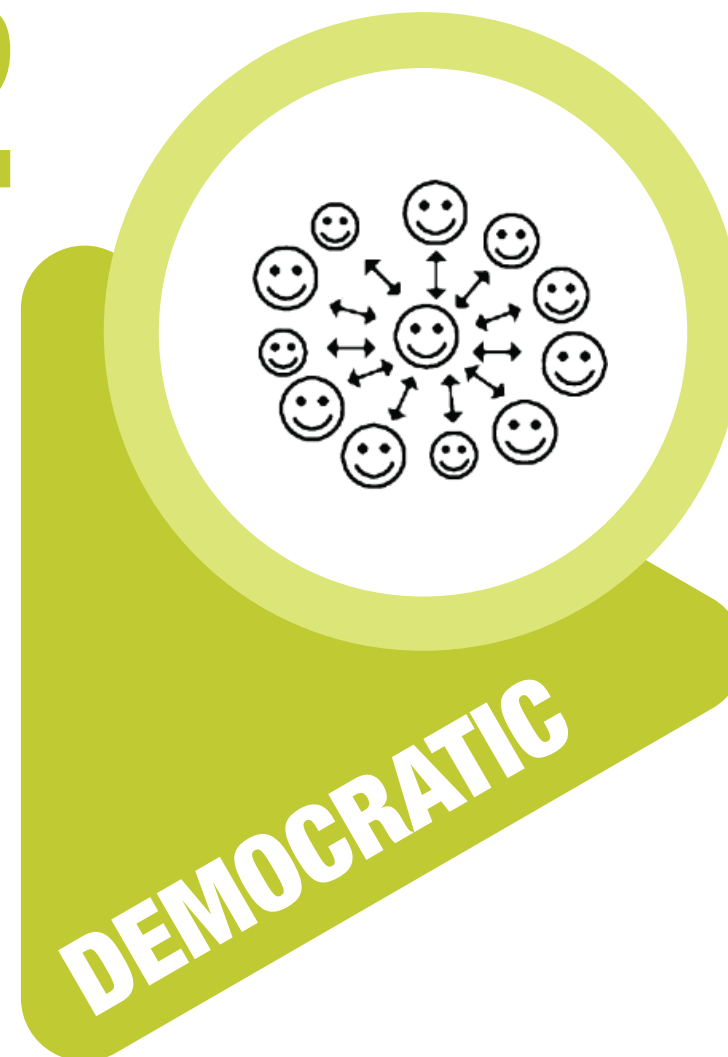
1 AUTOCRATIC
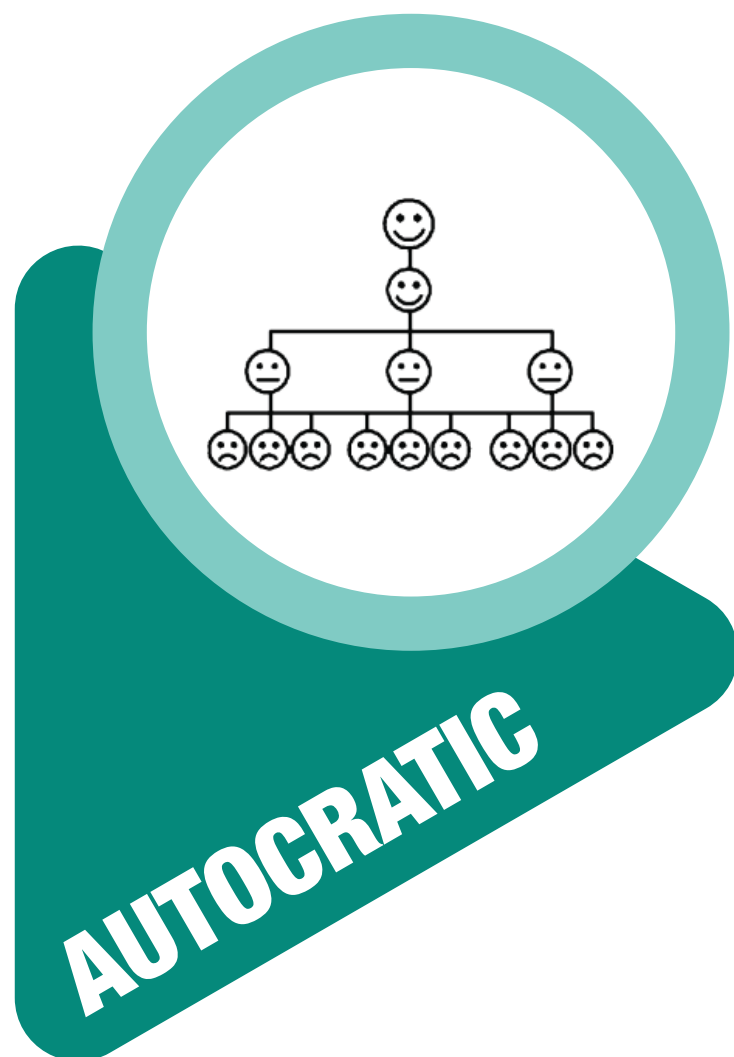
AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

The leader dominates and takes decisions without any consultation. This often causes discontent and rebellion in time. Though not the best way of leading progressively in CBOs and NGOs - autocratic leadership is sometimes necessary, especially in a crisis where someone has to take charge.

2 DEMOCRATIC

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

In the democratic style, the leader involves people in decision-making by facilitating consensus in a group. Democratic decision-making is usually appreciated by people, especially if they have been used to autocratic leaders. It is also a preferred culture in a community development context which tends to be people-centred.

It can however, be problematic though when there are a wide range of opinions and no clear way of reaching an equitable final decision. It can also be time consuming and frustrating to be too democratic especially with small matters.

3 LAISSEZ-FAIRE

LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP

The laissez-faire style (meaning 'let them do') minimizes the leader's involvement in decision-making, and allows people to make their own decisions. Laissez-faire is more 'hands off'. It works best when people are capable, ethical and motivated, and where there is no requirement for a central co-ordination, for example sharing resources across a range of different people and groups. But it can also be a disaster if someone is unclear about their work, lacks confidence or needs direction and supervision. Those who have a poor work ethic can also take advantage and manipulate this type of leader.

GROUP DYNAMICS

FORM ▶

The group comes together with a common interest/ purpose. There may be initial uneasiness, excitement, and confusion about what the group is going to do. People start to get to know each other, often showing their best side. Cliques may start to form and people might start to push each other's buttons. It is important for the leader(s) to give people opportunity to bond and clarify why they are there.

STORM ▶

In this stage, people's personal behaviours and issues start to come into the group. There may be conflict and tensions; people may be manipulative and less motivated. The storm' however is an important learning opportunity and leader(s) are challenged to use the conflict creatively. They can encourage people to open up and get the group to move beyond petty conflicts so that it can grow.

NORM ▶

People become closer and more comfortable with one another, there is more trust and a stronger sense of group identity. Leader(s) should facilitate processes, which will enable the group to develop 'norms' (principles, 'rules', and models of behaviour) and could develop a code of conduct or constitution. The group can then focus on its purpose.

PERFORM ▶

The group is on track – there are clear roles, structures and procedures. Teamwork and collective commitment enables the group to move closer towards achieving its goals.
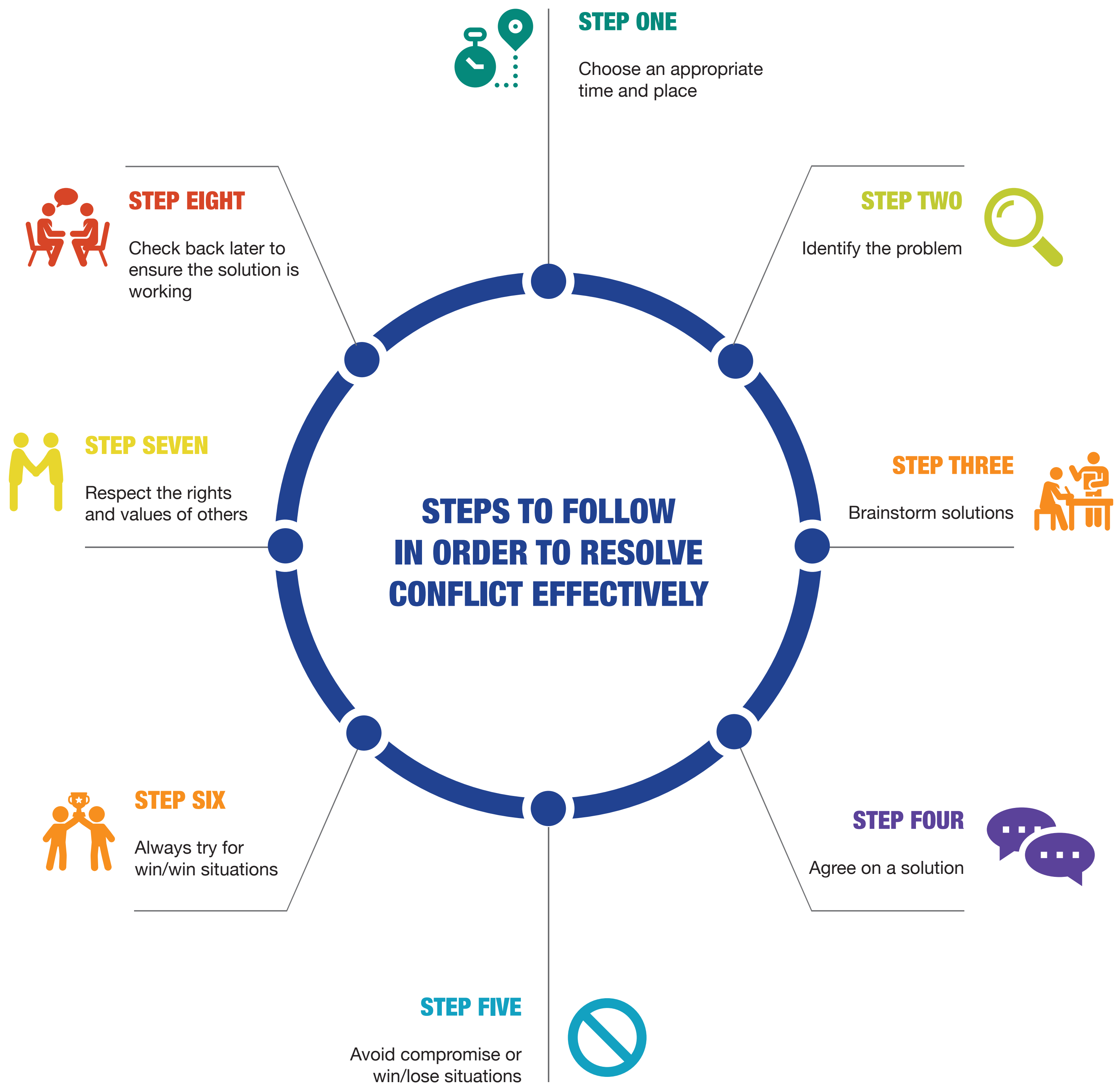
TRANSFORM ▶

The group has achieved its purpose and now needs to re-look at its Vision and Mission. Leaders should facilitate processes, which reflect and evaluate the life of the group, 'terminate' the group as it was and look at how learning can be transferred to other projects or situations. The group may 'die' or be 'reborn' as something new.

Source: This is a tool adapted from Community Connections 2002.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

STEP ONE

Choose an appropriate time and place

STEP TWO

Identify the problem

STEP THREE

Brainstorm solutions

STEP FOUR

Agree on a solution

STEP FIVE

Avoid compromise or win/lose situations

STEP SIX

Always try for win/win situations

STEP SEVEN

Respect the rights and values of others

STEP EIGHT

Check back later to ensure the solution is working

STEPS TO FOLLOW IN ORDER TO RESOLVE CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY

THE ACTION LEARNING CYCLE

Action Learning is a continuous cycle within a project, programme or organisation.

PLANNING

This is the key link between past learning and future action (and learning). The core "insights" from the previous experiences must be translated into decisions that will ensure improved practice and these decisions become part of our planning. Planning that is unrelated to learning is just 'business as usual';

ACTION

Doing/experiencing and recalling the experience: nobody knows your experience of your actions better than you do. To become more conscious of our "experience" while acting, can impact on what we do and how we do it;

01

02

ACTION LEARNING CYCLE

03

04

REFLECTION

Re-examining and thinking about the event or action means to make it more conscious, to analyse it, evaluate it, understand it better on a deeper level. Often it is only because of a crisis that we reflect, that we stop to take a deeper look - a more pro-active approach is vital to becoming a good action learner. This is very much a "brain storm" activity where we would look at the event from different angles.

LEARNING

Reflection is no guarantee that learning has taken place! Very often people "reflect" and then repeat the same mistake over and over again. Therefore the distinction between reflection and learning is important; learning here is the process of distilling or drawing out the core lessons. Be careful of jumping too quickly to learning before adequate reflecting has taken place.

Every project is unique and gives us valuable experience that we can learn from. The Action Learning Cycle is a guide for creating a learning rhythm in an organisation.