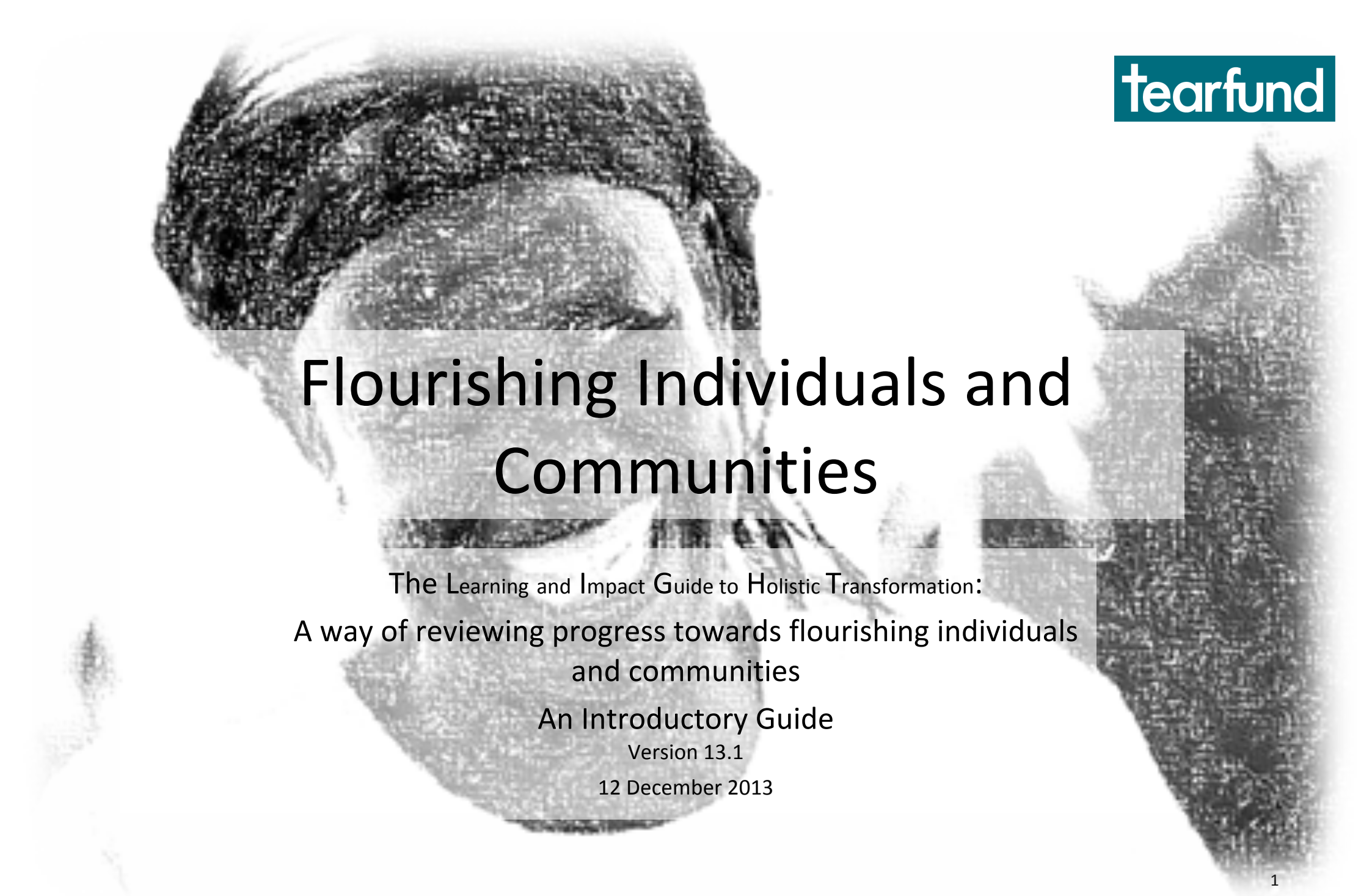

Flourishing Individuals and Communities

The Learning and Impact Guide to Holistic Transformation:

A way of reviewing progress towards flourishing individuals and communities

An Introductory Guide

Version 13.1

12 December 2013

Learning &
Impact
Guide for
Holistic
Transformation

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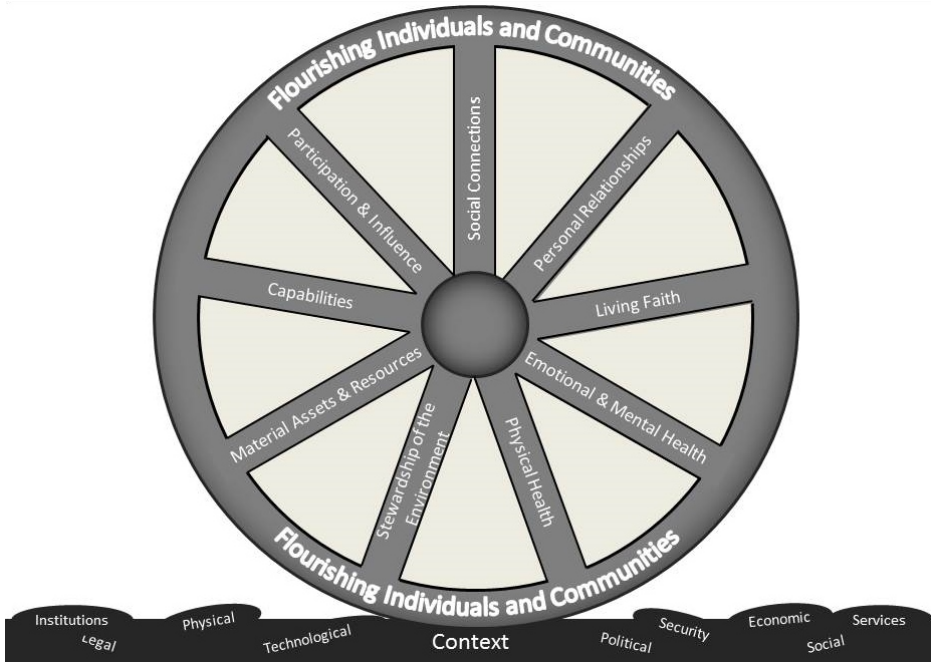


Introduction

The Learning and Impact Guide for Holistic Transformation "LIGHT" is a way of assessing how our activities are contributing to our aim: to see individuals and communities that are flourishing. For this, we look for people to be released from material and spiritual poverty and for broken relationships to be restored: relationships with our self, with others, with the environment in which we live and, above all, with God.

The spokes on the wheel represent different aspects of what it means to be whole and to flourish and therefore encompass spiritual, social, economic and physical well-being. They have been developed within Tearfund but reflect research and evidence more widely.

Using a common approach across different countries and contexts allows comparison and so can help us identify approaches that may have most impact.

Used within a church or community it can form the basis for a discussion about where and how to prioritise effort. By considering each spoke it also ensures that a holistic approach is taken in which the whole of the person and the community is addressed.

The wheel is intended to provide an overview of the journey towards transformation within a church and community. It is designed to be easy to use. While it will highlight areas where progress is being made, or not made, it is unlikely by itself to explain how or why that change is occurring (or not occurring). It can however be used to identify areas of interest for further analysis or discussion.

The discussion catalysed by the Guide can help a church or community identify underlying issues, understand what is causing and sustaining those issues, develop a theory of change through which it might be addressed and develop appropriate interventions that will address them.

Using the Guide

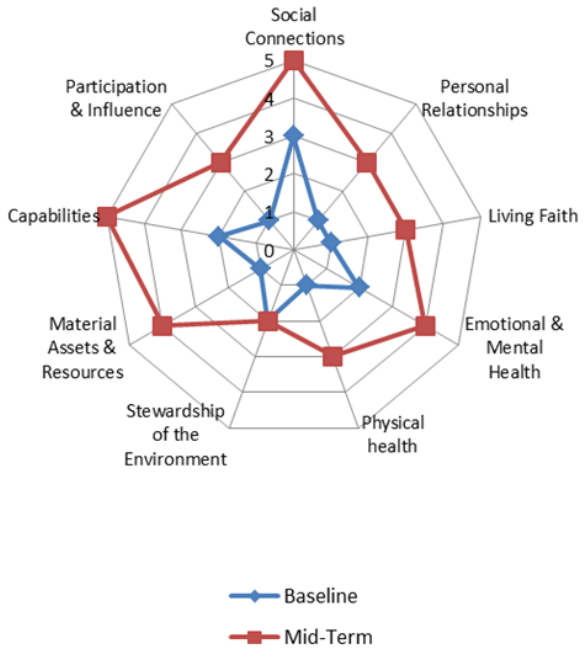
We are all on a journey and the wheel represents a way of representing that journey and of assessing where one is on the journey, in which direction one is travelling and at what speed or momentum. It is made up of 9 spokes that represent key inter-dependent domains or areas of change.

Each of the 9 spokes of the wheel is split into 5 "levels" that describe a stage on the journey. These descriptions provide a sense of what the view might look like at each stage of the way. It is unlikely that any one journey will be exactly like another and so it is unlikely that these descriptions will provide an exact representation of actual circumstances on the ground. They are therefore intended to provide a sense of progress and of location rather than an exact position. The 5 broad levels are as follows:

- Avoiding: "Leave us alone!"
- Aware: "Why doesn't somebody sort this out?"
- Acting: "We can make a difference; it's up to us too."
- Advancing: "Look, we are making a difference."
- Achieving: "We can do this; let's help you do the same."

The Guide can be used to assess individual journeys or those of wider groups and communities. When used by individuals the "levels" should be used as a basis for personal reflection and as a means of teasing out individual strengths and vulnerabilities.

When used with wider groups the level descriptions can be used to guide a facilitated discussion within groups, through which position and direction along the way can be gauged and the factors that drive or hinder change identified. In doing this it is the discussion and the sense of direction and momentum that is perhaps more important than the actual level number.



A questionnaire has been developed based on these 5 levels. Currently designed as an excel spreadsheet this will automatically produce a radar diagram like that above. The questionnaire can also be completed on paper copies. Over time it is hoped that we will be able to develop a digital solution that will increase the efficiency of data collection. Questionnaire responses can also be supported by examples, stories and case studies.

This diagram not only allows changes within each spoke to be seen but also reveals the overall picture, highlighting areas that may perhaps require more attention if the wellbeing of the whole of the person or the community is to be considered. It also allows a discussion to be had as to what areas may be seen as more or less important in that particular context and whether the aim should be to seek balanced growth across all spokes or to emphasise certain spokes over the short-term.

Spoke Descriptions

Social Connections:

This spoke considers the networks and connections that exist within a community. Unlike *"Personal Relationships"* these are focused more on the community rather than the individual and in general are likely to be less deep than personal relationships. They are perhaps more about structure both formal and informal than personal relationships. The domain considers four aspects of these connections: *who* is included in them and who is excluded i.e. their diversity – implicit in this is the community's attitude towards those who are different. The *quantity* of connections and the *range* of areas that the networks cover, the extent to which those within the networks share a *common vision or unity of purpose* and finally the *purpose* of them – whether they are self-serving or look to meet a wider community need.

Personal Relationships:

This spoke looks at the existence and quality of personal relationships as opposed to the more communal and outward connections covered by *"Social Connections"*. These relationships are, in general, likely to be fewer, deeper and more private. The domain considers four issues: the level of *commitment* people have to making and sustaining personal relationships, the *nature* of those relationships, the extent to which individuals are able to *manage differences* constructively within their relationships and finally the way in which personal relationships *fit* within and *influence* the wider community.

Living Faith:

This spoke considers the extent to which people within the community are *living out a Christian faith*, putting it into practice in their daily lives such that it impacts on the wider community. It is made up of three elements: the extent to which Christians are *growing* in their faith, moving from spiritual infancy towards maturity; the extent to which Christians are *balancing* their inward spiritual development with the external outworking of their faith in their daily lives and finally how this is *influencing* the environment in which they are living.

Emotional and Mental Health

This spoke considers the emotional and mental wellbeing of the people in the community. It considers the impact that events in the past may have on them and their attitudes towards the future. It explores the support networks that they might have and whether they feel able to share concerns with others. Finally it considers their emotional resilience; their ability to cope with shocks that may emerge in the future.

Physical Health:

This spoke looks at the physical health of the people within the community. It considers three aspects: the health *status* of individuals within the community, *who* has and who does not have access to health resources and the *types* of health resources that are available to the community.

Stewardship of the Environment:

This spoke is to do with the relationship of the community with the natural environment. It considers three elements: whether the community *engages* with others to consider their collective use of the environment, the extent to which they consider the natural resources that they use as part of a wider *ecosystem* and the manner in which they *use* natural resources.

Material Resources:

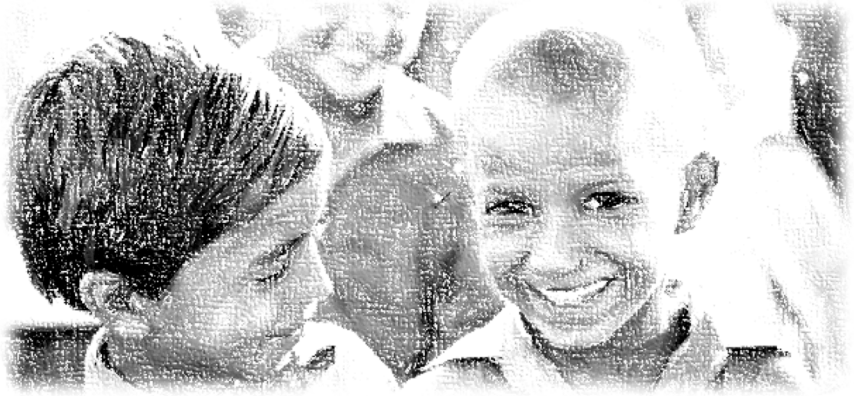
This spoke considers the material resources that people and communities have access to. It focuses on the tangible assets that when matched with "C*apabilities"* allow people to do something. That may be simply to exist or it may be to change their environment and improve. The domain comprises four elements: the *amount* of assets available; the ability to *access* and *use* those assets; the level of *resilience* or redundancy of those assets and the *attitudes* of people towards the assets.

Capabilities:

Effecting change requires the community to be able to access capabilities. Here we describe capability as the skills, expertise and knowledge that, when matched with physical (material) resources, enable the community to do something and bring about change.

Participation and Influence:

This spoke is looking at two basic ideas: firstly the extent to which people are able to *express* their views to those in power and secondly the extent to which they can *take part* in the decision-making itself. It is looking at the ability for people to take control over their own destiny. It has three elements: *who* has a say in the decision-making process; the level of *influence* that they have and the level of *participation*.



Spoke Level Descriptions

	Social Connections
Level 1 Avoiding	A community where people are focused on their own needs and have few links with others outside their immediate circle. Those networks that do exist are invariably like with like (e.g. women with women) and stay within their own groups (i.e. tribe or faith). The benefit or need for wider cross-group networks is not recognised.
Level 2 Aware	Individuals within the community recognise that to make progress on issues that concern them they need to develop positive relationships with elements of society outside their immediate circle. Attempts to do so however remain rare and very few networks like this actually exist.
Level 3 Acting	Members of the community are actively reaching out to others from different elements of society to establish networks through which, together, they can address issues of mutual concern for shared benefit. The number of such networks is increasing, issues are being identified and efforts to address them are beginning.
Level 4 Advancing	A rich web of networks exists, connecting most elements of society through which issues of mutual concern are being addressed.
Level 5 Achieving	Cross community dialogue and action is the norm with different elements of society working together for communal benefit. Different groups are valued, respected and included in community activities.

	Personal Relationships
Level 1 Avoiding	Personal relationships tend to be based on power and can verge at times on abuse with one party being dominant. Dominant individuals are rarely accountable to others for their actions. Communication is guarded and individuals are fearful of being open about their feelings or of appearing vulnerable. Painful or difficult issues are usually avoided and are not discussed openly. Forgiveness is uncommon and grievances tend to be held.
Level 2 Aware	Individuals are becoming aware of and are beginning to question power differences within personal relationships. There is a desire for more open communication and an increasing recognition that difficult topics need to be discussed and resolved. Such communication does however remain rare.
Level 3 Acting	Relationships are increasingly based on respect with each party being valued. Communication is becoming deeper with difficult topics being brought into the open rather than avoided. Individuals have others that they can share their feelings and concerns with, gaining emotional support through doing so.
Level 4 Advancing	The importance of healthy personal relationships is understood and individuals prioritise time to build and sustain relationships. People have personal networks, individuals and groups with whom they feel comfortable, to share their concerns and celebrations with, and are also willing to be accountable to them.
Level 5 Achieving	A community exists that comprises people who demonstrate a commitment to building and sustaining loving, equitable and affirming relationships, and which is capable of managing conflict constructively to ensure and enable the common good.

	Living Faith
Level 1 Avoiding	Although people may claim a Christian faith it remains largely nominal and there is no discernible difference in attitudes or actions between them and others. Outside organised church services there is little time dedicated to personal prayer or Bible reading. Differences exist within and between churches and are a source of division. The wider community does not look to the church as a source of material or spiritual support.
Level 2 Aware	People are beginning to reflect on their attitudes and actions in the light of a growing understanding of their faith and the need for it to influence the way that they live their lives. There is however, as yet, little impact on the wider community.
Level 3 Acting	People are actively looking for ways to put their Christian faith into action to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the community of which they are part. There is a sense of excitement and dynamism in the church that is attractive to others leading to growth. The wider community increasingly sees the local church as relevant and positive.
Level 4 Advancing	Christians from across denominations work together as salt and light to achieve positive change in their communities drawing people, through love, to faith in Christ.
Level 5 Achieving	Christians from across denominations continue to work together as salt and light to achieve positive change not only in their own communities but also more widely, working with other Christians to influence and impact society at the national as well as local levels. They continue to draw people, through love, to faith in Christ.

	Emotional and Mental Health
Level 1 Avoiding	A community where painful issues are hidden and not discussed. Many within the community feel isolated and alone. People are fearful of those that are different to themselves and their sense of identity is founded on exclusive terms that divide rather than unite. Some may feel bitter and resentful towards those who may have wronged them in the past. People tend to think the future will be much the same or worse.
Level 2 Aware	People recognise that it is necessary to reflect on the past and to seek reconciliation though struggle to do so. There is a greater willingness to share fears and concerns with others and a growing recognition that the past need not define their future and that the future could be more positive.
Level 3 Acting	Individuals are addressing past hurts and have an increasing sense of peace about themselves, self-esteem is growing. Fears and concerns can be shared amongst close friends and family. An individual's sense of identity is increasingly defined in positive terms. The past no longer defines their future and there is increasing optimism about the future.
Level 4 Advancing	Individuals have resolved past hurts and are at peace with themselves and with each other; self-esteem is high. Fears and concerns are shared with a supportive network of friends and family without fear. The future is seen as positive.
Level 5 Achieving	A supportive community comprising people at peace with the past and with hope for the future who are able to share concerns and have the emotional resilience to withstand and adapt to shocks, stresses and uncertainty.

	Physical Health
Level 1 Avoiding	Physical health indicators remain poor and what improvements have taken place had little impact on the most vulnerable who struggle to access health resources. There have been few improvements to health infrastructure and access to health resources (such as clinics and clean water etc.) remains low. There is limited awareness of good health practices.
Level 2 Aware	Some physical health indicators have improved. There is a growing awareness that some elements of society are not benefitting as much as others and that this needs to be addressed however, there is little action. Individual's knowledge of good health practices has increased though changes in practice remain rare. Access to health resources (i.e. clinics, clean water etc.) is improving.
Level 3 Acting	There are improvements in many physical health indicators. The needs of the most vulnerable have been recognised and are being addressed; local communities are playing a more active role in these changes. Knowledge of good health practices has increased and attitudes are changing. Access to health resources (i.e. clinics, clean water etc.) is common.
Level 4 Advancing	There are improvements in most physical health indicators. The needs of the most vulnerable have been recognised and are being addressed effectively. Good health practices have been adopted by most. Access to health resources (i.e. clinics, maternal care, clean water and sanitation) is the norm for most people.
Level 5 Achieving	A community with continually improving physical health indicators for all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, with equitable access to resources for physical health.

	Stewardship of the Environment
Level 1 Avoiding	Individuals make use of the environment to meet their own short-term needs with little thought for other users or for the longer-term. Inter-dependencies between different elements of their environment are not considered. Current practices exploit the environment and are not sustainable.
Level 2 Aware	Individuals make use of the environment to meet their own short-term needs but there is some recognition that these conflict with the legitimate needs of other users and with the needs of future generations. The inter-dependencies between different elements of their environment are increasingly recognised. This thinking has, as yet, had little impact on practices which remain largely unsustainable.
Level 3 Acting	Resources are recognised as finite and are consequently valued. Efforts are being made to engage with other users to agree a more sustainable and equitable use of some resources and practices are beginning to change. Inter-dependencies between different elements of the environment are recognised and a view of the environment as a system is taking hold.
Level 4 Advancing	People and communities routinely engage with other users to agree a more sustainable and equitable use of resources. Practices have changed and continue to evolve. Inter-dependencies between different elements of the environment are recognised and a view of the environment as a system is the norm.
Level 5 Achieving	A community where people actively engage with all other actors who access natural resources to both understand how natural resource systems operate and to ensure their sustainable use for the common good.

	Material Assets and Resources
Level 1 Avoiding	A community that is suffering from material poverty. Physical assets are limited and tend to be controlled by a dominant few, largely for their own benefit. Assets that do exist may not be recognised or may be hard to use due to the context (i.e. conflict) or environment (i.e. climate change). People have few if any reserves; levels of vulnerability are high.
Level 2 Aware	The community suffers from material poverty however, individuals are beginning to recognise the assets that, collectively, exist within the community and are considering how they might adapt their practices to increase their reserves and reduce individual vulnerability. With the exception of a few individuals, thinking has however yet to translate into significant action.
Level 3 Acting	Working creatively together, existing material assets and resources have been recognised and are increasingly being used to improve livelihoods and address levels of poverty. People are exploring ways to adapt; reserves are increasing and vulnerability is reducing.
Level 4 Advancing	The tangible assets and resources available to a community are increasing, incidences of material poverty are reduced and assets are being used collectively to improve livelihoods, establish reserves and reduce vulnerability. Communities have learnt to adapt and evolve in response to changes. Livelihoods are largely secure.
Level 5 Achieving	A community where all people can responsibly access and utilise the material resources they need to sustain their livelihoods, be resilient to shocks and, ultimately, to flourish both as individuals and collectively.

	Capabilities
Level 1 Avoiding	Levels of skills, expertise and knowledge within the community are low or not recognised. Levels of dependency are high and change is seen as being dependent on and driven by outside agencies. The community feels powerless in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges.
Level 2 Aware	Levels of skills, expertise and knowledge within the community remain low but, assisted by others; the community are beginning to recognise the capabilities that they do possess. Levels of dependency are recognised and their own role and responsibility in creating change is beginning to be understood. While challenges remain difficult, the community feels that change is possible.
Level 3 Acting	Levels of skills, expertise and knowledge within the community are increasing as the community recognises and makes use of the capabilities that they do possess, creatively finding new ways to apply their expertise. There is a greater assertiveness within the community as they increasingly take responsibility for their own development.
Level 4 Advancing	Levels of skills, expertise and knowledge have risen to the extent that the community is driving its own development; challenges are being addressed with external advice sought when required. Individuals continue to innovate in response to change and to develop best practice.
Level 5 Achieving	A community that recognises and realises its own and others potential, sharing its expertise with others, becoming the teacher rather than the taught. Individuals creatively plan, learn and adapt in response to changing needs and contexts to collaboratively effect change and achieve a shared vision.

	Participation and Influence
Level 1 Avoiding	Communities have little say or influence over the decisions that affect them with decision-making power residing in a select few. It is difficult to express opinions or to have their views taken seriously, particularly if female or young or from a minority group.
Level 2 Aware	Individuals recognise that their views are legitimate and existing decision-makers are beginning to expand the range of people that they consult. Many within the community, particularly the most marginalised however, lack the confidence to engage with decision-makers and assert their views. Ultimately authority remains vested in the few.
Level 3 Acting	Decision-makers increasingly seek out and respect the views of different elements of society including, on occasion, the most vulnerable and those traditionally excluded. Individuals, including those typically marginalised are increasingly confident in expressing and asserting their views. Although it remains rare for the community to set priorities, they do have increasing influence over the way in which decisions are implemented.
Level 4 Advancing	Decision-makers routinely seek out and respect the views of all elements of society including the most vulnerable and those traditionally excluded. The community is confident in expressing tis views and is involved in identifying priorities, influencing decisions and the way in which decisions are implemented.
Level 5 Achieving	A community in which the views of all groups can be represented and considered such that their views influence decision-making about their future and in which they are also able to participate.

Context

A quick analysis of the context within which the community exists can also be helpful. The following 9 categories are one way of thinking through how the context might influence a community and either help or hinder change as it moves towards flourishing. The question to ask is whether there is anything within these categories that is preventing or enabling change. Thinking through these can suggest areas where additional work may be required or opportunities that can be used; it might also highlight new actors that need to be engaged or partners that could assist.

Institutions:

"Institutions" refers to the various organisations, institutes and societies through which society is ordered and administered and the rules (formal and informal) by which they operate. National and local government departments and offices will be one key set of institutions; religious organisations, trades unions or business groups may also be significant.

Legal Framework:

This element focuses on the legal context. It looks at the body of laws and regulations that impact on a community. It looks not only at what laws and policies may exist that help or hinder change but also at how effectively they are being implemented or applied. Think widely and don't limit yourself to the formal statutes that may exist, consider also the more informal "rules" that may constrain or enable activity. There may well be some overlap here with "*Institutions".*

Physical Environment:

The *"Physical Environment"* takes into account the terrain and climatic conditions that affect the community. Ease of access, fertility, seasonal extremes such as flooding or drought, likelihood of earthquakes or similar crises and the availability of natural resources might all impact on how easy it is for the community to flourish and should be considered.

Technological:

"Technological" focuses on the access that the community has to technology and in particular communications technology and services such as mobile phones, computers and the internet. It also considers the state of infrastructure more generally.

Political:

"Political" examines the way in which power is exercised and managed at the national and local levels. It considers how and by whom decisions are made and implemented and so looks at topics such as representation and accountability. It asks who's voice is heard and who's voice is listened to. There could well be overlaps here with *"Institutions"* and with *"Legal Framework"*.

Security:

"Security" considers the safety of the community. It looks at incidences of crime or violence that impact on the ability of people to go about their daily lives. Violence may be overt or it may be hidden such perceptions or threats of violence are just as important as actual incidences of it.

Economic:

"Economic" considers the impact that the economy has on the community. It takes into account issues such as the health of trade, the strength of the business community, of markets, the banking infrastructure and the availability of capital. Options for employment might also be considered here although they might also influence the "*Social*" category.

Social:

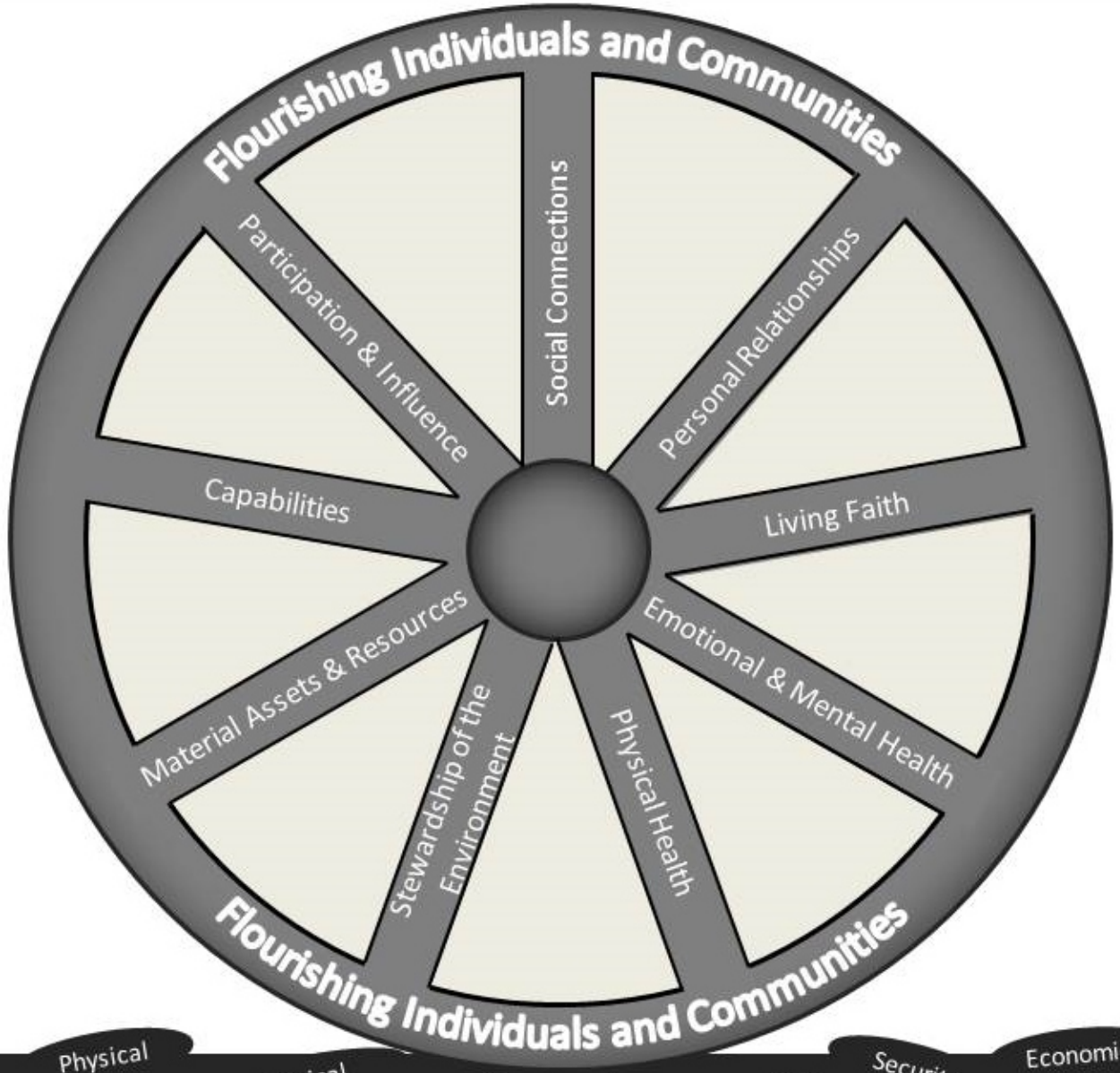
"*Social"* looks at the make-up of society and so will reflect issues such as age distribution and life expectancy, gender issues, the availability of employment and distribution of wealth, family size and structure, religion and beliefs, tribal or ethnic groupings, traditional leadership models and cultural norms.

Services:

"Services" considers the availability of essential services such as clean water, education, health and electricity. Aspects of these that influence the ability of individuals or of a community to change and flourish should be identified.

Domains

- Social Connections
- Personal Relationships
- Living Faith
- Emotional and Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Stewardship of the Environment
- Material Assets and Resources
- Capabilities
- Participation and Influence



Context

- Institutions
- Legal Framework
- Physical Environment
- Technological Situation
- Political Situation
- Security
- Economic
- Social
- Services

Institutions Legal Physical Technological Context Political Security Economic Social Services