Logic Models: Situational Analysis

To effectively plan and implement conservation outreach efforts, it is important to have a clear understanding of the problem we are trying to address. Clearly identifying the problem and its root causes is known as a ***situational analysis.*** This fact sheet presents some concepts you will want to consider before beginning an outreach planning process.

At its core, this process results in a clear and direct problem statement. What is the core problem we are trying to impact with our efforts? This will depend on your organizational goals, your setting, and the goals or objectives of any particular project or funding that underlies your outreach. In the conservation context, this most often has to do with limiting agriculture's impact on local or regional environmental conditions, or protecting the natural resource base upon which agriculture depends. In the behavior change context, we also need to consider the behavioral aspects that contribute to these conditions, which may come down to not enough farmers using practices we know can protect local natural resources.

After identifying the core problem we are trying to address, the next step is to consider the conditions and factors that contribute to this problem. Environmental conditions are typically the result of the interaction of complex systems that include social, economic, political, and ecological components.

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Use this space to conduct your own situational analysis. Start by identifying the central problem you are trying to address with your project. Reflect on each contributing factor to help guide your planning efforts.

- ***What is the problem you are addressing in your project?***

- ***What are the causes of the problem?***

- ***What are the social, economic, political, and/or ecological symptoms of the problem?*** (e.g. diminished social capital, impaired water quality, etc.)

- ***Who is affected by the problem?*** This may include both human and non-human communities.

- ***What will happen if nothing is done to address the problem?*** How will conditions change in the future? What uncertainties are at play?

Developing a clear understanding of the problem, its root causes, and who is affected by it will help in deciding what should be done. Considering the range of contributing factors will help direct resources to the conditions that are most likely to achieve our desired impacts. This situational analysis will help ground the rest of our planning process.

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