

# PLANNING AND EVALUATING PROJECTS

## STAGE ONE - IS THERE A NEED?

Before any project is undertaken the need should be clearly established and documented. It is not enough just to have a good idea. For any project to be successful in community support, lobbying or obtaining funding there must be clear evidence that the need exists.

Needs assessments are useful because they

- ensure that the instigators of the project document their idea and prepare a marketable package
- show clear evidence that a need exists
- indicate the extent of community support
- identify the non supporters
- encourage research to compliment a proposal or funding application
- give a clear direction for the project to forge ahead
- promote debate

## HOW DO WE DO A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Community groups are quite ingenious how they establish needs without spending huge amounts on market surveys and other tools. Some inexpensive ways to assess need are by conducting small surveys yourself and then comparing the results with existing information. This is often a good starting point to identify gaps or to confirm the direction you wish to proceed in. Before you start the process it is important to work out how the information you gather will be used. In other words you often need to look at the end of the process to determine how you will proceed at the beginning!

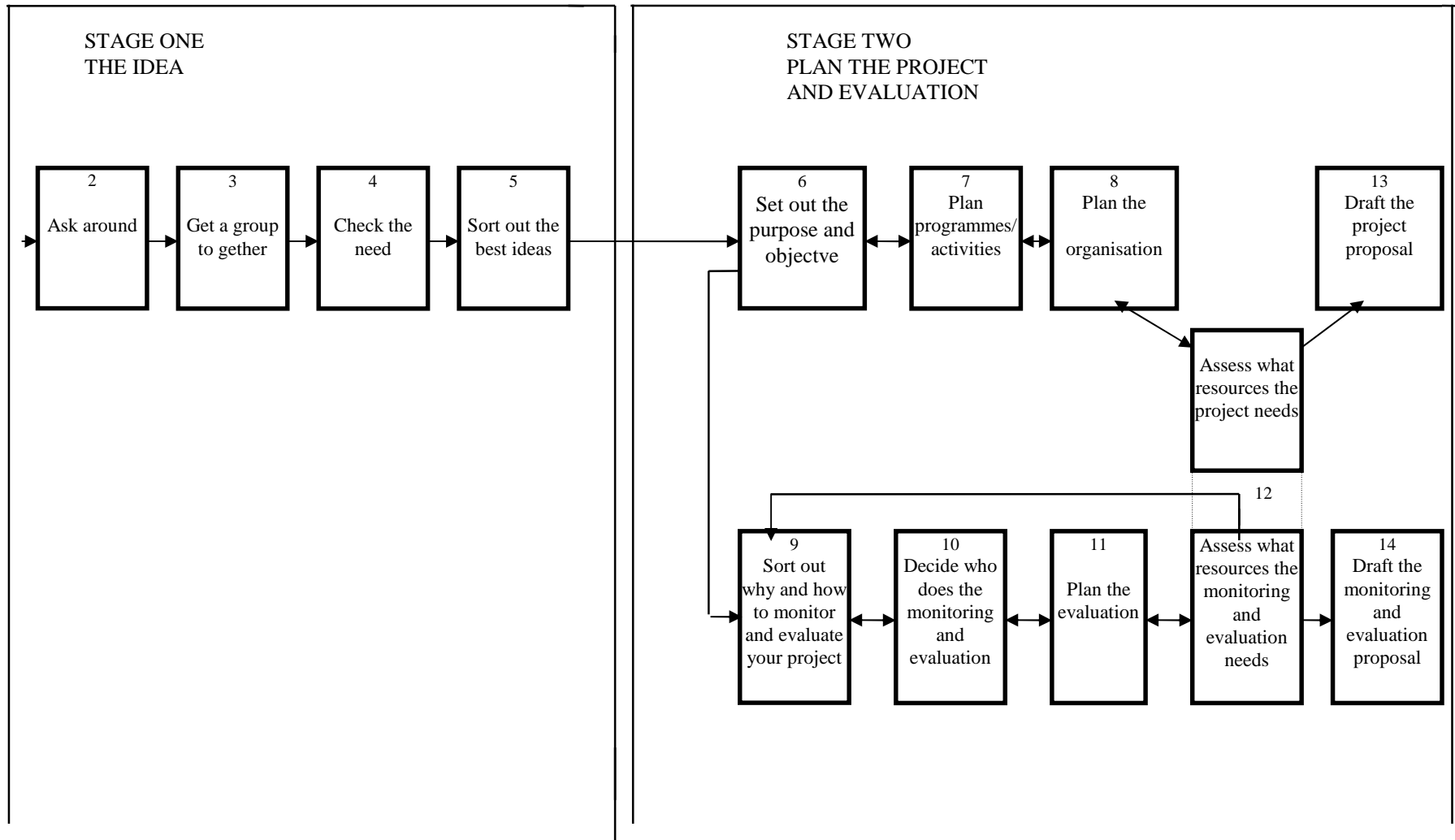
Always remember to use the KISS principle - keep it simple stupid! People get very tired of filling in pages of questions and you need to make it easy for people to say "Yes I will participate". Also make it fun.

## WHAT CAN A SURVEY TELL US?

- Visitor numbers
- Community needs
- Gaps in services
- Local attitudes
- Skill shortages or skills available
- A profile of the community

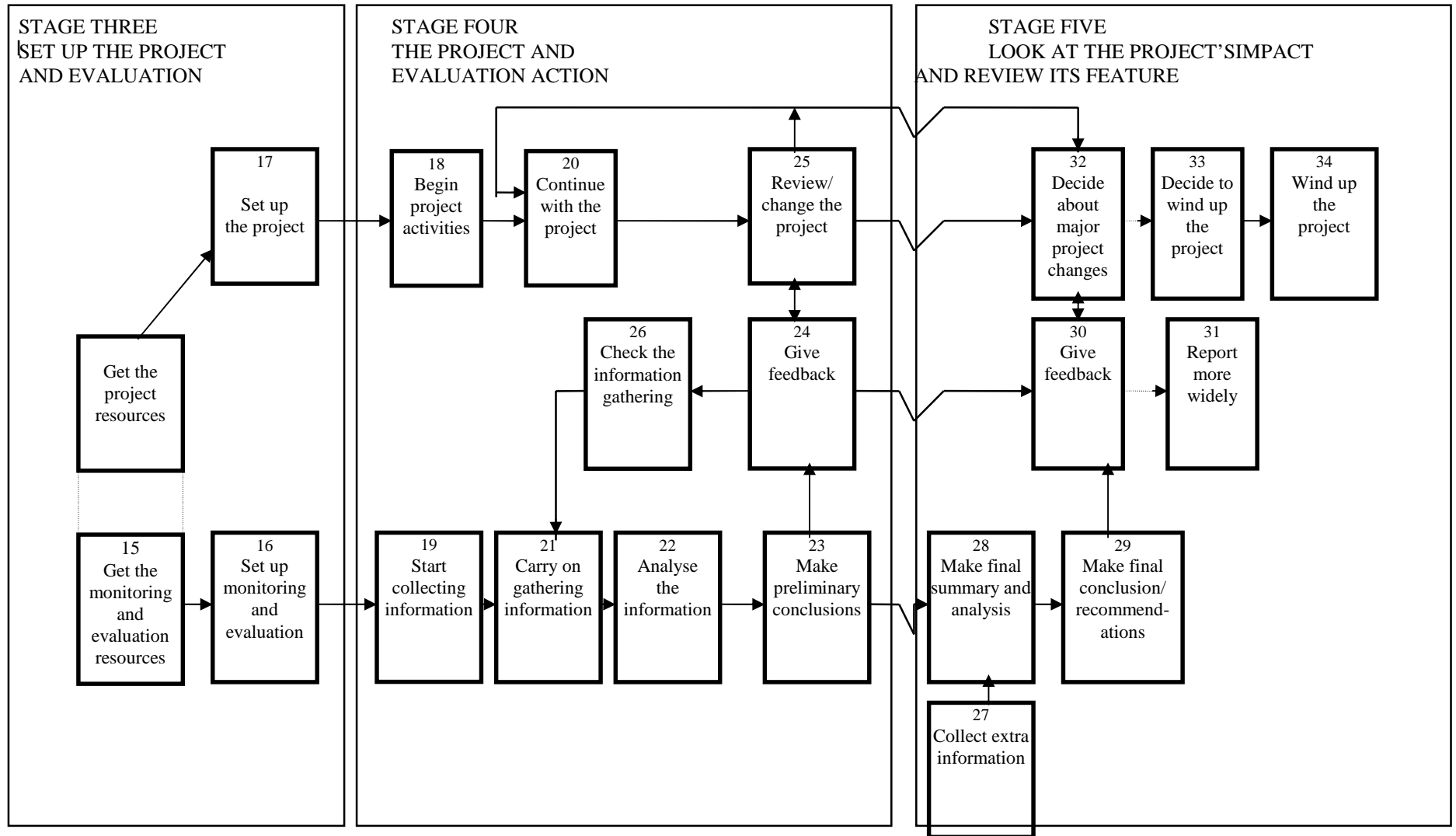
“WE ARE DOING WELL - AREN'T WE?”

A guide to Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Community Projects



# “WE ARE DOING WELL - AREN'T WE?”

## A guide to Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Community Projects



## RULES OF RESEARCH

- Use relevant information already available. Good references are Statistics NZ,
- Community research, local authorities.
- Have a clear purpose and decide on the end use of the results before your start.
- Work out the resources you have to undertake the survey, such as people, money, time and data processing. Maybe you could approach the local polytechnic or high school to help you.
- Evaluate the different methods of conducting a survey (telephone, face-to-face-through mail etc)
- Pre-test the survey questions to ensure any ambiguities are ironed out.
- If you are sending a questionnaire by mail try to provide a stamped addressed or postage paid envelope (make it easy).
- Before the survey begins work out exactly how responses will be collated to extract information before the survey begins.
- Try to reduce the number of questions to a minimum. One page is ideal.
- Ensure any covering note or introductory comments asking people to take part in the survey are appealing (What is in it for the participant?)

- *Case*
- *The group wanted to find out how many people were too poor to have a telephone and asked the question “Do you have a telephone in your house?”*
- *Only two people answered “no” but it was subsequently established that another 50 had telephones but they had been disconnected!*
- *Key*
- *Pretest the questions*

## FURTHER RESOURCES

**Ideas into action: - Planning community projects Internal Affairs**

**If you would like a list of our other community resources, or to be put on our mailing list, contact us at:**



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