CHAPTER 4

Mega Planning: Defining and Delivering Useful Societal and Community Results

KEY POINTS

- Useful planning and assessment begin with defining useful societal results
- An Ideal Vision is a measurable statement of the future we commit to create with others for future generations
- The Mega level needs assessment derives gaps between required/current results and current ones

MEGA PLANNING: AN OVERVIEW

In Chapter 2, the Organizational Elements Model (or OEM) was introduced as a decision-making tool and framework for Strategic Thinkers. The OEM provides decision makers with a structure for aligning all that institutions use, do, produce, and deliver, with the value they add to their communities and society. And while no level of the OEM (Mega, Macro, Micro, Process, or Input) is more important than the others, it is critical that we begin with the Mega level when we plan for educational success by defining Outcomes as the results at that level (Kaufman, 1998, 2000). If we start at any other level of the OEM we are forced to rely on assumptions about the contributing results that are to be attained. Relying on such assumptions is not only presumptuous, it is also bad practice. If we begin at the Mega level and identify the Outcomes we are committed to achieving, then we can “roll-down” from Mega to define the success criteria for each of the other levels with valid and reliable data rather than relying on conjecture.
WHAT IS MEGA PLANNING

Mega planning is a critical aspect of successfully defining, prioritizing, and achieving useful educational results (i.e., societal and community results, payoffs, and consequences). It is characterized by planning where the primary client and beneficiary is society, now and in the future. Mega planning views individuals and organizations as means to societal ends, and begins by identifying the outcomes that an institution commits to contribute to society. This differs from conventional planning techniques focused solely on the institution and/or the subsystems of the institution (i.e., teachers, learners, departments, college, or administration). Mega planning includes these levels of planning (Macro and Micro) as well by aligning them with positive societal contributions. Thus, an educational institution benefits from the application of Mega planning when it creates and assures the linkages between the Mega, Macro, Micro, Process, and Inputs levels of the OEM (Kaufman, Herman, and Waters, 1996).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tips for the Strategic Thinker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be future oriented—unfettered by any restrained or negative thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conventional planning begins with the institution and is primarily centered on the What Is (an existing educational institution achieving a certain level of results) rather than the What Should Be (see Figure 4-1). Starting all planning, assessment, and decision-making at the Mega level provides a future-oriented focus for initiatives as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case in Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Though Tiger High was successful in meeting many of the subsystem goals of their state’s education policy (i.e., standardized test scores, graduation rates), they were not successful in achieving the useful educational results that graduates required for future self-sufficiency and positive contributions to our shared society. During the earlier needs assessment and strategic planning initiatives at Tiger High, the focus had never left the school (or the school system) as the primary client and beneficiary. This limited scope, unfortunately, left the planning and later achievement without the necessary perspective of Mega, and offered no way to prove that Tiger High was adding value to the community and society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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WHY START WITH MEGA?

An old adage tells us if we act in haste we repent in leisure. And so it is with defining and delivering useful educational results.

Most internal and external partners and stakeholders of any educational institution want to help children be successful in both school and life. There are rarely any “bad actors” in the drama. Yet, we keep trying one quick fix after another with limited accomplishment of useful results. Education today is not a complete failure, but there are many learners who are being left behind in an increasingly complex and demanding world.

It is not enough to fix problems as they occur; it is better to define the results and payoffs before selecting any solution or resources. If we do this before implementing any more quick fixes, it will likely be both more effective and cheaper. Proactive planning that defines useful results to be accomplished before implementation is both rational and practical. After all, it is more expensive to fix a failing system the later we wait to detect the problems.

Boehm (1981) reported on the “relative cost to fix an error” (p. 17).
He suggests the following relative costs to fix an error building on a cost ratio of 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase in Which Error is Found</th>
<th>Cost Ratio (based on units of 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requirements (planning)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development testing</td>
<td>15-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance testing</td>
<td>30-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation</td>
<td>40-1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we shift the wording to education, the following applies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase in Which Error is Found</th>
<th>Cost Ratio (based on units of 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs Assessment and Planning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program and Curriculum Design</td>
<td>3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning program development</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot testing and evaluation</td>
<td>15-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program installation and acceptance</td>
<td>30-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation</td>
<td>40-1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another example of how small problems with inappropriate results specifications is seen in the catastrophic fate of the R.M.S. Titanic. In a breathtaking analysis of compounding quick-fix errors, Scerbo (1999) notes that numerous small errors were made, and when the iceberg was struck, the individual mistakes coalesced. These errors, each one possibly fatal, included:

- Not enough lifeboats for all passengers. After all, this was advertised as an unsinkable vessel, and the owners wanted more space for gracious living onboard.
- Each of the 15 “watertight” compartments did not reach to the top of the ships structure. While the first six could contain water, more than that failed. The builders and the owners knew of the possible problem but thought such a disaster would never happen.
- Thinking the ship was unsinkable, the wireless operator ignored warning of ice in the Titanic’s path, and the reports were not passed on to the Titanic’s captain.
- The captain, it is reported, was attempting to set a speed record even on the ship’s maiden voyage, through a very dangerous environment. (pp. 21–27)

Many errors were committed in the Titanic drama. Careful attention to Mega (i.e., survival at the societal level) may have avoided them. But as in education today, people assume that everything will be all right. We hope that societal value added will result from our efforts as we pursue conventional thinking, planning, design, development, and implementation. But errors don’t get better during design, development, and implementation . . . they get more expensive to fix.

**IF EDUCATION IS THE SOLUTION, WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?**

A pragmatic start to defining the What Should (or Could) Be at the Mega level is to begin with the most basic of questions:

- If education is the solution, what is the problem?

- What problems (or better yet, high-liability gaps in results) do education institutions attempt to close?

- What valuable opportunities to improve upon results not yet realized could education seek to obtain?

- How can educational institutions keep gaps in results closed more efficiently while maintaining effectiveness?

Institutional success now and in the future is dependent on being able to answer these questions. In so doing we are defining what
value we (as a profession and as individual educators) add to our society, our communities, our learners, and others.

Answering these questions, however, with abstract statements (such as "develop lifelong learners") may help an institution scope it's enterprise, but does little to measure its successful achievement. Obtuse purpose statements lack the accountability necessary for obtaining the results required to help develop the successful citizens of tomorrow. Defining success indicators for educational institutions requires that we prepare destinations for our progress, and address questions of our contributions in formal and rigorous terms. After all, without measurable demonstration of value added, it is difficult to justify activities.

In order to demonstrate value added to our communities, learners, and others, we must move to the rigorous specification of the results we achieve now and plan to achieve in the future. The Organizational Elements Model will be one of the primary tools we use to assure that we are achieving value-added results for our learners, colleagues, institution, and society.

When specifying and measuring useful results, one continuing challenge is resisting the “comfort” of relying on assumptions about the results of our activities. We can move from inferring and assuming useful results of our current activities, to linking our activities with desired/required results by asking “if that was achieved, what results would we expect to get?” By continuing to ask this question not only can we increase the level of measurement for the success criteria, but we can also move the focus from the individual/team, to the institution, and to society.

### Tips for the Strategic Thinker

Set goals and objectives at the ideal level; don’t be limited by today’s (or yesterday’s) restrictions.

From a Results Chain like the one developed by Tiger High, an educational institution can identify the level of results that should guide planning, assessment, and decision-making. However, it should not be presupposed that the results identified at the end of the Results Chain exercise will be defined in sufficient terms for successful planning of the Outcomes to be achieved. Rather than beginning with the current Inputs and Processes, useful planning and assessment begins by defining required/desired results at the Mega level.

Defining success indicators for education is the first task in defining What Should Be at the Mega level, and then Macro and Micro level required results are derived from the Mega level vision. This “rolling-down” process ensures that data driven systematic decision-making, in contrast to assumptions, drives all planning and assessment.

### OUTSIDE-IN VS. INSIDE-OUT PLANNING

Planning for any organization, including an educational institution, can be completed from two perspectives. The conventional perspective for educational planning starts with the notion that “we have always provided education, what can we do to improve upon...
Activity Worksheet 4-1. Complete the Results Chain Below for Your Institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question to Ask First</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Level of the OEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If education is the solution, what is the problem?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we achieved this, what would the results of that be?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we achieved this, what would the results be?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we achieved this, what would the results be?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If these are the results we really want from our activities, then why don’t we start all planning and decision-making with this objective?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case in Point

The planning and assessment team at Tiger High had just finished an activity to build partnerships and consensus based on Mega, when Mr. Leopard and Ms. Lion again found themselves discussing the initiative...

Mr. Leopard: Just when I am beginning to think that starting at Mega makes lots of sense, I can’t figure out how we can be held responsible for all the things in the world we don’t have control of . . .

Ms. Lion: I don’t think that is the point. My thinking is that we aren’t the only one responsible for saving the world, we’re simply clarifying what part we play, making sure that doesn’t keep someone else from doing their part, and moving forward with helping our students in a manner that can lead to “system” success.

Mr. Leopard: Maybe I just don’t get it yet, but I don’t see how all this “Mega thinking” is going to translate into a useful decision making guide for use as teachers.

Ms. Lion: I am not clear either, but this idea seems to make more sense than just continuing to meet the state’s standards while failing to achieve truly useful results for our students and community.

what we currently do.” This perspective of improving what the institution currently does is the hallmark of inside-out planning—starting with the institution and/or its subsystems as the basis for planning (see Figure 4-2). New realities, however, require that institutions adopt a new perspective for planning in order to effectively

![Figure 4-2. Inside-out and outside-in planning.](image-url)
plan for a successful future. That new perspective is the outside-in perspective which begins with specifying societal Outcomes to be accomplished (requirements to be delivered outside of the institution) before defining the Outputs of the institution, the Products of its employees, or the Processes and Inputs within the institution.

Though the Results Chain exercises we just completed are useful in identifying the relationships and linkages among the levels of the OEM, for planning and achieving useful results, educational institutions should start not with parameters and limitations but rather with the ideal results to be achieved at the Mega level. Adopting this "outside-in" perspective before educational planning begins ensures that all decisions regarding the methods and means an institution adopts will be aligned with its Mission Objective and contribute to its Ideal Vision (see Figure 4-2). 17

Where does your institution commonly start when making decisions regarding the planning and achievement of useful results?

- With society as the primary client and beneficiary (Mega)?
- With the institution as the primary client and beneficiary (Macro)?
- With individuals or teams as the primary client and beneficiary (Micro)?
- With a focus on the processes, activities, and interventions (Process)?
- With the inputs, resources, and tools (Inputs)?

DERIVING MEASURABLE AND USEFUL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Objectives are the rigorous and measurable statements (i.e., commitments) we use to state the useful educational results that we commit to deliver. As educators, measurable objectives provide statements of the value we add to learners. Without these clear measurable statements of What Should Be the expected results of our efforts, accountability for our efforts and expenditures is not possible.

Tips for the Strategic Thinker
Identify a clear set of specifications for success.

17Outside-in planning is not the same as an authoritarian imposed objectives approach. Th outside-in approach is defined and created by the educational stakeholders, not any individual or small group with only their interest accounted for in the planning.

In defining useful educational objectives we should state:
- What performance is to be demonstrated;
- Who or what will demonstrate that performance;
- Under what conditions the performance will be observed;
- What criteria will be used to determine success (Kaufman, 1995; Mager, 1997)

In creating measurable objectives (or performance indicators) for results to be accomplished at any level of the OEM, be sure to remember the following:
- A clear, unambiguous statement of desired or required results.
- Does not include any means or resources.
- Precise, rigorous criteria to measure actual results.
- Statement of who or what will demonstrate the intended results.
- Statement of under what conditions will the results or performance be observed.

By stating our intentions at the Mega level in these clear and unambiguous terms we can have truly Outcomes-based educational planning and achieving. 18

PUTTING ALL THE PIECES TOGETHER STARTS WITH AN IDEAL VISION

The core process of Mega planning is the creation of a Mega level vision: an Ideal Vision. An Ideal Vision is the measurable, long-term statement of the kind of world the institution is committed to contributing towards for future generations of our society. Starting from societal contributions, the Ideal Vision provides the basis for beginning all planning and assessment outside of the institution by considering the requirements of the learners, parents, community, and other stakeholders.

With a basic model for Strategic Educational Planning and Needs Assessment in focus (i.e., the Organizational Elements Model with results at the Mega, Macro, and Micro levels and levels of Processes...
and Inputs), we derive the What Should Be by beginning with the Ideal Vision. The Ideal Vision is a measurable objective specifying the future we are committed to create for our children and our children’s children.

House and Shamir (1993) hold that the “articulation of an ideological goal as a vision for a better future, for which followers have a moral claim, is the sine qua non of all . . . visionary theories of leadership.” As a measurable objective of the ideal future, the Ideal Vision is “ideal” and should not be restricted by current results, today’s technologies, or other limitations . . . and should not include any means, resources, or values.19 By leaving those barriers behind we have the opportunity to truly plan for the future we would like to create, uninhibited by the activities we are currently engaged in. This Ideal Vision is the starting place in defining What Should Be results. In defining the What Is, you will have the opportunity to spend ample time to describe the current results being achieved.

In defining the Ideal Vision there are only two rules that must be followed.

1. All statements must define results and only results (no processes, technologies, activities, resources, values, or other Processes or Inputs should be included in the Ideal Vision).
2. All results must be at the societal or Mega level in order that results obtained will be of mutual benefit to all subsystems, (e.g., the institution, the teachers, the students, the college, or the department).

Creating an Ideal Vision that falls within this structure is not time consuming when the participants have a working understanding of the Organizational Elements Model and the benefits of starting the journey to success by first specifying the useful end point. The tools and activities illustrated in this book are designed to assist educational leaders in this task.

19 What are important today are not values, since even a gang of bank robbers share common values, it is results and consequences that are important. Values inevitably lead to preferred methods-means for achieving results before identification of what are the required and desired ends of society.

### Case In Point

At Tiger High the following rationale for stating an Ideal Vision was developed by the faculty and staff to be used when discussing their initiative with partners and stakeholders.

Imagine that you were planning on taking a cross-country trip this summer with your family. Let’s say that you lived in Chicago and wanted to take your family for a vacation in San Francisco. Even though you know that, generally speaking, your destination is to the west, you probably wouldn’t just load the family into the van and start heading west in hopes that you’d end up in San Francisco. Rather, you’d lay out the map and plan the best route base on getting you from where you are to where you want to be. Further, you’d probably sit down with a yellow high lighter and plot the course starting from San Francisco, working back to Chicago, probably marking off milestone locations along the way, when it came time to set out for San Francisco, getting there would simply be a matter of following the route you planned on the map. In your travels, reaching those milestone locations would provide an indication that you are on track . . . in other words, “point of reference” for telling how close to your destination you are. In the same way that journeys are often easier to figure out starting from the end, so too is educational success best achieved . . . by specifying results to be achieved, then planning backwards from that objective so that you are prepared to carry out the processes and activities for reaching them.

A Basic Ideal Vision that has been developed through work with individuals and groups from around the world (representing business, government, as well as education) follows:

- There will be no losses of life nor elimination or reduction of levels of well-being, survival, self-sufficiency, quality of life, from any source including (but not limited to):
  - war and/or riot
  - unintended human-caused changes to the environment including permanent destruction of the environment and/or rendering it non-renewable
  - murder, rape, or crimes of violence, robbery, or destruction to property
  - substance abuse
  - disease
  - pollution
  - starvation and/or malnutrition
  - destructive behavior (including child, partner, spouse, self, elder, others)
  - accidents, including transportation, home, and business/workplace
  - discrimination based on irrelevant variables including color, race, age, creed, gender, religion, wealth, national origin, or location

Poverty will not exist, and every woman and man will earn at least as much as it costs them to live unless they are progressing toward being self-sufficient and self-reliant. No adult will be under the care, custody or control of another person, agency, or substance: all adult citizens will be self-sufficient and self-reliant as minimally indicated by their consumption being equal to or less than their production (Kaufman, 2000).
Though a Basic Ideal Vision provides Strategic Thinkers with broad-based definitions of the world we want to create for future generations, it does contain qualifiers and descriptors (the bulleted components above) that technically are not Mega level indicators. Rather, they are Macro level results that serve as “Mega enablers.” Because it is a combination of what people define as the preferred future and identify as being important, it includes philosophies and values, as well as determines a starting place for all planning, doing, and continuous improvement.

Case in Point

During an afternoon meeting the planning and assessment stakeholders as well as planning partners at Tiger High offered the following Ideal Vision:

There will be no murders, rapes, or crimes, nor debilitating substance or person abuse. The world will be at peace, and free of disabling infectious disease. Poverty will not exist, and every woman and man will earn at least as much as it costs him/her to live unless he/she is going to school or moving toward preparing himself/herself so that he/she is increasingly close to being self-sufficient and self-reliance. People will take charge of their lives and be responsible for what they use, do, and contribute.

While it may be more comfortable to phrase the Ideal Vision in the context of the institution (e.g., the school will be at peace and free of disabling infectious disease), this limits the scope of the planning and assessment to the Macro level with results confined to the success of the institution. Organizations (including educational institutions) are, after all, means to societal ends. By writing an Ideal Vision that is focused on the larger community and society, institutional planning and assessment can be guided toward the achievement of value-added contributions to all those they serve: the society.

ADDING MEASURABLE CRITERIA

Measurable criteria should be provided for each component of an Ideal Vision in order for it to be a useful and pragmatic tool for the institution. These criteria specify the indicators of achievement (success) for society and institution in achieving the specified objectives of the Ideal Vision. Examples of possible measurable performance criteria for elements of the Basic Ideal Vision are provided in Table 4-1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Ideal Vision Components</th>
<th>Examples of Possible Performance Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No unintended human-caused changes to the environment including permanent destruction of the environment and/or rendering it non-renewable</td>
<td>No species of plants or animals will become extinct from human action as certified by an international agency on the environment and/or the United Nations’ Secretary for the Environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No discrimination based on irrelevant variables including color, race, age, creed, gender, religion, wealth, national origin, or location.</td>
<td>There will be no significant differences among people on the basis of irrelevant variables as certified by the United Nations’ Secretary for Human Rights and/or an independent international agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No pollution</td>
<td>There will be no loss of life or quality of life from pollutants and related toxins as indicated by certified and audited reports of an independent international agency and/or the Secretary General of the United Nations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT ABOUT BELIEFS AND VALUES?

You may notice that the Ideal Vision you developed contains beliefs and values that are important to you and/or your institution. While such preferences are part of being a caring practitioner, they often rely on favored solutions (which, as Bob Mager suggests, are often marketed as “you really oughta wanna”). You probably also noticed that adding results criteria often made the value or belief superfluous. The reason for this is that results frequently stem from applying a moral principle. To assume the result is attained will entail assuming such a principle. This is a corollary of Mega-level planning.

However, stating the results first helps eliminate countless arguments over processes, resources, values, and beliefs by focusing on the What Should Be that a future-oriented, results-based Ideal Vision allows. Specifying and committing to accomplishing useful educational results involves making sure that no stakeholder is systematically disenfranchised by any individual or institutional method or means not justified by the ends to be achieved. Beliefs and values still exist. However, they are brought into play in the context of the Ideal Vision.
Activity Worksheet 4-2. Defining the World of Tomorrow's Child.

Now that you've had the chance to consider adding measurable criteria to an Ideal Vision, try your hand at doing the same for your institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe the world in which you want tomorrow's child to live:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., zero deaths or disabilities from illicit drugs; no murders; no rapes; no species become extinct from human intervention)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Kaufman, 2000

GAINING AGREEMENT ON WHAT SHOULD BE

Though rarely is there a single Ideal Vision to which planning partners and stakeholders agree upon unanimously upon first draft, the Basic Ideal Vision provides the grounds on which consensus can be built. In practice, most people who are willing to leave old comfort zones agree with the Basic Ideal Vision (Kaufman, 2000). The Basic Ideal Vision was developed based on the input of individuals and organizations from around the world, including social workers, teachers, parents, employers, politicians, executives, students, soldiers, engineers, and others from all walks of life. By adhering to the two rules (i.e., results statements and societal focus) these individuals and organizations contributed to the development of a measurable statement of the world they are committed to working toward for future generations.

An Ideal Vision provides a context for the generative commitments of individuals and organizations. As “the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation,” generativity represents the contributions of individuals in the creation of a larger community (Erickson, 1963; Kotre, 1995). McAdams, de St. Aubin, and Logan (1993), citing Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, and Tipton (1991) and Taylor (1989), suggest that “through generativity, adult lives become meaningfully integrated into modern social institutions and societal endeavors designed to ensure the continuity of things deemed ‘good’ (or worth preserving) from one generation to the next and the betterment of the world for generations to come.” An Ideal Vision provides this common direction, and does so by including precise measurement criteria.

Defining What Should Be at the Mega level begins with reaching agreement on an Ideal Vision. Without this measurable statement, subsequent decisions will be based on just an assumption that efforts will result in positive contributions to the community and society. Therefore the time necessary for ensuring a general consensus on an Ideal Vision to start the planning and assessment activities should be taken.

In defining an Ideal Vision, difficulties most often arise when the Ideal Visioning process challenges the comfort zones of individuals. As mentioned earlier, often experience within previous paradigms...
has rewarded Strategic Planners for including their values regarding processes and inputs. This may lead to well-intentioned beliefs and processes being implemented that do not link (or achieve) the desired/required results of an educational system. And although it is conventional strategic planning practice to include beliefs and values, this approach is not effective (Kaufman, et al., 1996; Kaufman, 2000). The reason is that typically the beliefs and values of Strategic Planning participants are focused only on the processes and inputs of the educational system (e.g., funding, technology, class size, teaching philosophy, etc.) and not on the results that must be achieved for learners to be successful now and in the future.

It is not unusual for those new to an Ideal Vision to struggle with the distinctions of both ends and means, as well as the differentiation of Mega, Macro, and Micro level results. When valued processes and inputs are identified as potential solutions to a problem as yet undefined, they should not be discarded but rather saved for use at the appropriate time when methods and means are selected (see Chapter 7). Potential missions and objectives (at the Macro and Micro levels) should also not be discarded, but rather saved for discussion at the appropriate time. During the Ideal Visioning process the sole focus of the discussion should be on the results to be achieved for the community and society. The resulting product should be a clear and measurable statement of the ideal future to which planning partners are committed to co-creating for future generations.

If we want a better world for tomorrow’s child—a world where there is no loss of life nor elimination or reduction of levels of well-being, survival, self-sufficiency, quality of life, livelihood nor loss of property—then these desired results should be specified in the Ideal Vision. For if we do not specify in measurable terms the results we truly want to achieve, we run the risk of delivering something much less. And while these Ideal Vision (Mega level) results may not be achieved within our lifetime, by planning for them now we can ensure that we are making contributions toward their achievement.

**DEFINING WHAT IS RESULTS AT THE MEGA LEVEL**

In conjunction with defining What Should Be at the Mega level (i.e., defining an Ideal Vision) a cooperative effort for defining the current results being achieved should be completed. Results data regarding What Is should be aligned with the indicators defined through the desired/required results the institution commits to deliver: the Ideal Vision. In particular, current results data should be obtained on the same indicators for which desired/required performance was determined in order to accurately determine the frequency and magnitude of gaps in results (needs).

While the indicators should remain the same, the data collection techniques may vary depending on the necessary confidence in findings (e.g., while soft data attained from focus groups may be useful in defining the What Should Be, additional and corresponding hard data from performance records may provide a more accurate portrait of the What Is). Commonly, it is reasonable to ask for perceptions of What Is (soft data) from the same participants involved in the specification of desired/required performance (i.e., What Should Be or Ideal Vision). However, since current educational activities and programs are more likely to include existing data related to results being accomplished (e.g., test results, progress reports, strategic plans), such non-human data sources should also be tapped. In the event that current interventions do not have existing “paper trails” of performance data regarding current results, initial estimates of What Is should be solicited (see Chapter 8). Defining the What Is at the Mega level starts with determining the data requirements for the assessment. For each element of the Ideal Vision, and the corresponding criteria for measurement, there are related data elements that must be collected for identifying the relationship of the What Should Be and the What Is. While What Should Be is defined by the Ideal Vision, the related What Is indicators should be specified on the same criteria and standards (e.g., the number of deaths, percentage of individuals who are self-sufficient, etc.). See Chapter 8 for specifications, tools, and techniques for collecting required data.

**MEASURING CURRENT MEGA LEVEL RESULTS**

The primary task of Mega level planning is the development of and agreement to an Ideal Vision. As the required and desired results are defined in the Ideal Vision as part of the Strategic Planning process, the integrated Needs Assessment process should begin (see figure 4.3). A Needs Assessment provides planning partners with the necessary information for moving from the Ideal Vision (Mega level) to the Mission Objective (Macro level). This process of deriving a Mission Objective for the institution from the Ideal Vision will lead to the specification of results to be achieved by the institution, the learners, the educators, and other partners involved in the educational pro-
elements of Tiger High's ideal vision | what should be | what is
--- | --- | ---
murders, rapes, or crimes | zero | according to certified valid police records, annually there were an estimated 2 murders, 31 rapes, and 143 crimes in the community; and thousands nationwide.
deblitating substance or person abuse | zero | according to certified valid police records, annually there were locally an estimated 21 individual debilitated due to substance abuse, and 32 due to some form of person abuse (e.g., spouse, child); and thousands nationwide.
world at peace | zero wars and/or riots | according to certified valid records of the united nations there were an estimated 8 wars and 24 military conflicts annually, leading to thousands of deaths and debilitating injuries.

Figure 4-3. Mega Level Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment.

cess. The Mission Objective (or elements of the Ideal Vision the institution is committed to achieving), however, should not be derived based on uninformed beliefs or values. Data-based decision making is the only practical and pragmatic tool for linking and aligning the Mega and Macro level of results.

Based on data, needs at the Mega level are defined by the gaps (or discrepancies) between the What Should Be and the What Is (see Figure 4-4). At the Mega level What Should Be results are usually absolute (zero occurrences of negative consequences), thus the "need" (gap between current and desired/required results) is typically the elimination of all incidents listed under What Is.

Dividing the OEM into What Is and What Should Be facilitates the conduct of the Needs Assessment on the basis of the definition of needs as the simple computation of What Should Be minus What Is for results. While this equation is equally as relevant for resource- and process-based gap analysis (i.e., quasi-Needs Assessment) as it is for gaps concerning discrepancies in results, useful decisions regarding means are best driven by the required/desired results derived from the Needs Assessment at the Mega, Macro, and Micro levels. Again, this is not to say that any one level of the OEM is more important than any other, but rather that strategists beginning planning at the Mega level are more likely to align internal performance with positive achievements beyond their organizations.

**DETERMINING RESULTS PRIORITIES**

The collection of the What Is data at the Mega level provides the initial data for decision-makers in determining which components of the Ideal Vision the educational institution should commit to achieving. The comparison of the What Is data to the desired results specified in the Ideal Vision (the What Should Be) constitutes the gap in results (needs) at the Mega level. These needs can then be prioritized on the estimated cost of ignoring the gaps (the cost of the problem) versus the cost of closing the gaps (the cost of potential solutions). Based on this prioritization of needs (along with an analysis of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats described in Chapter 8), the planning partners and stakeholders should be able to derive a Mission Objective from the Ideal Vision to which they can commit and which is suitable to the institution (Figure 4-2).

**MEGA LEVEL COSTS-CONSEQUENCES ANALYSIS (CCA)**

As a retrospective process, the evaluation of projects, programs, or

\[ \text{What Should Be} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{Hard and Soft} \\ \text{Data} \end{array} \quad - \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{What Is} \\ \text{Hard and Soft} \\ \text{Data} \end{array} \quad = \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{Gaps in results} \\ \text{(needs)} \end{array} \]

Figure 4-4. Defining needs as gaps in results.

\[ \text{Measuring Current Mega Level Results} \]

\[ \text{Tips for the Strategic Thinker} \]

Knowing where we are is critical to determining how to get to where we want to arrive: First define What Should Be and then What Is.

\[ \text{At this stage in the Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment process only broad estimates for the cost of closing a gap are available, since possible solutions have not been formally discussed or selected.} \]
Activity Worksheet 4-3. Your Institution’s Current and Required Contributions to an Ideal Vision.

Based on the Ideal Vision, with partners and stakeholders complete the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Your Institution’s Ideal Vision</th>
<th>What Should Be</th>
<th>What Is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4-5. Deriving a Mission Objective from the Ideal Vision.

Interventions has the luxury of comparing what was intended against What Is for results according to “return on investment” in terms of costs and benefits. Needs Assessments, on the other hand, require a different kind of metric for cost analysis since their purpose is prospective—the determination not only of current accomplishments, but required and desired results as well.

To predict the benefit (consequences) of accomplishing required/desired results, Costs-Consequences Analysis (CCA) estimates the cost of not achieving What Should Be (the often unconsidered cost of the problem) versus estimates of the cost of closing gaps in results (the cost of current and prospective solutions). Since both activities affix costs to gaps in results, Costs-Consequences Analysis must be conducted after needs have been identified (which requires the collection of both What is and What Should Be data). However, in order to reduce the time necessary to complete a Strategic Plan and Needs Assessment, the planning partners and stakeholders may choose to conduct a CCA with data obtained regarding both What Should Be and What Is for each component of an Ideal Vision.

Costs to ignore gaps in results (cost of continuing the status quo) should be estimated in order to determine the cost of the problem as in terms of “the full range of costs.” Differentiating “cost” from “price” (the dollar cost paid for a product or service), Scriven (1991) proposes the full range of costs can be determined by defining three elements: a) the payer, b) the type of cost, and c) the duration over which a cost is incurred (see Table 4-2).

Since useful planning and assessment focuses on results, rather than methods-means at the Mega level, the cost-to-close the gap may be less well defined by data than the cost-to-ignore the gap. Neverthe-
Table 4-2. Examples of the cost of ignoring gaps in results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Ideal Vision</th>
<th>Who Pays for Not Closing</th>
<th>Type of Costs</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty will not exist, and every woman and man will earn at least as much as it costs him/her to live unless he/she is going to school or moving toward preparing him/herself so that he/she is increasingly close to being self-sufficient and self-reliant.</td>
<td>Individuals, students, family, friends, employers, tax paying organizations, etc.</td>
<td>Taxes, learning disabilities, reductions in productivity, increased consumption, interventions, etc.</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will be free of disabling infectious disease.</td>
<td>Individuals and organizations</td>
<td>Deaths, missed opportunities, reductions in productivity, medical costs, etc.</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

less, these coarse-grain estimates will be essential in making decisions leading to the Mission Objective and the Macro level of planning. Additionally, more specific data regarding costs of interventions to close gaps in results will be necessary for the selection of solutions after all of the results to be achieved at the Mega, Macro, and Micro levels are defined. Specific data regarding the cost-to-close the gap can be difficult to come by at the Mega level (as well as at the Macro and Micro levels) since decisions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of possible solutions are best not made until after the desired results are specified in measurable terms. And while plausible solutions, as well as solutions supported by people's beliefs and values, will likely be abundant throughout the planning and assessment efforts, no decisions regarding their appropriateness and applicability should be made at this time. Thus, the cost-to-close the gap should be estimated based on the approximate cost of current solutions being implemented to resolve similar needs. Again, non-financial values for costs will suffice at the Mega level of the Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment (see Table 4-3).

Activity Worksheet 4-4. The Cost of Ignoring the Problem.

Complete the following Cost-to-Ignore table for each element of your Ideal Vision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Ideal Vision</th>
<th>Who Pays for Not Closing</th>
<th>Type of Costs</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Tips for the Strategic Thinker

*Decisions on setting priorities are best made if based on hard data.*
Table 4-3. Examples of the cost of closing gaps in results at Tiger High.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Ideal Vision</th>
<th>Possible Interventions</th>
<th>Type of Costs</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty will not exist, and every woman and man will earn at least as much as it costs him/her to live unless he/she is going to school or moving toward preparing him/herself so that he/she is increasingly close to being self-sufficient and self-reliant.</td>
<td>Government financial support</td>
<td>High taxes, dependency, etc.</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government and business cooperative job training</td>
<td>Medium taxes, private investment, business influence in education, etc.</td>
<td>Long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus of education on useful results</td>
<td>Low financial costs, time, training, etc.</td>
<td>Long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Privatization of education</td>
<td>Business influence in education, loss of tax revenue, etc.</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The world will be free of disabling infectious disease.</td>
<td>Vaccinations (preventive) for all known infectious diseases</td>
<td>Financial costs, risk of resistance, etc.</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immunizations (cures) for all known infectious diseases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continued infectious disease research</td>
<td>Financial costs, loss of productivity, deaths, debilitating effects, etc.</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data used in conducting a CCA at the Mega level is likely not to meet the stringent requirements of an accountant or scholarly economist, but coarse-grain estimates should be able to provide decision-makers with the necessary information for prioritizing gaps. The data used in prioritizing gaps in results at the Macro and Micro levels will be attainable at a more discrete level, allowing for decisions to be made with greater specificity. A CCA provides “best possible” estimates while offering educational decision makers additional data regarding what is not known and thus alerts them to possible risks from making decisions based on partial data. In many respects, one of the most valuable aspects of Strategic Planning and Assessment is measuring the consequences of the activities an insti-
tution engages in (or does not engage in). To this extent, sometimes knowing what you don't know is as important to achieving useful educational results as knowing what you do know. The ongoing nature of Strategic Planning, Needs Assessment, and CCA permits the continuous improvement of data collection and specification, as well as decision-making.21

Prioritize performance gaps for closure, maintenance, or abandonment. The preliminary analysis of needs data involves the cross-comparison (or “triangulation”) of gaps in results obtained through both quantitative and qualitative means. For quantitative data, descriptive statistics (frequency, percent, cumulative percent, mean, median, and standard deviation) for discrepancies between What Is and What Should Be should be used, along with an institutional analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) as discussed in Chapter 8. Content analysis of perceived needs (“soft” data) in order to identify patterns through descriptive analyses of participants’ perceptions of the current and required/desired status of results should be conducted when preparing data for decision-makers. In the analysis, a comparison of Cost-Consequences data (cost-to-close versus cost-to-ignore gaps in results) against needs data (What Should Be minus What Is) should be completed so that better informed decisions can be made regarding the prioritization of gaps in results for their reduction or elimination (see Figure 4-6).

Following the preliminary analysis of data, common and unique required results are identified. These data indicate the results that must be improved, versus those that should be maintained (gaps already closed). It is typical for Needs Assessments to identify redundant information regarding required/desired results from various stakeholders since most share common expectations concerning requisite performance for success, especially at the Mega and Macro levels. However, in that different stakeholders also have varying requirements for individual and institutional success, unique requirements are also likely to emerge. The identification of results should include those that must be improved by distinguishing between required performances that are shared with other organizations as well as those that are the primary responsibility of your institution. Doing so assists in aggregating performance require-

21 In addition to the CCA, an analysis of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats will also be an essential element driving the Mission Objective of the institution from the Ideal Vision. We suggest that Strategic Thinkers substitute Causal Utility Decision Analysis (CUDA) for the more common strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis (SWOT) since conventional SWOT tends to be more focused on brainstorming than actual analysis of individual, organizational, and societal results. The CUDA process is described in Chapter 8.

The prioritization of performance gaps—needs—entails the rank-ordering of needs (gaps in results) in a hierarchy from most to

Figure 4-6. Prioritizing gaps in results at the Mega Level.

Tips for the Strategic Thinker
Not all gaps will require intervention—some non-gaps you will want to maintain.

Case in Point

After completing a preliminary Costs-Consequences Analysis (including cost-to-ignore, cost-to-close, and institutional SWOT analysis) Tiger High prioritized the elements of their Ideal Vision as follows:

There will be no murders, rapes, or crimes (requires closing, and we commit to achieve this), nor debilitating substance or person abuse (requires closing, and we commit to achieve this). The world will be at peace (**requires closing, and we will monitor the world's progress toward this). It will be free of disabling infectious disease (**requires closing, and we will work with others to ensure this). Poverty will not exist, and every woman and man will earn at least as much as that cost him/her to live unless he/she is going to school or moving toward preparing him/herself so that he/she is increasingly close to being self-sufficient and self-reliance (**requires closing, and we will work with others to ensure this). People will take charge of their lives and be responsible for what they use, do, and contribute (**requires closing, and we commit to achieve this).

As you can see, based on their analysis Tiger High did not commit to achieving all elements of their Ideal Vision. Rather they specified those elements toward which they will focus their energies and resources, as well as those that they will work with others to achieve and those they will monitor. This prioritization will provide the basis for the Macro level planning and needs assessment for Tiger High.
Activity Worksheet 4-6

Without formally recognizing the fact, all organizations impact external clients and society. For each of the basic elements of an Ideal Vision, check if your organization currently makes a contribution to that element and thus to the total Ideal Vision (if you and/or your organization have an Ideal Vision of your own, it's elements can be substituted for the ones below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Ideal Vision Elements</th>
<th>My Educational Institution Makes a Contribution:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- war and/or riot
- shelter
- unintended human-caused changes to the environment including permanent destruction of the environment and/or rendering it non-renewable
- murder, rape, or crimes of violence, robbery, or destruction to property
- substance abuse
- disease
- pollution
- starvation and/or malnutrition
- child abuse
- partner/spouse abuse
- accidents, including transportation, home, and business/workplace
- Discrimination based on irrelevant variables including color, race, creed, sex, religion, national origin, age, location
- Poverty will not exist, and every woman and man will earn at least as much as it costs them to live unless they are progressing toward being self-sufficient and self-reliant

(continued)

Activity Worksheet 4-6 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Ideal Vision Elements</th>
<th>My Educational Institution Makes a Contribution:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- No adult will be under the care, custody or control of another person, agency, or substance: all adult citizens will be self-sufficient and self-reliant as minimally indicated by their consumption being equal to or less than their production

Consequences of the Basic Ideal Vision: Any and all organizations-public and private will contribute to the achievement and maintenance of this Basic Ideal Vision and will be funded and continued to the extent to which it meets its objectives and the Basic Ideal Vision is accomplished and maintained.

People will be responsible for what they use, do, and contribute and thus will not contribute to the reduction of any of the results identified in this basic Ideal Vision.

least critical. This order of criticality is arranged according to the magnitude of the gaps in results, the costs and consequences of the needs, as well as the degree of responsibility for reduction or elimination assumed by the institution and its partners and stakeholders.

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 5

Macro Planning: Defining and Delivering Institutional Results

KEY POINTS

- Required/desired Macro level results are derived from the Ideal Vision
- The Mission Objective defines the contributions of the institution

MACRO PLANNING: AN OVERVIEW

Based on the results an educational institution commits to delivering to external clients, partners and society, the Planning and Assessment initiative moves next to a focus on the institution and its clients. Effective Macro planning flows from Mega planning and is derived from the results it defines (see Figure 5-1). Macro planning identifies the results the institution is committed to delivering for the benefit of internal clients (i.e., learners, teachers, administration, and staff) and/or the institution itself. When done correctly Macro contributions are aligned with the results identified at the Mega level in the Ideal Vision. Macro plans typically include results to be obtained at the Mega level, but are specific to the institution as the primary client and beneficiary of educational processes.

When the Mega and Macro results are aligned and linked, an educational institution can make valuable contributions to the community and society, which permit it to be successful in the eyes of an increasingly demanding public. Without this alignment and linkage of Macro level Outputs and Mega level Outcomes, the institution may achieve a limited success with learners (for example, increasing...