



BRIDGING

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

CAPSTONE PROJECT HANDBOOK

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Introduction and Timeline

Upon the completion of the Short Course, all participants will be expected to complete a project to generate sustainable change in their own communities. The shape this project takes is entirely up to you! It could be a social media campaign with infographics on mental health, a short research project on the Malayan Emergency in the form of a blog post or an event to foster stronger relations between students and teachers at your school.

The Organising Team has prepared a number of workshops to guide you through your capstone project and ensure you have the necessary resources. During these workshops, you will learn how to identify your problem statement, map a solution to your problem and devise sustainable approaches to achieve your solution. Your capstone project can be carried out through August and September, and must be completed by **25 September 2021**.

The following is the tentative schedule for workshops, all of which will be held on **Zoom** from **1-3PM**, which is subject to change at the discretion of the Organising Team:

Month	Date (1-3PM)	Activity
July	22/7/21	Community Canvas
	23/7/21	Planning a Youth project
August	7/8/2021	Problem Analysis and Solution Mapping
	14/8/2021	Meet the NGOs
	21/8/2021	The Authors of Malaysian History - Who, How, and So What?
	28/8/2021	Political Panel Discussion and Mid-Project Check-in
September	25/9/2021	Reflection and Project Completion

Attendance is compulsory for the workshops, and your certificate of completion is conditional upon your attendance. If you are unable to attend a workshop, please contact sc@aodmalaysia.org or your facilitator with your reason for absence.



Community Canvas

To be completed by: 7th August 2021

Identity

1. What does your project hope to achieve?
2. Who is your target audience? (Age, gender, geographic location)
3. What is an important value of your project that you would like to share with your community? Why did you choose this value?
4. How would you describe a successful version of your project?

Experience

1. How will your target audience engage with your project?
2. Does your project have a finite duration (a start and an end date)? If so, what is it?
3. What experience do you want to create for your target audience? Describe what this experience will look like or how you will create it.

Structure

1. How would you define your role and responsibility? List at least 3 responsibilities you have for this project.
2. How will you hold yourself accountable and ensure you follow through on your project? (e.g. Create a schedule to prepare infographics for 2 hours every Saturday, Allocate 30 minutes every day to research my topic)
3. What platform will your project use to reach your target audience? How will you ensure you reach your audience?



Planning a Youth Project

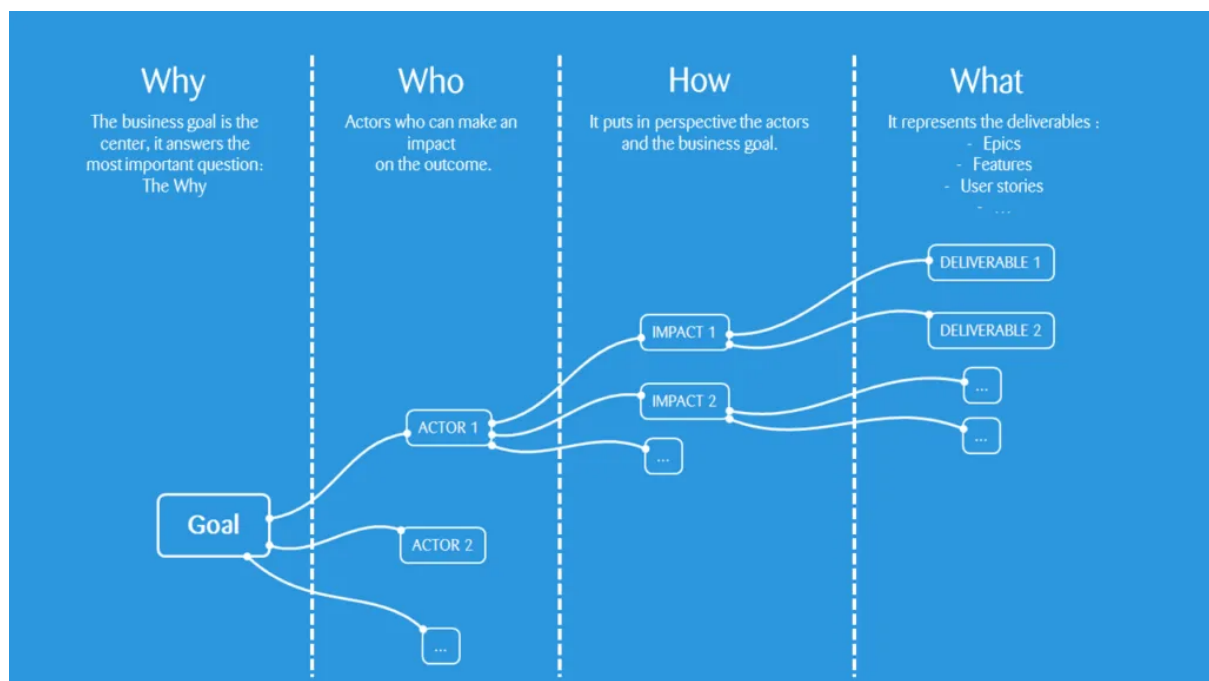
To be completed by: 7th August 2021

Mapping Impact and Defining Scope

The question now is: **what can we do?** Emphasis is placed on the word can as it dictates not only what we should do, but also how much we are capable of doing.

Mapping Impact

You have some idea of what you want to do for your project, but you don't know what you want to bring into your project yet. The impact map offers a simple framework that can help transform your project ideas into specific features that you can use for your project.



The flow of an impact map will be described in more detail below, with reference to the example of **a documentary on youths living in Emergency-era new villages:**

- Goal (Why):** the core objective that your project wants to achieve. It is always good to prioritise the interests of youths while forming your project's goal.
Example: this project's main goal could be to highlight the perspectives of young people living in Emergency-era new villages.
- Actor (Who):** the people who play a role in your project. This could include people involved in your project, people who could help support your project, and people who will participate in your project.

Example: some of the people in this project include young people in new villages, older people in new villages, historical experts, history-focused NGOs, and younger audiences.

- c. **Impact (How):** the role that each actor would play in realising your project goals. Each impact should directly or indirectly contribute to the project's goal.

Example: you might want young villagers to share their community's perspectives on living in new villages, share their personal stories, and introduce the village surroundings.

- d. **Deliverable (What):** the features you will include in your project to deliver the impacts that actors can create for your project.

Example: you might want to record interviews with at least three young villagers to showcase their perspective on living in new villages.

Defining Scope

The scope of a project is defined as what the project **can** cover and what it **cannot** cover. Projects, especially those led by youths, can be limited in their scale due to many reasons, and it is important to identify the scope so you can **do as much with what you have**. After all, it might not be possible to satisfy all the actors, maximise all the impacts, and achieve all the deliverables you identified in the impact map. Factors you should consider include:

- a. Date: When will the project take place? Is this a strategic time?
- b. Duration: How long will the project take? Is this a reasonable timeframe?
- c. Resources: What resources do we have (eg: financial, manpower, technology)? Do we need to work with other organisations?
- d. Skills: What skills does our team already have? What skills do we have to outsource (eg: editing, illustrating, tech logistics)?
- e. Reach: How many people do we want to reach? How can we reach as many people as possible?

Roadmap to Completion

Now that you have an idea of what you want to do and how much you can do, the big question now is: **how do you do it?**

1. Break down your product

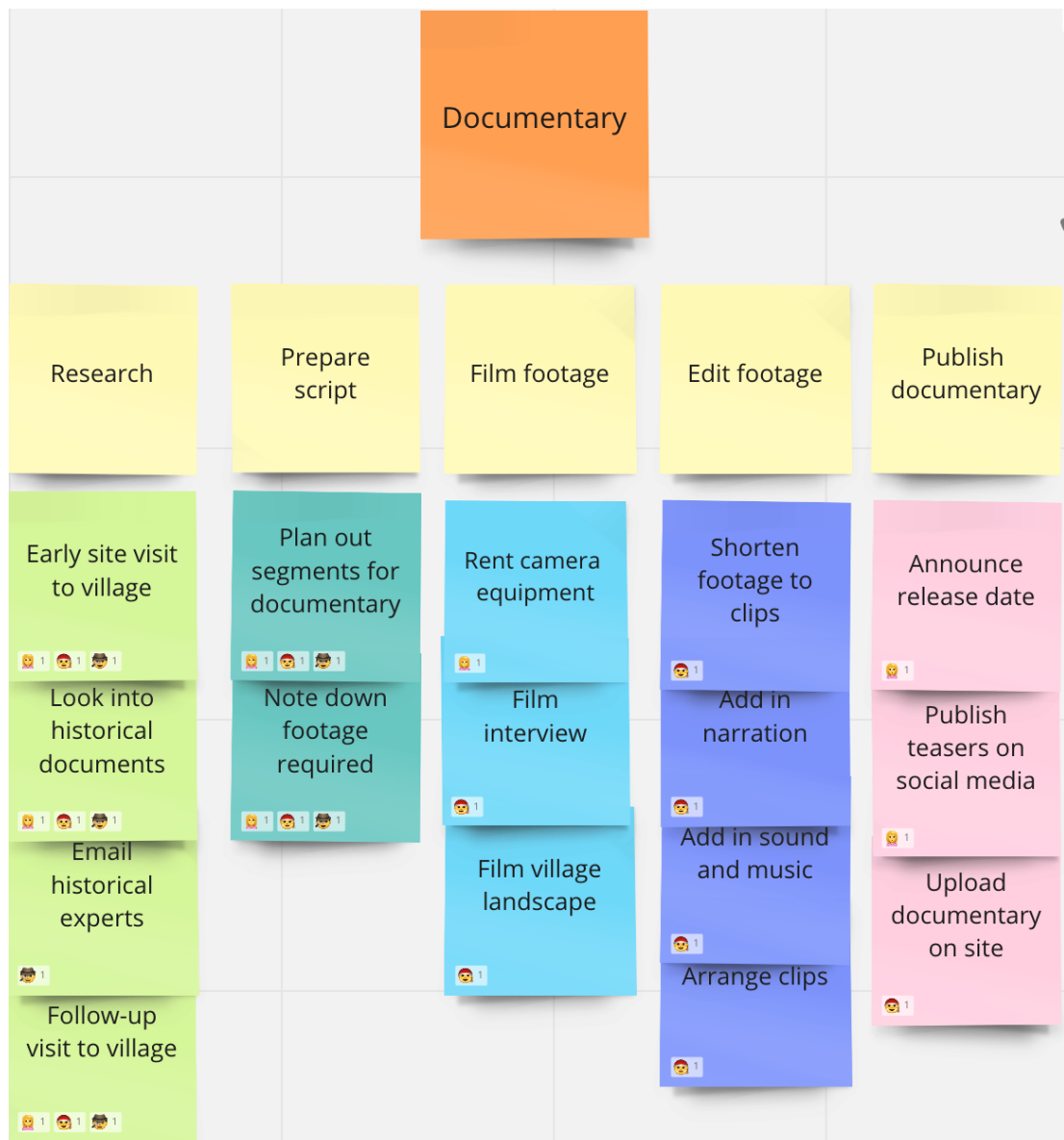
- Imagine this process as a mountain: the top represents the product, the stations represent tasks, and the trail represents the steps. To reach the top, you need to know which stations you need to reach and which trails you want to take.
- To show how your project can be broken down into smaller steps, I will be using our previous example of **a documentary on new villages during the Malayan Emergency**:





2. Assign responsibilities accordingly

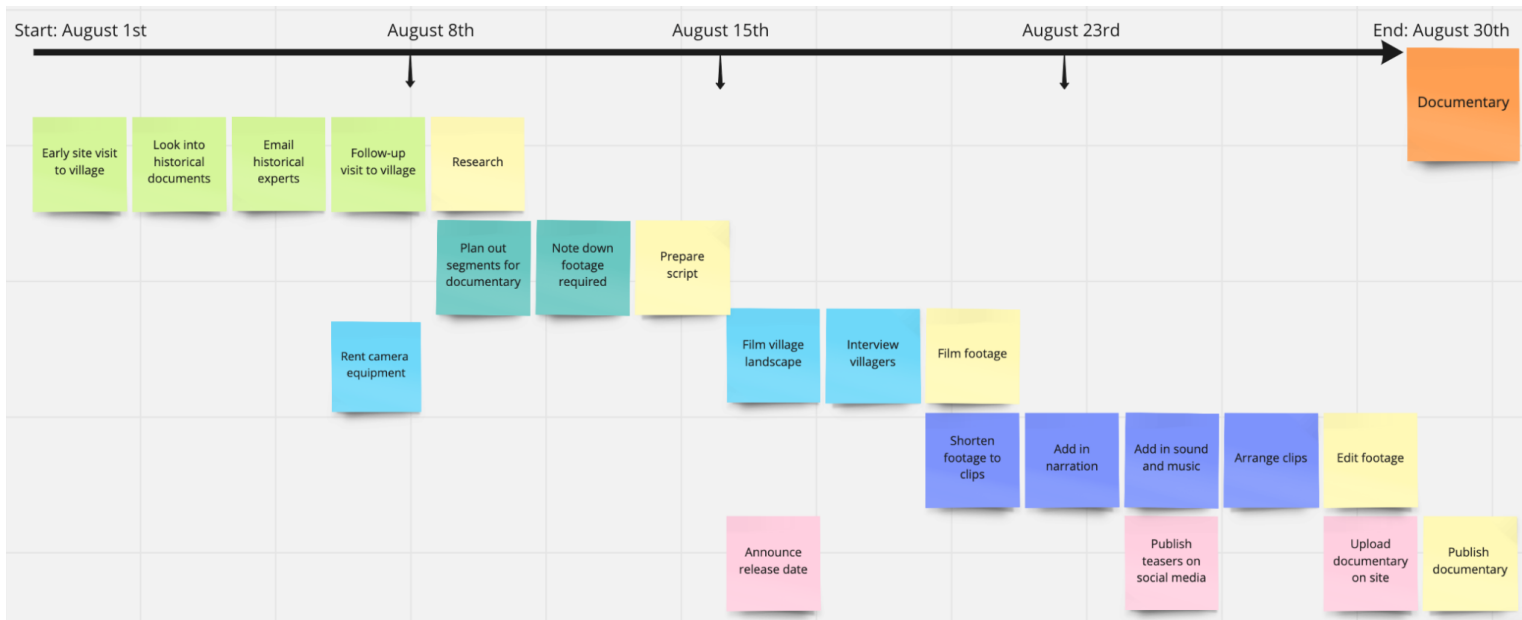
- When deciding who should be handling which steps or tasks, consider the skills and abilities your team members have. For example, someone who has a communications background should handle social media engagement, while someone who does illustrations should be in charge of designing.
- One advantage of using visual tools like the project board below is that teams can assign duties more effectively as members can tag themselves for specific steps they want to take charge of:



3. Work on a timeline

- Now that you know what steps are needed to complete your tasks and product, you can work on setting out a timeline for your project:
 - a. Start by deciding when you want your final product to be completed, considering date and duration.
 - b. Then, work backwards from the product to decide when major tasks need to be completed, keeping in mind some tasks are sequential and others are concurrent.

- c. Then, work backwards from each task to determine when each step should be completed for the task to be completed.
- While most teams use project calendars with the help of sites like Google Calendar or Notion, you can start charting out a basic timeline like the one below to help you with a more detailed project calendar:



Assessing Progress and Change

Progress is not linear since all projects are vulnerable to changes and challenges. There are changes we need to make to make sure we are on track and that we can deliver the impacts we want to achieve. The big question you should consider is: **what should we do to continue reaching our goals?**

Assessing progress and milestones

Consider these elements when reviewing project progress:

- Schedule: Will we be on time?
- Burden: Is anyone doing too much or too little?
- Resources: Are we making the most of our resources?
- Quality: Are we meeting the standards we set for ourselves?
- Relevance: Will we achieve our impacts effectively?

Assessing changes due to changing context

When circumstances change, for the better or worse of your project, your project might need to change too. While some of these changes can be unexpected, and even devastating at times, it is important that we understand these changes and make plans to modify our project plan. We can generally changes into two types:

Internal changes	External changes
Reduced budget, unavailable members, team conflict	Political changes, new partner collaborations, lockdowns

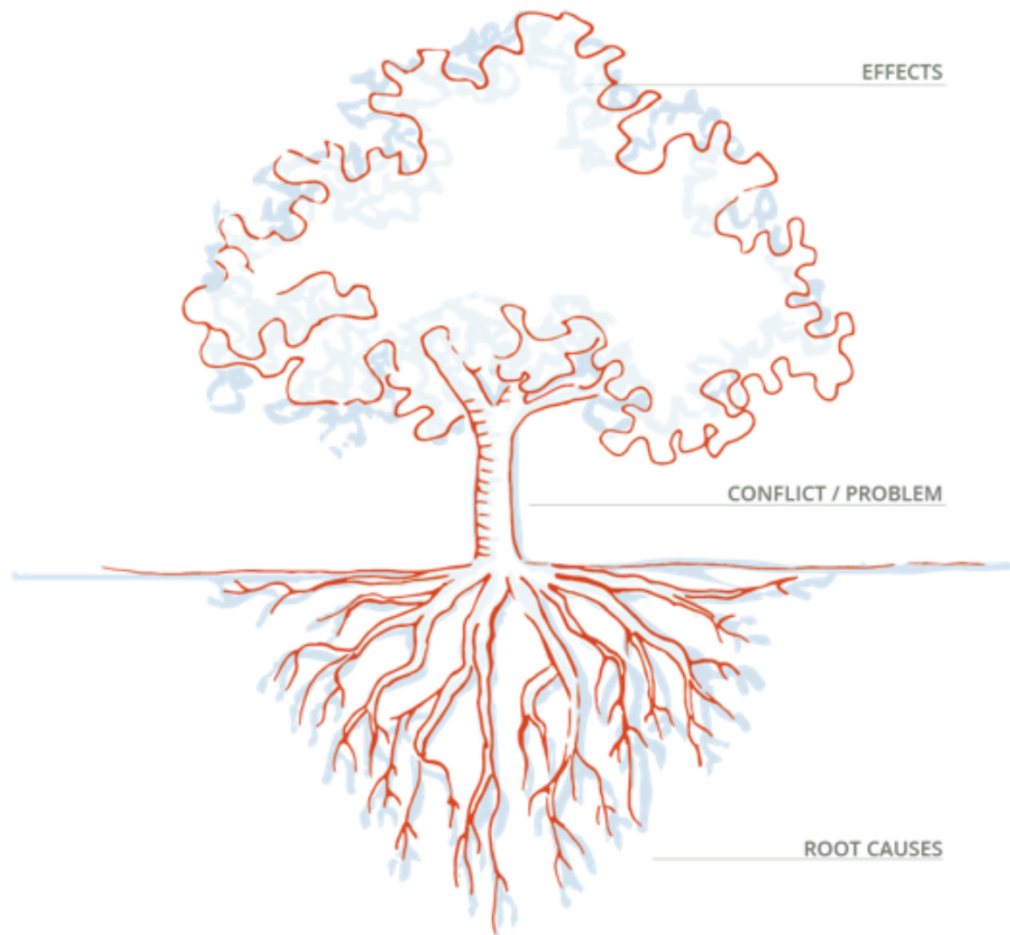
In these instances, adapt to these changes by reconsidering the details of your plan – be it your deliverables, scope, tasks, etc. You might also need to add, remove, or modify tasks to ensure that you will continue reaching the goals of your project.

Problem Analysis

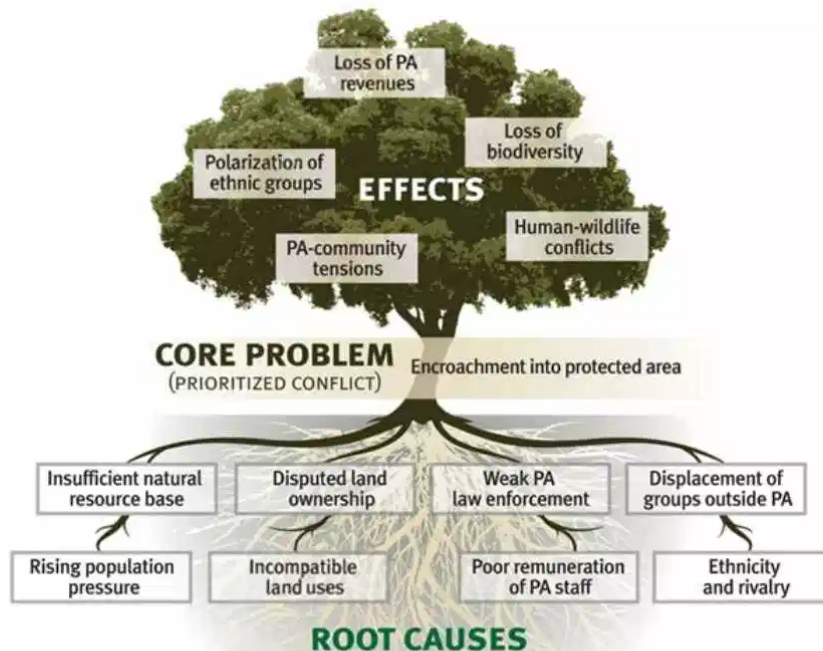
To be completed by: 9th August 2021

Now that you have completed your Community Canvas, you have an analysis of your target community. Next, you'll need to identify the root problem your project aims to address, as well as how your project addresses the problem.

1. What is the problem your project addresses?
2. Remember the workshop on Analysing a Conflict during the Short Course? Use your skills from that workshop to edit the conflict tree below (or draw one and upload it here) based on your identified problem.
 - a. What is the main problem?
 - b. What are the root causes of the problem?
 - c. What are the effects of the problem?



Below is an example of a conflict tree. Yours does not need to be as complex as this, but try to be detailed in your descriptions.



Example of a Conflict Tree

Beyond Peace
Image Courtesy: IISD

- How does your project address the problem, root causes and/or effects that you mentioned in your analysis?

Solution Mapping

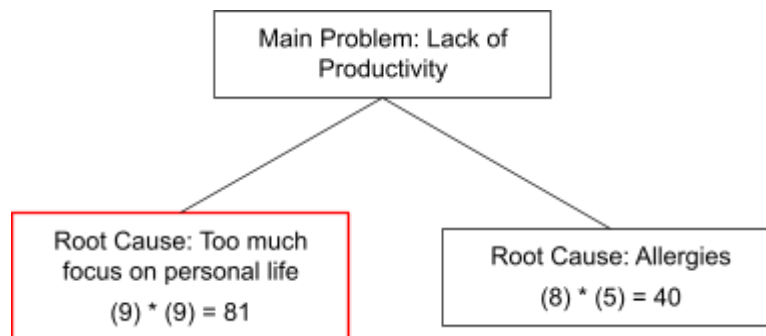
To be completed by: 9th August 2021

Now that you have identified the root causes of your problem, let us move on towards mapping out your solution.

Prioritize Root Causes

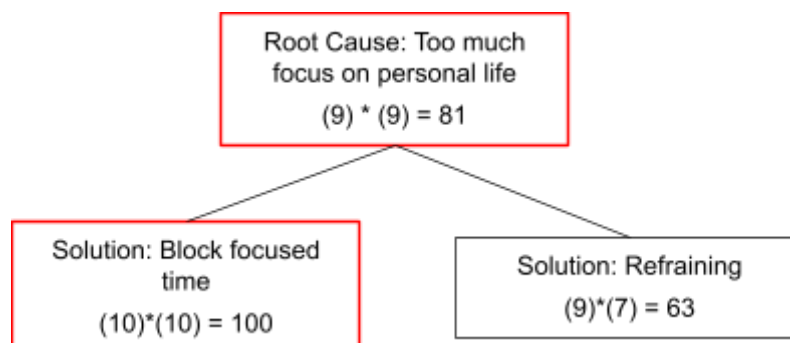
If you have more than one root cause, prioritize them. To evaluate an element, rate its impact (from 1-10) and your capacity at solving it (from 1-10). Then, multiply those two numbers. You get a relative result that makes it easy for you to decide what the priorities are. In some cases where the hierarchy in importance is obvious, you don't need to evaluate each element with those criteria; just decide. I have included an example below:

$$\text{Impact} \times \text{Capacity} = \text{Priority}$$



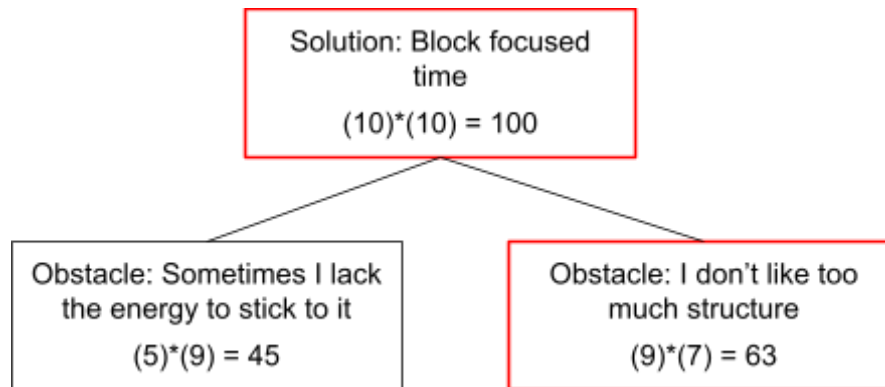
Brainstorm Solutions

Since you now know which root cause(s) to focus on, it is the time to brainstorm solutions for that one, or for the top few. List all the potential solutions that you can think of. Make sure to organize the solutions with their associated root cause. You can do so by drawing a line or arrow from each solution to its related root cause. Prioritize with the same criteria (impact * capacity), and highlight the most important solutions.



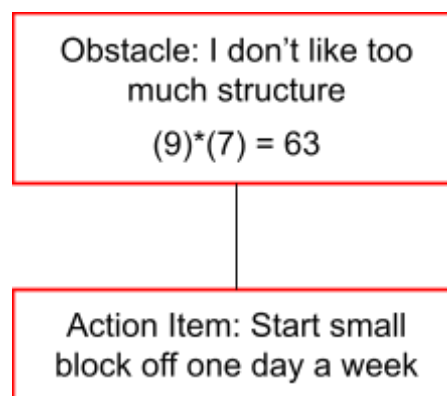
Identify Obstacles

For each of the most important solutions, identify the obstacles to their implementation. An obstacle is something stopping you from implementing the solution you have for a root cause. Prioritize with the same criteria (impact * capacity).



List the actions

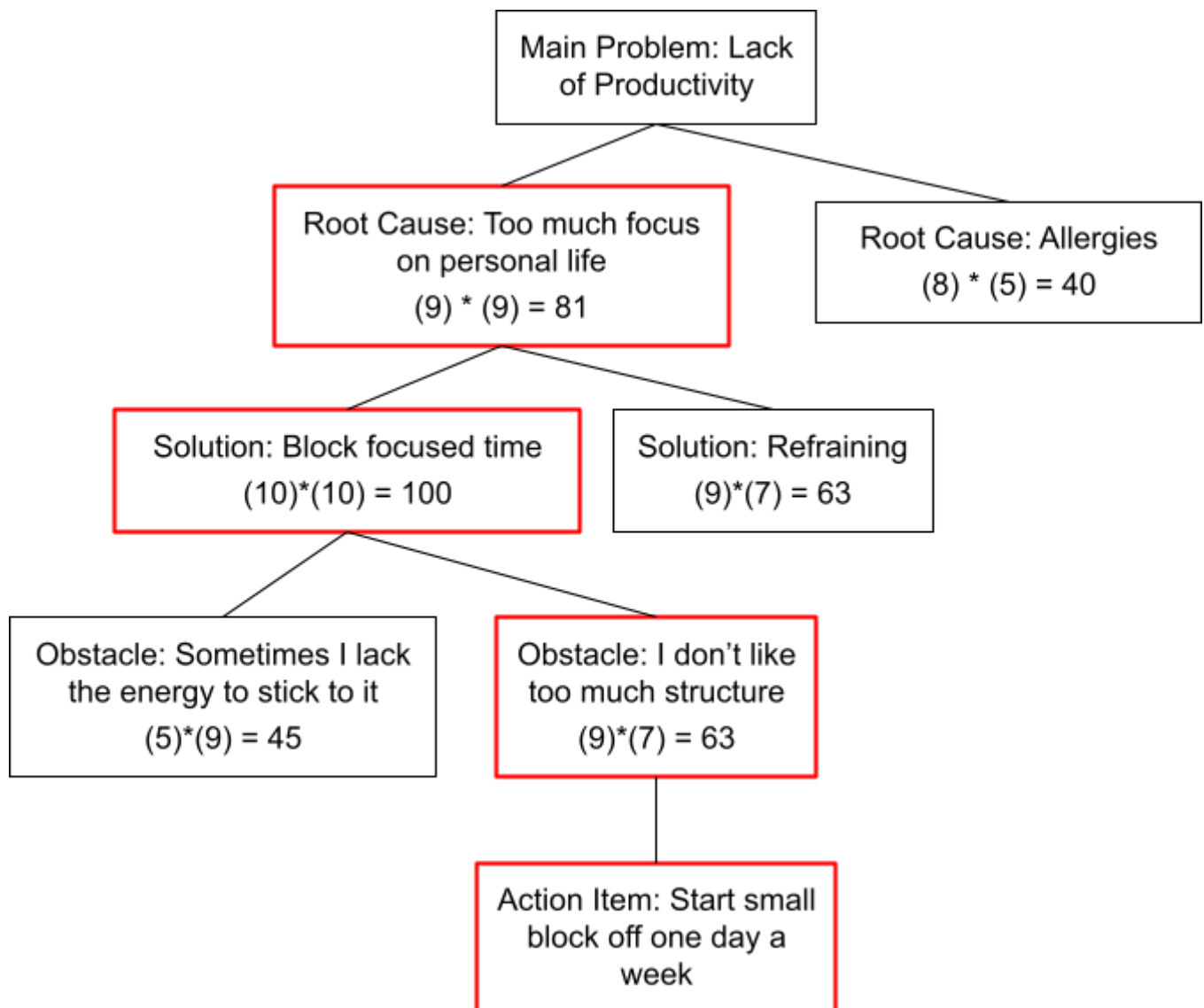
For the most important obstacle or for the top few, identify the list of actions needed to alleviate it. An action is simply the thing you need to do to remove that obstacle. Prioritize the actions you find, using the same criteria (impact * capacity).



You now have an ordered list of actions to take, which will remove the obstacles to the implementation of the solutions. Once you're done with those actions, you are ready to start implementing the solution itself!

An example of a completed solution map is included on the next page. Remember, you can choose to address more than one root cause, solution, obstacle, and action item:

Example of Completed Solution Map:



Mid-Project Check-in

To be completed by: 31st August 2021

At this point, you should be roughly halfway through your project. Here are some questions to guide your reflection over the first half of your project, and to help you with possible improvements over the second half of your project.

1. What went well? Why?
2. What problems have you encountered so far? What can you do to prevent them from happening in the second half of the project?
3. What might go wrong that hasn't happened yet? do to prevent them from happening in the second half of the project?
4. What would a successful version of your project look like? What is your project's desired outcome(s)?
5. Is your project on track to meet its desired impact?
 - a. Is your project reaching its targeted audience / community?
 - b. What can you do to ensure that your project reaches its desired impact by the project deadline?

You're almost there! Keep pushing through the final half of your project!



Final Reflection

To be completed by: 25th September 2021

Congratulations! You have finally finished your capstone project. Before you celebrate your hard-work and effort, here are a few more questions to help you reflect on your achievement.

1. Now that it's over, what are my first thoughts about this overall project? Are they mostly positive or negative? Write down some of these thoughts.
2. What were some of the most interesting discoveries I made while working on this project? About the problem? About myself? About others?
3. What were some of my most challenging moments and what made them so?
4. What is the most important thing I learned personally?
5. What most got in the way of my progress, if anything?
6. Were my milestones and goals mostly met, and how much did I deviate from them if any?
7. What did I learn were my greatest strengths? My biggest areas for improvement?
8. At what moments were I most proud of my efforts?
9. How can I use what I've learned in the future?

From everyone on the Architects of Diversity Short Course Team, thank you for sticking through with the Short Course and following through with your project! You are a changemaker in your community, and we can't wait to see what you will do next!

