



INCLEN Leadership & Management Program

Module 1
Version 1 (July 2003)

Strategic Planning

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Strategic Planning: General Principles

Introduction

INCLLEN has seen a lot of the term "strategic planning" in the past two years! The network is going through what is probably the most significant transformation in its twenty-year history. The board has changed in composition, from a group of persons primarily from industrialized countries, to a team comprised mostly of INCLLEN leaders from low- and middle-income regions. The executive leadership is now in the hands of "first generation" individuals, with the executive office located in Manila. The organization itself has become a "Trust". And new "strategic directions" have been identified by the Board of Trustees (BOT).

One of these "strategic directions" is regionalization. As a result, each of the regional INCLLEN groups have been involved in regional strategic planning processes. This activity will continue into the foreseeable future. (In fact, an important concept about strategic planning – elaborated on below – is that the process never stops!) Some of the examples used in this module are derived directly from the regional strategic planning exercises currently underway.

Similarly, most Clinical Epidemiology Unit (CEU) teams are re-evaluating their plans, given the fact that some of the core financial support previously available through "central" INCLLEN funds will soon no longer be available.

It is for these reasons that the Board of Trustees, during the March 2001 workshop that launched the LAMP initiative, identified strategic planning as an important leadership competency.

The purpose of this module is to put forward some general principles of strategic planning, with the hope that these will be useful to those engaged in the exciting (but sometimes difficult) process of planning.

Learning Objectives:

1. To explore six general principles of strategic planning, using some examples (case studies) from the INCLLEN experience.
2. To be introduced to some models and concepts about strategic planning from the general literature.

Background

Why strategic planning? The word "strategic" is derived from Latin and Greek terms referring to "a cunning plan or scheme", conceived by a (military) general. (So, strategic planning is closely related to leadership!). One definition of strategy is "the process of planning something or carrying out a plan in a skilful way". This definition is compatible with the purpose of this module – to strengthen the skills of those involved in the planning process.

Much of the writing about strategic planning is to be found in books and studies on institutional and organizational change and leadership. Many of these books derive from the world of business – that is, the private sector. Some studies have focused specifically on the public sector (such as the book by Osborne & Gaebler (1992) entitled, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*). And, the majority of books are written by authors who live and work in North America and Europe. More recently, several useful books have appeared that deal with nongovernment organizations. And a few studies have focused on networks per se. (See the Recommended Readings section at the end of the module for several examples.)

Peter Drucker uses a simple but helpful diagram to illustrate "the Drucker approach" to building an operational plan, adapted for the needs of nonprofit organizations (Drucker 1993).

It provides a framework for responding to five questions that Drucker uses in most of his work with organizations. They are:

- What is our Business (Mission)?
- Who is our Customer?
- What does the Customer consider Value?
- What have been our Results?
- What is our Plan?



Figure 1. Planning for Results. Mission is essential to nonprofit planning. The mission answers the question: What are the results we want to achieve? From the *mission* flow *goals* that define the desired future of the organization and the direction it will take. *Objectives* are specific and measurable levels of achievement. *Action steps* are the activities detailed in the plan that help an organization meet the objectives, including financial objectives. The illustration uses a circular movement to show that evaluation is continuous. *Source: Drucker (1993: 2)*

During 2001, members of the LAMP core group had the opportunity to participate in five regional meetings (including two meetings with the executive group in three of the regions – SE Asia, China and Latin America). Based on these experiences, we put forward six general principles that we hope will be useful in the on-going planning activities at the regional and CEU level. This list of six principles is not intended to be comprehensive. As with other "Version 1" modules in the LAMP initiative, we need your comments and feedback. In particular, we welcome ideas about INCLEN-relevant case studies to include in future versions of this module.

Principle 1: Involving Stakeholders

The plans of any organization, particularly when there is a plan to make changes, affect the lives of the people associated with that organization. That is, they have a "stake" in how the organization functions and adapts. This is particularly true of nonprofit organizations such as INCLEN, which is made up of professional peers who are essentially "volunteers". They are associated with INCLEN because of professional interests, but (for the most part) are not salaried by the organization.

The IndiaCLEN strategic planning process exemplifies some learning about involving stakeholders (See Box 1). This "case study" illustrates the importance of dialogue and discussion in the strategic planning process. In fact, stakeholder participation has become a key principle in the literature on international development. In his book,

Striking a Balance (a book about nongovernment development organizations), Alan Fowler (1997) lists "authentic participation" as a key development principle (See Recommended Readings). He addresses the argument that "the cost-benefit case for participation has not been sufficiently demonstrated", and that participation is only significant in "micro-development work done by social scientists". Fowler cites a study of the World Bank's lending portfolio, which demonstrated that lower performance was related to inadequate involvement and participation of recipients. In other words, the principle of participation "makes good business sense".

Box 1: Involving Stakeholders – The IndiaCLEN Experience

The year 2001 has seen an intensive effort by IndiaCLEN colleagues to prepare a strategic plan for their regional network. A meeting on April 28th (summarized in the June 2001 IndiaCLEN Newsletter) featured a SWOT analysis, presentations by the chairpersons of the subcommittees and other interest groups, as well as the results of small group discussions.

As preparations for the September 2001 IndiaCLEN meeting progressed, there was active debate about whether the strategic plan was focused primarily on the need to produce a workplan proposal for IndiaCLEN's major funder (USAID), or whether the intended scope was broader than this.

At some further strategic planning (SP) meetings in September, questions were raised by several IndiaCLEN colleagues about both the scope and the transparency of the SP process. This led to specific recommendations about the strategic planning process itself, in order to ensure that all relevant stakeholders (that is, all the CEUs) were involved in the next steps in the process.

As a result, the subsequent version of the strategic plan included a section on the strategic planning process. *(This section included some examples of "operating principles". These can be found in Box 4 below.)*

A Canadian group known as the "Innovation Expedition", led by Dr. Don Simpson (who is known to some INCLLEN colleagues) believes that dialogue around "key challenges" is central to the process of planning and implementation. An 8-step framework known as the "Challenge Dialogue System" (CDS) has been developed. This framework was used in the recent (November 2001) INCLLEN South-East Asia LAMP workshop as a basis for comments on the strategic planning process by this group (See Appendix 1). INCLLEN members who have participated in the electronic dialogue process that preceded some of the regional LAMP workshops will recognize elements of the CDS. For example, participants in the INCLLEN Africa LAMP workshop responded to the question:

"As you look ahead to the next one or two years of your work as a health researcher, what are the leadership challenges that you see: for yourself individually, for your CEU and for INCLLEN Africa as a whole".

To summarize, the key ideas around involving stakeholders are:

- carefully identify the people who have a "stake" in the planning process, and involve them in some way;
- even though this takes more time and effort at the beginning, it is worth it (from a cost-benefit perspective) in the long run; and
- consider using innovative methods (such as a moderated electronic dialogue) to facilitate this process.

Principle 2: Analyzing the Context

It is critical to be aware of the "driving forces" affecting the work of any organization. These "forces" are both external (to the organization) and internal (within the organization). Where the situation is changing rapidly, the focus is often on "new realities" (what has changed since the time of a previous situation analysis).

A commonly used tool for context analysis is the SWOT exercise to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The first two elements (strengths and weaknesses) are internal factors; the other two – particularly "opportunities" are external (recognizing that "threats" can also come from within an organization.)

The global health research community has recently completed a major "context analysis" exercise, culminating in the historic International Conference on Health Research for Development (ICHRD). Although the conference itself was only four days in duration (from October 9-12 2000, in Bangkok), an intensive and comprehensive preparatory process began more than a year prior to this conference. It was called a "consultation process" (demonstrating the principle of stakeholder involvement), conducted primarily at national and regional levels. At both national and regional levels, those contributing to the consultation process had an opportunity to hear a summary of the key findings and contribute to the resulting recommendations. In parallel to the regional activities, consultations were also held with donors, development agencies, and health research partner organizations. Reports of all of these discussions were reviewed at a "synthesis meeting" (in Prangins, Switzerland in July 2000). This meeting in turn led to the production of a discussion paper, entitled *Health Research for Development: The Continuing Challenge*. This document served as the basis for discussions in the ICHRD itself. There were also other "inputs" such as special issues of journals (Lee & Mills 2000), topic-specific analytic studies (Alano & Almario 2000) and books (Neufeld & Johnson 2001).

(All conference documents, including the conference report, are available through the conference website: www.conference2000.ch)

Several regional LAMP workshops undertook a context analysis as the first workshop exercise. Box 2 summarizes the results of this exercise done by participants at the LatinCLEN executive committee LAMP workshop held in November 2001.

(There is interest, in some regions, in preparing more detailed regional context analysis reports, to be used by the CLENs. For example, Dr. Cecilia Carlos-Acuin of the Philippines has agreed to prepare such a document for the South-east Asia region. The

LAMP group would welcome interest by individuals or groups in other regions to do something similar. We would be happy to work with you on these.)

Box 2: LatinCLEN Context Analysis

As part of the LAMP workshop of the LatinCLEN executive committee, participants discussed the Latin American health research context, identifying the factors that could potentially help and hinder the future plans of LatinCLEN. This discussion included both internal (LatinCLEN-specific) factors and external ("environment") factors. The results are shown below.

HELPS:

LatinCLEN:

- Individual/personal motivation, specifically for research activities.
- Economic needs of clinical epidemiologists – sustainability – thus pushing forward the INCLLEN agenda for research and capacity building for research.
- Current expertise: the design, analysis and conducting of research; multiple disciplines and multiple specialties.
- Relatively homogenous capacity in the different CEUs.
- Efficient access to scientific information (databases).

Environment:

- Pharmaceutical industry-originated research: promotes expertise with Good Clinical Practices.
- Recognition and prestige of LatinCLEN members.
- INCLLEN – its network is a source of human expertise.
- Institutional (university) recognition of clinical epidemiologists
- Institutions (university) with slightly better than average research culture and infrastructure.

HINDERS:

LatinCLEN:

- Motivation is mostly individual rather than group-based, even within CEUs.
- The regional focus makes group work difficult.
- Until very recently, lack of need to compete for funds.
- No protected time from institutions for research.
- Motivation and infrastructure was initially targeted towards capacity building instead of research.
- Lack of a pro-active approach to fund raising.
- Low expertise in competitive projects (multicentric, multidisciplinary initiatives, human and finance management, lobbying for funding).
- Poor knowledge of funding agencies and their priorities.
- Low visibility and publications in high impact journals.
- Lack of partners for win-win situations.
- CEUs not complete and in different stages of development.
- Institutional recognition has led to CEU “plundering” of vital human resources for other activities.
- Low generational turnover for new leadership.

Box 2: Continued

Environment:

- Research priorities from MOHs, universities and funding agencies discordant from those of the CEUs.
- Low demand for research from decision makers, both for new and finished initiatives.
- Low availability of funding for research.
- Perception of LatinCLEN as a technical and sophisticated elite with low emphasis on relevance.
- Perception of LatinCLEN as a self-sufficient organization with low contact with research users/clients.
- Still poor university infrastructure for research management.

Additional comment from the workshop report:

"Members reflected that the exercise had allowed the Executive Committee to make a situational analysis, to identify opportunities, to identify where to intervene, as well as which LAMP modules to prioritize in the near future".

Principle 3: Developing a Vision

In the context of strategic planning, a "vision" can be thought of as "a guiding star" – a short, inspiring statement of the underlying purpose of an organization or group.

In his book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Peter Senge (1990) devotes an entire chapter to "shared vision". He suggests that a vision is the answer to the question, "What do we want to create?". Senge stresses the following points:

- a vision must be shared – it cannot be the vision of one person, or a small group;
- a vision must provide the focus and energy for action and learning; and
- shared visions emerge from personal visions; as Senge says, "this is how they derive their energy and how they foster commitment". The challenge, of course, is to move from personal visions to a shared (corporate) vision.

Senge goes on to describe how visions can be spread, through the steps of enrollment and commitment:

- enrollment is the process of becoming part of something by choice
- commitment, the next step, involves feeling responsible for making the vision happen;

Various writers about the strategic planning process make distinctions between the terms vision, mission, goal and objective. Here is one set of definitions:

Vision: a short, inspiring statement of underlying purpose;

Mission: a more detailed statement of long term intentions. (*A "mission statement" often summarizes an organization's answer to the question, "What is our distinctive contribution or our 'niche'?", or the question "Why are we here"?*)

Goal: a more direct statement about what an organization wants to achieve;

Objective(s): a specific statement (or set of statements), for example, about the measurable achievements to demonstrate in the next year.

In the past year, the INCLLEN Board of Trustees has revised its mission statement. In short, this mission is: *RESEARCH AND TRAINING FOR IMPROVING EQUITY, EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE*. This statement is increasingly being used in various INCLLEN publications and discussions.

A question arises: *"To what extent does this mission statement (or this vision) reflect the personal visions of INCLLEN members, of CEUs and of regional groups?"* We suggest using this question as a focus for discussion and debate at upcoming CEU and regional meetings.

For many INCLLEN members, the concept of "equity", while obviously important, has not been a feature of their vision for INCLLEN. It is a recently introduced idea – and one that presents the challenge of getting "enrollment" and "commitment" to a vision or mission. The INCLLEN leadership team therefore created an opportunity for debate and clarification in selecting the theme of the February 2002 Global meeting. The theme was "Equity-Oriented Health Research: Leadership Challenges in the 21st Century."

Principle 4: Preparing Action Plans That Work

To some extent, an action plan will be successful if the first three principles (above) are followed. That is, intentions are more likely to be implemented if:

- relevant stakeholders are involved in an open and transparent process;
- a context analysis is done that includes both a comprehensive review of the external "environment", and an honest assessment of the (internal) strengths and weaknesses of an organization; and
- there is a compelling, shared vision linked to a mission statement and goals which reflect the distinctive contribution of an organization.

Given the above, some of the next steps in preparing an action plan are likely quite familiar to INCLLEN members. They are experienced in the writing of grant proposals where the specifics of "who will do what by when" are required.

A good example is the work plan prepared by INCLLEN Africa. The general structure of this document, including the categories used, is summarized in Box 3.

Box 3: INCLEN Africa's Work Plan

In June 2001, the Council of INCLEN Africa (IA) asked IA Executive Office, in consultation with the IA sub-committees to prepare a work plan intended to serve as a "blue print" for the activities of the network for the period 2001/2. Four broad objectives had been defined by the IA Council:

1. Financial sustainability and fundraising
2. Organizational management
3. Leadership development
4. Creation and promotion of existing partnerships

Activities under each of these 4 categories were listed, accompanied by a table with the following categories for each objective:

- expected outputs
- activities
- time frame
- persons responsible
- resources

This document has served as a useful basis for further discussion and debate, both with external "stakeholders" (such as the International Executive Office, and officers at the Rockefeller Foundation), and within the network (as evidenced by the lengthy and vigorous discussions about the work plan at the IA regional meetings in Alexandria, Egypt in October 2001).

A component of a work plan (action plan, operational plan) that sometimes is overlooked, is a set of "operating principles". These are statements about how the organization will operate, and how it wants to be viewed by others. A starting point for identifying operating principles can be a set of "assumptions" prepared by an executive director, or a steering committee, or a planning facilitator. This list can be designated as draft assumptions and disseminated for comment to those involved in a strategic planning exercise. The ensuing debate and clarification can transform the list of assumptions into operating principles. (See Box 4.)

Another key activity is the allocation of human and financial resources to support the Action Plan. The normal tendency is to think about "single source" funding. For example, many CEUs became used to receiving "core funding" from INCLEN each year. Now that this source is coming to an end, an opportunity for creativity and collaboration presents itself. The question now might be: "Can the objectives of a given CEU be achieved by joining forces with another group within the same (or related) institution, and by sharing resources – both human and financial?" The same question can be asked at a regional level. For example, the IndiaCLEN group currently receives most of its funding from a single source (USAID). However, during the IndiaCLEN strategic planning discussions, there was some vigorous and forward-looking dialogue about other possible funding sources, given the goals of IndiaCLEN.

Box 4: An Example of Operating Principles

As mentioned in Box 1, the IndiaCLEN strategic planning meeting in September 2001 included a discussion about the process elements.

At the request of colleagues responsible for strategic planning (SP), the LAMP group prepared a note on the strategic planning process, to be used over the subsequent several months. This note included some operating principles. These are reproduced below, as examples:

1. IndiaCLEN's strategic plan will be comprehensive. That is, it will include all IndiaCLEN functions: research, training, capacity building, and other (e.g., advocacy).
2. Key stakeholders will be included in the SP process. During the next 3 months, this will include all CEUs (that is, all members of IndiaCLEN) and the ministries of health in the 5 states where CEUs are located. Additional stakeholders mentioned were the central government Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), ICMR, and nongovernment organizations (as representatives of the "community").
3. As priorities and proposed activities are clarified, several funding agencies will be contacted. *(It is recognized that over the next 6 months, some specific documents will need to be prepared to respond to the opportunity presented by the announced extension of the USAID grant.)*
4. The SP process will be clear and transparent. It was proposed that a working group of the Governing Body (GB) be created to manage the SP process during the next 3 months.
5. The SP process will include a review of relevant "external context" documents, in particular:
 - the INCLEM Trust Board of Trustees' "Priority Project Matrix" (distributed at the Sunday morning session);
 - the draft National Health Policy document, available at the following website: <http://mohfw.nic.in/np2001.htm>. Suggestions on the draft policy are welcome, and should be sent soon to: aeabop@nb.nic.in
 - the draft document, *Changing the India Health System: Current Issues, Further Directions* – available from Prof. Ranjit Roy Choudhury, one of the chapter contributors.

A second tendency is to become pre-occupied with financial resources, to the neglect of the "human resources" component. It is for this reason that the LAMP initiative includes a module on Team and Coalition Building. *(The first version of this module is now available.)* Many organizations have found that by paying more attention to the allocation of human resources, success in finding financial resources follows.

Principle 5: Measuring Things That Matter

Probably not much needs to be said to the INCLLEN group about the measurement and evaluation component of a strategic plan. After all, this expertise is the "bread and butter" of the various INCLLEN training programs. The main message with this principle is that deciding what to measure, is as important – perhaps even more important, than how to measure.

A useful framework for thinking about what to measure, can be found in a book by Robert Kaplan and David Norton (1996), entitled *The Balanced Scorecard* (see Recommended Readings). These authors suggest four categories or perspectives to consider, as a basic framework for measuring the performance of an organization –that is, the results of a strategic or action plan.

1. Funder and donor satisfaction

Most of us are familiar with this category, given our experience with reporting for research grants, and so on.

2. Customer satisfaction

This tends to be a business concept, and may be less familiar to a research and training organization. Nevertheless, it is useful to return to two of the "Drucker questions" listed on page 3:

- Who is our customer?
- What does the customer consider value?

The "customers" of a research and training group could include the intended "users" of research findings – policy makers, clinical practitioners, and so on. Or, they could be the students in our training programs.

(The LAMP core group is addressing the same issue in regard to the LAMP initiative – and as a "user", you can help us by providing feedback on this and other modules. Let us know what you found "valuable" – what was not!)

3. Internal business processes

The indicators here are concerned with direct "management" issues, regarding the allocation and use of resources – both human and financial.

4. Enhanced Learning and Growth

The question here is, "To achieve our vision, how will we sustain our ability to change and improve?". This category is not frequently included in a strategic plan, and yet it is very important. We will expand on this in the next section – Principle 6.

Within each category, there should be further elaboration and specification about objectives, measures and targets.

Principle 6: On-going "Learning While Doing"

Developing and writing up a strategic plan is hard and exhausting work. And it is quite natural, when the job is done, to say, "There – that's it; I don't want to think about strategic planning for the next three years!" But this is precisely what we should not be doing.

To avoid this trap, we put forward the idea that strategic planning is not simply a periodic exercise. Rather it can be considered as an on-going process. In particular, it can become a dynamic and productive learning process.

We offer four suggestions about transforming the strategic planning process into an on-going "learning while doing" adventure.

1. A strategic plan should have both short- and long-term features. While a vision/mission/goal statement (and related intentions) can apply to a longer period of time – say five years – most attention should be given to the short term. Some organizations focus on 6-month plans, on the assumption that situations can change very rapidly, both inside and outside the organization. Most strategic planning facilitators encourage organizations to prepare detailed 1-year plans, within the framework of a 3 or 5-year plan. The practice then is to have a system for close monitoring of progress indicators at points in time during that 12-month period (say every 3 or 4 months). Toward the end of the year, a detailed plan is prepared for the following year. In this way, a strategic plan becomes a "rolling" plan.
2. Strategic planning activity should be thought of as an integral part of knowledge management. In the business world, quarterly reports have become a key tool for both monitoring and planning, and are an integral part of a given company's customized knowledge management system. We encourage similar thinking for research and training groups.
3. Be intentional and specific about creating a learning component within a strategic plan. We refer again to Senge's book (about the "learning organization") and recommend the chapter on "team learning". Senge (1990) cites the work of physicist and quantum theorist, David Bohm, who has made a study of the theory and practice of dialogue. Bohm identifies three conditions that need to be met for constructive dialogue:
 1. All participants must "suspend" their assumptions, literally to hold them "as if suspended before us".
 2. All participants must regard one another as colleagues.
 3. There must be a "facilitator" who can "hold the context" of a dialogue.

The Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED) provides an example of a global health research organization that has made learning a specific component of its work, through the use of "learning briefs" (see Box 5).

4. Last, we return to the importance of leadership. The person (or persons) who have been given the responsibility for leading a group or organization need to be "systems thinkers". They must avoid being pre-occupied with the details of people or money problems, and learn how to maintain "the long view". They must ensure that the team or organization takes time to reflect on its work and activity, identify what worked and did not work, consider what can be done differently or better, and help individuals and teams to revise their work plans accordingly. In other words, leaders must themselves be examples of "learning while doing", while at the same time creating the conditions within the team or organization for the same process.

Box 5: Learning Briefs – A Tool for "Learning While Doing"

In 1999, the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED) conducted an internal review of its role and performance. Among other things, this exercise resulted in a newly energized communication strategy, to emphasize COHRED's "three key messages". These are:

- Put countries first
- Work for equity in health
- Link research to policy and action

Since that time, COHRED has produced a series of "learning briefs". These appear as inserts in each COHRED newsletter. They are also available on the organization's website: <http://www.cohred.ch>

Here is a description of what a learning brief is ... "*A succinct description of lessons learned about a particular ENHR (Essential National Health Research) activity or project that are of value to others about to embark on similar and comparable activities. It should be written for a wide audience A short, snappy 'newspaper article' style is more appropriate for a learning brief, than a formal academic presentation. Emphasis should be on how to convey the message as simply and persuasively as possible.*"

Examples of learning briefs are:

- No. 2001/4: *How can we act on information we don't have?* Information and communication needs in health policy decisions in Ghana.
- No. 2001/5: *Developing a health knowledge network: the case of SA (South Africa) HealthInfo*



References:

Alano, B.P., Almario, E.S. 2000. *Tracking Country Resource Flows for Health Research and Development (R & D)*. Published for the Centre for Economic Policy Research, Manila by Adarna House.

Drucker, P.F. 1993. *The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask About Your Nonprofit Organization*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fowler, A. 1997. *Striking a Balance*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd.

Kaplan, R.S., Norton D.P. 1996. *The Balanced Scorecard*. Boston, MA, U.S.A.: Harvard Business School Press.

Lee, K., Mills, A. 2000. Strengthening governance for health research. *British Medical Journal* 321: 775-776.

Neufeld, V., Johnson, N. (Eds.) 2001. *Forging Links for Health Research: Perspectives from the Council on Health Research for Development*. Ottawa, Canada: IDRC Books.

Osborne, D., Gaebler, T. 1992. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*. Reading, MA, U.S.A.: Addison-Wesley.

Senge, P.M. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday – Currency.

Simpson, D. 2001. *The Challenge Dialogue System*. An internal document of the Innovation Expedition. London, ON, Canada: Innovation Expedition.



Recommended Readings:

Drucker, P.F. 1993. *The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask About Your Nonprofit Organization*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This little book is advertised as a "participant's workbook", and has been produced by the P.F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management. Using five key questions as a framework, the book consists of a series of exercises, with interjected commentaries.

Fowler, A. 1997. *Striking a Balance*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd.

This helpful book has the sub-title: "A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of Non-government Organizations in International Development". It contains a detailed analysis of various arrangements for organizing and managing relations among nongovernment organizations.

Kaplan, R.S., Norton, D.P. 1996. *The Balanced Scorecard*. Boston, MA, U.S.A.: Harvard Business School Press.

The focus of the book is a "tool" known as the Balance Scorecard for measuring: financial performance, customer knowledge, internal business processes, and learning and growth. The authors put forward this framework, not only as a "measurement system", but also as a "management system".

Neufeld, V., Johnson, N. (Eds.) 2001. *Forging Links for Health Research: Perspectives from the Council on Health Research for Development*. Ottawa, Canada: IDRC Books

This multi-author book was prepared in conjunction with the International Conference on Health Research for Development, held in Bangkok in October 2000. The perspective throughout the book is that of developing countries – reflecting the mission of the Council on Health Research for Development which sponsored the book. Beginning with the landmark report in 1990 of the Commission on Health Research for Development, the book describes aspects of the performance of the global health research system, finishing with recommendations for future consideration.

Senge, P.M. 1990 *The Fifth Discipline: the Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday – Currency.

In this now classic book, Senge introduces what has become a "new age" term – the "learning organization". Five disciplines (or "component technologies") of the learning organization are presented. They include: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision and team learning. In Senge's view, systems thinking is

the "fifth discipline". As he says, "It is the discipline that integrates the disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice".

Appendix 1: Comments on the Strategic Planning Discussions during the LAMP Workshop at the INCLEN SEA Regional Meeting

26 November 2001 - by Vic Neufeld

The following comments are my observations on yesterday's discussions, stimulated by the 3 exercises on strategic planning. These comments will use the "Challenge Dialogue System (CDS)" framework, developed by Don Simpson and colleagues of the Innovation Expedition, London, Canada.

1. DEFINING THE CHALLENGE:

The exercise on context setting, produced a set of factors (barriers, contributors) that were primarily internal – that is, they were directly related to INCLEN SEA. Relatively little reference was made to the broader "environment" for health research in SE Asia – for example, the various conferences over the past 18 months, some key reports which have been published (e.g., Chitr's paper on a health research policy for WHO SEARO). It may be useful to do some further work on this.

There was general agreement about the "key challenges", such as:

- how to re-vitalize INCLEN SEA's strategic plan
- how to obtain commitment to a new work plan
- how to design a structure (for INCLEN SEA) that matches "function" – that is, the renewed mission and goals of INCLEN SEA

2. SETTING THE STAGE FOR COLLABORATION:

The three discussion groups agreed that there is a good climate for collaboration and cooperation within the INCLEN SEA, upon which to base a renewed work plan.

3. EXPLORING OPTIONS / DETERMINING PRIORITIES:

The goals that were suggested concentrated heavily on research collaboration, with less emphasis on capacity building (education, training).

Although reference was made to the INCLEN Trust's new emphasis on "equity-oriented, priority driven health research", there seemed to be some variation in what is meant by "equity-orientation" as expressed in any proposed activity. I suggest that some further discussion is needed about this. Also, a reminder that the theme of the up-coming Global meeting (in February 2002) is about equity-oriented health research – so this will provide an opportunity for further thinking and discussion about this.

4. PRACTICING INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP:

In the discussions yesterday afternoon, two quite different leadership models emerged. One featured a more centralized, hierarchical approach, while the second featured multi-centre teams within the network (for example, collaborative research teams on specific cross-cutting problems. My own bias is that the second model is more appropriate, and can work. *(We will have an opportunity to discuss this further today, in the context of team building and coalition building. Also, this may be an area where further interactions with the LAMP may be considered.)*

5. MEASURING FEATURES THAT MATTER:

We didn't have an opportunity to get into this aspect of strategic planning – that is, indicators or markers of progress and achievement. It will be important to spend some time on this, particularly on two aspects mentioned yesterday:

- Indicators of funder satisfaction (e.g., the INCLLEN Trust, Rockefeller, etc.)
- Indicators of learning and growth (e.g., commitment and communication)

I suggest that a small group (perhaps a sub-committee of the BOC) work on this for incorporation into the INCLLEN SEA work plan. If this work is completed within the next 10 weeks, it could be discussed at the Global meeting.

6. USING APPROPRIATE ICTs (Information & Communication Technologies):

Several ideas about this aspect of strategic planning emerged:

- The Newcastle group represents an excellent resource for INCLLEN SEA with respect to the role of ICTs in capacity development, particularly regarding the principles and practices of "distance learning".
- Regarding the use of electronic dialogues, I suggest setting up 1 or 2 of these over the next few months, to get some practice in how to do this. For example, an "e-dialogue" could be arranged on the question, "Can an equity-orientation be included in the design of randomized clinical trials?" *(Tessa Tan Torres has a particular interest in this question. We might ask her to prepare a short "challenge paper" as the basis for a 6-8 week electronic dialogue prior to the Global meeting.)*
- We have recently learned about an "ICT Research and Development Grants" program available to Asia-Pacific organizations, sponsored by a 3-agency consortium. One of the agencies is IDRC. *(We are getting more detailed information about this; note that the deadline date is December 15th!).*

7. TAKING CONCRETE ACTION:

I suggest that we aim to produce a revised INCLEN SEA work plan during the course of this week, while we are together in Khon Kaen.

8. PRACTICING DISCIPLINED FOLLOW-UP:

The LAMP core group is available and interested to continue working with INCLEN SEA, in relation to strategic planning, team building and coalition building, and so on. A specific suggestion for the BOC to consider, is the creation of an INCLEN SEA LAMP working group, to facilitate the use of LAMP modules and resources in the SEA region. Among other tasks, some members of this group could join the LAMP activities at the Global meeting, and assist with planning further LAMP-related aspects within the INCLEN SEA work plan over the next 18 months.