Professor L. Alberto Franco

PROBLEM STRUCTURING WORKSHOP

Loughborough University

Problem structuring in teams*

- Group problem structuring is typically about:
  - ***understanding purpose*** for a specific 'organisation' (department, division, corporation, partnership, collaboration);
  - ***understanding causality*** of deliberate actions to create outcomes (means-ends);
  - ***agreeing*** where to ***practically focus*** (e.g. energy, cash, emotion) and ***how to respond*** to the problem/decision;
 - ***implement*** these agreements.

*after Ackermann & Eden (2011)

Problem structuring workshop

- In groups, you will use a problem structuring method to articulate *a draft mission and a set of draft goals and strategic concerns that might guide the BOR community over the next 1-3 years on its way to a sustainable future*.

- At the end of workshop, in plenary session, a representative of your group will present the draft mission, goals and priority areas for the BOR community

Causal mapping technique (Ackermann & Eden 2011)

- Gathering issues.
- Clustering issues.
- Linking issues.
- Gathering consequences.
- Clustering consequences.
- Linking consequences.
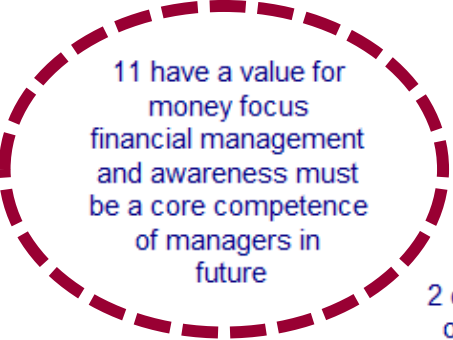- Linking issues and consequences.
- Prioritise issues.
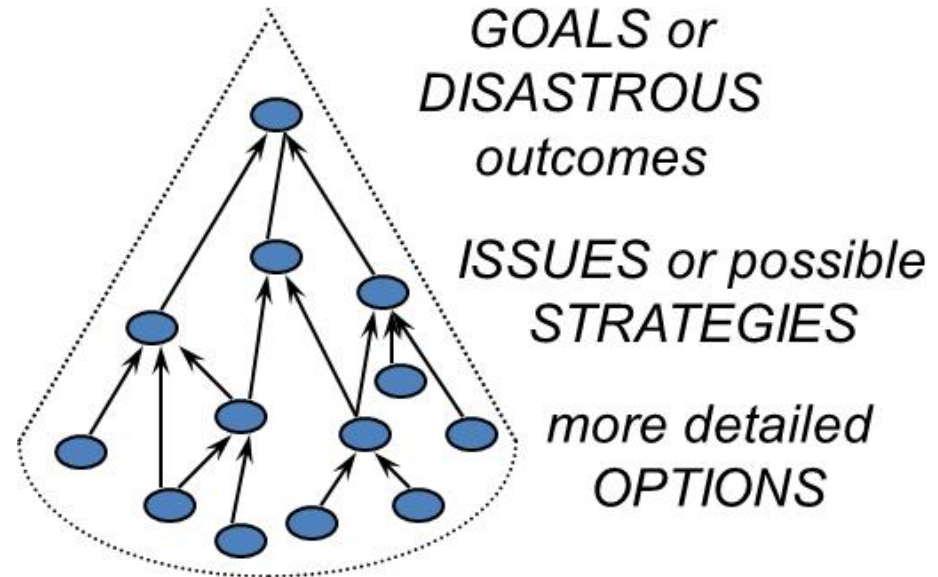
GOALS or DISASTROUS outcomes

ISSUES or possible STRATEGIES

more detailed OPTIONS

Gather

What do you think the BOR community should do over the next 1-3 years to assure its long-term future?

Gathering: Rules

- Make statements action oriented by including a **_verb_**:
  - e.g. "clear understanding of service requirements"…

    …."**_understand_** _service requirements clearly_"
- 6-15 words max to ensure each statement is discrete yet descriptive.
- Avoid words such as 'need', 'should', 'ought' and instead make **_propositions_**:
  - e.g. "need to eliminate duplication from current provision"…

    …."~~need to~~ eliminate duplication from current provision"
- Avoid using "in order to", "due to" may lead to", "as a result of", "through", "caused by", etc. as these imply two statements linked together by an arrow.

Beginning of a 'gather'…

11 have a value for money focus financial management and awareness must be a core competence of managers in future

4 establish quality social housing (at least for Rantorf)

3 develop a strong, credible governing body

5 address the management skills senior peple have - particularly performance management - key to getting the culture sorted out

2 change the culture of entitlement to a culture of accountability

1 what are the major strategic issues RHA faces over the next 3-5 years?

10 must gain direct management control of local managers

6 achieve excellent customer service as the norm

9 positive, creative and rigorous performance management ethos and systems

8 an understanding of effective customer outcomes/our purpose

7 revisit our operating model and at the same time address staff and managers' attitudes and behaviours

*Taken from Ackermann & Eden (2011)

Initial gather after wording changes…

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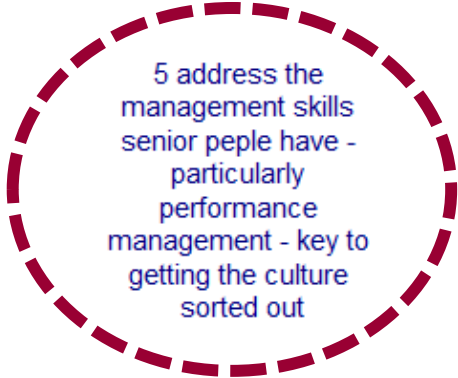7 revisit our operating model and AT THE SAME TIME address staff and managers' attitudes and behaviours

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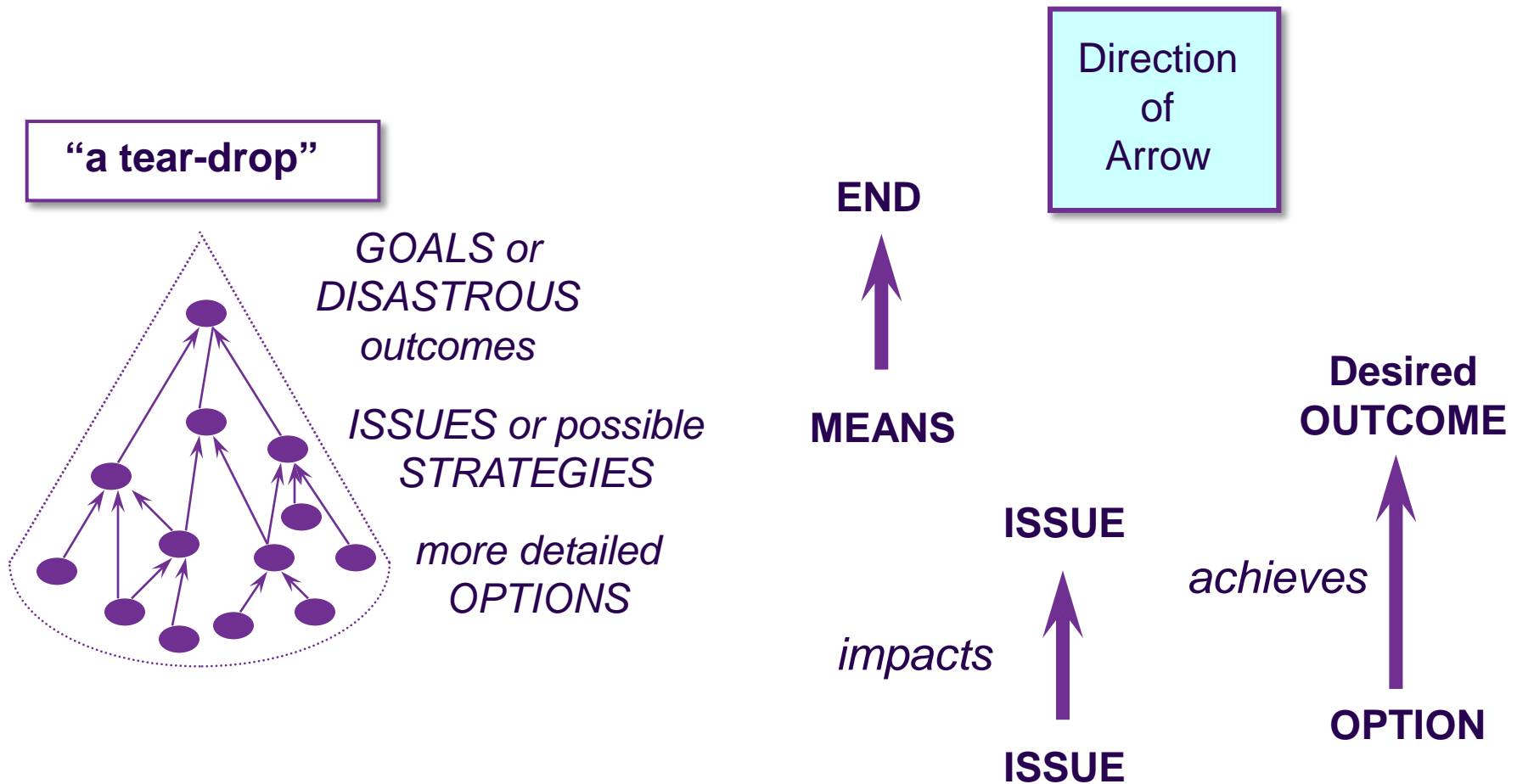
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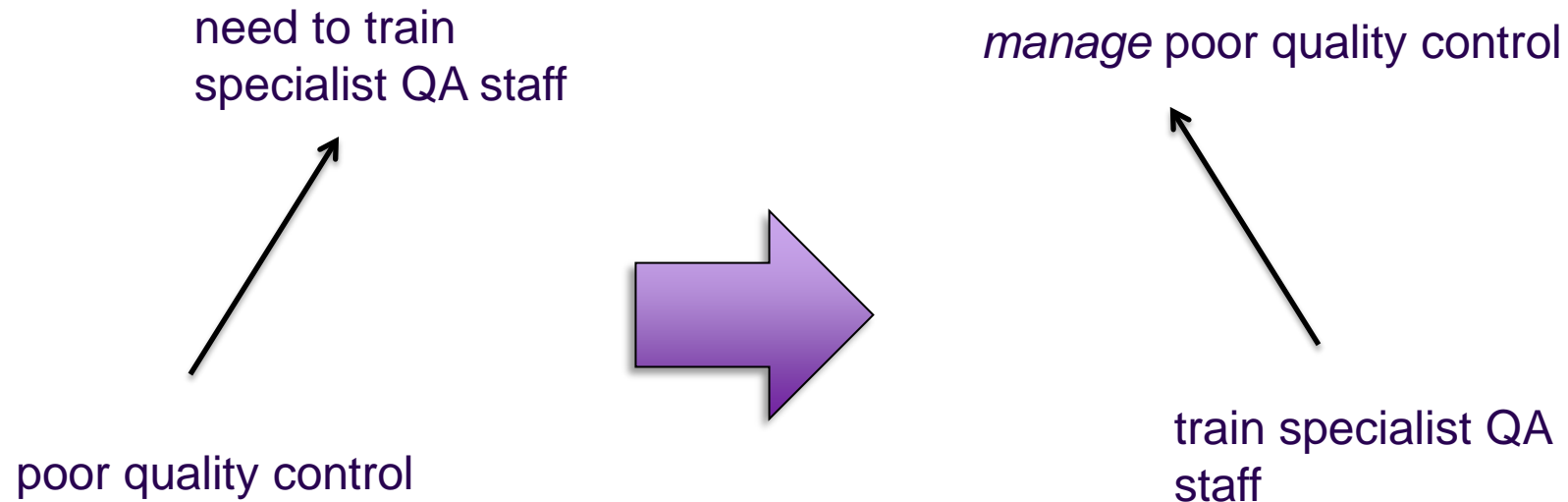
Linking issues

- Ask yourself *how the different statements relate to each other*:

    - this usually leads to thinking about direction of links.

    - each link must express a different chain of causality.

- Start with the top level issue in a cluster.

- Watch for links within and between clusters.

Developing *links* (Bryson et al 2004)

"a tear-drop"

GOALS or DISASTROUS outcomes

ISSUES or possible STRATEGIES

more detailed OPTIONS

Direction of Arrow

END

MEANS

Desired OUTCOME

ISSUE

impacts

achieves

ISSUE

OPTION

Get means-ends relationship link correct!!

need to train
specialist QA staff

manage poor quality control

poor quality control

train specialist QA
staff

Take out "need", add a verb, and make the relationship: ***means to ends***.

Thus, we have the option of 'training staff' in order to '*manage* poor quality control'.

Without correct coding any analysis will be meaningless!

Linking issues

- Ask yourself *how the different statements relate to each other*:

    - this usually leads to thinking about direction of links.

    - each link must express a different chain of causality.

- Start with the top level issue in a cluster.

- Watch for links within and between clusters.

- Any reasons for linking two statements which has not already been captured should be added to the map with links showing the line of argumentation.

Avoid double arrows…

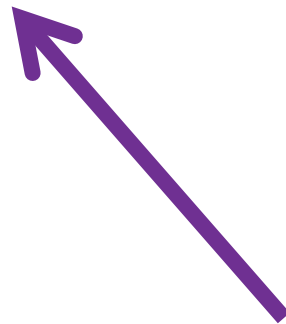Conduct research that transforms practice ⟷ Increase research funding
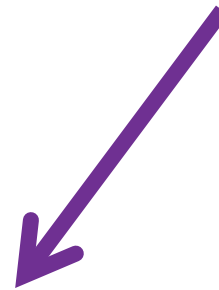
By elaborating the 'loop'

Conduct research that transforms practice

Develop strong industry connections

Increase research funding

Watch for 'overlinking'…