

THE TEN SEED TECHNIQUE (TST) RANKING TOOL *July 2022*

Preamble

This paper¹ describes a practical, easy-to-use, participatory technique which can be used in both humanitarian and development processes. This is the Ten Seed Technique (TST) ranking tool. The TST was first used by Dr Ravi Jayakaran² in a development setting, and this participatory tool has been modified and used by TorqAid since 2002. This paper looks at three TST examples:

- A TST exercise carried out in a community development setting in West Bengal, India
- A TST exercise carried out with a government health department team in Darwin, Australia, with the individuals working in Remote/Outback Australia
- A TST Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) exercise in Vanuatu

TST Process

The TST is an easy-to-use, highly participatory tool. It consists of the following three stages, and requires a facilitator to initiate and facilitate this. This can be carried out in either an inside or outside classroom setting, or remotely using Zoom:

- Stage 1: Brainstorming
- Stage 2: Scoring & Ranking
- Stage 3: Analysis

Ideally two complementary TST exercises should be carried out:

- One which focuses in on the strengths of the community in question
- Another which focuses in on the challenges facing that community

The following steps should be taken. These require a facilitator to initiate and manage this:

Stage 1: Brainstorming

- Separately brainstorm the strengths and challenges of the community. Ideally write these on whiteboard or flip chart paper. Mark each strength or challenge with an alphabetical letter (ie A,B,C,D.... etc)

Stage 2: Scoring & Ranking

- Draw a circle on whiteboard/flip-chart paper, and divide this into segments or slices marked A,B,C,D,....etc)
- Every participant is given ten 'stick-on' dots of the same colour. Individuals can place these in the circle segments or slices against strengths or challenges they feel most important. **There is only one rule – no more than four dots per person can be placed in any one slice/segment.**
- Add up the scores in each slice/segment
- Re-arrange the order of strengths or challenges according to scores, with highest on top. Where possible group the challenges into obvious categories

¹ The reference of which is www.torqaid.com/ten-seed-technique

² See these and other development material by Dr Jayakaran at <http://ravijayakaran.com/books>

Stage 3: Analysis

- Take 4-5 of the highest-scoring challenge categories. Highlight strengths on separate space on wall
- Have stakeholders divide into working groups, each one taking a major challenge category. Ask each working group to do the following:
 - ✓ Discuss the causes of that challenge category
 - ✓ Discuss the effects of that challenge category
 - ✓ Discuss possible solutions to these causes and effects, drawing down, where possible, on the strengths of the community
- Have each working group present their findings to the overall class or community as a whole
- Ideally write up these findings and record them for subsequent action

West Bengal TST Exercise



This TST exercise was carried out in a rural setting, which was the site of a long-standing Indian community development NGO, supported by Australian partners. The TST exercise was part of a Participatory Project Management (PPM) training program. The teaching was facilitated by Bengali-speaking staff. As outlined in the TST process, two separate exercises were carried out, these being:

- Brainstorming and analysing the key strengths of the community³
- Brainstorming and analysing the key development challenges facing the community



³³ The actual strengths-based question posed (in Bengali) to the group was the following: 'Whilst there are many poor people in this and surrounding villages, there are also many positive features of this community, which can help promote good development. What are these ?'

For the first of these exercises, a total of eleven separate factors were brainstormed.

| Community Strengths: Factors brainstormed | Scores |
|---|--------|
| Folk culture | 56 |
| Natural beauty | 45 |
| People are hard working | 41 |
| Natural resources | 27 |
| Unity & cooperation | 27 |
| Handicrafts & cottage industries | 27 |
| Ancient language & social system | 26 |
| Clean environment | 25 |
| Leprosy health centres | 22 |
| Colleges & higher education (university) | 21 |
| Historical places (heritage sites) | 18 |

The second TST ranking exercise focussed in on 16 brainstormed development challenges.

| Challenges faced: Factors brainstormed | Scores | Categories |
|---|--------|------------|
| Unemployment | 68 | A |
| Water, agriculture, lack of food | 60 | B |
| Transport | 36 | |
| Alcohol | 25 | C |
| Humanity, social justice & self-respect | 25 | C |
| Health & , hygiene & sanitation | 23 | D |
| Women, domestic violence | 20 | E |
| Poverty | 17 | A |
| Child marriage & dowry | 16 | E |
| Lack of women's education | 15 | |
| Injustice & lack of human dignity | 13 | |
| Industry not developed | 12 | |
| Child labour | 12 | |
| Irregular electricity supply | 9 | |
| Not proper distribution of wealth | 9 | |
| Not good drainage | 8 | |

The key challenges were then summarising into five main categories:

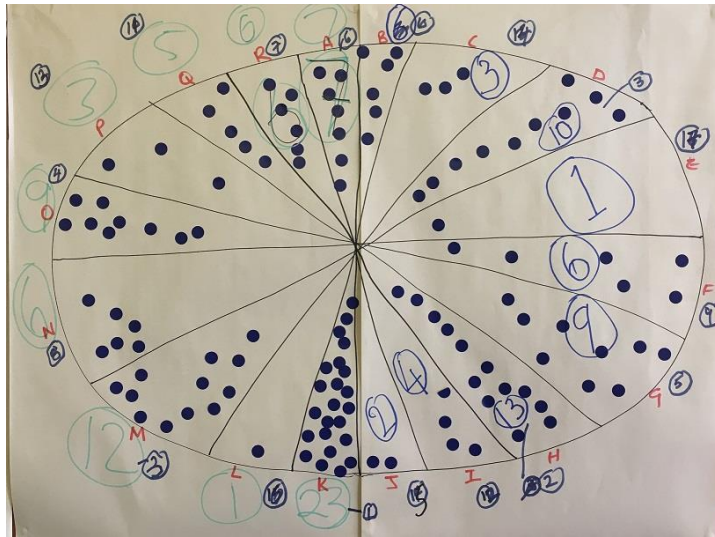
- A : Unemployment and poverty
- B : Water, agriculture, and lack of food
- C : Alcohol, social justice & self-respect issues
- D : Health, hygiene and sanitation
- E : Domestic violence, child marriage and dowry issues

Participants were then divided into five groups, with each analysing a category (A-E) as follows:

- Causes of the categories identified
- Effects of the categories identified
- Some practical solutions to these Causes and Effects

Darwin TST Exercise

This TST exercise was again part of PPM⁴ training program, this time held up in Darwin, in the Northern Territory (NT), Australia. The participants were members of a specialized government health team, working on community development (CD) initiatives within Outback/Remote Australia. The exercise here focused on the challenges facing practitioners as they carried out their CD initiatives across the territory with Aboriginal communities. The same TST process as before was then carried out with this group of participants. The ranking results of these challenges are then illustrated in the photos below.



| | | | |
|---|------|------|--------------------|
| (K) Issues of trust (inc history) | - 23 | # 1 | Trust |
| (H) Community overload / meeting fatigue | - 13 | - C | Community |
| (J) Time - getting to community / interacting | - 10 | - P | Bureau |
| (O) Community politics + dynamics | - 9 | - C | Things + processes |
| (G) Health + well-being of community | - 9 | - C | Things + processes |
| (A) Distance - getting to projects / interacting with com | - 7 | - P | Things + processes |
| (R) Balance - Canberra + community expectations | - 6 | - BP | Practical issue |
| (N) Cross-cultural awareness + sensitive practice | - 6 | - C | |
| (F) Our timing with community timing | - 6 | - BP | |
| (B) Am I the right person to talk to? | - 6 | | |
| (Q) Increasing bureaucracy | - 5 | - BP | |
| (I) Coordination of stakeholders | - 4 | | |
| (P) Lack of resources + infrastructure with in community | - 3 | | |
| (C) V. High operational costs | - 3 | | |
| (S) Safety within community - both for visitors + parties | - 2 | | |
| (E) Annual funding cycle | - 1 | | |
| (L) Transparency of stakeholders + community | - 1 | | |

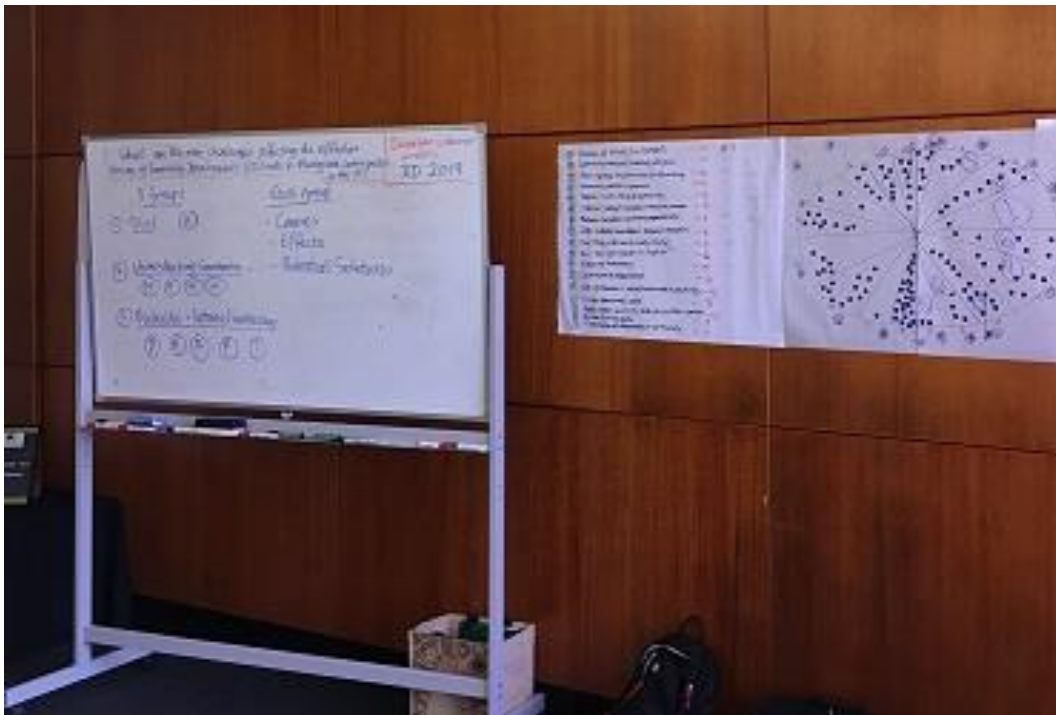
⁴ Participatory Project Management

The Challenges were then grouped into three categories, namely:

- Issues of Trust
- Understanding Communities
- Practicalities of Distance & Travel

The team then divided into three groups, each taking a category, with discussion, and later class presentation, on the following:

- Causes of the categories identified
- Effects of the categories identified
- Some practical solutions to these Causes and Effects



Vanuatu TST Exercise

This was part of a Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) workshop facilitated in Vanuatu, a year after the 2015 Tropical Cyclone (TC) Pam, and in the midst of an el-Nino related drought period. Summarised below are the results of the TST exercise relating to the challenges from the drought. The challenges mentioned were then grouped together into three main categories (A/B/C).

| Challenges from current ongoing drought | TST Score | Category A/B/C ⁵ |
|---|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Not enough water | 42 | A |
| Food shortages | 17 | B |
| Use of unhealthy water | 11 | A |
| Affecting community programs | 11 | C |
| Affecting community life | 11 | C |
| Damage to fences from animals | 11 | B |
| Affecting adult and children's health | 8 | A |
| Affecting school program | 7 | C |
| Overall effect of heart – on skin and people's energy | 7 | A |
| Affecting food production | 5 | B |
| Dead animals | 5 | B |

The three key categories were then:

- A. Not enough clean water, this creating health problems
- B. Adverse effect on agriculture, and not enough food
- C. Adverse effect on school and community programs

The first two categories were then tackled in group work, with focus on:

- Causes of the highlighted challenge
- Effects of the highlighted challenge
- Practical solutions designed to counter these Causes and/or Effects

The results of this TST exercise are summarised on the next page.

⁵ A = Water and Health. B = Food, Agricultural Production, and Farming Issues. C = Education & Community Life

Group A: Not enough clean water

Causes:

Not enough tanks and underground wells
Too much sun; not enough rain
No nearby river or natural source of clean water

Effects:

People getting sick
More money spent on transportation of water
Disruption to community and school programs
People lack clean drinking water

Solutions to counter Causes and/or Effects

We must build more wells and tanks
We need to purchase water containers for clean water
We need to seek assistance from urban/rural water supplies

Group B: Damage to agricultural sector and lack of food ;

Causes:

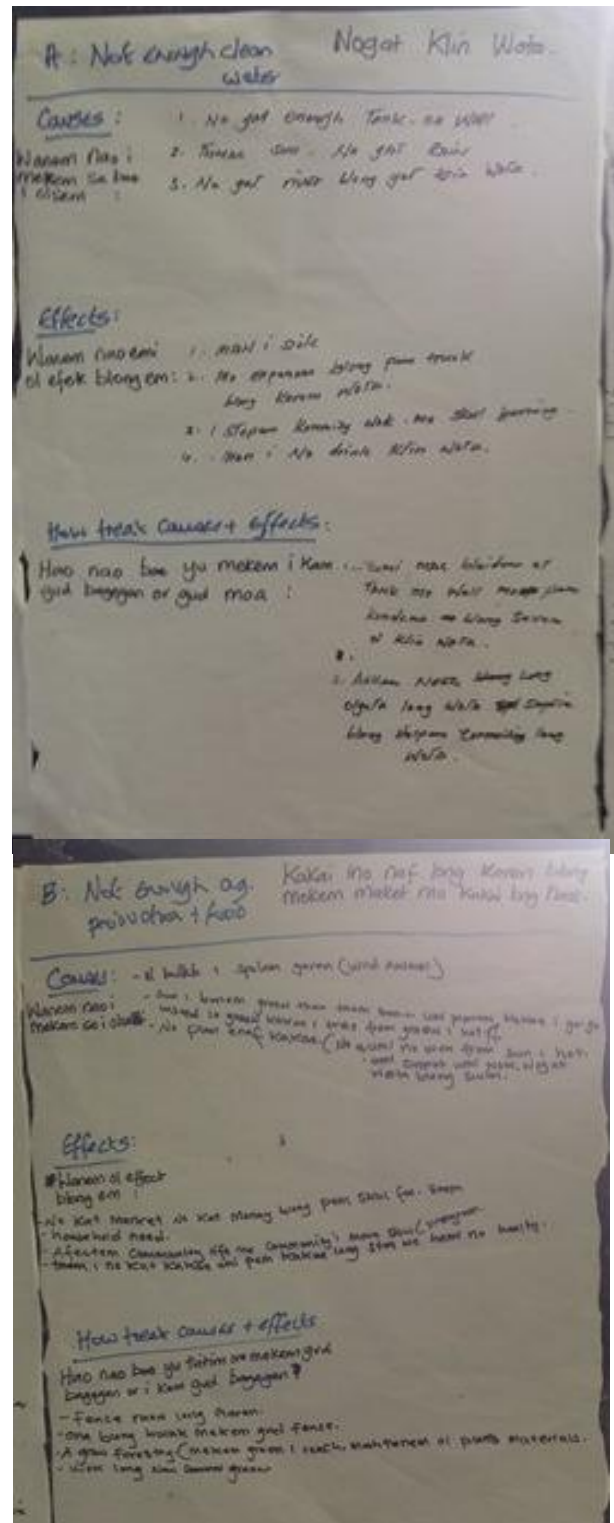
Gardens destroyed by wild animals and cattle
Strong heat from the sun caused the soil to dry up, and thus crops withered/died
Low crop production due to people hesitant to work in such heat, with not enough water to survive on

Effects:

Low generation of income from crop sales, resulting in lack of money for school fees and other household necessities
Adversely affected community life in terms of community mobilization for programs and church/social activities
People start resorting to imported foods from shops which are not so healthy

Solutions to counter Causes and/or Effects

Build fences around gardens
Cattle owners to fix fences
Adaptation of farming systems that can better cope/adapt to extreme weather conditions – eg agroforestry
Move gardens to areas which are more fertile



Concluding Remarks

This paper then indicates that the TST ranking tool can be utilised in a variety of development and humanitarian situations. For more information about this, together with how a modified TST process can be utilised for a Seasonal Calendar, please contact the TorqAid Director below.

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This TST topic is taught as part of Topic 06, Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) initiatives, in the online Participatory Disaster Risk Management (PDRM) program – www.torqaid.com/online-pdrm-program, which runs from the end of July to mid October 2022. For further information, contact the TorqAid CEO, Chris Piper, on pipercm@iprimus.com.au. July 2022