

Activity 4.07 Boston Matrix (social enterprise)

Module: 4. Planning Social Action

Duration: 25 minutes

Social Development Themes: Social Enterprise

Summary

A tool which can support participants to identify the realism in their ideas for social action.

Learning Outcomes:

Skills in project planning and management

Skills in project planning and management – risk analysis

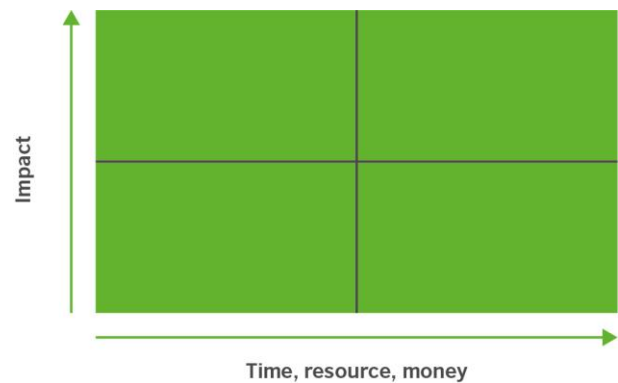
Preparations and Materials:

Adapted Boston Matrix on flip charts for each social action groups (see diagram 43 below).

Approach:

1. Each social action group is given a copy of an adapted 'Boston Matrix' (designed by the Boston Consulting Group) on a flipchart. Invite participants to write down their ideas for social action on post-it notes, discuss and place them on this matrix. They may not agree exactly where they go, this is part of the process of conversation.
2. Ask the group to give a name to each of the four boxes that reflects whether it is high or low impact and requires a lot or few resources. For example: the bottom right box could be called 'Don't go there!'.
3. Ask the group: reflecting on the Boston Matrix, which of the social actions appeal to them and why? Ask the group: are the social actions you have identified very risky? Does this influence your choice of social action?

Diagram 43: Boston Matrix

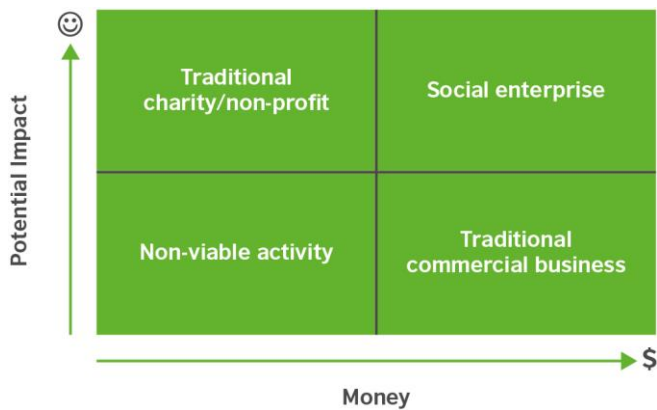


Alternate Approach:

As well as supporting learners to assess the realism of their social action project ideas, this activity can be amended and used to help participants assess social enterprise ideas and their potential for generating income/profit, rather than assessing risk.

1. Draw out the simple axes of the graph, with a happy face representing social impact, and a dollar or pound sign representing potential income generation.
2. Ask the group to discuss what the names for each of the four boxes might be, related to the style of operating, which reflects whether it is high or low impact and has potential to generate income. See Diagram 44 below. Agree on where social enterprise fits.
3. Invite participants to write their ideas for social action on Post-it notes, discuss and place them on this matrix. They may not agree exactly where they go – this is part of the process of dialogue.

Diagram 44: Boston Matrix: Social Enterprise Product Ideas



Debrief

Debrief with the group with the following questions:

- a. Reflecting on the Boston Matrix, which of the social actions appeal to them and why?
 - b. Are the social actions you have identified potentially sustainable through generating income?
 - c. Just because a social action does not have any potential to generate income, does that mean it's not worth doing? What other factors might influence your choice of social action?
 - d. Could a social enterprise generate income through purely commercial products or services, in order to help cover the costs of high social impact activity that is not able to generate income?
 - e. Have you overestimated the potential impact or income? Are you being realistic?
 - f. Does this influence your choice of social action?
5. The facilitator could also encourage participants to discuss the potential benefits of helping sustain social action through social enterprise behaviour. Take care to make sure they understand that commercial business activity and traditional non-profit activity is still useful and worthwhile.