

# XI. Final aim

Once we have the situation diagnosed and have defined problems and type of intervention, as well as the type of population we intend to work with, it is possible to address the **fundamental question**: What do we want to achieve? Where do we want to get by undertaking all these efforts?

The question will be answered by working from the general to the particular in terms of final aim, objective, results or actions.

## 11.1. What is the final aim?

A final aim designates **the future positive state, at an overall level, to which our intervention contributes**. This is our supreme aspiration, the ultimate goal of our action.

Examples:

- All the children of the country/region have good nutritional status, or
- Child Rights are respected in the country.

The final aim provides the **overall orientation** and underlying sense of all the efforts being made. A final aim cannot be achieved by a single stakeholder, who taken in isolation can merely contribute towards approaching it. It can even be claimed that a final aim can never be achieved. Thus, for the second example above, even where there has been success in having Child Rights respected, it is always possible that they will subsequently be undermined again.

## 11.2. Building the final aim

The final aim is a direct emanation of the project's vision, can be expressed in a single sentence, and refers to a desired future positive state to which our project will contribute.

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### Key questions for the final aim:

- *Does the final aim refer to a future positive state at an overall level towards which our project is contributing?*
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- *Does the final aim correspond with our overall aspiration vis-à-vis the matter at issue?*
  - *Does the final aim correspond with Terre des hommes' mandate and mission?*
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**Summary:**

***The final aim refers to the future positive state at an overall level towards which our intervention contributes. It is our supreme aspiration and the ultimate goal of our action.***

***The final aim provides overall orientation and underlying meaning to all our efforts.***

## XII. Objective

The objective is the keystone of the strategy. Without a sound objective there can be no sound strategy. Building of the objective is therefore a crucial moment in planning.

### 12.1. What is the objective?

An objective indicates **what we want to reach in concrete terms, within a specified time, in order to contribute towards achieving the final aim.** The objective is the description of the **future positive state** in which the beneficiary population is to find itself by the end of a project phase as a result of project action. This state has **lasting effects**. It is **measurable** even though the objective itself is not necessarily quantified.

For example, if the final aim is full observance of Child Rights, the objective that might be set could be a change of public opinion so that it comes to consider certain situations as a breach of these rights. Most often, a series of objectives makes it possible to come closer to realising the final aim.

The objective lies with the **competence and responsibility of the project**, which means two things: that **the project has the means to bring it about** and that it has **the obligation to achieve it** by the end of the project phase.

Often the objective concerns a change in behaviour. We can induce it by creating specific conditions but we cannot guarantee it as it depends on the persons concerned. The underlying hypothesis should be made explicit. For example, in the case of a change in behaviour concerning exclusive breast-feeding, the hypothesis might be: if we train women in exclusive breast-feeding, they will change their behaviour and breast-feed their infants for six months without having resort to supplementary feeding.

### 12.2. Formulating the objective

To say that **an objective is a state** supposes that the following criteria have been taken into account in its formulation:

- A state is a **new situation**, not a process, wish or intention.
- This situation is the outcome of a **change** produced by the project.

- A state always has **an object and a subject**: What has changed and for whom has it changed?
- The objective should describe a **positive** state, it should not therefore be expressed in negative terms. For example, to say that children no longer live on the street does not tell us what has become of them. It is better to say, for example, that the children have been settled in a satisfactory family setting.
- Along the same lines, **it serves little purpose to formulate the objective in comparative terms**, as the new situation necessarily expresses a positive change with regard to the initial situation. For example, rather than saying that children are better fed, it is preferable to specify the nutritional status achieved.
- To express a state, **verbs should be used in the present or past tense**. An infinitive or gerund generally expresses a process or action. **This way of formulating the objective forces a distinction between the means and the end**. Phrases frequently heard may be: our objective is to support single mothers. This tells us what we want to do but not what we want to achieve. Stating that "single mothers are independent", on the other hand, is a clearly expressed state.
- The objective should be **formulated concisely**. It acts as a focus to direct project intervention and all members of the team should therefore bear it constantly in mind. Too lengthy and complicated expression cannot be easily memorised.

It is nonetheless useful for the formulation of the objective to be accompanied by comments clearly defining the terms of the objective. For example, if it is stated that "single mothers are independent", this will provide an opportunity to explain what is meant by independence and what conditions make it possible to assert that it has been achieved.

### **12.3. Elements necessary for building the objective**

To construct a solid objective, we need:

- A well defined **mission**
- A clear idea of the **ideal situation** we want to contribute to bringing about (the final aim we aspire to achieve one day)
- A thorough knowledge of the **unsatisfactory situation**
- Analysis of strategically important **stakeholders**
- An idea of the **framework and limitations** of our intervention

## 12.4. Stages in building the objective

1. **Deadline:** indicating the month and year of the end of the phase
2. **Beneficiaries:** who they are exactly (for example the children of a specific part of town, living in a given situation), their numbers (in numerical terms or as a percentage)
3. The **spatial** (geographical) area
4. The **state** and the quality it is wished to achieve
5. The **qualitative and quantitative elements** necessary to specify what we want to achieve and for whom
6. **Other elements** regarded as important.

A sound objective should meet the following **criteria**:

- Be attainable with the means and by the project's action
- It should address the main problem identified
- It should be highly desirable for the protagonists of the project. For that, it should be both realistic and bold, motivating and mobilising
- It should make a significant contribution towards the final aim

## 12.5. An example of an objective

An example of an objective broken down into components (Project to prevent child abandonment – Casablanca)

Component 1	75% of beneficiaries
Component 2	have been able to keep their children
Component 3	satisfactorily*
Component 4	and to assume responsibility for themselves**
Component 5	following the association's support for a maximum of one year

\* Keeping their children satisfactorily:

- Skill 1: ...
- Skill 2: ...
- Skill 3: ...

\*\* Assuming responsibility for themselves:

- Skill 1: they are capable of facing difficulties themselves
- Skill 2: they have a plan for their lives

## **There is no ready-made formula...**

Building a sound objective is a difficult exercise because of the wide diversity of situations in which Terre des hommes operates.

An objective which may suit one project very well cannot for the most part be transposed to another project, even where the two projects are very similar, because of differences in the context of intervention, teams' skills, Terre des hommes' experience on the spot, etc. Yet again there can be no ready-made formula.

We have given definitions and indications making it possible to formulate an objective appropriately. It is however not possible to provide orientations as to its content which will make it possible for sure to formulate an appropriate objective.

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### **Key questions for building an objective:**

- *Does the objective make a significant contribution to the final aim?*
  - *Does the objective describe a situation to be attained (a future positive state sought by the project) and not a process, wish, intention or list of actions?*
  - *Does it contain essential components: target population (for whom?), duration (when?), place (where?)*
  - *Is it attainable with the human and financial resources available?*
  - *Does it bring an appreciable solution to the key problems identified?*
  - *Is its degree of attainment measurable? Have we defined indicators and means of verification?*
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### **Summary:**

***The objective is the keystone of strategy. Without a sound objective there can be no sound strategy. Building the objective is therefore a crucial moment in planning.***

***The objective falls within the scope and responsibility of the project.***

***An objective indicates what it is specifically wished to reach within a given time in order to contribute towards attaining the final aim. It is the***

*description of a future positive state in which the beneficiary population will find itself by the end of a project phase and as a result of the project's action. This state has lasting effects. It is measurable even if the objective itself is not necessarily quantified.*

*The objective meets specific rules of formulation.*