

# **BUILDING A NATION: SINT MAARTEN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN & INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING**

**DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE STRATEGIC TRAINING WORKSHOP, OCTOBER 2-4, 2013**

**CONSOLIDATED NOTES PREPARED BY THE NDP LEADERSHIP TEAM**

## **DAY ONE**

**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 2<sup>ND</sup>**

**Welcome remarks by Tom Woods and Okama Brook**

**Climate setting by workshop moderator and trainers – Elena Diez – Pinto and Anai Linares**

Participants introduced themselves in pairs. The pairs were asked to explain by drawing together the role of a dialogue process for achieving a national development plan for Sint Maarten

Some themes expressed in drawings:

- Problematical individualism solved through the dialogue “handshake”
- Dialogue is a “broker” bringing people together
- Expressed through Jollification
- Requirement for people to listen to people, society all reflective in government
- A process of diffusion
- Contribution produces divergence
- Dialogue is symbolic of a tree it starts at the roots
- Dialogue process produces new behavior
- Dialogue establishes new horizons and a brighter future
- Produces synergy
- Opportunity to produce tangible results and present SXM positively
- SXM working together as one with sustainable communities
- Dialogue is a messy process and continuous process without an end
- Dialogue is a talking process
- Enables youth empowerment

### **Workshop Objectives and Program**

- Starts at 8.30 am and ends before 5pm

### **Workshop Rules**

“Responsible for what you say but also responsible to listen.”

Agreed to rules -

- No mobile phones
- No interruptions
- No unnecessary repetition or dominating talk times
- Be tolerant and respectful
- Emotional responsible
- Remain objective

### **Workshop Mechanics**

- Participatory
- Involves team work
- Help each other through collective wisdom
- Remain flexible to ensure responsiveness to emerging context
- Is peer to peer learning
- Responsible for your own learning

### **The Workshop Methodology**

“Best way to dialogue is ask questions.”

- Combination of approaches
- Combination of dialogic tools
- Combination of intentions
- Combination of spaces

### **Challenges and Opportunities facing Sint Maarten**

A panel of experts provided context to establishing a dialogue strategy for Sint Maarten

- Francio Guadeloupe talked in the socio/political context
- Jude Houston on present economic realities
- Marc Arnold on Kingdom Relations

## **SESSION THREE – BUILDING A DIALOGUE STRATEGY**

**STEP ONE: First lets be positive in forming a vision for what is great for Sint Maarten.**

“Celebrate what’s right in the world instead of wallowing in what’s wrong.”

Dewitt Jones

The first step in building a dialogue strategy commenced with an inspirational movie titled “Celebrate what is right with the world.”

The movie encourages one to being open to seeing the world through new eyes (“vision controls perception; our perception becomes our reality”), and by dedicating yourself to seeing the beauty in the world, actively looking for it.

**Key questions arising from the movie:**

- Do you have a vision that fuels your passion, unleashes your creativity and gives you the energy to soar above the ordinary?
- Wouldn't you love to have a vision that's so compelling that you rise up every day eager to work towards achieving it?

By highlighting the images captured through his lens, Dewitt Jones talks about the importance of viewing the world from a positive perspective (**“I won't see it until I believe it... that's what life is about.”**

Rather than viewing the world inspirationally, we tend to adopt a negative -based perspective: **“I'll believe it when I see it”.**

Both perspectives were clearly highlighted in many of the comments when participants were asked: What expectations and fears they have regarding the workshop?

Fears are encapsulated in the phrase “I'll believe it when I see it.” In this sense, a national development plan will only be realized when “I actually see it”. What may preclude a plan developing are founded in the following fears:

- The fear of no results
- The fear of not achieving results
- Fear of manipulation that results will be achieved

The fears were balances against more positive views . Building a strategy for national development commences with a belief a vision “ I'll won't see it until I believe it.” In other words we must celebrate what is right with Sint Maarten and that change is always a possibility. Sint Maarten is not just a “good country” but is a “great country.” By pressing the edge between “goodness” and “greatness” our power of vision illustrates our view of the world and what is not only best in the world but been best **for** the world. The following are inspirational statements as to how participants view in joining together to build a dialogue strategy for Sint Maarten.

- The power of communication will bring about change
- Empowerment of the people will bring change
- Inclusivity is empowerment
- Dialogue is capacity building that will generate change

## **Participant Reflection of the Movie**

Participants formed the Margolis Circle. The participants addressed a set of questions that were inspired by the movie. After the ringing of a bell external chaired participants changed partners to discuss and reflect set question . Participants were told to listen what there partner was saying and to take time to talk and share views.

### ***What do I want to celebrate ?***

“I celebrate that the people of SXM share a common interest and build SXM into a more progressive country”

### **What do you want to celebrate here now?**

I celebrate in getting energized. It’s Hans birthday to day...lets celebrate !!

### **What do you choose to see regarding possibilities about SXM?**

The youth are our future. The involvement of the youth is a necessary yet under-utilized “ possibility”

I see positive foundations in SXM that can be built upon where everyone will be happy

### **What are you open to?**

I am open to religious diversity. There is more than one truth. I am open to a Caribbean without borders to build a stronger region

### **What are the external edges that we as group need to overcome?**

We need to really embrace inclusivity and take it into the community

### **What do you see when you believe it?**

I believe through dialogue that a successful result will happen

### **What is your vision for Sint Maarten?**

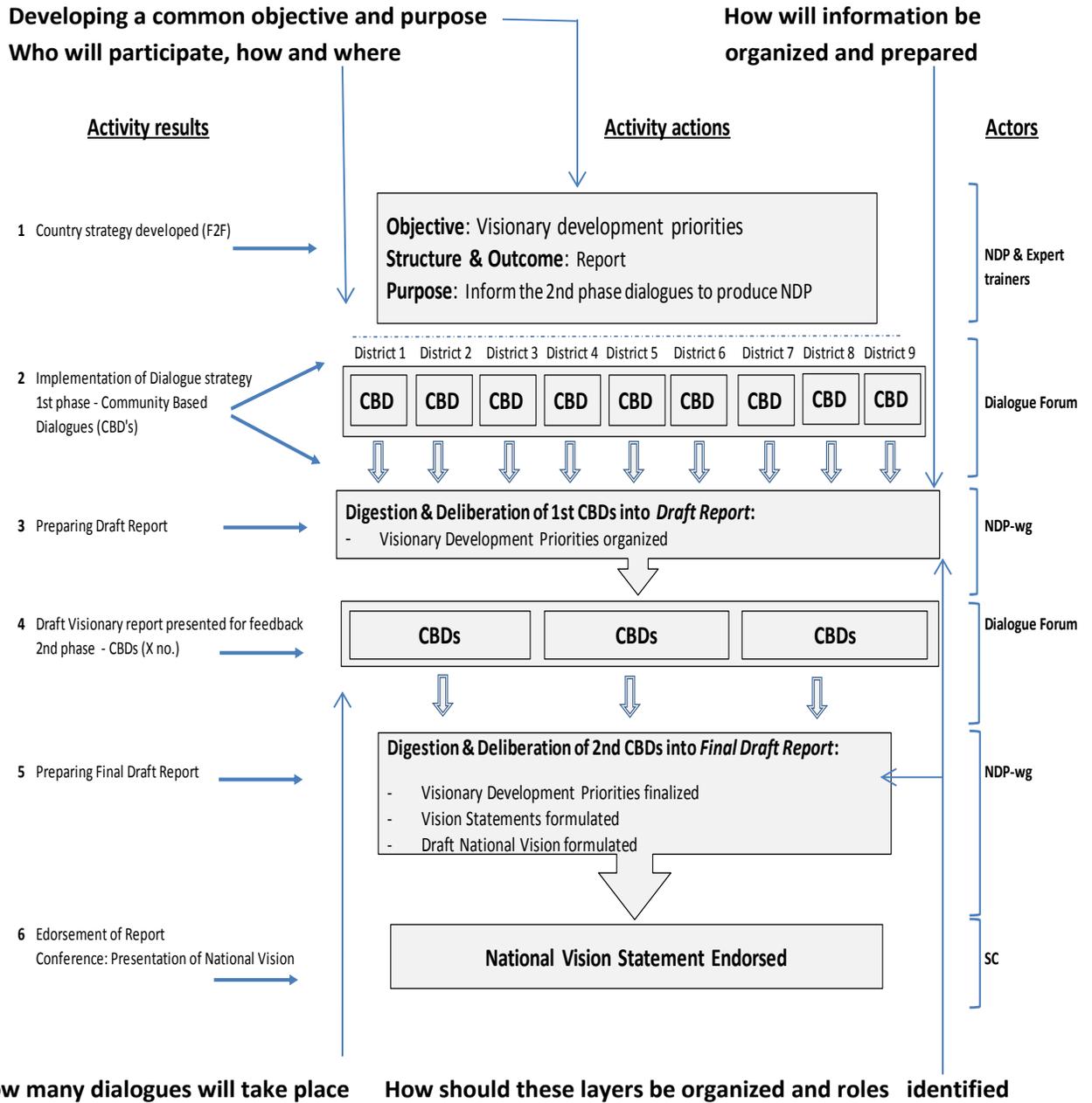
A transformed community that embraces everyone. A Sint Maarten that is not a threat where our communities work as one.

## **STEP TWO: Let’s start to build a dialogue strategy**

The idea through a staged approach is to create a a shared meaning of a dialogue strategy

The session commenced by Tom Woods providing an introduction to the strategy. If the analogy of building a house is used, the project team are the drafters who seek instructions/inputs from the participants as to how the “strategic house” should be constructed. The strategy consists of several layers that require information

## Information needed



## Objectives and Purpose of a Dialogue Strategy

Are the objectives and purpose relevant and go to the point of a dialogue process?

## Proposed objectives for a dialogue strategy

- Raise awareness and ownership in dealing with the complexities faced by Sint Maarten
- Acquire new perspectives and insights
- Forge a common understanding for the country's strategic direction
- Strengthen policies and procedures, country coordination and ownership of the final product
- Link country priorities and strategies with broader national and international development processes

### **Comments**

The issue of identity of Sint Maarten should be noted. If so, what is it? Should be noted that policy makers and politicians be held accountable and visible throughout the dialogue process. Monitoring is important as is the need to build desire for people in general to participate. Is issue with the word "ownership." It should be followed with the words " by the people" and prefixed with the words " built, create or foster." Should "ownership" be substituted with "partnership"? What does "awareness" mean? The words are too complicated and for some meaningless. Objectives 1 and 2 ought to be re-written. The concept of "Trias Politica" should be noted.

### **Proposed Purpose for a dialogue strategy**

- Support country –level dialogues on issues and themes related to developing a long term national development plan (NDP) that will guide the sustainable development of Sint Maarten

### **: Comments**

What is long term? Term needs definition. The statement needs to be simplified and capable of understanding to the common man. Why are country level dialogues? Why not refer to society or the community? The words "country level" is most appropriate way to encompass "broad based" and the "community at large. "Should the French side of the island be included? What are "issues"? The word "issues" does not resonate well. "Topics" is more acceptable. Inclusiveness and accountability is absent. Should words be supported by images?

### ***Suggested additions and re-wording***

"To create dialogues that reach into all sectors of Sint Maarten society. The dialogues should be open to all people and will be the grounds for the development of a long term national development plan (NDP) The NDP will serve as our guide for the sustainable development of Sint Maarten"

"To strive for inclusiveness of all stakeholders."

"To promote inclusiveness of all voices and concerns of Sint Maarten's population at large through the use of dialogues in order to capture and address all the areas of concerns in a national development plan."

### **What are you excited about (this far)?**

After completing the first stage of building a dialogue strategy the session closed with the participants indicating what excites them. Some responses:

I am excited -

- That we are on the way
- About the diversity within the group
- About all the things you are excited about
- The process
- Bringing people together ..will be one of the best things for SXM
- Finally something is happening
- Being part of change in SXM
- Because the process has started
- About the possibilities of the grass roots been involved in the process
- Learning different perspectives
- It gives me hope
- Finally having a say
- Given a chance to work with a diverse group and working towards the same goals for development
- About celebrating what is right for the world
- About being part of an ongoing learning process
- The process of inclusion and giving our children an opportunity
- That we are the solution and not the problem for change
- About meeting you all
- Been here and seeing so many excited people

**The mood at days end**



## DAY TWO

THURSDAY OCTOBER 3<sup>RD</sup>

### **Building the dialogue strategy – Step 6: *Process architecture for Sint Maarten's Dialogue.***

The criteria set for selecting participants to enter into dialogue were introduced per table grouping and set on the white board. Most attention was given to the criteria of 'Allegiance to St. Maarten', of which was expressed that this criteria revolves around the aim to reach inclusiveness of the various (marginalized) groups that make up the community.

Other principle criteria were the following:

- Cooperative;
- Representation;
- Articulate;

The *process architecture* was confirmed through the grouped performed exercises, carried out on previous and the second day, which build the following architectural aspects of the process:

- Purpose;
- Objectives;
- Principles and Values;
- Criteria.

In continuation of *Building the Dialogue Strategy*, the *process architecture* was drafted as a result of brainstorm-sessions per group. The results were subsequently presented per table-grouping.

Before entering in this exercise, a dance, under the guidance of Okama, was collectively performed. The – belly dance inspired –loosening of the limbs served to re-awaken and energize the lulled group, due to the lunch held previously.

The outcomes of the brainstorm session were presented by the individuals on behalf of their group, and done so within the big circle. The main question that served for this exercise was *What key dialogue events should St. Maarten's process include? (keeping in mind the groups of participants identified in the morning)*

Architecture presented; 1 minute presentations per group:

**Group 1 – Othmar** presented a structure characterized by its community-level approach, in which the community councils play a pivotal role in community dialogue.

The process starts out with a communication plan before going over into dialogue. Informative approach in order to enter in the dynamic process, where the people are involved in different capacities. After this initial phase, Othmar indicated the ‘learning journey’:

- Issues are discussed;
- Consensus reached;
- Enter in to concluding stages where a ‘Calypso’ can be made encapsulating the process results, performed by a local calypso artist.

**Group 2 – Warno** highlighted the inspiration from the course reading materials of the U-theory. Based on this theory, the process starts with a media campaign “civic awareness” – followed up by public sessions in a safe setting. Not an open and unmanageable setting.

In continuation, panel discussions where topic/thematic experts will be invited in order to provide conceptual clarity on e.g. democratic dialogue. These panel sessions will lead in in the workshop and from there the attending people will be asked to become a participant in the ‘dialogue house’, provided that these persons have the willingness and ability to do so.

From here the outputs will be presented to the *conveners* who will advise, etc.

**Group 3 – Diana** introduced a *bottom-up* approach which will be launched through a media campaign. The process is marked community meetings within the various sectors of society: Civic, Private, Public. The collected results of these meetings will be drafted to plan the national dialogue with all community stakeholders which will lead in the NDP.

A remark was made on the importance of having a central role set within this process for the youth.

**Group 4 – Paul** highlighted a multi-thematic approach in a cross-cutting community dialogue. The process is kicked-off with a campaign and a broad-choreographed Televised dialogue process in order to familiarize people with the process. From there the process moves into a series of community dialogues events. These events are not led by the geography of St. Maarten, but by the diversity of every one who considers themselves a member of the community and the willingness to participate.

The output will be digested and strategized into topic specific dialogue events. The outcome will then be checked for compatibility and feasibility. A ‘feedback-group’ will then make the link back to the community, thereby creating a continual process.

**Group 5 – Maggie:** A public launch forms the first phase of the process, followed up by community dialogues whereby the community councils for a central role. This process will be led in by experts who will guide the dialogues by providing clarity on the topics and themes that will be discussed.

A draft plan will come out of the summaries of these thematic dialogues, which will be fed back to the communities which will lead in the finalization of the draft.

**Group 6 – Chino** presented a simple layout, as the emphasis in this process is to spread the workload. The process will not be kicked-off by a publicity campaign, because the NDP-team will carry that component out.

The fourteen different community councils have a pivotal role in the process, whereby the councils will bring in the community stakeholders and present the topics and themes for the preliminary dialogues with the facilitators. The results will be published and thereby made public. The community feedback on these results will enable the finalization and drafting of the preliminary results into a NDP.

**Group 7 – Carl's** group drafted a similar process as Chino's group, whereby a working-group will be formed and call on different topics e.g. sustainable energy, sustainable development.

A steering committee will oversee these dialogue processes and endorses the draft plan for feedback to the communities, which will eventually result in an adequate plan for St. Maarten.

**Group 8 – Maria's** group was inspired by the 'learning journey', characterized by inclusivity and several 'must do events'.

It will enable the opportunity to better understand the multitude of information that is being gathered and to better identify the communities.

The process is a *leveled* approach, of which government endorsement is the first level. Secondly, the process will have to pass parliament for approval. Thirdly, political parties will have to approve likewise through consultations.

After the process has been approved, info-sessions will be held to inform the public. In the fourth stage, a grand launch will be held.

The endorsement process of the previous three stages serves to have support for the process. It's anticipated that the launch will then make an impact on the public, after which an interactive campaigning will be held. This fifth phase will create opportunities for the public to respond and react to the progress being made. The progress reporting will be done to ensure to captivate the interest of the

public. This is then followed by the national dialogue process, which leads in the final phase of the staged approach by strategizing the outputs into a NDP.

**Main reaction on the different presented processes was the following:**

- the endorsement of the plan by government and parliament before implementing the plan caused some consternation. The argument for having the plan endorsed beforehand were mainly to avoid a potential disapproval of the government at a later stage, whilst the argumentation contra was the idea of not needing an approval of the process from government in order to enter into dialogue, but rather seeking approval from government and Parliament of the outcome of the dialogue process. Which is the communally drawn development plan.

**The workshop day came to an end with the *check-out* resuming with the following comments on the question *'what became clear to me today'*?:**

- What are we doing and how we are going to do it.
- Everyone has their own opinion, but we're getting at a common goal.
- We are on our way to a national plan.
- Being more confused than yesterday, but at a much higher level.
- A lot of people who have SXM at heart.
- A strong level of commitment and passion.
- Equality is recurring topic.
- Our leaders are good, and it gets better. Dragged in much deeper than anticipated.
- We accomplished far more than I ever expected.
- We're a small people, but with great quality. Big things with great value come in little packages.
- Equality in the kingdom should be measured in humanity.
- The hard work of the group.
- I had the feeling this morning that there was a lot of doubt in the room; This afternoon however, there was so much positive energy, a total different environment.
- Room filled with committed people and good to see the amount of men.
- We're almost there, tomorrow we'll get there.
- We are all friends now.
- Learning by doing really works.
- The multitude of hands-on ideas.
- I'm more excited than yesterday.
- To be part of a process were government allows you to be a part in is the first step in the right direction.
- I know that SXM is going in the right direction.
- I'm 90% there, as I know almost everyone by name.
- Even in conflict we can still work and come together to plan for the future.

- The aspect of openness.
- The process and the objectives of what we are doing became clearer to me today.
- That the workshop is actually modeling to us.
- The building blocks are now clear.
- Once you give people the opportunity to talk, you can't turn them back.
- Emotional intelligence.
- Unity within diversity.
- Optimistic about the future.
- I was born to be here.
- The process became clearer, but we need to work like this on the outside.
- Success depends on YOU.
- Unity is strength.
- I'm in an artificial stage and don't know if I'm ready to dialogue yet.
- It's up to us. Help is not coming.
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## Moodmeter



DAY THREE

THURSDAY OCTOBER 4<sup>TH</sup>

9:00-9:30AM Discussion on identity led by Francio Guadeloupe

Quick summary and clarifying of key questions as below:

What is the national dialogue strategy?

How does all these tie in together?

How long should a plan be for to be considered long term?

Based on your experience, how far are we as dialogue champions?

Why have so many initiatives failed in Sint Maarten?

After all these, will it work?

Why do we sit here like this, so natural. Why is it a precondition to successful dialogue consultations?

Elena explained that historically, the circle is a natural way to communicate and dialogue with each other.

Open spaces: what are the criteria for moving in different spaces to ensure that you can engage with most people

What is being learned from this workshop that can help you to hold dialogues in various spaces?

She further reiterated that dialogue is like an orchestra where there are different players who carry out different functions. Building capacities and providing input for this team to build the dialogue strategy in a Sint Maarten local context.

Need ideology of definition, promotion of culture, hard core values are still there and need to be revisited

Old values are still there but on the back end of still being there. I can still remember what my parents taught us back home when I was growing up in Aruba. If we don't preserve that, then we will lose everything that was there.

Nostalgia: I have to accept SxM as it is right now. This is what I saw and have to connect.

How many people born here? Small minority put up their hands.

Simulation of a dialogue between Sint Maartener & Facilitator: CARMEN & EMMERIKA.

The summary of the discussion is that one has to be objective especially as a facilitator. No matter what the issues at stake and even if the facilitator is verbally attacked, they would still need to be neutral. **THE CONVERSATION WENT EMOTIONAL BUT THE FACILITATOR WAS ABLE TO BRING IT BACK ON TRACK.**

9:30-10:00AM

## THE PROCESS ARCHITECTURE

### TEAMS AND INTERNAL RELATIONS

#### Facilitator:

A design of the workshop, methodological design, event, route, questions for group (broad to embrace diversity of group), encourage reflection, summarize and reach consensus). Be honest with yourself in deciding to become a facilitator. You really need to like what you do with people.

The facilitator can share their route at this stage with the trainees to help them understand what would need to be planned and the various steps in the process.

#### Communications:

This deal with communication in tow ways: language that is spoken vs language that communicates key messages. The leadership team interacts between the communication team and the facilitator team. The most important aspects is coordination.

#### Logistics and documenters:

Elena suggests that the Sint Maarten team should also include a separate logistics and documenting team. Logistics team has a lot of connections with other teams

Documenters should record what people are saying. There should be no filtering to maintain the objectivity, neutrality and passion with which people are making statement.

Conveners: group of leaders (well known, connect with community) that get in touch with other leaders to open them up for the dialogues.

TO ENSURE SUCCESS OF THE FACILITATION, THERE WOULD NEED TO BE KEY QUESTIONS DESIGNED AND VALIDATED TO STIMULATE THE CONVERSATIONS

10:00-10:30 GROUP WORK ON INTERNAL TEAM RELATIONS

FLOW CHART DISCUSSIONS & SUGGESTIONS FROM THE GROUP:

NEW TEAMS:

SUPPORT TEAM (FOR COUNSELING, PSYCHOLOGISTS)

TRAIN THE TRAINER TEAM

RESEARCH/PROFESSIONAL TEAM

LOGISTICS & TRANSLATION TEAM

INDEPENDENT CHAMPIONS

10:30-11:00 ANAI'S PRESENTATION

Q: WOULD THERE BE A TEMPLATE FOR THE COMMUNICATION?

A: NOT NECESSARY. CAN MAKE YOUR OWN BASED ON INFORMATION YOU WANT TO GATHER.

Q: IS IT NECESSARY TO MAKE A LIST OF PARTICIPANTS?

A: MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE YOU WANT ARE PRESENT

11:00-11:30

REVIEW OF TOOLS AND INSTRUMENTS USED

POWERFUL QUESTIONS: that challenge one's thinking, are open and matter to the speaker (explores inquisitive enquiry brains of people).

MARGOLIS WHEEL: to trigger what makes the community tick; used as an ice breaker, to build or to reflect. Only one part of the circle should swift/rotate at a time.

Can there be psychological testing for people who have signed up for different roles? No

NEXT STEPS:

Conduct a simulation exercise within two weeks.

MOOD METER.

