



East
Dunbartonshire
Voluntary Action



www.TheLastingDifference.com

Sustainability – making a lasting difference?

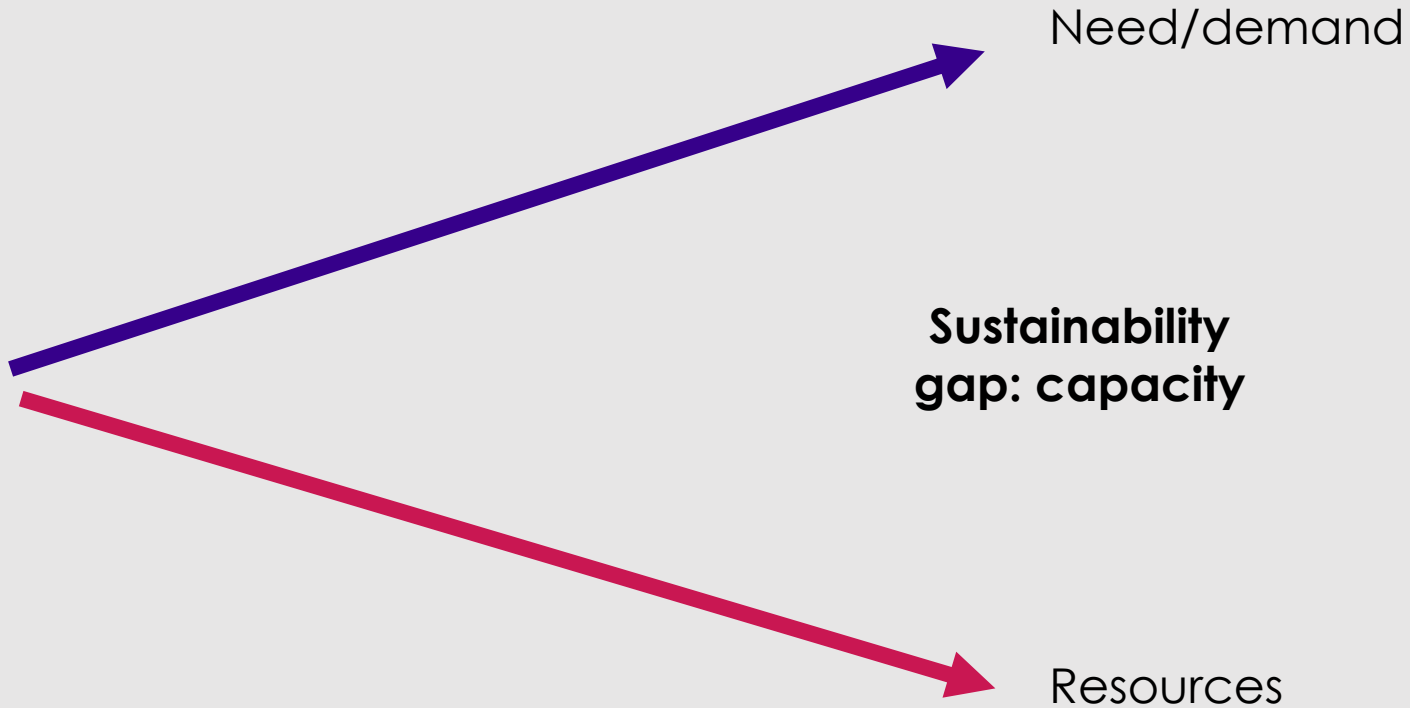
Graeme Reekie



Things stand
the test of
time when:

- ➔ They *mean* something
- ➔ They hold *memories*
- ➔ They create *connections*
- ➔ They are *cared* for

It's more than just resources



The Change paradox



Only by changing can organisations be sustained.

Principle: *Sustainability does not mean 'sustained'.*

Practice:

Learn, adapt and evolve purposefully.



The Yes/No paradox

The things that an organisation needs to survive can also kill it. Saying 'yes' to everything is fatal.

Principle: Sustainability is about more than just money. Capacity and quality matter.

Practice:

Understand that every yes is a no!

Learn when, how and what to say 'no' to.



The Octopus paradox

Organisations need to reach out in new directions to grow. But growing in too many directions pulls them out of shape.

Principle: Diversified income does not necessarily mean reduced risk.

Practice: Focus on your organisation's core purpose and structure.

The Efficiency paradox



Efficiency preserves resources but can impair development.

Principle: Organisations cannot evolve, adapt or respond without spare capacity.

Practice:

**Balance delivery with development.
Invest in capacity building.**

The myth of perpetual motion

The Myth of Perpetual Motion: Work can continue without inputs being replenished.

Principle: Sustainability does not mean self-sustaining.

Practice:

Prepare for funding to end.

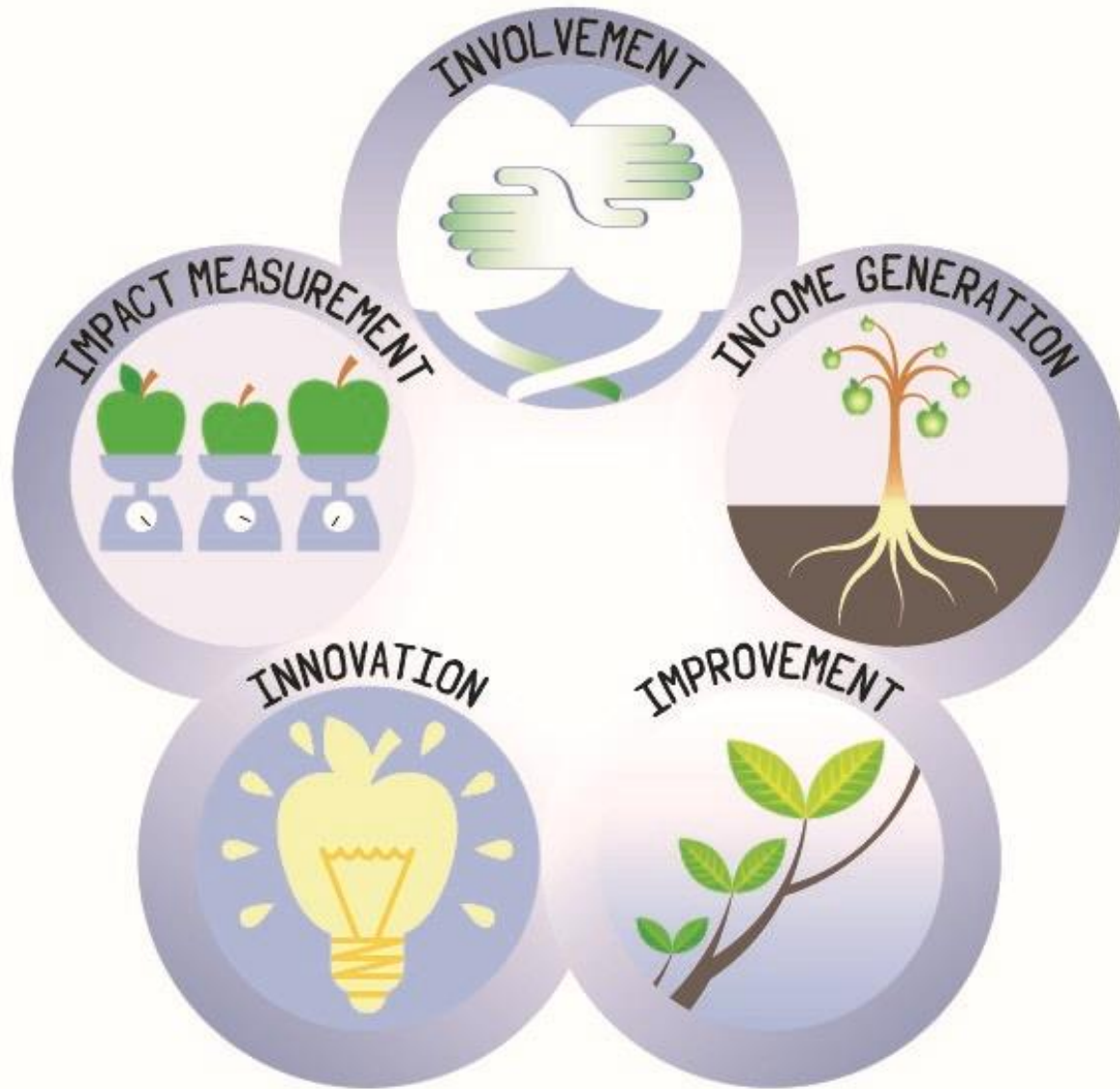
Invest in capacity building.

Challenge/paradox	⇒	Principles
The paradox of change		Sustainability ≠ sustained
The yes/no paradox		Sustainability > money
The octopus paradox		Diverse income ≠ reduced risk
The efficiency paradox		Sustainability needs capacity
The myth of perpetual motion		Sustainability ≠ self-sustaining

If you recognise the *paradoxes*
and the *principles* are right
what does that mean for *you in practice?*

Paradox	Principle	Organisational practices
The paradox of change	Sustainability \neq sustained	Adapt and evolve purposefully. Test, pilot, prototype.
The yes/no paradox	Sustainability $>$ money	Understand when, how and what to say 'no' to.
The octopus paradox	Diverse income \neq reduced risk	Focus on the core - purpose and structure
Efficiency paradox	Sustainability needs capacity	Delivery & development; scrutiny & strategy
Myth of perpetual motion	Sustainability \neq self-sustaining	Build capacity to make a lasting difference. Inform and influence funders and policy makers.

The five capabilities





Involvement

***Who does your
work belong to?***



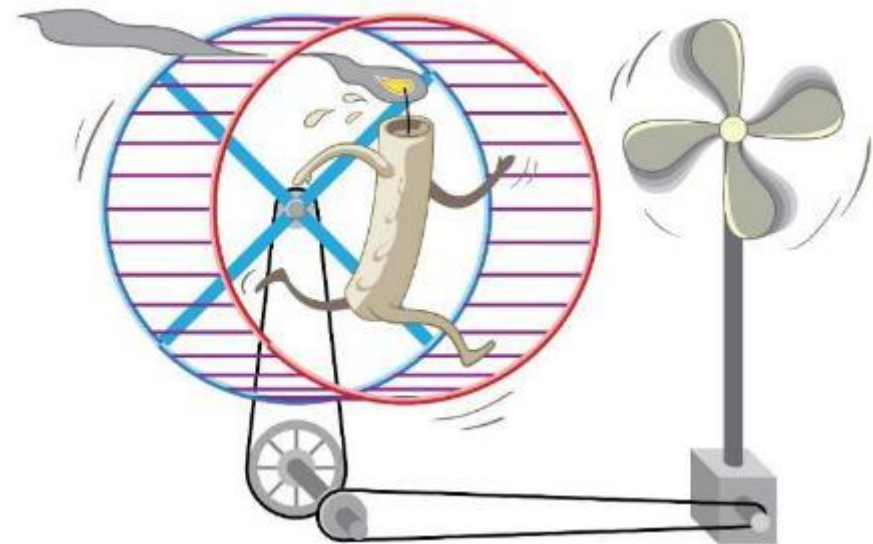
Income Generation

Money follows good work, not the other way around.

Innovation and Improvement



***Busyness is not
progress!***



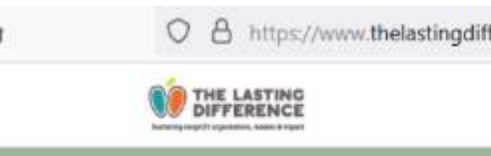


Impact Measurement

What are you trying to achieve?

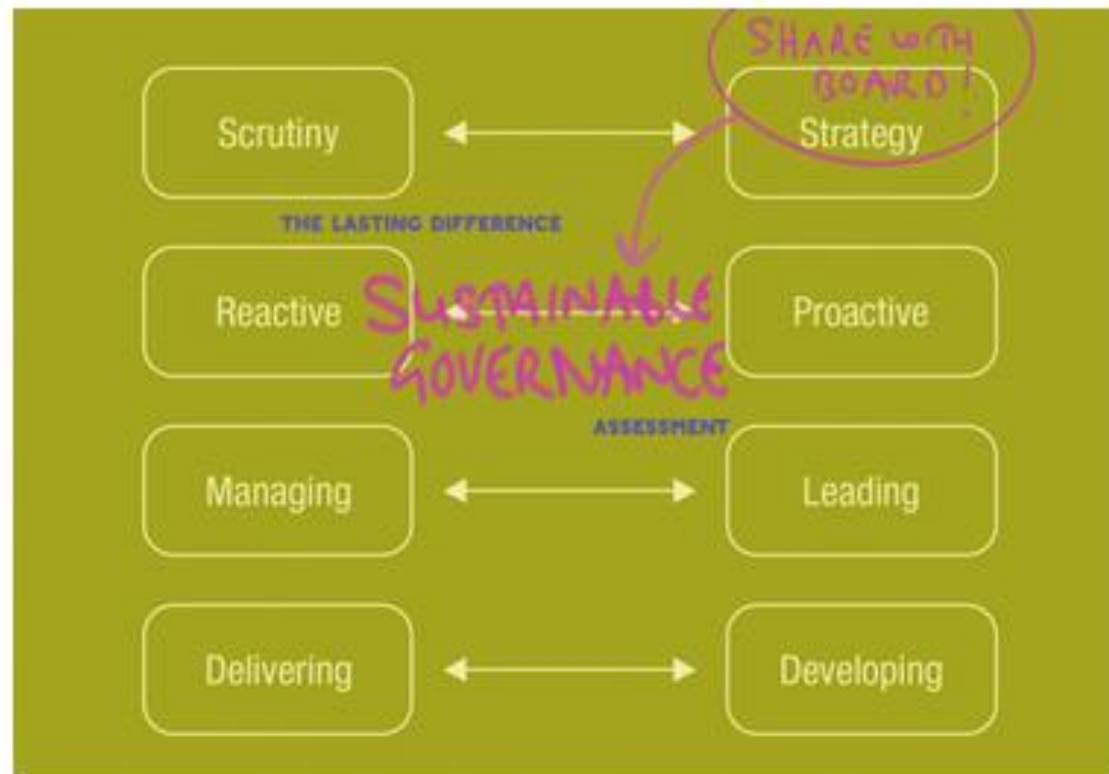
Is that the same as what you measure?

Other resources: leadership

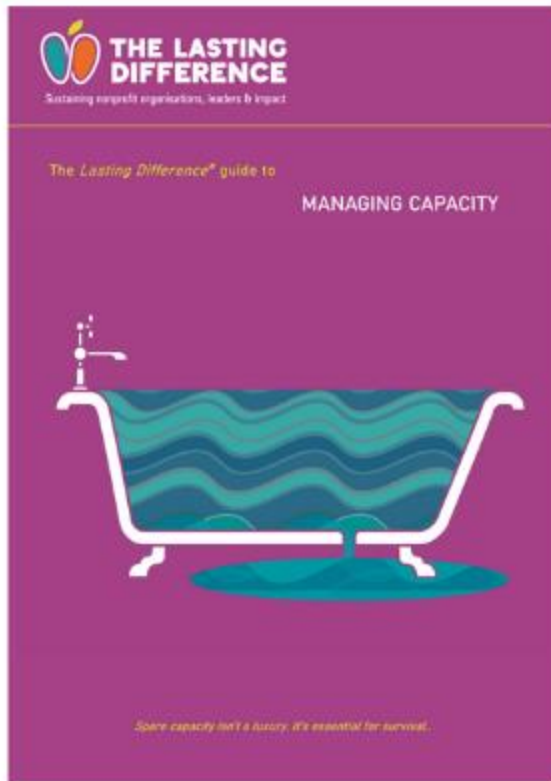


Guide to Lateral Leadership

Because leadership is in every corner of your organisation.



Other resources: capacity



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Guide to Managing Capacity

Because spare capacity isn't a luxury. It's essential for survival.

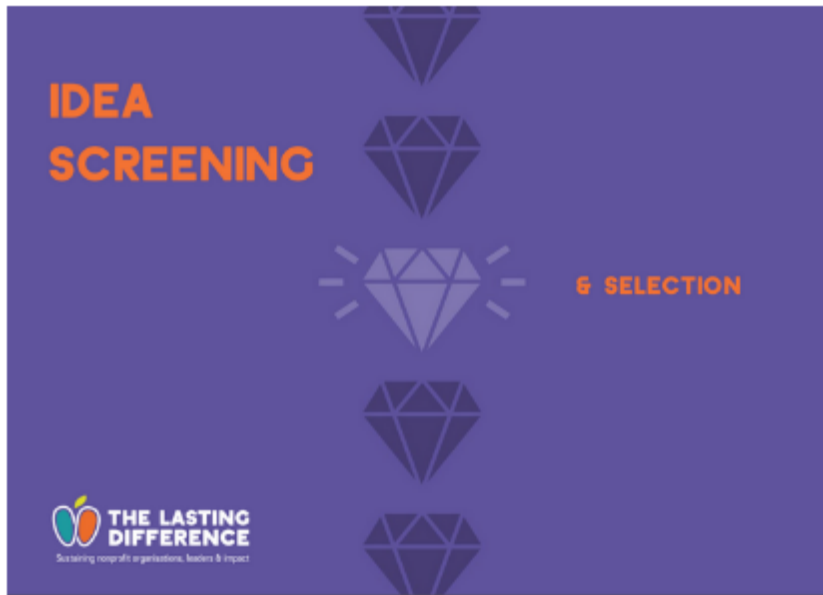


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Guide to Sustainable Impact and Capacity

Because you can't do it all.

Other resources: **the octopus!**



Idea screening and selection

Manage some of your key sustainability and survival challenges by screening new ideas (and existing commitments?) against your core purpose, priorities and capacity.

Questions, feedback, follow-up?

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Sustaining nonprofit organisations,
leaders & impact