HOW TO PREPARE STUDENT CHALLENGES

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AgriSCALE
Scaling agro-entrepreneurship
through problem-based learning

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Photo: Matleena Muhonen, Aalto SGT Studio, PBL East Africa, Makerere University, Uganda 2018

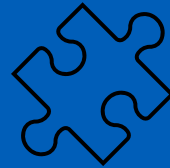# PBL PROBLEMS
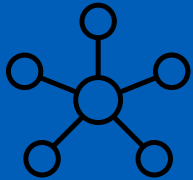
MENTORS

EXPERTS

CONTEXT
Where everything happens
Course
Workshop
Special project
Thesis
?

"CLIENT"
Partner
Problem owner
Beneficiary
End user

Coaching, decision
making, feedback

CHALLENGE
Open ended
No right answer

TEAM(S)
The task force
Responsible of the work

Supported by mentor(s)
and experts

PBL PROBLEMS

Start very real, local problems

Students can be part of identifying the problem

Collaborate with other schools / colleges / departments / research groups in your own institution

Collaborate with local communities

Collaborate with local businesses

Collaborate with local civil society organizations

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Who is the client / partner / problem owner?

Company / local business

quite straightforward, often requires an agreement, works also one-off case, timing can be challenging, can lead to work opportunities to students

Community / NGOs

slower process, benefits from continuation, the problem harder to identify, often needs support from civil society organizations (can be done through company or research too)

Researcher / research group

close by, can produce real content to the ongoing research, also quite straightforward, hypothetical

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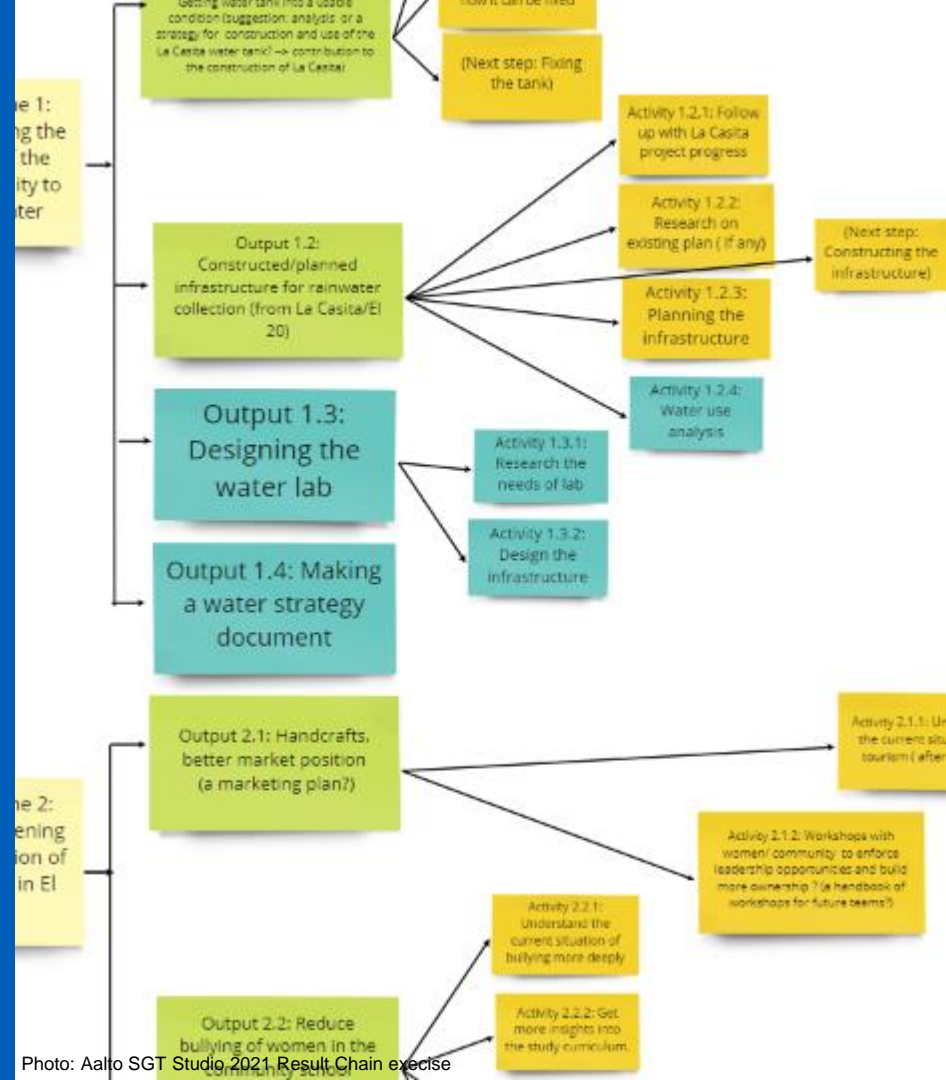Aalto-universitetet
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How to define the problem?

Ready project proposal – the client drafts the task

Project idea – you (teacher, mentor, faculty) draft the task

Project concept / frame – the student team defines the problem / goals together with you (mentor) and the client

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Photo: Aalto SGT Studio 2021 Result Chain execise

What is the expected outcome?

What do you promise to your client as and output?

>> an idea, scenarios, prototype, concept, report

What are the learning outcomes to your students?

>> work life skills, team work skills, communication skills, project management, interpersonal skills, intercultural skills, cross-disciplinary skills

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Getting ready – some topics to reflect on…

Clarify the **role of the partner** (client, expert, stakeholder, university partner)

What are the **client's expectations**, what is the expected end result?

Are there **financial implications** in the projects (travel, meetings, materials, prototyping etc.)? How are the costs covered?

What is the project **expected to produce**? What has value to all the participants?

How are **the results of the students' work going to be communicated**?

Does the university have a partnership with the external organization?

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Getting ready in practice

Decide on the context

Prepare the challenge with the client, discuss on the expectations

Form student team(s) – and explain the context to them!

Decide on mentor(s) and make **mentoring plan (!)**

Create structure and timeline (beginning – midpoint - end), share with students and the client!

Get to know your team(s) and team members and their expectations!

Help the team members to get to know each others (icebreakers, games, fun activities)

Connect the team with the client and agree how they can communicate. Arrange the first meeting.

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Preparing for the challenge

SGT Studio in Aalto as an example

- Who we are? (study field, expertise, skills)
- Sharing hopes and fears and needs (expectations)
- Ground rules (how we work together)
- Introducing project planning tools and methods
- Stakeholder analysis
- Result chain (identifying the objectives together: impact, outcomes, output, activities)
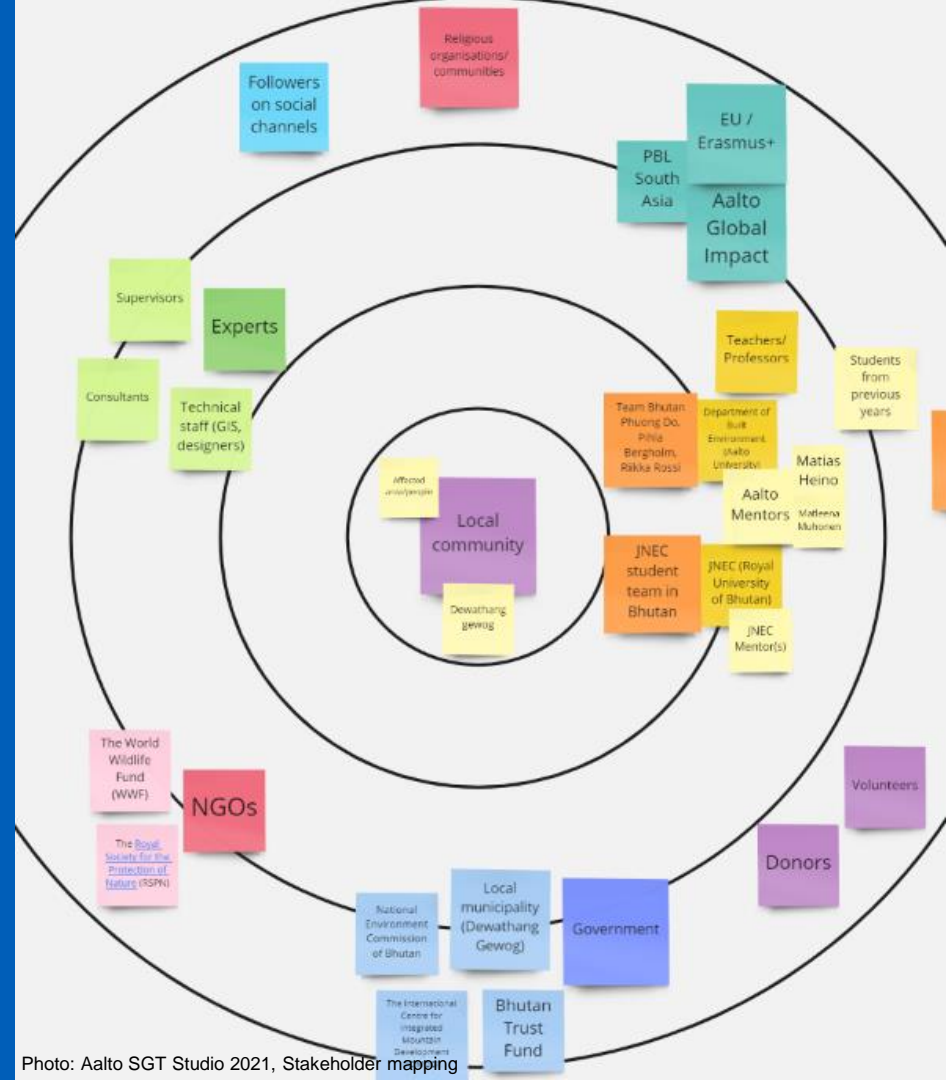- >>> Project document

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Photo: Aalto SGT Studio 2021, Stakeholder mapping

Have fun!

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