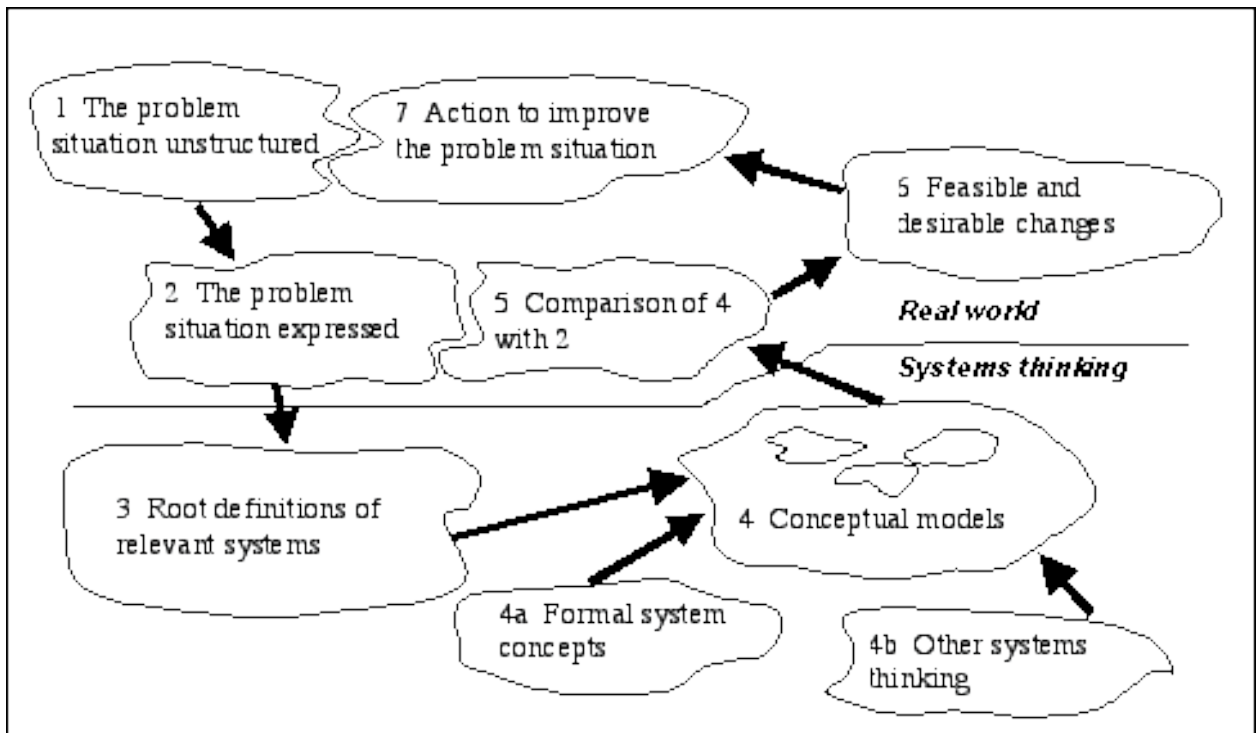


Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)

Systemic approach for tackling real-world problematic situations



Tags: Holistic. Monitoring and evaluation

Challenge: When we are dealing with a problem, we can take the path of simplifying it or not questioning the systems' thinking that implies this problem.

Solution:

SSM is a 7-stage methodology to deal with complex systems and real life situations, drawing tools and methodologies from several years of action-research.

The seven stages are:

1. Entering the problem situation.
2. Expressing the problem situation.
3. Formulating root definitions of relevant systems.
4. Building Conceptual Models of Human Activity Systems.
5. Comparing the models with the real world.
6. Defining changes that are desirable and feasible.
7. Taking action to improve the real world situation.

The dynamics of the method come from the fact that stages (2) through (4) are always an iterative process. The stake-holders (defined as Client, Actors and Owner) engage in a debate guided by the analyst/facilitator. During this debate various root definitions (succinct statements of appropriate systems) and conceptual models are put forward, modified and developed until a desirable model is achieved by consensus. This model then forms the basis for real world changes

Links:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft_systems_methodology#Overview
- <http://www.aral.com.au/areol/areol-session13.html>

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- Ian Bailey (2008) *MODAF and Soft Systems*. white paper with contributions from Brian Wilson Koios Group Ltd.

Submitted by: FFCUL