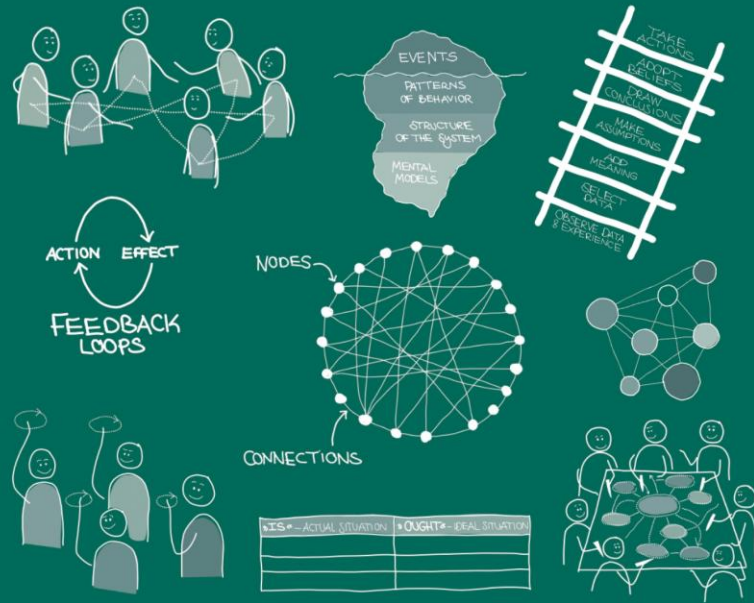


CHRISTIAN BARON

# METHODS FOR SYSTEMS THINKING

65+ PRACTICAL APPROACHES FOR EXPLORING SYSTEMS, PERSPECTIVES, AND COMPLEXITY



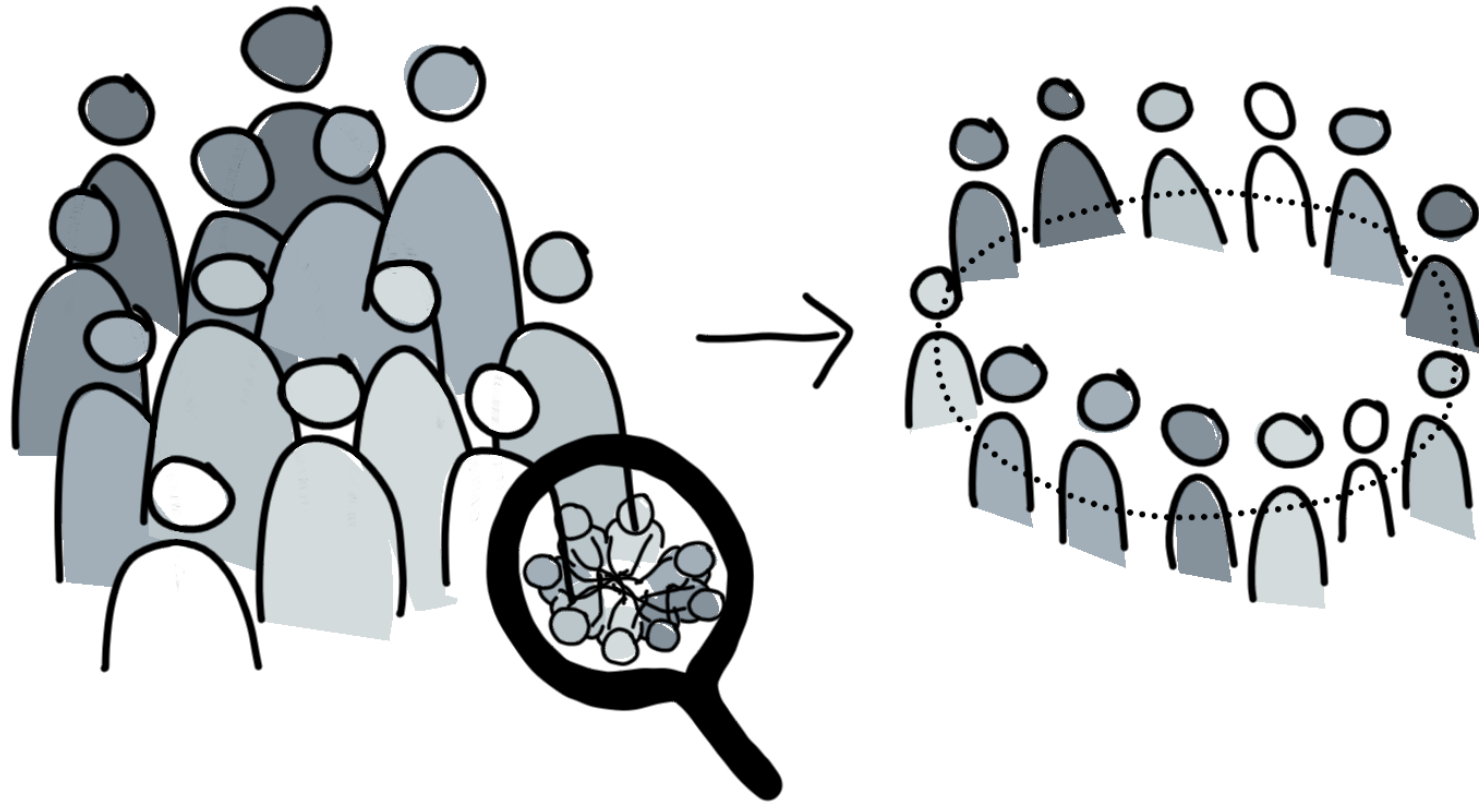
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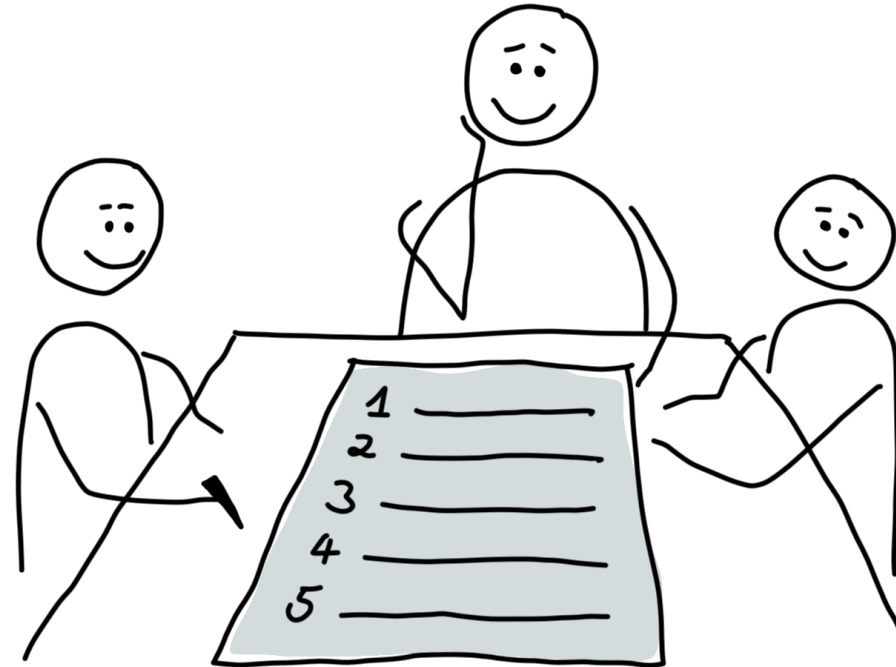


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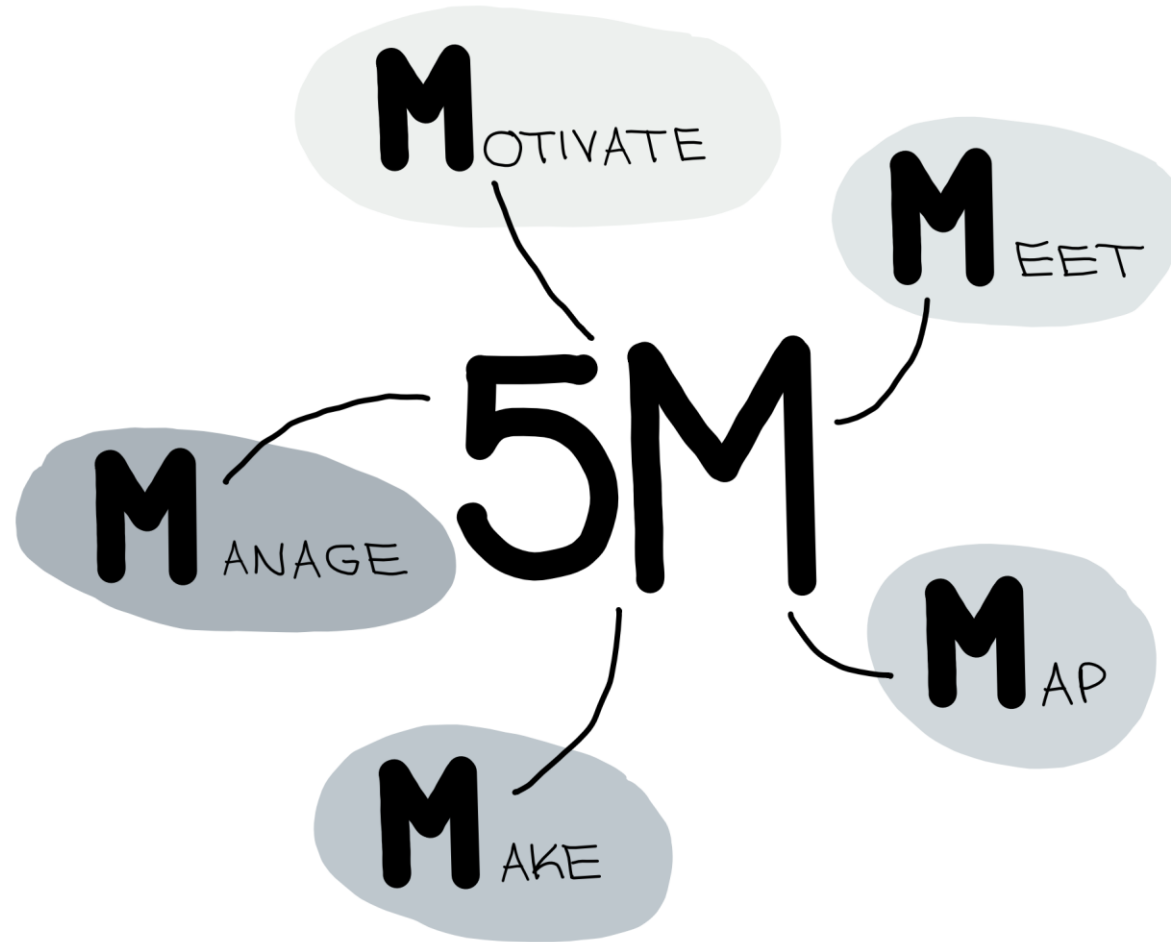
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### Meet: Engage Stakeholders and Perspectives

This section emphasizes stakeholder involvement, collaboration, and capturing different perspectives to build shared understanding and alignment.

<i>Method</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Understand</i>	<i>Collaborate</i>	<i>Strategize</i>	<i>Innovate</i>	<i>Adapt</i>
Silent Signal	Explore how messages change without words	✓	✓			✓
Invisible Connections	Experience interdependence through movement	✓	✓			✓
Collective Pulse	Demonstrate self-organization without leadership	✓	✓			✓
Speed Framing	Expose bias by quickly reframing problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Invisible Negotiation	Reveal how hidden goals influence group behaviour and decisions	✓	✓		✓	✓
Ladder of Inference	Reveal how unconscious thinking shapes beliefs and actions	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fishbowl Discussion	Facilitate inclusive group dialogue		✓			✓
Reverse Fishbowl	Practice adapting discussions under disruption		✓			✓
Stakeholder Mapping	Identify and prioritize key stakeholders	✓	✓	✓		
Cluster Map	Explore and connect ideas around a topic	✓	✓			
CATWOE Analysis	Clarify system purpose from multiple angles	✓	✓	✓		
Boundary Critique (BC)	Define and challenge system boundaries	✓	✓	✓		
Appreciative Inquiry	Identify and build on system strengths	✓	✓	✓		
World Café	Enable rotating conversations on shared topics		✓	✓		

## Rich Pictures

Perspectives | Interconnectedness | Boundaries

### Purpose

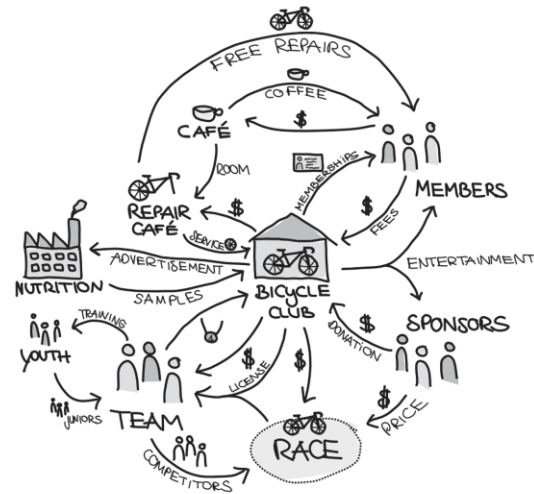
Rich Pictures, introduced by Peter Checkland [64] as part of Soft Systems Methodology, help participants explore complex situations by drawing the people, processes, and relationships involved. They make different perspectives visible and surface hidden tensions or assumptions – especially helpful at the start of problem-solving or when aligning stakeholders.

### How It Works




Participants work in small groups with large paper and markers. They sketch the situation using symbols, text, and arrows to show connections. Each group then presents their picture to others, helping share views and spark discussion.


### Applications

Rich Pictures are used in workshops on strategy, change, education, or community planning. They help teams see the bigger picture, uncover assumptions, and build shared understanding before moving into analysis or planning.



## Exercise: “Rich Pictures”

Participants 	Time 	Equipment 
4–10	40–90 minutes	Large sheets of paper, markers, crayons, coloured pencils, stickers (optional)

**Space** : A room with enough space for participants to work in groups and create large visual representations.

### Setup

1. Prepare large sheets of paper for each group.
2. Arrange markers, crayons, and other drawing materials within easy reach.
3. Ensure enough space for groups to spread out and work comfortably.

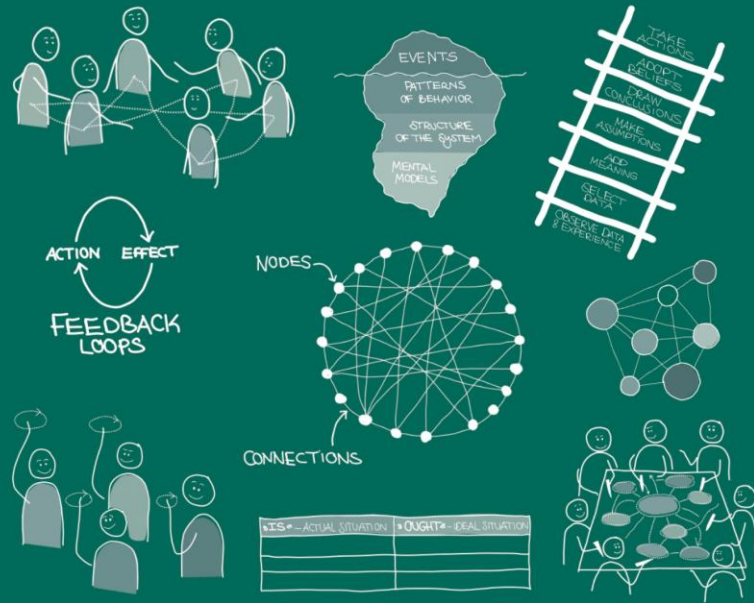
### Instructional Steps

1. **Introduction (2 minutes)**
  - Explain the purpose and significance of Rich Pictures.
  - Provide examples of symbols and metaphors participants can use to represent elements of the problem.
2. **Brainstorming and drawing (10–30 minutes)**
  - Ask participants to brainstorm key elements of the problem situation.
  - Encourage them to use symbols, drawings, and text to represent these elements on the large sheets of paper.
3. **Adding detail (5 minutes)**
  - Guide participants to add relationships and interactions between different elements.
  - Encourage the use of colours, stickers, and decorative items to enrich the visual representation.
4. **Group presentations (5–20 minutes)**
  - Have each group present their Rich Picture to the rest of the participants.
  - Encourage questions and discussions to explore different perspectives.
5. **Debriefing (15 minutes)**
  - Ask participants to individually reflect on their personal learning from the exercise.
  - Encourage them to think about how creating Rich Pictures influenced their understanding of the problem and different perspectives.

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