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Introduction

Today, more and more youth are asking the question: *How can I become more involved in community projects?*

A growing number of practitioners and policy makers are asking the same critical question. How can youth development approaches be used to enhance Community Economic Development (CED) and likewise, how can community development strategies promote youth development? Sparked by this question, Parkland Community Futures Development Corporation (PCFDC) realizes that young people, as program participants, planners and advocates are an important part of CED. This is why PCFDC partnered with Dauphin Youth Service Canada (DYSC) to develop a youth community development guide that will assist youth in learning how to become involved in their neighborhood, community or region.

The purpose of the guide is to provide youth with the necessary knowledge and tools to become active in their local communities through participating in CED projects. Our goal is to help youth by developing a guide that will provide information and steps for getting involved, with a case study that illustrates the process.

It is hoped that this guide will help build better networks in the community and develop community education and awareness programs on youth issues, as well as build or improve individual youth agencies within the community.

It is also hoped that we can promote the importance of integrating youth in the development of community economic development projects in any community.

Case Study Examples

Throughout this guide you will find these textboxes with case study information pertaining to each section. Dauphin Youth Service Canada and two of their community-based projects were chosen for this case study. It will provide examples to help illustrate concepts or ideas.

Dauphin Youth Service Canada

DYSC is a program funded by Human Resources Development Canada and the City of Dauphin. This program is designed for young Canadians between the ages of 18-30, who are out of school and unemployed. It challenges youth to put their skills and knowledge into action by being involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of community projects.

[Dauphin Youth Service Canada](#)

[Parkland Community Futures Development Corporation](#)

Your Community

Why you should get involved in your community

There are very good reasons to become engaged in your community. Not only will it give you the chance to become involved in your community's development, you will also find it to be a rewarding experience. You don't have to run a business to make your community grow. By volunteering or joining a group, you are on your way to doing something to improve your community. Even the smallest participation can make a huge difference. Once you get started, you'll find it's not that hard getting involved in your community's development.

So what can you do to make your community a better place? *Get involved*. The following are three options on getting involved in your community:

1. Join/volunteer with an existing group (long-term commitment).
2. Volunteer for a certain event (one-time commitment).
3. Form your own group to carry out a project to fulfill a need you have identified in your community.

Youth Service Canada

Participants of the program have chosen option #1, joining a group. This involves a longer-term commitment of 13 weeks.

Participants work on large group projects to increase their teamwork skills and to get to know the other participants better. Participants put in a 30-hour work week, spending 2-4 hours/week working on large group projects.

The third option of forming your own group is a challenging one. This guide is designed to help you through the process of forming a group and designing a project.

If you have an idea that you think would be great for your community, then it's your responsibility to explore it further. Start by discussing your idea with family and friends. Once you get the idea out in the open, you may find people with similar interests that would like to join you.

Along with the process of becoming involved in your community, you will develop skills that will benefit you in the future. You will also find yourself gaining valuable experience. You will also be able to apply new experience and skills to the workplace.

The benefits of becoming involved in your community

Benefits to you

Volunteering not only promotes community awareness, but is also beneficial to your personal development and in acquiring life skills. It helps build self-confidence and boosts self-esteem. Volunteering can also be an exciting experience where you can learn new skills, including leadership skills such as:¹

- How to encourage participation
- Conflict mediation
- How to relieve tension in the group
- How to help others communicate through feedback
- Active listening and rewording what was said
- Measuring the emotional climate of the group
- What to look for in group process and group growth
- How to build trust
- Time management.

Youth Service Canada's Goals:

Participants build on their employment skills, along with developing new ones. These skills are developed through the experience of working on community-based initiatives.

Each participant has the opportunity to develop their:

- Organizational skills
- Communication skills
- Problem solving skills
- Decision making skills
- Teamwork skills
- Employability skills/
Marketability skills

Benefits to your career/job search

Building your network:

When you volunteer, you're part of a team that helps you build a network. Your network can help you find employment, make career choices, or act as a resource for any projects you may get involved with.

What is networking?²

Networking is the process of enlisting other people to help you through life.

These people will become your "sales agents" to "market" your skills and experience to people they know and to potential employers. One study found that 40% of all people found employment through a lead provided by a friend, relative or acquaintance. People like to give advice and help where they can. By seeking such help, you get others personally involved in your success.

Gaining teamwork skills is very important. Being able to work with others and having the experience of filling various roles in a team, is necessary to succeed in today's ever-changing job environment.

Employability:

Not only does volunteering build leadership skills and good work habits in the workplace, it also looks good on a resume. Although you are not getting paid for volunteering, you still gain valuable work experience. Employers recognize this experience gained through volunteering. This is especially valuable for youth who are just entering the workforce and don't have much (if any) work experience. It is also beneficial for applying for post secondary education or training programs.

¹ Tips for Working with Youth in Community Development Projects, Health Canada, 1997

² Winnipeg Transition Centre

Benefits to your community

The community as a whole will benefit from youth participation.

- Demonstrating how youth can get involved in their communities.
- Creating projects that are filling a community need.
- Networking so that community groups can work together and create projects with partnerships.
- Increasing the number of volunteers in the community.
- Promoting the importance of community involvement.
- The community will receive ideas from a youth perspective.

Getting to know your community

Now that you know *why* you should get involved, you're probably wondering *how* you can become actively involved in your community. First, identify all of your local community groups. Your local civic administration office or band council usually has a list of all the different activities, clubs, groups, institutions and organizations within your community. This will help you discover people with similar interests. If a civic administration building does not exist, then talk to the people in your schools, hospitals, libraries and local community groups (e.g. Lions Club, Friendship Centre). The people that work in these fields are often well versed in the community's initiatives.

Where your community's resources can be found:

- Community service providers
- Churches
- Civic administration office/Band council office
- Hospitals
- Libraries
- Media
- Local businesses
- Schools
- Chamber of Commerce
- Drop in centers
- Friendship Centers

If you need help with your project, contact any of your community's resources or your local [Community Futures Development Corporation](#).

Once you have identified all the different groups and committees in your community, you can then decide if one of them interests you or suits your purpose. When you find a group or organization that interests you, find out how you can join or if you could volunteer. You will find volunteering to be helpful, joyful and worthy of your time.

Remember, your community leaders want the community to thrive so don't be afraid to ask for help. They should give you all the help they can to support your ideas and to send you in the right direction.

DYSC Case Study:

For their projects, participants identified resources within their community that they could partner with. Some include the City of Dauphin, Dauphin & District Food Bank, Robinson Recycling, the media and many local businesses.

[Community groups in Dauphin](#)

Knowing your community's resources³

Now that you've researched which groups are operating within your community, it is important to identify the local needs and resources to see if there is a need for your idea/project.

Community Toolbox
<http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/>

There are many good reasons to identify needs and resources. These include:

- Understanding the environment in which you will be working. Trying to improve the community without first understanding it, is like trying to build the Sky-Dome in a rural community – it just isn't efficient.
- Knowing how the community feels about an issue and what they think needs to be done about it. Acquiring the opinions of community members, while at the same time mapping the resources and limitations of the area, gives a focused view of the issue.

Once you have assessed the community, it is much easier to make improvements that community members will notice and benefit from. A comprehensive identification of needs and resources will provide a clearer view of the community's strengths and limitations.

[More info on knowing your community's resources](#)

Needs can be defined as:

- The gap between what a situation is and what it should be.
- It can be as concrete as the need for food and water or as abstract as improved community cohesiveness.
- For example, older adults in a community need help getting around town, but your community has no public transportation. Here the need is more obvious. More abstractly, these same adults may feel a need to be valued for their knowledge and experience.
- Examining needs help us discover what is lacking, and points us in the direction of future improvement.
- An individual, a group, or an entire community can feel a need.

Resources or assets:

- Things that can be used to improve the quality of life.
- They can be anything from people to places to organizations.
- For example, the block mother arranging a soccer game after school, the pastor having a community benefit dinner in the basement of the church, and the athletic club holding a lock-in for teens all represent individuals using the resources they have to improve the community.
- Everyone is an asset, and everyone has assets that can be used for community building.

³ Community Toolbox, <http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/>

Many people benefit when you identify local needs and resources. These include:

- Those experiencing the problem (local need)
- Service providers
- Community leaders
- You!

You want to ensure that your project has the potential to make a positive impact on the community.

Identifying needs and assets can be helpful to your organization at almost any point in your initiative. It should be done on an ongoing basis throughout the initiative, including:

- Prior to planning the initiative
- During the implementation of an initiative
- On an ongoing basis

[Community Group Questionnaire](#)

There are many ways to identify local needs and resources:

- You can focus on the needs or strengths in your community.
- You can interview key people, hold community meetings or focus groups, or follow a number of other methods.
- The most important part of identifying local needs and resources is listening to the insights of group members, community members, leaders, and others while incorporating community data and history into the analysis.
- A document that identifies the local needs and resources of a community should ring with a richness that only a comprehensive, diverse, and large group can give.

In following this method, you'll go out to people in your community and ask them what they feel are your community's greatest needs and assets. Sound simple? It is, but first you need a plan.

Phase 1: Brainstorm – Before you poll the community, take some time to think broadly about what you're really after. Determining the focus of your area of interest is a key first step to putting together a useful, usable plan.

Phase 2: Start with what you know – Identifying what you know about an issue also helps highlight what you don't know and this will form the basis for the questions you will ask when you survey the community members.

Phase 3: Decide what you still need to know and finalize the questions you will ask.

Phase 4: Identify your target population – Who in the community has the information that will help you answer the questions you have formulated? Make sure your questions are appropriate for each group.

Phase 5: Decide what methods you will use to collect information – Examples include interviews, listening sessions, public forums, needs assessments, and asset mapping.

Phase 6: What is missing? What are the limitations of the assessment or study?

Phase 7: Determine whether you have the resources to conduct the study – This is a very important point that often gets overlooked. Before you begin a full-scale effort, you should be sure your organization can afford it. Costs include human resources, materials, telephone calls, printing, etc.

To sum it up

Needs and resources are really two sides of the same coin. Without each other, they don't buy much! In order to get a comprehensive view of your community, it is important to look at what you have and what you need. With these things in mind, you can have a positive impact on the problem you wish to address. Understanding your community in this manner will also help your organization clarify where it would like to go and how it will get there.

Where did the DYSC participants get ideas for these projects?

Food Bank – A past DYSC participant talked to the Project Leader about her positive experience of volunteering for the Food Bank. She felt that DYSC could raise the community awareness about the importance to donate food on a regular basis.

Recycling – The City of Dauphin approached the DYSC Project Leader with the idea of participants promoting the importance of recycling from the viewpoint of a “first time recycler”.

Make sure that each committee member has an interest in the cause or project.

Taking action – Getting involved in your community

By now you've looked at the groups working in your community and you've identified the needs and resources of your community. So you have your idea and you're ready to start making a difference.

There are two ways you can get your project off the ground. You can present your idea to an existing group in your community and work with them to get it going. If you can't find a group that suits your needs, you can develop your own group to complete your project.

The participants find that dividing into subcommittees works more efficiently. Therefore, committees are formed according to interest.

Here are some things to think about when developing a new project or starting a new group.

- How long are you willing to work on this?
- Who is going to help you?
- Is there already another group working on the same issue? Can you join or link up with them?
- Are you going to need funds?
- Will you need to register your organization?
- Who will replace you if you leave?

Patience, planning, and listening are three valuable attributes for setting up a new group. The first thing you'll need to remember is that everything takes longer than you think. There is paper work to fill out, meetings to be held and decisions to be made.

If you have decided to form your own group, the rest of this chapter will help you get started.

Getting a group together

If you've decided to form your own group, there are several steps you need to follow.

- Find a place for a meeting (community center, school, library, classroom, or park).
- Set a time for the meeting.
- Distribute notices with all the information about the meeting (what, why, where, and when). Remember to give people enough time to see the notice.
- Write articles or send notices to the community and school newspapers. It's important to do so

To find partners for your projects, seek out organizations that are doing something similar.

Recycling – participants went to the recycling depot. As well, each participant was required to talk to 5 people to see what they thought about recycling. This allowed participants to discover the community's perception of recycling.

Food Bank – Participants met with Dauphin Friendship Center's Community Liaison Worker and talked about the food bank. They visited the food bank and saw how it was set up. They also attended an intake day to see who is actually receiving the food.

When working on a community-based project it is important to separate perceptions from reality.

Quite often what we perceive and what is actually happening are two different things.

well in advance as most need about a week's notice.

- Tell everyone you know and ask them to tell everyone they know.
- Announce it any way you can (school PA system, posters, bulletin boards at school, grocery stores, libraries).
- Call and remind people a night or two ahead of time.

Keeping the group together

It's great to have people getting together with a common goal. Passion and dedication should be channeled positively – try to focus on why you're there, not on personality differences. However, negative dynamics can happen so try to resolve the conflict rather than let it disrupt the group. Consider asking an outside facilitator to help. Another option is for those involved in the conflict to leave the group and form their own organizations. On the other hand sometimes conflict can be constructive. For example, it can introduce new ideas and debate around an issue. It's up to you to decide what works best for the group.

DYSC:

The Project Leader talks to the participants about the dynamics of teamwork and how to be an effective team member.

It is crucial that the team be able to effectively communicate with each other throughout their project.

It is important to recognize that in any given project, there will be successes, failures and lessons to be learned. It is important to work through these phases as a team.

Recruiting volunteers⁴

Volunteers can be found anywhere. When looking outside your organization, consider people and places. Look beyond traditional sources for a variety of individuals with differing knowledge and experience. Try to find individuals who have specific skills but also use and appreciate those who are just willing to volunteer.

[Encouraging involvement in community work](#)

How to Recruit

The initial contact with a potential volunteer is crucial. First impressions can be lasting. Make sure you are honest and enthusiastic and present your group's values as clearly as possible. Initial contact can be made personally or through advertisements.

Personally

- On a one-to-one basis
- Speeches to potential groups
- Word-of-mouth
- Personal letters

To attract volunteers for an event you can create "Volunteers Needed" posters and hang them in the high schools. You can also have your event announced at the high school on their PA system and have a sign up sheet in the office. The best way to attract volunteers is to do so face to face.

Advertisements

⁴ Recreation Director's Handbook, 2002

- Radio, TV
- Public service announcements
- Bulletin boards (churches, grocery stores)
- Local flyers
- Store windows
- Community newspaper
- Other organization's newsletter
- Displays at schools, malls
- Posters, brochures, pamphlets
- Notices or announcements at events
- Community council office or band office

How to keep volunteers

Here's some tips on how to keep volunteers.

- Don't give them too much work.
- Allow them enough time to do their jobs.
- Provide enough people to do the job properly.
- Never publicly embarrass them.
- Never manipulate information or volunteers to influence decisions.
- Never treat volunteers without considering their job or community authority. You must respect their knowledge.
- Never ignore their feelings.
- Don't make volunteers feel guilty about having other things to do.
- Never play a martyr and do everything yourself.

DYSC believes in the importance of recognizing volunteers. Make sure to take the time to thank volunteers when they help out. Thank you cards and Certificates of Appreciation are a must!

Meetings

Before you hold your first group gathering, go to a council or community group and ask them if you can sit in on a few meetings. This will give you the opportunity to see how they run their meetings and maybe give you some insight. While you're there, ask them about past projects they have done. This may give you ideas about what you can do in your community. Be sure to ask them about their past failures and achievements. You can learn from their mistakes and recreate their successes.

Meetings are great for brainstorming ideas, providing feedback to the group about what's been happening, and for setting goals. They are also good for evaluating key events and activities, so you can learn from successes and failures.

For meetings large and small, it's worth establishing the following roles at the beginning.

Meeting roles

Facilitator/Chairperson – To keep people focused on the agenda and ensure everyone has a chance to speak. It is important to make sure the agenda items keep to their allocated time and the meeting doesn't drag on. You may want to have a separate timekeeper for that.

Minute Keeper/Secretary – To record decisions and keep track of who's promised to do what, etc. This is important especially so that people who missed the meeting are kept up to date.

DYSC:
Hold weekly meetings to get caught up on what's been happening in subcommittees. All participants bring a report updating what they've been doing and anything they're struggling with. A rotating chair leads each meeting and an agenda is followed. Participants all report on the week's activities and future plans. Everyone takes his or her own notes.

What is an agenda?

An agenda is an outline of a meeting. It is a list of things to be acted upon or information to be given during the meeting. It's a good idea to check the minutes from the last meeting for any business that was postponed. It's also important to give everyone a chance to add items to the agenda before the meeting starts.

An example agenda:

- I. Call to order
- II. Approval of the agenda
- III. Minutes from the last meeting
 - a. Business arising from minutes
- IV. Reports of the officers (treasurer, secretary)
- V. Committee reports
- VI. New and unfinished business
- VII. Announcements
- VIII. Next meeting
- IX. Adjournment

[Sample Agenda](#)

Meeting etiquette

Remember not to talk over people in meetings. Maintaining group harmony is the first and most important victory for any group. Meeting as a group on a regular basis will strengthen your organization. Meetings provide an opportunity to discuss the plans and needs of the group. They should be fun and effective. Everyone should feel welcome and included in group discussions.

It's probably a good idea to develop a code of ethics for your group. A code of ethics sets out the rules for acceptable behavior during meetings and while working on projects.

An example:

- Always respect other people's opinions
- Speak for yourself, not others
- Speak to others directly
- Be honest
- Listen when others are speaking
- Silence is all right
- No fighting
- What is said or happens in here stays in here⁵

Some of the guidelines for team meetings:

- Everyone needs to actively participate at every meeting.
- Respect everyone you work with
- Agree to disagree when necessary
- Recognize when there is tension and resolve it immediately

Informal communication works wonders. Dialogue is much more likely to be achieved during informal sessions and opportunities than around a formal table or highly structured meeting. Allowing generous amounts of time for refreshments enables multiple conversations to take place. This will help the flow of ideas. The more people talk, the more elaboration occurs.

A series of sessions can help a conversation to unfold. This will give people an opportunity to work through their feelings, have their concerns heard, and to move forward.

Unproductive meetings⁶

You may find as part of your research, that most people dislike meetings based on four reasons:

1. Too many meetings don't have agendas that are followed.
2. Unproductive meetings stray off the agenda.
3. Unproductive meetings don't result in any actions or decisions.
4. Poorly run meetings are just plain unproductive and a huge waste of time.

<http://www.delalbright.com/meetings.htm>

⁵ Tips for Working with Youth in Community Development Projects, Health Canada, 1997

⁶ Del Albright, 2003

TARAC⁷ (Time, Agenda, Roles/Rules, Actions, Commitments)

An effective acronym to keep in mind so that your meetings are run effectively is TARAC. It stands for Time, Agenda, Roles/Rules, Actions, and Commitments.

Time – Set a time to start, finish and handle important parts of the meeting. Stick with the schedule!

Agenda – Publish an agenda before the meeting so that people have time to prepare for anything that affects them.

Roles/Rules – Tell people what their role is in the meeting (vote, just listen). Ground rules help you run a better meeting.

Actions – If a decision is made, record it and the person that is going to carry out the action.

Commitments – For each action or decision, solicit a vocal commitment from the person who is going to carry it out.

Minutes

The purpose of the minutes is to:⁸

- Provide a permanent record of the proceedings of a meeting;
- Keep track of progress;
- Inform absent members;
- Help familiarize new members with the committee/organization;
- Provide a useful guide for evaluating a committee's/organization's work.

Tip: Write the minutes as promptly as possible. Your notes will be easier to decipher.

Do record:

- All adopted and “lost” or defeated motions
- Name of the maker of the motion
- Names of all those elected or appointed
- Number of votes on each side in a ballot or counted vote

Don't record:

- Discussion or personal opinion
- Name of the seconder of a motion
- Motions withdrawn
- Entire reports⁹

⁷ Running Better Meetings by Del Albright, 2003

⁸ Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, 1996

⁹ Robert's Rules in Plain English, 1997

Keeping organized

It is important to keep all of your meeting notes, project ideas, budgets, etc. organized so that you can always refer to them if needed.

It is a good idea to design letterhead to use on all correspondence. This will ensure consistency among all information you put out in the community in order to build recognition.

Keeping all of your information together in one place will make it easier to put together reports for your project at a later date.

Each member is responsible for assisting and updating the Final Report Binder. This binder is updated at least once a week.

It includes:

- Committee reports
- Budget
- Donations
- Media contacts
- Materials to be proofed
- Letterhead

Designing your project

Brainstorming your ideas

First thing to do is get together as a group and brainstorm. Brainstorming can generate a lot of ideas. The group is asked to say anything that comes to mind as a possible solution. No judgments are allowed during the suggestion time. The more suggestions, the more likely worthwhile options will come up. Once the list is compiled, the group can evaluate, discuss and select ideas.¹⁰

For brainstorming to be an effective tool, it is necessary to follow a number of guidelines:

- Set time limits
- Have a designated recorder
- Suggest all ideas even if they sound silly as they may trigger an idea in someone else's head
- Avoid criticizing anyone's idea

The participants first review the project outlines and tour the organization's facilities. The participants then do a large brainstorming session about what surprised and excited them about the project's information. Then they break into small groups and start listing all activities needed to reach the project's objectives. As a large group, the participants prioritize the ideas, and begin putting them into a timeline.

Identifying perceptions

Perceptions are what you think or believe about someone or something. Perceptions are developed based on what you have heard, seen, or learned. Perceptions are forever changing.

Identifying perceptions is very important if you want to reach measurable outcomes for your project.

After going through the meeting process, participants determine which tools would be needed to address the perceptions that the participants had identified, as they may also represent the community's perceptions.

Recycling – The purpose of the project was to promote the importance of recycling. After examining the recycling materials already available, the participants decided that as a first time recycler, they didn't understand the promotional materials. They then decided that they needed to create promotional materials suited for the first time user.

Food Bank – the participants found that the perception was that if you can't give a significant amount, it's not worth donating. They decided to attack this perception by using the slogan 'One Can Makes a Difference' on all their promotional materials.

VMOSA (Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, Action Plan)

Now that you've got your group together and you understand the importance of meetings, the next step is to get the group organized and on the road to success. A good tool to use at this point is the VMOSA process.

By going through this strategic planning process as a group, it allows you to build consensus around your focus and the necessary steps you should take. It also allows you

¹⁰ Recreation Director's Handbook, 2002

to focus on short-term goals while always keeping sight of your long-term vision and mission.

Let's look briefly at each of the components of the VMOSA planning process.

[Action Plan Chart](#)

1. **Vision** (the dream) – Describes what your organization believes are the ideal conditions for your community; how things would look if the issue important to you were perfectly addressed.
2. **Mission** (the what and why) – Describes what the group is going to do, and the reasons why.
3. **Objectives** (how much of what will be accomplished by when) – Broad goals that refer to specific measurable results of the initiative.
4. **Strategies** (the how) – Explain how the initiative will reach its objectives.
5. **Action plan** (what change will happen; who will do what by when to make it happen) – Describes in great detail exactly how strategies will be implemented to accomplish the objectives developed earlier in this process.

The Action Plan

When you first get your group together just remember to aim big but start small. Planning and goal setting will help you measure your successes and also keep you on track. As well, an action plan will hopefully also prevent you from over-committing by ensuring you set achievable goals.

The Basic Elements of an Action Plan:

- Subject or nature of an action plan
- Motivation
- Objectives of action to be taken

Action outline:

- How will the action be measurable, as achieved?
- What is the action relevant to?
- Time frame

[Example action plan for the Recycling project](#)

The action plan keeps track of who is going to do what and when. It also identifies any resources that people will need to carry out that step. For every set of actions, there needs to be an overall coordinator or contact point that is different from the people carrying out the action step. These are the people who monitor action and make sure individuals are receiving the necessary support.

An action plan is a way of taking all of your brainstorming ideas, and putting them in order to make a map of where you are as a group and where to go next. It's an easy way to be clear on what steps need to be taken, when and who needs to take them. It also helps to keep all the members of the group organized and on track.

In terms of the task, you are answering the questions:

- What exactly will happen to achieve this objective/action?
- Who will be responsible to carry out the activity/action?
- Whose support do we need?

There are different ways to record this information. You can choose the format you think will work the best for your group. The important thing is to write it down and give everyone a copy. This is the stage where, if plans are not written, it will affect the group's ability to get the job done.

From the standpoint of group maintenance, this is the stage to double check that everyone is in agreement. You want to make sure that the group has time for the following conversations.

- Do we need to choose one objective or another? Can it be both? Several?
- We thought we were in agreement to this point but now there seems to be disagreement on how to implement the project. Let's talk this out. (This is where you may discover you had a different interpretation on goals or objectives).
- Are we moving too fast? You sense some people are not quite ready to commit to this plan. What are your concerns?
- Let's check for group consensus. Is there anything happening that you cannot live with?

Determining objectives

Once the brainstorming session is done, the participants break into committees to come up with 2-3 objectives for the project. They spend half a day on this activity. The committees get back together to meet and discuss their objectives. The purpose of the large group meeting is to give suggestions and to act as a resource to the committee who is presenting their ideas.

Why Plan?

Planning is about regaining power for you and your community. Sometimes the problems we face seem too big for us to do anything about. That sense of powerlessness means that we do nothing and things get worse. Planning can make all the difference.

- Knowing exactly what you want makes it easier to get it.
- Planning reduces the chances of a nasty surprise as the group develops.
- You'll avoid the disappointment of working on something you can't win.
- If you don't plan you can waste time or money on the wrong things.
- You can be sure you are trying to influence the right people in the right way at the right time.

By planning you can work out what you can change and how. It helps you set tasks and take small steps on the way to achieving your bigger goals.

Budget

An important part of your action plan is to develop a budget. This ensures that you take into consideration the costs involved in your project and plan appropriately to find funds to cover these costs. Searching for funds is covered in a later section, but it is important to have a budget developed so that you know how much money you need to collect.

A budget is an organization's financial plan and may cover a year or a particular activity. A budget specifies:¹¹

- How much money the organization will receive (revenue) and where it will come from. Revenue may come from grants, donations, fundraising, etc.
- How much money the organization will spend (expenditures) and on what activities. Expenditures may include facility rental, photocopying, telephone calls, etc.

You don't need a complicated budget for your project. The importance of this piece is to consider how much money you're going to spend and where you're going to get the money to cover these expenses. If your project is fairly simple and not requiring many materials, you may want to create a checklist of items that will cost money, instead of a detailed budget.

Example – supplies needed for a car wash:

- Sponges
- Water
- Buckets
- Rags
- Soap
- Glass cleaner
- Paper towel
- Garbage bags
- Signs to advertise the car wash (poster paper, markets, tape/staples)
- Something to store the money in (cash belt for the project leader)

[Budget example](#)

Tips from DYSC:

- Ask people for in-kind contributions
- Photocopying – go to some large organizations such as a car dealership and ask if they could photocopy for \$0.05 or donate if you put their name on your posters.
- Sometimes it's cheaper and easier for an organization to take some sheets of paper from their package and give it to you rather than money
- Set up an email account at the local library or CAP site with a group name so that everyone has quick access to committee updates, or information requested
- Avoid faxing – it's expensive
- Take into consideration the cost of color paper, color photocopying, laminating, kind of paper, size
- Sometimes it's cheaper to color photocopy than to color print.
- Try to get as many materials donated as possible.

¹¹ Recreation Director's Handbook, 2002

Implementing the action plan

In the beginning it will be hard to get things organized but don't give up. After awhile it will become easier once you get more people involved. Just remember that the first steps of any project are the hardest, and it will take time before you are done or see any results. So if you want your project to happen, you won't give up no matter how many little problems come up. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Dauphin & District Food Bank—"One Can Makes A Difference"

The participants put in a lot of time and effort into this project. This project was split into two committees: the Mall Committee and the Business Committee.

It was just before Thanksgiving, and the Food Bank was finding that they had a high number of intakes, as the weather was very cold. The participants set up at the large grocery stores to get additional food donations and to remind people of the importance to donate food on a regular basis. They also promoted the upcoming Community Food Drive at the Mall.

The Mall committee organized the Community Food Drive at the Mall. They had tags reminding people to donate food for the Food Bank in Safeway, Co-op, Skyliner and 7-11. They also put up posters reminding people of the Food Drive on November 2nd.

The business committee had over 20 businesses competing in a food drive. Each business was against a similar business, e.g. Royal Bank vs. credit union. All the food was collected on November 1st. The committee didn't have a chance to drop off the food at the Food Bank because they were so busy trying to organize incoming food. There was so much collected that they had to load the truck numerous times to get all the goods to the Food Bank.

730 CKDM invited the Project Leader to do a daily report for the week leading up to the Community Food Drive at the Mall. It was an opportunity to promote the businesses that were competing and to remind people to bring food to the Mall Day. It also gave competing businesses a chance to challenge each other on the radio. This brought in more donations to the participating businesses.

On November 2nd, the goal was to have 300 cans collected. By the end of the day, over 600 cans were collected. More than \$1500 from local businesses was donated to the Food Bank.

Recycling Project

This project was originally focused on the re-education of the community on the importance of recycling and promoting Robinson Recycling. Once the participants began the project, they felt that a weakness of Robinson Recycling was their promotional material. The participants redesigned the recycling calendars and flyers.

The participants split into two committees. The Promotions Committee and the Mall Event Committee. The Promotions Committee was in charge of promoting the Recycling Day Mall event and the importance of recycling. The Mall Committee organized the Recycling Day event at the Mall.

The Mall Committee organized all aspects of the Recycling Day at the Mall. They created a layout, as well as designed the four booths: All about Recycling, What is Recyclable, Blue Box Deposits and Calendars, and How to Package Your Recyclables. This committee also created blue box displays to go into businesses to promote the event, and to remind the public of what is recyclable.

This committee also completed the redesign of the recycling flyer and calendars.

The Promotions Committee conducted an interview with Ron Robinson of Robinson Recycling. This interview was used for an article that was featured in the Dauphin Herald. They also created advertisements for the newspaper, radio and access channel. This group learned how to work with the media, and designed some creative ways to promote the event.

Implementing your project

Obtaining Financial Support

Fundraising

The most common way to get funding for your project is to do some fundraising. This will give you the opportunity to raise start up money for the little costs such as printing fees. Remember that [Fundraising ideas](#) fundraising is about need, not about money. Any fundraising message you develop should start by establishing the need (what needs to be done to make your community a better place) and how your organization can do something to relieve this need.

Five key fundraising methods include:

1. *Public donations*- these can be accessed through events, raffles, street collections, advertising, inserts and direct mail, etc.
2. *Supporters/donors*- if you already have some financial supporters/donors you can approach them to give a repeat gift via direct mail telephone or face to face.
3. *Foundation grants*
4. *Government grants*
5. *Corporate sponsorship/donations*

If you have trouble raising funds, approach local businesses to:

- Provide matching funds for the money you have raised,
- Provide in-kind contributions (such as printing leaflets at no or low cost, or providing refreshments for your events, etc.)
- Or for direct donations.

If you have trouble getting support from local businesses try contacting regional or national organizations for help. There is a whole country of Canadians that are just like you, ready to help where they can. Do what you think would raise funds the best in your community.

Fundraising Checklist

[Fundraising tips](#)

- Check out the law before you start fundraising. Make sure you have the necessary permits for raffles, street collections, etc. Check with your local fire department, police service, band office, and civic office.
- Each province in Canada has different fundraising

Food bank:

The Dauphin Friendship Centre and the City of Dauphin provided funding for this low cost project

Expenses:

- Promotional posters
- Mileage (picking up food)
- Laminating grocery tags

Contributions in kind:

- Ruf's Furniture donated all the boxes for food to be collected in

Recycling:

The City of Dauphin provided funding for this low cost project.

Expenses:

- Cost of colored paper for promotional materials
- Cost of photocopying all materials and posters for the recycling event

Contributions in kind:

- Robinson Recycling provided the recycling bins and items that can be recycled for displays that can be toured to other communities.
- Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation also assisted with this project. They provided the participants with lots of information on the importance of recycling as well as prizes for the Mall Day.

- legislation. Contact your provincial government before you start your activities.
- To offer tax deductibility for donations, you must be registered as a charity under provincial or federal legislation. To find out more information call the Charities Directorate at 1-800-267-2384 or visit their website <http://www.ccra.gc.ca/charities>.
 - Recognize risk. Public activities or events have measure of risk. Examine your need for insurance to provide safety and cover any legal costs. Ask the police for advice.

[Checklist for planning/running a fundraising event.](#)

Fundraising guidelines to get you started:

- Identify why you want to raise funds. Be as specific as possible
- Set a reasonable target for your fundraising activity.
- Identify appropriate fundraising strategies to reach your target.
- Ensure you have available resources to run the activity and plan well ahead, particularly if relying on volunteers to help.
- Often you will have to pay for fundraising activities well before any income is received. Budget carefully with this in mind. Don't rely totally on funding from one area, as this increases risk.

Top Do's and Don'ts of Fundraising

Do

- Include a contact phone number, email address or web address on all of your communications.
- Collect the name, address, phone number and web address of your donors. You're never too small to start a database of those who give.
- Keep in regular contact with your donors/supporters. People give to organizations they have a relationship with.
- Negotiate to get goods in kind or at a reduced cost to assist you in running fundraising activities cheaply.
- Communicate clearly, passionately and with urgency about your organization.

Keep track of money raised and donations. This will make it much easier to thank those who helped out your cause. DYSC kept a list of the businesses that donated food, those who competed in the business challenge, and those businesses that donated food.

Don't

- Create expectations you can't fulfill.
- Exaggerate the scope of your activities.
- Be vague about why you're fundraising.
- Launch into a fundraising activity without planning and budgeting.
- Raise money for a specific project and then spend it on something else without first informing your donors.
- Keep approaching the same businesses for donations - try to find new ones.

Donations

Donations are money or goods given to help a person or organization. Ask businesses to donate items they already have and don't need to purchase. After receiving the donations, it is very important to keep track and to have a system for recognizing donations.

Seeking Donations - Call first. It is necessary to have the specific name of the person, who reviews requests.
Secondly, drop off the letter to reduce postal or fax expenses, whenever possible.
All materials distributed MUST have the project logos. It helps to create public awareness.

Applying for grants

One way that groups and organizations receive funds to do projects is by applying to government (local, provincial, and federal) and non-profit agencies for funding. Usually the agency will have application guidelines to follow and forms to fill out. Pay close attention to the application guidelines and make sure your proposal fulfills the requirements of the funding agency. You will also need to provide the proper information such as who you are, what activities you are currently involved in, and a description of the project, the expected outcomes, the resources needed, the cost, project duration and timelines, and how you will evaluate the project in the end. In most cases you will need to provide matching contributions in order to qualify for any additional dollars. The matching contributions don't necessarily have to be provided in cash, in many cases this will be provided as in-kind support.

[Proposal writing](#)

Sometimes there are no guidelines or you may need to develop a general proposal. A proposal is similar to a business plan and usually contains sections like the following:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Problem Statement or Needs Assessment
4. Goals and Objectives
 - Why is the project being done? What is to be accomplished? Why is it important?
 - Target population – What special group is being studied or served? Who will benefit?
5. Implementation
 - Activities – What is being done? What methods will be used?
 - Location
 - Budget
 - Qualifications – Who will be involved? What are their qualifications?
 - Partners
6. Evaluation
 - Expected outcomes
7. Conclusions/Recommendations
8. Appendices

Promoting your project

Promoting your project is designed to inform the community of your existence and the work you are doing. Effective promotion sparks community interest, awareness and potential support for your project. It also assists in building a profile for you and your project.

When you are campaigning consider the following:

- Whether the method provides the type of coverage required
- Whether the method will achieve the desired results
- Whether the method will convey your message accurately

People should know about your meetings. Promotion is a good way to get the word around. Keep your message short, understandable and simple. Be creative and colorful, as visually interactive, eye catching publicity is more effective. Other publicity ideas include personal contact or word of mouth, leafleting, newspapers, phone trees, e-mail lists, newsletters on community bulletin boards and information tables.

The best way to encourage support is to promote your group or organization and the purpose of your project. This will help individuals understand the projects goals, encourage organizations to donate supplies and persuade people to volunteer in the effort.

Here are some promotional ideas:

- Send a press release to the local newspaper, radio and/or television station
- Inform other community groups in the area about the project.
- Write to local organizations and companies who are sympathetic to your cause
- Write to businesses in your community
- Distribute flyers and/or mailers
- Inform local schools of the activity
- Notify local leaders
- Notify local press of your efforts

Frequently used marketing vehicles include:

- Advertising
- Brochures
- Direct mail
- Face-to-face marketing
- Internet
- Marketing kits
- Media relations
- Networking
- Newsletters
- Partnership programs
- Seminars and presentations
- Speaking engagements

- Special events
- Telemarketing

Dealing with the Media

Reporters are always on the lookout for new and interesting stories. Often the best stories will come from ordinary people saying to them, “Hey why don’t you do a story about...?” Telling their story is something every group should be able to do. Turn what you want to do into a story. There are often community or school newspapers willing to publish a good human-interest story.

Become familiar with the local media in your area. Get to know which stations and newspapers report on these types of issues. Talk with the people who work at the newspapers - remember you want to draw attention to the group and its project. Newspapers are usually interested in listening to young people. Don’t forget reporters interview young people for a variety of reasons all the time. It would be a welcome change if they didn’t have to go out and find your story because you came to them. Don’t be intimidated to approach key reporters at a newspaper because they need stories to do their job well.

Use the media - unless you attract some media attention your project is likely to struggle. Why do you need media attention? Because unless you spend a fortune in advertising very few people will know your projects exists.

When writing a news release remember:

- Think before you write
- Target narrowly and carefully
- Keep it to one page
- Keep it relevant to your target
- Tailor the information to your target audience
- Address each email message separately
- Re-read, re-read and re-read and rewrite, rewrite and rewrite
- Only commit to actions you know you’ll complete
- Follow up professionally

Remember that the media is only interested in newsworthy topics. You need to develop an angle that will spark public interest.

What is newsworthy?

In general, news editors, reporters, assignment editors, and news producers look at seven indicators of whether or not a story is newsworthy. When pitching a story idea to the media, it will be helpful to keep these seven indicators in mind.

1. ***Timely*** – Is the story something that relates to current events or breaking news? Is it being released on the heels of national or province wide news on the same subject; i.e., is it localizing a national or regional story?

2. **Impact** – How many people in the community will the story impact or affect. How many people are affected by the issue that you think is news?
3. **Unusual** – Is there anything out of the ordinary happening? Is there something that will challenge our assumptions or beliefs?
4. **Currency** – What are people talking about now? Is the item something that is occurring in current events, or on everyone's lips?
5. **Prominence** – Are well-known people or institutions involved? Do prominent newsmakers, celebrities, politicians, or other high-profile people play a role in the story?
6. **Proximity** – Is the news happening in the community or region where you are pitching the story idea?
7. **Conflict** – Is there drama, clashes between people and institutions, etc.?

When writing for the media try and convey your message in a manner that will generate immediate interest. Ideally you should be able to convey your message in the first paragraph of your article, follow with supporting material and conclude by summarizing your message. Ideally media releases should be no longer than one page.

Articles to help you deal with the media:

- [How to write a news release that works](#)
- [Media relations checklist](#)
- [Example news article](#)
- [Writing a news release](#)
- [Writing news releases and media advisories](#)
- [Writing public service announcements](#)
- [Example of a public service announcement](#)
- [Building rapport with the media](#)
- [What to do when a reporter calls](#)
- [Handling interview requests](#)
- [Interview do's and don'ts](#)
- [Interview preparation](#)

[Link](#) to find more resources on creating newsletters, brochures, preparing public service announcements, etc.

Examples of printed materials from the DYSC projects

Food bank project:

- [Grocery tags](#)
- [Food Bank challenge winners poster](#)
- [Food bank poster](#)
- [Prize list](#)

Recycling project:

- [Recycling passport tags](#)
- [Mall display poster](#)
- [Recyclables flyer](#)

Evaluating your project

Evaluating your project is an important step, but isn't always the easiest. Community development projects usually produce results that are sometimes hard to determine or measure.

[Using Evaluation to Understand and Improve the Initiative](#)

Reporting

It is usually necessary to report on the progress of your project. This is why it is important to keep organized throughout the project and to keep all the information together. That way, when you need to write a progress report or a final report, you have all the information you need in one place.

Each committee is required to write monthly reports. Participants wrap up their large group projects 3-4 weeks before the end of their term. A final report is written for the project sponsor, mainly as a method for evaluating the project's success and impact on the community.

Project sponsors require some form of reporting and there are many methods of reporting. Get samples of reports from other groups to follow instead of designing your own. This will save you a lot of time. Also, remember to ask your project sponsors up front what type of reporting they require. Get quotes from committee members or key individuals in your community on the success of your project and its impact on the community.

Outcomes of the project

As part of your evaluation, it is necessary to determine what has happened as a result of the project. In many cases, you may have unexpected results. These unexpected results can have a positive or negative effect on the project. By identifying results, you can evaluate what was successful and what could be improved, as well as the impact on the community.

There are two types of results.

- **Qualitative** results reflect people's judgments, opinions, perceptions and attitudes of a given situation or subject. These are the results that are sometimes hard to pinpoint. Example – as a result of the Mall Event, people

Recycling:

The participants met their objectives. Through the many initiatives the participants undertook, they increased the awareness of the importance of recycling. During the project, they saw a dramatic increase in the number of people recycling and an increase in the amount of materials being recycled.

The Mall Event was provided to give the public information about numerous topics related to recycling. It was a great opportunity for people to learn what is and isn't recyclable. The participants were surprised at the amount of people who brought in items that hadn't been picked up by the recycling staff. They were surprised by how many recyclable materials weren't being recycled, from lack of understanding of what is recyclable.

They completed the project by having the City continue to distribute the updated recycling materials list, as they had always distributed the recycling information. They also displayed the "What is Recyclable" display in the City lobby for a couple of months. The other displays were given to Robinson Recycling to display and use for public education.

in the City of Dauphin have a better idea of the items that are recyclable.

- **Quantitative** results are measures of quantity. These results are easier to identify as they can be counted. Example – 600 cans of food were collected at the Mall Event.

Food bank:

Close to 600 cans were donated at the Mall Day by community members, over \$1,500 was collected from businesses to purchase food, and 17 businesses participated in the business challenge. The food collected by the businesses alone filled an entire room. The project was an overwhelming success both because of the food collected (quantitative) and the awareness in the community of the importance to donate food (qualitative).

Importance of demonstrating results:

- Credibility of the group's efforts
- Accountability to all stakeholders
- Continuous learning
- Informing decision making and resources allocation
- Leads to new projects and opportunities

In some cases, the outcomes of the project are not the same as those you had hoped for. The project may have even failed. But if you ask any successful committee, they will tell you that it is important to recognize that some projects will succeed and some will fail. Try not to get discouraged and learn from the experience. Ask yourself why the project didn't succeed or go as you had planned. What should you have done differently? Were there external factors that inhibited the success of your project? If you can figure out why things turned out as they did, that is a success in itself.

Challenges faced

Most projects will face challenges. Keep track of these challenges so that you can be prepared for new ones. Challenges aren't necessarily negative impacts. Some challenges are a result of good things happening as in the case study example.

Food bank:

The only difficulty that the Food Bank Board encountered was that there was more food collected than expected and not enough space to store it all. The City of Dauphin stored some of the food on a short-term basis.

The participants had to attack the perception that if you can't donate a large amount of food, then it's not worth donating at all. They had to keep pushing the message that if each person in Dauphin donated one can a month, the Food Bank would never run out of food.

Lessons learned, things to ponder

Recycling:

The participants learned the importance of both visual and written information. The Mall Event was very well attended. People wanted both demonstrations and written info. Both were very important and effective in promoting the importance of recycling.

Advice – Make sure you get as many partners involved as possible. Every partner brought very valuable resources and ideas to the project.

Food Bank:

The involvement of the media was a great contributor to the success of the project. Both the newspaper and radio heavily promoted the cause.

The participants were involved in the Food Bank intake days.

It was very important for them to learn who utilizes the services at the Food Bank. They were surprised to see how many people came in for one month because they couldn't make the bills. It could be your neighbor or best friend.

The tags in the grocery stores brought in a lot of food at the Mall day. Many of those grocery stores continue to collect food for the Food bank.

Advice – Be as public as possible. Three weeks before the event, it happened to be Thanksgiving. They sat at both grocery stores collecting food and reminding people of the importance to donate food on a regular basis. That was a very successful idea. It also created some excitement around the project.

Overall evaluation of the project

It is so important to learn from your experiences. Sit down as a group or by yourself and ask the following questions.

- What did you learn while doing this project?
- Was it worth it? Could your time have been better spent on another project?
- How would you do things differently?
- How do you think you benefited from doing the project? How did the target group benefit? How did your community benefit?

If possible, continue to monitor the results of your project. Sometimes it takes a while to see the benefits of the work you have done. And you may even be surprised by how things turn out later on.

Robinson Recycling submits their recycling statistics to Manitoba Product Stewardship on a regular basis. Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation in turn produces a quarterly report on how much all the communities are recycling.

The City of Dauphin and Robinson Recycling have continued the recycling promotion program.

The Project Leader keeps in touch with the Food Bank to see how they are doing. They continue to receive more and more donations from both business and community members. Community education continues to be a priority for the Dauphin & District Food Bank Board.

Where do you go from here?

Evaluate your project and learn from your experiences

Take a few minutes to look back on your project and learn from your experiences. How did it go? Did things turn out as you had hoped? What did you learn? What were you feeling while working on the project? Really evaluate your experience. This will give you valuable insight to take with you on future projects. Realize that every project isn't going to succeed. It doesn't mean that the project was a waste; maybe there were external factors that influenced the outcomes. Reflect on what has happened and record it for the next time.

Stay involved, get others involved

Continue volunteering and let others know the benefits of getting involved in your community. Every community needs more project champions. Some people have great ideas but aren't sure how to implement them.

Learn to let go. It is so important to share the project and to work as a team. Too often people try to do it all without sharing information with the rest of the group. It's hard to let go of the ownership of a project. But, if you don't share the project with others, it is more likely to fail. A project should be set up to run continuously no matter who's involved or missing. Every team member has equal value.

Avoid volunteer burnout

Feel free to take a break. This is one of the most difficult things to learn. Volunteers tend to become involved in numerous activities, which can sometimes become overwhelming. When you start to feel the pressure, it's a good idea to step down and take a break. This doesn't mean you have to give up your involvement in the project or group. Maybe you just need to step down as the chairperson and help with specific initiatives instead of being in charge of everything. This is why you need to make sure that the project is not dependent on one person. A good leader will ensure that the project is set up to continue if they leave.

Explore other opportunities

Continue to seek out new opportunities in community development. If you enjoy working with communities, seek out careers that allow you to do so. Who do you think put this guide together? If you're unsure where to start, there are many colleges and universities offering programs in this field of study.

Or if you don't necessarily want to make a career of it, find other ways to expand your community involvement. For example, find out how you can apply for municipal or provincial round table groups that meet to discuss youth issues.

A Final Thought

“Do not wait for extraordinary circumstances to do good action; try to use ordinary situations.” Jean-Paul Richter

The goal of this project was to provide you with the tools to create your own community-based initiatives. It doesn't matter whether you start with a small or large project; what's important is to get started. We hope that now that you have the tools that you will need, that you can now focus on the excitement of your project.

Get excited and get others involved!

It is important to realize that you, our youth, can be future community leaders; now and in the future. Imagine what you want your community to look like in the future – why not share your vision now? Your communities will grow and benefit from your ideas, perspectives and opinions.

Continue to be involved in your community and enjoy the adventure!