**Student Title: Magee, Tim OL 204 Assignment 4**

**Student Date: Date of Student Assignment Here**

**Magee Example Project OL 204 Assignment 4**

**Online Learning: OL 204 Designing and Funding Non Profit Projects. The Community Focus**

**Center for Sustainable Development:** <https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/ol-204-designing-and-funding-non-profit-programs-4/>

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**Assignment Four. Project Launch: Leading a Participatory Workshop in a Long-term Skill Set**

**Part 1**

I started preparing for the workshop a week in advance because I realized that I didn't have all the materials that I needed (like paper and markers and a stand to hold the paper) and that I needed to develop some materials like a how-to card to give to the participants, and also I wanted to make a few simple posters to illustrate some of the ideas that we're going to discuss in the workshop.

I also needed to find four colleagues that would be willing to support me during the workshop, and to prepare some snacks and a luncheon. As I've given more of these participatory workshops, I found that it's better to have more people helping me then just one or two. If you've only got one person assisting you and a problem comes up and they need to leave for a few minutes you've lost your only support. Also, there are frequently participants who are quiet and/or aren't engaging; the extra helpers can work with them to make them feel more included and let their voice be heard.

This workshop we're trying something new: we've invited one of the community members to join our workshop team. This will be a great opportunity for them to learn the insides of launching and managing a project so that in two years when our NGO pulls out, they will know how to take over. On top of that, we discovered that it's a boon for us too. They are able to alert us to cultural sensitivities that we should be aware of, they're able to offer translation of words or phrases that were unfamiliar with—and the names of local things, and they're a good troubleshooter when we need something done or fixed quickly because they know everybody in the village and where to get things. They're also able to forewarn us off potentially complicated people attending a workshop and of people who are in conflict with each other.

I also took part of a day to return to the village and tour the farm fields, forests, and water points with one of the committee members as my guide. I was fortunate in that I was able to see some of the farmers and talk to them for a few minutes, and to gain a much greater understanding of the scale of the community and get a better sense of some of the challenges they were facing.

I've given a lot of workshops but I'm really glad that I had my lesson plan. It helped me to get started and when little things came up that threw me off track it helped get me back on track.

I tried to be as inclusive as I could in order to make the community part of the process and also so that I could collect new bits and pieces of information that I hadn't known before.

The workshop was about drawing a participatory community map especially indicating farmlands and water sources. My main concern at the beginning of the workshop was would it become too disorganized with a number of people trying to draw one map. But it worked out fine, the participants were receptive, they contributed wonderful ideas and useful information, and seemed to understand what we're trying to do.

The resulting map is quite good and very colorful. We drew a small map first just to see how things would go and to begin understanding the spatial relationships between the different parts of the community that we want to identify on the map. A couple of the men turned out to have good drawing skills and so they were elected to transfer the information from the small map to the much larger map. The new map is quite large: it's 2 m x 4 m. We had a large clean classroom floor to spread out the newsprint on and tape it together. The size was chosen such because when the map is done we can hang it on a wall so everyone can see it clearly; so 2 m is the perfect height.

We decided not to include the full village in the map because it would've taken up too much space and wasn't really useful for this farmer workshop. So we drew the map so that only the edge of the village was showing along the bottom of the map so we could see the roads coming out of the village as they accessed the farmlands and we can see the main highway that travels along the edge of the village too. From there, the farm fields are spread out in three roughly adjacent areas that are partially separated by small areas of forest and encroaching hills. This was good because we could then see where the water sources came from in the hills—such as springs and streams.

Each farmer was allowed to indicate where his plot was. In one of the books that I use as a resource, they suggested using a simple geometric shape to represent a farmer's plot simply as a token in order to not raise issues of property line disputes. We discussed this in advance and everyone seemed to be in agreement with that. Consequently, the map is more artistic than it is exacting but everyone seemed happy with the outcome.

Since I didn't grow up in this village it was extremely helpful to me to see a birds-eye view of how transportation routes (including the highway, small roads, and pathways), steep hillsides, level farm fields, water sources, and areas of hazard during extreme weather events related to each other.

We then took colored sheets of construction paper and decided on shapes that would represent additional features from the perspective of the farmers. This was done for two reasons. One is to begin to open discussions and get the farmers thinking about the challenges that they face and the other reason is to gain local knowledge which we can compare with to what we learn from the agriculturalist when we visit the farm fields and water sources next week.

The easiest thing to do was to make little squares and circles and triangles with different colors of paper and make drawings of specific things on them. So for example, tan squares represented crops—and we just true simple representations of specific crops on the squares. I brought some removable scotch tape so that we could stick these pieces of additional information on the map yet be able to move them around or take them down.

There was a tremendous amount of extremely useful information on the map—we were all learning a lot. However, the map was getting awfully busy. So I made the suggestion to the artists, that they draw a second map equal to the first map without the additional taped on information indicated, and with a few other pieces of information removed—so that we had sort of a master map we could use for other purposes. I proposed that after the agriculturalist comes next week we could use this new map to apply the information that he comes up with as a comparison to the information that the farmers came up with.

We could then combine the information that would be most relevant to the goals of our project on one of the two maps.

I feel like I have a good baseline of where the community is now that we can use for a comparison when the project finishes in 2 years. When the workshop was over I spent a reasonable amount of time photographing the new map so that I could have a history of how it evolves over time.

All in all, everyone thoroughly enjoyed the workshop. There were many animated discussions (not to mention a few minor skirmishes!) and I think that everybody was very happy with the outcome of the map. No one seems to mind its somewhat abstract manner—I think that having an artistically abstract map is more conducive to conveying the information that the farmers need to know. They're very much looking forward to next week when I return within agriculturalist to physically go look at their fields, soil, crops, water sources, forests, and flooding challenges—and then applying his thoughts to the second big basic map.

We had prepared a quick luncheon to start the workshop (and to encourage people to come). I asked people to come at 12:30 and started the workshop promptly at one o'clock. I took the half an hour while the participants were eating to go through introductions and an icebreaker and to give some background about the workshop; essentially I did the first activity of the lesson plan during the luncheon. But still it took us until 6:00 to finish the map and have our wrap-up discussions. So, my 4 1/2 hour workshop actually took 5 1/2 hours. Partially because a lot of people had to stand around while the artists transferred the information from the initial draft map to the big map.

My colleagues and I took photographs and in the process of taking them we looked at them on the back of the camera to make sure that they were of good quality, they were in focus, and that we had a variety of different kinds of photographs.

I took notes on my lesson plan of things that were going well—and the things that I could improve the next time—and I also kept track of how long each of the exercises took for future reference. My helpers and our community team member were extraordinary. My helpers were able to keep everybody engaged, and the community team member was able to sidetrack potential arguments and skirmishes because she knows the community members so well.

The next day (Monday actually) the team and I got together and reviewed the workshop and made notes that would help us to a better job the next time we give it.

We all felt that the lesson plan that we had adopted from the resources I found on participatory mapping were very well done and we didn't really have too many improvements that we would recommend. One thing that we came up with was:

We should have done this in two workshops—I think people began getting a little bit tired towards the end. We would recommend a relatively short evening workshop to do the initial activities to describe what it was we were going to do and then to draw the initial small draft map. Then, everyone could go home, and our two artists could transfer the information to the larger simplified/basic map. Then we could have started the workshop up again a week later, or a few days later to begin applying the more specialized information.

We all agreed that the workshop was a success.

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