

OL 201 Assignment Four Homework Instructions

Online Learning. OL 201 Designing and Funding Non Profit Projects

Center for Sustainable Development: <https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/ol-240-design-fund-manage-nonprofit-programs/>

This week's resources:

Assignment Four Discussion

Magee Example Project Assignment Four

Assignment Four Family Garden Field Guide Example

Assignment Four. Will the community buy into it?

Asking for feedback from your community, writing a ¾ page field guide on one simple activity, and assessing expertise.

1. Feedback from the community.

In getting feedback from the community, all that you will need is to organize a 30 minute meeting with a few of the community members that participated in the needs assessment.

Discuss your Assignment 2 Project Outline and Project Goal with them. At this stage don't get into a lot of detail. Listen to their reactions, answer any questions that they may have. Long-term sustainability depends on their buy-in and ownership of the project.

2. ¾ page guide.

For the purposes of saving time, pick a single very small, discreet activity from your Project Outline (Assignment 2) (nothing more complex than teaching someone how to (in my example) form garden beds and plant seeds. You may have already seen practical information on your activity on the Internet. If there is a guide already available, you might be able to adapt information from it (by cutting and pasting) to begin your own guide.

Very Important:

1. This guide needs to be focused on something very simple that you plan to teach community members how to do.
2. The ultimate purpose of this guide will be to serve as an introduction to an activity for other field staff to use in the future.
3. It needs to be about one very, very simple activity (at the level forming garden beds and planting seeds)
4. For some reason, some participants feel that this is a place where they need to explain their entire project, or to explain some very complex aspect of their project. Please don't fall into this temptation or you will need to redo the assignment.

Please look at the Magee Project Example and Assignment 4 Family Garden Field Guide Example for an example of the simplicity we are looking for.

This week's guide does not need to be more than ¾ of a page (not a book or a pamphlet!), and you shouldn't spend more than 30 minutes on it.

3. List of project consultants and working partners

In the first three weeks we had a lot of fun meeting with communities and designing our dream projects. In week three we may have had a bit of a surprise when we discovered through research that our favorite project activity has never shown evidence of having worked in the field to solve our community's problem.

In Assignments 6 and 12, we will be taking our projects to donors for their feedback. Donors can be unusually helpful in fine-tuning a project; they have seen a lot of projects and have a sense of what works and what doesn't.

Two of the things that they are quite picky about are experience and expertise. One non profit that took the course approached a donor with a vocational skills training project; the non profit was very excited about their project design. The donor asked a lot of questions about their experience in working with vocational skills training in communities – and was surprised to find out that their expertise was actually in conservation projects – not in vocational training.

In order to help you avoid an embarrassing situation like this, Part Three of this assignment is to make a list of aspects of your project activities where you and your non profit have insufficient experience or expertise. I would like you to make a three-tabled column:

1. The first column is the list of potentially problematic activities
2. The second is your solution to finding expertise for each activity, (list one of these three things: 1. hire an expert consultant, or 2. partner with an experienced non profit, or 3. Hire a specialist for the duration of the project)
3. The third column is who might these consultants or partners be – or where might you find them (local vocational school?)?

Examples where I have seen course participants run into challenges include health projects, all types of water projects (especially if they include infrastructure or construction), and connecting farmers to market projects.

This short process will ensure that you aren't caught unprepared in a donor meeting, and will come in useful in Assignment 9 when you are developing your project budget.

For a non profit to submit a project in an area where they don't have expertise is perfectly normal. Frequently non profits with complementary expertise partner with each other, frequently non profits hire expert consultants, and frequently non profits hire specialists for the duration of the project. This just needs to be clearly spelled out in your proposal and budget for the donor to be satisfied.

The homework to turn in will be:

1. A short paragraph summarizing any comments that your community may have had about your project concept.
2. A ¾ page field guide on one of your projects' very simple activities.
3. A three column table with a list of activities of project consultants and working partners

Go to Magee's Example Project Assignment Four and the Assignment 4 Family Garden Field Guide Example to see what this could look like.

See you next week.