

Assignment Five Discussion

Online Learning: OL 203 Designing and Funding Non Profit Projects. The Community Focus

Center for Sustainable Development: <https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/ol-203-designing-and-funding-non-profit-programs-3/>

Assignment Five. Sustainability through Community Management Committees/Teams.

The long-term sustainability of your project or program needs to be supported in several different ways. One of the most important, is community ownership of your program. We've seen in earlier assignments how by getting to know community members and their specific context can help to bond relationships and develop this ownership. Now that you have developed this ownership and community members how can you encourage their engagement in the co-management of your program?

This co-management can come in many different forms. It could be in engaging community members as volunteers within the program, including a community member on your board—or in forming a community management committee or team that will work with you as a partner on the ground. This can have an extraordinary number of benefits. They can provide resources and assets such as helping you to hold workshops or meetings. Also helping you with tools to use or locations for holding meetings. They can help you get the word out to other community members.

Also the community members can be a number of different kinds of people. A few weeks ago in Assignment One I posted a quote where Carter McNamara showed different and interrelated types of community members:

- target market one: dropouts from Minneapolis high schools
- target market two: counselors in Minneapolis high schools
- target market three: parents of dropouts from Minneapolis schools
- target market four job placement services seeking to help people find jobs
- target market five: local businesses looking for employees

Basic Guide to Nonprofit Program Design and Marketing. Carter McNamara

The purpose of this assignment is to look at forming a community management committee or team. However how you define who the community members are for the purposes of forming a management committee can be fairly broad. If you have a community garden—then the members of your team could be people who participate in the garden: these may be long-term participants. However, it's possible that if you work in a food bank or in a homeless shelter, your community members may not have the time or the resources to participate on a team—or they may be transitional clients and might not be able to become permanent members of the team.

However, that said, there's an excellent article on a New York soup kitchen where the people that help prepare the meals and serve the meals are indeed members of the homeless community. I highly recommend reading this article and watching the accompanying video—it is very heartwarming.

At a Manhattan Soup Kitchen, Food on the Table and Chops on the Piano

https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/30/nyregion/at-a-manhattan-soup-kitchen-piano-music-is-always-on-the-menu.html?_r=0

But let's say that this isn't your situation and that your food bank's clients for your homeless shelters client's aren't able to participate on a co-management team—who could your team members be? Well, looking at the example from Minneapolis above they could be members of your volunteer team, they could be interested members of the community where your food bank is, they could be members of the business community that provide donations of food to your food bank. And the list goes on.

So you could look at identifying the members of your team could be from several different directions. One: is there a segment of your organization that you're hoping to strengthen? This could be—for example—volunteers or donors that by participating in a team could strengthen the participation of other members within that group. Or, it could be a new group hoping to engage somehow with your community—such as retirees within the community who would like to contribute—but don't know how to get started.

So bearing in mind that the purpose of forming this team is to help support program sustainability—don't limit yourself in to who the team members could be. Ideally, these team members would help keep your program alive and healthy for the long-term—even if your funding dries up: they would keep your program continuing for the benefit of your clients.

Here are a few quotes from this week's list of resources that can help you see the diversity that you can find in teams and what they're capable of doing:

The Orton Family Foundation's mission is to empower people to shape the future of their communities by improving local decision-making, creating a shared sense of belonging, and ultimately strengthening the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of each place.

The thought of forming a committee probably makes you groan. Memories of endless meetings, unreasonable expectations, and dwindling participation can make potential members head for the hills. So when recruiting people to help with a Community Heart & Soul project, don't form a committee. Form a team: The A Team, the Action Team, Team (Your Town). You've likely been on a team at some point in your life. Perhaps you played sports growing up. Or you've been involved in local theater, the team effort where prima donnas and stagehands all must do their parts for the curtain to fall to the applause of a thrilled audience.

Forming Your Heart & Soul Team

<https://www.orton.org/resources/forming-your-heart-soul-team/>

Community engagement has been defined over the last two decades in multiple, evolving ways. One definition of community engagement is “the process of working collaboratively with relevant partners who share common goals and interests”. It involves “building authentic partnerships, including mutual respect and active, inclusive participation; power sharing and equity; mutual benefit or finding the ‘win-win’ possibility” in the collaborative project. The emphasis on community engagement promotes a focus on common ground and recognizes that communities have important knowledge and valuable experience to add to public stakeholder discussions.

Users and Beneficiaries of the activities and funds of the partnership. This is the most basic level of engagement. Advisers to the partnership through their involvement in consultations, working parties and evaluations which seek their guidance and feedback. Contributors to Management through membership of forums and steering groups that work alongside staff supervising progress on partnership activities. Decision Makers primarily through their membership of the partnership board, but also when periodic consultations are taking place about strategic choices and other major decisions. Deliverers of projects and programmes on behalf of the partnership and as local successor bodies that are being developed to take over projects and programmes from the partnership.

Building Partnerships: Key Considerations When Engaging Underserved Communities Under The Mhsa

[https://health.ucdavis.edu/crhd/Pdfs/resources/Building%20Partnerships\(yellow\).pdf](https://health.ucdavis.edu/crhd/Pdfs/resources/Building%20Partnerships(yellow).pdf)

Artscape's projects secure their financial sustainability and public support by ensuring that an ever-widening circle of partners, stakeholders and supporters are engaged in the project from the outset and can contribute to the development of a shared project vision. Building a network of partners, stakeholders and supporters is an ongoing process but the major focus is during the pre-project development phase.

Who Are My Stakeholders and How Do I Engage Them?

<http://www.artscapediy.org/Creative-Placemaking-Toolbox/Who-Are-My-Stakeholders-and-How-Do-I-Engage-Them.aspx>

Broad—and deep—engagement with community members is a fundamental building block of a successful Heart & Soul Community Planning project. We've worked hard to advance authentic engagement because it makes all the difference to building stronger communities; it is a means to an end in our work, and it is also an end in itself for the trust it builds, the ideas it sparks, and the new connections it creates.

Top 10 Tips for Inclusive Engagement

<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/top-10-tips-for-inclusive-engagement/>

These quotes continue to show us that community-based participation is necessary for long-term sustainability—and that community-based management committees are an effective mechanism for connecting participation to implementation.

What we learned in assignment four of OL 201 is that in many nonprofit projects, as the project nears completion, the beneficiaries have not been prepared to receive the continuation of project activities: and so the positive program outcomes stop. One of the reasons cited is that community members were not trained in the management of nor in the maintenance of program activities. The studies suggested the formation and training of community-based management committees could work to solve this challenge.

Community committees can be set up at different levels of sophistication—depending on the demands of the project that you are executing. A committee can be as simple as electing a group of community members to oversee the implementation, takeover and management of your project—or setting up a formal committee with bylaws, governing rules and regulations, fiduciary responsibilities, and state registration.

It's up to you to evaluate the level of involvement that your committee has in your project—partially based upon the complexity of the project. Last week we asked you to speak to your community contacts in an effort to get ideas for people who did serve on a committee. This week will be an opportunity to develop a workshop for meeting with your contacts and with their suggested committee members in order to form the committee itself.

So the workshop should have four basic components:

1. Introducing the concept to community members about a committee in a participatory workshop setting.
2. Consciousness-raising about the importance of having a committee and about skill sets that will need to be developed by committee members in order to participate.
3. Going through the step-by-step procedure of forming a committee with the workshop participants.
4. Electing or appointing committee members.

I look forward to seeing your work this week -- please move on to assignment 5.

Sincerely,
Tim Magee

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