



THE ROLES OF THE VOLUNTEER IN DEVELOPMENT





Capacity Building Toolkit 5

VOLUNTEER AS PROJECT CO-PLANNER

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VOLUNTEER AS PROJECT CO-PLANNER

KSA MATRIX AND LEARNING PLAN



	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
Knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) you need for this role	Project planning steps and cycle; local resource identification; resource development; examples of successful small-scale projects in sector and region	Small Project design and action planning skills; drafting and managing budgets; proposal writing; resource identification and mobilization; project monitoring and evaluation; time management	Tolerance for opposing views; thoroughness; diplomacy and tact; realistic expectations; flexibility
Your initiatives to learn more (Make a plan)	What knowledge you still need and where to find it: — — — — —	Skills you need to gain or improve and how you might work on further skill development: — — — — —	Things that will help you change any attitudes that will hinder your role: — — — — —

WHAT IS A PROJECT CO-PLANNER?

In the Peace Corps context, Volunteers serve as co-planners by helping their communities to identify, plan, implement, and evaluate small-scale projects that will enable them to address changes or improvements they want in their lives. These projects may relate to a primary technical assignment area (health, education, economic development, agriculture, etc.), or they may address other areas of concern for a particular community. In all cases, the projects should focus on specific local priorities and be managed by community members with Volunteer support.

As was described in the Introduction section of this RVID Toolkit series, project planning is part of a larger community development cycle, and the role of the Volunteer as a co-planner overlaps substantially with two other roles—those of community facilitator and change agent. Toolkits 2 and 4 focus on the Volunteer’s role in helping the community analyze its situation (resources, desires, needs), determine development priorities, and identify ideas for specific projects. Here in Toolkit 5 we *introduce* how to involve the community in moving from analysis to action through setting project goals and objectives, making an action plan and budget, mobilizing specific resources, monitoring the process, and evaluating results.

It is important to note that we do *not* focus on *each specific step and skill* involved in the planning process. The Peace Corps has developed a training resource entitled *The New Project Design and Management (PDM) Workshop Training Manual* (ICE T0107), which has detailed session plans,



handouts, and worksheets for planning small-scale projects with your community. Many Peace Corps posts offer the PDM workshop to Volunteers and Counterparts as part of their In-Service Training. Ask your APCD if a PDM workshop is being or could be arranged for your program. If you can't attend a PDM workshop, we recommend that you request a copy of the manual and study and use it when you are ready to begin actual project planning with community members and Counterparts.

As we have emphasized in the other Toolkits, Volunteers should always **partner with the community to get the work done** so that genuine capacity building takes place. This can be especially hard when the planning process is moving more slowly than you anticipated. Volunteers often have to remind themselves, "It's the community's project, not mine."

EXAMPLES OF THE CO-PLANNER'S ROLE

1 Kathy and Jeff, a Volunteer couple assigned to work in a Papua New Guinea Rural Community Development program, organized a health conference for women in the local district. One conference participant, a woman named Mal, left the meeting motivated and began a series of mini-conferences in her own village. Kathy gave Mal resources and Mal adapted the information so that her villagers could understand it. Mal was dedicated to helping her community and Kathy became dedicated to supporting Mal's efforts. When Kathy was invited to attend a health education conference sponsored by Save the Children, she decided to take Mal with her. Although the conference was in English and attended mostly by nurses, Mal understood enough of what was going on to take notes and discuss the information with Kathy. They talked about how this information could be applied to their own village; they talked about Mal's dreams for her people and how these dreams could be realized, brainstorming ideas for possible projects.

Of all the ideas discussed, Mal was most excited about the prospect of starting an egg farm. Eggs would provide the local people with an easy, affordable source for the protein they needed. Although people in her district loved eggs, no one was raising hens to produce them, and buying eggs required a 1½-hour bus ride to the nearest town where they were sold. To summarize a long but successful story, Kathy and Jeff arranged to have Mal and two other villagers attend a Peace Corps PDM workshop where they learned and practiced project planning. Afterwards, they returned to their community and began engaging more and more people in the egg farm project idea. Sometimes helping with transportation, other times offering facilitation and technical knowledge, Jeff and Kathy were careful not to become the leaders of the project. Instead, they encouraged Mal and the other project champions to build a network of support, get local people trained in the knowledge and skills they would need to carry out the project, and carefully attend to how the community would manage project finances and ensure sustainability.

[From *Above and Beyond: Secondary Activities for Peace Corps Volunteers*, p. 63, Peace Corps, Washington, DC. 1995. (ICE M0052)]



2

A Volunteer in Côte d'Ivoire worked with a local women's cooperative to create a project that combined income generation and HIV/AIDS prevention. To raise money for an agricultural venture, the co-op decided to put on a health theater fundraiser. Together, the Volunteer and co-op established guidelines for culturally appropriate HIV/AIDS prevention messages, and created comedic and educational performances to convey the messages to the community. The co-op divided into groups of 10 and each group presented the skits over the course of two days. The group collected money (about 16 cents) from each person who wanted to see the skits. Each person who paid the admission price received a condom as a receipt. With the money from the fundraiser, the co-op plans to buy seeds to start a vegetable garden and then sell the vegetables in the village and neighboring villages' markets.

[From *HIV/AIDS: Integrating Prevention and Care into Your Sector*, p. 31, Idea Book, Peace Corps, 2000. (ICE M0081)]

Three bricklayers were asked what they were doing. One said, 'I'm laying bricks.' The second replied, 'I'm building a wall.' The third stated, 'I'm constructing a temple.'

— Anonymous





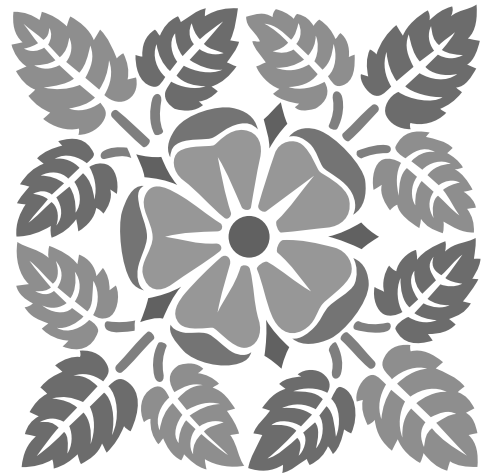
Capacity Building Toolkit 5

MODELS, CONCEPTS, AND CASES

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

Volunteers, Counterparts, community members, and Peace Corps staff have identified a number of elements that promote project success and sustainability. These characteristics include:

- Involvement of the community and all beneficiaries in all phases of the project planning, implementation, and evaluation
- Analysis of the situation and determining what the community wants to do
- If a problem is identified, a problem analysis needs to be done and the community must select a cause that it can reasonably work on
- Realistic and doable project goals
- Realistic and concrete project objectives
- Clearly defined project tasks and responsibilities of all people involved
- Well-designed time frame and budget, so that the objectives are met within the time and resource limits
- Partial, concrete, and tangible results achieved during implementation of the project
- Effective monitoring system that measures the project's progress, identifies problems, and provides a mechanism for necessary changes in the project
- Methods for keeping the larger community informed and involved



(continued)



CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

- Evaluation of each phase of the project and of the entire project after it is finished, based on indicators set beforehand
- Logical and effective structure of project design and management
- Qualified persons assigned to specific roles
- A mechanism for training community members in effective maintenance of the project, if required





PROJECT PLANNING AND THE COMMUNITY ACTION CYCLE

Project planning is part of the larger community development process that begins with the community assessing its resources and needs and deciding what its development priorities are. Once the priorities are established, community members begin to identify and plan specific projects that will enable them to address their development goals. The steps in project planning are frequently presented in a linear, or perhaps a circular, diagram, with one step neatly following another. In fact, rarely does a project develop—let alone get implemented—in such a neat pattern. Several steps may be happening at once as well as a need to backtrack to reconsider or redo something.

THE COMMUNITY ACTION CYCLE





HOW TO DESIGN A COMMUNITY PROJECT

[IMPORTANT NOTE to PST Trainees and trainers: The following design process was developed for use by Volunteers and their Counterparts and communities. If you are doing a practice project during PST, you will need to adapt this design process to fit your situation. Pay particular attention to the notes labeled “Hints for PST projects” to help you refocus the framework appropriately. Also, review the activity description “Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating a Practice Project” on page 37 of this Toolkit.]

Once you have worked with the community to identify the priority issues it wants to address (better locally available health services, more education opportunities for girls, improved soil conservation, easier credit sources for individuals, and so on), then you are ready to help it plan a project around the selected priority issue. The first major part of the planning process is creating what we call the “basic design” or broad framework for the project plan. The design is built around six important questions (see box below), which you and your community work together to answer.

THE PROJECT DESIGN	
The Questions	The Design Outline
1. What is our preferred dream or vision of the future? (relating to the priority issue)	Dream or vision statement describing a preferred future
2. What are our existing assets that will help us reach our vision? (sometimes done <u>before</u> and after the visioning)	List of assets, best resources
3. How can we make our vision happen?	List of possible strategies/opportunities; ranking and selection of best strategies
4. What are the long-term and short-term results we want?	Project goals and objectives
5. How will we know if our project has been successful?	Signs/indicators of success or achievement
6. How feasible is our project?	Feasibility analysis

See the Project Design Worksheet on the following pages.



PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHEET

[This is a worksheet for designing a small-scale project for one of your community's development priorities. See The New Project Design and Management Training Workshop Manual, Peace Corps, Washington, DC. 2000 (ICE T0107) for more information and sample designs.]

YOUR SELECTED PRIORITY ISSUE IS:

1 What is your preferred vision or dream of the future?

Focusing on your priority issue, imagine the future you want for your community. What does it look like? Use pictures, symbols, words (or whatever!) and create your vision here on this page.

[Hints for PST projects: Since you are in a learning mode during PST, your project will likely have more to do with your own capacity building than with addressing a real priority in the community. That said, you can still ask community participants to help you envision what you all want to get out of the project.]



2 **What are the community's existing assets that will help you reach your vision?**

Think about all of the strengths and resources your community has that could help it reach the vision. What are the physical resources? Groups such as civic organizations, NGOs, government services, and businesses? Individuals with relevant skills and experience? Strong relationships or affiliations with others from outside of the community? Use the space below to list as many of these resources and assets as you can identify.

[Hints for PST projects: Consider your trainers, fellow Trainees, and other resources relating to your Peace Corps training program as part of the local community. Keep in mind that your PST program will have minimal or no monetary funds to support community service projects.]



**3**

What strategies or approaches will work best?

Considering the nature of the vision and the resources available to the community, think about the different ways you might approach the project. What strategies can you think of that might work well? What opportunities are out there that you could use? Let your mind flow freely and think of several different approaches. Write them down below.

[Hints for PST projects: In your limited context, this step does not have to be too involved. The idea is to make some preliminary decisions about the best way to do the project. In a park cleanup project, for example, two different strategies might be (a) to involve a large number of people (all ages) and do the cleanup in one day, or (b) to engage a group of youth and work in the park a few afternoons over the course of two weeks. Based on your resources, people's daily schedules, and local traditions, which approach seems most likely to succeed?]

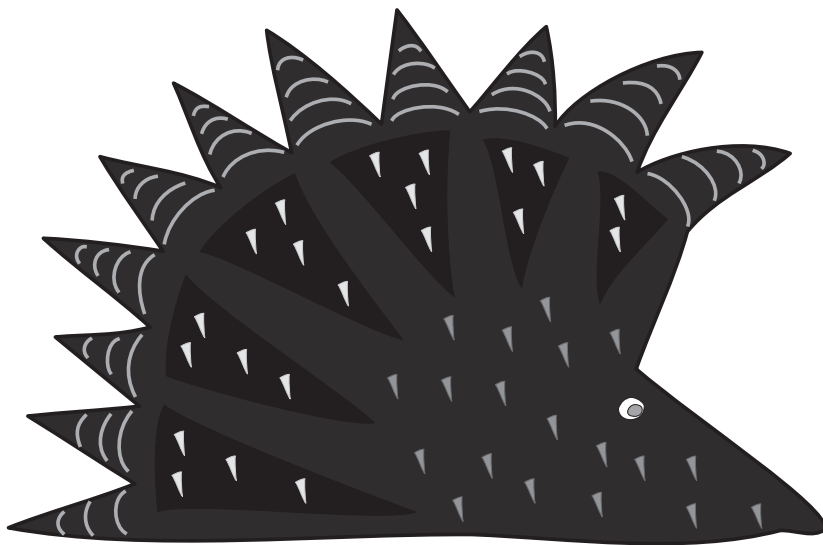
Possible Strategies or Approaches:



Selection of Best Strategies

With your planning partners, weigh the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies on your list, narrowing the options down to two or three strategies. Then, decide what criteria you want to use to make a final decision. Some possible criteria include: acceptability to the community, sustainability, cost, number of people benefited, greatest likelihood of success in the short term, and so on. Sometimes, it helps to use a decision matrix to structure this process. (See *Toolkit 2: Volunteer as Change Agent*, page 16 for a description and illustration of the decision matrix.)

Possible Strategy	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3



4 What are the long-term and short-term results you want?

Let's start with the long-term results. Look at the work you have done so far in this design—your vision, the list of community assets and resources, and best strategies or approaches for the project. Now, think about the desired **result(s)** you want to get out of this project. (Pretend for a moment that you have just finished the project and you've invited a Peace Corps staff member and a ministry representative to see the results. What would that look like?) These major results are the **goals** for your project. The number of goals will depend on the scope of your project. Most small projects have only one or two goals.

Project goals...

- restate the vision and approach in terms of what is to be accomplished;
- define the long-term results or changes that the project will bring about; and
- are realistic and include an overall time frame.

Write your goal(s) in the boxes provided on the following page. Leave the sections for “objectives” and “signs of success” blank for now.

[Hints for PST projects: Your PST project is likely to be so small scale and short term, that it will not require a goal. You can simplify the design process by working with two or three objectives. See some sample objectives for our park cleanup project on page 15.]

PROJECT GOAL # 1

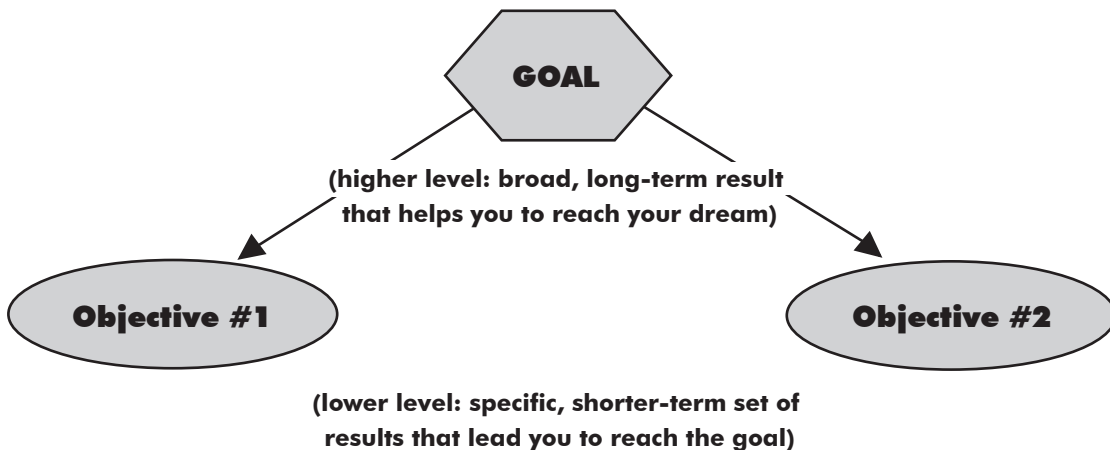
Objectives	Signs of Success
Objective 1	
Objective 2	



PROJECT GOAL # 2

Objectives	Signs of Success
Objective 1	
Objective 2	

Project Objectives: Objectives are similar to goals but much more specific and focused on the short-term results you need to meet the longer-term goal(s) of the project. Goals and objectives form a hierarchy as illustrated below. For each project goal, you should have at least two objectives.



Project Objectives...

- are the short-term results you need to meet the longer-term goal(s) of the project
- are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound



- answer these questions:
 - Who is the target group or individuals expected to change?
 - What action or change is expected?
 - When will the desired action or change be accomplished?
 - How much change is expected?



Go back to the grid on the preceding pages and write in your objectives for each of the goals you've listed.

[Hints for PST projects: Here are some possible objectives for our sample park clean-up project. Please note that the second objective refers to the Trainees' own capacity building.]

Objective 1: *By the end of March, young people and Trainees in our community will clean and improve the landscaping in the central plaza such that it is a safer and more pleasant place to spend time.*

Objective 2: *By the end of PST, Trainees will gain hands-on experience in planning, implementing, and evaluating a small-scale park improvement project that engages at least 15 local youth in all phases of the process.]*

5 How will you know if your project has been successful?

This important question helps you to determine how to measure (or evaluate) the achievements you expect from the project. It pushes you to think about what “success” means with regard to this particular project. For example, if your project centers around increasing local awareness of the need for forest preservation and a major strategy is to design and conduct environmental awareness camps for youth at the local preserve, what would indicate to you that you had achieved something? One measure of short-term success is an increase in knowledge about local environmental concerns on the part of the students attending the camp. You could administer a pre- and post-test to measure their learning more precisely. Though hard to do, you should also think about what larger and lasting impacts you hope your project will have on the people and the environment. In this same example, maybe you hope that youth will begin volunteering to work on some small environmental improvement activities sponsored by the preserve, or bring their parents and siblings to special events at the preserve.

Look at the objectives you have set for your project. What are some ways you could measure your achievement of each one? List at least one “sign of success” beside each objective on the worksheet.



[Hints for PST projects: Since PST projects are short term, you should focus on modest, immediate signs of success. In the example of the park cleanup project, some signs of success would include the following:

Objective 1:

- *The plaza is clean and new plantings are being cared for by the youth.*
- *More people are using the park in the evenings than did before the cleanup project.*
- *People, including the mayor and the teachers, give public recognition to the youth and Trainees involved in the project.*
- *The young people express interest in starting another environmental project.*

Objective 2:

- *The youth participated actively from beginning to end of the process (came to planning meetings, located and helped to obtain materials, and so on).*
- *The Trainees and youth finished tasks on time and within the budget.*
- *The young people and Trainees communicated clearly with each other in the local language.*
- *The Trainees are able to identify key lessons learned from this project to apply to their future work at site.]*

6

How feasible is your project?

At several points in the planning process, you should stop and consider the *feasibility* of the project. Is this project logical? Is it possible? Use the following questions to help you test the feasibility of the basic design you have created here. The insights you gain from this analysis will help you determine if you need to adjust your goals and objectives.

FEASIBILITY TEST

1. What, beyond your direct control, could cause this project to fail? (For example, drought or flooding could negatively affect an agricultural project, local elections could mean the loss of a leader who strategically supported the project, etc.)

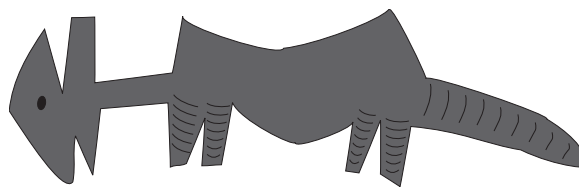
2. How can you (the community) improve the likelihood that the project will succeed?



3. All things considered, do the benefits justify the costs?

4. Does the community have the capacity to handle and *sustain* a project of this type and scope? If not, how can we narrow the focus to make it more manageable and sustainable?

[Hints for PST projects: Questions 1 and 2 are relevant to even short-term PST projects. In the case of our park cleanup project, what if the mayor doesn't trust "Trainees and children" to do a quality improvement on the park? Perhaps we could show him drawings or examples of what the landscaped areas could look like and involve him in the plans. What if the parents of the youth are resistant to their children doing a public project for four or five afternoons rather than coming home to work on family-related chores? Maybe we could get the mayor and the teachers to help us convince the parents of the potential benefits. What if the youth themselves get bored after the first afternoon or two of cleanup and stop showing up? For one thing, we need to be clear with the young people about the amount and nature of the work. Also, we should plan some fun activities and rewards that will help to hold their interest. Since our project takes place outdoors, weather is an important consideration. If we are in the middle of the rainy season, the project might not work at all!]



Congratulations!

You now have the basic design for your community project. Although building this type of framework may seem tedious and downright difficult at times, it is a critical part of the planning process and community members (such as a design team or committee) should be fully engaged in its development. This is how you are building capacity in others to do project planning in the future without you! Also, it is helpful to remember that the design (along with the action plan) is a living document in the sense that it may need to be updated and amended as the community begins implementing project tasks.





THE PROJECT ACTION PLAN

After community members have completed the basic design for their project, they are ready to prepare the action plan containing *the details* for how the project will be implemented. The action plan includes three components: (a) tasks for each project objective, (b) roles and responsibilities of the community and other project stakeholders, and (c) the timeline for getting the project done. Here is a worksheet for drafting a simple community project action plan.

ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET FOR PROJECT:

Goal # _____ (from the Project Design Worksheet)

Objective # _____ (from the Project Design Worksheet)

Tasks: What to do? (List in sequence)	Roles: Who will do it? (Place asterisk beside name of person with primary responsibility)	Timeline: When will it start and finish? (Expressed in weeks or months)											
[Sample PST park cleanup project]													
Have a meeting w/mayor to get his ideas about improving the park	Trainees,* local teacher, PST trainer												
Recruit interested youth and visit their parents to discuss the project	Trainees,* local teacher												
Orient youth to project design and get their ideas	Trainees,* PST trainer												
Get plants and trees (donated from nearby agricultural demonstration farm)	Trainees, PST trainer*												
Gather other materials (sand, rocks for edging, etc.)	Trainees, young people												
Etc.													





THE PROJECT BUDGET

An obvious and important part of a community project plan is the budget. Before the community can start implementing the actual project, it must identify all the resources it will need to complete the project tasks, and then estimate the cost or value of those resources. General categories of resources for small community-based projects include people or human resources, equipment, materials, supplies, and transportation. Once community planners have outlined the budget, they can then determine how to acquire the resources. Some may be available within the community, others donated or bartered, and others purchased with cash funds.

The budget plan provides information about the requirements for outside expertise or training of local people, and loans, grants, or other funding to purchase or rent equipment and materials. Many project planners gasp when they see the figure under “total project cost” and realize they need to either find significant funds or make some creative cuts in the project scope. Hence, the budget serves as a reality check in addition to its role as spending guide.

There are many ways to develop a budget and most organizations have preferred formats for organizing the project cost information. For our purposes here, we will concentrate on three general categories of costs and offer a simple budget worksheet. As with all of the previous steps in project planning, the community should be involved in the budget work as well.

BUDGET CATEGORIES FOR SMALL-SCALE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

1. Human Resources/Labor:

In this category, you identify all of the people you need to carry out the project. To determine labor needs, examine each of the tasks you have delineated in your action plan, and try to imagine how that activity will be performed. Ask:

- Who is going to do it?
- What skills or knowledge do they need?



In trying to determine whether someone is available locally, go back to the asset maps and capacity inventories you and the community may have created earlier (see Toolkits 2 and 4). Does someone have the skills and knowledge needed on the project? Or, who has the connections in the larger region or nationally to get the needed skilled persons? Are there ways to acquire outside help without cost by going through certain channels? If your community has not done an assets map, it would be a valuable activity to do as you begin working on designing a project. If the skills are not available locally, consider the notion of providing training to local people as a part of the project, especially if the skills are needed for sustainability.



2. Equipment, Materials, Supplies:

For each task, identify any equipment, materials, and supplies that will be required. Equipment items such as slide projectors, well drills, and jigsaws might be bought, rented, or borrowed. Supplies are consumables such as pencils, paper, cooking oil, or gas. Materials are also consumable, except that the time frame for their consumption is much longer. Examples include building materials, books, fencing, thermometers, and so forth. Materials and supplies may need to be purchased or they could possibly be obtained through “in-kind” donations from local businesses, other institutions, or individuals. Check to make sure your project really needs all the items you have listed in this category. Sometimes we forget some of the essentials and include items that are “nice” but not necessary.

3. Transportation and Other Costs:

There are almost always transportation needs in projects and they are often forgotten when developing a budget. Equipment or materials may need to be transported. Members of the group may need to make trips to attend meetings, visit a similar project, or go to the bank. Others may need to visit your project site: skilled laborers, extension agents, or experts to provide advice, and so on. Since transportation is costly, it is important to anticipate the need and get accurate estimates.

Besides transportation, there may be other costs that don't fit into the first two categories of the budget worksheets (human resources and equipment, materials, supplies). For example, you might need to rent a room to conduct a workshop, or pay for participants' lodging at a conference center. These types of expenses may be placed under “Transportation and Other Costs.”

BUDGET WORKSHEETS

Here is a sample budget worksheet that you may adapt and use with your community. The worksheet has three pages: pages for each of the three major cost categories listed above plus a summary sheet. On the summary sheet, you will see columns for dividing the total costs for each category into three amounts:

- amount provided by the community or project group
- amount provided by a partnering group (useful when two or more groups are collaborating closely on the same project)
- amount needed from outside the community (for example, grant funds from a donor organization)



One main reason for this costing breakdown is to underscore and value the contributions that the community is making toward the project. Oftentimes, we portray the community's contribution in general terms—“they'll supply the labor” or “they'll gather locally available materials such as sand and clay.” A better approach is to estimate the actual cost of all of the resources needed, i.e., “what would it cost if we had to pay for it?” That way we can (a) know the total real cost more definitively, and (b) show our pride at just how much the community can offset those real costs and reduce the need to seek outside funds. If your community is likely to need some funding from the outside, then you will be more successful in securing those funds if you can clearly show contributions from within the community.



BUDGET WORKSHEET 1

Project Name: _____

Tasks (from Action Plan)	Human Resources/Labor Needed (Trainers, teachers, technicians, construction workers, drivers, etc.)	Number of people X	Cost, Number of days X	Wage/day or job =	Subtotal
Subtotal this Page:					()
Person-time donated:					()



BUDGET WORKSHEET 2

Project Name: _____

Tasks (from Action Plan)	Materials/Supplies/ Equipment	Transportation/ Other Cost Items	Unit Cost X No. Needed = Cost Subtotal
Subtotal this Page:			





BUDGET SUMMARY WORKSHEET

Project Name: _____

Budget Category	Total Cost by Category	Amount Provided by Community or Project Group	Amount Provided by Project Partner(s)	Amount Needed from Outside Community
Project Totals:				



SAMPLE BUDGET WORKSHEET 1

Project Name: _____

Tasks (from Action Plan)	Human Resources/Labor Needed (trainers, teachers, technicians, construction workers, drivers, etc.)	Number of people X	Cost, Number of days X	Wage/day or job X	= Subtotal
1. Conduct Environmental Awareness (EA) Camp – 40 youth	Park EA leaders (staff time donated by park)*	2	3 (prep day + 2-day camp)	20.00	(120.00)*
	Local participating teachers (teachers' time donated by school)	3	3 (prep day + 2-day camp)	20.00	(180.00)*
	Park administrative assistant (staff time donated by park)	1	2 days (equivalent)	15.00	(30.00)
	Local traditional forest users	3	1 day (equivalent)	10.00	30.00
			<i>Subtotal for Task 1</i>		<i>30.00/ (330.00)</i>
2. Plan and implement conservation project at school Plant live tree border to prevent erosion at edge of play field	Participating teachers (teachers' time donated by school)	2	2 days (equivalent)	20.00	(80.00)
	Park staff to help plan and advise on project (staff time donated by park)	1	1.5 days	20.00	(30.00)
			<i>Subtotal for Task 2</i>		<i>(110.00)</i>
Subtotal this Page:					30.00
Person-time donated:					(440.00)





THE CONCEPT OF WINNABLE VICTORIES

Consider the concept of “winnable victories” popularized by Saul Alinsky, an American community activist. His idea is that, in order for people to gain self-confidence, it is necessary to start small and “win” with small achievements. If, on the contrary, the group members try to tackle something too big, they may not be able to see the progress they are making and become discouraged, thereby damaging their self-esteem.



Winnable victories are particularly important in situations where the community or organization has little or no experience in project planning and implementation, or in cases where recent project attempts have fallen short or failed. An activity as simple as painting a school building or cleaning up trash in a town plaza can have the effect of boosting participants’ motivation to try something more substantial the next time.

What are some examples of potential “winnable victories” for the organizations or groups you are familiar with in your community?





IN PLANNING, THE PROCESS IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE PRODUCT

Whenever you get involved in project planning with your community, it is essential to consider the process (who is involved and how you work together) as much as the product (what you produce or accomplish). Authentic community capacity building must emphasize both of these elements.

Here are some examples of *process objectives* that you and your community might target during project planning and implementation.

- Ensure that key policy and decision makers and community leaders contribute to the project.
- Ensure that those who are most affected by the project focus have a meaningful voice in the planning process.
- Enlist technical assistance from external organizations that have desired expertise.
- Identify and leverage needed resources to carry out the project activities.
- Ensure that what is learned through exploration and investigation of the priority issue(s) is applied to the planning process.
- Strengthen individuals' and organizations' analysis, planning, and negotiation skills.
- Build community leaders' skills to facilitate a planning process that integrates those who are most affected by the issue.
- Establish effective communication channels and relationships between community actors.
- Ensure that opposing points of view can be voiced and discussed in a constructive manner.



[Adapted with permission from *How to Mobilize Communities for Health and Social Change* (draft form), Chapter 7, by Lisa Howard-Grabman and Gail Snetro, Save the Children Federation, Westport, CT.]





PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA

In the Introduction section of this Toolkit, we presented a list of factors that contribute to a sustainable community development process. These same criteria may be adapted and applied to measuring the sustainability of a small-scale project.

- **Culturally sustainable:**

Does the project design fit within and build on local beliefs and traditions, or will it be seen as an “outsider’s idea” and not be acceptable or continued when you (the Volunteer) leaves?

- **Politically sustainable:**

When there is no longer an outsider in the project, will it be sustainable within the sociopolitical context?

- **Economically sustainable:**

Will there be sufficient local resources (or the capacity to generate them) when you or other supportive outsiders leave?

- **Managerially sustainable:** Will there be the local management capacity to carry on the work when you leave?

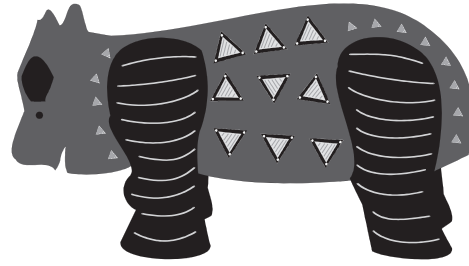
- **Environmentally sustainable:** As the project grows, will the environment be able to sustain the use of resources?



By addressing these questions at the outset of the planning process, you and the community will be more likely to create a meaningful project that has the impact you desire.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD: KENYA



Two Volunteers were assigned to the small village of Wanjohi located on the western slopes of the Aberdare Mountain Range. Wanjohi is a small farming community in a district of approximately 40,000 people. When the Volunteers first arrived in Wanjohi, they assisted the community in analyzing and generating solutions to problems that already existed. After speaking with many people throughout the community, the Wanjohi Health Center, and the Public Health Office, it quickly became apparent that people's access to health information was quite limited. The idea of a Health and Medical Resource Center was suggested and received enthusiastic response from everyone.

However, many logistical problems had to be resolved before they could start. Issues had to be addressed such as, How to start this kind of project? Where should the Resource Center be located? Who would manage it and be responsible for materials? What resources were already available? It was decided that a room would be designated for the Resource Center within the Wanjohi Health Center, which is centrally located and easily accessible to most people. The Health Center staff also volunteered to rotate through so supervision would always be present at the Resource Center during business hours. The Public Health Technician agreed to manage the facility and catalog all incoming materials and resources.

The next step was to solicit books from donors and major health institutions. After compiling a list of organizations, they started a mailing campaign that procured approximately 100 promising donors. The response was overwhelming. The Health Center has received approximately 200,000 shillings worth of books. More are on the way.

The Resource Center started as a small-scale project that has caused a chain reaction in initiating other projects in the community, creating confidence, and motivating individuals to educate others. For instance, the Health Center personnel started to give seminars at local schools based on information researched from donated books. Nurses were able to research child-care topics and relate the information to their patients. The clinical officer was able to research such sensitive subjects as drug dependency and HIV/AIDS, problems that are increasing in the area.

The Swahili have a saying, "*haba na haba hujaza kibaba*," which means "little by little always fills the cup." Unexpectedly, this project is little by little having an impact on a small village located on the side of the Aberdares. Through the efforts of the two Peace Corps Volunteers (Health and Environment), a Health and Medical Resource Center was born in Wanjohi. With effective cross-sector collaboration, careful planning, and designation of a manager, their work will continue to benefit the community.

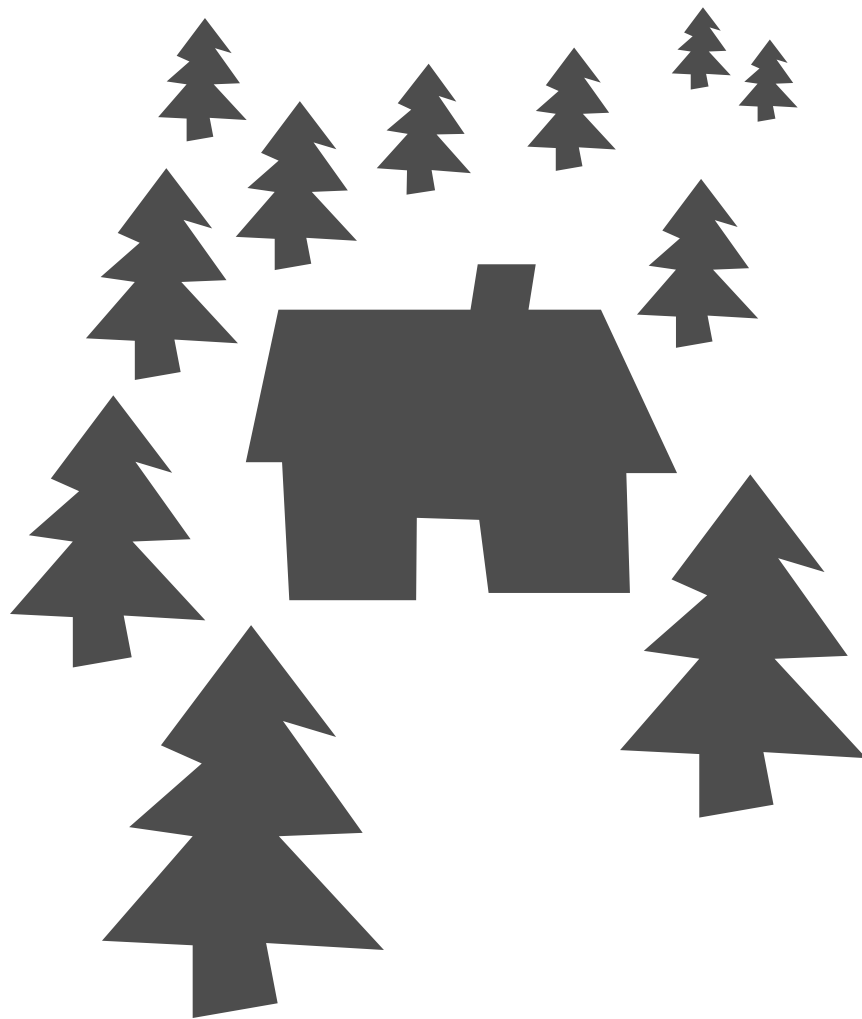


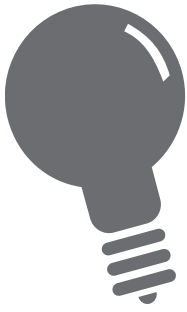
BULGARIA

An Environmental Education Volunteer teaches ecology and English at the Municipal Children’s Center in Balchik, Bulgaria, and at other local schools. Balchik is a small town on the Black Sea coast; he is the first Volunteer assigned there. “I’m happy about making a few inroads in town and I think most people here know who I am and have a positive impression of the Peace Corps.”

With his Bulgarian colleagues, the Volunteer helped plan a full week of activities for Earth Day, including planting 550 trees at two schools. Twenty-five students and teachers from nearby towns also came to help. Balchik businesses and private sponsors donated all costs and materials, including trees, planting soil, food, and accommodations for the visitors.

In the coming year, Balchik will be the site of one of five schools piloting the GLOBE environmental education program. “We’ve had many false starts on other projects and sometimes I think it would be easier if I did everything myself, but what benefit is that?” says the Volunteer. “I try to keep thinking ‘our project’ versus ‘my project’—it’s very slow sometimes, but it’s why I’m here.”





IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING YOUR ROLE AS A PROJECT PLANNER

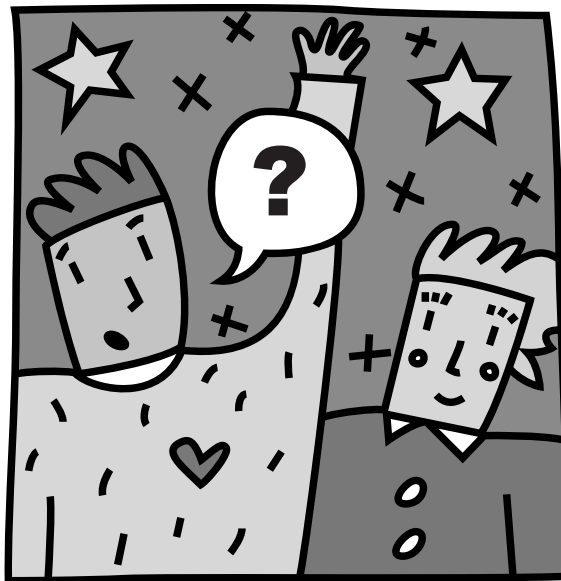
INTERVIEWING EXERCISE: WHAT MAKES PROJECTS SUCCEED OR FAIL IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

PURPOSE

To assess current or past community projects in terms of their overall success and sustainability; to identify the key elements that seem to account for a particular project's success or, conversely, its failure

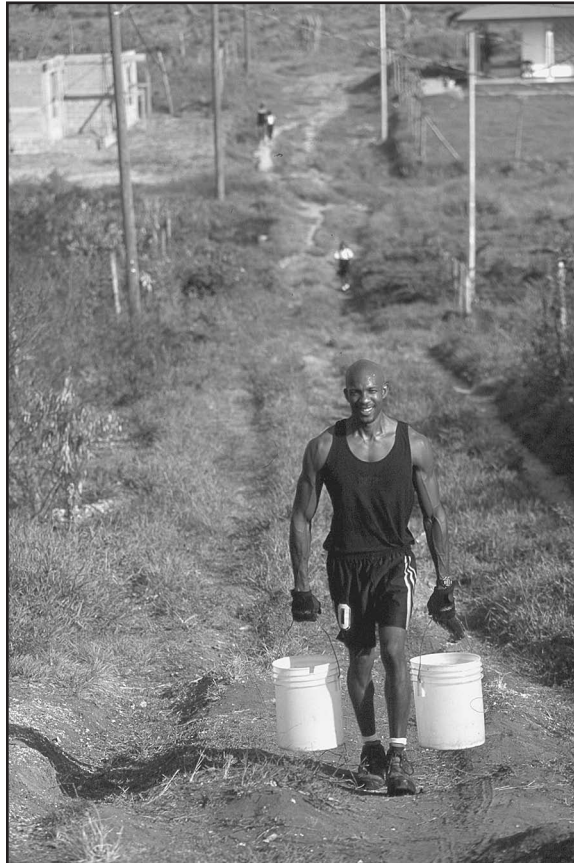
ACTIVITY

1. With the help of your trainers, Counterpart, or community leaders, identify one or more community projects that are ongoing or have been completed in the past year. Find out who the key project stakeholders are, i.e., those people with a vested interest in the project outcomes. Stakeholders typically include project planners, implementers, beneficiaries, and funders; they may also include people who are opposed to the project and have the power to negatively affect its outcome.
2. Using the list of “Characteristics of Successful Projects” (pp. 5–6) and the Project Sustainability Criteria (p. 27), draft several questions to use as an interview guide for assessing the success of the project. Some sample questions might include:





- How has this project involved community members? Who was involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases? Who are the project leaders?
 - Is there a difference in the way men and women (or girls and boys) participate(d) in the project?
 - How has the project made use of the community's existing resources? How has the community supported or obtained additional resources for the project?
 - How has the project built the capacity of local community members?
 - What kind of lasting impacts (positive or negative) do you think this project will have on the community? Impact on men? Impact on women?
- 3.** Using your interview guide, meet with two or three different types of stakeholders to learn their perspectives about the selected project. If your second language skills are limited, try to team with someone who is more fluent and conduct the informal interviews together as a pair. Afterwards, share your information with other Trainees, trainers, or your Counterpart. Try to isolate specific factors that seem to have contributed to the success or failure of the project. Discuss whether or not these factors are universal (i.e., they would have the same effect on any project of a similar scale) or are more peculiar to your community, region, or culture.
 - 4.** Keep the a of factors and pertinent information to refer to when you are ready to begin planning projects with your community.





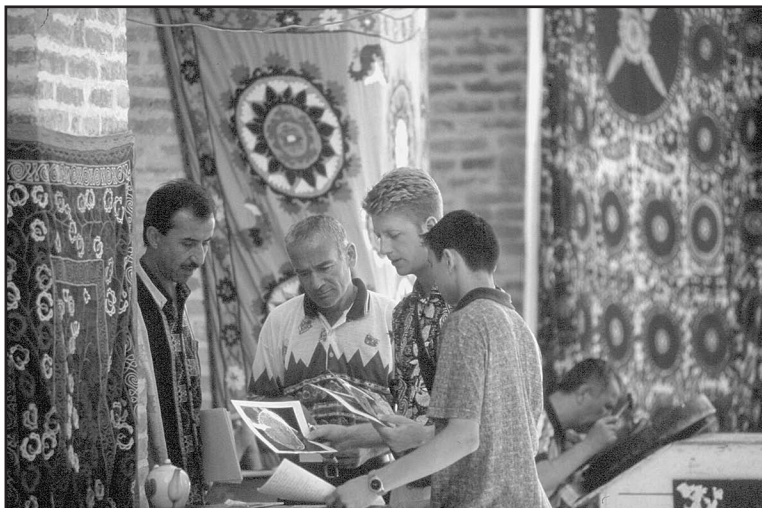
FINDING RESOURCES INSIDE THE COMMUNITY

PURPOSE

To become more aware of existing community resources related to your particular technical sector

ACTIVITY

1. Working with your fellow Trainees or your Counterpart, canvass your local community for resources that might be needed for or applied to sector-specific project activities. For example, if you are a Volunteer assigned to work in an Environmental Education Project, consider the types of small-scale projects you and your community might attempt—a curriculum development project, a youth camp, a teacher training workshop, and so on. Look around the community to ascertain what human, physical, and material resources might *already be there* to tap. List as many resources as you can find.
2. Ask your host family, friends, and trainers to help you see hidden assets that can become “in-kind” contributions to a particular project. In-kind contributions are non-cash items such as the following: a local person with particular construction skills who is willing to advise on the project, a local business that is willing to lend the use of a needed piece of equipment, or materials that may be gathered for no cash cost (sand, palm fronds, rocks, etc.).
3. If you are in PST, join together with other Trainees in your technical assignment area and compare your lists.





IDENTIFYING LOCALLY ACCEPTABLE WAYS TO HELP COMMUNITIES RAISE FUNDS FOR PROJECTS

PURPOSE

To identify traditional and non-traditional ways for raising modest project funds

[NOTE: When talking about fundraising, it is important to clarify that we are referring to fundraising activities conducted by the community to benefit their projects. The Peace Corps prohibits Volunteers from participating in fundraising activities that would result in personal benefits for themselves.]



ACTIVITY

1. Using your observation and interviewing skills, find out how people in your host community have traditionally raised funds when they want to implement a new project or activity. For example, people may conduct raffles or sponsor a special sport event for which they charge an admission fee. Who is responsible for these fundraising activities? How easy or difficult is it to manage each type of activity? Which fundraising methods seem to be the most successful? Are they more successful during specific times of the year? (If so, why?)
2. After you have identified local fundraising methods, get together with other Trainees, Volunteers, and/or Counterparts and add other ideas you may have seen or used to raise project funds. Here are some examples of fundraising techniques used successfully by Volunteers and their communities:
 - Place donation boxes in public places.
 - Collect and recycle materials for cash or other resources.
 - Sponsor fairs and expositions (charge for displays, sell food, charge admission).
 - Write and distribute solicitation letter with inspirational story.
 - Make small craft items to sell and/or distribute to potential sponsors.
 - Swap in-kind gifts with other NGOs.

- Sponsor a talent show, “non-talent” show, concert, or dance (charge admission fee and sell food).
- Show an outdoor movie (charge admission fee and sell food).
- Have a car wash.
- Create and sell local postcards or T-shirts.



- 3.** Once you have a list of fundraising ideas that have been successful in your community, consider these questions:
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of a community earning its own project funds?
 - What kinds of skills and abilities do these fundraising methods call for? Where can we find these skills?

Little strokes fell great oaks.
— Benjamin Franklin





PRACTICE EXERCISE: WRITING PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

PURPOSE

To practice drafting goals and objectives for a small project; to better understand the difference and relationship between a goal and an objective in the context of a small-scale project

ACTIVITY

1. Read the following story:

NITA'S DREAM

Nita is a 16-year-old girl who lives in a small village. She has grown up in this village with her brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts, and uncles. She goes to school fairly regularly, and helps her mother in the house and the garden. Although Nita has never left her village, she dreams of attending the university in the capital city where she can study business and have a career, like her cousin Nafta. Nafta visits a few times a year with stories of city life. This dream of going to the university has been with Nita for many years, but lately it is all she can think about, especially as her family begins to talk about marriage for her.

One hot and quiet evening, Nita is lying restlessly in her bed, tossing and turning and trying to sleep. Her mind is whirling with images of the city and school and life outside her village. She abruptly gets up and quietly finds a candle. She tears a sheet of paper from her school notebook. At the top she writes, "University." Then she begins to make a list:

- *Talk to school counselor by March about different universities and scholarship opportunities.*
- *Write to four different universities to request information within two months.*
- *Study mathematics at least one hour per day for the next term.*
- *Apply for university entrance examination before spring deadline.*
- *Discuss plans with mother and aunt.*

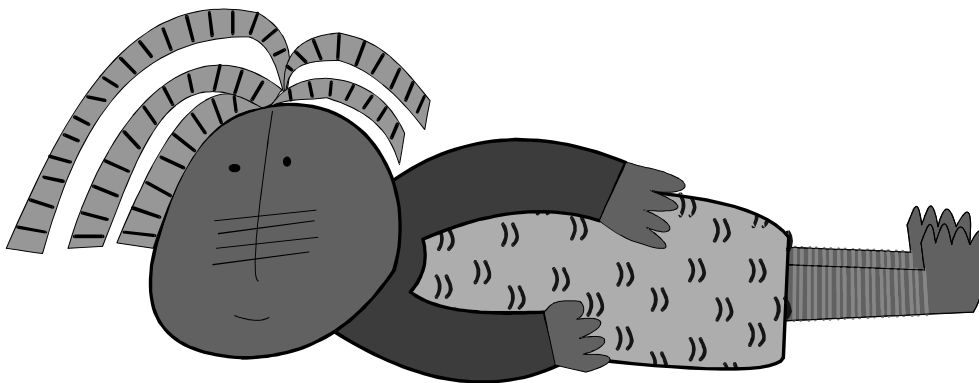
She rereads what she has written and, satisfied with her plan, crawls into bed to sleep.



- 2.** After reading the story, how would you describe Nita’s dream? How would you state this in terms of a goal? (As needed, refer to the definition of a goal in the Project Design Worksheet on page 13.) Write the goal in the space below:

- 3.** How would you describe the list Nita developed? Are these major steps or activities she will carry out in order to reach her goal? What other activities could be included on this list? Review the definition of “objective” in the Project Design Worksheet on page 14. What are some of the characteristics of Nita’s objectives? Are they SMART objectives? Use the space below to adjust and/or add to Nita’s list of objectives:

- 4.** Review the relationship between the goal and the objectives you (and Nita!) have written. If Nita accomplishes all these objectives, will she likely reach her goal and make her dream come true?



[Adapted with permission from *Project Design for Program Managers*, pp. 33-37, CEDPA Training Manual Series, Volume II, Centre for Development and Population Activities, Washington, DC. 1994.]





PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING, AND EVALUATING A PRACTICE PROJECT DURING PST

PURPOSE

To practice the steps in project planning by designing, implementing, and evaluating a small project during PST; to practice doing a project in a safe environment (with peers and host community members you already know); to help community members (project participants) learn new information or skills of benefit to them

ACTIVITY

During most PSTs, there are opportunities to plan and carry out small projects or activities. Sometimes these may be related to your technical Project (small business development, natural resource management, health and nutrition promotion, secondary education, and so forth). Other times, they may be related to a particular interest you and members of the community share in common. Here are a few examples of small projects or activities that Trainees have successfully planned and implemented during their PST:

- Exercise or athletics with teenagers or other age groups
- Projects for children such as arts and crafts, reading, storytelling, drawing
- One-day events such as a women's health fair, a wall mural drawing, a parade, and so on
- Cooking classes (any type of food)
- Music sessions (introductions to pop, rock, jazz, opera)



- Teaching computer literacy or introducing the Internet
- Cleaning up and doing small landscape improvements (planting trees and flower beds, etc.) at a local park
- Celebration to show appreciation to host families

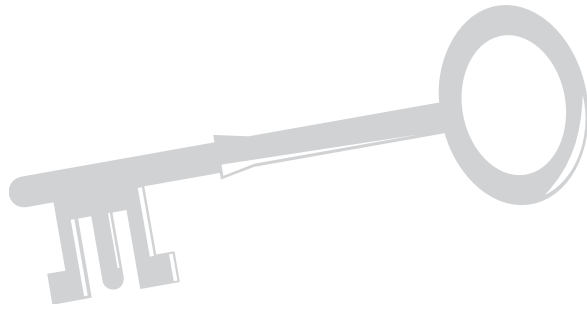
Approach your community service project as an opportunity to “get your feet wet” before you try an actual project with your community at your site. Select a project idea that is small and “winnable.” Talk to your fellow Trainees, trainers, and APCD about project options in your PST situation and then select an appropriate activity or event to plan. Test your project ideas out with people you know in the community—are people interested in working with you on this idea? If enthusiasm seems limited, consider another option.

Once you have identified your project idea, use the Project Design, Action Plan, and Budget Worksheets in this Toolkit to guide you through the project planning steps, modifying the steps to fit the scope and nature of your project. Throughout the planning and implementation process, involve the project participants and beneficiaries as much as possible. Make this their project, not just yours!

Ask your trainers to help you monitor and evaluate the project. At the end of the experience, sit down with everyone who participated in the planning process and share your lessons learned.

*If you have a lot of things to do,
get the nap out of the way first.*
— An eight-year-old





KEY RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INSIGHT

Above and Beyond: Secondary Activities for Peace Corps Volunteers. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC) 1995. [ICE M0052]

Design and Management of Community Projects: A Team Approach. Robert L. Hubbard and Mari Ennis-Applegate. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC) 1993. [ICE R0081]

HIV/AIDS: Integrating Prevention and Care into Your Sector. Idea Book Series. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC) 2000. [ICE M0081]

The New Project Design and Management Workshop Training Manual. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC) 2000. [ICE T0107]

Beyond the Classroom: Empowering Girls. Idea Book Series. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC) 2000. [ICE M0080]

Participatory Program Evaluation: A Manual for Involving Stakeholders in the Evaluation Process. Judy Aibel. (Catholic Relief Services and Peace Corps, Washington, DC) 1995. [ICE R0094]

Children's Participation: Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care. Roger Hart. (UNICEF and Earthscan, New York, NY) 1997.

Who Are the Question Makers? (OESP, UNDP, New York, NY) 1997.

Youth Development and the Environment. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC) 1998. [ICE M0057]



NOTES

