Youth Leading Community Change:

An Evaluation Toolkit

Rural Youth Development Grant Program
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U. S. Department of Agriculture

Kim Sabo Flores, Primary Author and Editor
Contributions by 4-H, FFA, and Girl Scouts of the USA

Title Page

Sections of this resource, Youth Leading Community Change: An Evaluation Toolkit, were adapted, with permission, from materials developed for Girl Scouts of the USA, the National 4-H Council, and the National FFA Organization, the managing organizations for the Rural Youth Development Grant Program (RYD)* for which this Toolkit was primarily developed. Dr. Kim Sabo Flores, Evaluation Access, provided original work, and served as the editor, to combine these resources into a comprehensive and cohesive toolkit.

*Official name is "Grants to Youth Serving Institutions."

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Grant Administrators

Sally Miske, M.S., and JoAnne Leatherman, M.S., M.B.A., National 4-H Council

Gladys Padro-Soler, M.P.A., and Janet Hines, M.U.P., Girl Scouts of the USA

Stefonie Sebastian, Michele Sullivan, and Dedra Andreko, National FFA Organization

Primary Author and Editor

Kim Sabo Flores, Ph.D., Evaluation Access

Project Coordinator

Nancy Valentine, Ed.D., National Program Leader, 4-H National Headquarters, Division of 4-H and Youth, Institute of Children Youth and Families, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture

Content Developers

This toolkit is comprised of several evaluation instruments, materials, and activities that were developed for and tested by Girl Scout, 4-H and FFA members and volunteers. The original materials are listed below and/or in the toolkit. We would like to offer a special thanks to all of those who created, drafted, and tested portions of this toolkit:

Michael E. Newman, Ph.D., Professor and Director, School of Human Sciences, Mississippi State University

Mary Arnold, Ph.D., Professor and 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Oregon State University

Matthew Calvert, Ph.D., Associate Professor and 4-H Youth Development Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension

Stefonie Sebastian, Education Specialist, National FFA Organization

Michael L. Slavkin, Ph.D. - Associate Professor and Director of Teacher Education, Manchester University

Kim Sabo Flores, Ph.D., CEO, Evaluation Access

Melanie Hwalek, Ph.D., CEO, SPEC Associates

Adapted Materials

The Girl Scouts of the USA Challenge and Change Project Toolkit. © 2010 SPEC Associates, Detroit, MI. All rights reserved; Used with permission.

Mary Emery, Cornelia Flora (2006). Spiraling-Up: Mapping Community Transformation with Community Capitals Framework. Community Development, 37/1, pp. 19-35.

Flora, C. B. 2004. Community Capitals Framework. "Social Aspects of Small Water Systems." Journal of Contemporary Water Research and Education, 128: 6-12

Contributors

4-H

Michael E. Newman, Ph.D., Professor and Director, School of Human Sciences, Mississippi State University

Mary Arnold, Ph.D., Professor and 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Oregon State University

Matthew Calvert, Ph.D., Associate Professor and 4-H Youth Development Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension

Sally Miske, M.S., Director, Financial Management, National 4-H Council

JoAnne Leatherman, M.S., M.B.A., Program Director, Health Living, National 4-H Council

FFA

Stefonie Sebastian, Education Specialist, National FFA Organization

Michael L. Slavkin, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director of Teacher Education, Manchester University

GSUSA

Kim Sabo Flores, Ph.D., CEO, Evaluation Access

Blair Darnell, M.S.W., Research Associate, Evaluation Access

Melanie Hwalek, Ph.D., CEO, SPEC Associates

Linda Knispel, M.A., Former Researcher for SPEC Associates

Reviewers

4-H

Donna J. Peterson, Ph.D., Extension Evaluation Specialist, Mississippi State University

National Marketing, Brand Development, and Communications Department, National 4-H Council

GSUSA

Victoria Straub, M.A., CSSBB, COO, SPEC Associates

Gladys Padro-Soler, M.P.A., Director, Inclusive Membership Strategies, Girl Scouts of the USA

Michael Conn, PH.D., Vice President of Research, Girl Scouts of the USA

Janet Hines, M.U.P., Rural Youth Development Project Manager, Girl Scouts of the USA

Carol Porter, M.A., Former Rural Youth Development Project Manager, Girl Scouts of the USA

Rochana Rapkins, Former Rural Youth Development Project Coordinator, Girl Scouts of the USA

FFA

Dedra Andreko, Program Manager, National FFA Organization

Michele Sullivan, Enhancement Team Leader, National FFA Organization

Katy Mumaw, Education Specialist, National FFA Organization

National Marketing, Communications and Brand Management Division, National FFA Organization

Pilot Testers

4-H

Barbara Baker, M.S., Associate Extension Professor, Cooperative Extension, University of Maine

Meg Dallapiazza, 4-H Youth Development Educator, Florence County, University of Wisconsin-Extension

Steven Henness, P.M.D., State 4-H Youth Development Specialist, University of Missouri Extension

Proof Reading

Kathleen Ellis, CEO, The Writing Coach

Layout/Design

202design, Washington, DC

Design Coordinators

Josh Kligman, Brand Development Manager and Sarah Hunt, Marketing Coordinator, National 4-H Council

Preface

In 2002, the United States Congress established the Rural Youth Development Grant Program (RYD)* to assist **4-H**, **FFA**, and **Girl Scouts** in expanding and strengthening their work in rural America. These organizations increase leadership, citizenship, and life skills in young people and the adults who work with them. They also significantly impact citizens—and the communities in which they live—through the community projects that are implemented and supported with federal funds. **These three organizations collectively reach more than one in three youth who live in rural America.**

With an enrollment of over 6 million youth, 4-H is the world's largest youth organization and non-formal education program. It is operated by land-grant universities in every county, state and territory. The RYD program supports the 4-H Vision which is "a world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together as catalysts for positive change."

The National FFA Organization is a national youth organization of over 520,000 student members. There are over 7,400 local FFA chapters in 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The RYD program supports the mission of FFA to "make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education."

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) is the largest organization for girls in the world with a membership of over 3.3 million girls and adults in 112 Girl Scout councils in the United States and 90 countries. The RYD program supports the mission of Girl Scouts to "build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place."

Although **4-H**, **FFA**, and **Girl Scouts** have slightly different strategies in implementing RYD programs, they all engage youth in the development of community projects that:

1. Identify complex, long-term community issues–or needs–to address.

2. Plan and implement community projects to address those needs.

3. Evaluate the impacts of community projects, paying explicit attention to building community capital.

The funded organizations are dedicated to sharing tools and resources for youth and adults as they work together to build community assets. This Evaluation Toolkit provides adult facilitators with a step-by-step process and all the tools and resources necessary to support youth in the evaluation of their community projects.

While these materials were developed for use by the RYD grantees, they are applicable to any community-based youth group who wants to bring about change for themselves and the communities in which they live. We hope they are useful!!

*Official name is "Grants to Youth Serving Institutions."

Table of Contents

Toolkit Overview

Youth Leading Community Change: An Evaluation Toolkit

This evaluation toolkit is designed for youth and adult facilitators who want to measure the impact of their community projects. The toolkit includes many activities and resources that have been used by young people in 4-H, FFA, and Girl Scouts to evaluate their projects in a variety of different types of communities across America.

This evaluation toolkit is best used in concert with other youth-led curricula designed to support youth as they plan, develop, and implement community projects. These types of resources can be found on the Rural Youth Development website at www.ruralyouth.org. The illustration below shows how youth-led evaluations weave into and support community projects.

Community Project Process

Step 1

Explore Community Needs

Step 2

Decide on a Community Project

that focuses on a complex, societal issue and will address one or more of the seven community capitals.

Step 3

Develop a Community Project Plan

• Set clear long-term goals and mid- and short-term measurable outcomes
• Develop a map of how your project will work to achieve its goals
• Define specific action-steps to be taken and programs to conduct
• Determine the resources necessary to conduct the action steps
• Create a team and determine roles and responsibilities
• Determine adult roles
• Identify stakeholder or other collaborators

Step 4

Implement the Community Project

• Manage team and project activities
• Gather and manage resources
• Engage stakeholders and inspire others to help

Step 5

Telling Your Story

• Engage stakeholders and inspire others to help to sustain, grow, and/or improve your project.

Evaluation Process (Toolkit Sections)

Step 1

Planning Your Evaluation (Section 1)

• Set clear long-term goals and mid- and short-term measurable outcomes
• Develop a map of how your project will work to achieve its goals
• Determine which tools you will use to monitor the quality of your project
• Determine which evaluation methods you will use to demonstrate the impact of your project

Step 2

Monitoring the Quality Of Your Project (Section 2)

Step 3

Gathering Evidence About Your Community Project's Impact on the Community (Section 3 and Supplement)

Step 4

Using Evidence to Tell Your Story (Section 4)

• Bring all of your evidence into one story about the impact of your project.

Why Youth-Led Evaluation?

Evaluation plays a critical role in community projects because it requires youth to be very specific about: where they are headed (their long-term goal), how they will achieve it (their activities), and how they will know they are headed in the right direction (measurable short- and medium-term outcomes). Through the evaluation process, youth learn how their projects impact communities.

Engaging youth in evaluation assures a high quality community project with strong potential of building community capitals. It also contributes to overall positive outcomes for youth, particularly in the areas of:

- Youth development
- Skills and mastery, particularly in understanding the perspectives of others, decision-making, data collection and analysis, writing, public speaking, and communications
- Critical social awareness

How to Use the Youth Led Evaluation Toolkit

Planning an evaluation should occur at the very beginning of a community project and help clarify where youth are headed (long-term goal), how they will get there (actions or activities), and how they will know if they are succeeding (short-, medium-, long-term outcomes). The more specific youth are about their community projects in the beginning, the more likely they are to achieve their long-term goals.

This toolkit is designed in four sections. It is recommended that youth and adults start with Section 1, as each section builds upon the next and results in a completed evaluation. Begin by planning the evaluation with youth (Section #1), then help them to monitor the quality of their project (Section #2), next, support them to gather evidence about the impact of their project on the community (Section #3), and finally, help them share their stories with other community members who might help them to continue the project (Section #4).

Who Should Use the Toolkit

Most of the tools and resources within this toolkit have been used with youth ages 11 and up. However, some of the tools may be most effective with youth ages 13 and older. When working with younger youth, consider creating mixed aged and/or capacity groups to work on planning, implementing, and evaluating a single community project.

Planning your Evaluation

Youth Leading Community Change: An Evaluation Toolkit

Introduction

Evaluation planning is like community project planning and should occur at the very beginning of a community project. Both processes should help youth clarify where they are headed (long-term goal), how they will get there (actions or activities), and how they will know if they are succeeding (short-, medium-, long-term outcomes). The more specific youth are about their community change projects in the beginning, the more likely they are to achieve their long-term goals.

Why Evaluate?

- ❯ Evaluating supports youth to discover if their community projects are on track (achieving short-term and medium-term outcomes) so they can make changes and improvements along the way.
- ❯ Evaluating allows youth to determine if they have achieved their goals at the end of the projects.
- ❯ Evaluating gives youth the information necessary to share their stories with others who may be able to engage community members, influence media and government, and provide resources.

Why Plan an Evaluation at the Very Beginning?

- ❯ It allows youth to determine, in advance, the types of information they will need to gather along the way. In many cases, youth will want to illustrate the conditions at the very beginning of their project so they can show change at the end.

Section #1 includes two activities that will support youth to plan the evaluations of their community projects. Choose the activity that works best for your group, or do both.

Section Objectives:
- ❯ Youth will learn how to use Storyboards as Logic Models to plan their community projects and evaluations.
- ❯ Youth will learn how to develop measurable short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes for their projects.
- ❯ Youth will learn what community capitals are and how to link them to short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes.
- ❯ Youth will learn how to create for successful projects and use a rubric to evaluate their success.

Activity #1: What Is Your Story

During this activity, youth will learn how to create storyboards that can be used as logic models.

Activity #2: The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie

During this activity youth will use evaluation and measurement skills to determine criteria on which to evaluate the ultimate chocolate chip cookie. They will also practice evaluating different cookies against their criteria using a rubric. These skills will then be used to help youth plan their community projects, supporting them to think clearly about successful criteria from the beginning.
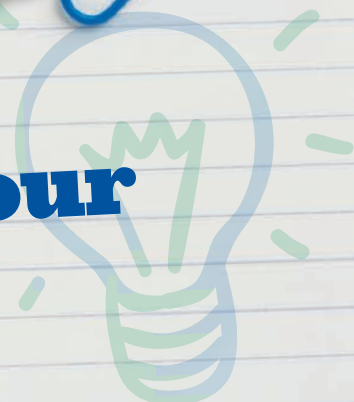
Purpose:

To help youth create storyboards of how their programs work to solve identified community issues. The storyboard will work like a **logic model** and help youth clarify where they are headed (long-term goal), how they will get there (actions taken), and how they will know if they are succeeding (short-, medium- and long-term outcomes).

Objectives:

- ❯ Youth will learn how to use storyboards to plan their community projects and evaluations.
- ❯ Youth will learn how to develop measurable short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes for their projects.
- ❯ Youth will learn about community capitals and how they connect to short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes.

A **logic model** is a visual representation that illustrates the complex community change that youth would like to make, their actions and activities, and the short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of their projects. A storyboard can represent the components of a logic model in visual and creative ways.

ACTIVITY 1

What is Your Story?

Time:

60 minutes

Materials:

1. Large drawing paper or poster boards (you will need four per individual youth for each of the 4 squares outlined in Step 1 below)
2. Art and craft supplies (markers, crayons, paint, stickers, glue, scissors, rulers, old magazines, etc.)
   Youth could also use computers to retrieve images from the internet
3. Pad of flip chart paper

Handouts:

- ❯ #1 Community Capitals
- ❯ #2 Storyboard Example
- ❯ #3 Storyboard Questions
- ❯ #4 Storyboard Template
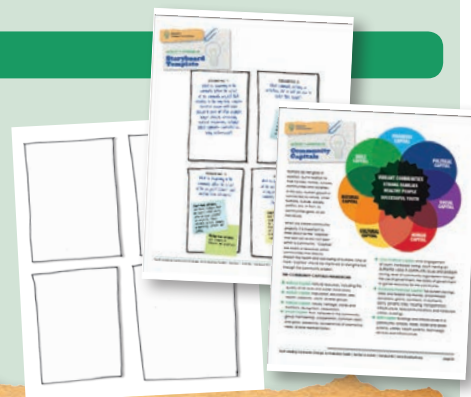
HELPFUL TIPS

If youth have completed program plans in a previous activity, they should use them to provide information for their storyboards.
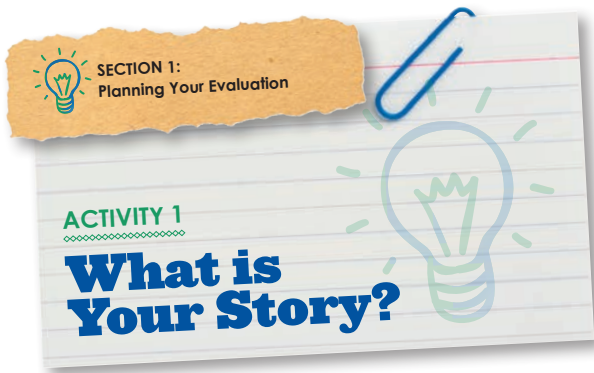
ACTIVITY 1
What is Your Story?

Introduce Activity:

- **Explain to youth that humans do not grow in isolation, but in relation to their families, schools, communities, and societies.** In fact, as communities grow, so do individuals. When we create community projects, it is important to think about all of the "capitals" that DO or DO NOT exist within a community. "Capitals" are assets or resources in seven areas within communities that directly impact the health and well-being of humans. Projects should focus on improving one or more "capitals" in the community.

- **Pass out The Community Capital handout and review it.** Let youth know that they may want to consider this handout as they define the change they want to make in their communities. Briefly discuss the seven areas of community capital (i.e., human, social, cultural, civic/political, natural, financial and built) and ask the youth which area or areas their project will impact.

- **Let youth know that they will be creating storyboards to tell the story of how their community projects work.** Explain that storyboards are like comic books, and each "scene" of the storyboard tells a unique part of the story. In this activity, they will create four "scenes" or "squares" to tell their stories. They can draw images, develop their stories from magazine collages, or use other creative ideas.

- **Pass out the Storyboard Example. Explain why storyboards are useful.**
  Storyboards can be use to:
  - create a "snapshot" of a program. This snapshot can serve as a useful communication tool to a variety of people, including youth and adult team members and community members.
  - help youth think through each step of the program so that they have a realistic understanding of what can be accomplished in a set timeframe.
  - support youth to articulate the community problem they would like to address, the actions they will take, and the changes that will occur because of their work (**outcomes**).

Outcomes describe the changes that youth want to see in individuals and/or the community because of their project.

- For *individual* community members, these outcomes are changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors.
- For the *community*, these outcomes are increases in one or more community capitals: natural capital (natural environments); human, cultural, and social capital (people in the community); civic capital (how things get done); financial capital (how people and communities save and invest money); and built capital (things humans build).

ACTIVITY 1

What is Your Story?

1 Invite the youth to review the Storyboard Example and ask the questions in squares 1 - 4.

2 Pass out the Storyboard Questions handout, which provides youth with key questions to consider as they tell their stories. Review these questions so they can refer to them as they draw their storyboards.

3 Review the Storyboard Template and review definitions, as necessary.

4 Ask youth to create their own storyboards about their community projects. Give each group 4 sheets of large drawing paper.

SQUARE NO. 1:

What is happening in the community <u>before the start of the community project</u> that <u>relates to the</u> long-term, complex societal issue youth have chosen to work on? (For example, hunger, obesity, preserving natural resources, bullying). Which community capital(s) is being addressed?

SQUARE NO. 2:

What <u>community actions or activities</u> did or will you use to solve this issue?

SQUARE NO. 3:

What is happening in the community <u>after the start of the project</u>? (Short- and medium-term outcomes)

SQUARE NO. 4:

What is happening in the community <u>at the end of the project</u> or after a <u>long period of time</u>? What new community capital(s) was built? (long-term outcome)

Facilitator Notes

While the youth are drawing or designing their stories, place 4 pages of flip chart paper on the wall (4 pages per community project). Pages should be titled: issues to be addressed within the community (Square No. 1); community project activities/actions (Square No. 2); what happens in the community right after the project begins— short and medium-term outcomes (Square No. 3); what happens in the community when the project is over or after a long period of time – long-term outcomes (Square No. 4).

HELPFUL TIPS

Groups are encouraged to work on just one project (issue) per community, but if they are working on different projects, they need to have 4 page per project.

ACTIVITY 1

What is Your Story?

Discuss Activity:

5 **When the drawings are completed, have each individual or team present their story to the group.** As the youth share their stories, take notes on the flip chart pages, placing their verbal information on the appropriate pages (note: writing down what they say is important because they often include more information in talking about their stories than what they have drawn). When more detail is necessary, ask them follow-up questions from the Storyboard Questions handout.

6 **Ask them if the story "makes sense." In other words, do they think that the activities in the story are likely to lead to the community change illustrated in the pictures?** If not, ask them to brainstorm a revised set of changes or impacts for the community project. After the questioning and discussion, give youth the opportunity to use the feedback received to revise or add to their storyboard or pictures. If necessary, have them create captions for each piece of the story or write out the story in more detail on the backs of the flip chart paper.

Warning

Make sure to collect all the storyboards, as the youth will be using them in the activity called Evaluation Methods (Section #3). Also, youth may want to use them like roadmaps that they can check throughout their community projects.

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #1

Community Capials

Humans do not grow in isolation, but in relation to their families, homes, schools, communities and societies. In this way, human growth is connected to nature, other humans, culture, society, politics, etc. In fact, as communities grow, so do individuals.

When we create community projects, it is important to think about all the "capitals" that exist DO or DO NOT exist within a community. "Capitals" are assets or resources within communities that directly impact the health and well-being of humans. One or more "capitals" should be improved or strengthened through the community project.

THE COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORK

- **Natural Capital:** Natural resources, including the quality of air, land and water; biodiversity.
- **Human Capital:** Population, education, skills, health, creativity, youth, diverse groups.
- **Cultural Capital:** Values, heritage, stories and traditions, recognition, celebration.
- **Social Capital:** Trust, networks in the community, group membership, cooperation, common vision and goals, leadership, acceptance of alternative views, diverse representation.

- **Civic/Political Capital:** Civic engagement of youth, increased voting, youth having an authentic voice in community issues and problem solving, level of community organization through the use of government, the ability of government to garner resources for the community.
- **Economic/Financial Capital:** Tax burden/savings, state and federal tax monies, philanthropic donations, grants, contracts, investments, loans, poverty rates, housing, transportation, infrastructure, telecommunications and hardware, utilities, buildings.
- **Built Capital:** Buildings and infrastructure in a community: schools, roads, water and sewer systems, utilities, health systems, technology services and infrastructure.

Flora, C. B. 2004. "Social Aspects of Small Water Systems." Journal of Contemporary Water Research and Education 128:6-12.

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #2.1

Storyboard Example Square No. 1

Needs/Issues to be addressed in the community (What is going on in the community?)

Unhealthy School Snacks

Unhealthy School Meals

No Access to Fresh Produce

Unhealthy Eating and Obesity

Hungry Families

Sedentary Lifestyles

Issue: Improve the health of people in the community through nutrition and physical activity

What is going on in the community: Many people spend a lot of time at their computers and watch TV so they do not get much physical activity. They are overweight and eat junk food and drink sugary drinks. The closest grocery store is 50 miles away and there is no access to fresh food. Some families are hungry. The schools have junk food and drinks in the snack machines and the meals are not nutritious.

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #2.2

Storyboard Example Square No. 2

What will we do about the issue?
(community project activities and actions)

Develop Policies that Improve School Meals and Snacks

Build Jogging Trail

Teach Classes

Establish Farmers Market

Establish Gardens

Goal: Improve the health of people in the community through nutrition and physical activity.
What will we do? Teach classes on nutrition such as cooking with healthy ingredients, buying nutritious food on a limited budget and eating a balanced diet. Build a walking trail so people can increase physical activity. Start community and individual family gardens and teach people how to raise and preserve produce. Develop policies and work with school staff to improve school meals and vending machine selections. Establish a farmers market for people to buy fresh produce and increase family income by selling extra produce from gardens.

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #2.3

Storyboard Example Square No. 3

What happens in the community soon after the project begins? (short- and medium-term outcomes)

Physical Activity Increased
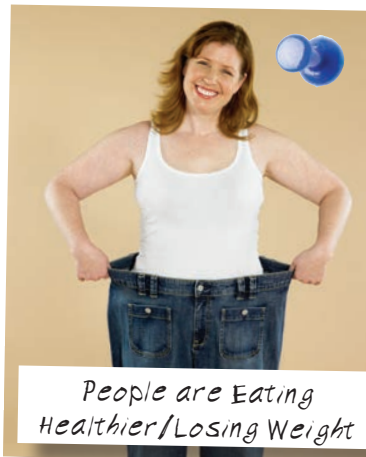
People are Eating Healthier/Losing Weight

School Meals are Healthy

School Snacks are Healthy

Increased Access to Fresh Produce

Families Have Food to Eat and Sell

Goal: Improve the health of people in the community through nutrition and physical activity.
What happens soon? People are exercising more. They are eating healthy foods and cooking with healthy recipes. The farmers market gives people access to fresh produce. Families are raising their own gardens, preserving the food they raise, and selling extra produce to increase income. Vending machine options and cafeteria meals are healthier at schools.

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #2.4

Storyboard Example Square No. 4

What happens in the community over a long period of time? (long-term outcomes)

Reduced Health Care Costs

Living Longer and Enjoying Life

Reduced Disease and Illness

Reduced Need for Nursing Home Care

People Have Enough to Eat

Goal: Improve the health of people in the community through nutrition and physical activity.
What does the community look like over a long period of time? People live longer, enjoy life, and are happy and healthy. There is a reduction in the number of people that have to go into nursing homes. Individuals have reduced the amount of money they pay for medicine and health care. Families have enough to eat. Diseases and illnesses have decreased.
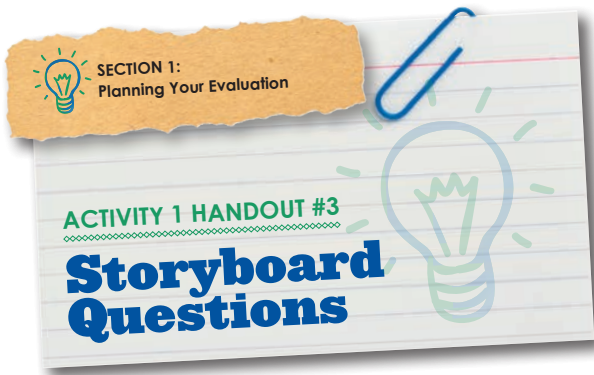
ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #3

Storyboard Questions

Square No. 1: What was/is going on in your community before the start of your community project?

- What is happening in your community related to the long-term, complex community issues you have chosen to work on (health, poverty, low academic achievement, mental health, nutrition, contaminated natural resources).
- What community capitals will you be working on?
- Who lives in the community? (Are they wealthy? Poor? Educated? Not educated? What are their ethnicities?)
- How do they live? (Do they live in houses? Apartment buildings? Condominiums?)
- Do the different community members live in the same neighborhoods?
- If the neighborhoods are different, how are they different (housing, resources)?
- Do the different community members get involved in the community? If so, how and how much?
- What are the various community members doing, thinking, seeing, feeling, or experiencing related to the issue?
- What access does this community have to resources (education, health, food, housing, etc.)?

Square No. 2: What did/will you do for your community project? What Action did you take or Activities did you do?

- Is the community issue about knowledge and skills or is it about access to resources?
- Which members of the community will need to be made aware of your community issue?

- Which community members will need to be reached with workshops and information that might change their knowledge, skills and/or abilities?
- Which community members will need to be reached with workshops, activities, that will help them change their behaviors?
  - How often will people need to be reached to make changes in their behaviors?
  - How much information will be necessary for people to change their behaviors?

Example: One activity might be conducting workshops on healthy eating habits. Often activities will also include the number of times an activity is conducted, the period of time in which it is conducted, and the number of people served (five healthy eating workshops over one year, serving 100 community members).

Square No. 3: What is going on in your community soon after the start of your project (short- and medium-term outcomes)

- Is the community beginning to look different?
  - If so, how?
  - Who is experiencing this change?
- What are community members doing differently?
  - Are they engaged in new activities and actions?
  - Are they having new experiences? If so, what are the new activities or experiences?

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #3

What is Your Story?
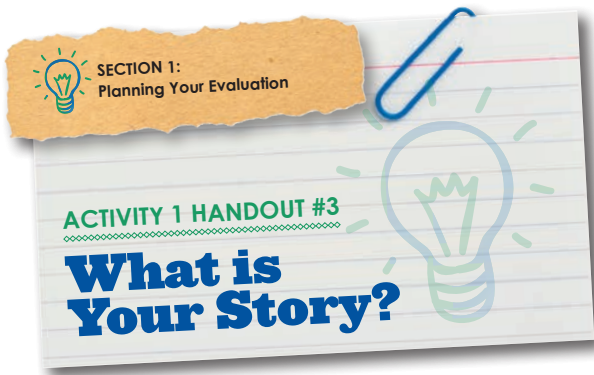
- If youth are working with a specific community group (the elderly, children), how has the community project changed them?
  - What do they know now that they didn't know before?
  - How do they act now?
  - How do they think now?
  - How do they feel now?
  - What new skills do they have?
  - What do they do differently?

Square No. 4: What will/does your community look like after your community project is completed or after a long period of time? (long-term outcomes)

- Does the community continue to look different?
  - If so, how?
  - Who is experiencing this change?
- What are the community members doing differently?
  - Are they engaged in new activities and actions?
  - Are they having new experiences?
  - If so, what are the new activities or experiences?
  - Do they look different?
- If you are working with a specific community group (the elderly, children), how will your project continue to change them?
  - What do they know now that they didn't know before?
  - How do they act now?
  - How do they think now?
  - How do they feel now?
  - What new skills do they have?
  - What do those involved with your community project take with them when they leave your project?

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #4

Storyboard Template

SQUARE NO. 1:

What is happening in the community <u>before the start of the community project that relates to the</u> long-term, complex societal issue youth have chosen to work on? (For example, hunger, obesity, preserving natural resources, bullying). Which community capital(s) is being addressed?

SQUARE NO. 2:

What <u>community actions or activities</u> did or will you use to solve this issue?

Community Actions or Activities are what the program does to increase individual and community outcomes.

SQUARE NO. 3:

What is happening in the community <u>after the start of the project</u>? (Short- and medium-term outcomes)

Short-term outcomes are those changes that we expect rather quickly after we have started our projects. These outcomes include changes in knowledge, attitude, and skills.

Medium-term outcomes are changes in behavior and practices.

SQUARE NO. 4:

What is happening in the community <u>at the end of the project</u> or after a <u>long period of time</u>? What new community capital(s) was built?
· (long-term outcome)

Long-term outcomes occur over time and refer to changes in conditions. At the community level, a long-term outcome might be that all youth have access to healthy food in their communities.

Purpose:

To help youth plan their community projects, supporting them to think clearly about the criteria for success from the beginning.

Objectives:

- Youth will understand evaluation and measurement concepts.
- Youth will learn how to create **criteria** for successful projects and use a **rubric** to evaluate their success.

HELPFUL TIPS

Search for types of cookies that fall within general criteria for a chocolate chip cookie (different brands of round chocolate chip cookies made with chocolate chips: large, small, hard, soft, large, with nuts, without nuts, with coconut, without coconut) as well as 1 "outlier" that somewhat meets the criteria, but not exactly (cookies made with butterscotch chips, white chocolate, cookie bars). Providing an outlier cookie helps the participants recognize that their definitions of the Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie might come close to some products but not all.

A **rubric** is a tool that helps youth assess something objectively and consistently, using predetermined criteria and scales. The **criteria** are the specific elements being observed and the **scales** are the "how much".

ACTIVITY 2

The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie
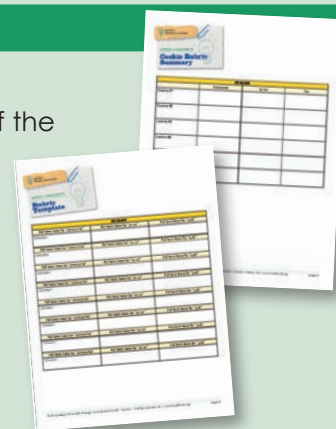
Time:

90 minutes

Materials:

6 varieties of cookies (whatever is most relevant or interesting to the audience, depending on what they are hungry for!)

Handouts:

- Rubric Template (7 copies per youth—one for ranking each of the six cookie in Part One, and one for ranking each group's community project in Part Two
- Cookie Rubric Summary

ACTIVITY 2

The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie

Part One – The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie

Introduce Activity:

> **Hand out one chocolate chip cookie (the same brand/kind) to each youth.**

> **Ask youth to taste the cookie and rate how good it is on a scale of one to five (with five being the best).** Tell them to write this number down on paper. DO NOT shout it out.

> **Create an imaginary line in the room (for example from one desk to the door), noting that one end represents a score of #1 and the other represents a score of #5.** Ask youth to stand at the #1 location if they rated the cookie a 1, the #2 position if they rated it a 2 and so on. Once the youth have chosen their places, ask them why they are standing there. For example, if a group is standing at the #5 location, ask each of them why they scored the cookie a 5. Begin to highlight their various reasons for scoring (for example, some youth think it is a 5 because it was sweet, some think it is a 5 because there are nuts in it). Ask the group the question: did we all think the cookie was a 5 for the same reason? Did we all think it was a 1 for the same reason, etc.?

> **Explain that when we are evaluating something, we need to ensure that everyone is clear about what we are going to look at (the criteria) and how we are going to determine if it is good (the scale).** A tool to help is called a rubric. During this session, they will learn how to create a rubric to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their community projects. A rubric is a tool that helps youth assess something objectively and consistently, using predetermined criteria and scales. The criteria are the specific elements being observed and the scales are the "how much" (for example, a,b,c,d,f or none, a little, a lot, not at all). Rubrics ensure that each person is assessing something in the same way. Generally, a rubric is a grid with criteria listed along the side and scales listed across the top. See the Rubric Template for an example of a rubric.

Facilitate Activity:

1. **Break youth into groups of no more than 4 or 5 to develop a collective definition for "the ultimate chocolate chip cookie."**

2. **Pass out one copy of the Rubric Template to each group, and ask them to write down 6-8 criteria that most closely describes their ultimate chocolate chip cookie.** Ask them to be very specific about their criteria. In other words, does the cookie need to be warm and chewy, or cold and hard? How many chips does it need to have, etc?

3. **Have the groups share their definitions and criteria of the ultimate chocolate chip cookie with one another, noting similarities and differences.**

4. **Allow groups to modify their criteria based on what others shared.**
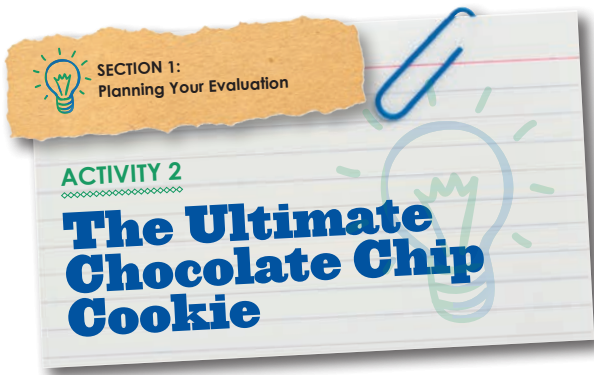
ACTIVITY 2

The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie

5 Direct youth to the top of the Rubric Template. For each criterion determine what would be "awesome," "so so," and "yuk." For example, if the criterion is a lot of chocolate, then "awesome" might be 10 to 15 chips per cookie, "so so" might be 5 to 10 chips, and "yuk" might be fewer than five chips. Have the group be as specific as possible for each criterion. Fill in the top box for each criterion on the Rubric Template.

6 Let the groups know that they have just created a rubric. Remind them that a rubric is a tool that helps assess something objectively and consistently, using predetermined criteria and scales (for example, a,b,c,d,f or none, a little, a lot, not at all). It ensures that each person is assessing the cookie in the same way. Generally, a rubric is a grid with criteria listed along the side and scales listed across the top.

7 Provide each group with a sample of 6 types of chocolate chip cookies (including an outlier or a cookie that is slightly different) and six blank rubric templates per youth (one per cookie).

8 Invite each youth to evaluate their chocolate chip cookies using the criteria they developed. Each youth should fill out one rubric per cookie using the criteria established by the group.

9 Ask each group to examine all of the completed rubrics from their group members and create a summary.

10 Hand out the Cookie Rubric Summary

11 Ask the youth to examine all of the rubrics for Cookie #1 and make tally marks that represent the number of youth who gave cookie #1 an "awesome", "so so", and "yuk" ratings. Continue this for each cookie.

Example: In the example below there were 5 youth in the group. Those 5 youth gave cookie #1 - 15 "awesome" ratings overall, they gave it 3 "so so" ratings, and 12 "yuk" ratings.

	Cookie Rubric Summary		
	Scales		
	Awesome	So-So	Yuk
Cookie #1	15	3	12
Cookie #2	20	10	
Cookie #3	5	15	10
Cookie #4	25	3	2
Cookie #5	19	11	
Cookie #6	1	11	18

12 Ask each group to determine which cookie came closest to their group's definition of the ultimate chocolate chip cookie. Ask the youth to identify which cookie is the strongest and weakest candidate and why.

ACTIVITY 2

The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie

Discuss Activity:

13 As a large group discuss which cookie that each group selected as "The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie" and why.

14 Discuss with the whole group how this process of rating the cookie was similar or different to the first time they talked about the qualities of a chocolate cookie in their groups. Were they clearer as a group about what they were rating (the criteria)? Were they clearer as a group about their understanding of how they were ranking (the scale)? In other words, what a 1 meant, what a 2 meant and so on. As evaluators of the cookie, do they think they were more specific and consistent in their measurement? Why? Why not?

HELPFUL TIPS

Let the youth eat the cookies as a reward for their hard work!

Part Two – The Ultimate Community Project (60 minutes)

Introduce Activity:

Explain to the youth that they will use rubrics, just as they did in the Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie activity to plan and evaluate their community project.

Facilitate Activity:

1 Break youth into groups of no more than 4 or 5 to develop a collective definition for "the ultimate community project."

Facilitator Notes

If youth are working on more than one community project, break them into project groups.

2 Invite the youth to think about their community projects and consider the ultimate change/difference they want to see in their communities as a result of their projects. Changes should focus on long-term societal goals such as hunger, poverty, obesity, contaminated water, energy reduction, nutrition, physical fitness, mental health, bullying, and so on. Have the youth write these down.

Facilitator Notes

Questions to ask include:
- What would success look like, sound like, feel like?
- Who will the project benefit (senior citizens, young children, limited resource families)?
- How will the beneficiaries change?
- How will the community be better?
- How will the lives of residents be better?

Since they are working on a project in a group, have them discuss their different visions of success and begin to develop one common goal.

3 Pass out copies of the Rubric Template, and ask each group to write down 6-8 criteria that most closely describes their ultimate community project. Ask them to be very specific about their criteria for success.

ACTIVITY 2

The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie

4 **Have the groups share their definitions and criteria of the ultimate community project with one another, noting similarities and differences.** As they share, ask the following questions:
- Are the criteria **S**pecific?
- Are the criteria **M**easurable? If so, how might they know when and if they have done a good job?
- Are the vision and criteria **A**ttainable?
- Are the vision and criteria **R**ealistic?
- Is the vision **T**ime bound? In other words, will they be able to see change during the program timeframe?

5 **Explain that the term S.M.A.R.T. is used to define strong criteria (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound).** When they develop their community projects they will want to be sure that they have S.M.A.R.T criteria. Hand out the Building Measurable Criteria Sample and review it with them.

6 **Ask groups if they need to modify their criteria based on what others shared.**

7 **Ask the youth to fill in the boxes across the top of the Rubric Template.** For each criterion have them determine what would be "awesome," "so so," and "yuk." Have each group be as specific as possible for each one.

8 **Invite the youth to share their scales with one another.**

Facilitator Notes

If your group is developing one community project, you may ask the groups to choose the top 10 criteria and scales that will be used to evaluate their community project.

💬 Discuss Activity:

9 Ask the youth to consider the following questions:
- How could they use this rubric throughout their community projects?
- How could they use the rubric to evaluate their project at the end?
- Could they create a table at the end of their community project, just as they did with the ultimate chocolate chip cookie?

ACTIVITY 2 HANDOUT #1

Rubric Template
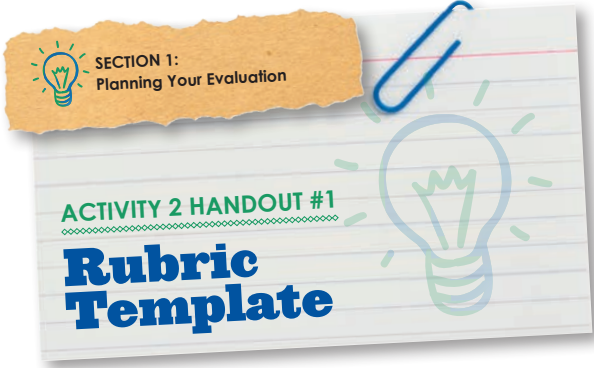
SCALES		
Put term here for "awesome"	**Put term here for "so so"**	**Put term here for "yuk"**
Criterion:		
Put term here for "awesome"	**Put term here for "so so"**	**Put term here for "yuk"**
Criterion:		
Put term here for "awesome"	**Put term here for "so so"**	**Put term here for "yuk"**
Criterion:		
Put term here for "awesome"	**Put term here for "so so"**	**Put term here for "yuk"**
Criterion:		
Put term here for "awesome"	**Put term here for "so so"**	**Put term here for "yuk"**
Criterion:		
Put term here for "awesome"	**Put term here for "so so"**	**Put term here for "yuk"**
Criterion:		
Put term here for "awesome"	**Put term here for "so so"**	**Put term here for "yuk"**
Criterion:		
Put term here for "awesome"	**Put term here for "so so"**	**Put term here for "yuk"**
Criterion:		

ACTIVITY 2 HANDOUT #2

Cookie Rubric Summary

SCALES			
	Awesome	So-So	Yuk
Cookie #1			
Cookie #2			
Cookie #3			
Cookie #4			
Cookie #5			
Cookie #6			

Monitoring the Quality of your Project

Youth Leading Community Change: An Evaluation Toolkit

Introduction

Section #2 includes an activity, along with four distinct tools, that will help youth monitor the quality of their community project(s). Choose the one(s) that works best for your group, or create your own. Using any of these tools will give youth insight into the things that are going well and help them identify places where they may need to make adjustments.

Section Objectives

- Youth will understand how to conduct a project check-up.
- Youth will understand what they are doing well and where they might need to target their efforts to ensure that they are on track.

Activity #1: The Project Check-Up Activity

This activity provides a step-by-step guide for youth as they conduct their project check-ups. It helps them determine how to conduct a project check up, who will be involved, when they will be involved, and at what level they will be involved. This activity should be done when using Sample Tool #1, #2, and #3 only.

Ready To Use Tools: Following Activity #1, you will find 4 ready to use tools that will help youth check on the progress of their projects and identify changes that might help them to meet their long-term outcomes.

Sample Tools #1 and #2, provided by the Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), and Sample Tool #3, provided by 4-H, rely on feedback from people who may not be directly involved in the project, but who know enough about the project to answer most of the questions. If any of these three tools are used, it will require the distribution, collection and analysis of the responses you receive.

Sample Tool #4, provided by FFA, is a tool youth can use themselves to check on the status of their projects. This tool is self-explanatory and can be used without a specific activity. Choose the tool, or tools, that seems right for your group.

- Sample Tool #1: In-depth Project Check-Up
- Sample Tool #2: Brief Project Check-Up
- Sample Tool #3: Evaluating the Progress of Your Project
- Sample Tool #4: Service-Learning Project Checklist

Purpose:

To provide a step-by-step guide for youth as they conduct their project check-ups. This activity helps youth determine how to conduct a project check-up, who will be involved, when they will be involved, and at what level they will be involved.

Objectives:

- Youth will understand how to effectively monitor a project.
- Youth will effectively monitor a project to produce desired outcomes.

Preparation:

Before getting started, consider the following questions:

- How can I support youth to invite community stakeholders to provide them with feedback about the community projects?
- How will the forms be returned from various stakeholders (self-addressed envelope, sealed envelope, hand-delivered)?
- Will the forms be confidential and/or anonymous? If so, who should receive the information, analyze the responses, and report strengths and weaknesses to the group?
- How will the results be compiled and shared with youth so that feedback (both positive and negative) will be acceptable?

ACTIVITY 1

The Project Check-up

Time:

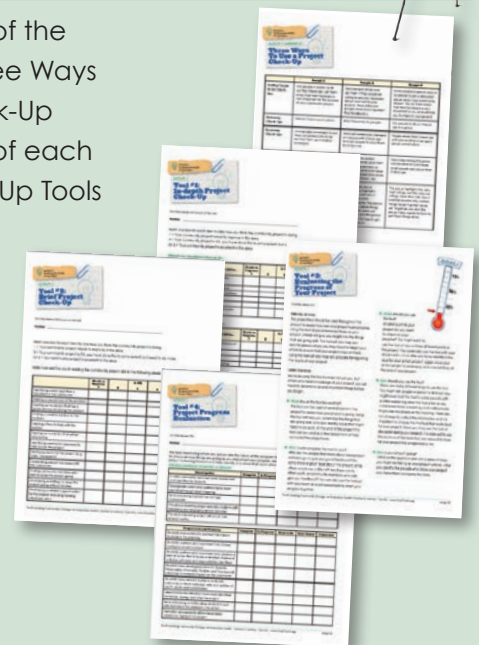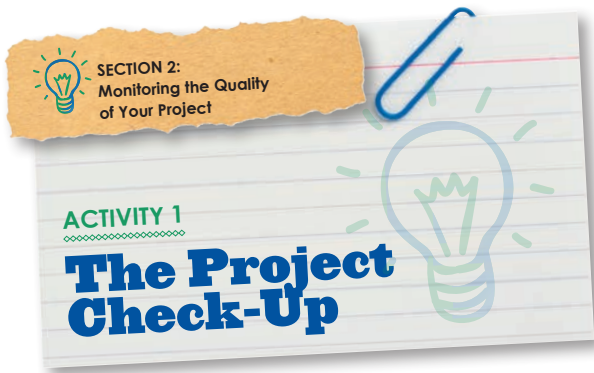Depends on the number of tools selected and the number of people surveyed

Materials:

Flip chart paper

Handouts:

- One copy per youth of the handout entitled: Three Ways Use The Project Check-Up
- One copy per youth of each of The Project Check-Up Tools (Tool #1, #2, #3, #4)

ACTIVITY 1

The Project Check-Up

Introduce Activity:

○ **Explain to youth that Project Check-Up Tools are very similar to rubrics that they learned about in Section 1.** They have a set of criteria along the left and a scale across the top. However, these tools are used throughout a project to assess how well it is moving along. Using these tools as the community projects unfold will let youth know what is going well and identify places where they need to make adjustments.

○ **Briefly describe each of the tools:**

  • **Sample Tools #1, #2, and #3** rely on feedback from people who may not be directly involved in the project, but who know enough to answer most questions. Sample Tool #1 and #3 should be filled out by people who know *a lot* about the community project. Sample Tool #2 can be filled in by community members and others who know *a little* about the project.

  • **Sample Tool #4** is a tool youth can use themselves to check on the status of their projects.

○ **Go over all Project Check-Up tools with youth and determine which one to use.**

Facilitator Notes

If youth select Tool #1, #2, or #3, continue through the rest of the activity. If they choose Tool #4, go ahead and print it. Then have them determine when they will fill it out.

Facilitate Activity:

1 **Ask youth the following questions about who should fill out the Check-Ups:**

  • Who could answer these questions about your community project? (Don't forget to tell them to choose people who know about their projects and can give them feedback about their work.)

  • Which forms should you use (in-depth or brief)? (Remember: the in-depth versions, Tools #1 and Tool #3, are best for those who know a lot about the project. The brief version, Tool #2, is best for those who know a little about the project.)

  • Which members of the community (group leader, other youth, community project volunteers, etc.) would have the most valuable feedback?

2 **Ask youth when they would like to conduct their Project Check-Ups (at the beginning of the community project, in the middle, and/or at the end).** Determine how they will know when they have reached the beginning, middle, and end of the project.

3 **Work with youth to determine how they will gather information.** Pass out the handout on Three Different Ways To Use a Project Check-Up and review it with youth. Determine which one works best for their community projects.

4 **Next, discuss with youth how they will invite people to do the Project Check-Up.** If youth have decided to invite people in person or by phone, they may want to develop a script to use during the calls. If youth are inviting people to complete the Project Check-Up through the mail, help them write a letter that lets people know how important their feedback is. Also, if youth are planning to send out Project Check-Ups more than once during their community projects, make sure they let people know from the start.

ACTIVITY 1
The Project Check-Up

The letters should include:

- Who the group is and what they are working on
- The purpose of the Project Check-Up and why it is important
- Why the people have been selected to provide feedback to the group
- The deadline for their responses
- How they should return the Project Check-Up and to whom
- Whether the Project Check-Up is confidential (in other words, will they need to give their names?)
- What the Project Check-Up results will be used for
- Who to contact with questions

HELPFUL TIPS

TIPS FOR SHARING FEEDBACK: Share the most positive feedback (ratings of 4 or 5) with youth first. If there are low ratings, let youth know that the community project still needs improvements in certain specific areas.

5 **Let the youth know that once the Project Check-Ups are returned, responses need to be summarized.** Ask the youth if they remember how they summarized the "Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie" rubrics in Section #1. In the same way, the youth will count or tally responses across each survey.

HELPFUL TIPS

This can be done on a blank "Project Check-Up" sheet.

6 **Use a blank Project Check Up form as a summary sheet.** Begin going through the returned Project Check-Ups one-at-a-time and record the number of times the different people answered the same question the same way.

For example, if there are 10 people who responded to the Project Check-Up, 2 might have rated question number 1 as a 5; 3 might have rated it as a 4; 5 might have rated is as a 3. So, most people believed that on question 1 the project was "OK."

HELPFUL TIPS

Refer to Section #3 Supplement: Developing And Using Evaluation Methods - Surveys for more information and tips for analyzing surveys responses.

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #1

Three Ways To Use a Project Check-Up

	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3
Inviting People to Do Check-Ups	Ask people in person to fill out the Check-Ups. Let them know that their feedback is very important for the success of your community project.	Send people letters and ask them if they would be willing to provide feedback about your community project. These letters let people know how important their feedback is.	Invite people in person and/or by phone to join a discussion group about your community project. You let them know that their feedback is very important to you and will help you to improve your project.
Delivering Check-Ups	Deliver Check-Ups in person.	Mail Check-Ups to people.	Ask people to fill out Check-Ups in a group.
Receiving Check-Ups	Give people envelopes to put their completed Check-Up ins. Pick them up in sealed envelopes.	Send self-addressed, stamped envelopes with Check-Ups and ask people to send them back by mail.	People share their Check-Ups with one another in an open group conversation.
Summarizing Check- Ups	Don't open the sealed envelopes. Rather, give them to a trusted teammate or adult to read and summarize, so you don't know who wrote what on the Check-Ups.	Don't open the sealed envelopes. Rather, give them to a trusted teammate or adult to read and summarize, so you don't know who wrote what on the Check- Ups.	Take notes during the group conversation to summarize what people said about their Check-Ups.
Next Steps and Improvements	The person who reads the Check-Ups highlights what people said about your successes and accomplishments. The person asks you why certain things haven't gotten done yet. Together, you and the person create a plan for how to get these things done.	The person who reads the Check-Ups highlights what people said about your successes and accomplishments. The person asks you why certain things haven't gotten done yet. Together, you and the person create a plan for how to get these things done.	The group highlights the very high ratings and the very low ratings. Next, they talk about possible reasons why certain things haven't gotten done yet. Together, you and the group make a plan for how to get these things done.
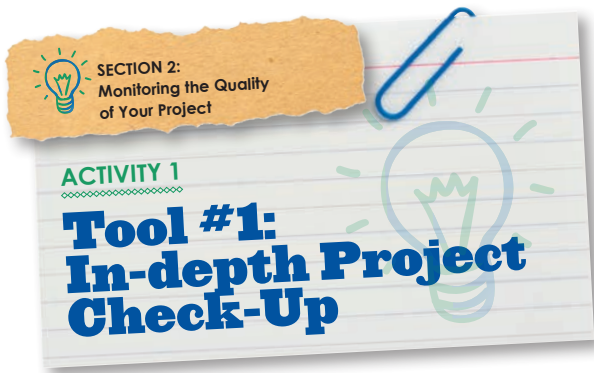
ACTIVITY 1

Tool #1:
In-depth Project
Check-Up

Contributed by Girl Scouts of the USA

Name: _____

Mark one box for each item to rate how you think the community project is doing.

1 = Your community project needs to improve in this area,

3 = Your community project is OK; you have done this to some extent, but need to do more,

Or 5 = Your community project is excellent in this area

Check on: deciding what to do…

Rate how the youth leading the project did in…	Needs to Improve 1	2	Is OK 3	4	Excellent 5	Don't Know
Exploring the strengths and struggles in the community						
Conducting a community discussion group						
Talking to experts about the problem or solutions						
Developing a "project ideas inventory"						
Making a causal map of the problem						
Picking a topic both the youth and community care about						

Check on: developing a solution…

Rate how the youth leading the project did in…	Needs to Improve 1	2	Is OK 3	4	Excellent 5	Don't Know
Figuring out a solution that has a good chance of solving the problem						
Finding a pretty creative solution						
Inspiring others to help with the solution						
Figuring out a solution that will be long lasting						

ACTIVITY 1

Tool #1: In-depth Project Check-Up
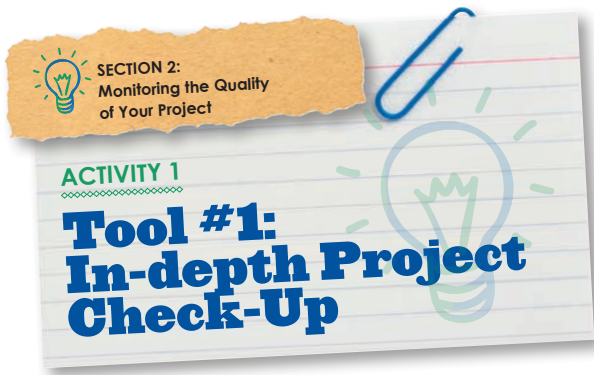
Name: _____

Check on: planning...

Rate how the youth leading the project did in...	Needs to Improve 1	2	Is OK 3	4	Excellent 5	Don't Know
Identifying and gathering what was needed to do this project (e.g., money, volunteers, experts)						
Creating a project name that is short, snappy, and describes what will be done						
Setting a clear overall project goal						
Setting clear project mini goals						
Selecting a core team to help that has people with the right skills, talent, and other resources						
Finding an advisor the youth can trust and who has the right knowledge, connections, and resources						
Presenting the project idea to key community members						
Creating a clear budget for the project						

Check on: getting up and running...

Rate how the youth leading the project did in...	Needs to Improve 1	2	Is OK 3	4	Excellent 5	Don't Know
Having meetings with his/her team						
Talking with the youth team and adult leader about progress						
Reviewing the budget and making changes as needed						
Identifying challenges to the project and making changes as needed						
Continuing to identify community resources						
Encouraging others to join the team						
Recruiting more volunteers						
Getting publicity for the project (e.g., newspaper, radio)						
Celebrating project successes with the community						

ACTIVITY 1

Tool #1:
In-depth Project
Check-Up
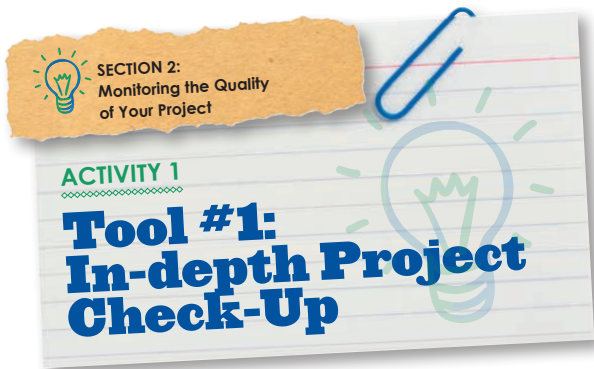
Name: _____

Check on: reflecting on how we did...

Rate how the youth leading the project did in...	Needs to Improve 1	2	Is OK 3	4	Excellent 5	Don't Know
Meeting all of the project goals and mini goals						
Gathering evidence about the project's community impact						
Writing up findings about the project's community impact						
Sharing findings with others in the community						
Making changes to project based on the findings						

Check on: sustaining the project into the future...

Rate how the youth leading the project did in...	Needs to Improve 1	2	Is OK 3	4	Excellent 5	Don't Know
Finding or building leaders among others on the team or in the community						
Communicating the vision for the project to the team or others in the community						
Finding community members who plan to keep the project going						
Developing a strategy to keep the project going						
Developing a reliable support system for the project (including funding, volunteers, etc.)						
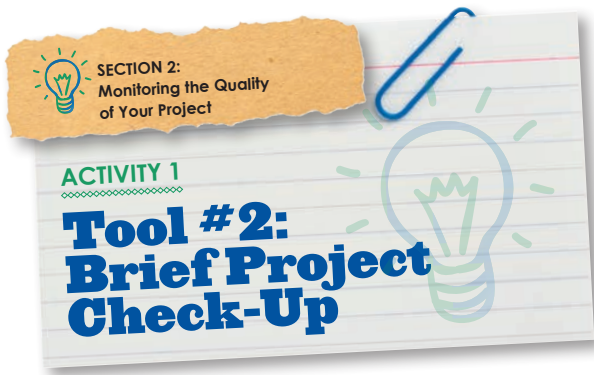
ACTIVITY 1

Tool #2:
Brief Project
Check-Up

Contributed by Girl Scouts of the USA

Name: _____

Mark one box for each item to rate how you think the community project is doing.

1 = Your community project needs to improve in this area,

3 = Your community project is OK; you have done this to some extent, but need to do more,

Or 5 = Your community project is excellent in this area

Rate how well the youth leading the community project did in the following areas:

	Needs to Improve 1	2	Is OK 3	4	Excellent 5	Don't Know
Identifying a real need that is important in the community						
Making a causal map of the problem						
Figuring out a solution that has a good chance of solving the problem						
Finding a creative solution to the problem						
Inspiring others to help with the solution						
Figuring out a solution that will be long lasting						
Identifying community resources to help sustain the project						
Getting publicity for the project (e.g., radio, newspaper)						
Celebrating project successes with the community						
Finding community members who plan to keep the project going						
Developing a strategy to keep the project going without him/her						
Developing a reliable support system for the project (including funding, volunteers, etc.)						

ACTIVITY 1

Tool #3: Evaluating the Progress of Your Project
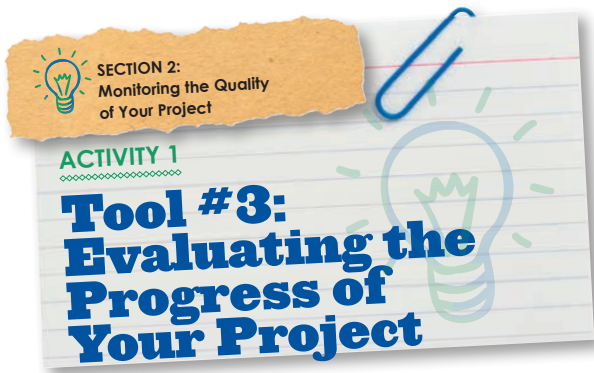
Contributed by 4-H

PURPOSE OF TOOL

This project tool should be used throughout the project to assess how well your project is progressing. Using the tool at predetermined times as your project unfolds will give you insight into the things that are going well. The tool will also help you identify places where you may need to target your efforts to ensure that your project stays on track. Using this tool will also help you prepare for reporting the results of your project.

USING THIS TOOL

Because using this tool involves not just you, but others who have knowledge of your project, you will need to determine several important things before you begin:

- **What** should this tool be used for?
 This tool can be used at several points in the project to assess how your project is going. Using the tool will help you determine the things that are going well, and also identify areas that might need more work. At the end of the project this tool can be used as a final assessment of how successful the project was.

- **Who** could complete this tool for you?
  Who are the people that know about your project well enough to give you good feedback? Do some know a great deal about the project, while others only know a little bit? Are there adults, other youth, or community members who can give you feedback? You can also use this tool just with your team as a self-assessment to chart your progress together.
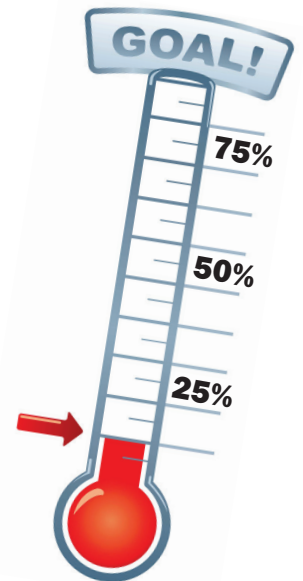
- **When** should you use this tool?
  At what point in your project do you want to check on your progress? You might want to use the tool at two or three different points in the project. You could also use the tool with your storyboard – once after you have identified the issue for your action project, again once your action project is underway, and one last time at the end of your project.

- **How** should you use this tool?
  There are many different ways to use this tool. You might ask people in person to fill it out; you might even mail the tool to some people with a letter explaining what the tool is for; or you could even have a meeting and invite people to provide feedback at the meeting. There are lots of ways to collect the information and it is important to choose the method that works best for your project. Since you may use this tool at any point during your project, it is okay just to use the sections of the tools that are relevant to how far your project has progressed so far.

- **How** is your project going?
  Listed on the questionnaire are a series of steps you might be taking as your project unfolds. After you identify the people who know your project well, have them complete this form.

ACTIVITY 1

Tool #3: Evaluating the Progress of Your Project
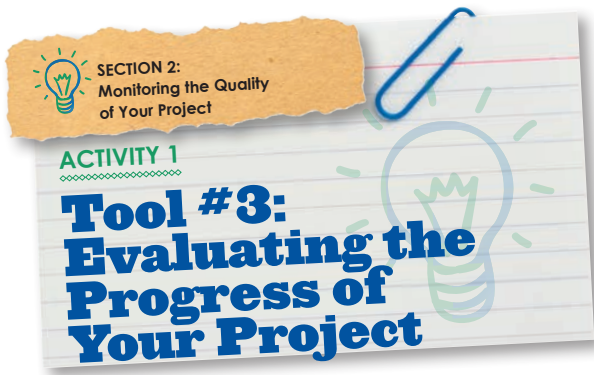
Name: _____

Consider each step listed in the first column, and then circle the number that best matches how you feel the project is doing.

PART ONE: ISSUE DISCOVERY AND ACTION PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Rate how well the team did in:	Not done	Needs more work	Good progress	Completed	Don't know
Creating a storyboard for the project	1	2	3	4	n/a
Determining methods to be used for issue discovery	1	2	3	4	n/a
Conducting the issue discovery process	1	2	3	4	n/a
Deciding on a community action issue	1	2	3	4	n/a
Creating a first action plan to address the issue	1	2	3	4	n/a
Determining a solution that has a good chance of solving the problem	1	2	3	4	n/a
Determining a solution that will be long lasting	1	2	3	4	n/a
Inspiring others to help with the solution	1	2	3	4	n/a

PART TWO: ACTION PROJECT PLANNING

Rate how well the team did in:	Not done	Needs more work	Good progress	Completed	Don't know
Identifying and gathering what was needed to do this project (money, volunteers, experts)	1	2	3	4	n/a
Naming the project in a way that describes the project well and engages community stakeholders	1	2	3	4	n/a
Setting a clear, overall project goal	1	2	3	4	n/a
Setting clear project mini goals	1	2	3	4	n/a
Developing clear roles for all team members	1	2	3	4	n/a
Identifying community stakeholders to support the project	1	2	3	4	n/a
Presenting the project idea to key community members	1	2	3	4	n/a
Creating a clear budget for the project	1	2	3	4	n/a
Determining which community assets the project addresses	1	2	3	4	n/a

ACTIVITY 1

Tool #3: Evaluating the Progress of Your Project
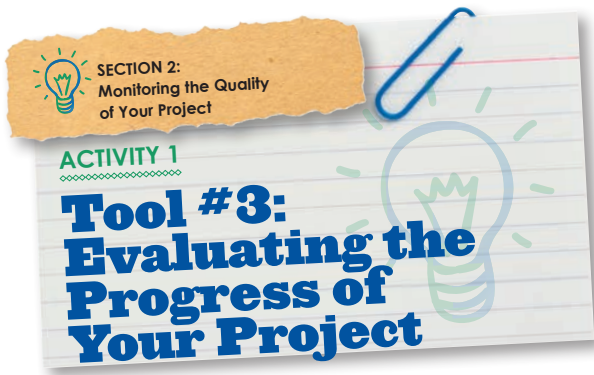
Name: _____

Rate how well the team did in:	Not done	Needs more work	Good progress	Completed	Don't know
Identifying potential collaborators that match community assets being addressed	1	2	3	4	n/a
Contacting identified collaborators to serve as mentors, educators, grants, or information providers	1	2	3	4	n/a

PART THREE: ACTION PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Rate how well the team did in:	Not done	Needs more work	Good progress	Completed	Don't know
Providing training for other participants in their state	1	2	3	4	n/a
Having team meetings	1	2	3	4	n/a
Communicating with team members and leaders about project process	1	2	3	4	n/a
Reviewing the budget and making changes as needed	1	2	3	4	n/a
Identifying challenges to the project and making changes as needed	1	2	3	4	n/a
Continuing to identify community resources	1	2	3	4	n/a
Encouraging others to join the project leadership team	1	2	3	4	n/a
Recruiting more volunteers for the project	1	2	3	4	n/a
Getting publicity for the project (newspaper, radio)	1	2	3	4	n/a
Celebrating project successes with the community	1	2	3	4	n/a

Tool #3: Evaluating the Progress of Your Project
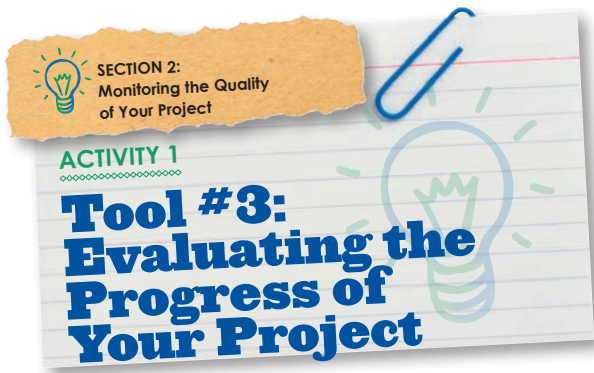
Name: _____

PART FOUR: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Rate how well the team did in:	Not done	Needs more work	Good progress	Completed	Don't know
Finding or building leaders among others on the team or in the community	1	2	3	4	n/a
Communicating a vision for the project to the team or others in the community	1	2	3	4	n/a
Finding community members who plan to keep the project going	1	2	3	4	n/a
Developing a strategy to keep the project going beyond the project funding	1	2	3	4	n/a
Developing a reliable support system for the project (including funding, volunteers, etc.)	1	2	3	4	n/a

PART FIVE: END OF PROJECT EVALUATION

Rate how well the team did in:	Not done	Needs more work	Good progress	Completed	Don't know
Meeting all of the project goals and mini goals	1	2	3	4	n/a
Gathering evidence about the project's community impact	1	2	3	4	n/a
Writing up findings about the project's community impact	1	2	3	4	n/a
Sharing findings with others in the community	1	2	3	4	n/a
Making changes to the project based on the findings	1	2	3	4	n/a

ACTIVITY 1

Tool #4:
Project Progress
Evaluation
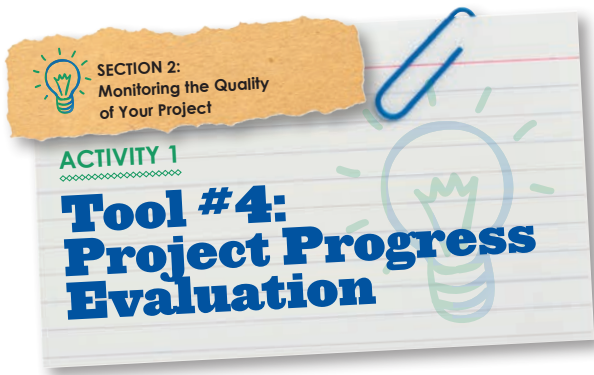
Contributed by FFA

Name: _____

The best monitoring efforts are woven into the fabric of the program from the beginning! It is always important to check on how things are going as you implement your projects. Use the checklist below to ensure that your project is moving forward and help identify any areas that need attention.

SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRESS CHECKLIST

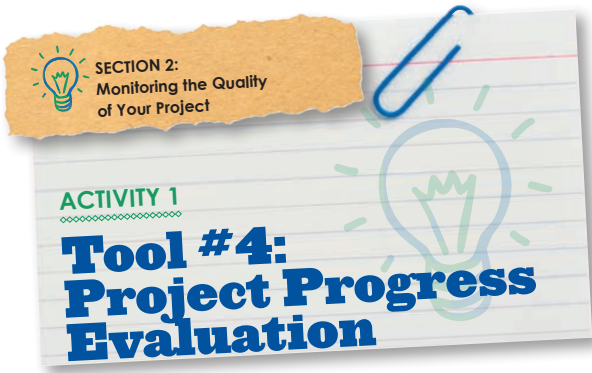| Investigation	Complete	In Progress	Need to Do	Don't Know	Comments
A valid community need has been researched and identified by students.					
Appropriate community partners have been identified through asset mapping.					
Service-learning experiences are age appropriate.					
The service-learning project provides students with interesting and engaging service activities.					
The service-learning project will occur over several months.					

Preparation and Planning	Complete	In Progress	Need to Do	Don't Know	Comments
Students and community partners have been involved in the planning.					
Students, partners and volunteers from diverse backgrounds are involved.					
Students, partners and volunteers have created a plan of action that includes a detailed timeline of activities with roles and responsibilities identified.					
Students have developed S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound) outcomes to measure impact on the community.					
Students have created a plan to evaluate outcomes on the knowledge, skills and abilities of: youth, adults and beneficiaries.					
Opportunities for reflection have been identified for before, during, and after the project.					
Service-learning activities allow students to put skills learned in the classroom into action.					
Promotion and publicity efforts have been created to highlight the project.					

ACTIVITY 1

Tool #4:
Project Progress
Evaluation

Name: _____

Action	Complete	In Progress	Need to Do	Don't Know	Comments
Students have a voice in the project.					
Community partners are engaged in the service.					
Timeline of activities is being met.					
Photos, items created, articles and other outputs have been shared with our state, regional and/or national offices.					
Students utilized the measurement tools identified through the evaluation/assessment plan.					

Demonstration	Complete	In Progress	Need to Do	Don't Know	Comments
Students have a plan to share outcomes to a broader audience.					
Students know and can articulate what community need is being met.					
Students can describe the outcomes on the community.					
Students collect evidence of progress toward meeting specific outcomes from multiple sources through the service-learning project.					

Choosing the Right Methods

Section 3

Youth Leading Community Change: An Evaluation Toolkit

Introduction

This section of the Toolkit builds directly on the activities in Section #1: Planning Your Evaluation in which youth created storyboards and rubrics that highlighted their project outcomes. During this section, youth will learn about **evaluation methods** and begin to determine which are most appropriate for gathering evidence about the impacts of their projects on the community.

Section Objectives:
- Youth will understand evaluation methods and how they work to gather evidence about project outcomes.
- Youth will select, develop, and utilize the most appropriate evaluation methods for their community project.

Section #3 is divided into two parts:
- Part One, Activity and Method Guides, focuses on helping youth better understand evaluation methods and how to determine which are right for their projects.
- Part Two, Sample Methods, includes activities for three methods that can be used to measure community impact and the development of youth/adult leadership skills.
  - Method #1: Mapping - Mapping Your Impact in the Community
  - Method #2: Pre/Post Survey - Youth/Adult Leadership Skills Evaluation
  - Method #3: Observation - Project Outcome Instrument

Part One: Activity and Method Guides

Activity #1: Choosing The Right Methods
This activity introduces youth to a variety of evaluation methods and helps them determine which are right for measuring their projects' outcomes.

Supplement: Tips for Developing and Using Methods
After youth have completed Activity #1, they will have more questions about the different methods. This supplement offers a step-by-step guide to creating and using each method and allows youth to go through the information on their own without additional activities. As the leader, however, you will help them select the most appropriate method(s), walk them through the corresponding guide, and facilitate their thinking through discussions. The supplement includes:
a. Interviews
b. Focus Groups
c. Surveys
d. Observations
e. Evidence That Exists

Part Two: Sample Methods

Part Two highlights three existing methods that will help youth evaluate their projects. Review the following methods with youth and determine if any are right for their community projects.

Method #1: Mapping - Mapping Your Impact In the Community

Over time, the effects of a community project may ripple out to have a wider impact on the community. This mapping tool is designed to explore community impacts from the point of view of youth and adults who have worked on the project. This tool will help your group think about how their projects might ripple out to create change across their communities as well as and how their projects might increase community capitals. This tool can be used after your group has projects well underway or at the end of their efforts.

Method #2: Pre/Post Survey - Youth/Adult Leadership Skills Evaluation

This tool is designed to measure the development of leadership skills in the youth and adults who are working on community projects. In other words, have the adults and youth gained new skills by working on this community project together?

Method #3: Observation - Project Outcome Instrument
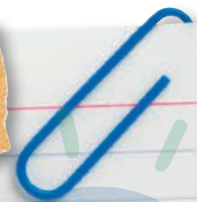
This tool is designed to measure the changes within the communities related to how adults view youth, how adults perceive youth being engaged in solving community issues, and how youth are supported by their communities. These evaluations are done through the observations of selected youth, adult leaders, adult participants, and parents of youth participants at local sites.

Purpose:

To help youth learn about **evaluation methods** and determine which are most appropriate for gathering evidence about the impacts of their projects on their communities.

Objectives:

- Youth will understand evaluation methods and how they work to gather evidence about project outcomes.
- Youth will select, develop and utilize the most appropriate evaluation methods for their community projects.

Evaluation Methods are tools that help you gather evidence about your program's impacts.

ACTIVITY 1

Choosing the Right Method

Time:

90 Minutes

Materials:

1. Youth's storyboards and/or rubrics from the activities in Section #1
2. Large post-it paper or butcher block paper (you will need four pieces per youth and/or project)
3. Art and craft supplies (markers, crayons, paint, stickers, glue, scissors, rulers, etc.)

Handouts:

- Methods for Gathering Evidence
- Planning Your Own Evaluation. One copy per project. Each community should only be working on one issue. But, a large group can be divided and handouts provided accordingly

ACTIVITY 1

Choosing the Right Method
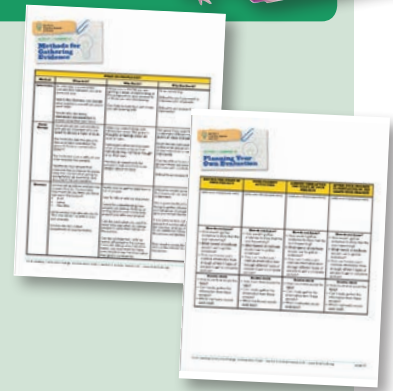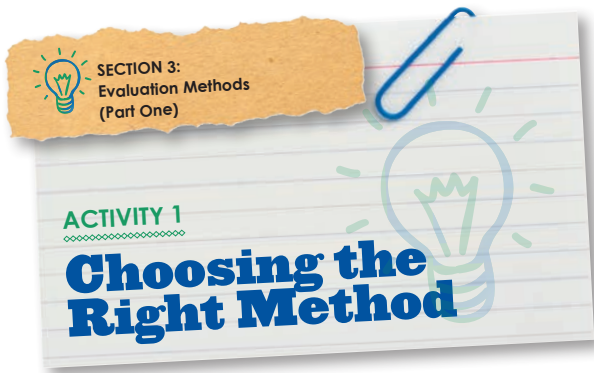
Introduce Activity:

Explain that this activity will help youth figure out what methods or tools to use to evaluate their community projects.

Explain that there are many methods that can be used to gather evidence about how their projects are working.

Provide each youth with a copy of Methods for Gathering Evidence. Let them know they can use different types of methods for gathering evidence about:

▶ **What people say** (Use a survey, interview or focus group)

▶ **What you can see, hear, and touch** (Conduct an observation or take photographs or videos)

▶ **What you learn by reading existing information** (Read and research other information about your community issue; compare this information with what is happening in your community)

Facilitate Activity:

1. **Distribute the Methods for Gathering Evidence Handout.**

2. **Break youth into groups and have each group read a different section of Methods for Gathering Evidence.** Ask each group to focus on one or two different methods and discuss the following questions:
   • Have you ever heard of or seen this method? If yes, where? When? What did this look like?
   • What are the advantages and disadvantages of gathering evidence using this method?

• Think of at least one example of how this method could be used to gather evidence about your community projects.

Facilitator Notes

Ask one youth from each group to take notes on the large paper. When the groups are done discussing, invite each group to report their conversations back to the larger group. They may want to do this by answering each of the above questions.
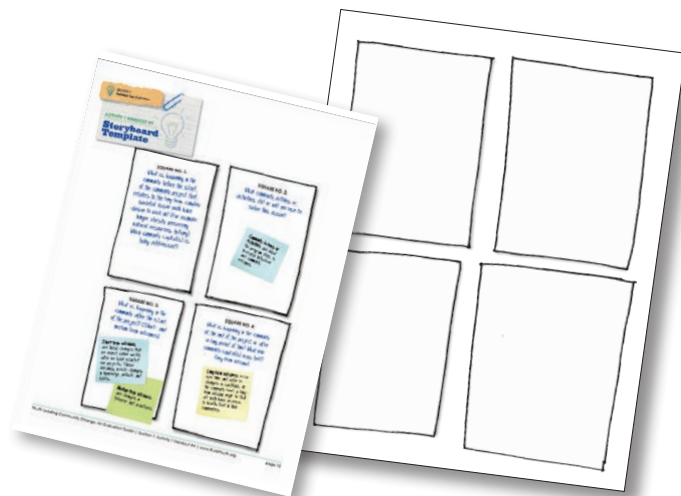
8. **Next, invite youth to review the community project storyboards they developed in Section #1, Activity #1.** Give each youth, or group, four sheets of the large paper (one per storyboard square) and a copy of Planning Your Own Evaluation. As they look at each square of their story, have them reflect on the following questions and write their answers on each square's sheet of paper.
   • How would I gather evidence to show that this was happening?
   • What type(s) of methods would I use to gather evidence? For example, words (surveys), pictures (observations), conversations (focus groups or interviews), or existing documents?
   • How can I make sure I capture information from enough different types of people to get a complete picture?

ACTIVITY 1
Choosing the Right Method

4 **Do a Reality Check**. Ask youth to answer the following questions:
- How much time would this take to gather this information?
- Can we really gather the information we need from these people?
- Which method would work best?
- Do we have people and/or computer programs available to analyze the information from this method?

💬 Discuss Activity:

5 Ask each youth to identify one method that could be used during each stage of his or her community project (or each square in the storyboard). Have youth share their final evaluation plans with one another.

- **If youth are interested in mapping their community impacts, review Sample Method #1: Mapping Your Impact in the Community with them.**
- **If youth and/or adults are interested in measuring the impacts of their projects on leadership skills, review Sample Method #2: Youth/Adult Leadership Skills Evaluation with them.**
- **If youth are interested in engaging community members in perceptions of how youth have changed, review Sample Method #3: Project Outcomes Instrument with them.**

Next Step

After youth have completed Activity #1, they will have more questions about the different evaluation methods. Section 3: Evaluation Methods (supplement) offers a step-by-step guide to creating and using each method and allows them to go through the information on their own without additional activities. As the leader, however, you will help them select the most appropriate method(s), walk them through the corresponding guide, and facilitate their thinking through discussions. The supplement includes:

- ❯ Interviews
- ❯ Focus Groups
- ❯ Surveys
- ❯ Observations
- ❯ Evidence That Exists

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #1

Methods for Gathering Evidence

| WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY?			
Method	**What Is It?**	**Why Use It?**	**Why Not Use It?**
Interviews	An interview is a one-sided conversation between you and someone else. Prior to the interview, you decide what questions you will ask and in what order. People who are being interviewed are expected to answer using their own terms.	Allows you to KNOW you are getting a deep understanding of the perspectives and viewpoints of those you are interviewing. Can help to build trust with those you are working with.	Time consuming. Difficult to use if you want to interview a lot of people. Difficult to summarize the information.
Focus Groups	Focus groups are conversations with groups of people who are asked to discuss a topic or issue. The facilitator asks the group to discuss a topic and allows the group to have a conversation about it. The facilitator's job is difficult and often requires two people. Facilitators must ensure that everyone has a chance to speak, keep the conversation going by asking follow-up questions, and document the conversation.	Helps you collect deep, rich information about the group's thoughts or feelings about an issue or topic. Participants often remind each other of events or issues that individuals may not have thought of on their own. Provides an opportunity for people to talk and think more deeply about an issue.	Not good if you want to better understand different individuals' points of views and perspectives. Must choose participants carefully (either small groups of very similar individuals or very different individuals). Can be difficult to run a focus group if there are many people in the room with conflicting opinions. Difficult to summarize the data.
Surveys	Surveys ask questions and provide answer choices. For example, how much do you think you have learned in this session? • A lot • Some • Very little Some surveys may also ask you to "fill in the blanks" or write in your own answers. Surveys are also called assessments or questionnaires.	Terrific way to gather data from a lot of people. Easy to tally or add up responses. Good for understanding how people are feeling, thinking, or acting prior to your community project and after your project. Can be used when you want to know who said what, by asking people to write their names on the surveys. Can be confidential – with no names attached to the surveys. If you are asking about sensitive topics, you may want to make sure people know the information they give is confidential.	Difficult to create survey questions that everyone can easily understand. Not a good method if you are trying to gather information from a small group of people who will give you honest feedback. If you send surveys out, the percent of surveys returned may be very low, and you may have to do additional follow-up to get the surveys completed. May need a computer to analyze data or the internet to do an on-line survey.

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #1

Methods for Gathering Evidence

WHAT DO YOU SEE?			
Method	**What Is It?**	**Why Use It?**	**Why Not Use It?**
Observations	Observations can focus on what something looks like/sounds like, how a space is used, how activities are run, how people are behaving, etc. When conducting observations, you will want to determine how to capture evidence (through writing notes and/or photographs). Prior to an observation you may want to create a guide or checklist to remind you of things you are looking for. Of course, you may also document other important things that are not on your guide/list. You must remain very neutral (unbiased), and document exactly what you see.	Can gather evidence about things you see and hear. Can be fun. Great to do when you want to show how something has changed over time.	Time consuming. The presence of an observer might change how those you are observing act. You could be biased based on what you want to see. Hard to interpret data.

WHAT CAN YOU LEARN BY READING?			
Method	**What Is It?**	**Why Use It?**	**Why Not Use It?**
Evidence that already exists	You can find information or evidence about an issue in many places: town records, newspapers, meeting notes, school data like graduation rates, and so on.	Can be easy and fast to gather. Using existing data can make a strong argument. (For example, prior to beginning our community project, town vets reported that five cats per month were brought in for spaying/neutering. After our project educated community members about the need for spaying/neutering stray animals, more than 100 cats and dogs were brought into local veterinary offices to be spayed/neutered.)	Sometimes difficult to obtain credible sources.

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #2

Planning Your Own Evaluation
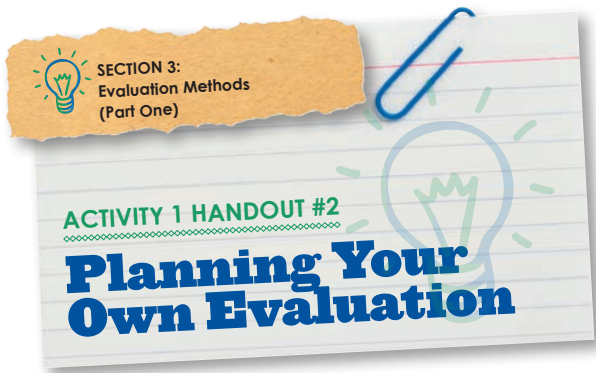
BEFORE THE START OF YOUR PROJECT	YOUR PROJECT ACTIVITIES	A SHORT TIME AFTER THE START OF YOUR PROJECT	AFTER YOUR PROJECT IS COMPLETED OR YOU LEAVE YOUR PROJECT
[add your storyboard here]	[add your storyboard here]	[add your storyboard here]	[add your storyboard here]
How do you know? • How would I gather evidence to show that this was happening? • What type(s) of methods would I use to gather evidence? • How can I make sure I capture information from enough different types of people to get a complete picture?	**How do you know?** • How would I gather evidence to show that this was happening? • What type(s) of methods would I use to gather evidence? • How can I make sure I capture information from enough different types of people to get a complete picture?	**How do you know?** • How would I gather evidence to show that this was happening? • What type(s) of methods would I use to gather evidence? • How can I make sure I capture information from enough different types of people to get a complete picture?	**How do you know?** • How would I gather evidence to show that this was happening? • What type(s) of methods would I use to gather evidence? • How can I make sure I capture information from enough different types of people to get a complete picture?
Reality check • How much time would this take? • Can I really gather this information from these people? • Which method(s) would work best?	**Reality check** • How much time would this take? • Can I really gather this information from these people? • Which method(s) would work best?	**Reality check** • How much time would this take? • Can I really gather this information from these people? • Which method(s) would work best?	**Reality check** • How much time would this take? • Can I really gather this information from these people? • Which method(s) would work best?

Purpose:

To help youth map the many interlinking and multi-faceted contributions their projects have made to individuals and communities. This is usually a very empowering exercise for youth as they can visually see the impacts of their projects on a wide variety of people, conditions, and community capitals.

Objectives:

- Youth will understand how to measure the larger impacts of working together in the community.
- Youth will understand how to create a map that shows how community capitals have been built (human, social, civic, cultural, natural, financial and built) and how people's lives have been improved.

This activity adapted from Mary Emery, Cornelia Flora (2006). Spiraling-Up: Mapping Community Transformation with *Community Capitals Framework*. *Community Development*, 37/1, pp. 19-35

METHOD 1

Mapping Your Impact in the Community

Time:

60 - 90 Minutes

Materials:

1. Large pieces of flip chart or butcher paper OR a large, white dry-erase board
2. Tape to hang flip charts if they aren't adhesive
3. 4 markers of contrasting colors (the example uses black, blue, red and green; dry-ease if needed)

Handouts:

- Community Capitals Framework
- Community Mapping Tool Example

METHOD 1

Mapping Your Impact in the Community

Introduce Activity:

Explain to youth that the end result of this activity will be a "spider map" that will provide a picture of their short-, medium- and long-term outcomes impact of their projects. It will also show them how the impact of their project might "ripple" out into the community.

Facilitate Activity:

1 Break youth into pairs and ask them to quickly write down the most significant activities they have done during their community projects.

2 Ask each pair to select one activity they feel had the most impact or connected them to the most people in the community.

3 Have each pair share their activity with the large group.

4 Make a list of all the activities identified on a piece of poster paper and have the group decide which activity they would like to select to map for community impact.

HELPFUL TIPS

The group may come back to the list later for additional activities or only focus on one.

Facilitator Notes

• Write the name of the project activity the group chose in the middle of a large piece of poster board or flipchart paper.
• Then write the titles of each of the seven community capitals around the outside of the paper.

HELPFUL TIPS

Refer to Diagram #1 on Community Mapping Tool Example.

Built   Financial

Natural   Political

KID'S PARK

Cultural   Social

Human

Diagram #1
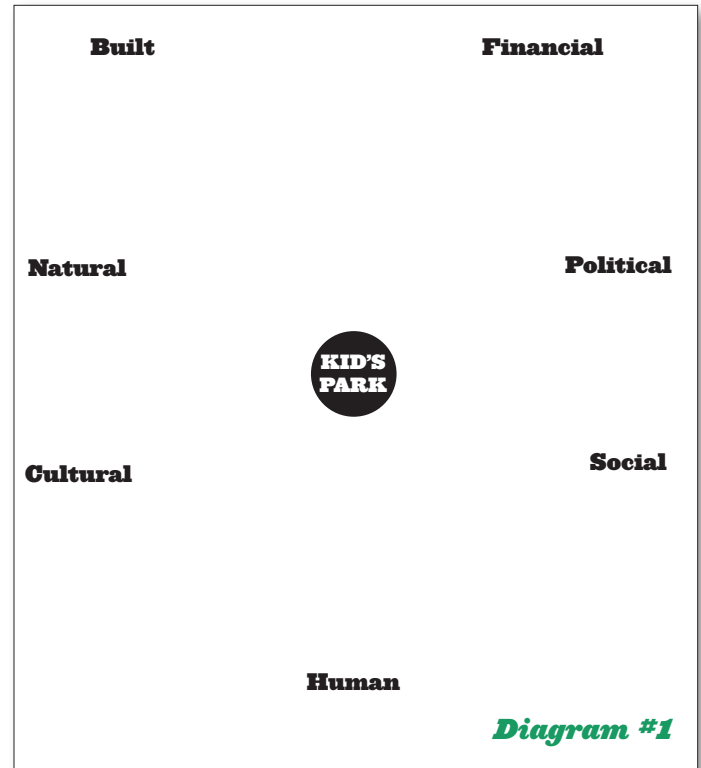
5 Distribute the Community Capitals Framework Handout

6 Quickly describe each of the capitals as they are placed around the outside of a large sheet of paper on the wall so everyone understands what each capital means.

7 Have the group brainstorm answers to the following questions:
• How are things different as a result of our activity?
• What are people doing differently as a result of our activity?

HELPFUL TIPS

Continue to go deeper and brainstorm even after the initial examples have been shared.

METHOD 1

Mapping Your Impact in the Community

8 Ask the group to match each of their brainstorm statements with one or more capital(s).

Facilitator Notes

- Write the answers with a colored marker near the center of the circle nearest to the assigned capital.
- Add a capital letter denoting the community capital in front of the statement (F, C, S, P, etc).

HELPFUL TIPS

Refer to Diagram #2 on Community Mapping Tool Example Diagrams

Built   Financial

Natural   More people use parks **(B)**   Youth use new skills in other places **(H)**   Political

KID'S PARK

Youth develop relationships with garden club **(S)**   Youth understand how city governments work and how to access resources **(P)**

Cultural   Social

Human
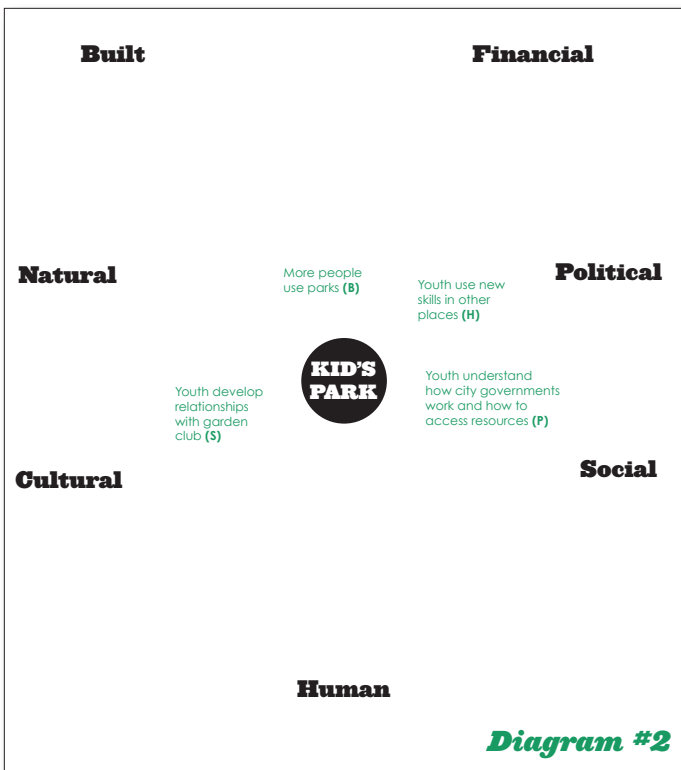
Diagram #2

9 Draw arrows connecting each statement to a community capital. Some may fit into two capitals.

HELPFUL TIPS

Refer to Diagram #3 on Community Mapping Tool Example Diagrams

Built   Financial

Natural   More people use parks **(B)**   Youth use new skills in other places **(H)**   Political

KID'S PARK

Youth develop relationships with garden club **(S)**   Youth understand how city governments work and how to access resources **(P)**

Cultural   Social

Human

Diagram #3

10 Let the youth know that they will now work on the second circle of impact on their community or medium-term outcomes. Ask the group the following questions:

- Who benefits from the project and how?
- How does the fact that people are doing things differently make a difference?

Example: For the statement "more people use the park," youth might state that kids and local visitors benefit. They way they benefit is that: "Kids start earlier physical activity" and "Local and visitors' kids have places to play."

METHOD 1

Mapping Your Impact in the Community

Facilitator Notes

- Write the answers with a new marker color in the second ring around the middle. These are the medium-term outcomes of the projects.
- Add a capital letter denoting the community capital in front of the statement (F, C, S, P, etc).
- Draw arrows connecting each statement to a community capital. Some may fit into two capitals.
- Be sure to use a new color to draw the second set of arrows to the capitals that relate to those answers. Sometimes one answer may relate to more than one capital.

HELPFUL TIPS

Refer to Diagram #4 & 5 on Community Mapping Tool Example Diagrams

Built

Financial

Increase the usefulness and value of home (B/F)

Local and visitors; kids have places to play (B)

Youth learned to participate in public meetings (P)

Natural

Kids start earlier physical activity (C)

More people use parks (B)

Youth use new skills in other places (H)

Political

KID'S PARK

Youth develop relationships with garden club (S)

Youth understand how city governments work and how to access resources (P)

Cultural

Community benefits from park additions (N)

Social

More support and knowledge for intergenerational connections (S)

Youth feel they can approach the city for additional connections (P)

Human

Diagram #5

11 **Let the youth know that we will now move to the third circle – or long-term outcome.**
In order to fill in the last ring, ask the youth: "As a result of the mapping you have done so far, what changes do you see in the way community groups and institutions do things?"

Example: the community trusts youth to be productive instead of causing problems. This is a change in cultural capital and also contributes to social capital since it helps connect youth and adults.

Facilitator Notes

- Write the answers with a new marker color in the third ring around the middle. These are the long-term outcomes of the projects. Draw arrows connecting each statement to a community capital. Some may fit into two capitals.
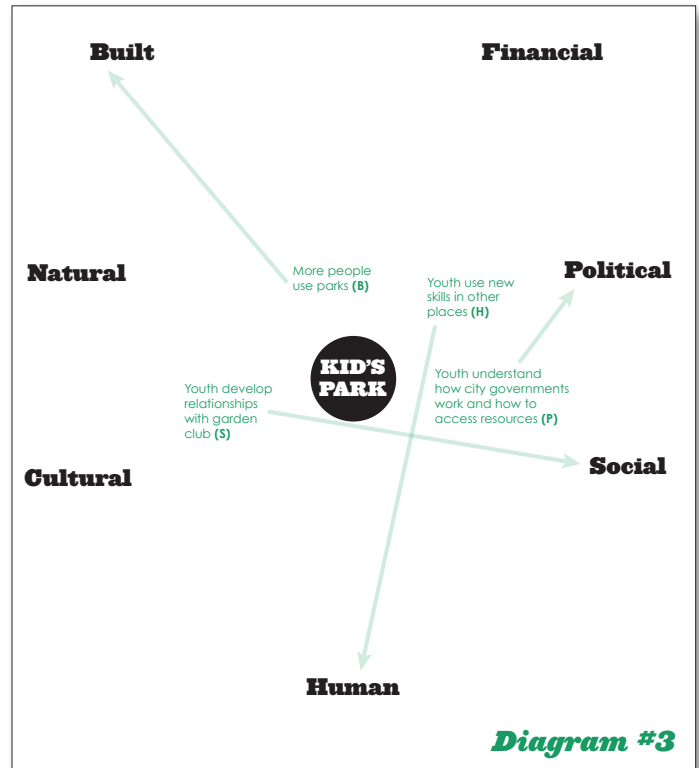- Add a capital letter denoting the community capital in front of the statement (F, C, S, P, etc).
- Be sure to use a new color to draw the third set of arrows to the capitals that relate to those answers. Sometimes one answer may relate to more than one capital.

Built

Financial

Increase the usefulness and value of home (B/F)

Local and visitors; kids have places to play (B)

Youth learned to participate in public meetings (P)

Natural

Kids start earlier physical activity (C)

More people use parks (B)

Youth use new skills in other places (H)

Political

KID'S PARK

Youth develop relationships with garden club (S)

Youth understand how city governments work and how to access resources (P)

Cultural

Community benefits from park additions (N)

Social

More support and knowledge for intergenerational connections (S)
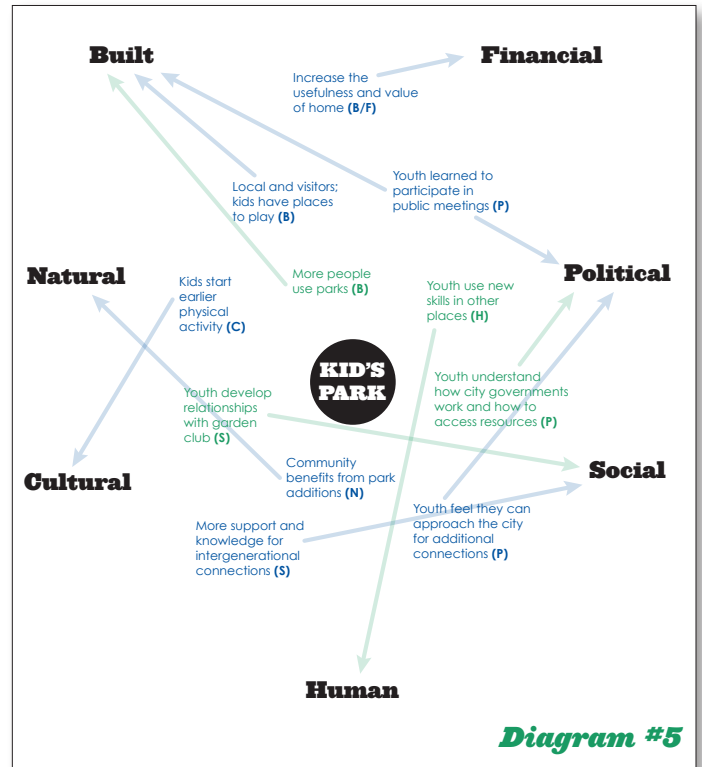
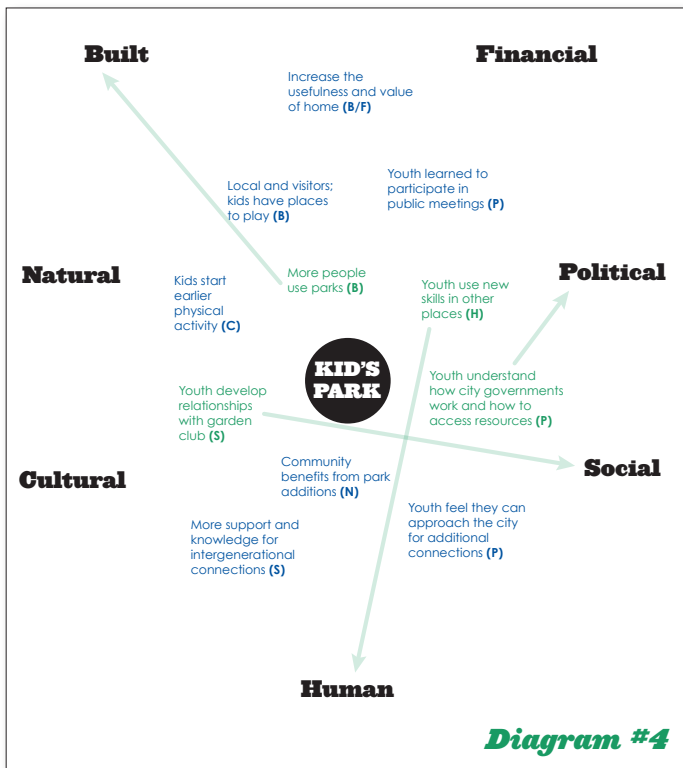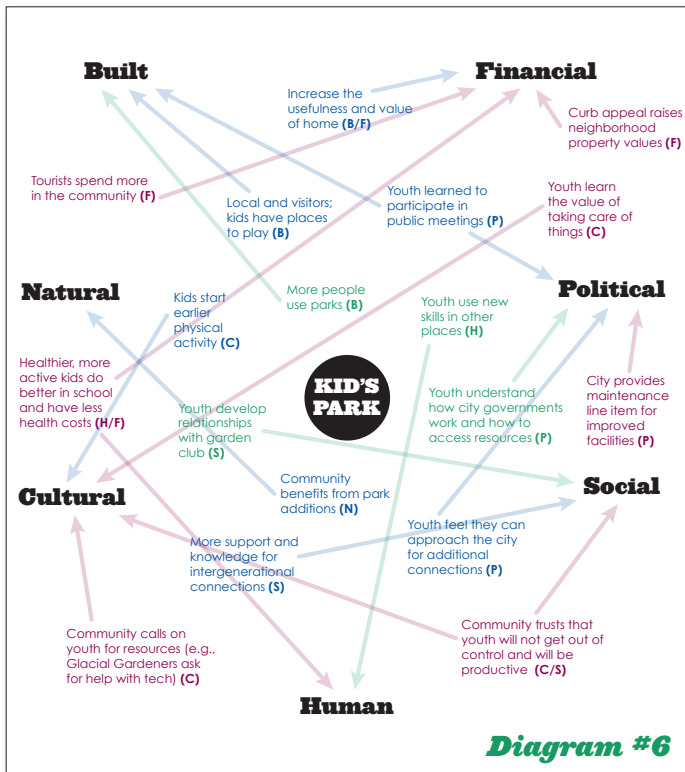Youth feel they can approach the city for additional connections (P)

Human

Diagram #4

METHOD 1

Mapping Your Impact in the Community

Refer to Diagram #6 on Community Mapping Tool Example Diagrams

Diagram #6

Built

Financial

Increase the usefulness and value of home (B/F)

Curb appeal raises neighborhood property values (F)

Tourists spend more in the community (F)

Local and visitors; kids have places to play (B)

Youth learned to participate in public meetings (P)

Youth learn the value of taking care of things (C)

Natural

Kids start earlier physical activity (C)

More people use parks (B)

Youth use new skills in other places (H)

Political

Healthier, more active kids do better in school and have less health costs (H/F)

Youth develop relationships with garden club (S)

KID'S PARK

Youth understand how city governments work and how to access resources (P)

City provides maintenance line item for improved facilities (P)

Cultural

Community benefits from park additions (N)

Social

More support and knowledge for intergenerational connections (S)

Youth feel they can approach the city for additional connections (P)

Community calls on youth for resources (e.g., Glacial Gardeners ask for help with tech) (C)

Community trusts that youth will not get out of control and will be productive (C/S)

Human

12 Explain that as the lines cross each other, the map gets messy, just as working on projects that increase social capital within the community often get messy. The color-coding is helpful in keeping track of the circles and makes mapping look more exciting.

Gather everyone around the map to take a picture. Be sure to get a readable picture of the map for the group to use at a later date.

Discuss Activity:

13 Once youth have completed the third circle of impact, ask them to look at the map as a whole group and reflect on the answers for each of the circles.

14 Have them decide which change or impact was most significant. Let them know that some groups choose more than one. Indicate that activity with a star (or two).

15 Invite youth to think about whether they can expand the story so others will be convinced of the significance of this impact.

16 Discuss ways youth will share the impact results they have achieved for their projects.

17 Explain to the group that analyzing and sharing this information can be useful for:
1. Identifying future stakeholders and sponsors based on developing new knowledge about the impact of the project on the community.
2. Developing an in-depth evaluation by collecting more data on key impacts identified by mapping.
3. Reflecting on the types of activities that had the most impact and using that information when planning future work.
4. Reporting on the results and public value of projects, programs, and strategies.

Facilitator Notes

- Ask one or two people to take responsibility for recording the data from the mapping process in a format that is simpler and more easily shared with others. See the chart on the next page for an example.
- The recorder/s should: select a statement from the inner circle (responding to the first question), write it into the first column, follow any arrows to connection(s) in the second circle, and put those in the second column. Then follow arrows from those connections to the third circle of responses, and go back to the center and trace the connections from another idea. This way, they can read across the chart to share how the changes they have made have affected people and, in turn, the community system.

METHOD 1

Mapping Your Impact in the Community
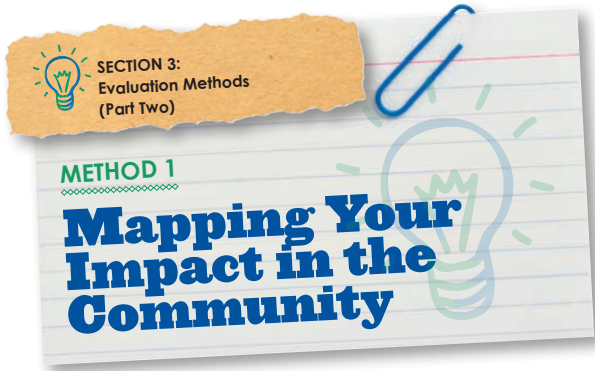
Facilitator Notes

The youth may want to summarize their spider map into a table like the one below.

Activities & short-term change: What are people doing differently?	Who benefits & how?	Systems and long-term change: Are there changes in the way community groups and institutions do things?
SAMPLE B More people use the park for new relationships	**SAMPLE** B Local and visitors' kids have places to play C Kids start earlier physical activity	**SAMPLE** F Tourists spend more time in the community H Healthier more active kids do better in school and have less health costs C Youth learn the value of taking care of things F Curb appeal raises neighborhood property values
S Youth develop relationships with garden club P Youth understand how city government works and how to access resources	S More support and knowledge for intergenerational connections N Community benefits from park additions P Youth feel they can approach for additional projects Youth learn to participate in public meetings	C Community calls on youth for resources (e.g., Glacial gardeners ask for help with tech) 2 stars for most significant change C Community trusts that youth will be productive C/S City provides maintenance line item for improved facilities

METHOD 1 HANDOUT #1

Community Capitals

Humans do not grow in isolation, but in relation to their families, homes, schools, communities and societies. In this way, human growth is connected to nature, other humans, culture, society, politics, etc. In fact, as communities grow, so do individuals.

When we create community projects, it is important to think about all the "capitals" that exist DO or DO NOT exist within a community. "Capitals" are assets or resources within communities that directly impact the health and well-being of humans. One or more "capitals" should be improved or strengthened through the community project.

FINANCIAL CAPITAL

BUILT CAPITAL

POLITICAL CAPITAL

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES STRONG FAMILIES HEALTHY PEOPLE SUCCESSFUL YOUTH

NATURAL CAPITAL

SOCIAL CAPITAL

CULTURAL CAPITAL

HUMAN CAPITAL

THE COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORK

- **Natural Capital:** Natural resources, including the quality of air, land and water; biodiversity.
- **Human Capital:** Population, education, skills, health, creativity, youth, diverse groups.
- **Cultural Capital:** Values, heritage, stories and traditions, recognition, celebration.
- **Social Capital:** Trust, networks in the community, group membership, cooperation, common vision and goals, leadership, acceptance of alternative views, diverse representation.

- **Civic/Political Capital:** Civic engagement of youth, increased voting, youth having an authentic voice in community issues and problem solving, level of community organization through the use of government, the ability of government to garner resources for the community.
- **Economic/Financial Capital:** Tax burden/savings, state and federal tax monies, philanthropic donations, grants, contracts, investments, loans, poverty rates, housing, transportation, infrastructure, telecommunications and hardware, utilities, buildings.
- **Built Capital:** Buildings and infrastructure in a community: schools, roads, water and sewer systems, utilities, health systems, technology services and infrastructure.

Flora, C. B. 2004. "Social Aspects of Small Water Systems." Journal of Contemporary Water Research and Education 128:6-12.

METHOD 1 HANDOUT #2.1

Community Mapping Tool Example

Built

Financial

Natural

Political

KID'S PARK

Cultural

Social

Human

METHOD 1 HANDOUT #2.2

Community Mapping Tool Example

Built

Financial

Natural

More people use parks **(B)**

Youth use new skills in other places **(H)**

Political

KID'S PARK

Youth understand how city governments work and how to access resources **(P)**

Youth develop relationships with garden club **(S)**

Cultural

Social

Human

METHOD 1 HANDOUT #2.3

Community Mapping Tool Example

Built

Financial

Natural

Political

More people
use parks **(B)**

Youth use new
skills in other
places **(H)**

KID'S PARK

Youth understand
how city governments
work and how to
access resources **(P)**

Youth develop
relationships
with garden
club **(S)**

Social

Cultural

Human

METHOD 1 HANDOUT #2.4

Community Mapping Tool Example

Built

Financial

Increase the usefulness and value of home **(B/F)**

Local and visitors; kids have places to play **(B)**

Youth learned to participate in public meetings **(P)**

Natural

Kids start earlier physical activity **(C)**

More people use parks **(B)**

Youth use new skills in other places **(H)**

Political

KID'S PARK

Youth develop relationships with garden club **(S)**

Youth understand how city governments work and how to access resources **(P)**

Community benefits from park additions **(N)**

Social

Cultural

Youth feel they can approach the city for additional connections **(P)**

More support and knowledge for intergenerational connections **(S)**

Human

METHOD 1 HANDOUT #2.5

Community Mapping Tool Example

Built

Financial

Increase the usefulness and value of home **(B/F)**

Local and visitors; kids have places to play **(B)**

Youth learned to participate in public meetings **(P)**

Natural

Kids start earlier physical activity **(C)**

More people use parks **(B)**

Youth use new skills in other places **(H)**

Political

KID'S PARK

Youth develop relationships with garden club **(S)**

Youth understand how city governments work and how to access resources **(P)**

Cultural

Community benefits from park additions **(N)**

Social

More support and knowledge for intergenerational connections **(S)**

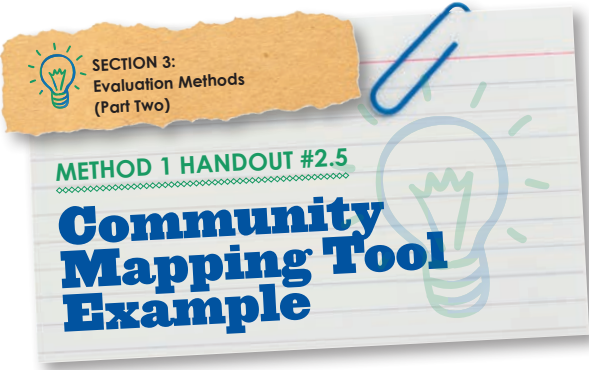Youth feel they can approach the city for additional connections **(P)**

Human

Diagram #6

SECTION 3:
Evaluation Methods
(Part Two)

METHOD 1 HANDOUT #2.6

Community Mapping Tool Example

Built

Financial

Increase the usefulness and value of home **(B/F)**

Curb appeal raises neighborhood property values **(F)**

Tourists spend more in the community **(F)**

Local and visitors; kids have places to play **(B)**

Youth learned to participate in public meetings **(P)**

Youth learn the value of taking care of things **(C)**

Natural

Kids start earlier physical activity **(C)**

More people use parks **(B)**

Youth use new skills in other places **(H)**

Political

Healthier, more active kids do better in school and have less health costs **(H/F)**

Youth develop relationships with garden club **(S)**

KID'S PARK

Youth understand how city governments work and how to access resources **(P)**

City provides maintenance line item for improved facilities **(P)**

Community benefits from park additions **(N)**

Social

Cultural

More support and knowledge for intergenerational connections **(S)**

Youth feel they can approach the city for additional connections **(P)**

Community calls on youth for resources (e.g., Glacial Gardeners ask for help with tech) **(C)**

Community trusts that youth will not get out of control and will be productive **(C/S)**

Human

Purpose:

This survey can be used with either youth or adults to determine the degree to which they increased leadership skills during the project.

Check the "Survey Tips and Examples" in Section 3 (Supplement) for ideas on how to analyze the survey results.

This survery is based on an existing instrument which was part of the revised version of the self-report "Personal Skill Assessment Guide" in the 4-H Curriculum, *Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow, Book III* and revised by Laurie Blackwell for a M.S. thesis at New Mexico State University in 1990.

METHOD 2

Youth/Adult Leadership Skills Evaluation

Facilitator Notes

The survey can be completed once after the project has been in operation for a while. Another approach would be for the participants to complete the "Before" questions when the project begins, then complete the "After" questions when they have participated in the project after a few months.

HELPFUL TIPS

If you want to keep the surveys confidential (perhaps people will fill them out differently if they know their names are not easily identifiable), develop a key such as: Jimmy Jones, #1; Susie Smith, #2; and Sharon Green, #3. Then give each respondent his or her assigned number and ask them to put the number on the survey in the space where their name would go.

METHOD 2

Youth/Adult Leadership Skills Evaluation
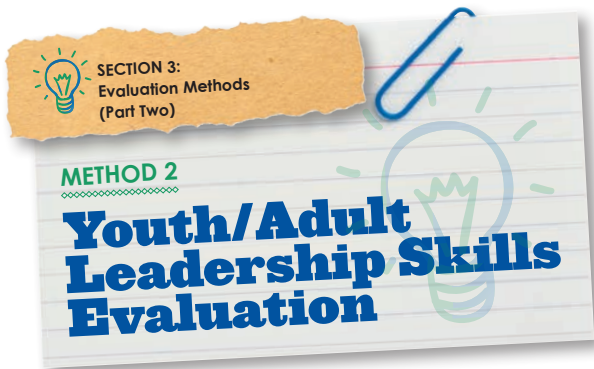
Name: _____

Directions. For each of the leadership skills listed below, rate your ability to perform each skill. In the left-hand columns, indicate your ability **BEFORE** participating in the project. In the right-hand columns, indicate your ability **AFTER** participating in the project. Circle the number that matches your answer at the top of the columns.

|	BEFORE				AFTER			
	No Ability	Some Ability	Good Ability	Excellent Ability	No Ability	Some Ability	Good Ability	Excellent Ability
1. I can organize a group activity.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
2. I can organize information.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
3. I can establish time use priorities.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
4. I can lead group discussions.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
5. I can evaluate programs.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
6. I can work as a team member.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
7. I can speak before a group.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
8. I can keep written records.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
9. I can see things objectively.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
10. I can follow a process to make decisions.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
11. I can plan programs.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
12. I can identify resources.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
13. I can share new ideas with others.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
14. I can teach others.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
15. I can meet with others.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
16. I can relate to people from other cultures and backgrounds.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3

Your Activities

Directions. For the statements below about your project experience, indicate how much you agree with the statements by circling the number of your answer that matches the answer at the top of the columns.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I taught others.	1	2	3	4
I acted as a mentor to others.	1	2	3	4
I planned learning activities.	1	2	3	4
I am more confident in helping others.	1	2	3	4
I am more confident in myself overall.	1	2	3	4
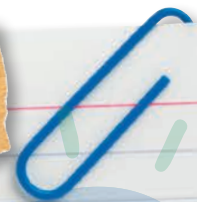
Purpose:

To help youth measure the changes within the community related to how adults view youth, how adults perceive youth being engaged in solving community issues, and how youth are supported by their communities. This is done through the observations of selected youth, adult leaders, adult participants, and parents of youth participants at local sites.
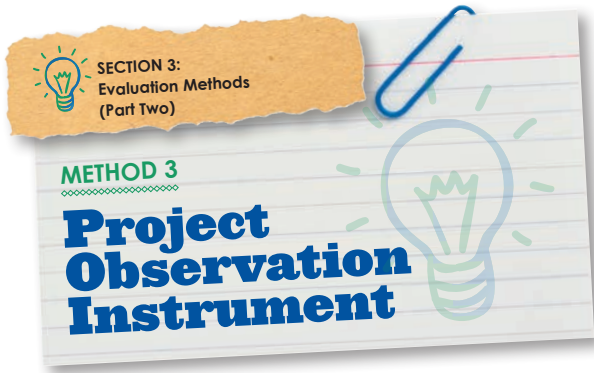
Contributed by 4-H

This observation tool developed by Newman, M. E. (2010). Engaging Youth, Serving Community Year 6 Final Evaluation Report. Chevy Chase, MD: National 4-H Council. Available on-line at http://www.4-h.org/Programs/Citizenship/Rural-Youth-Development/EYSC6-Final-Evaluation-Study.dwn

METHOD 3

Project Observation Instrument

Using This Tool

1. Identify the people you want to gain feedback from. For example, you could select ONE EACH of the following people: a youth who participated in the project, an adult who participated in the project, one teen from the community, one parent or other adult from the community.
2. Ask each person to fill out the survey.
3. Follow the steps in Three Ways to Use a Project Check-Up in Section #2 to decide how to distribute and collect the observation instrument.
4. Review Survey Tips and Examples in the Supplement: Developing and Using Evaluation Methods for information on how to analyze the responses.

METHOD 3

# Project Observation Instrument

Name: _____

Directions. For each of the items below, think about what you have seen happen in your community as a result of this project. Answer the questions by circling yes or no and providing examples of activities, behaviors, actions, policy changes, and other things you have observed that support your answer. If you run out of room for your response, turn this sheet over and write on the back.

(Circle one)

1 **Have community leaders demonstrated more positive attitudes about youth being actively involved in leadership roles in the community?**   YES   NO

Give examples of how community leaders have become more accepting of youth as community leaders. Include changes in policies, investment of resources, invitations to share ideas, etc.

2 **Has the project reflected the diversity of the community?**   YES   NO
Give numbers and percentages of the different ethnic and racial groups of the community and explain how the project has been inclusive of the different groups. If the project has not been inclusive, tell why you believe this is so and how it might be improved.

3 **Has the community seen an increase in opportunities for youth to be involved in positive youth development activities as a result of the project?**   YES   NO
Give examples of new opportunities (include numbers and percentages where appropriate). If the community has not seen an increase in opportunities, tell why you believe this is so and how it might be improved.

4 **Have project participants (youth and adults) shown an increased commitment to the community as a result of the project?**   YES   NO
Give examples of how youth and adults demonstrate a more positive attitude toward the community and their role in it.

5 **Did youth and adults learn how to identify community issues and assets while participating in the project?**   YES   NO
Give examples of procedures used to identify issues and assets and the results of these procedures.

6 **Did the youth and adult leaders apply leadership skills from their training to local situations?**   YES   NO
Give examples of ways in which the youth and adults demonstrated the use of leadership skills.
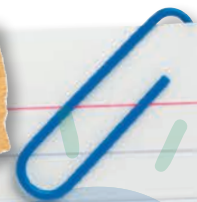
Developing and Using Evaluation Methods
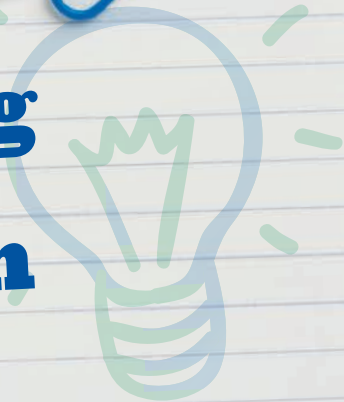
After youth have completed Section #3: Evaluation Methods, they will probably have questions about the different methods they should use to evaluate their projects. Below are guides in this section that offer a step-by-step process for using each method. The guides allow youth to go through the information on their own without additional activities. As the leader, however, you will help them select the most appropriate method(s), walk them through the corresponding guide, and facilitate their thinking through discussions.

1. **Interviews**
2. **Focus Groups**
3. **Surveys**
4. **Observations**
5. **Evidence That Already Exists**

Interviews

What is an interview?

An interview is a one-sided conversation. This is really important to remember, because the key to being a good interviewer is LISTENING. Your role as an interviewer is to ask questions and then listen. When the person you are interviewing says something that you want to know more about, ask! Good interviewers make the people being interviewed feel comfortable.

How long should an interview take?

Most interviews should take less than one hour and NO longer than two hours, because people get tired of talking.

What types of questions should we ask?

Knowing the right questions to ask can be difficult, but you're in luck because the storyboard you developed in Section #1 can help!

1. Go back to your storyboard and take a look at the first square – *What is going on in your community before the start of your project?*

During your interview, you may want to ask questions that will help you understand how community members saw and experienced your community before you started your community project. The questions should focus on your community issue. For example, if your project is trying to improve access to healthy food in your community, your questions could be something like, Are you able to buy fresh fruits and vegetables? If so, where? What is the price of these fresh foods? Are they affordable? "Where are these stores located? Are there any

communities that do not have stores with fresh fruits and vegetables?

2. Now, check out the third square of your storyboard – *What does your community look like after you begin your community project?*

You might want to ask questions that would help you know if your project is going according to plan. For example, you could ask: Do you see anything new, or have you noticed anything different about the access to healthy food now? Have you noticed my community project? If so, what have you noticed? Do you think it is a good project or a good idea? Why or why not? You can also look back at the Project Check-Up (Tool #2) to see if you would like to use any of those questions in your interview.

3. Finally, take a look at the last square of your storyboard – *What does your community looks like after your project is completed or after a long period of time?*

You can ask specific questions that will help you know if your project is making the impact you planned for: Do you think this project is having an impact on the access to healthy food in the community? If so, what do you think the impact is? If not, why don't you think it has had an impact? What more can be done to increase the amount of healthy food available in the community?

Interviews

What type of person should be interviewed?

Now that you have thought about **what** you want to know, you need to think about **who** you should talk to. Consider the questions you would like to use and ask yourself: Who might best know the answers to our questions? Who are the people who might have been impacted by our project? Who are the people that really like our project? Who are the people who may not like our project?

How do we prepare for an interview?

After you decide what questions you want to ask, write them down and try to put them in an order that makes sense.

Start your interview with questions that are easy to answer and make the person being interviewed feel comfortable. The questions can be more complicated as you continue the interview. The list of questions is called an **interview guide**.

In the first part of your interview guide write a short paragraph that you will read out loud to the person when you begin the interview. This paragraph should explain the purpose of the interview and how you will use the information.

You should also let people know whether or not you are going to use their names when you share your

HELPFUL TIPS

Use the interview guide to remind yourself of the questions you want to ask and the order you want to ask them in. You can also leave room to write down the answers to your questions directly on the guide.

results. If you are not going to use their names, this is called a confidential interview, and you tell people that you will not share their names when you discuss the community project.

Warning

If people do not give you permission, DO NOT use their names when discussing your community project. If a person does give permission, ask him or her to sign a written statement. For example, I _____ give my permission to _____ [name of group] to use my name when communicating information about this project.

Interview Tips

1. Introduce yourself and explain why you want to interview the person. You can do this by reading the first paragraph in your interview guide.

2. If you want to record the interview, ask permission before you turn on the recorder. Also, let the person know you will be taking some notes as he or she speaks. Remind the person that you will not use names unless you are given permission!

3. Start the recorder (if you are taping) and use your interview guide or something else to write notes on. You can also take notes on a computer or other electronic device. Make sure to do the following:

- When you would like to know more about something, ask a follow-up question such as, Why? Can you please explain that? or Can you tell me more about that?

- Make sure each question is fully answered. Do not allow the person you interview to go too far off topic. This is your chance to really hear from people, so go as in-depth as possible and cover all the questions.

Interviews

4 Let the person you are interviewing know when you have reached the last question and ask if there is anything more they would like to add. Remember to:

- Thank them for taking the time to share their knowledge and opinions with you.
- Tell them what you will do with the information. For example, maybe you will present your evidence at a community meeting, write a report about it, put it in the newspaper, or post it on a blog or website.
- Take time after the interview to complete your notes and reflect on the interview.

Analyzing and Summarizing Interviews

1 Organize your notes using your interview guide as an outline. Make sure you list the responses you got are listed under their corresponding questions.

2 Next, read through all the interviews and take notes about the following:

- Information that stands out to you – This can be anything you find particularly interesting or important.
- Information that may have surprised you – Why did it surprise you? What additional questions does it raise?
- Key words and themes – Are there words, issues, or ideas that are repeated by more than one person?
- How different people's responses are – Do you hear the people you are interviewing saying the same things or very different things? If they are saying different things, why?

3 Next, go through each question, one at a time. For example, read all the responses to question #1 on your interview guide. Summarize the responses to this question. Does everyone say the same things or do they say very different things? Count the similar responses and begin to make summary statements that describe which responses are expressed most often.

4 Put it all together by telling a story with your responses. You want to present the most accurate picture of what everyone has said. The way you tell the story will likely depend on your audience. To whom are you are going to tell your story? We'll talk more about the different ways you can present your evaluations in a later activity (Tool #4), because there are many different options!
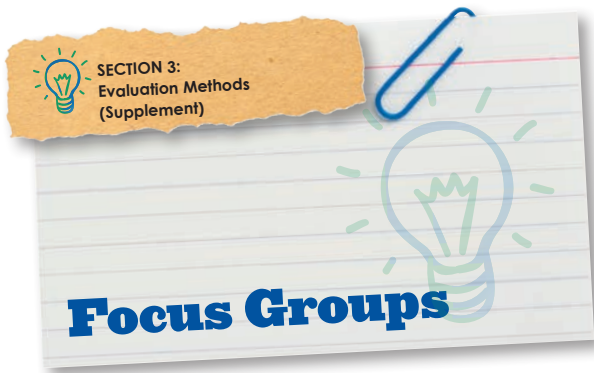
Focus Groups

What Is a Focus Group?

Focus groups are a way of collecting information about what a group thinks about an issue or topic. During focus groups, which usually have between 4 to12 people, everyone is asked to discuss a specific issue or topic. When you conduct a focus group, you will learn about the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of the group. That is really important! Remember that it is not about an individual's thoughts, feelings, or perspectives; rather, it is about the group's thoughts, feelings, and perspectives.

How long should a focus group take?

A focus group usually takes about one to two hours. You want to allow plenty of time for everyone in the group to answer the questions and, more importantly, you want to allow time for the focus group participants to discuss each question. At the same time, try to stop after two hours because the group may not be able to focus on the discussion for longer than that.

How many questions should we ask?

In a focus group, you will ask fewer questions than you would in an interview in order to give the group more time to discuss each question. Usually that means asking fewer than 10 questions.

What types of questions should we ask?

Knowing the right issues and topics to discuss can be difficult, but you're in luck, because your storyboard can help!

1. Go back to the storyboard you created in Section #1 and take a look at the first square – *What is going on in your community before the start of your project?*

During your focus group, you may want to ask the participants to focus on what was going on regarding your community issue prior to the start of your project. For example, if your project is trying to improve access to healthy food in your community, you might ask the group to discuss their access to fresh fruits and vegetables prior to the start of your project: Where did they buy fresh fruits and vegetables? Were the prices affordable for everyone? If not, who couldn't afford them? Why not?

2. Next, check out the third square of your storyboard – *What does your community look like after you begin your community project?*

You might want to ask the group to focus on what changes they have seen or heard. For example, you could ask the group to discuss the changes they have noticed: Do they see anything new, or have they noticed anything different about the access to healthy food now? Have they noticed your community project? If so, what have they noticed? Do they think it is a good project or a good idea? Why or why not? You can also look back at the Project Check-Up (Tool #2) to see if you would like to use any of those questions in your focus group.

3. Finally, take a look at the last square of your storyboard – *What does your community look like after your project is completed or after a long period of time?*

You can ask the group to discuss how they believe the project will impact the community in the long run: Do they think this project is having an impact on the access to healthy food in the community? If so, what do they think the impact is? If not, why don't they think it has had an impact? What more can be done to increase the amount of healthy food available in the community?

Focus Groups

Who should be a part of a focus group?

Now that you have thought about **what** you want to know, you need to think about **who** you want to talk to. Start by making a list of the different types of people (or specific people) who you may want to talk to in a focus group. After you have made the list, ask yourself these questions and discuss them with your leader and the others in your group:

- Why do you want to include these people in the focus group?
- What types of information might they have?
- Do you want the group of people to be from similar or different backgrounds?
- Do you want to include people who participated in the project? Is so, do you want to include those who have participated "a lot," "some," or "a little"? Or, you may want a mix.
- How many focus groups do you want to have? A group tends to work well with four to 12 people; enough people to hold a discussion, but not so many that people don't get enough chances to speak. If you have more than 12 people, you may want to hold more than one focus group, splitting the large number of people into smaller focus groups.

How do we prepare for a focus group?

After you decide what questions you want to ask, write them down and try to put them in a logical order. This list of questions is called a **focus group guide**. Start with questions that everyone can answer and then get more specific.
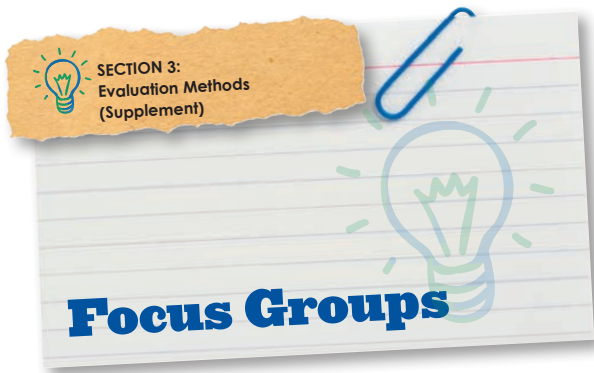
> **HELPFUL TIPS**
>
> Use the focus group guide to remind yourself of the questions you want to ask and the order you want to ask them in. You can also leave room to jot down key responses from the group directly on the guide.

In the first part of your focus group guide write a short paragraph that you will read out loud to the group when you begin. This paragraph should explain the purpose of the focus group and how you will use the information.

You should also ask people whether or not you can use their names when sharing your results. If you are not going to use their names, this is called a confidential focus group, and you can tell people that you will not share their names when you discuss your community project. You will also need to ask the group members to respect each other's privacy by asking them to agree not to tell others who was in the group and what individuals said.

> **Warning**
>
> Warning: If people do not give you permission, DO NOT use their names when discussing your community project. If people do give permission, ask each person to sign a written statement. For example, I _____ give my permission to _____ [name of group] to use my name when communicating information about this project.

Focus Groups

Focus Group Tips

Planning the Focus Group

Decide how you will capture the information. Will you record the focus group? If you are recording, make sure that you put the recorder in a location that can capture all voices. Will you write notes on flip chart paper? If so, will you have someone else take notes while you ask questions? Will you or someone else take notes on an electronic device?

Materials

- flip chart paper
- digital/tape recorder (option
- focus group guide
- name tags
- electronic device for taking notes

The Day of the Focus Group

1 **Introduce yourself to the participants as they arrive and give them name tags. Make people feel welcome when they arrive, especially if they don't know each other. You may also want to:**

- Pass out a sign-in sheet to be sure you have their names and any other information you may need. For example, you might want to know the intersections close to where people live so you know their neighborhood locations. You might ask for e-mail addresses for following-up and/or sending copies of the results of the focus group.

- If another person is helping run the focus group, introduce him or her to the group and explain that the person is there just to listen and help you remember what everyone says; maybe even take some notes!

2 **It is helpful to have everyone sit in a circle so they can see and hear each other. Make sure to do the following:**
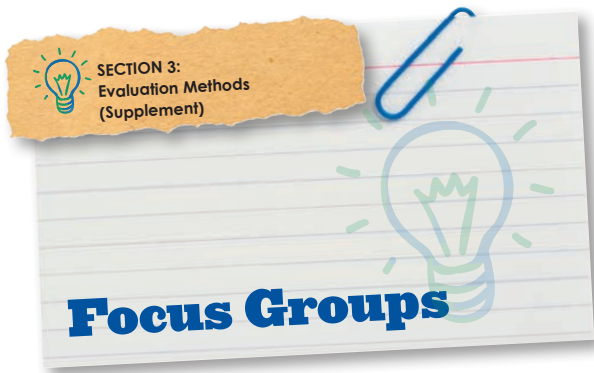
- Give an overview of the community project that includes the complex issue that the project is trying to improve. Explain the purpose of the focus group and how the information will be used.

- If you want to record the focus group, make sure everyone agrees to be recorded.

- Ask that they not share things that were said in the focus group with others.

- Let them know that you will not use any names when sharing the focus group results with others.

3 **Start asking the questions on your focus group guide. Remember to do the following:**

- If you want to know more about what someone is saying, ask them follow-up questions. For example, you might say, "That is an interesting point. Can you tell us more?"

- Make sure each question is fully answered. Do not allow the conversation to go too far off topic. This is your chance to hear from people, so you want to go as deep as possible and cover all the questions. Be aware of the time and keep the conversation moving!

- Keep eye contact with everyone throughout the focus group session and give everyone a chance to express their opinions and ideas. If some people are quiet, draw them out by asking if they have any thoughts on a particular question. If someone is talking too much, say something like, "That's a great idea, Mr. Smith. Now let's see what others in the group have to say."

4 **Let the participants know when you have reached the last question and ask if there is anything more they would like to add. Remember to:**

- Thank them for taking the time to share their views and opinions with you.

- Explain the next steps about how you will use this information. For example, you may

Focus Groups

present your evaluation results in writing, present your evidence at a town meeting, write a report, and/or post results on a blog or website.
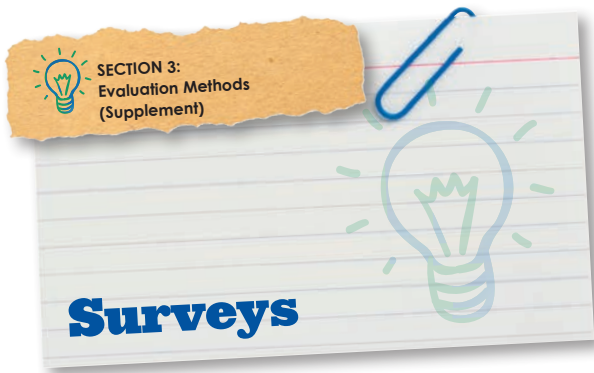
After the Focus Group

Take some time to reflect on the focus group. Talk about what you learned with the person who took notes, or just think through what you heard on your own. Make sure to write your thoughts down on paper so you don't forget them. Think about the following questions as you reflect on your focus group:

- What did we learn?
- Did everyone agree on each of the different topics?
- If they did not all agree, who disagreed? What topic(s) did they disagree about, and why did they disagree? Are these people different from the others in the group who did agree?
- What other questions do we have now?

Analyzing And Summarizing Focus Groups

1 Organize your notes using your focus group guide as an outline. List the responses under their corresponding questions.

2 Next, read through all the notes and ask yourself the following questions:
- What information stands out to you? This can be anything you find particularly interesting or important.
- Does any information surprise you? Why did it surprise you? What additional questions does this raise?
- What do most of the people say about each question? These responses are important because they represent the views of most of the group.
- Do you hear people saying the same things or very different things? If they are saying different things, why? Do they come from different communities, ethnicities, genders, and so on?

3 Now, go through each question one at a time. For example, read all of the notes from question #1 on your guide. Summarize the answers to these questions. Does everyone say the same things, or do they say very different things? Count the similar responses and begin to make summary statements. Continue to summarize each question. Pay particular attention to which responses are expressed most often. They should be the most important ideas to capture in your summary.

4 Put it all together by telling a story with the information you have learned. You want to present the most accurate picture of what everyone has said. The way you tell the story will likely depend on your audience. Who will you tell your story to? We will talk more about the different ways you can present the information in a later activity—there are many different options!

Surveys

What is a survey?

A survey usually includes a series of questions with possible response choices that have been supplied. Survey questions can be constructed as:

#1 Lists. For example:

Q: *Which of the following activities have you participated in? (Mark all that apply.)*

A: ___workshop   ____training   ____focus group

#2 Scales. For example:

Q: *Rate the following statements from one to five, with five being the best. Circle the number that best represents how much you believe you learned.*

A: *I learned something new at the workshop*
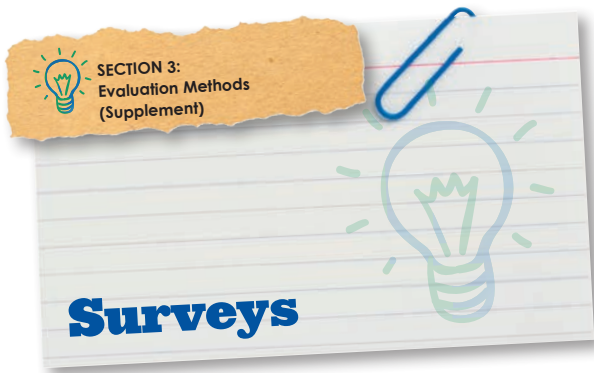   *1   2   3   4   5*

OR

Q: *Indicate how much you liked the workshop.*
A: ___not at all   ___some   ___a lot

#3 A Simple "yes" or "no" options.

#4 Open Ended Questions to allow a person to write in an answer using his or her own words.

Allowing the person to answer this way can provide valuable details about an issue. For example: Why did you like the workshop? If people answer in their own words, their responses are summarized in the same way as an interview.

When do we use a survey?

It is best to use a survey when you need to understand how a lot of people think or feel about an issue (more than 25 people). Surveys are great when you want to protect people's identity from being known. In other words, surveys can be anonymous because people do not need to put their names on them. Surveys are also effective when you want to find out what people know or how they are thinking "before (pre-test) and after (post-test)" your community project.

A good example of a pre-test/post-test survey is the Youth/Adult Leadership Skill Evaluation, which can be found in Section #3, Part Two.

What types of questions should we ask on a survey?

Knowing the right questions to ask can be difficult, but you're in luck because your storyboard can help!

1. Go back to the storyboard you made in Section #1 and take a look at the first square – *What is going on in your community before the start of your project?* In the survey, you may want to ask questions that will help you understand how community members saw and experienced your community before you started your project. The questions should focus on your community issue. For example, if your project is trying to improve access to healthy food in your community, you could ask: Are you able to buy fresh fruits and vegetables? If so, where? What is

Surveys

the price of these fresh foods? Are they affordable? Where are these stores located? Are there any communities that do not have stores with fresh fruits and vegetables?

2. Next, check out the third square of your storyboard – *What does your community look like after you begin your community project?*
You might want to ask questions that would help you know if your project is going according to plan. For example, you could ask: Do you see anything new, or have you noticed anything different about the access to healthy food now? Have you noticed my community project? If so, what have you noticed? Do you think it is a good project or a good idea? Why or why not? You can also look back at the Project Check-Up (Tool #2) to see if you would like to use any of those questions in your survey.

3. Finally, take a look at the last square of your storyboard – *What does your community looks like after your project is completed or after a long period of time?*
You can ask specific questions that will help you know if your project is making the impact you planned: Do you think this project is having an impact on the access to healthy food in the community? If so, what do you think the impact is? If not, why don't you think it has had an impact? "What more can be done to increase the amount of healthy food available in the community?

Once you have written out all the questions, think how people might answer them. For example, if you ask the question, "How available is fresh produce in your community?" you might provide the following answers: very available, available, a little

available, not available. Make sure the answers you provide match the question. Be sure to include the appropriate directions for each question's response set (for example, "Mark all that apply," "Mark only one answer," "Explain your response").

How will we know if we're asking a good question?

Think about a few things first:
- Is what you're asking something everyone will understand?
- Is the question clear and specific?
- Are you asking only one question at a time, or are you asking two questions in one? For example, if you ask, "How much did you learn about nutrition and exercise in this workshop?" you are asking for two pieces of information in one question. Make sure to ask for only one piece of information in each question.
- Did you remember to ask for information you may need about the people filling out the survey? For example, did you ask where they live, their ages, their gender? Do you need this information?

In what order should my questions go?

Your survey questions should go in an order that makes sense for the person taking the survey. Usually, it's best to ask general questions that are easy to answer first, and then ask more specific questions that may take more thought.

Surveys

How do we prepare for surveys?

After you decide what questions you want to ask and who is going to take the survey, you can start putting it all together. At the beginning of your survey, write a short paragraph explaining the purpose of the survey and how you will use the information. You should also let people know if the survey is anonymous. In other words, that you will NOT ask for their names.

Warning

Warning: If you would like to gather people's names, let them know how you will use the information.

It is often good to test your survey first to make sure it is easy to understand. You can do this with others in your group. Ask them to take the survey and let you know if all the questions make sense. While they fill out the survey, you also might want to time them to see how long it takes! If it takes a long time, you may want to delete some of the questions. Here are some good questions to ask others after they have tested your survey:

- Did you understand all the questions? Were they asked clearly and in a way you could understand?
- Were any questions difficult to answer? Which ones? Why were they difficult?
- Did you want to add information for particular questions but there wasn't room to write? Which ones? Why?
- Did you feel that the survey was too long, too short, or just right?

The information you get back will help you make changes to the survey before you use it. You may decide to do a survey before (pre-test) and after (post-test) your project so that you can measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior over time.
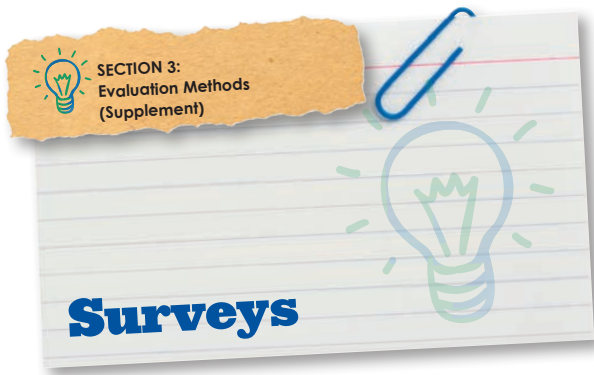
Analyzing And Summarizing Surveys

1 **Write out all of the questions and response categories for your survey or use a copy of a blank survey.** Take a look at the example below:

How much do you know about the air quality in our neighborhood?

BEFORE	AFTER
A lot	A lot
A little	A little
Nothing	Nothing

Surveys

2 **Go through the survey and place a mark next to the answer category for each person's answer, like this:**

How much do you know about the air quality in our neighborhood?

| BEFORE		AFTER	
A lot	I	A lot	IIIII
A little	IIIIIII	A little	III
Nothing	II	Nothing	II

3 After you have made all of your tallies, count them up! This measurement is called a **frequency**, because you are counting how often (or the frequency of times) this question was answered in this way. Once you have those numbers, you can do many things with them. Here are a few examples:

A **frequency** is how often people answered the question in a certain way. In the example above, for the question "How much do you know about the air quality in your neighborhood," you would count the number of times (or frequency with which) people said "a lot." Only one person marked a lot "Before" but five people marked a lot "After."

NUMERICAL: You can simply use numbers: for example, "7 out of 10 people said that they knew nothing about the air quality before they came to the workshop (pre-test), but afterwards (post-test), 5 out of 10 people said they knew a lot." That means that 5 people learned something! It is best to use the actual numbers when you have surveyed less than 25 people.

PERCENTS: If you have surveyed more than 25 people, you may want to use a percent. You can get a percent by using simple division, especially if you have a calculator to help. The first thing you will need to know is how many people took the survey and answered each question. Sometimes people skip survey questions, so you will need to go through and count how many people answered each question. Next, go back to the sheet you have been recording on and begin creating percents. For example, if 20 people said that they learned a lot at your workshop and 25 people answered that question, then you would divide 20 by 25. This will get you the percent, in this case, 80%. If the other 5 people said they learned a little bit, then you would divide 5 by 25 to get your percent. In this case, it would be 20%.

4 **Once you have counted and added all the responses and have the numbers (or percents), you can also show this information in charts and graphs.** You can draw your charts and/or graphs by hand or use a computer program. These will be very helpful when you tell other people about your community project and what you found.
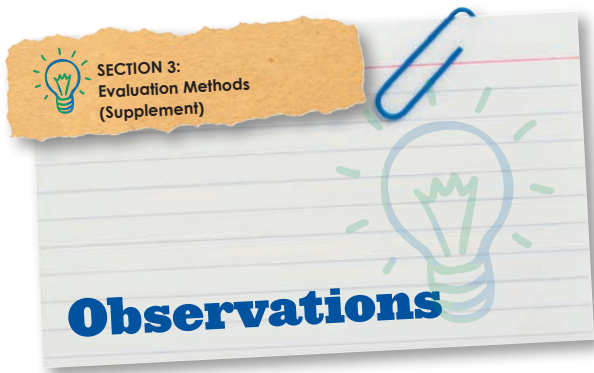
Observations

What is an observation?

Observation is a method to help you to see evidence. Observations can be done by taking photographs or videos, or they can be done by watching and listening and then taking notes.

What should we observe?

Bring out the storyboard you created in Section #1 and look over all the squares. Think about the types of evidence you could gather by sight.

1. Take a look at the first square – *What is going on in your community before the start of your project?* Is there anything that you could see or take photos or video of that would help document the problem or challenge in your community? This type of observation would happen at the beginning of your community project.

2. When you check out the second square – *What did/will you do for your community project?* Ask yourself if there are any changes that you see once you start your project. You can take photos or video of your project and the actions you are taking.

3. Take a look at the third square of your storyboard – *What was going on in your community soon after your community project begins?* Are there any changes that have taken place that are visible? For example, you may have created a community garden and can take photos of people enjoying the garden, or you may have created a skate park and can document through video how young people are using it.

4. Finally, take a look at the last square of your storyboard – *What does your community look like after your community project is completed or after a long period of time?* Are there any changes that have taken place that are visible? For example, you may have created a community garden and now community members have created a business selling the produce.

Make a checklist of things you want to observe at different points in time. Here are some other good questions to ask:

1. What do you want to observe? An individual, a person, or a setting?
2. If you are observing people, will they know you are doing the observation? Why? Why not? How much, if anything, will you tell people about your observation?
3. How much detail do you want from your observations? Is a checklist enough or do you need more?
4. How long and how often will your observations be?
5. How will you document your observation? Will you use video or photographs? Will you write notes about what you see?

Do I need a guide?

YES! A guide is a list of questions you would like to answer through observations. Questions should be written and in a logical sequence. This will help you remember what you are observing and why. Even if you are using photography or video, you will still need to take notes to remind yourself of the details.
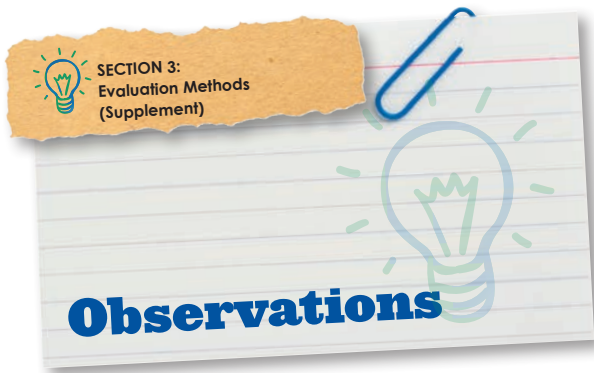
Observations

Observation Tips

1 When you arrive at the site of your observation, take a look at the things around you, what is called the ENVIRONMENT. Describe the overall feeling and appearance of the location based on what you see, hear, smell, and what you feel. Also, jot down the characteristics of the physical space.

2 Ask yourself, What OBJECTS catch my attention? What stands out? What objects do I see first? What catches my eye that is not so obvious?

3 Who are the ACTORS in the setting? Describe who is present.

4 What are the actors doing? Or, what ACTIVITIES are the people involved in and what ACTIONS are they taking? Describe everything you see in detail.

5 Don't forget to describe TIME. What time of day is it? Did the time move quickly or slowly?

6 What FEELINGS do you have when you come into the site and when you watch the actors?

7 Is there anything else you see or feel about the setting? You may want to ask yourself these questions more than once throughout your observation to make sure you notice when things change. Write down EVERYTHING, even if something doesn't fit into one of the categories above or does not make sense at the time. It might make sense later.

Analyzing And Summarizing Observations

1 **Read through all your observation notes, and your pictures or videos if you took them.** Review everything, taking note of the following:
- What is the same throughout your observations? What is different?
- What stands out as particularly interesting?
- Is there a difference between what you saw at the beginning of your community project and what you saw at the end?

2 **Now that you have gone through all your observation materials, think about these questions and write down your thoughts:**
- What do you think your observations are telling you?
- What are your initial impressions? Are they positive? Negative?
- What surprised you most? Why?
- What did not surprise you at all? Why?
- What did you learn?

3 **Tell a story about what you learned and saw.** If you took pictures, pick out a before and after picture that best describes the changes you observed through the course of your community project. If you did not take pictures, highlight a few main points from your observations that tell the story.

Evidence That Already Exists

What is existing evidence?

Evidence that already exists means information that provides a "starting point" to describe the issue you are addressing in your community project. Then, after your project has been in place for a while, or at the end of the project, you can compare what you find through your evaluation efforts with the "starting point" information to see if your project has made a difference.

This existing evidence is usually expressed as numbers or percentages. Information from national, state, county, or local levels can be used. Usually information from national and state levels are used when identifying the issue you want to work on in the needs assessment phase of planning your project. Information from local groups, reports, and studies may be the most important if you want to illustrate how your community project has changed the current state of your neighborhood, community, school, etc.

CAUTION
When looking for existing evidence, you want to make sure the source of information is reliable.

HELPFUL TIPS
Good places to look would be federal, state, or county reports, or information a local group has gathered on your community.

The existing evidence you are trying to find should be related to the issue you have chosen to focus on for your community project. Here are two great examples:

Bullying was a big problem in Anytown, USA. Youth did research and discovered that the high school had 30 incidents of bullying reported in the school year before the community project. Following the community project, which focused on preventing bullying, there have been only 15 incidents reported, or a 50% decrease.

A school policy required pregnant teens to physically stay in school in order to complete graduation requirements. During one year, 30 girls were pregnant. The community project got school policies changed so that pregnant girls could get class credit through on-line courses and homebound schooling. At the end of the year, 25 of the 30 girls were able to graduate.


HELPFUL TIPS
When making comparisons, look for information about communities and people who are very similar to those you are working with.

For example, in the following project, youth made comparisons to the same emergency response rates before and after their projects:

It took emergency responders in any county, USA, about 45 minutes to respond to fires and disasters on farms and in rural areas because properties were difficult to locate. Our community project used GIS/GPS systems to locate and mark all the farms and houses in rural areas. Emergency responders report that they now respond to most calls within an average of 20 minutes, resulting in significant containment of damage and destruction for community residents.

Evidence That Already Exists
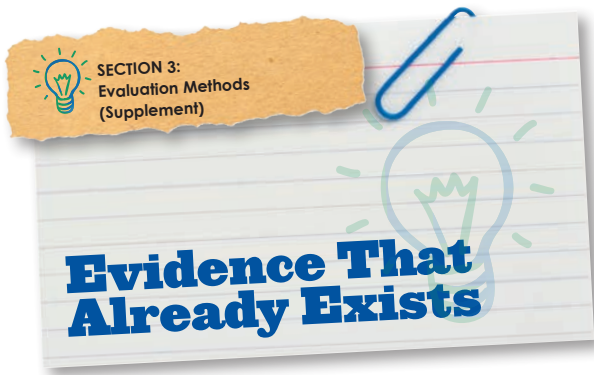
Do you want to make an even stronger argument for why your community project is addressing a certain problem? Finding evidence that already exists and comparing it with your evaluation information is a great way to do that!

How do we find out what evidence might already exist?

First, take a look at your storyboard. Think about what you want to know and where you might find this information (the Internet, the library, town hall). List all the possibilities and decide where to start looking. You may even need to make a few phone calls to people or organizations. Here are some examples of where you can find evidence that already exists:

- **The Internet**: As you know, you can find a lot of information on the Internet. But make sure it is from reliable sources! You cannot go wrong if you use information from national, state, or county reports. Information from colleges and universities are usually reliable as well.
- **The library:** Visit the library to check if there are any books or reports on your subject.
- **Newspapers and magazines:** Articles may have been published on your topic.
- **Organizations you are working with:** Depending on what you want to know, they could already have useful information.

Developing a guide can help you look for evidence that already exists. For example, you might be looking at A LOT of information, and having a guide can help you pull out what is important. First, decide what information you want to know and use that to design the points or questions in your guide. Of course, you will want to focus on information related to the issue your group is working on through the community project. Consider the outcomes you have set for the project.

Collecting useful evidence at the beginning of your project will make it easy to compare information at the end. This comparison of information will provide strong reasons why people will want to support your project with their time and/or money.

As you find existing information about your issue, be sure to accurately record all the details (numbers, percentages, etc.) and the places where you found them.

Also, record information such as titles of books or articles, dates they were published, who wrote them, and who published them. If the information was retrieved from a website, record the address and as much information as you can find, as if the site were a book or article. Also, include the date you retrieved the information.

Telling Your Story

Youth Leading Community Change: An Evaluation Toolkit

Introduction

The final step of any evaluation is sharing the results. The impacts of community projects are important, and people should know about them. Additionally, the continued success and sustainability of these projects often depends on informing community members and potential funders about the work. This section will help youth develop a story about their work, and determine who to share it with and how to present it.

Section Objectives:

- Youth will understand how to report their evaluation findings.
- Youth will identify the appropriate audiences to share their community project impacts with.
- Youth will learn how to work with the media to share their work.

Activity #1: Me, You, Us Moment

This activity supports youth to thoughtfully consider how to share the impacts of their projects. It invites them to reflect back on their projected outcomes, articulate their progress toward those outcomes, and provide evidence that supports that progress. As youth fill out worksheets, their stories begin to emerge.

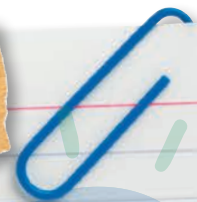### Activity #2: What is your story?

This activity helps youth determine who they want to share their results with and how.

Supplements

- Supplement: List of Ideas for Presenting Data
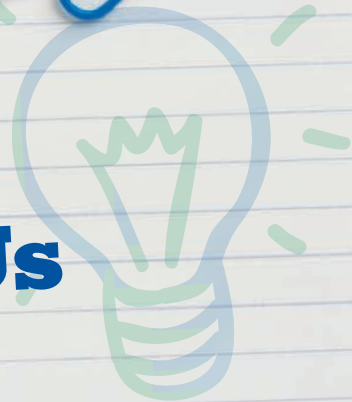- Supplement: Sharing Your Story with the Media

Purpose:

To help youth thoughtfully consider how to share the impacts of their projects. It invites them to reflect back on their projected outcomes, articulate their progress toward those outcomes, and provide evidence that supports their progress. As youth fill out their project impact worksheets, their stories begin to emerge.

Objectives:

- Youth will be able to articulate progress toward project outcomes.
- Youth will be able to articulate the evidence they have gathered through evaluations to illustrate progress toward their outcomes.
- Youth will learn how to report their evaluation findings.

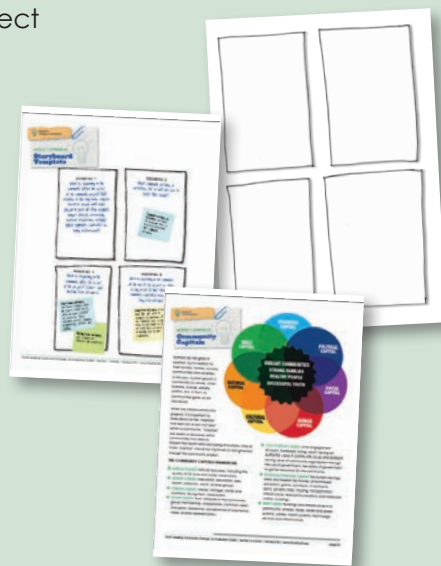# ACTIVITY 1

Me, You, Us Moment

Time:

90 minutes

Materials:

1. Colored writing/drawing utensils
2. Either their storyboards or rubrics from Section #1

Handouts:

- Community Project Impacts Worksheet (1 per project outcome)
- Community Capitals Handout

ACTIVITY 1

Me, You, Us Moment

Introduce Activity:

Let the youth know that this activity will help them to share the impacts of their projects. During this activity they will fill out a worksheet that will help stories emerge.

▶ Pass out storyboards and/or rubrics that the youth created in Section #1. Pass out the blank Community Project Impacts Worksheet. Youth should take one for each project outcome.

▶ Ask youth to refer to the S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound) outcomes that were created at the beginning of their community projects.

HELPFUL TIPS

If there are multiple outcomes for the project, divide them between the students.

Facilitate Activity:

1 Ask youth to write one outcome on each Community Project Impacts Worksheet.

2 Have youth use a colored writing/drawing utensil to shade in the percentage level that best represents progress toward the outcome.

3 **Ask youth to fill out the Evidence and Methods section.** This section will illustrate progress toward their outcomes by showing the types of information collected and the methods used to gather that information.

- Key words related to project outcomes and impacts: increased, improved, reduced, decreased, and/or expanded.
- Popular methods of collecting information: surveys, interviews, observation, mapping, focus groups and existing data.

4 **In the Community Capital(s) Addressed section, have youth check all community capitals that were impacted by their community projects.** Pass out the Community Capitals handout. This is the "Me" Stage.

5 **In groups of two or three have youth compare and modify their answers—that's the You stage of the activity.**

HELPFUL TIPS

If working with multiple outcomes for the project, ask youth to work in groups with different outcomes. This will allow them to discuss impacts on all of the outcomes.

6 **Have the small groups share their answers with everyone—that's the "Us" stage of the activity.**

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #1

Community Project Impacts Worksheet

Measurable Outcomes

Reflect on the outcomes you created for the rubrics and storyboards in Section #1.
Write one outcome in the space below.

Progress Towards Outcomes

Fill in the bar chart to the percentage level that best shows the progress toward the outcome

0%	50%	100%
Not on Target	Making Progress	On Target

Evidence & Methods

In the box below, share the evidence supporting progress toward the outcomes and the method(s) used.
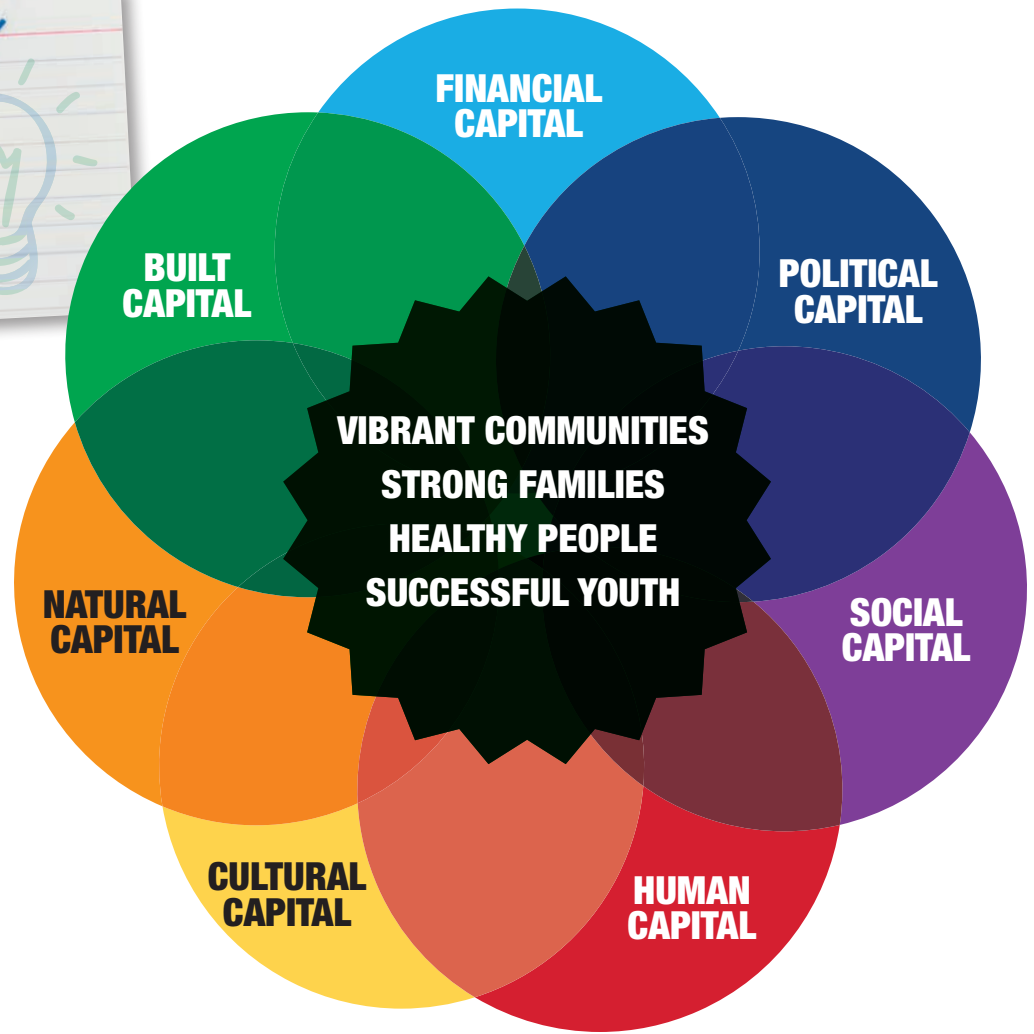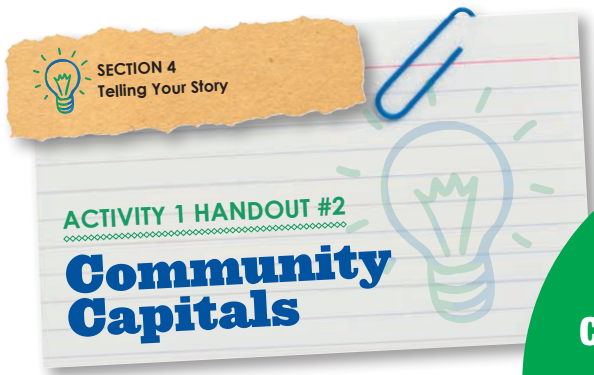
Community Capitals

Check all community capitals that the project impacted.

Human	Natural	Cultural
Social	Civic/Political	Financial
		Built

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT #2

Community Capitals

Humans do not grow in isolation, but in relation to their families, homes, schools, communities and societies. In this way, human growth is connected to nature, other humans, culture, society, politics, etc. In fact, as communities grow, so do individuals.

When we create community projects, it is important to think about all the "capitals" that exist DO or DO NOT exist within a community. "Capitals" are assets or resources within communities that directly impact the health and well-being of humans. One or more "capitals" should be improved or strengthened through the community project.
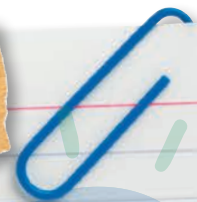
THE COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORK

- **Natural Capital:** Natural resources, including the quality of air, land and water; biodiversity.
- **Human Capital:** Population, education, skills, health, creativity, youth, diverse groups.
- **Cultural Capital:** Values, heritage, stories and traditions, recognition, celebration.
- **Social Capital:** Trust, networks in the community, group membership, cooperation, common vision and goals, leadership, acceptance of alternative views, diverse representation.

- **Civic/Political Capital:** Civic engagement of youth, increased voting, youth having an authentic voice in community issues and problem solving, level of community organization through the use of government, the ability of government to garner resources for the community.
- **Economic/Financial Capital:** Tax burden/savings, state and federal tax monies, philanthropic donations, grants, contracts, investments, loans, poverty rates, housing, transportation, infrastructure, telecommunications and hardware, utilities, buildings.
- **Built Capital:** Buildings and infrastructure in a community: schools, roads, water and sewer systems, utilities, health systems, technology services and infrastructure.

FINANCIAL CAPITAL

BUILT CAPITAL

POLITICAL CAPITAL

NATURAL CAPITAL

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES
STRONG FAMILIES
HEALTHY PEOPLE
SUCCESSFUL YOUTH

SOCIAL CAPITAL

CULTURAL CAPITAL

HUMAN CAPITAL

Flora, C. B. 2004. "Social Aspects of Small Water Systems." Journal of Contemporary Water Research and Education 128:6-12.

Purpose:

To help youth create an evaluation report to share with their communities and/or those who might have an influence on their community issues.

Objectives:

- Youth will understand how to report their evaluation findings.
- Youth will identify the appropriate audiences to share their community project impacts with.
- Youth will learn how to work with the media to share their work.

ACTIVITY 2

Creating an Evaluation Report

Time:

90 minutes

Materials:

Paper and Pencil

ACTIVITY 2

Creating an Evaluation Report

Introduce Activity:

Let the youth know that this activity will help to create an evaluation report that they can share with their communities and/or those who might have an influence on their community issues.

Facilitate Activity:

1 **Ask youth to think about the different types of people and groups who would want to know about their community projects.** Have them discuss their answers in small groups. Here are some examples:

- Organizations you have worked with or that are concerned with similar issues
- Neighborhood groups
- Community boards
- Peers and teachers at schools
- Local radio stations
- Local television stations
- Newspapers
- Potential funders
- Other youth groups

2 **Ask the youth to think about the following questions and record their answers on paper:**

- Who has been involved in your project?
- Who has supported you throughout your project?
- Who would have a special interest in knowing about the impact of your project?

3 **Let youth know that once they have determined their audience, they will need to figure out what they want to share with them.** Explain that when they share any kind of story they should start at the beginning. Also, there are a few key elements to evaluation stories that they will want to pay special attention to. Have them answer the questions in the following Community Project Report Outline to help guide their stories. As they answer these questions, their story will emerge.

ACTIVITY 2 HANDOUT #1

Community Report Outline
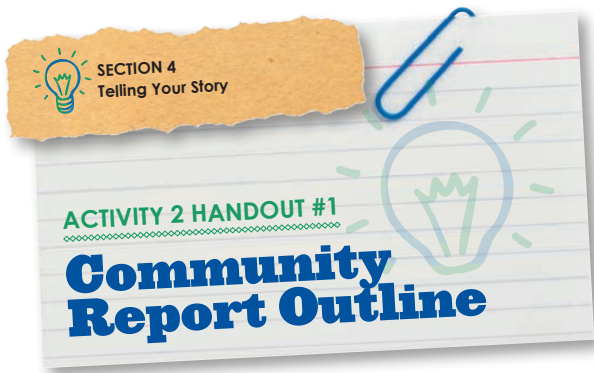
No matter which creative format you use, your final presentation should say the following things:

1. Introduction to Your Community Project
- What is the focus of your project?
- Who are the participants?

2. What is the Purpose of Your Community Project?
- What are the complex societal issues you are addressing? Why are they so important?
- Who is affected or most invested in these issues?
- What is interesting or challenging about these issues, and why do they have meaning or relevance for you?

3. Your Community Project's Story
- What were the main questions your project and its evaluation were asking?
- What outcomes were the project designed to achieve?
- What types of information did you collect to answer these questions?

4. Making an Impact
- Describe each of your methods (interviews, focus groups, existing data, surveys, observations) and which questions they helped answer.
- Why did you choose these methods?
- How often were these methods used?
- Why did you choose these specific people to gather data from?
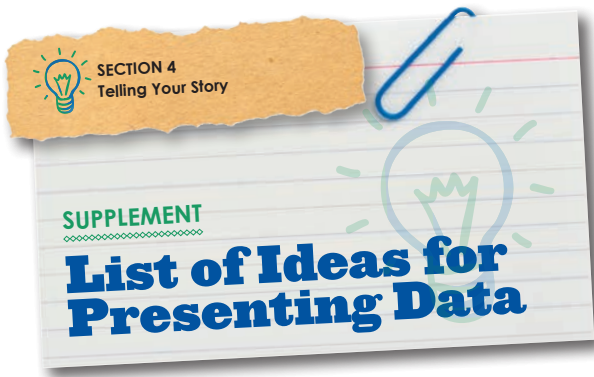
5. Data Analysis and Interpretation
- How was the data analyzed and summarized (for example, responses were tallied by hand, themes were identified by the number of responses given, a computer program was used to tally the responses).
- When was the data analyzed and summarized. (For example, a pre-test and a post-test were given before the start of the project and at the conclusion. In addition, participants were asked to keep a diary of all of the fruits and vegetables they ate each week).
- Who participated in the analysis and summary (for example, 5 youth members from our group with help from an adult community leader)?
- How often did you meet with others to review the data?

6. Community Project Findings
- What were the most important things you discovered during your evaluation?
- You can organize these findings around your original questions. In other words, these are the questions we were trying to answer and here is what we found.
- Try not to interpret the data, explain it, or make any conclusions until step #7.

7. Community Project Conclusions and Recommendations
- In this section, you can tell the audience more about what the evaluation information means to you. What conclusions have you drawn from the data and why?
- You can also note your recommendations for sustaining your project's impact in the future. (For example, who will continue the project as it now operates? Will some parts of the project need to be smaller? Where will the money come from to support the project?)

SUPPLEMENT

List of Ideas for Presenting Data

There are many ways you can present your community project. BE CREATIVE! Do you love acting? Perform. Are you an artist? Draw. Paint. Sculpt. Illustrate. Do you like film? Make a video. Also, it is okay to use a PowerPoint presentation – or mix and match! Present your data in a way that reflects you and your project. When it comes down to it, you can present your data visually, in writing, and/or interactively. Here are some examples:

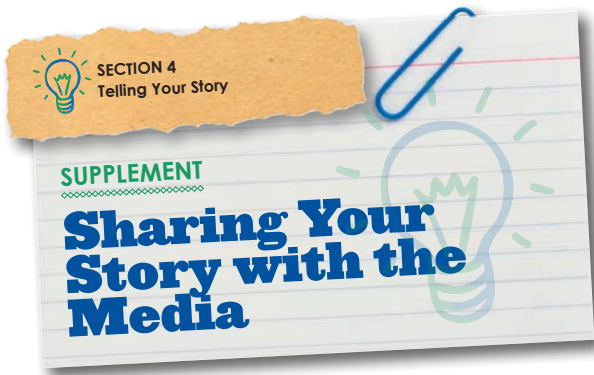## Visual Representations of Data

Multi Media

For some community projects, youth have created videos showing excerpts from interviews and footage of a project's process and progress. Others have used photos (both print and slide shows), picture storyboards, and poster displays of their evaluation process and findings. Another idea is to create a Facebook page that posts data from every step of your project. The Facebook page could also include a blog in which several people discuss project results.

Visual Presentation

Depending on your audience and the data you collect, a simple presentation done with a computer program such as PowerPoint or Prezi can be very powerful.

Interactive Representation of Data

The Game Show

Creating a game show with data can be a fun and interactive way to present the impact of your project. For example, split the group you're presenting to into two teams. Ask them to try and guess the responses to various questions that you asked people during your evaluation (like a game show). Write the questions and responses on flip chart paper and cover the responses or answers with paper or post-it notes. Then ask the groups one question at a time, and have them hold up their answers on a piece of paper. The team who gives the most common responses wins! It is a very interesting way to start a discussion because everyone likes to talk about why other people would respond in those ways!

The Play

If you like to act, you could write a script about your community project and its impacts and results and then perform it. This tends to work best with a team of people. The team could break into small groups to work on different aspects of the script, using the components of the Project Report Outline as a guide.

This is a particularly good strategy when different views and opinions need to be shared. For example, some youth can perform the views of particular community members while others perform a different set of views and beliefs. Direct quotes from the information collected can be used to help develop the script. At the end of these performances, you can conduct audience discussions, asking about their interpretations of key evaluation findings and any recommendations they might have for moving forward. These conversations are usually very revealing and lead to extremely creative recommendations. It is a good idea to document these discussions so they can be used for further planning.

SUPPLEMENT
Sharing Your Story with the Media

What's It All About?

The impact your project has on the people it was intended to reach and the broader community is important and everyone should know about it! In addition, the success of your project depends on your ability to keep the people of your community informed about your work, your group, and the project. Your neighbors will benefit from the project you are undertaking. Mostly likely they are interested in its progress and they might be able to contribute to its success. The key to keeping them informed and ensuring your success is telling your story!

Publicity is vital to community projects. It helps build community support from parents, school officials, business leaders, and local government officials. Publicity also encourages other young people in your town to get involved in worthwhile projects, including the work you and your team members are doing. And publicity gives your group the credit you deserve for improving the community.

This tool will help you plan and produce publicity programs. Use it as a guide. Work closely with your adult leaders. Use your own creativity. Most of all, remember that publicity work is fun. It involves writing about your project, arranging for photographs, and talking to people about the good work you are doing for the community.

What Makes Your Project Interesting to the Media?

Your project is of interest to those who will benefit from it. Those people read newspapers, watch television, listen to the radio, and retrieve information from the internet and other electronic sources. Be proud to tell people your story. The local media will be interested in a project of such value.

When you visit your local media, it is important to be well-informed about your project so that you present it and yourself in an interesting and professional manner. Before media visits, practice interviewing with a fellow group member. When you are ready for the visits, you should:

- Provide editors and the radio and television news directors with background. Tell them how the project was selected, and what was required to get it approved and started. Discuss your plan of action. Include information about coordination between youth conducting the project and local officials, who may help you publicize your project. Explain how the project fills a community need. Estimate how much time the group members will contribute to the project.
- Provide a data sheet on your group or organization, its past projects, and history. Show why the group or organization is important to the community! Talk about your membership and provide the names of important former local members.

Working with the Media

Your primary tool in media work is a news release containing the facts reporters need to do stories about your project. These releases are key resources for the staff of your local newspaper, radio and television stations. There are six basic questions every news release must answer:

1. **WHO** is doing the project?
2. **WHAT** are you going to do?
3. **WHERE** is the project to be done?
4. **WHEN** will you get started, finished, etc.?
5. **WHY** are you doing this particular project?
6. **HOW** are you getting it done (volunteers, contributions, etc.)?

A news release about your project is just like other stories you read in the newspaper. The most important information comes first in the story, the less important information follows.

SUPPLEMENT

Sharing Your Story with the Media

A sample news release can be found at the end of this tool. Although this release was written from the perspective of a national organization, it can be adapted with similar language and information about your community project

The news release includes several items of information:
- The date the release was written.
- The name and telephone number of the person who can provide additional information.

It is best to deliver stories to the local media in person. If you cannot deliver your releases personally, be sure to use the correct e-mail addresses. First, make a list of newspapers, radio, and television stations in your local and regional community. Then call each of the organizations for the name of the person to whom you should give your release. Personal delivery of the releases gives news people a chance to ask questions. It makes the contact more personal, giving you a better chance of getting your story published.

Other tips include:
- Ask editors about deadlines.
- Be sure to include the editor's complete title.
- In preparing news releases, be sure to get all appropriate approvals.
- Check releases with your adult leader to make sure you are clearing releases with the right people. You might have each person initial and date the review copy for your files.
- The final copy should be double-spaced.
- Don't send out sloppy work, and always triple check for errors.
- Be very careful that all names are spelled correctly and that all dates and times are correct.

A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words

Include photographs when telling your story. Take photos when the project begins, when progress is under way, and when the project is completed. If you are in an organized group that has a designated reporter, he or she can take the photographs. These photos might be used by the newspaper, school publications, or national reporting. Photographs are also important to provide evidence of the impact the project has made on the community.

You can also ask the local newspaper send out a photographer. Send out a media alert a week or few days in advance of a large event. Provide a description and schedule, and ask the newspaper to send a photographer to document the event. A sample Media Alert can be found at the end of this tool.

Public Service Programs

Most radio and television stations have a community interest program during which a host interviews individuals about items of interest to the audience. Your community project should be of interest in your hometown because it benefits the community. These steps can help you approach public service program officials:

- Discuss the idea with your adult leader. As a member of your community, he or she may know the program director or on-air host.

Sharing Your Story with the Media
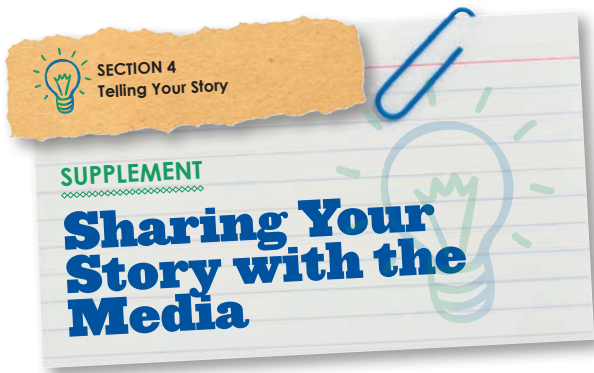
- Decide if your adult leader or publicity chairperson is going to make the initial contact. Prepare background materials, including news releases, information on your local group, and information on your project sponsor if you have one.

- Make an appointment to visit the host to discuss the project. Take the prepared packet of materials. If you have photos of the project's progress, be sure to take them along. Television stations will use on-air visuals during an interview. Be well-informed so that you can talk with ease about:
    - your local group, its purpose and size
    - information about your current project
    - how the community is contributing and can continue to help make this project a success
    - how the community and the people who live there will benefit from the project and how your project will help make the community a better place to live

Don't be shy about approaching your local stations. Your story is newsworthy. It will be interesting to the public and helpful to your program. Give your sponsors credit because they deserve it, and they will appreciate it. Sponsors could be more cooperative in the future when they get credit for doing something good for the community. Don't overlook local farm shows—usually aired early in the morning—as promotional possibilities, particularly if you live in a rural area.

On-Site Publicity

It is a good idea to do some on-site publicity. For example, find someone who can neatly produce a sign for the project site or contact a local printer. Your local building supplier might donate some plywood and posts for constructing a site billboard. Your school's shop class might be willing to help. Dark letters on a light background are best. Construct your sign early in the project so you can benefit as long as possible from the recognition it will give.

Community Relations

You can publicize your community project in other ways. Use speaking engagements to present your project more personally and involve even more of your peers than you can through the media.

Try to find parents who are involved in civic and church groups. Ask them to speak to their organizations about your community project. Or, if you are allowed to make a presentation to one of the groups, as the parents if they are willing to work with you. They are familiar with the audience and can give you tips on what to say.

Provide any speaker who agrees to talk about your project with important facts and figures. These facts should include the same items we have discussed: who, what, where, when, why and how. Type a fact sheet in all capital letters with plenty of space between the lines. It will be easier for the speaker to refer to during the presentation. A PowerPoint presentation may help the speaker bring the community project to life through pictures.

Or, ask several members to make the presentation. One speaker can explain how the project was chosen and how it benefits the community. Another speaker can discuss what the project is and how it will be done. And a final speaker can explain who is involved, who in the community is contributing, and who the sponsoring organization is.

SUPPLEMENT

Sharing Your Story with the Media
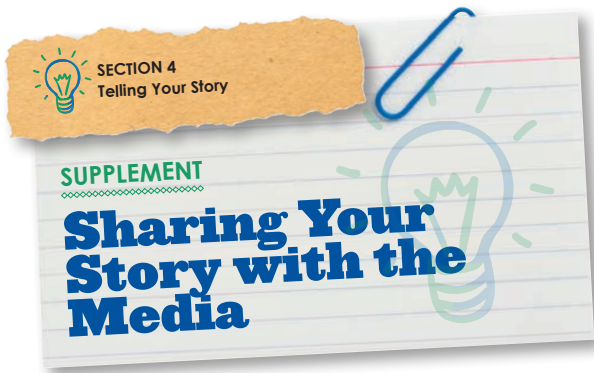
Local Government

It may be possible for you to speak at your local town or county meetings. Council members are interested in local improvement projects and may be able to help you. Ask your adult leader how you should contact the local board. In some areas, you may be able to get on the agenda by simply contacting the board in advance of the meeting. In others, it might be best to send the board an email in advance.

By participating in the local government process, you might make your project a part of the municipal record. This participation would expose you and your group members to the processes by which your community is governed and the leadership roles all of you might play in the future. It could also lead to additional funding.

The County Fair or Other Public Events

Your group may already be exhibiting at the county fair or other public events, with literature available on your various programs as well as your community project. If not, you should consider including such an exhibit in your plans. County fairs operate differently all over the country. Yours may be sponsored by a local civic organization. It may be operated by your local agricultural extension office or your state department of agriculture.

Check the organization's website or contact a member of the board to find out how to apply for exhibit space. If you choose to have a fair exhibit, a committee should be formed to organize the details. You have to file the correct forms by a deadline in

some areas. Then you are ready to design the exhibit and have it constructed. It can be as elaborate or simple as your group decides. Be sure to have printed information about your community project available for people who visit your exhibit.

Using Social Media to Tell Your Story

Social media can be extraordinarily powerful. Social media, as a tool, allows your group to build relationships, share information, and move your project forward. It is a two-way street for communicating. Your group is able to share information about forthcoming occasions and useful resources with the public. Perhaps you and your group will choose to use social media as a platform to raise questions and initiate conversations. With no upfront cost to your group, social media can help you start building relationships with potential community partners. Sharing ideas via social media is a great way to publicize your group's activities. Below is a list of social media outlets and brief summaries of how they can be used.

Twitter

Twitter is a website that can be used to promote your group online and drive traffic to your website. Twitter uses "tweets," 140-character (maximum) messages posted to your Twitter profile, to share what you are doing at any moment.

Twitter's system of shortened links and hashtags makes it easy to find people or businesses posting tweets. Hashtags are hyperlinked keywords that have been embedded into tweets. Any word can be turned into a hashtag by adding the "#" sign before the word in the body of your tweet. Twitter's "@Mention" system allows you to contact any other Twitter user, regardless of whether or not they follow you, by placing an "@" symbol in front of the Twitter user name in the body of your tweet.

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site meant to bring people together who may or may not know each other but who have similar interests or affiliations (went to same high school/college).

SUPPLEMENT

Sharing Your Story with the Media
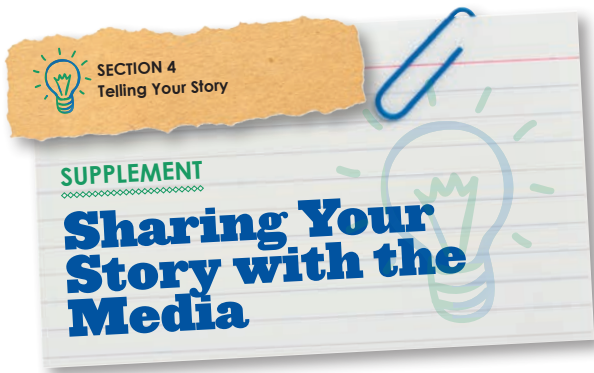
Facebook has online chat capability and allows individuals and groups to set status and event updates and post photos. Have your group create a Facebook page so you can share updates and pictures with followers.

Foursquare

Foursquare is a location-based social networking website for mobile devices such as smartphones. Individuals share where they are and tell others about the places they have been. The process is called a "check-in." Users check-in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Check-in - Social_check-in using a mobile website, text messaging, or device-specific application by selecting from a list of venues the application locates nearby. Users are also able to offer feedback or general comments about places and events they have attended. Create a check-in for your community project site!

Instagram

Instagram is a popular photo-sharing service app for smart-phones and Facebook. It is simple and accessible to everyone. Use it to share important moments in your group's community project.

Samples of Social Media Usage:

Twitter: We fight hunger! #livingtoserve
Facebook: We are putting our leadership into action to help fight hunger in our community!
Foursquare: This is where we serve
Instagram: A picture of our project's progress

Creating a Plan to Tell Your Story

Now that you know the basic tools to help you tell your story, you can develop a plan for your group. Select the publicity committee first. Depending on the size of your project and community, you may need from one to three people to take this responsibility. If you select more than one, designate one person as chairperson who understands that he or she is responsible for making sure every item on the publicity schedule is done ON TIME. One of the first rules of dealing with the media is that you must understand their deadlines and meet them. Choose a chairperson who has good grammatical skills and who is good with details.

Use the Telling Your Service-Learning Story Planning Guide to create a year-long marketing plan for your community service project.

The following Pages Include Additional Tools That Can Help!

- A sample letter from a national organization that awarded funds to a local community. You can adapt the letter using a local perspective: Write about the important things you want people to know about your community project.
- A sample form you would fill in for a media alert that gives media important information about an event or activity you would like to publicize.
- A guide to help you plan your communication activities.

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National FFA Organization
6060 FFA Drive
P.O. Box 68960
Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960
Telephone: 317-802-6060
Fax: 317-802-6061
FFA website: www.ffa.org

[Date], 201[ ]

Contact: [Insert Chapter Contact]

[Chapter Name] FFA Receives "Rural Youth Development" Grant
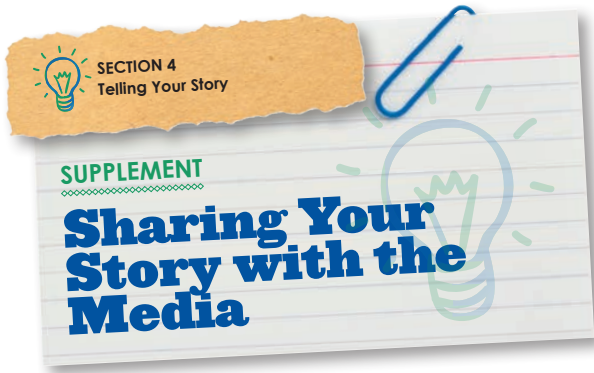
INDIANAPOLIS - The National FFA Organization recently awarded more than [check with program coordinator for total amount of money granted] in rural youth development grants to [total # of chapters funded] local FFA chapters in [total # of states represented] states across the country. The grants continue the outreach to rural youth and will support service-learning projects that impact local community needs. To be eligible for a grant, FFA members must live in a rural area and submit a competitive proposal for a service-learning project which successfully addresses a local issue or need.

One successful "Rural Youth Development" chapter was the [Chapter Name] FFA Chapter in [City, State]. They received [$ amount] to fund their project "[Project Title]." [Insert three to four sentences describing the project here. Mention the overall goal, how the students will implement the project and how the community can help (if applicable.)] The [Chapter Name] FFA Chapter advisor is [Advisor Name]).

The grants are administered by USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) through the National FFA Organization. For information on the "Rural Youth Development" program please visit www.ffa.org/livingtoserve .

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization of 540,379 student members as part of 7,489 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The National FFA Organization operates under a federal charter granted by the 81st United States Congress and it is an integral part of public instruction in agriculture. The U.S. Department of Education provides leadership and helps set direction for FFA as a service to state and local agricultural education programs. For more, visit the National FFA Organization online (http://www.ffa.org), on Facebook (http://facebook.com/nationalffa), on Twitter (http://twitter.com/nationalffa) and FFA Nation (http://ffanation.ffa.org)

[Group Name]
[Address and Contact Information]

SUPPLEMENT

Sharing Your Story with the Media

MEDIA ALERT
[Date]

What:	**Rural Youth Development [insert event name HERE]**
Where:	
When:	
Who:	
Why:	
Additional Information:	

For more information, please contact [Adult Leader NAME] with [NAME] Group at [PHONE NUMBER]

SUPPLEMENT

Sharing Your Story with the Media
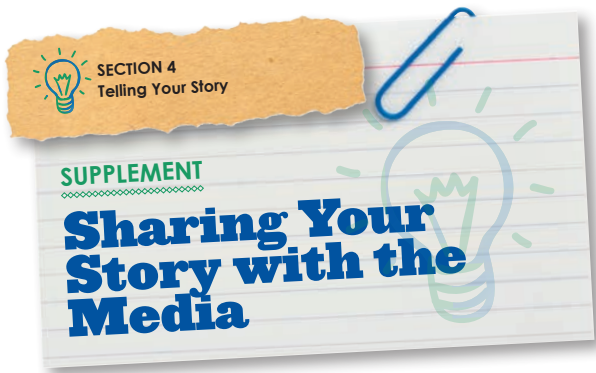
Telling Your Community Project Story—Planning Guide

	(SOCIAL) MEDIA OUTLET(S)	INFORMATION TO HIGHLIGHT	PERSON IN CHARGE	DUE DATE
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				
January				
February				
March				
April				
May				
June				
July				