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AUTHOR Wiglesworth, Bill, Comp.
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ABSTRACT

Designed to assist in the planning of community education and services, this booklet offers an argument in support of as well as step-by-step implementation instructions for a 2-day planning process. Following a discussion of the advantages of cooperative planning, the community planning process is outlined. Examined next are the reasons why a 2-day structure fosters cooperation and produces solutions to problems. Various aspects of implementing the process are explained, including who organizes a 2-day planning meeting, who should be involved in it; what useful data should be collected before the meeting, personnel who are essential in a planning meeting and their role in it, the exact procedures for conducting the meeting, and writing a work statement. Set forth next are guidelines for evaluating a planning meeting. Sample correspondence and evaluation forms are appended. (MN)

Community Education

A Community Planning Process Guide

Developed pursuant to Grant No. G008006209 by Morehead State University, Bureau of University and Regional Services, Division of Continuing Education, Eastern Kentucky Community Education Training Project, No. 563CH00053.

George W. Eyster, Project Director
Bill Wiglesworth, Project Coordinator

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Compiler: Bill Wiglesworth
Typist: Lila Berry
Illustrations: Becky Dodson
Cover and booklet design: Rocky Zornes

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Introduction

What Is the Purpose of the Process Guide?

This booklet is designed to assist people who wish to engage their community in a serious planning effort. Some of its material was used to help plan the expansion of library services for disadvantaged adults.[1] Though much of the content has been modified for use in the planning of community education programs and services, it could be adapted to other specific planning areas.

Most community educators would claim that community education is a process, not an institution, and that it involves all programs, services, and organizations that contribute to the well-being of a community. Acceptance of that premise would suggest, then, that if our approach to planning is suitable for community education, it could also work for other community-based planning efforts.

The process is not limited to the development of new activities. It can be just as effective when used to improve existing practices of well-established agencies or institutions. There may not be a need to create new programs from scratch, but to refine, expand, or redesign old programs or services.

This manual presents a two-day planning process as one way to plan effectively. It offers an argument in support of this process and it provides step-by-step implementation instructions.

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What

What Are the Advantages of Cooperative Planning?

If two heads are better than one, does it follow that fifteen are better than two? Perhaps. In the case of planning for community needs, cooperative planning between people and agencies has several obvious advantages over the more traditional approach to planning.

Traditional Planning	Cooperative Planning
Agencies involve citizens, if at all, only to review plans worked out before.	Agencies and citizens develop plans from the beginning as joint partners.
Each agency determines its own goals and schedules.	Agencies and citizens jointly determine goals and schedules.
Agencies have a monopoly on important information.	Citizens and agencies have access to the same information.
Rich agencies have more power than poor agencies.	Rich and poor agencies have equal input.
Each agency has its own staff, funds, building, etc.	Planning may lead to joint staffing and funding and shared facilities.
There is competition among agencies for	Coordination may result in sharing and

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available funds, local and outside. reducing costs.[2]

If the benefits of cooperative planning are so apparent, how do you make it happen? One approach is to follow a specific process model.

What Is a Community Planning Process?

Quite simply, it is a procedure that has been structured to deal with specific concerns shared by people within a defined community. The two-day planning process described in this manual was developed over a six-year period by the Appalachian Adult Education Center (AAEC), Morehead State University, Morehead, Kentucky. It was used to initiate research and development projects in adult basic education (ABE). After the process had been improved even more, it was applied to cooperative planning efforts at over eighty sites where the focus was upon cooperation between libraries and adult educators. The purpose: to expand library services for disadvantaged adults.[3] Throughout its use in library service planning, the process was continuously refined. Adapting it to community education planning required only minor adjustments. In both applications, the people involved and the problems addressed were very similar. It has been tried and tested—and it works!

Why

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Why Use a Two-Day Planning Process?

Too often we have participated in problem-solving meetings where motives were misunderstood, where participants defended their current practices rather than sought new cooperative approaches. The meeting was characterized by resistance to change, maybe even confrontation, and resentment; it produced no collaborative plan of action.

Most of us have also participated in meetings where people expressed their concerns, set admirable goals, and then left the meeting feeling good. Unfortunately, the problem-solving enthusiasm often went no further: specific responsibilities were never outlined; necessary tasks were never identified. The problem(s) remained.

Because of its two-day format, the process described in the booklet can eliminate the impediments described above. It can resolve misunderstandings and reduce excessive defensiveness much better than a single meeting can. It can transform good intentions into concrete plans. It can cultivate genuine collaboration.

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Why Does the Two-Day Structure Foster Cooperation and Produce Solutions to Problems?

During the first day of the process, the participants tell how the central issue has affected them and how they have dealt with it, unilaterally and in cooperation with others. They express wants, needs, and concerns relevant to the problem area. They describe their successes as well as their failures. By the end of the session, everyone should have a much better awareness of the complexity of the issue which brought them together.

At the end of the first day's work, an informal happy hour or evening meal can provide the opportunity for some very productive interaction. (Though the planning for this social gathering is the responsibility of the convenor of the meeting, it may be sponsored by any or all of the participants.) It is during this socializing that people tend to re-evaluate what has been discussed. They prioritize concerns. They challenge each other's assertions. They consider and compare different possible solutions. Individual ponderings develop into shared opinions. This casual intersession deliberation is as important as the structured business because it produces a clearer sense of purpose and direction than a single formal meeting could. The participants are preparing themselves to deal with the next session's business: actual problem-solving. Obviously, a one-shot meeting lacks this built-in advantage of the two-day planning process.

(If there is no scheduled social get-together, the overnight pause between sessions still allows the participants to evaluate the first session and to think about their contribution to the following day's meeting.)

During the second day of the community planning process, specific task objectives are developed. They will become the core of the "Work Statement", a precise written plan compiled after the meeting. This document is duplicated and sent to all of the participants. It is the collaborative product of two business sessions and one important intersession.

How: A Course of Action

Who Organizes a Two-Day Planning Meeting?

Before people can be involved in a two-day planning meeting, someone must assume the role of organizer or *convenor*. This person is responsible for bringing people together and getting the process under way.

The convenor may be the person or agency which first decides that a problem needs serious attention—or the convenor may be recruited by this person or agency. A good convenor will be known and respected by the community, will be able to bring people together, will have good organizational abilities, and will be committed to solving the problem.

Choosing an easily accessible facility for the planning meeting is a prime consideration. The meeting room should be comfortable (though not too comfortable), well-lighted, and provided with tables and chairs that can be arranged in a semicircle facing one wall. There are probably several organizations in your area which could provide such a facility.

Signing a written agreement creates a greater sense of commitment than merely making a vocal intention. If the convenor wants a written commitment from prospective participants, the reply portion of the invitation letter (Appendix A) should be emphasized. The facilitator (see page 16) may also want a strong commitment from the convenor. In the Morehead State University Community Education Project, the convenor of a planning session signs a "Letter of Agreement" (Appendix B) which is a

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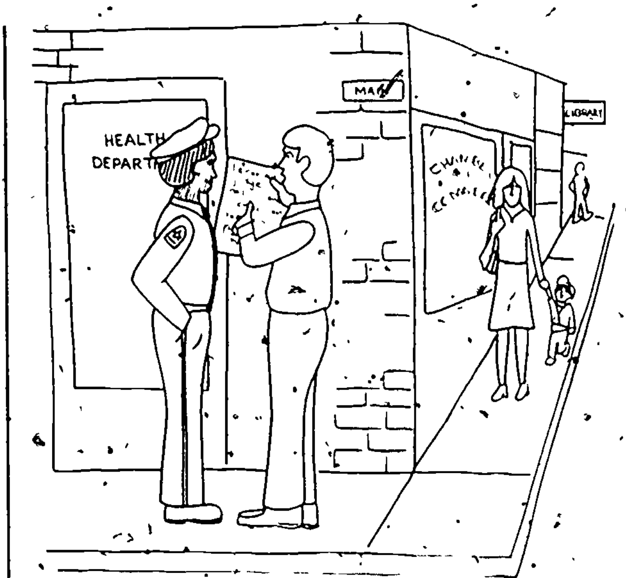

The *convenor* recruits people to attend the planning meeting

statement of a serious, though nonbinding, commitment to do two things:

(1) involve people, and

(2) gather useful information.

Both of these tasks will be explained below.

Who Should Be Involved in the Meeting?

Who the convenor decides to involve in the planning process will depend primarily upon the nature of the problems being addressed. The following sample list was developed for use in the Morehead State University Community Education Project. Notice the broad range of people who could be invited to a community education planning meeting.

- School Superintendent
- Board of Education Member
- County Judge/Executive
- Mayor
- Member of the Fiscal Court
- Librarian
- Library trustee
- ABE area supervisor, director, teacher
- School principal
- School teacher(s)
- Representative of:
  - Area Development District
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Junior Chamber of Commerce
  - College or university
  - Community Action Agency
  - Community college
  - Comprehensive Care
  - Cooperative Extension Service
  - Department for Human Resources
  - Farmers' Cooperative
  - Fire Department
  - Health Department
  - Hospital
  - Labor union
  - League of Women Voters
  - Legal Services
  - Local Arts Society
  - Local business and industry
  - Local radio and newspaper
  - Ministerial Association
  - Parks and Recreation

Police Department
Private school
PTA
Red Cross
Senior Citizens
Service club (Rotary, Lions, etc.)
Other volunteer association
Special education
Vocational education
YMCA, YWCA
Youth organization

The above list is certainly not complete. You probably know of other people who should be involved in community education planning. If the planning were to consider non-community education issues, you may choose to involve only those people or agencies that are directly associated with the problem area.

Many local organizations and agencies will have state and regional offices. We recommend that you send copies of the invitation letter to the upper-level decision-makers, not necessarily to invite them to the meeting, but to make them aware of the event and to gain their approval. Subsequently, you may want to involve them in the "Work Statement" activities.

It is doubtful that you would get a representative from every organization listed above. The most effective planning meetings occur with groups of 15 to 30 people. If you think that the number of actual participants will become too large, you may decide to revise your invitation list.

How Do You Get People Interested?

To sell the planning process, you must try to convince potential participants that the process does not belong to anyone in particular; it belongs to all the participants and everyone with whom they interact. Each individual or agency will have to believe that their self-interest will be served. The question "How will it affect me or my business or my agency?" must receive a reassuring answer.

Another important participation factor is concern about the planning meeting's impact upon the whole community. Participation is often encouraged by a positive response to "Will my peers or other influential people be involved?". These considerations can be addressed through one-to-one conversations, small informal orientation meetings, and good local publicity such as radio talk shows and newspaper feature stories.[4]

If you are unable to secure a two-day commitment from all the prospective participants, you may want to present a general orientation session where concerns and fears receive more detailed consideration. Some people respond to a five-minute selling job; others need a well-presented, more organized method of persuasion. You'll have to use your own best judgement.

If you still cannot get people to commit themselves for two full days, you may have to schedule your planning meeting for one afternoon, followed by a morning session. Unless the prospective participants sincerely feel that there is a need for a planning meeting, your recruitment efforts will probably be unsuccessful.

The "Sample Letter to Agency People Who Might Participant in a Planning Session" (Appendix A) invites participation by using several direct questions. Probably the best way to dispel fears and promote cooperation is through the one-to-one approach. The letter attempts to formalize and reinforce the commitment to attend.

The decision to participate in such a process requires more than just a casual interest in community concerns. It is an expression of commitment to a serious cooperative effort. The choice to become actively involved is the keystone to successful collaboration.

> Making an agreement to have a collaborative process is easy. It is easy to agree to almost anything. People talk, nod their heads, pass resolutions and really believe that they all agree.
>
> To agree is simply to express approval. To make a commitment is to make a choice that involves a definite course of action. Commitment solidifies a position and an attitude towards a problem. It forces people to decide, to bring closure, usually so that something else can happen.
>
> People choosing the route of collaboration must be willing to commit

themselves to the time, energy, trust, and action necessary to bring about a collaborative effort.[5]

What Useful Data Should Be Collected Before the Meeting?

In the Morehead State University Community Education Project, a standard form (see pages 14-15) is used to record basic demographic information. This data is relevant to the focus of most community education programs, that is, the well-being of the entire community. This information can highlight some of the more important economic and educational needs, as well as identify existing resources related to these needs.

This data sheet is only one suggested format. You may decide to adapt this form to your particular information needs. Or you may choose to gather the necessary background information in an entirely different way: in anecdotal comments, in informal testimony, or in other survey documents available in the community. What's important is that the need for the planning meeting be clearly documented.

The information sheet will be distributed to the participants early in the first session. The collected data should demonstrate to them that there are good reasons for them coming together.

Background Data for Planning Session

County__________________ Area____________

Towns____________________________________

Topography____________________________________

Major Transportation Routes____________________________

1 Population Total__________ Male________ Female________

Distribution by age groups ----- _____ ----- _____ ----- _____

(age group number) ----- _____ ----- _____ ----- _____

Median Family Size__________

2 Economic Information

Median Income Family__________ Per Capita__________

Total Civilian Work Force__________ Male________ Female________

Number Unemployed__________ Percent Unemployed__________

Major Local Employers____________________________

____

____

3 Educational Information

School Age Population__________

Median School Years Completed, age________ or older

Male________ Female________

School Years Completed for Adults, age________ or older

Years	Number	Percentage
0	____	____
1-4	____	____
8	____	____
9-11	____	____
12	____	____
13-15	____	____
16+	____	____

(You may substitute different "Years" groupings.)

Educational Offerings/Community Services Available

Agency/Organization	Program/Service

Information and Referral Services

Facilities Available for Community Use

Public (e g school gym, local park, library, etc)

Private (e g. church hall, bank conference room, homes, etc)

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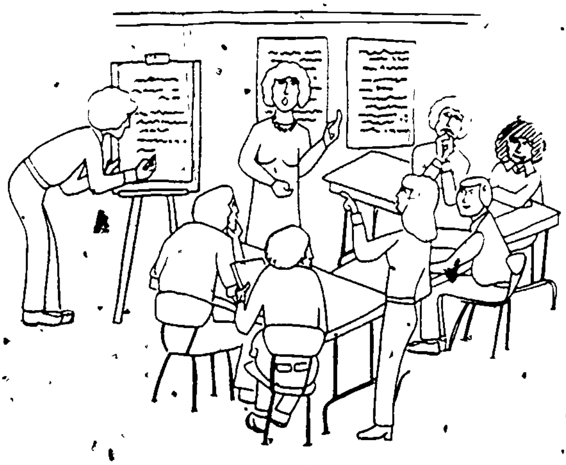
Who Are the Essential Personnel in a Planning Meeting and What Do They Do?

1. Neutral Facilitator

The most important person in any planning meeting is the *neutral facilitator,* who acts as the moderator for the whole process. This person does not have to have a special interest in the subject of the meeting, and can in fact be successful in a group of strangers on a subject about which he has no knowledge or personal interest. "A facilitator is usually more concerned with *how* people go about deciding what to do, than *what* it is they are deciding."[6]

The need for impartiality does not prevent the facilitator from helping the group to identify problems. Rather than illustrate an issue with a hypothetical situation, facilitators can confront the exact problem by pointing out specific examples. The decision to deal with a specific problem, however, should consider the range of its impact: does the problem involve and affect most of the participants or just one or two? The facilitator must allow everyone to express an opinion and then get the group to explore the causes for the differences of opinion so they can eventually reach a solution that carries the commitment of the whole group.

The role of facilitator eliminates the need for a chairperson. The convenor of the meeting, therefore, is free to argue a personal point of view—or can be a passive listener. The convenor should, however, take control of the meeting if the discussion gets sidetracked. During the first session, group discussion should be limited to problem identification and related to actual data whenever possible. The facilitator is expected to be impartial and should be challenged when he interjects personal bias. The facilitator is a process guide, not an advocate for a particular viewpoint.



The *neutral facilitator* acts as the moderator for the planning meeting.

The effective facilitator:

1. Keeps the meeting focused on the topic
   Points out the discussion has drifted
   Re-states the original topic
2. Clarifies and accepts communication
   Summarizes a contribution
   Relates ideas
   Points out when someone is cut off and invites him to continue
3. Accepts feelings as valid data
   Summarizes feelings

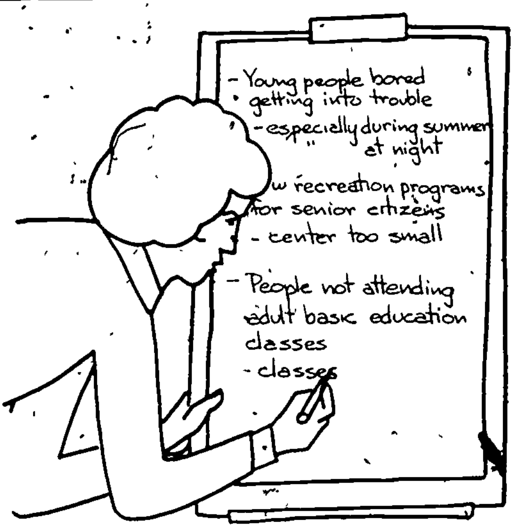
4. States a problem in a constructive way
   Re-states problem to eliminate blame-fixing
   Sends problems, not solutions
   Helps clarify areas of decision-making
5. Suggests a procedure or problem-solving approach (See IV F, Agenda for Two-Day Process)
   Points out times to move on
   Makes a suggestion of procedure
6. Summarizes and clarifies direction
   Summarizes what meeting has accomplished and indicates next steps
7. Behaviors to be avoided
   Judging or criticizing ideas or feelings
   Asserting own ideas
   Making decisions for the group
   Making lengthy comments[7]

Because it is desirable that the neutral facilitator not feel intimidated or influenced by any of the participants, it would be best to recruit this person from outside the community. The less the facilitator knows about the personalities involved, the easier it will be for him to preserve impartiality. One source for neutral facilitators would be the Centers for Community Education Development which are found nationwide.[8] Regional universities and community colleges are often quite willing to provide staff persons for facilitator roles. You might also secure a neutral facilitator from the community education division of your state department of education.

2. Recorder

The second key person in the process is the group discussion *recorder.* It is this person's responsibility to sift from the discussion those comments which deal directly with the task of the session and then to record them on a large chart pad. For the first session, the task is to identify the problems; for the second session, the task is to develop solutions to the problems.

At the beginning of each session the participants are sitting in a semicircle, facing a wall. We recommend that the chairs be arranged behind tables. This arrangement makes it easy for them to read the chart pad which has been set on an easel in front of the wall. The recorder must take care to write the comments clearly enough for all to see.



The *recorder* writes comments on a chart pad for all to see.

To minimize confusion and misunderstanding, the recorder should avoid paraphrasing. The facilitator must continuously monitor what has been recorded to see if it accurately represents the idea of the speaker—"Is this what you said? Do these words express what you meant?" The recorder should alternate colors on the chart pads, especially when there is a topic change. As each sheet of chart paper is completed, it should be mounted on the wall behind the recorder and neutral facilitator. This practice will focus attention on the subject of the discussion rather than on personalities. A skillful recorder will star, underline, and circle key ideas.

It is not essential that the recorder have previous experience working with the neutral facilitator. What is important is that he have a discriminating ear and be able to write distinctly. The convenor may recruit a recorder locally, perhaps from one of the participating agencies. Selecting a local person should cause no problem with partiality because as long as the neutral facilitator continuously monitors what is being written on the chart pads, the recorder cannot be accused of bias.

What Is the Exact Procedure for Running a Planning Meeting?

The agenda outlined below is the facilitator's guide through a two-day community planning meeting. The format is designed to help establish, expand, or improve community education programs and services at the local level. The same format could be used by other public service agencies or any other people-oriented organization which desires to expand or improve its services.

The agenda is flexible. The facilitator can modify it as long as two major process goals are preserved: (a) getting the participants to talk about their community's needs; (b) getting the participants to plan how they can work together to deal with these needs effectively. The neutral facilitator should review the agenda before the planning session and proceed in this order.

(Coffee breaks should be scheduled at least once every one and a half hours of discussion time. Keep to the schedule. Punctuality will help set a more serious tone for the meeting.)

The First Day

Step 1. **Get a list of all the participants.** Be sure to get the correct spelling of their names, their titles, the name of the organization they represent, its address and phone number. The convenor should already have this informatin before the meeting begins. Any changes in expected participation could be noted on a registration list which is compiled as the participants arrive. To pass around a registration sheet during the meeting would be disruptive.

Step 2. **Welcome the participants.** Thank them for attending and encourage them to become actively involved in the meeting. Stress that its success will depend upon their input.

Step 3. **State the purpose of the meeting.** Clearly explain the purpose of the meeting: to develop a written plan for expanding community education services. Review the problem that the meeting will try to solve. You may want to approach it indirectly by mentioning some of the more obvious benefits of successful community education programs; for example, more interagency co-operation; greater utilization of public facilities; more citizen involvement in all community programs and services; increased citizen support for local agencies and service institutions.

Go over the agenda for the next two days. As new people come in, you'll have to go over it again briefly to let them know what you're doing.

Step 4. **Have the participants introduce themselves** and name the organizations they represent. Ask them to delay discussing their agency's services until after you have reviewed community needs.

Step 5. **Review community survey information.** Distribute copies of the community data sheet and go over the information to point out (a) some of the community's needs, and (b) what resources presently exist in the community to meet those needs. This information provides only a very limited overview. The next step should expand this information considerably.

Step 6. **Ask the participants to discuss the central issue** as it relates to: (a) the services offered by their agencies; (b) the needs of their clients; (c) their successes in meeting these needs; (d) their experiences with interagency oooperation. Are there people who are not receiving services they need and deserve? Don't be afraid to ask probing questions.

(It is a good idea to find out who can be at the meeting for only a short time and ask them to talk first.)

The recorder should list the needs on the chart pad as they are identified. The list will be used later in the planning session. This step will acquaint the participants with each other's services and set the stage for planning cooperative approaches to community problems.

A different approach to needs identification is to examine existing programs at other sites. By comparing other program standards to current local practices, the group might identify specific service needs. This look at successful strategies could generate the planning for necessary local strategies—analyze the ideal to plan for the real.

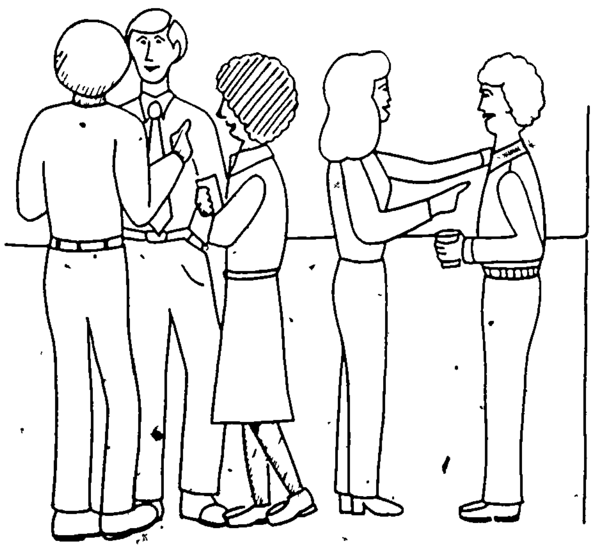
Step 7. **Briefly go over the list of community needs you have compiled.** Explain that you will use the list the following day in planning objectives and activities to meet these needs.

End of first session.

Intersession

If possible, we suggest that the convenor arrange for the participants to attend an informal social gathering after the first session. It could provide the opportunity for some very fruitful discussion.

Sometime between the two sessions, the neutral facilitator, the group discussion recorder, and, if possible, a third person who has accurately recorded the entire proceedings, should meet to analyze the discussion and to organize the information on the chart paper. They should rank the listed needs according to their complexity and write them on a new chart sheet. Normally, the simpler the problem, the greater the chances for finding a solution. Presenting the participants with a simple problem first will make it easier for them to learn how to develop objectives. Begin-



A social gathering after the first session could produce some very fruitful discussion.

ning the second session with a complex problem could confuse and discourage the participants. It's important to have an early success in creating objectives.

Assigning an order of priority to the needs does not mean that complicated problems will be ignored during the next session. What problems will be addressed after the first one or two will depend upon the participants. In fact, their preferences always come first; the neutral facilitator can only suggest, not demand.

The Second Day

Step 1. **Review the first day's activities and answer any questions about the previous session.**

Step 2. **Ask the new participants to introduce themselves, to briefly talk about what they do, and to discuss their view of community needs.**

Step 3. **The facilitator describes how objectives will be developed** (see below). As he refers to the chart sheet of needs, he explains that a simple problem will be dealt with first—to serve as an exercise in developing objectives. Two such objectives should train the group in the process and enable it to attack more difficult problems.

It is also suggested that the chart sheets of the previous day's discussion be readily accessible, perhaps mounted on a side wall where the group can see them.

Step 4. **Tell the group that they will now begin developing objectives.** Each objective will be composed with the aid of the questions listed below. If you post the objective-developing questions up front where everyone can see them, it will be easier for the participants to follow the process. The recorder should write the responses to each question on a chart pad. It is the facilitator's duty to continuously check that what is written is exactly what the group means. The facilitator cannot expect unanimous agreement on every statement, but should try to achieve a consensus. If it's obvious that the objective has become too controversial and discussion has reached an impasse, it may be necessary to move on to another need.

The Work Plan: Questions for Development of Objectives

What Is the Real Problem?

Based on the survey data and the consensus of the participants, what statement best describes the specific problem chosen? Some examples:

a. There are no structured summer recreational programs or activities in out town for a majority of our teenagers.
b. Our ABE (Adult Basic Education) courses are being underutilized because the classes are offered in inconvenient locations.

c. Senior citizen recreation programs are limited by the lack of suitable facilities.

What Are We Going to Do?

The answer to this question is the statement of the objective for that specific problem. Examples of three objectives are:

a. Establish a summer recreational program for local youth.

b. Offer ABE classes in more convenient locations.

c. Find additional facilities for senior citizen recreational programs.

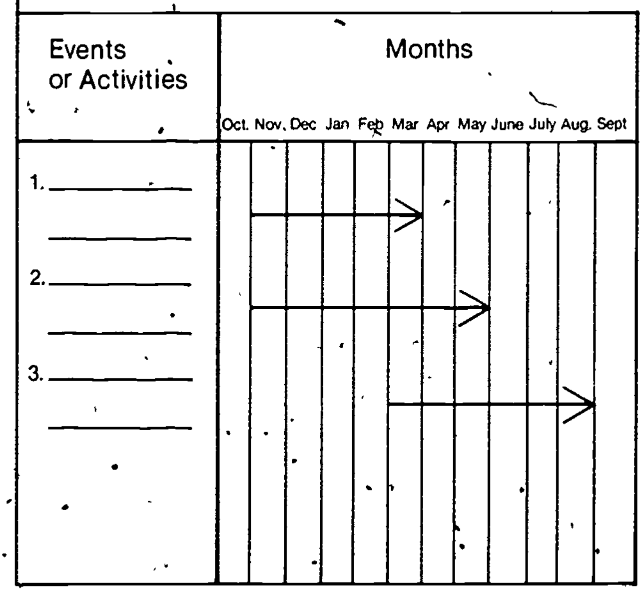
Why Are We Going to Do It?

This statement will be the goal of the objective. It may seem so obvious as to be unnecessary, but unless the participants can agree on a reason for their action, long-term cooperation may not be possible. Unity of purpose is essential for achieving united action. This concept does not preclude acting out of self-interest, but it does make concern for the common good the principal motivation behind the action. If there is no serious conflict between personal interests and the goal of the objective, the facilitator should proceed to the next question.

How Are We Going to Do It?

At this point, the participants list the activities necessary to accomplish the objective. It may be advantageous to determine the best chronological sequence for the separate activities. In addition, the participants need to estimate approximately how long it should take to complete each activity. This rough time frame will make people more aware of any delaying problems that develop, and of any person or agency which is not doing their job.

One way to clearly present time expectations for each objective is to locate on a time chart (use a sheet of chart paper) the starting point, work period, and finishing point for each activity. One time chart format:



Rather than select a single rigid solution, the group should consider several solutions. Again, they might look at what other organizations are doing elsewhere. What are their strategies? Assess both the positive and negative aspects of each strategy. Examine the benefits and disadvantages of each alternative from various individual and institutional persepctives, e.g., time factors, facility availability, community responsiveness, focus of control, etc. Also consider if the solutions will satisfy local policy and state and federal regulations.

Keep in mind that the group may confront a factor which prevents implementing a strategy. Unless they can eliminate the barrier or suggest an alternative solution, the objective will have to be abandoned. The group may encounter an insurmountable obstacle at any stage of the process, not just during the planning of activities. Failure to develop an adequate response to any of the next three questions (Who is going to do it? What do we need to know? How much will it cost?) would bring the process to a halt for that objective. Flexibility and willingness to cooperate are the key ingredients here.

Who Is Going to Do It?

The group must now determine which persons or institutions will assume responsibility for each activity. The opportunities for collaboration are greatest now. The facilitator may have to coax a person or agency into a new, uncharacteristic role. New liasons may be frightening and unpredictable at first, but the fruits of successful cooperation justify the risk.

What Do We Need to Know?

What are the knowledge needs for each activity? It is quite likely that the participants will be able to meet most of these information needs. However, some activities may require special knowledge or expertise that the participants do not possess. In such cases, outside resources should be identified.

How Much Will It Cost?

Financial requirements are as crucial as staff responsibilities. Interagency cooperation may produce solutions to some of the financial demands. There may in fact be a variety of alternatives to direct-dollar outlay. Explore the options.

How Will We Know We Have Done It?

How will you know you have succeeded? Unless you can accurately measure the satisfactory completion of each activity, you will not be able to evaluate your performance. How will you document your progress and final accomplishments? (See Evaluation, Chapter 5, for more information.)

Who Should Know We Have Done It?
How important is it that other local groups or different communities learn what the planning meeting eventually achieves? Who might benefit from this information? Who might want to duplicate your efforts? How will you inform these people of your successes (and failures, for they too may be instructive)? What will be your dissemination strategy?

Step 5. **Read over the objective, activities, staff assignments, knowledge needs, financial needs, and documentation, and answer any questions.**

Step 6. **Develop another objective.** Continue to avoid objectives that are too controversial or that will require too much meticulous task description.

Step 7. **Develop more difficult or more controversial objectives,** some that require real change and evidence of commitment to community cooperation.

Step 8. **Finish developing objectives.** End the session with an objective that is less emotional and demands less subjective involvement. Choose one that requires more attention to impersonal detail, one that is more "mechanical." This practice will release tension created by the controversial objectives.

If the second session has lasted for a full day, the group should have been able to develop objectives in four to six problem areas. Throughout this process, it is the facilitator's responsibility to clarify meaning and insure agreement on what is being written down.

Step 9. **Read back all objectives.** For each one, state its activities, staff assignments, knowledge needs, financial needs, and documentation to make sure you have heard correctly what the participants have agreed to do. Refer to the chart pad.

Step 10. **Explain that you will compile the objectives in a work statement and send it to them for their approval.**

In case of future cutbacks in staff or funding, we recommend that the group rank the objectives. Decide which ones are essential and which ones might be sacrificed or temporarily neglected.

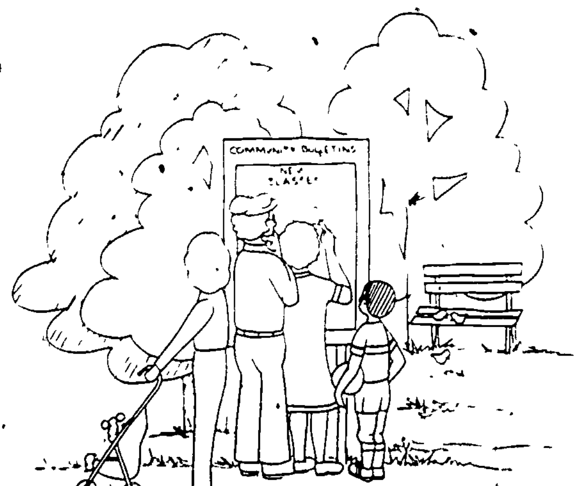
It is possible that upon review the group will decide not to undertake expanded cooperative services at this time. Though other priorities and pressures may be very strong, leave the door open for future efforts. If you meet with resistance, give the participants a non-threatening chance to change their minds. You may be able to use this experience to try again at some future time. An agreement to meet periodically over the long term may be the major product of the planning meeting.

Suggestions for the Facilitator

1. **Be positive.** Emphasize out how much the existing agencies have to offer to the community, especially through interagency cooperation.
2. **Be persuasive.** Some members of the group may reject the idea that their community has not reached its full potential and that there are important needs still to be addressed.
3. **Point out the service gaps** politely but firmly, based on the community survey and upon the participants' own input.
4. **Persist in searching for possible alternative ways of using existing resources to provide needed services.**
5. **Briefly review what has been done each time someone new joins the group.** This policy will remind and reinforce.
6. **Explain the reason for your fast pace.** Objectives, activities, staff assignments, and knowledge needs have to be developed in only two days.
7. **Be enthusiastic.** Show that you are glad to be there. Such eagerness is often contagious.
8. **Be willing to accept criticism** without becoming defensive or openly negative.
9. **Talk with the participants** during coffee breaks and the intersession. You may receive some valuable, candid feedback regarding the session activities.
10. **Encourage the participants** to think about "what should be" rather than "what is."

What Next?

After the two-day planning meeting is over, it is the facilitator's duty (with the help of the recorder) to prepare a written plan or work statement. This plan is a record of the agreements reached by the planning meeting participants. Copies of this plan are sent to all participants (a) to make sure it is an accurate report of what the group agreed upon and (b) to seek from each participant or participant's agency the assurance that they will fulfill their part of the agreement. In other words, will they do what they committed themselves to do? Request an early response so that any misunderstandings can soon be resolved.



A successful community planning meeting can establish, expand, or improve community education programs and services at the local level.

It is recommended that these written plans also be sent to people who were invited but could not attend the planning meeting. In addition, copies should be sent to the regional and state level decision-makers who were previously notified of the planning meeting.

The facilitator and/or the convenor should assume the responsibility for periodic monitoring to see if the agreements are being acted upon. The brief monitoring contact may stimulate a participant to fulfill an agreement. It could also yield information which can then be shared with all the group in terms of success, failure, need to reconvene, or need to redirect some of the activities.

How Do You Write a Work Statement?

To be an effective guide for responsible action, the work statement must be clear, concise, and specific. Every participant should know exactly what was decided upon.

The work statement should begin with some background information on the planning meeting. In a short description of the community, explain the purpose for the meeting—why was it convened?

Mention the place and date of the meeting. List all of the meeting's participants and the organization or agency which each person represents.

Now you are ready to document the business of the planning meeting. The answers to the objective questions (pp. 26-31) will provide the essential content matter for the work statement. For each problem that was discussed:

- **Write out each objective as it was agreed upon in the meeting.**
- **Write the goal of the objective.**
- **List the activities for each objective, including the staff responsibilities for each.** Are these tasks listed in the proper chronological order? Who has agreed to carry out each activity? Are there any cooperative arrangements between agencies regarding facilities, staff, funding, or other resources?
- **List all of the resource and knowledge needs for each objective.** Who will cover the expenses? Were there any alternatives to direct funding? Point out each planned expenditure. What physical resources must be obtained? What must each person and agency know to accomplish their activities?

The work statement should show a time frame for completing the objectives. Inclusion of a "Time Chart" (p. 28) would address this concern. Delays and unanticipated obstacles are inevitable. Though it will probably be necessary to alter the schedule of activities, tentative target dates will help guide the process. In the long term, good judgement and experience will be your best aids.

Repeat the above steps for the rest of the objectives developed in the planning meeting. See Appendix C for examples of "Work Statement" objectives.

Evaluation

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How Do You Know if the Planning Meeting Has Been a Success?

An appraisal of the meeting itself can be obtained through the use of a participant response form like the one shown in Appendix D. The ultimate proof of success would be the achievement of all the objectives—on schedule. But evaluation should do more than measure final accomplishments. It should also be concerned with the process—with the progress of the activities—so that if difficulties do surface, adjustments can be made before the process becomes irreversibly bogged. Flexibility is crucial.

For evaluation to be adaptable, it must place less emphasis on tight schedules and rigid programs and more emphasis on clients, services, facilities, staff, and goals.

Providing for the needs of the community is the purpose of the entire planning process. Effective evaluation will monitor and strengthen staff, services, program, and facilities—the components that contribute most to meeting the needs of the community.

There are several ways of measuring the success of your planning meeting:

Accomplishment of objectives
As mentioned above, this method of evaluation judges success simply by comparing what you did with what you intended to do. The work statement should indicate how the attainment of objectives will be determined. It is important to state both the goals and

objectives because in some cases the successful accomplishment of an objective may not result in the desired goal. Were the activities misdirected? What went wrong? Such cases are worth documenting for future planning.

Personal comments from people affected by the planning meeting decisions

Anecdotal records can be useful measures of the success of your planning. They can help justify your program and provide valuable insights for improvement. If the clients (the community?) don't rate your planning a success, is it?

Number of new people involved in the programs or services

A record of people who take advantage of the planning meeting's new programs or services is another gauge for measuring the degree of success. More important than just numbers, however, is the quality of each individual's experience. Does your plan provide for the measurement of change in attitude, outlook, or appreciation for the new activities? Will you know whether any learning has occurred? A measure of the quantity of clients is enhanced by a simultaneous measure of the quality of the client's experience.

Summary

The community planning process described in this booklet is not a failsafe change vehicle. It cannot be used successfully in a complacent, non-receptive community. It can work only if the participants are seriously looking for solutions to community problems and are willing to carry out their part of the work plan.

The process is a means of structuring positive energies in short-term activities and responsibilities. If the action it initiates is to continue, additional planning must occur. In this sense, the community planning process may be viewed simply as one step in the direction of community self-actualization.

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Footnotes

1. Appalachian Adult Education Center, *Planning Expanded Library Services for Disadvantaged Adults* (Morehead, Kentucky: Morehead State University, May, 1975).
2. Center for Community Education Facility Planning, *Community Planning Assistance Kit* (Columbus, Ohio, 1980).
3. A disadvantaged adult is defined as anyone sixteen or older who reads below the tenth grade level or whose family income is below poverty level.
4. Lanny Carmichael and George Wood, *Motivating Community Leaders to Get Involved* (Muncie, Indiana: Ball State University, June 1979).
5. Rebecca Hutton, "Collaboration: Problems and Opportunities," *Community Education Journal,* July, 1980.
6. Robby Fried, *Learning is Community: An Empowerment Approach,* developed by New Hampshire Department of Education (Muncie, Indiana: Ball State University, 1980), p. 24.
7. Bob Biagi, *Working together: A Manual for Helping Groups Work More Effectively* (Amherst, Massachusetts: Citizen Involvement Training Project, University of Massachusetts).
8. National Center for Community Education, 1017 Avon Street, Flint, Michigan 48503.

Appendices

Appendix A

Sample Letter to Agency People Who Might Participate in a Planning Session

Dear ______________________,

--Are you able to serve all of your clients as well as you'd like to?

--Do you know of anyone who is duplicating your programs or services? If so, could these duplicate energies be rechanneled into other areas of need?

--Would you like to learn more about other programs and services in our community?

--Is your agency or organization's effectiveness threatened by budget cuts and staff reductions?

--Can you identify important needs and concerns in our community which are not being addressed?

--In your opinion, could active cooperative planning produce a more effective approach to community problem-solving?

If you answer "Yes" to any of these questions, (the convenor) would like to invite you to join other concerned citizens in a two-day planning session to be held on ______________ at ______________

The goal for the meeting will be to identify important wants, needs, and concerns of the community which can be addressed through our cooperative efforts. The final product of the meeting will be a "work statement" which will outline the specific activities necessary for dealing with these concerns. We ask that you contribute your special knowledge of ______________ County and its current needs.

If you would like to be involved in this cooperative planning activity, please fill out and return to me the form at the bottom of this letter. For additional information, phone ______________ at ______________

We encourage your attendance and welcome your input.

Sincerely,

Yes, I will participate in a community planning workshop to be held on

______________ at ______________

(If you are unable to attend the entire workshop, your presence at the first session is especially important.)

NAME ______________

AGENCY/ORGANIZATION ______________

MAILING ADDRESS ______________

PHONE NO. ______________

Please return this form by ______________

Appendix B

Letter of Agreement

We, the Undersigned, of ______________ (city/town), ______________ (county),

desire and agree

1 To provide information that will be useful in the assessment of existing community resources and needs,

2 To encourage the involvement of local agency staff, public officials, and other active community members in a two-day community planning session

We understand that the staff of Morehead State University's Community Education Project will assist us in

1 The review of community resources and needs,

2 The development of a concrete plan during a two-day planning meeting with the individuals mentioned above, and

3 The provision of periodic advisory assistance after the planning session until ______________

We understand that we will receive written copies of the work agreements developed during the planning session

In return for these no-cost services, we agree to report our progress at regular intervals so that the Community Education Project may meet its reporting obligations and adjust its services to us

POSITION

SIGNED ______________ ______________

______________ ______________

______________ ______________

DATE ______________

A copy of this agreement should be signed and sent to

Bill Wiglesworth
Division of Continuing Education
701 Ginger Hall
Morehead, KY 40351

Appendix C

Sample "Work Statement" Objectives

Objective 1: To develop community discussions on crime prevention in Clinton County.

Goal: Create an understanding among Clinton County residents of the causes of crime and how to protect themselves from the occurence of crime.

Activities:

1. The library will work with the Neighborhood Service Center, the Sheriff's Office, and the Wilmington Police Department to plan a discussion series for citizen awareness for crime prevention. It is suggested that the series revolve around two themes:
   (a) what causes crime
   (b) what prevents crime
2. The discussion sessions will be advertised on radio, television, and in newspapers and church bulletins.
3. The library will provide a display of materials on crime prevention.
4. It was suggested that the site for the discussion series move—the first meetings at a church building near the library, the last few at the library itself.

Knowledge Needs:
The staff of the Community Action Council has been investigating crime prevention programs in other communities for about two years. Other

projects have taken all available staff time. With library support of the CAC, the series can get under way.

Objective 2: Organzie a broad-based drug awareness group.

Goal: Create an informed public.

Activities:

1. Engage university graduate students in gathering information that will document the nature and extent of the local drug problem.
   a. Ruth Thomas will contact the appropriate University of Cincinnati personnel.
   b. Bill Jones will seek involvement of Northern Kentucky University
   c. Mike Downer will speak with members of Xavier's Psychology Department.
2. Mary Ann Adkisson, Anne Metz, Bill Jones, Jay Bamberger, Ruth Thomas, Donna Dahmann, Susan Poston, and Billie Jo Morris will meet September 2 (12 noon) at the Dragon Inn to establish a steering committee.

Mr. Paul Hogan stated that Boone County Schools would assist in the duplication of necessary correspondence and materials for the steering committee. It was suggested that mailing expenses might be shared by several of the organizations or agencies that become involved in the work of the steering committee.

The participants in the meeting felt that "everyone" should know about the activities of the Steering Committee. Newspapers, the radio, bulletin boards, and other media would be used to publicize the drug awareness effort.

Appendix D

Evaluation of Two-Day Planning Session

County Town or City

Name Position Date

Planning Session

1 Was the purpose of the planning session clear to you before you attended it? Yes No
If no, please explain what you did expect ______________________

2 Were you aware of any specific community needs before the planning session? Yes No

a If yes, did the planning session increase your awareness? Yes No
b If no, did the planning session make you aware of certain needs? Yes No

3 Did the planning session stimulate you

a to plan new programs? Yes No

b to improve cooperation with other agencies and organizations? Yes No

c or to develop new services? Yes No

4 Did the planning session make you more aware of programs and services of other agencies in your community? Yes No

5 In the long run, what effect(s) do you expect the planning session to have upon your community? ______________________

Objectives

1 Are the objectives developed in the planning session appropriate to the needs of your community? Yes No
If no, please explain ______________________

2 Did the planning session influence you to set objectives that you really do not want? Yes No

3 What factors in the community might make it difficult to achieve the planning session objectives (for example transportation, political problems, insufficient funds, personality conflicts, etc)? ______________________

OTHER COMMENTS ______________________