Project Planning Guide

Developed by the NWT and Nunavut Literacy Councils

2008

Acknowledgements

Contact the NWT or Nunavut Literacy Councils to get copies of this resource.

NWT Literacy Council

Phone: Toll free 1-866-599-6758 or 873-9262 in Yellowknife.

Email: nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca

Nunavut Literacy Council

Phone: 867-983-2678 Cambridge Bay OR
867-645-5506 in Rankin Inlet.
Call collect if needed.

Email: kimcr@qiniq.com OR literacy@qiniq.com

Table of Contents

Introduction

Successful project planning involves meeting and working with people in your community, assessing community needs and making a plan to make things better. It is important to get as many people involved in this process as possible.

This section has all the information that community groups need to develop a project plan.

You can call or email the NWT or Nunavut Literacy Councils if you need help planning for your project.

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Tools for Community Building
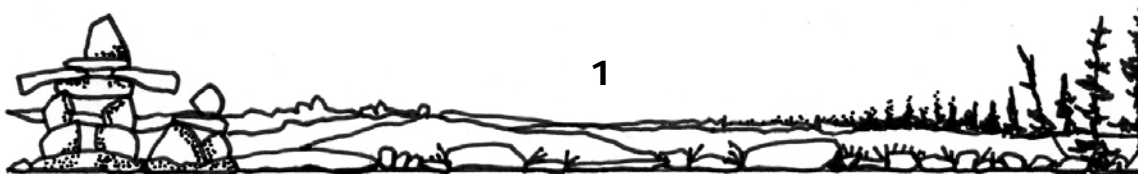
Watch for these symbols

Information about different topics related to project planning. Look for this symbol.

Activities are things you can do to help with your planning. Look for this symbol.

Worksheets are pages you can copy and fill in to help you with planning. Look for this symbol.

Tools for Community Building

A Community Development Approach

Community development happens when people come together to take action around common issues. A community development approach recognizes that the power of a community rests with the people of the community and not just with its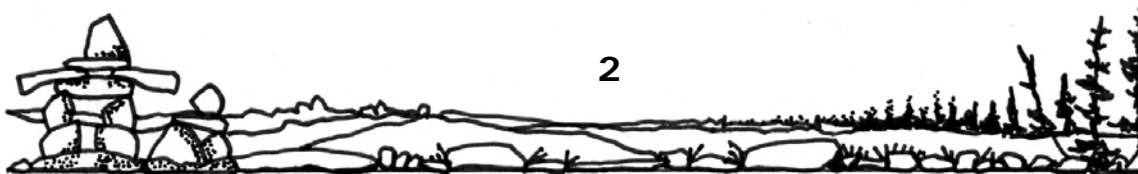 leaders. It is a process that builds on the existing strengths of the community and involves local people in designing and making change, and learning from it. The most important outcome of community development is a better quality of life.

Community development …

- ✓ Is a long-term process;

- ✓ Is started and supported by community members;

- ✓ Involves information sharing and good planning;

- ✓ Benefits the community and its residents;

- ✓ Is supported by many community organizations & groups;

- ✓ Creates local ownership, shared solutions and responsibility, and strong local networks.

Ways to go about community development

Below are several examples of community development strategies. You may know about some others too.

Speaking out about important issues like the need for a shelter or for Aboriginal language programs.

Organizing people to take on a task like a community feast, clean-up or spring carnival.

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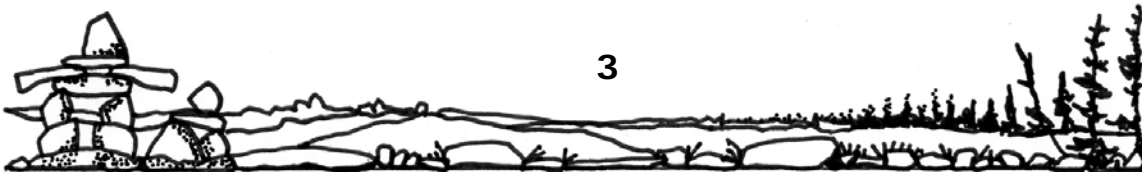
Providing a service that the community needs like a literacy program, youth centre or arena.

You can **build capacity** of people through community workshops and training. Capacity building raises people's knowledge, awareness and skills. It helps them to understand and take part in decision making, communicate better with others and feel confident in their own abilities.

**Capacity Building** can happen through change and learning. Here are some examples.

- ✓ Find out how much you already know about a topic.

- ✓ Discover a new piece of information.

- ✓ Try out a new skill like planning, organizing, public speaking, or record keeping, etc.

- ✓ Think in different ways.

- ✓ Learn how to take risks and do things you have not done before.

Working in small northern communities

Working in a small northern community is much different than working in an urban centre. Everyone knows everyone in a small community, so it is important to invite as many people as possible to be part of the planning stage. People who are involved from the beginning will more likely take ownership of a project.

If you are new to a community and want to plan a project make sure you get local people involved. Get feedback and support for your project idea from local people before starting your project. Ask a local person to help you organize and
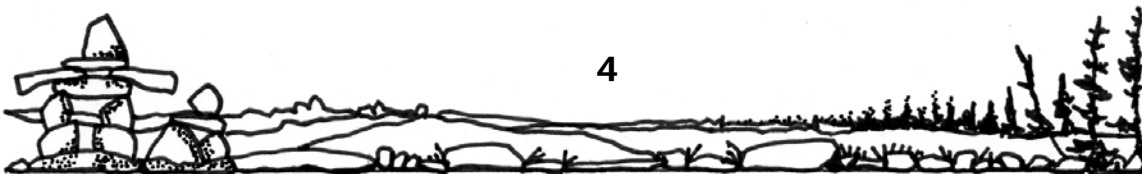
plan a community meeting. Ask a local person to co-facilitate with you. Sharing the facilitation and the lead on the project will make your project planning much stronger.

Are you working in a community in which English is a second language? If so, you should consider holding the workshop in the language of the community or offering simultaneous translation. It is important that Elders and people who are unilingual speakers have an opportunity to participate in the planning of a community project. Too often people are unable to attend workshops because they are not proficient in English.

In Nunavut

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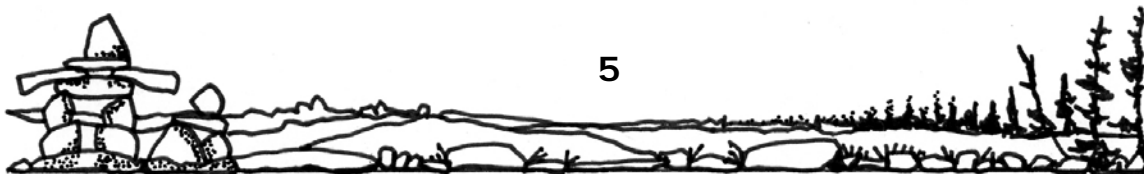
About Planning

Why do we plan?

Planning is a key part of any community development project or activity. Good community-based planning creates opportunities for working together and results in activities that benefit the whole community.

To be effective, a community-based planning process should:

✓ Involve community people, groups and organizations from the beginning in the design of local activities;

✓ Make sure that people with different abilities and literacy levels are able to participate in design and decision-making;

✓ Consider how to make the best use of community strengths and resources

✓ Respond to local needs and interests;

✓ Build in ways to review how project activities are going and make changes as needed;

✓ Include opportunities for local people to develop their skills, knowledge and experience;

✓ Raise awareness about what is being planned;

✓ Increase the sense of local ownership;

✓ Leads to shared responsibility, increased local partnerships and relationships.

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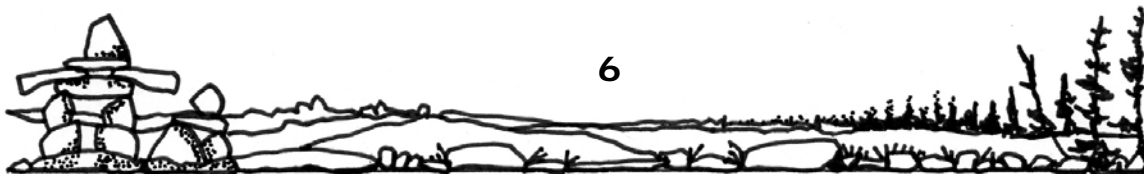
Three Critical Things to Planning

1. **Know the Community**
    Before you begin designing your program, you should familiarize yourself with all the local programs in the community. What organizations are already active in the area? What services are already being provided? Which needs are going unmet? Such knowledge will help you avoid the duplication of services and ensure that your program is filling a critical gap.

2. **Know Your Resources**
    You should also familiarize yourself with sources of funding and support, which can be found at the local, regional, and national levels.

3. **Build Partnerships**
    Community-based organizations are more likely to experience success if they work together. Partnerships allow organizations to learn from each others, increase program efficiency, and improve the quality of services provided.

Before Your Planning Session

1. **Identify a need in the community.** What issue needs to be addressed in the community. Are young people dropping out of school? Are young people losing their culture and language? Talk to local people and find out what they think is needed most in the community.

2. **Ask people to come to a meeting to discuss their ideas.** Make sure you ask lots of different people to the meeting. Remember that local projects and community development affect everyone!

3. **Find a facilitator for the meeting.** If possible, find a local person, who has some skills at facilitating a meeting.

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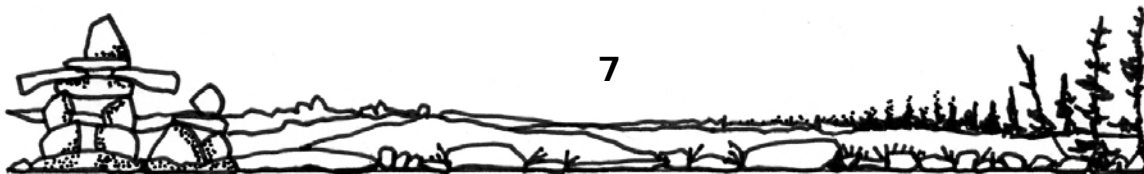
4. **Find a space to hold the meeting.** Find a space where people will feel comfortable. Some people may not feel comfortable at the school or local training centre. Be sensitive to people's feelings.

5. **Make an agenda and give it to people before the meeting**. Use the guide in this section to help you plan for your meeting. Make up an agenda for the meeting using your plans.

6. **Make food and coffee for the meeting.** People appreciate country food snacks.

At Your Planning Session

1. **Talk about different options.** Give everyone a chance to talk about what they envision for their community. You may already have an idea of the issue that needs to be addressed. Now is the time to think of a specific project that will help to address this specific issue.

2. **Follow the planning guide.** Use this guide to help you plan for your project.

3. **Write your ideas down.** Make sure that you write all your project ideas down on flip chart paper during the meeting.

4. **Make sure everyone has the chance to share.** Too often meetings and workshops are dominated by two or three people. Try to get everyone involved in the discussions and brainstorming.

5. **Start an outline for your proposal.** Get at least your goal, objectives and work plan complete by the end of the session.

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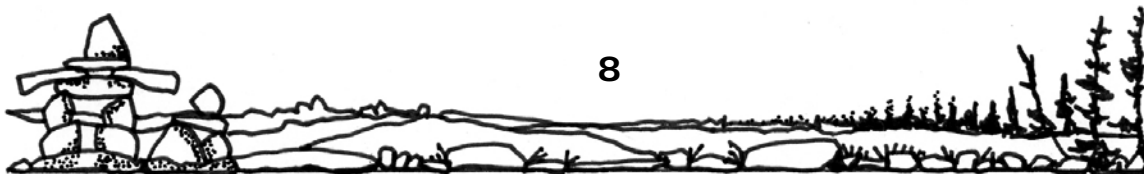
6. **Ask for help.** Ask participants if anyone is interested in forming a working group to continue to work on the proposal and project idea.
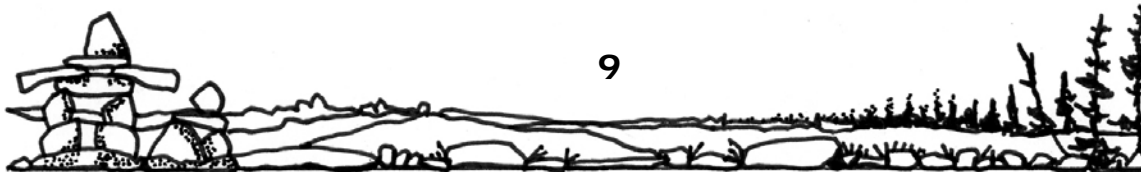
After Your Planning Session

1. **Pitch your project idea to a funder.** Make sure you pitch your idea to a funder before you go ahead with the writing of your proposal. It may save you a lot of time and energy.

2. **Complete the proposal.** Use the proposal writing section to help you write your proposal.

3. **Meet with the working group.** Have regular meetings with the working group to keep the momentum going.

Who Should I Invite?

There is no limit to who you can invite to your planning meeting. Encourage different organizations and community members to attend. It is important to have a variety of people at the meeting:

- ✓ Elders
- ✓ Teachers
- ✓ Family Literacy Coordinator
- ✓ Adult Educator
- ✓ Youth coordinator
- ✓ Health care workers
- ✓ Community Health Representative

- ✓ Adult learners
- ✓ Employees of the Hamlet of Band
- ✓ Chief
- ✓ Mayor
- ✓ Aboriginal Head Start workers
- ✓ Daycare workers
- ✓ CPNP coordinator

Tools for Community Building

For example:

Seven years ago, a group of community members in Fort Providence identified that they needed more parents involved in their children's learning. They asked the NWT Literacy Council to facilitate a discussion on literacy and family literacy. Fifteen people came to the meeting from the school, daycare, adult education program and the hamlet. The group talked about literacy and family literacy. They decided they wanted to have a family literacy coordinator for the community. They came up with a plan and identified Healthy Children's Initiative funding for the project. They developed a proposal and were successful in getting funding. For seven years Fort Providence has had a family literacy coordinator for their community. She coordinates literacy events and programs for families, parents and children. It has been a wildly successful initiative.

A family literacy night in Fort Providence in 2005.

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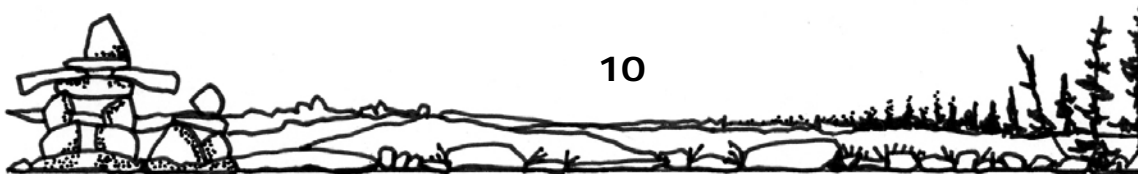
Meeting Checklist

Before the Meeting	Yes	Don't Know	No
Do people understand why they are being invited? Do they know about the purpose of the meeting, why it is happening and what it hopes to do?			
Have people had the chance to see and comment on the agenda?			
Do you have a plan for accommodating language differences?			
Does the agenda include enough time for discussion and decision-making?			
Have you prepared printed materials of important information? Are they easy to read?			
Is the meeting location easy to get to? Is it quiet and well lit? Does the seating allow people to talk to one another and see the flipchart?			

Once the Meeting Starts			
Do people understand the purpose of the meeting?			

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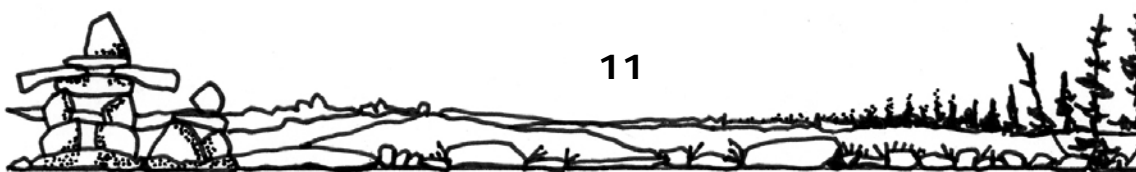
Do they agree to the agenda?			
Do they know what decisions they can make and what items they can take action on?			
Have they had the opportunity to say who they are and why they came?			
Has the group been able to make agreements about how they will listen and communicate?			
Has the group made decisions about how they will identify and solve problems?			
Has the group been able to plan for how they will work through conflicts?			

| **After the Meeting** Did the chair or facilitator do these things…	Yes	Somewhat	No
Create a safe atmosphere?			
Create space for everyone to ask questions and comment on each topic before moving on?			
Keep the meeting on track?			
Make sure things are clear and suggest changes as needed?			
Share leadership, tasks and actions with other group members?			

Tools for Community Building

Thinking About Your Project

To get you started the next few pages will help you to start thinking about planning and your community.

The planning iceberg

A project can be compared to an iceberg. Think of a project you know about in your community. What do you know about it? You usually just see the activities of the project. For example, you may attend a family literacy night or see a family literacy poster up in the community. These things are visible – just like the tip of an iceberg.

Local Programs and Activities

Planning
Communication
Partnering
Reporting
Evaluating
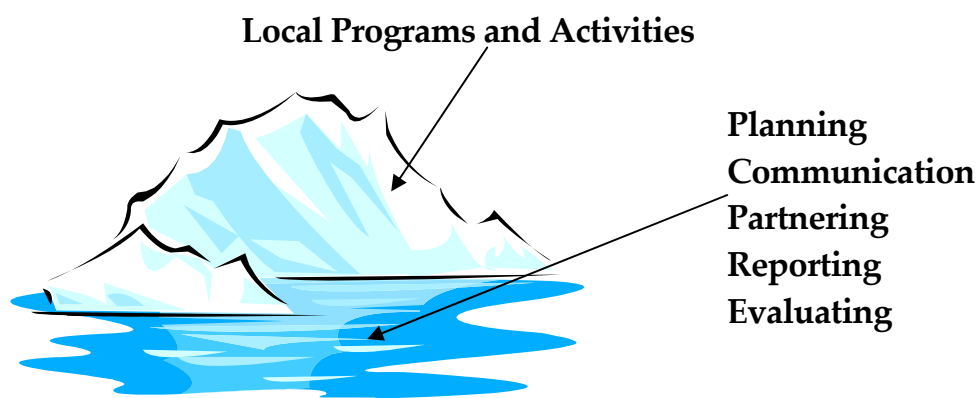
What we sometimes take for granted, or don't see, are all the activities and resources that go into making a program or project happen. Planning is one of these activities.

Can you think of others?

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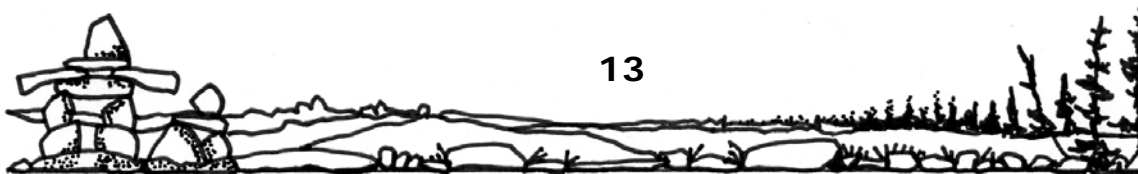
Projects you have known and loved (activity)

Take a moment to think about programs or projects in your community. Does any program or project stand out?

- ✓ Why was it important and what was the purpose?

- ✓ Why was this project chosen instead of another?

- ✓ How were decisions made?

- ✓ What resources (people, money, materials, equipment, etc.) were needed?

- ✓ What was the project expected to do?

- ✓ Was the project successful or not?

- ✓ What issues came up during the project?

- ✓ What made it good?

- ✓ Is there anything that frustrates you about it?

- ✓ How could the project have been different of made better?

What you like and what frustrates you are useful to think about when you're getting ready to plan a project. These things will have a lot to do with how well your project goes.

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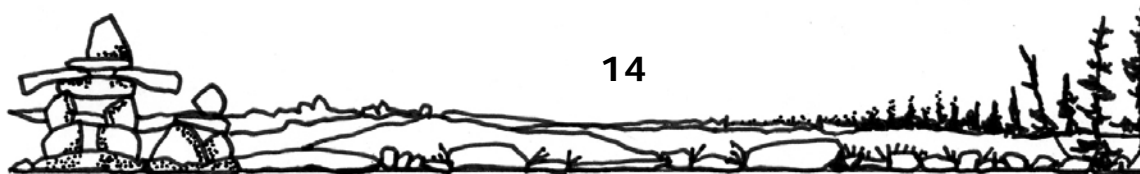
Projects you have known and loved worksheet

Here's an opportunity to think and talk about **your own experiences** with projects.

What went well?	What was frustrating?	How could it be better?
Example The project had clear goals.	**Example** Those who did not agree kept quiet.	**Example** People speak up when they do not agree.

Tools for Community Building

Some Project Planning Success Factors

Here are some factors that usually help to make project planning more effective. Projects are more likely to be successful when people have …

- ✓ A shared vision;
- ✓ Effective leadership;
- ✓ A shared sense of commitment to the issue;
- ✓ Enough resources – (people, money, time, equipment, materials and other supports);
- ✓ A realistic picture of the current situation;
- ✓ Community support;
- ✓ Political support;
- ✓ A process that includes others;
- ✓ A sense of teamwork;
- ✓ The time to work through the planning stage;
- ✓ A plan that builds on past accomplishments and efforts;
- ✓ A way to evaluate their work.

Are there any items from your worksheet that you would add to this list? Is there anything on this list that you didn't talk about?

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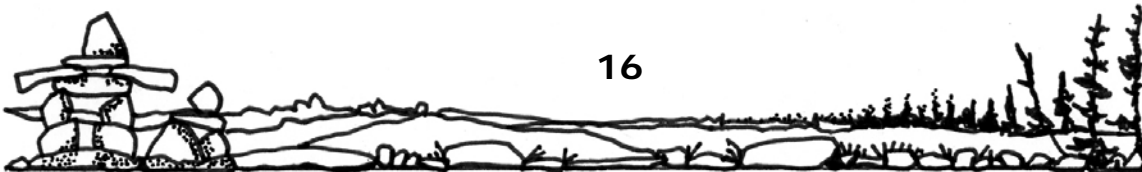
Many ways to plan
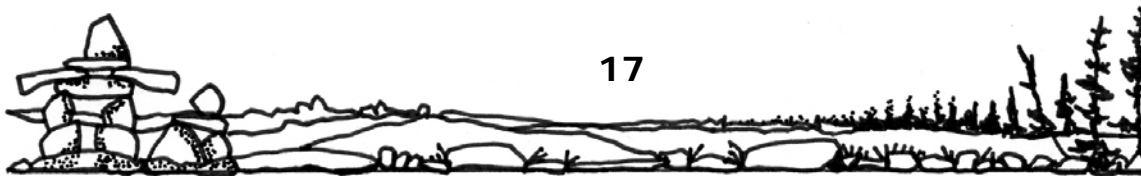
Just like getting ready to go out on the land, good project planning usually takes a lot of talking and preparation.

There are many different ways to plan. The planning methods you choose will depend on:

✓ Who is involved?

✓ How well do you know each other?

✓ Have you worked together before?

✓ Do you agree on what you want to do?

✓ Do you know the direction the project will take?

Seven Steps to Planning

The last few pages gave you a chance to learn about planning from your own experience. This next part uses a step by step approach to project planning. It is intended to help you and your group create a plan for a community-based activities or projects. We have used **literacy** as an example to demonstrate the process of using the steps. This step by step planning process works with any issue or topic.

7. Evaluate Progress and Results

6. Implement the Plan

5. Develop a Work Plan

4. Establish Objectives

3. State Your Goal

2. Assess the Current Situation

1. Create the Vision

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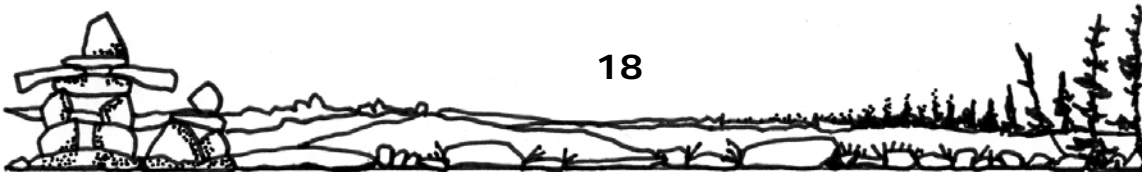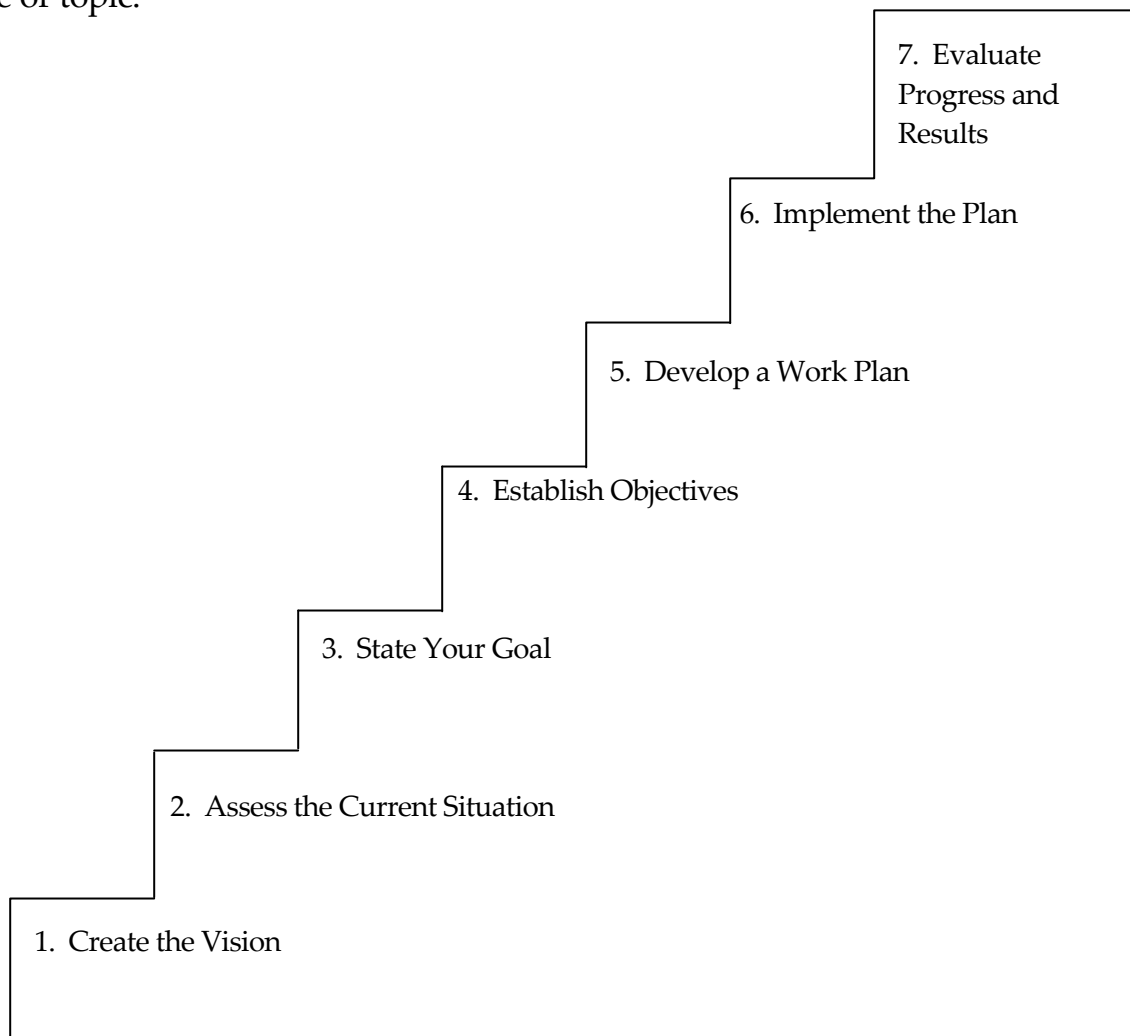
Getting Started

Before we start Step 1 take a few minutes with a partner to think and talk about your community and literacy. Finish each statement with a few words or a simple picture and talk to each other about what comes to mind.

- ✓ Something about my community that I am **proud of** is …

- ✓ A **strength or quality** of my community is …

- ✓ A **fear** I have about my community …

- ✓ My **wish or hope** about this for the future would be **...**

Step 1: Create the Vision

A community **vision** describes what is hoped for and valued in the community. It is an ideal picture of the future.

Some people and organizations have a vision of a better future and they use it as a guide for what they do.

Some people might think that imagining a better future is foolish and not very practical. It may feel a bit foolish a first but a vision is practical because it guides you and helps you on the right path while you create a plan.

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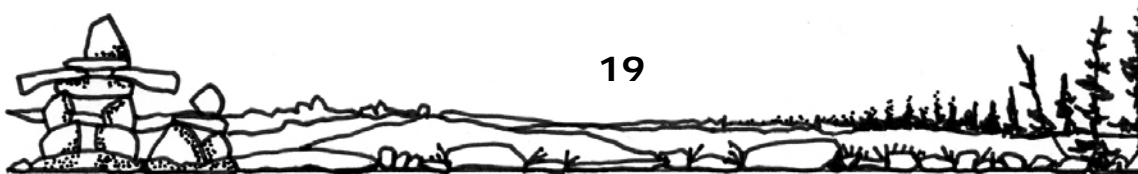
Your Task

1. Take a few minutes on your own. Use drawings or words to describe this ideal future. Imagine your community some time in the future.

   ✓ What is it like?

   ✓ What literacy and learning activities are happening?

   ✓ What else can you see, hear, feel, touch, taste?
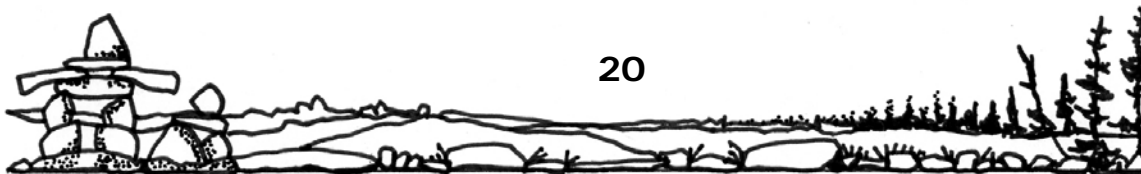
2. Now share your work with the others in your group.

   ✓ What's the same?

   ✓ What's different?

1. When you hear each other's ideas do other things come to mind? You will probably agree on some things and not on others. That's okay. Try creating a shared vision using the words and images that you do agree on.

Tools for Community Building

Example: Vision

This vision includes cultural literacy programs, more cultural resources, lots of $$,
a cultural resource center, cultural values instilled and shared with families

Tools for Community Building

Step 2: Current Situation

Now that you've had a chance to imagine the future, let's think about your community today (the current situation). We will do three activities to help us understand the current situation around literacy in your community.

1. Community map

2. Community Assets

3. Community Challenges

1. Community Map

A community map gives you a picture of some of the supports and resources that exist in your community. It can include things like:

- ✓ Groups, organizations, services & businesses

- ✓ People, their gifts, attitudes and beliefs

- ✓ Events and activities

- ✓ Culture and traditions

- ✓ The land and location of special places

- ✓ Pressures from the outside

- ✓ Hotspots or areas of big change

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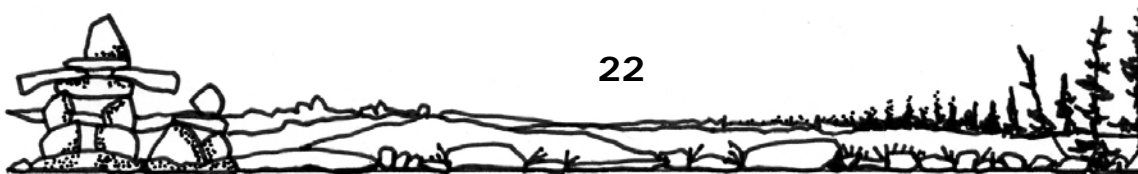
Your Task

1. Take a few minutes to think about all the resources in your community.

2. Draw a map on flip chart paper. Your map could look like the example on the next page or you can draw a picture of your community.

3. Write down all the resources in your community that could potentially support your litercy project.

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Example: Hay River

A hand-drawn mind map centred on **Hay River** (35 → 3800, ★ major inland port) with branches:

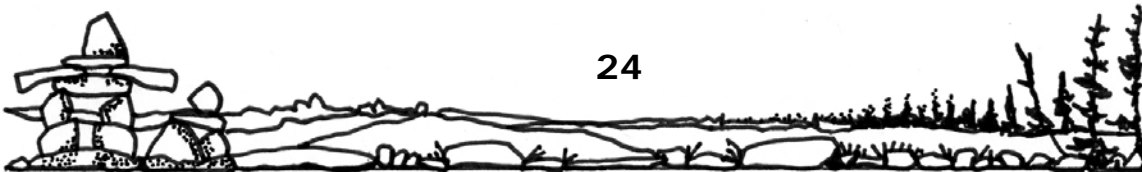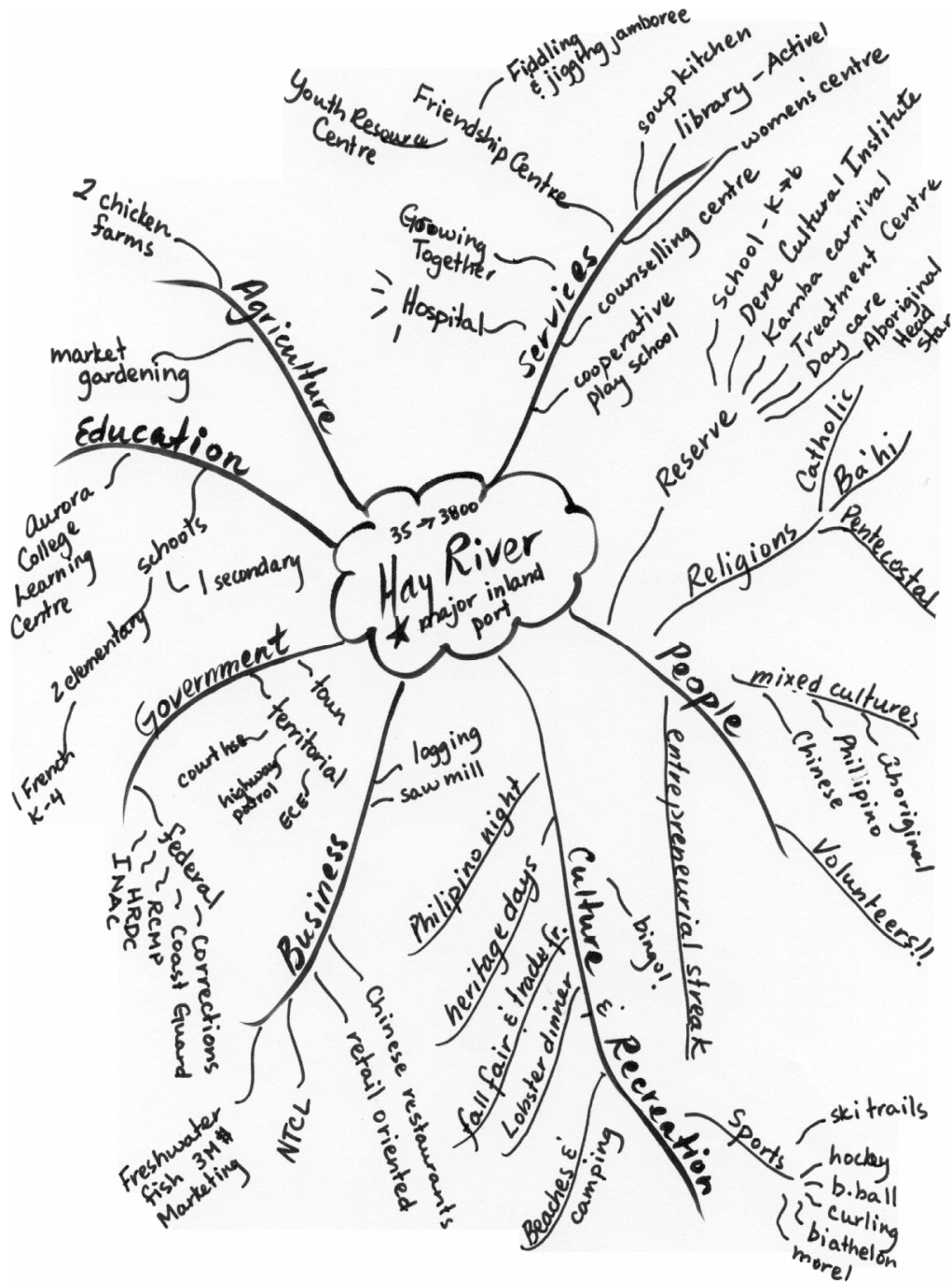**Services** — Youth Resource Centre, Friendship Centre, Fiddling & jigging jamboree, soup kitchen, library – Active!, women's centre, counselling centre, cooperative play school, school – K to 6, Dene Cultural Institute, Kamba carnival, Treatment Centre, Day care, Aboriginal Head Start, Growing Together, Hospital

Agriculture — 2 chicken farms, market gardening

Education — Aurora College Learning Centre, schools, 1 secondary, 2 elementary, 1 French K-4

Government — town, territorial, courthouse, highway patrol, ECE, federal ~ Corrections, Coast Guard, RCMP, HRDC, INAC

Business — logging saw mill, NTCL, Chinese restaurants retail oriented, Freshwater Fish 3M# Marketing

Culture & Recreation — Philipino night, heritage days, fall fair & indust., Lobster dinner, bingo!, Beaches & camping, Sports, ski trails, hockey, b.ball, curling, biathelon, more!

People — entrepreneurial streak, mixed cultures, Aboriginal, Philipino, Chinese, Volunteers!!

Reserve — Religions, Catholic, Bá'hi, Pentecostal

Your Turn – Community Mind Map

2. Community Assets

Does anything stand out for you about your community map?

Some people are surprised to see just how much their communities have to offer (community assets). Community maps are sometimes called asset maps.

Assets are the good things people or communities already have. They can be obvious like a community centre. They can also be things that are not so obvious like a parent who is willing to help out in the community school.

Your Task

Look at the chart on the next page. Take a few minutes to make a list of the assets in your community. Assets can be people, attitudes, activities, organizations, groups or things that help to make your community a healthier, happier place to live. Then write down what each asset has to offer a literacy project.
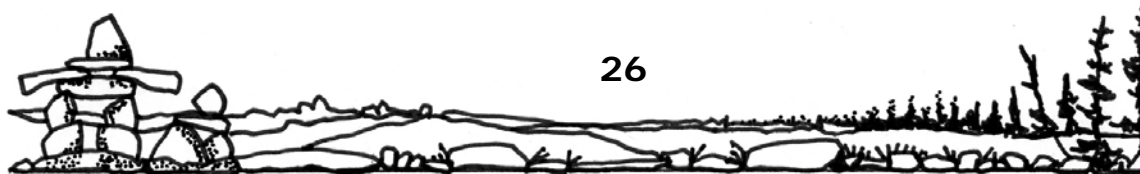
Assets Chart

Who are and what are the assets?	What do they have to offer?
Organizations	
Group	
Buisnesses	
People	
Attitudes	
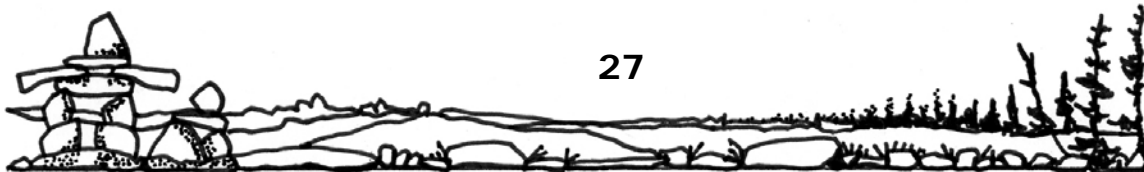
Are there any people, groups or organizations in your community assets worksheet that might be interested in working with you?

- ✓ Who are they?

- ✓ Why might they be interested?

- ✓ What interests or goals might you have in common?

- ✓ What possible risks (things you could lose) might you face in working with them?

- ✓ What are some of the benefits (things that help you) of working with them?

3. Community Challenges

What are some of the challenges around literacy that you see in your community? For example, your community may not have an adult literacy program or youth are dropping out of school. In some communities lack of aboriginal language resources is a huge issue.

Your Task

1. Brainstorm all the literacy issues and challenges that you face in your community. This list will help you identify the issues that your project may need to address.

2. Prioritize your list. Mark down the top three issues in your community. Make sure everyone aggrees on the top three issues. It may take some time to reach a concensus.

3. Refer back to your vision. Does your vision deal with the top three literacy challenges in your community? If so, you now have some ideas for a project!

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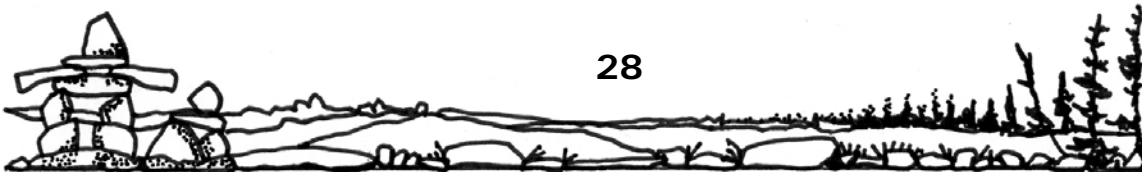
4. Refer back to your assets sheet. Can you see any potential partners for your idea?

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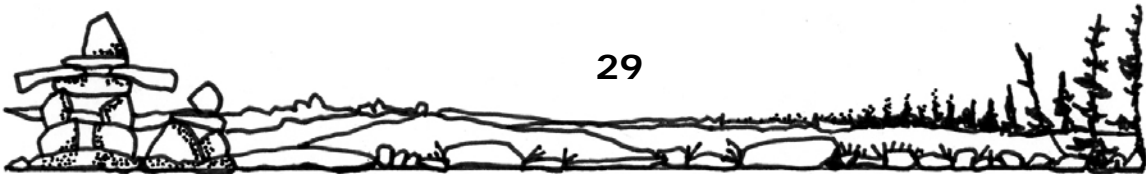
Steps 3 & 4: State Your Goal and Establish Objectives

If you think of the community vision as a place you want to live in someday, then a project goal is one of many possible pathways to get there.

Writing the goal and objectives can be tricky. Your project goal is a broad statement about the purpose of your project. A project goal is supported by up to three objectives. Objectives describe the ways in which you will carry out your project goal. You will be able to use these objectives throughout your project to see how well you are doing in reaching your project's goal.

Make sure you write in the active tense. For example these project goals are written in the active tense:

✓ Parents **read** and do literacy related activities more with their children.

✓ Educators **include** health related topics in their program.

The objectives for the above goals could be:

Goal: Parents read and do literacy related activities more with their children.

Objectives:

1. Parents understand that reading and doing literacy related activities is important for their children's literacy development.

2. Parents learn new ways they can help their children with literacy.
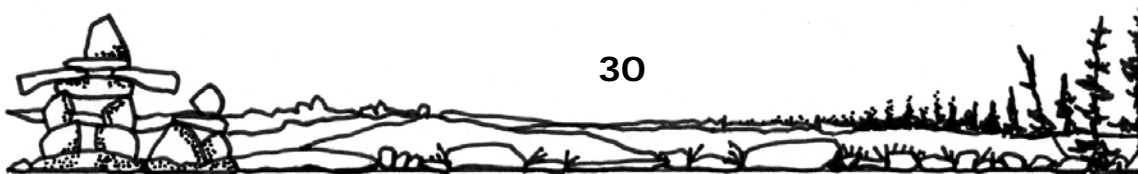
Goal: Educators include health related topics in their program

Objectives:

1. Educators understand the importance of teaching health related topics.

2. Educators use new health resources in their program.

Another Example

Say your vision includes the importance of children and families and tradition. Here are two examples of two possible project goals and objectives.

Goal: Families in our community use their language and traditions more at home.

Objectives:

1. Families learn new skills to teach their children their language at home.

2. Families learn how to prepare traditional foods.

3. Parents understand the importance of passing on their language and traditional skills to their children.

Goal: Youth know more about their culture and traditions.

Objectives:

1. Youth experience on-the-land activities.

2. Youth listen and learn from Elders.
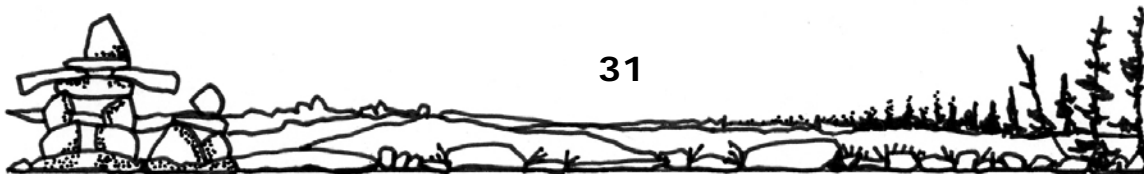
Your Task

1. What are your ideas for projects? You should have some good ideas from your vision and current situation. Take a few minutes to discuss your ideas.

2. Pick one that you think you could do. Here are some questions that may help you to choose.

   ✓ How does this project make use of the assets in the community?

   ✓ What could get in the way of doing this project?

   ✓ How much additional support will it require?

   ✓ How easy will it be to do this project?

Sometimes it is best to start with something that you know will be successful. This will help to build your confidence and your credibility (the way others see you) in the community.

If you already have these things then you may want to take on something more challenging.

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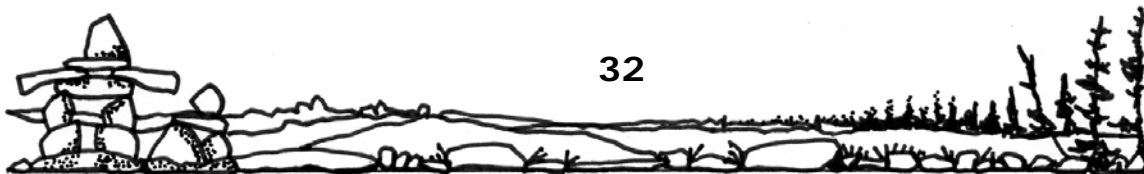
Example Project

Uluhaktok(Holman) decided they wanted to have a family literacy programs in their community. They felt that it was important that parents take an active role in supporting their children's literacy development. They recognized that some parents might not know how to support their children with reading, writing and other literacy related activities.

They decided to start with the 1-2-3 Rhyme with Me Program. They met once a week to share rhymes, stories and songs. Everyone contributes to the program by sharing their stories and ideas. They did it in both English and Inuinnaqtun. The program was a huge success. Each week at least 12 families participated in the program. Youth and Elders also participated.

After the success of this program, the community decided that they needed more family literacy programs. For the past several years, Uluhaktok has had a Family Literacy Coordinator who organizes events for families throughout the week. The coordinator hosts a variety of programs like Books and Bannock, Traditional Sewing program with Elders, and Books in the Home.

Tools for Community Building
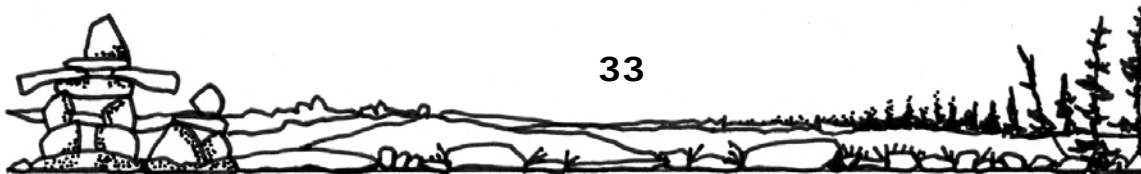
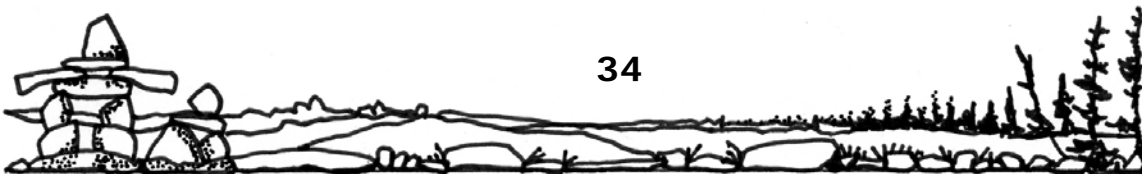# Project Goal and Objectives Worksheet

Your Project Goal:

Objectives:

1.

2.

3.

Tools for Community Building

Step 5: Develop a Work Plan

A work plan gives details about each activity for each objective. Your project may have one, two, or three objectives. And each objective has one or more activities. The work plan answers these questions:

- ✓ What resources will you need?

- ✓ What activities have you planned?

- ✓ What is the timeline for each activity?

- ✓ What is the product for each activity?

- ✓ Who is responsible for the activity?

- ✓ What is the result for each objective?

Your Task

1. Use the sample and the blank template in this section, and answer the questions below to help develop a work plan for your project.

   - ✓ What resources do you need for each activity? For example, space, staff or contractors, equipment, training, or other things. Make notes about what resources cost money and how much, and what resources can be donated. This helps develop the budget details later.

   - ✓ How long will each activity take? When will each activity start and finish?

   - ✓ Who is responsible to carry out each activity? For example, board members, staff, contract workers, volunteers, or others.

   - ✓ What products do you expect to produce with each activity? The products are the tangible things from the project. A product can be information, a resource, PSAs on the radio, posters in the community, etc.

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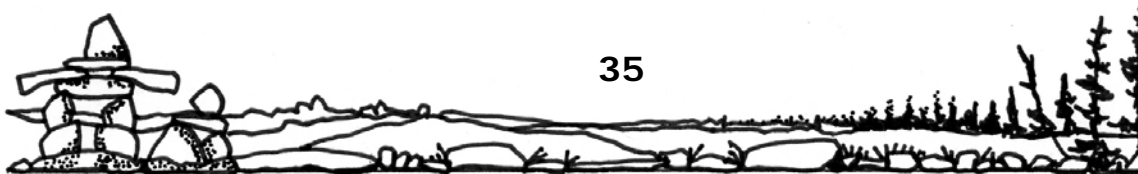
✓ What results do you expect at the end of the project? Results are the overall outcome of your objective. It is a broad statement that summarizes each objective.
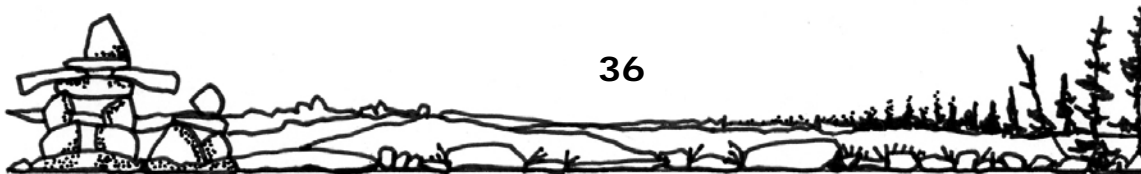
Example:

On the next page is a work plan for a family literacy project. Below is the goal for the project and the objectives.

Goal: Parents read and do literacy related activities more with their children.

Objectives:

1. Parents understand that reading and doing literacy related activities is important for their children's literacy development.

2. Parents learn new ways they can help their children with literacy.

Following the example is a blank worksheet your group can use for your project.

Tools for Community Building

Work plan	**Project name:** Family Literacy Project

Objective 1: Parents understand that reading and doing literacy related activities is important for their children's literacy development.

Resources	Activities and timelines	Products	Who is responsible?	Results
Family Literacy Coordinator	Develop family literacy public service announcements to be aired on local radio stations. To be completed by November and aired for December and January.	▪ PSAs play on the radio	Family Literacy Coordinator	Families see and hear information that will help them understand that reading and doing literacy related activities is important.
Family Literacy Coordinator, space for workshop, food, materials	Develop and deliver a workshop to parents about the importance of doing literacy related activities with their children at home. Developed by September Delivered in October	▪ Workshop	Family Literacy Coordinator	

Tools for Community Building

Work plan	**Project name:** Family Literacy Project

Objective 2: Parents learn new ways they can help their children with literacy.

| Resources	Activities and timelines	Products	Who is responsible?	Results
Family Literacy Coordinator, space, food, materials	Develop and deliver a series of workshops that show parents how to help their children at home with reading and other literacy related activities. Developed by October Workshops once a month from November - March	▪ Workshop, materials for workshop	Family Literacy Coordinator	Parents have new tools and ideas to help them with their children's literacy development.
Family literacy coordinator, printing costs	Develop and distribute a leaflet about family literacy and things parents can do at home to support their children's literacy development. Developed by November Mailed out in January for Family Literacy Day (January 27)	▪ Leaflet about family literacy	Family Literacy Coordinator.	

Tools for Community Building
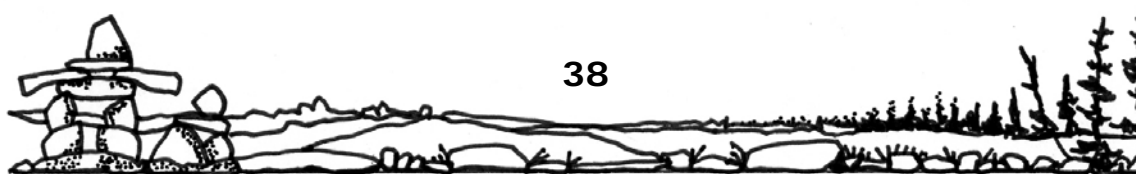
| **Work plan**		**Project name:**		
Objective:				
Resources	**Activities and timelines**	**Products**	**Who is responsible?**	**Results**
				.

Tools for Community Building
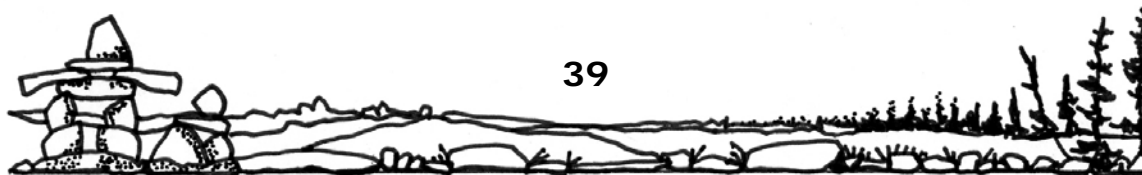
Step 6: Implement the Plan

Congratulations!

Now you have a project goal, some objectives and a work plan. The Proposals Section of this workbook will help you to take the work you have done so far and write a proposal for your project.

A lot of work has happened below the surface of your planning iceberg.

Local Programs and Activities

Planning
Communication
Partnering
Reporting
Evaluating
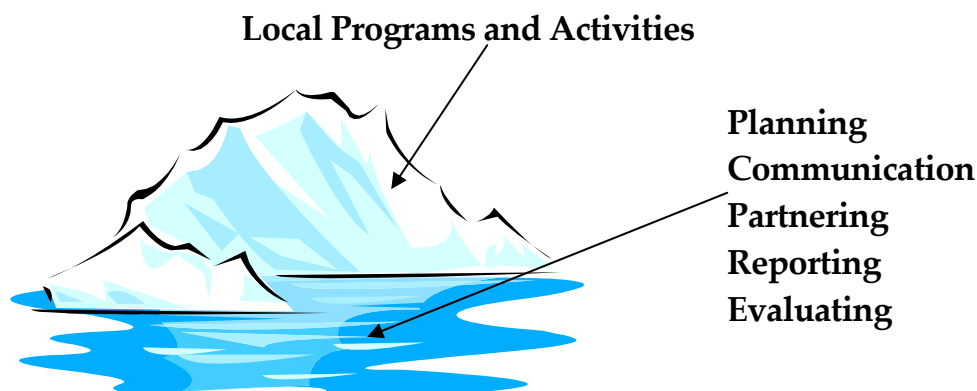
When you have everything you need to carry out your project you will be at the tip of the planning iceberg! The part that everyone else sees!

Things to consider

There will be a number of things to pay attention to as you **implement** (carry out) your project like …

- ✓ Keeping your project group strong;
- ✓ Keeping track of how the project is going;
- ✓ Negotiating and working through conflicts;
- ✓ Making change in mid-stream.

Can you think of others?

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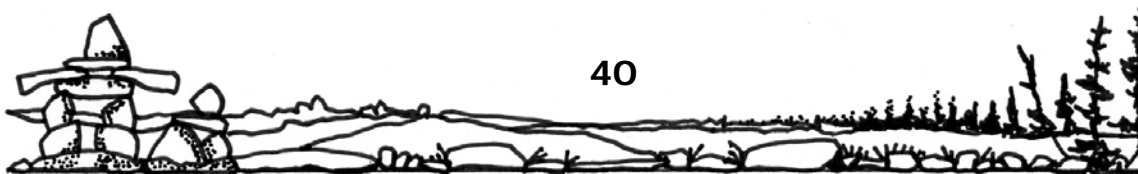
Step 7: Evaluation[1]

What do you think about when you hear the word evaluation?

What's that?

Ugh!

No time!

When do you do it?

We do that already.

_____

_____

Definitions

Here are some definitions that will help you understand this section better.

Evaluation is a planning term for finding out how things are going and making decisions about what to do next. If you have ever been involved in a project or program you have probably been involved in some kind of evaluation.

Outcomes are the result at the end of your project.

Inputs are things that you put into your project like salary dollars, a building or ideas.

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[1] http://www.reddi.gov.on.ca/track_what.htm

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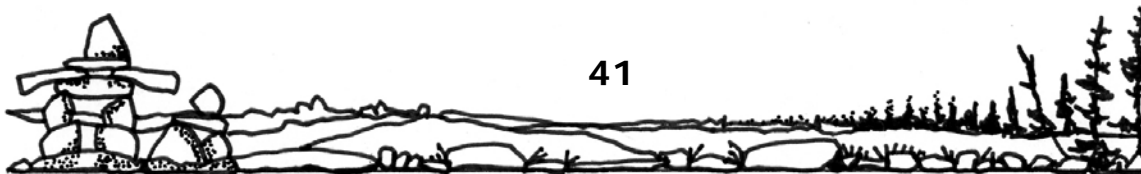
Qualitative evaluation is an assessment process that answers the question, "How *well* did we do?" Some examples of questions that help define qualitative evaluation for a literacy project are:

- ✓ What was learned?
- ✓ Are families using their new knowledge? If so, how?
- ✓ What do users think of the project or activity?
- ✓ Do people like the new resources?
- ✓ Do they use the resources?
- ✓ Do people in the community think the literacy project was successful?
- ✓ What activities did they like most? Least?

Quantitative evaluation is an assessment process that answers the question, "How *much* did we do?"
Some example questions that help define qualitative evaluation for a literacy project are:

- ✓ How many people attended the program?
- ✓ How many books were given out?
- ✓ How many people continued to attend each week?
- ✓ How many resources were developed?

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan shows how you plan to collect and analyze information while the project is operating. The information helps you know what to change during the project to help you reach your project goal. You also use the information to answer evaluation questions at the end of the project.

People evaluate projects and programs in order to:

- ✓ Develop and improve what they are doing;
- ✓ Know when to make changes;

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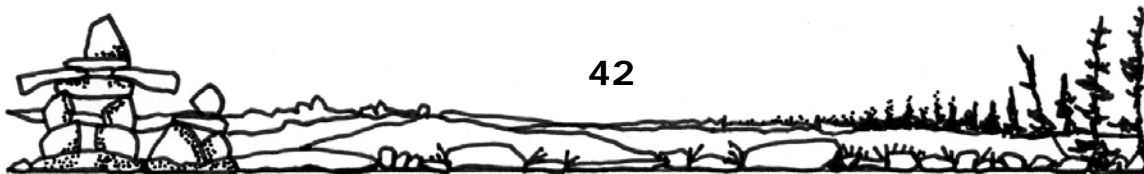
✓ Figure out what success looks like and share this information with others;

✓ Celebrate success and learning from valuable mistakes;

✓ Show results to supporters and increase the chances of getting more support in the future.

Why is Project Evaluation Important?

Evaluating project results helps to provide answers to key questions like:

✓ What progress has been made?

✓ Were the desired outcomes achieved? Why?

✓ Are there ways that project activities can be refined to achieve better outcomes?

✓ Do the project results justify the project inputs?

Why do we sometimes avoid evaluation?

It is still fairly common for people to carry out projects and activities without doing the kind of evaluation they need to do. Here are some of the reasons that people give for not doing evaluation.

✓ Limited time

✓ Not enough money

✓ Not sure how to do it

✓ Don't see it as being important

People who do not evaluate are missing out on the opportunity to learn from their experience. Mistakes are expensive so why waste them!
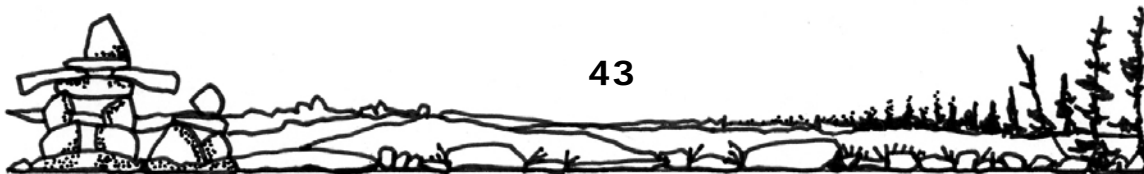
Some simple ways to do evaluation

There are all kinds of ways to evaluate a project. A small, effective evaluation is always better than no evaluation at all. Right from the beginning, encourage everyone to think about crisis as an opportunity to make change.

Here are a few simple examples.

- ✓ Ask workshop participants for their feedback about a workshop. Make the feedback session part of the workshop agenda. Relate the feedback to the purpose of the workshop.

- ✓ Find out how things are going in a project by talking regularly one to one with the people who are taking part either as staff, volunteers or participants. Always be open to hearing what they have to say. Keep notes or ask if you can use a tape recorder.

- ✓ Evaluate a reading circle or family literacy activity by asking the kids. Make it fun by asking kids to interview each other. Make a video tape.

- ✓ Hold a check-in meeting and make sure that people feel comfortable enough to speak up. Put the main points on flip chart paper so the group can see their words and so you have a record for later.

- ✓ Talk to other people in the community who may not be part of your project but who may be in a position to see changes that are happening as a result of your project.

- ✓ Collect stories about what it was like to take part in the project or about something good that happened as a result of the project. Record them in writing or use a video or audio tape.
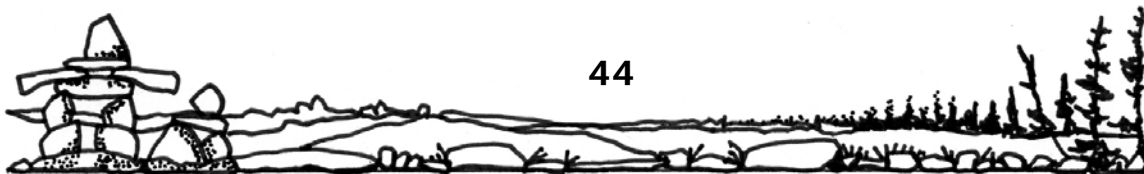
✓ Ask permission to keep a confidential record (no names attached) of people's stories and comments. Ask if you can share some of these stories and comments with funders or others who support the project.

What are the Challenges in Monitoring and Evaluation?

- Getting the commitment to do it;

- Establishing an evaluation framework at the beginning of the project;

- Identifying realistic quantitative and qualitative indicators;

- Finding the time to do it and sticking to it;

- Getting feedback from your stakeholders;

- Reporting back to your stakeholders.

Your Task

In your planning stage you identified the outcomes for your project. These will help you measure the success of your project. Read the information below and review the sample evaluation plan and then use the blank form to fill out an evaluation plan for your project.

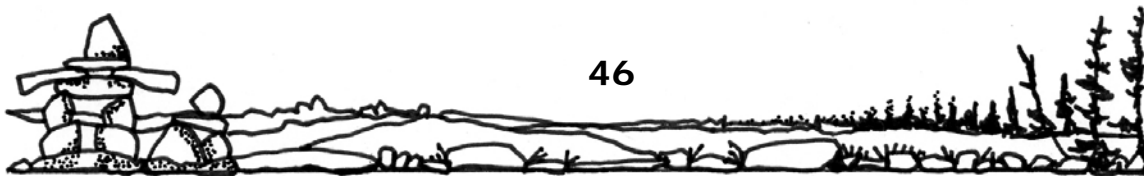Answer the questions below to help develop an evaluation plan.

✓ What results do you expect from each project objective? These come directly from the work plan.

✓ What indicators will you use to measure the results? Indicator is a general term for the information you gather to measure the project results.

✓ How will you gather the information? For example, from interviews, project records, or other ways.

✓ When will you gather the information?

45
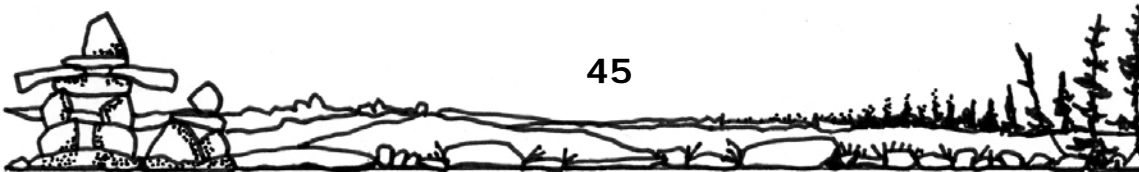
✓ Who will provide information? Who will collect it? Who will write the evaluation reports?

✓ How will you share the results of the evaluation? This is sometimes called dissemination.

People need time and certain skills to do a good evaluation. Consider including money in the budget to carry out the evaluation and write the reports, and/or for training about evaluation.

Tools for Community Building

Sample Evaluation Plan		**Project name:** Family Literacy Project	
	Results (from work plan)	**Indicators & data to measure results**	**Sources of data**
Objective 1 ▪ Workshop ▪ PSAs	Families see and hear information that will help them understand that reading and doing literacy related activities is important.	▪ Number of times the PSA plays on the radio ▪ Number of parents who attend the information session. ▪ Workshop evaluations. ▪ Workshop materials that parents receive. ▪ Number of times PSAs play.	▪ Workshop attendance and evaluations. ▪ Feedback from parents. ▪ Feedback from teachers, partners, etc.. ▪ Project records and financial reports.
Objective 2 ▪ Workshop ▪ Leaflet	Parents have new tools and ideas to help them with their children's literacy development.	▪ Number of families that attend the family literacy workshops. ▪ Workshop evaluations. ▪ Family Literacy Leaflet produced. ▪ Number of leaflets mailed. ▪ Workshop material that families receive.	

47

Tools for Community Building

Blank Evaluation Plan	Project name:		
	Results (from work plan)	**Indicators & data to measure results**	**Sources of data**
▪ **Objective 1**			
▪ **Objective 2**			

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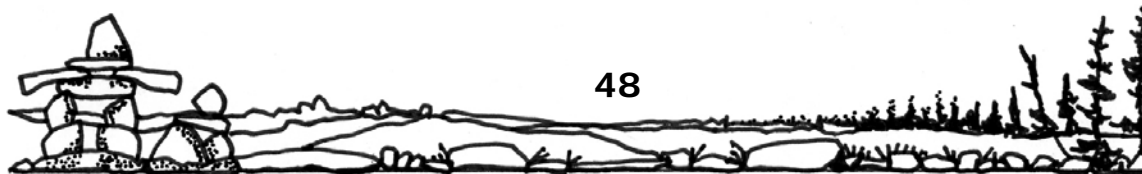
Planning section reflection

Congratulations you have completed the project planning section. As you can see a lot of work goes into planning for a project. It can be very rewarding working with others to develop a project plan that will help your community. And sometimes it can be frustrating too. It is always a good idea to get feedback from participants at a meeting or workshop. Use the questions below to get feedback. You can have a group discussion or you can photocopy this page and people can answer the questions individually.

When did you feel most successful? Least successful?

What surprised you?

What new things did you learn from each other or the experience?

What skills and resources do you have in your group?

What questions do you have?

What things do you want or need to learn more about?

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