

Workshop Ten

MOVING ISSUES TO ACTION

Objectives

- To understand the role of assessment and research in the community action process.
- To understand the role of community partners in identifying solutions to community issues.

Outcomes

- Participants will be able to identify a variety of assessment and research strategies that can be used to define community issues for action.
- Participants will explore the process of identifying partners that are concerned about their chosen issues and understand how to develop strategies to work with them.
- Participants will understand the process of developing action strategies and potential solutions to identified community issues.

I. Welcome and Agenda Review

(10 Minutes)

Welcome everyone to the group meeting, check in and see how everyone is doing. Review the agenda for the day. Explain that this session will use the sample community scenario provided in Workshop Nine to demonstrate how

The implementation of the steps demonstrated in this workshop is a process that normally unfolds over a series of weeks/months within a community action group (the timing really depends upon the complexity of the issue chosen). The purpose of this workshop is to give group members a flavor of what the process looks like from beginning to end. In the reality of building an action campaign, these steps are often quite fluid, with additional research undertaken as a project moves forward and strategic action plans modified to respond to the evolution of the situation at the community level. Point out to workshop members that each time their community action group identifies an issue, moving through these steps will be a critical part of the planning and action process.

to carry out the steps associated with “moving to action.” Note that participants will learn about researching the issue that they have chosen as well as performing additional assessment. They will explore how partners can be identified. Finally, group members will review how a strategic action plan is created to provide a blueprint for a group’s work together.

II. Reviewing the Community Scenario

(10 Minutes)

Ask the group to review the sample community scenario that group members worked with in Workshop Nine. Go over the “Choosing an Issue” worksheet again briefly, checking in with group members to assess their understanding of the process to this point.

III. Further Assessment of the Sample Scenario

(45 Minutes)

Have participants move into the working groups created during Workshop Nine. Point out to the group that every good community action requires some detailed groundwork to

lay a foundation for the group's strategies. Further assessment of the issue is designed to better understand how it is experienced in the community and the implications of working on it. This stage of assessment should always precede the development of an action plan and should draw on the elements in Workshop Nine, which explored the criteria for effective policy. Participants will work in their small groups using "Further Assessment of the Issue" worksheet (Handout #1) to answer the questions as they pertain to the sample scenario.

As group members begin to work on the questions related to research, have them consider the following:

- What facts or information would be useful to them and why? What statistics, if any, could help them better analyze the scenario's issue?
- What information do they need about current programs or policies that would help them understand the issue better?
- What financial or budgetary information do they need to analyze the issue?
- What information might they need from community residents to assist them in analyzing this issue more completely?
- Who or where would they need to go to gather this information?

Have the small groups share their responses to the worksheet. After everyone has had an opportunity to share, ask group members to compare their worksheets to the samples at the end of this workshop. (Handout #2)

IV. Identifying Partners

(15 Minutes)

Note that virtually all community action requires partnerships to move the work forward. In the further assessment worksheet, participants identified individuals and organizations that share a concern for the issue in the sample scenario. Point out that partners are allies on the issue. Note that it is important to be certain that any partners brought to an issue do not alienate other members of your coalition. It is also critical to determine how part-

ners will gain from working with you as you move the issue forward. Finally, point out that a group must decide how they will share power with partners. Review and discuss the sample "Identifying Partners" worksheets (Handouts #4 and #6) provided for the sample scenario. Ask participants if they can think of any other partners not listed on the sample worksheet that might be helpful for working on the identified issue.



V. Identifying Strategies

(30 Minutes)

Note that once a group has analyzed its research and further assessed the issue, it is important to consider how the group can use the research to take steps to impact the issue they are addressing. In taking steps, the group must reflect on its goals, the specific issue and the alternatives available for action. Identifying strategies helps you answer the following:

- How might you solve the issue;
- What would you like to see happen;
- How will you know if you are moving in the right direction with your actions?
- What strategies could you use to move the issue forward.

Linking Strategies to the Public Health Model

As you review possible strategies with the group, help them to analyze whether the proposed strategies focus on the agent, the host or the environment. Remind group members that it is often helpful to consider multiple strategies that target each of the three sides of the public health triangle. This brings depth and greater comprehensiveness to your community approach.

Strategies are how you will move your issue forward. Examples include:

- Negotiations
- Public policy
- Picket lines
- Petitions
- Rallies
- Media coverage
- Mass demonstrations
- Letter writing campaigns
- Accountability sessions
- Educational meetings
- Other

When considering strategies, the following criteria can be used to assess their appropriateness:

- Can you really implement the proposed strategy?
- Have you chosen the correct individual or organization to help you address your issue?
- Do the strategies give power to the group working on the issue?
- Do the strategies also further your organizational goals?
- Are the strategies within the experience of the group? Is the group comfortable with them?
- Are your group leaders experienced enough to carry out the strategies?
- Will people enjoy working on or participating in this strategy?
- Will the strategies play positively in the media?
- Will they work?

When you have completed your review of the range of possible strategies, have participants use the blank “Identifying Strategies” worksheet (Handout #7) to brainstorm possible strategies for addressing the issue defined for the sample scenario. After the full group has participated in filling out the worksheets, compare them to the completed form provided (Handout #8). Are there strategies that group members came up with that are not listed on the sample worksheet? Are there critical strategies that they have not considered?

VI. Creating A Strategic Action Plan

(20 Minutes)

Once the group has reached the action phase of a particular issue, it is important to clearly conceptualize the structure of their action plan. In this process, it is extremely important to consider the political environment within which the group is working. Sometimes group members themselves may not be able to solicit change from those in power, but may have relationships with other members of the community who wield more “weight” in the community.

A strategic action plan should include:

- what will occur;
- how much, or to what extent, these actions will occur;
- who will carry out these actions;
- when the actions will occur and for how long; and
- what resources will be needed to carry out the actions.

When creating a strategic action plan, it is important to build specific time tables into tasks, and to make them specific enough that they can be accomplished in the established time frames. Set up structures to communicate with community action group members between meetings and to assist them in completing their assigned tasks. Make sure that everyone in the group has a role in moving the action forward between meetings and that group members have a clear vision of where they are headed.

To help participants get a concrete sense of what this process looks like, have them review and discuss the completed Strategy Action Planning Chart (Handout #11) for the model community scenario. Point out that this model strategic action chart includes only the beginning steps in the action process. Also note that ongoing steps must continually be defined as a group’s work moves forward and that the ongoing steps should take into consideration the results of the first steps of the action process.

With review of the sample scenario complete, the foundation is set for group mem-

bers to begin their work together. Let group members know that as they transition from the training to beginning their community action, they will move back to the list of issues brainstormed in Workshop Nine and decide together on their first issue for action. Using the steps that have been modeled in this workshop, their work together has just begun!

VIII. Conclusion and Evaluation

(15 minutes)

As a closing activity, ask participants to stand in a circle and share one word that comes to mind about the training. After each person has had an opportunity to share, thank group members for their participation and commitment.

WORKSHOP TEN

Handouts

Workshop Ten – Handout #1

Further Assessment of the Issue

Having identified the issue above, it is now important to further refine the analysis to better understand how the issue is experienced in the community and the implications of working on it. This additional assessment process should always precede the development of an action plan.

How will working on the issue result in a real improvement in people’s lives? Are the people who will benefit helping to define how they will benefit?

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How will working on this issue give the people working on it a sense of their own power?

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Is this issue widely felt? By whom?

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Is the issue deeply felt? By whom?

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What individuals or organizations in the community share this issue?

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|----------|----------|
| 1) | 5) |
| 2) | 6) |
| 3) | 7) |
| 4) | 8) |

How would they benefit from joining your effort to address the issue?

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What resources could they bring to the table?

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Is working on the issue non-divisive? How could this work divide your constituency?

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List any additional information (qualitative or quantitative) needed to better understand the issue? For each piece of information required, indicate the source for acquiring it.

INFORMATION

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)
7)
8)

Workshop Ten – Handout #2

Sample Worksheet for Further Assessment of the Issue

Having identified the issue/problem above, it is now important to further refine the analysis to better understand how the issue is experienced in the community and the implications of working on it. This additional assessment process should always precede the development of an action plan.

How will working on the issue result in a real improvement in people's lives? Are the people who will benefit helping to define how they will benefit?

If families, children and local residents can safely use the park, there will be an increase in the communal aspects of the neighborhood as well as an increase in safety for all residents living nearby. The individuals who live close to the park identify this issue as important and want it to be addressed as soon as possible.

How will working on this issue give the people working on it a sense of their own power?

For the last few years, as this situation has gotten worse, residents have been retreating inside. They have felt helpless to solve the problem and all they have tried has failed. Coming together as a group will provide "safety in numbers" and build community to strengthen the neighborhood.

Is this issue widely felt? By whom?

Anyone living near the park has experienced the problems resulting from the drinking. The park used to be widely used by people from all over the area. Now very few families will come to the park and the area around it has deteriorated. Moreover, the Head Start program is thinking of finding new space if the issue can't be solved. All the children in the program are afraid to use the park because of fights they have witnessed by drunken men.

Is the issue deeply felt? By whom?

Families with small children suffer the most from this situation. The residents who live on the perimeter of the park also suffer deeply.

What individuals or organizations in the community share this issue?

- 1) Residents
- 2) Head Start Parents, Children and Staff
- 3) Nearby merchants
- 4) Police department
- 5) Washington Park Neighborhood Association
- 6) Chamber of Commerce

How would they benefit from joining your effort to address the issue?

Improved safety for all using and living near the park as well as improved value of homes and increased use of stores located near the park.

What resources could they bring to the table?

Parents can bring their considerable numbers. There is strength and safety in numbers. The Chamber and other small businesses could mobilize their political might for whatever solution is chosen to address the issue.

Is working on the issue non-divisive? How could this work divide your constituency?

For the people living and working near this park, there is no “down side” to making it safer. It is possible the police may take exception to claims that they have been unresponsive to the problem.

List any additional information (qualitative or quantitative) needed to better understand the problem/issue?

- 1) Police calls for service to the park (police records)*
- 2) Probation or parole status of anyone arrested in park (police records)*
- 3) Injuries or threats made to residents from people in park (resident surveys)*
- 4) Drugs being used in the park (police records and resident observations)*
- 5) Rules currently governing drinking in the park (planning department)*
- 6) Loss in local business revenue (Chamber of Commerce and local business feedback)*

Workshop Ten – Handout #3

Identifying Partners

Creating partnerships helps to move the work forward. In the work under “Further Assessment of the Issue” you identified individuals and organizations that share a concern for the issues cited. Of these, which are likely to want to work with you on the strategies that have been selected? When considering possible partners, think about the resources that they will bring to the effort. Also consider the risks of working with them. Will your work with them alienate others? Will they move too slowly? Are they bound up in institutional process? Will they share the power of decision-making easily? Why would they join you? What is in it for them?

What individuals or organizations in the community might become partners in this strategy?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)

What individuals or groups might attempt to hinder your work?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)

Workshop Ten – Handout #4

Sample Worksheet for Identifying Partners

What individuals or organizations in the community might become partners in the strategy?

- 1) *Other neighborhood groups with parks (e.g., St. Vincents Hill, Heritage, Sutter Street, Vallejo Heights, etc.)*
- 2) *Chamber of Commerce*
- 3) *Parks and Recreation Department*
- 4) *Head Start*
- 5) *Parent-teacher groups in schools*
- 6) *Nearby school principal*
- 7) *Nearby businesses*
- 8) *Nearby faith institutions*

What individuals or groups might attempt to hinder your work?

- 1) *Service clubs afraid that park regulations could impact their events*
- 2) *Parks and Recreation Department may not support parks regulation*
- 3) *People in park may begin to threaten residents*
- 4) *City Council members who oppose regulating “social problems”*
- 5) *Police Chief may view strategy as a “slap in his/her face.”*

See “Identifying Organization Partners Planning Worksheet” on the following page.

Workshop Ten – Handout #5

Identifying Organizational Partners Planning Worksheet

Name of partner and role they could play	
What are the benefits to the partner?	
Who else could they bring in?	
Who might they alienate?	
What barriers exist to bringing in this partner?	

Workshop Ten – Handout #6

Identifying Organizational Partners Planning Worksheet

Name of partner and role they could play	What are the benefits to the partner?	Who else could they bring in?	Who might they alienate?	What barriers exist to bring on this partner?
<p>Neighborhood Associations: Could help build support in neighborhood surrounding park and could help create broader support across city for principle of ordinance</p>	<p>Could help prevent problems from moving to another area</p>	<p>Their membership</p>	<p>Some of their own membership who might not feel that this is their issue</p>	<p>Some neighborhood associations are not well organized Anglo Neighborhood Associations may not want to help African American neighborhood</p>
<p>Local businesses could be allies with municipal officials</p>	<p>Increased revenue if area were perceived as safer</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>Businesses that oppose regulation</p>	<p>Businesses might fear retaliation from people in park</p>
<p>School Principal might be able to help engage parents of school children as well as administration in supporting ordinance/ and/or could help set up neighborhood watch</p>	<p>Support for safer environment near school and for children attending school</p>	<p>School Board PTA</p>	<p>Some parents might not feel this is a school issue</p>	<p>Could be fear of addressing these kind of social issues or perceive their mission as “education”</p>

Workshop Ten – Handout #7

Identifying Strategies

Strategies identify how things will get done—how you will get from A to B. Effective strategies take into account existing barriers and resources, and keep within the organizational vision and mission.

How will you solve this issue?

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In the long run, what would you like to see happen with this issue?

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In the near future, how will you know if you are moving in the right direction (i.e., what will it look like)?

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What organizational considerations must be taken into account to address this issue (institutional resources, organization’s position in the community, internal problems, etc.)?

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What individuals or groups can resolve this issue?

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Name three concrete improvements that would likely occur if you implement your solution to the identified issue.

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Who would benefit if you achieve your goal?

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What activities (e.g., media events, actions for information and demands, public hearings, law suits, accountability sessions, etc.) will you use?

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Use the strategy chart to lay out your key activities and the tasks required to carry them out.

Workshop Ten – Handout #8

Sample Worksheet for Identifying Strategies

How will you solve this issue?

Pass a local ordinance that prohibits drinking alcoholic beverages in this park

In the long run, what would you like to see happen with this issue?

- 1) People from the neighborhood join together to develop and pass a local ordinance*
- 2) Residents come together to form a block watch or similar type of association to ensure that the park stays safe*
- 3) Police increase presence in the park area and enforce ordinance.*

In the near future, how will you know if you are moving in the right direction(i.e., what will it look like)

- 1) Residents will meet to discuss solutions*
- 2) The police will join residents at the table to problem solve*
- 3) City leaders will be willing to sit and talk about possible solutions including a possible ordinance*

What organizational considerations must be taken into account to address this issue?

- 1) Relationship with the police...will we alienate them insisting on increased action and pointing out their lack of attention to the problem?*
- 2) We don't currently have strong working relationships with the business community...will we be creditable helping to lead this effort?*
- 3) Can we support a public policy such as an ordinance?*

What individuals or groups can resolve this issue?

- 1) The City Council has the power to adopt and implement an ordinance prohibiting drinking in the park*
- 2) The police have the power to enforce it*
- 3) The residents have the power to reclaim the park and keep it in their control*

Name three concrete improvements that would likely occur if you implement your solution to the identified issue.

- 1) Park will be safer and used by families*
- 2) Quality of life nearby will improve as residents experience few nuisance-related problems*
- 3) Head Start program will stay on block near park*

Who would benefit if you achieve your goal?

Children and families, businesses and residents

What activities will you use?

- 1) *Bring media attention to the problem and help bring other people to the effort in order to pass the ordinance*
- 2) *Residents will hold meetings with each planning commissioner and city council members*
- 3) *Meetings between residents and the chief of police*
- 4) *Flyers will be passed out to all nearby residents informing them of the group forming to solve this issue*
- 5) *Public hearings will occur at the planning commission and city council as the ordinance is heard*

Workshop Ten – Handout #10

Sample Worksheet for Action Plan

Desired Outcome:

Passage of a parks ordinance that prohibits alcohol consumption in the park at Ohio and Marin Streets

Primary individual or group that has the power to make your outcome occur:

The City Council

See chart called “Strategy Action Planning Chart”

Workshop Ten – Handout #11

Strategy Action Planning Chart

SELECTED STRATEGY Passing a Parks Ordinance (Note: This worksheet reflects first steps in the action planning process for this strategy.)

Activities/ Tasks	Person Responsible	Resources Needed	Blocks and Barriers	Outcomes Expected	Date Started	Date Done
1. Organize neighborhood/ collect petitions	George Vasquez	Fliers/petitions and 16 hours time	Trust from neighbors to open doors	Petition signed by 300 resi- dents who live or work near park	10/15/99	
2. Meet with local businesses	Gail Jones	8 hours time	Going to businesses when managers present	Build support for ordinance from local business workers	10/20/99	
3. Contact other neighbor- hoods	Heritage – Paul Hawkins St. Vincent Hill – Robert Watson Hilton – Altred	Fliers and names of association contacts	Convincing them that issue affects their quali- ty of life	Support from other neighbor- hood associations for the ordinance, providing broader public support base	10/18/99	
4. Meet with Chief of Police	George Vasquez Grace Granthano FTG staff – Linda	Resident stories of how problem affects them	Finding time all parties can meet	Build support for trying a different approach to policing neighborhood; gather police's perspective on park	10/25/99	
5. Meet with Chamber Executive Director	FTG staff – Linda, Gordon Farmer	Concerns of local busi- nesses; statistics on calls for service	None – good relation- ship	Support from Chamber for ordinance, as well as possible willingness to help with media campaign	11/7/99	
6. Meet with local newspaper reporter	Pete Henderson Arthur Lett, FTG staff	Statistics on calls for service; photos of prob- lems; draft of ordinance	Getting police calls for service	Story written on park prob- lem highlighting ways ordi- nance could help	11/15/99	
7. Meeting with Planning Commissioner	To be determined	Calls for service, peti- tion, testimonials	Finding time to meet	Build awareness of issue; solicit preliminary support for ordinance	11/21/99	