Program/Project Planning – Applying Theory to Practice
July 8, 2020

❑ **Programs** are typically ongoing initiatives (several years); **Projects** are time limited in months or 1-2 years

Program/Project Planning Defined

❑ **A rational, logical, dynamic <u>process</u> for designing programs/projects that aim to effect change and build capacity of individuals, families, and communities**
❑ Effective program planning isn't just about scheduling fun activities; it's about effecting some kind of positive change in participants (i.e., a change in attitude and/or behaviour, developing new skills, etc.)
❑ <u>Participants are changed as a result of being part of your program/project</u>

Typical Program/Project Planning Process – Basic Problem-Solving Model

1. Identify needs and capacities
2. Program/project design and development
3. Program/project implementation
4. Evaluation

Laying the Foundation for Program/Project Planning

1. **Determine what is needed** – for example, by doing a needs & capacities assessment
2. **Identify the target population** – age, gender, ethnicity/race, class, etc.
3. **Consider why/how people change** – what we know about why and how people change their behaviour, attitudes, etc.
4. **Consider the characteristics of program/project participants** – level of education, ethnicity, etc.

1. Determine Needs

❑ **Need –** gap between "what is" and "what should be"
1. **Absolute need –** basic survival
2. **Relative need –** absence in comparison to a standard, i.e., "keeping up with the Jones"
3. **Felt need –** identified by people experiencing the deprivation
4. **Ascribed need –** identified by someone other than participants, i.e., health professionals, politicians
❑ **What's the most credible type of need to justify a program? Why?**

Don't Forget Capacities!

❑ Focusing on needs is not enough…Don't forget the capacities of individuals and organizations
❑ **Capacities –** Abilities, competencies, skills, facilities, resources
❑ **Individual & community/group capacity building –** strengthening abilities of people or communities
❑ **Accentuate the positive –** everyone has capacities; often overlooked or dismissed, especially when not formally recognized, or within marginalized groups

2. **Identify the Target Population for your Program/Project**

   ❑ Sometimes a target population emerges from broad identification of needs
   ❑ Sometimes a funder specifies the target population
   ❑ Your organization may target specific groups, people, communities, etc.
   ❑ Be as specific as possible – identify age, gender, ethnicity, class/income level, level of education, etc.
   ❑ **For example:** When programming for youth, specify under 16 or over 16; difficult to effectively program for youth aged 12 and those who are 20 as they are at different developmental stages

3. **Consider Why and How People Change**

   ❑ Why is looking at the change process important? Linked to our definition of program planning
   ❑ When you've experienced change in your lives, what prompted the change?
   ❑ Were you in control of the change? Was someone else in control? How did this influence your experience of the change?
   ❑ Change activated by a shift in beliefs, thoughts, values, or behaviours
   ❑ Change is usually a **process** rather than a single event

4. **Consider Participant Characteristics**

   ❑ Program participants are seldom a homogenous group
   ❑ Have different needs, interests, ways to inspire, etc.
   ❑ Need to plan for diverse characteristics among participants, different activities, approaches, etc.
   ❑ What participate characteristics should you keep in mind when planning a program/project? How do the diverse characteristics effect program/project design?

Refine Your 'Elevator Speech'

   ❑ Talk with key stakeholders about the primary focus and purpose of the program; **don't rush this step**
   ❑ Massage the different ideas into a clear statement; this can take a week or more
   ❑ Develop your 'elevator speech' – be able to describe the focus and purpose of your program in 1-2 sentences - before your 'elevator' gets to the 5th floor
   ❑ Test your elevator speech with friends and family; **you can't develop clear goals and objectives until you can clearly and succinctly articulate the focus and purpose of your program/project**

Developing the Goal(s) of Your Program/Project

   ❑ **Goals are…**Broad, high level, global statements about participant outcomes; think big picture: Overall program/project purpose

   ❑ Consider how participants' lives will be different as a result of being in the program/project
   ❑ **Example:** Goal of a parenting program is fostering change in parents (improving their parenting skills), not that there will be 5 sessions
   ❑ **Example:** The goal of this project is for community members to identify aspects of their community that enhance their quality of life
   ❑ **Example:** This project aims to reduce seniors' risk of being victims of telephone fraud

Developing Objectives for Your Program/Project

- ❑ **Objectives state expected results** – **Should be measurable (see SMART Objectives below)**
- ❑ Targets to achieve; are helpful in choosing the types of activities, developing appropriate strategies
- ❑ Provide a standard to strive for; essential in evaluating the "success" of a program
- ❑ **Example:** Attendance at each mathematics class will average 95% or higher
- ❑ **Example:** By September 2020, provide a weekly computer training class for 70 adults
- ❑ **Example:** By March 2021, 3 new staff members will be hired to provide counselling to the youth in the program

Developing SMART Objectives

- ❑ **Specific** – Concrete, usually action verbs
- ❑ **Measurable** – A numeric or descriptive
- ❑ **Attainable** – Limited in scope; what can realistically be achieved
- ❑ **Results-focused** – Outputs or results – not activities; includes expected accomplishments
- ❑ **Timely** – Identifies a target date

Developing Outcomes for Your Program/Project

- ❑ Specific changes in participants' **attitudes**, **behaviours**, **knowledge**, **skills**, **status or level of functioning**
- ❑ **How people are changed as a result of being in your program/project?**
- ❑ Reflect the program/project Goals & Objectives
- ❑ Short-term Outcomes (6 months – 2 years), Medium-term (1-2 years), and Long-term (2 + years)
- ❑ **Example:** Youth improve skills in decision-making and problem solving
- ❑ **Example:** Youth gain confidence in doing community work
- ❑ **Example:** Increase opportunities for people to learn, discuss and address the impacts of racism in their community

- ❑ **Activities in your program/project need to align with and support achieving the goals, objectives and outcomes**

Developing a Budget

- ❑ **3 key variables:**
1. **Revenue** - $ coming in
2. **Costs/Expenses** - $ going out [out of pocket, hard costs]
3. **In-Kind contributions** - donated services, materials, staff etc. that would otherwise need to be covered as costs; volunteers, agency support for program, etc.

Costs/Expenses

- ❑ **Direct –** Out of pocket expenses
- ❑ **Indirect –** Overhead (space, utilities, etc.)
- ❑ **Fixed –** Costs don't change regardless of the number of participants (publicity, program development costs, etc.)
- ❑ **Variable –** Costs will change with number of participants (meals, transportation, childcare, photocopying, etc.)

In-Kind Contributions

- ❑ Contributions other than hard cash
- ❑ Non-monetary support, i.e., office space, computers, materials (e.g., paper), staff time, etc.
- ❑ Agency can wave its fee for administering the program (often 10-15% of the total budget)
- ❑ Dollar value attached to volunteer skills and time
- ❑ <u>Many funders require in-kind contributions as it demonstrates community support for the program</u>
- ❑ Often listed on budget page as real costs of running the program; avoid over-estimating contributions

Examples of In-Kind Contributions

In-Kind Contributions		
Item	**$ Value**	**Details**
Organization staff time ($35/hour x 100 hours)	3,500	Support to program facilitator
Office space, computer, office equipment	2,000	Organization dedicate resources for duration of program
Lunch for 2 sessions (30 lunches x $10/lunch)	300	Donation from McDonald's
Volunteer hours (5 volunteers x 10 hours x $25/hour	1,250	Various activities
Total $ Value of In-Kind Contributions	**$7,050**	

Program/Project Evaluation

- ❑ Why do evaluation:
- ❑ **Program improvement** – current, future programs
- ❑ **Accountability** – funders, program participants
- ❑ **Focuses attention** – achieving goals & objectives
- ❑ **Documents results** – strengths, weaknesses and major accomplishments

Program/Project Planning and Proposal Writing – Overlapping Steps

Program/Project Planning	**Proposal Writing**
Identify needs & capacities of potential participants	Describe program/project in 2 sentences
Program/project design and development	Identify 2-3 program/project outcomes
Program/project implementation	Develop activities to achieve outcomes
Monitor, evaluate, make adjustments as needed	Identify program/project deliverables

1. Complete 1st two steps in Program/Project Planning before writing the proposal
2. **Key to both:** <u>Align the program/project goal(s) and objectives, outcomes, activities and timeline</u>