**Preparing a Community Action Plan (CAP)**

**The Community Decides its Own Future**

Deciding what is wanted, observing what is available, and recognizing the steps needed to get it—are all bases of planning.

In training and encouraging the community and its executive to become stronger (more self- reliant), you must impress upon them the necessity of management and planning.

In planning, it is first necessary to have vision, “where do you want to go?” To illustrate that, we often quote Lewis Carroll, the author of Alice in Wonderland: “if you do not know where you are going, then any road will go”.—It is important that the community is unified in sharing its vision. Your job as community development worker is to ensure that.

The essence of management planning(see: four) is condensed into four questions:

1. “What do we want? ”
2. “What do we have?”
3. “How do we use what we have to get what we want?” and
4. “What will happen when we do?”

The community assessment should answer question two.

To answer question three and four, the community should prepare a community action plan (CAP).—this can be a one year plan, a five year plan, or some other time period, consistent in length with district plans.

The action plan should indicate:

1. How the community is now;
2. How it want to be by the end of the period; and
3. How it intends to get from 1to 2.

It can make reference to any planned community projects; those are described below.

The action plan should be drafted by the executive committee, based on community feedback from the presented assessment. The draft action plan should then be presented to the community as a whole for refinement and approval.—Again you, as community development worker, should not present it, but facilitate so that the executive can present it. Its acceptance must be by the whole unified community.

**Project Design, Proposals, Outside Resources**

**Design a Project and Getting resources for it**

When helping the community to decide on the detail for their chosen project, you must balance the tendency to get too many other sides resources, thus encouraging dependency and sustaining poverty, in contrast to depending upon internal resources(difficult), thus becoming more empowered and self-reliant.

Remember that your job is to fight dependency, where community members come to rely on outside assistance for community improvements. Your emphasis should be on community self-reliance(where the community relies mainly on its own resources). If the community chooses an expensive project, and cannot expect to raise enough money, you must caution them to be more realistic(not to depend upon outside charity).

A proposal is a request for founds from a potential donor. The best proposal is designed like a project design, which serves to justify to the donor why it should donate funds.—the same project action plan should be the bases for submitting to higher level of government to access ceded funds.

Do not do the work of the committee, howevertempted you are. The executive must learn by doing.—Illiterates on the committee must be fully involved in its preparation, verbally, line by line.

A project design can be used as a proposal for obtaining outside funds. It must be use for getting the approval of the whole community for undertaking the project. In that sense it is still a kind of proposal. It might be required by district authority; it surely it advisable to give them a copy.

The essence of the project design, like the brainstorm, is to systematically answer The Four Key Questions, (what do we want, what do we have, how can we use what we have to get what we want, and what will happen if we do).—it is your duty , as community development worker, to go through these four key questions in detail with the executive, putting them into the relevant context, and systemize the answers into an appropriate document to be written by the executive.

When discussing resources, you will often hear executive members saying that the community does not have enough funds. There is a tendency to rely on one outside donor only.—Relying on only one source increases vulnerability, thus decreases the strength of the community. With some effort, community members can pull in resources from many and varied sources. See Resource Acquisition.

The community development worker does not dictate to the community that all these must be provided by the community.—Instead you can mention all of these, and ask the community members to identify those which the community can provide.

Sources of support can include:

* **Donations:**cash, land, building, supplies and equipment, donated by individuals who want to support their community.(Acknowledged and thanked in public meetings);
* **Commercial**:gifts from firms and businesses that want to advertise their good will and the support of the community.(Acknowledged and thanked in public meetings).
* **Communal labor:** time and labor donated by community members some unliked(clearing grass, laying bricks), some skilled (carpentry, masonry), meetings, planning, supervision.
* **Agricultural:** farmers may donate food for the project:
* **To** communal workers who are working on the projects, or
* To the executive committee the sell to raise cash for the project.
* **Foods:** people who donated for the preparing of food and refreshment to the community members on communal working days;
* **Contributions and fees:** for credit club and similarfinancial project; contribution from all members, service fees such as for obtaining water;
* **Governmental:** partial funding from central, district or local governmental sources. Sources may include district development committee participation;
* **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** local community based organizations, churches, outside NGOs working locally; and
* **Anonymous Donors:** benefactors who remain unknown.

This list is not complete. Seek suggestions in brain storming sessions with community members(not only leaders).—See**funds** for more detail about obtaining resources for community projects.

**Monitoring Arrangements**

**Knowing How We Are Doing**

When a community prepares a project design, that design should include a description of how it will be monitored. Monitoring must be an integral element of every project.

The word “monitoring” sound a bit likes technical jargon, and some of your community members might feel a threatened by your talking about it. Never fear; the idea of monitoring is very simple.—It is also important for community strengthening, and severs many purposes so long as it is an essential integrated element, not something separating which was tacked on like an afterthought. See monitoring.

Again, to get your point across, use a metaphor. The “bicycle” analogy can be useful here. Ask the group, “how many of you here know how to ride a bicycle?” We hope ansexpact at least one says yes.(if not, you will have to be hypothetical, or ask about any other activity that required sight). “yes?” Good!—“have you ever tried shutting your eyes while riding a bicycle?” “if not , can you imagine what will happen?” you can draw out a number of answers, which should indicate disaster, like running into a tree or person, going off the track, falling down.

Now say that the community is the rider; the bicycle is the project design; the ride or journey is the community project.—the project design (bicycle) will get you to where you want to go (objectives), but you must keep your eyes open (monitor your progress).

Every project, large or small, can easily go a little off track, and usually does. If it is closely and continuously monitored (watched), then it will soon go off the road, hit something, and fall down.—if it is constantly monitored, then small deviations can be quickly and easily corrected, and failure avoided.

The community must be in the driver’s seat.

Others will also want to monitor. Any external donors will want to know if their donated resources are being well used.—district officials will want to monitor for their own purposes. You will want to monitor to see how well you are strengthening the community.

The community has the greatest reasons for monitoring.—your job as community development worker to empress upon the community members the importance and simplicity of monitoring.(simple does not always mean easy).

Your job is also to guide the executive in ensuring:

1. That how monitoring is to be done by them is included in the project design;
2. That the monitoring is seen as important as the action itself;
3. The executive is committed to monitoring;
4. That the executive carries out monitoring, and
5. That the executive reports its observations to the whole community, and asks for the same back from all/ any community members.

How the community project is to be monitored should be agreed upon and understood by the executive and community, and carefully spelled out in its planning documents.

**Organizing for Action**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

A group can be organized in different ways for different purposes; look for the best organizational set-up for effective community action.

Many people do not realize the different kinds of organizing, for different purposes, done by a community development worker.

The two most important kinds are:

1. Organizing for decision making; and
2. Organizing for action

Of course these two are closely related.

When you assisted the community to form the executive committee, you were organizing for community decision making.—now, when you work with the community to decide who does what(e.g. in the project), you are organizing for action. See organizing by training.

Although there will overlap, action organizing should also identify certain individuals to carryout specific tasks. This is essential.—if a task has been identified(e.g. transport roofing sheets to the project site), it should not be left up to the group as a whole. That way it may never get done as everyone thinks it is someone else’s responsibility.

A great tasks should not fall on one person, e.g. the chairperson of executive. It is important that as many tasks and responsibility be delegated to as many other community members(especially those not on the executive) as possible.—Emphasize the value of as much and wide spread participation and contribution as possible. Make sure that when a task or responsibility is delegated to an individual, that it is well known by everyone, and if it is not completed on time, that individual can be called to account by the community.

Community action (that you facilitate) should not be spontaneous and ad hoc. It should be organized.