Community-University Capacity Building Internship Handbook

Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities

ACSRC Report Series #11-12
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Abstract

In light of the capacity concerns observed in rural Alberta, the University of Alberta – Augustana Campus devised a community-university collaborative endeavor that aims to address these issues. The purpose of this rural capacity internship is to offer rural communities a student intern who, using the knowledge and experiences they have gained through their university careers, will be able to work with a community partner/supervisor to assess the needs of the rural community. With this information, the intern can work with their community supervisor to begin to develop projects and initiatives that will address capacity issues. The intern also acts as a much-needed human resource within the community.

Because of the adaptability of the internship program and the unique nature of the needs of rural communities, outcomes produced will be different in each community following the completion of the internship. Depending on the needs of each rural community, the interests of the student interns, the outputs that are developed and the involvement of community members, each community will likely end up with a distinct set of increased capacity outcomes.
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I. Introduction

This model was created as a means of providing useful information for those interested in developing community-university capacity building collaborative partnerships. This model of collaboration focuses on the idea that by connecting universities and post-secondary students with rural communities, there is an opportunity to work together to design and implement capacity building initiatives that will help rural communities to thrive and acknowledge a future that will be both sustainable and resilient. This mutually beneficial collaborative partnership creates positive outcomes for all parties involved.

The information provided in this model is to be used as a basis for collaborative development. It is by no means exhaustive in information, and can be adapted and built upon to suit the needs of those who are hoping to collaborate on community capacity building efforts.

II. Capacity Focused Community-University Collaboration

Community-University collaboration, as the name implies, occurs when a community and a university work together with a common goal in mind. Literature suggests that such alliances can result in “significant benefits” for all parties involved, including students, the university, and the community (Savan (2004) 382; see also Chupp and Joseph (2010), Timmermans and Bouman (2005), and Jones and Pomeroy (2009)). Through collaborative efforts, universities and rural communities can work towards maintaining the resiliency and vibrancy of rural areas. The idea of collaborative capacity building recognizes that communities can benefit from having access to the wealth of research potential inherent in academic settings, while universities benefit from being able to foster engagement with their neighbouring communities. In this way, community-university partnerships work as mutually beneficial relationships.

Community-university collaboration recognizes that, in a time of funding cutbacks, it is necessary to work together and form relationships in order to provide services (Butterfield and Soska (2005) 7). This collaboration has the potential to alleviate capacity issues in the short-term in rural communities. However, the real significance of capacity-focused community-university collaboration is in its ability to impact the long-term sustainability of rural communities and organizations by connecting community partners with examples of relevant best practices and pertinent academic research. By working with community partners to identify local needs, this kind of relationship develops the community-university rapport that is necessary for successful knowledge translation (see Williams et. al (2008) 114).

Although not specifically related to service-learning, collaborative capacity building is based upon similar themes and theories as service-learning. Like in service-learning, university institutions, communities and students can work together to become “agents of social transformation” in rural areas (Chupp and Joseph (2010) 197). With community-
university collaborative capacity building, the goal is to move beyond traditional service-learning that involves “only short-term direct services or assistance” and create long-term changes to the broader knowledge base and behaviours of rural communities (Chupp and Joseph (2010) 196). Another significant parallel to service-learning is the idea that collaborative capacity building stresses the importance of making connections, creating equality among colleagues, being good neighbours and making meaningful changes that are “equitable and mutually beneficial” to all parties (Chupp and Joseph (2010) 192; 197). What cannot be stressed enough, is that although there is a need for flexibility when it comes to community-university collaboration and service-learning, the outcomes must be mutually beneficial to all parties involved. There should not be an unequal partnership amongst the parties, as this will cause a breakdown of the relationships that have been built.

III. Defining Capacity Building

Capacity building is an extremely complex term, with many different definitions and descriptions. The term can be interpreted in various ways depending on context and the beliefs of those defining the term. Capacity building is a process and can be used in the context of personal, local, regional, national or international contexts, as well as across academic fields (such as health, education and policy review) and has developed to become a term that can be used in both the broadest and most specific sense.

Keeping this in mind, it is appropriate to approach the term in such a way that is fitting for the context of rural capacity building. In regards to community-university collaborative capacity building it makes sense to use a broad definition to describe capacity building.

For the purposes of this model, capacity building will be stated as:

   Community capacity is the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community. (Chaskin 2001 295)

The development of community capacity is an intrinsic part of building resilient, sustainable rural communities. In many cases, capacity building may be defined in traditional terms as enhancing the economic vibrancy of the community, but community capacity building is much more than this. Identifying that economic wellness is not an entity unto itself, it is recognized that there is a distinct web of resources that all must be healthy in a community in order for it to be sustainable.

Simmons et al. states that, “stemming from its evolution in community development and community participation, the notion of building capacity is essentially about empowerment and sustainability” (Simmons et al. (2011) 198). By expressing their needs, community citizens become empowered to engage in a plethora of issues that they believe are affecting their community’s wellbeing. This helps to build a more sustainable
community that looks beyond the parameters of economic development. When developing ways to increase community capacity it is important to assess the needs of the entire web of community resources, which include, but are not limited to:

- Citizens – including children, youth and seniors
- Economic health
- Government health
- Volunteerism and leadership
- Human resources
- Health and wellness
- Social inclusion
- Community engagement
- Environment
- Infrastructure
- Unique opportunities or initiatives
- Access to education and healthcare
- Culture and Spirit
- Communication
- Network and links to other rural communities

Many groups are criticized for viewing “capacity building…through a deficit lens” (Simmons et al. (2011) 198), so it is necessary for a community-university collaboration to communicate the inherent value of the available resources in the community. Many of the resources discussed above are definite assets to a community, and can be used to reinforce the resiliency of the community. There is value in highlighting the areas of the community that are assets to capacity building projects, but it is also important to define the areas in the community that are lacking capacity. Some of the resources in a community are limited or non-existent, and this must be addressed in order to increase sustainability and build a resilient rural community.

IV. Specific Capacity Issues Affecting Rural Communities

Keeping in mind that capacity building across organizational and academic fields focuses on people, economy, environment and culture (to name a few) (see Section III), it is recognized that there are many similarities between these fields. The difference with rural communities is that in many instances, the survival of the community depends on solving many of their unique capacity issues. Of course, it is true that all communities face their own unique capacity concerns. However, rural communities must deal with limited resources (Eversole and Martin (2005) 693; Markey et. al (2010) 3), a lack of access to information on what other communities have done to address sustainability concerns (Markey et. al), and seemingly less and less control over decisions that affect them. We live in a world where “plans are fast-tracked, and local communities in their turn do what they can with the circumstances they have been given” (Eversole and Martin (2005) 701). Given the complexity of capacity issues, it should not be surprising that one-size-fits all solutions do not tend to work well, particularly in rural centres. In a rural
context, sustainability means building the capacity to “effectively respond to future challenges as they arise” (Davies 383).

In comparison to their more urban counterparts, rural communities struggle to secure financial and human resources. This means that, even if the community has ideas on how to deal with the issues they face, there simply might not be enough money or people to carry out the initiative. The reality can be quite discouraging. A cyclical pattern can be noticed: without the human resources to look for alternative funding sources a lack of funds prevents the hiring of additional human resources.

Though rural communities assume that they are not alone in the problems that they face, without access to information about other communities’ solutions to these challenges, it can seem as though they will have to find solutions to their problems alone. A great deal of sustainability research exists that would be relevant to rural communities if they were able to access it. Likewise, all around the country there are real-life examples of communities that have created innovative answers to their capacity problems. Finding useful information can go a long way to assisting rural communities. However,

“…information barriers associated with the rural context may simply impede the opportunity for rural planners and decision-makers to know about sustainable technologies and techniques, even if they are well proven.” (Markey et. al (2010) 15).

As a result of the complex challenges that they face, many rural communities may feel as though they have little control over their future. Whether they will even exist tomorrow seems to depend on the political beliefs of today. In this context, it is no wonder why so many rural populations struggle to create and sustain any long-term plans.

Synthesis

Those who paint a grim picture for the future of rural communities have sobering facts with which to draw their reality. Despite this, many rural Canadian communities are redefining themselves as thriving, resilient communities. Regardless of outside pressures suggesting that ‘rural’ is a thing of the past, communities have been successful in increasing capacity and developing initiatives to increase sustainability. The task at hand is sometimes overwhelming for rural communities, who often have minimal funding and little to no resources to devote towards moving beyond the evaluation stage of community sustainability. One of the great challenges for rural communities is the translation and synthesis of existing knowledge about how to be resilient and sustainable in the face of economic, social, environmental and political challenges.
V. Community-University Collaborative Rural Capacity Building

The Rural Capacity Internship Program

In light of the capacity concerns observed in rural Alberta, the University of Alberta – Augustana Campus devised a community-university collaborative endeavor that aims to address these issues. The purpose of this rural capacity internship is to offer rural communities a student intern who, using the knowledge and experiences they have gained through their university careers, will be able to work with a community partner/supervisor to assess the needs of the rural community. With this information, the intern can work with their community supervisor to begin to develop projects and initiatives that will address capacity issues. The intern also acts as a much-needed human resource within the community.

The rural capacity internship not only offers the rural community the chance to increase capacity, it also helps the student use their knowledge and skills in a real life setting. Interns are able to access many of the unique opportunities available in rural municipalities or non-profit organizations in small communities, and gain valuable work and life experience. The intern is partnered up with a community supervisor that is an expert in many areas of municipal and organizational development, and can provide the student with mentorship helping them to increase their knowledge base on the issues of rural sustainability.

In addition, this internship fills the gap between universities and communities, as well as filling gaps that may exist between rural communities. By placing students in a variety of rural communities a network is created by, not only the student interns but also inadvertently, the communities. Sharing resources, knowledge and experiences, these students and communities are able to work together to learn best practices on increasing sustainability and building a stronger, more resilient network of rural areas.

The main objectives of this model rural capacity internship are extensive and include:

- Linking communities with each other;
- Linking rural communities to existing knowledge;
- Increasing rural capacity in a variety of ways;
- Creating and increasing a presence of university students and the broader university community in rural areas;
- Creating a unique real-life experience for students; and
- Establishing the ever-growing importance of partnerships in increasing rural resiliency;

The vision of this program is one of resilient rural communities that utilize existing knowledge to enhance their sustainability through evidence-informed decisions, interventions, programs and public policies.
VI. Collaboration in Our Rural Capacity Internship

A successful internship requires the commitment and cooperation of at least three parties: the community partner, the student intern, and the university partner. The partnership between the three groups is mutually beneficial, and allows for a sense of foundation, stability and functionality of the internship.

Figure 1.0: This image is intended to show the mutual relationship that the three parties of an internship program would share. Each party brings a unique aspect to the program that benefits one another. (Adapted from Chupp and Joseph “Getting the Most Out of Service Learning: Maximizing Student, University and Community Impact” (2010) 207)
**Community Partner**

The community partner is an individual(s) from the host organization – such as a non-profit, or municipal office – that works with a student intern to plan and execute capacity building initiatives and projects in the community. In addition, they provide support and training to the intern, becoming a mentor for further learning and skill building. The community partner provides a workplace for the intern, as well as all necessary resources the intern needs to be successful.

In our internship program, each community hosts one student that is selected for the internship. Because of the nature of many rural communities, the capacity to host more than one intern is often not possible, but that may not be the case for all communities and in some instances it might be beneficial for a community to host more than one intern (it is up to the discretion of the organizing bodies of the internship).

Community partners have the support of the university partner if questions and problems arise. It is important that there is a connection between the university partner and the community partner so that the communication link is direct, rather than through a third party such as the student intern. It may be helpful for the community partner (and student intern) to receive site visits from the university partner so that any clarifications that are needed can be addressed.

**Student Intern**

The student intern is an undergraduate university student who works with the university and community partner to collaborate and develop goals and projects oriented towards community capacity building and increasing rural sustainability in a variety of ways. The student intern should be well prepared, responsible and willing to complete the work with enthusiasm. The ideal student intern is a good communicator is flexible, has the ability to adapt to changing goals. The student should also be self-motivated and be able to work independently with minimal supervision.

It is recommended that students follow the mandates of the university and reflect the goals and values that both the community and university believe in. The student interns become ambassadors for the university when they enter the rural communities, providing a link between rural areas and the university.

In our internship, each student selected for the internship has the opportunity to work one-on-one with the host community or organization. There has never been an instance where students are partnered up in the same community or with the same organization. Because of the uniqueness of each rural community, it is helpful to try to match a student, their interests and their knowledge, with a community that has similar expectations and project goals.
University Partner

The university partner will likely be the liaison for the community partner and student intern. It will be the job of the university partner to recruit both communities and students, and find suitable matches between the two. It is also helpful if the university partner defines deliverables that the student is expected to complete. The university works with the student and community partner in developing the Work Plan that helps the student meet those deliverables during the internship.

In the Rural Capacity Internship Program, the university partner plays host to a variety of events that bring together the interns and host communities to discuss the program and the desirable outcomes of the program. This helps the university to gain insight into rural issues and develop partnerships with the rural host communities and organizations. Sometimes it may be useful for the university partner to visit the intern and the community partner to discuss the specific projects and ideas that are being developed.

The university partner should also ensure that both the student and community understand their roles, and that all parties understand the collaborative nature of the initiative.

Other

Although our program has focused on the three main parties mentioned above, there is always the opportunity to include other players that may enhance the internship program. Take into consideration the needs of your specific program and identify key parties that should be involved. Perhaps partnerships beyond the intern, community partner and university partner will be required to ensure a successful program.

VII. Creating a Successful Internship

The creation of a successful internship program requires the effective collaboration of all parties involved (see Section VI). Ideally, an internship program is a mutually beneficial endeavor that is advantageous for the intern, community, and university alike. To get the full benefit the intern, community, and university must work together to address issues that arise and to communicate their own unique goals. It is important to keep in mind that community and university participants come from different backgrounds, and therefore are familiar with different work structures, budgetary timelines, and jargon. In designing an internship program, it may be useful to consider adapting the following strategies to suit your targeted objectives.

Effective Communication

Effective communication is key to a successful internship program. Each participant that enters into an internship program has his or her own expectations. Challenges may arise when the expectations of the intern do not appear to fit with the expectations of their
community supervisor or the university. Having a transparent communication process in place can ease some of these issues.

The body in charge of the selection of the interns and community partners has the responsibility to ensure that potential participants are aware of what they are agreeing to participate in. Unambiguous language should be used, as there is nothing to be gained from including participants (community or student) who expect the internship to be something that it is not. Community-university collaborations (see Section II) are naturally unpredictable. Still, efforts should be made to inform participants of the intended outcomes of the internship (see Section VIII), making sure that any changes to the original plan are shared with all.

The relationship between the intern and the community partner is most sensitive to the challenges of communication, as they will likely have the most direct contact. For the internship to be successful, the work of the intern needs to be meaningful for and understood by both the intern and for the community partner.

The Work Plan

The development of a Work Plan, early in the internship, can assist the communication process. It is advisable for the community partner and the intern to establish a guideline for the duration of the internship as soon as possible. Sending this document to the university supervisor’s guarantees that all parties are aware of the intended outcomes of the program and allows the chance for university supervisors to provide feedback and recommend possible changes, if necessary. Included in the work plan should be a specified workload, scheduling details and report and deliverable deadlines, to ensure that the student intern accomplishes all requirements prior to the end of the internship. For each objective it is useful to include important deadlines and the steps that are required to complete it. A great way to allow the intern to invest in their work is to give them a chance to have a say in the creation of the Work Plan. It is important to keep in mind that the most useful Work Plans are ones that are viewed as a working document, with the flexibility to change as the internship proceeds. A sample Work Plan is available from Appendix I.0. It may be necessary to adapt the sample to make it relevant for your intended objectives.

Deliverables

Deliverables are important as they express the intended outcomes of the internship to all parties involved. Achieving these deliverables provides concrete evidence of the success of each community’s unique objectives. No two deliverables will be exactly alike. The Augustana Campus, U of A Rural Capacity Internship deliverables included, but were not limited to:

- Presentations to council
- Policy reviews
- Video podcasting
• Policy creation
• Event planning (i.e. Youth engagement activities)
• Social media management
• Conducting research into economic development initiatives related to tourism
• Undertaking program delivery (i.e. Issues related to at-risk youth)
• Organizing local food initiatives
• Reviewing financial statements
• Reporting on ways to create welcoming and inclusive communities
• Carrying out intergenerational community engagement programming

Check Ins

In an attempt to ease the communication process, it may be useful to consider having regular check-ins with the participants. It is recommended that university staff complete at least one in-community visit to make sure that the internship is going smoothly for both the intern and the community supervisor. In addition, the university may consider having more frequent check-ins with the student interns. Depending on the distance between the host communities, and the distance between the communities and the university, it may be more practical to do these check-ins via phone, videoconferencing, or other electronic means (for example Skype). A great way to open the lines of communication is to have a meeting with all partners and interns at the very beginning of the internship. At this point the university can answer any pre-internship questions that people have and explain the intended outcomes. It is then fitting to have a similar meeting of all participants at the end of the internship to discuss the successes and challenges of the program. Check-ins, whether in person or not, can be a helpful tool to ensure that any issues are addressed quickly, before they get out of hand.

Connecting with the Community

One of the most important tasks for a community partner is to help the student intern connect with the community. Setting up meetings and helping the intern to identify the ‘movers and shakers’ in the community will ensure that the student has the opportunity to become truly invested in their internship work and host community. An intern who is able to connect with the people and the place of their internship is far more likely to go beyond their job description. The university can assist in this process by actively matching interns and community partners who share common goals (e.g. placing an economics student with a community having capacity issues with their economic development plan).

It is important the student interns know that their experience will definitely be more rewarding if they take the time to get to know the community/organization that they are working with. Investing time and energy outside of the required duties allows an opportunity for a different kind of learning. Interns should be encouraged to:

• Talk to the people that they work with, listening to their stories and experiences.
- Take advantage of informal discussions (coffee breaks with co-workers) to learn about what makes your host community/organization unique.
- Be open and willing to try new things.
- Check out local attractions and make an effort to attend community events.
- Spend some downtime in the community when they are not officially working since it is impossible to fully experience a community by sitting in an office the whole summer.

Students should be reminded that community members will appreciate their efforts to engage in local events. When the intern, community, and university make an effort to facilitate this kind of connection, innovative solutions to issues of rural capacity often result.

**Identifying Community Needs**

A challenge of the Rural Capacity Internship Program is balancing the goals and objectives of the interns, communities, and university. It can be difficult to ensure that the internship is meaningful and rewarding for everyone involved. In part, the responsibility falls on the university staff to ensure that community partners and interns know what to expect prior to agreeing to participate in the internship. However, interns and community partners must take responsibility for communicating their expectations, as well.

One way to balance these expectations is to identify the community/organization’s needs early on in the internship through a Needs Assessment (see Section IX and Appendix 1.1/1.2). Once this is done it will be easier to come up with a Work Plan (see Section IX and Appendix 1.0) that satisfies both the goals of the intern and the community partner. It is possible for the university to implement a selection process, for interns and communities that minimizes the chance of including participants that are not genuinely interested in addressing capacity issues.

**Needs Assessment**

Creating a Needs Assessment will help to identify areas in the community that are lacking capacity and will help focus the internship around building projects and initiatives based on those areas. In one of the initial meetings between the community supervisor and the intern it is important to have a conversation around community needs. Once the intern and community supervisor have completed the Needs Assessment, they can work together to create an Assessment Survey (Appendix 1.2) that can be modified to meet their specified objectives. For example, if the Needs Assessment identifies a lack of capacity to provide youth programming, it would make sense to create a survey that could be distributed to young people, their guardians, and teachers. Appendix 1.1 is an example of a Needs Assessment that can be adapted to suit requirements of each internship community and Appendix 1.2 shows an example of a needs assessment survey.
Possible Recruitment Process

As mentioned in *Identifying Community Needs*, having an appropriate selection process to recruit students and community partners is advantageous to creating a successful internship. By identifying students and communities that wholeheartedly wish to participate in the program, and understand the principles and vision that the program has, it is much more likely that the program will be successful.

Considerations made by our programs in the recruitment process include:

**Student**

Having a set of requirements and a screening process (such as an interview and reference check) is an adequate way to ensure that students are chosen that will likely be successful interns. Others include:

- Defining a minimum grade average that must be met in order to apply;
- Stating a minimum year of study that the student must have completed in order to apply (such as opening applications to senior level students, or those who have completed at least two years of undergraduate study);
- Ensuring that the student has the willingness to relocate to the host community if necessary; and
- Asking the student to include work, volunteer, education or extra-curricular related references;

**Community Partner**

Given the breadth and diversity of rural communities, it is helpful to understand that rural communities are unique and diverse. Size, demography, geography and economy are all traits that will differ between rural communities. One common misunderstanding is that a specific population size defines ‘rural’. However, rural communities fall under a variety of population sizes. Below is a guide to the diverse nature of rural population sizes:

Based on the Rural Capacity Internship, rural communities of all sizes are welcome to participate, but attempts are made to distribute participation evenly across communities of 3 different population sizes:

a. Less than 500  
b. 500-5000  
c. 5000-19,999
Capacity to support/supervise an intern

To ensure that a community is able to support an intern, here are a few examples of requirements that a community might need to meet in order to participate in the program:

- The community partner should have strong organizational skills and commitment to the vision and goals of program;
- A sufficient commitment of resources, both financial (that is, some form of financial contribution is provided by the community partner towards the program) and staff has been made;
- The community partner should be committed to providing training and professional development opportunities for the intern;
- Must be able to provide a reasonable work environment for the intern that includes:
  - Phone
  - Supervisory person
  - Assistance in locating temporary housing if necessary (administrative only)
  - Internet access
  - Office/desk space;
- A demonstrated willingness to provide training and exposure consistent with the intern’s workplan and specific goals and objectives of the host community;
- Evidence of support for superior workplace standards of conduct, including a workplace harassment policy and a current health and safety policy; and
- The community partner should be in agreement to the terms of the internship placement

VIII. Expected (Possible) Outcomes of the Internship

Because of the adaptability of the internship program and the unique nature of the needs of rural communities, outcomes produced will be different in each community following the completion of the internship. Depending on the needs of each rural community, the interests of the student interns, the outputs that are developed and the involvement of community members, each community will likely end up with a distinct set of increased capacity outcomes.

Remember when assessing the outcomes of your program that ‘outcomes’ and ‘outputs’ are distinct from one another. Outcomes include the impacts and changes that your program has made, or the benefits that your program has had on the parties involved. Outputs are the deliverables completed by the student interns that offer the potential to benefit the community. The outputs are the source from which outcomes are developed. An initiative or event hosted by the student interns can offer the community the chance to learn, change their thought process, and engage in the process of capacity building. It is possible that each output can affect change and produce outcomes. It is up to the community partners and community members to take from the outputs a new outlook on their community capacity issues and begin to make positive changes.
The purpose of any rural capacity internship program is to build capacity and increase the sustainability and resiliency of rural communities. Therefore, the ultimate outcome should be some form of built capacity in each host community. Keep in mind that when assessing the outcomes of your internship program it is important to identify short, intermediate and long-term outcomes of the program. Of course, long-term outcomes are usually assumed by using the results of the short-term and intermediate outcomes.

As assessment of past programs shows that an immediate boost in capacity is seen with the addition of an intern in the form of human capacity. By developing projects and initiatives that fit with the needs of the community, the intern is developing capacity in both the short and intermediate-term. Seeing a change in behaviour and thought processes resulting in increased viability/resiliency/sustainability of the community could result in a long-term increase in capacity.

Some specific outcomes that may be seen following the completion of a rural capacity internship are:

- Producing a better understanding of the factors that affect rural communities’ well-being and capacity through knowledge exchange and collaboration;
- Improving student and youth knowledge and experiences of rural communities, rural policy-making and community development;
- Contributing to the financial/administrative elements of policy-making capacity of smaller rural communities through increased human resources, training and knowledge synthesis, translation and exchange;
- Improved/increased uptake of federal/provincial programming by rural communities;
- Increasing the training and mentoring of future CAOs, administrators, elected officials and practitioners; and
- Fostering collaboration among rural government and decision-makers, researchers, administrators and other stakeholder around the collection synthesis and sharing of evaluated programs, policies and interventions;
IX. Appendices

1.0 Sample Work Plan

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<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Steps to Complete Task</th>
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1.1 Sample Gantt Chart

![Sample Gantt chart](image)
1.2 Sample Needs Assessment

This assessment is used as a way for the community organization to target areas of their community that are lacking in capacity, and those areas that can be used as assets to the community.

1. What do you think are some of the strengths of your community?
   - What are the aspects of your community that you are most satisfied with?
   - In what ways is your community successful in meeting the needs of community members?
   - What does your community do well?

2. What are some of the capacity challenges that your community faces?
   - Does your community have concerns regarding youth engagement and/or retention?
   - Does your community have concerns regarding senior citizens services?
   - Does your community have concerns regarding sustainable economic development?
   - Does your community have concerns regarding environmental issues?
   - What is the biggest challenge that your community deals with?

3. What do you value about your community?
   - What aspects of your community do you consider important?
   - What makes you proud of your community?
   - What aspects of your community do you value for yourself (and your family)?
1.3 Sample Needs Assessment Survey

Section 1: (Please circle the appropriate score using the following scale: 1=completely unsatisfied; 2=unsatisfied; 3=satisfied; 4=completely satisfied)

1. Availability of affordable daycare
   1 2 3 4
2. Quality of daycare centres
   1 2 3 4
3. Safety in schools
   1 2 3 4
4. Well lit streets
   1 2 3 4
5. Availability of parks and recreation
   1 2 3 4
6. Availability of employment opportunities for adults
   1 2 3 4
7. Opportunity for you and your family to make decisions that affect the community
   1 2 3 4
8. Availability of supervised after school youth activities (educational, cultural, recreational)
   1 2 3 4
9. Availability of youth employment opportunities
   1 2 3 4
10. Access to affordable housing
    1 2 3 4
11. Access to information about community resources available to residents
    1 2 3 4
12. Appearance of the community (tidy yards, public places to be proud of)
    1 2 3 4
13. Availability of small businesses in the community
    1 2 3 4
14. Opportunities available to open small businesses in the area
    1 2 3 4
15. Availability of agencies providing services to adults
    1 2 3 4
16. Availability of agencies providing services specific to youth
    1 2 3 4
17. Availability of agencies providing services specific to seniors
    1 2 3 4
Section 2: (Check all that apply)

- [ ] Activities for youth
- [ ] Employment
- [ ] Sense of community pride
- [ ] Services for seniors
- [ ] Communicating what services are available
- [ ] Services for parents
- [ ] Housing
- [ ] Religious opportunities
- [ ] Economic opportunities
- [ ] Other: (Please Specify):

Where would you like to see your community make an effort to improve?

Section 3: Short Answer

1. Name 3 things that you like about your community:

2. Name 3 things that you would change or improve in your community:

3. Name 3 ways to get people involved in your community:
VI. References

Works Cited


