

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECTS 2018



Start

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STEP 2: START

1. Why start a project in my community?

Volunteering isn't just about sharing and helping others—it's also about wanting to make a difference in a community. It's about giving back and moving society forward.

By volunteering, you're taking part in positive community change and showing interest in a cause you care about. ❤️

1.1. Getting started



A classic pitfall is to rush headlong into the implementation phase without taking the time to analyze and fully understand the community's needs.

A project idea can come from a discussion, observation, exchange, etc. It's always best when the people who will benefit from the project come up with the idea themselves.

You can find a solution to the problem by observing your community's needs.

When you're well prepared, you can be more efficient and maximize your project's success rate.

1.2. Project participants

Project leaders refers to anyone or any group of people that comes together to start, develop and implement a project, which we call a *chantier* in French. Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the project runs smoothly, which includes technical and financial responsibilities.

A project's team members can also be the project's **clients**.



It's a good idea to make sure that everyone is on the same page! When multiple parties agree on how to tackle a problem, projects will be more successful.

For example, a mycology group wants to organize a mushroom exhibit and public tasting that would raise funds for an organization fighting climate change. The mycology group is the "project leader," but it also gains visibility for its activities and contribution.

Project team members can also be a **link** between the community's needs and the clients.

For example, a local resident has noticed two problems in their town. First, they realized that an organization for local underprivileged youth needed funds. Second, they noticed a widening generational gap. So they recommend organizing a “knit-a-thon” with the local youth centre and retirement home.



The entrepreneurship projects coordinator, development officers, instructors, camp leaders, mentors and other designated coaches can support and help a project leader. However, they shouldn't replace the project leader. The project leader should always be in charge of their project.

1.3.Clients

The clients are the people who are either directly or indirectly affected by the project's improvements. More and more social development projects are targeting neighbourhood or town residents, which is where we get a lot of our examples from.

1.3.1. Identifying issues: Getting clients involved

Remember the difference between project leader, partners, camp leaders and clients!

Let's say that the project leader's goal is to organize a “knit-a-thon” to raise funds to help low-income children. The project's direct clients are the children who will benefit from the funds raised by a charity, which is a project partner. The indirect clients are the people from the youth centre and retirement home. An experienced camp leader will work toward bringing the groups closer together, which is a cause everyone can get behind.

As a project leader, you'll have to get as much help as you can to identify issues. This will help you:

- Make sure the issues are actual problems experienced by clients.
- Get a first-hand account of the situation.
- Make sure that clients will participate in the project and that they're interested in it. When clients cooperate in a project, there's a better chance that it will stand the test of time.



By holding special activities (discussion groups, awareness-raising events, surveys, etc.) clients can help identify issues and develop the project.

What's the diagnosis?

When you make a diagnosis, you collect and analyze information on a specific situation or region before recommending improvements. In this step and the planning step, it's best to use a participatory approach (involving the clients and as many partners as possible) over a traditional approach (where only a few people make decisions).

1.3.2. Working with the community: Some precautions

- Clearly introduce yourself and your plans to clients, potential partners and teammates.
- Before initiating a discussion with clients, you have to know what you want to talk about. Do some research beforehand.
- Avoid creating useless needs. If you abruptly ask people what's wrong, they'll probably give you a laundry list of low-priority issues.



Be careful not to cause frustration.

Don't lead people to believe that you'll fix everything.

Don't impose your favourite issue on the clients!

2. Make a participatory diagnosis



Don't skip this step! When doctors make the wrong diagnosis, they prescribe the wrong drugs and patients don't get better! Similarly, if you misunderstand and under-analyze the issues when developing your entrepreneurship project, its solutions won't work.

2.1.Consider the context

Look into the project's context, including all the community's social, economic, geographic, institutional and environmental features you'd like to improve. By looking into these factors, you can get more information about projects that have already been completed and your project's goals.

2.2. Identify project partners

The first question to ask yourself is: Which partners will most likely participate in this project? Take them all into consideration. You can include neighbourhood associations, professional associations, sports associations, city hall, government services, etc.

What's a partner?

An individual, group of people, association, institution or business that could have a relationship with the project.



*A project that doesn't include locals in the identification phase might not be get community **support** and **participation** during its implementation. This could even create a strong opposition.*

Partner involvement can help or hinder project implementation. This is why it's necessary to pinpoint why they're interested in the project and what they expect to get out of it.

Use the **partner chart** below to determine each partner's relationship to the project.

NAME OF PARTNER	POSSIBLE ROLE (How will the partner be involved in the project?)	REQUIRED SKILLS (What are the partner's strengths and skills in this area?)	INTERESTS AND EXPECTATIONS (What does the partner gain from participating in the project?)	RISKS (How could the partner's participation hurt the project?)

2.3. Municipalities: Worthy partners



Municipalities have expertise in many areas: education, sanitation, highway maintenance, health care, etc. Since they manage their city or town, they should be able to give you insight on your project. Some of them have specific development plans, so you should be able to work in one of their priority areas.

2.4. What about you?

Don't forget to define your role!

Describe why you're interested in the project and your skills. Do you have the experience, interpersonal savvy and technical skills needed to carry out this project?

You can't be a jack of all trades! Refer to step 1 in the entrepreneur's journey!

You need one basic skill: the ability to **rally** experienced stakeholders behind your project.

3. Analyzing problems and finding solutions



Your project aims to tackle a problem experienced by your clients. To find the right solutions, you'll have to analyze the issue. This means considering all its causes and consequences.

You can easily organize a problem analysis session during an activity with locals or clients. You probably already have solutions in mind, but don't bring them up. Give yourself the time to listen to participants' responses. Encourage them to come up with new ideas during discussions!

Step 1: Define the question you want to address.

Step 2: State the problem.

Step 3: Identify the causes.

Step 4: Identify the consequences.

Assess each problem identified with this three-column table (causes, consequences and potential solutions).



Here's an example of neighbourhood residents not following the garbage collection rules.

Causes	Consequences	Potential solutions
<p>Residents leave garbage bags in the street without following the collection schedule.</p> <p>Underprivileged people open the bags to search through them, leaving them open.</p> <p>Squirrels and cats get into the bags.</p> <p>Neighbourhood residents aren't aware of the problems that can arise when they don't follow the garbage collection rules.</p>	<p>There's increased garbage in the streets, sidewalks, yards and alleys.</p> <p>The neighbourhood looks run-down.</p>	<p>Get the underprivileged involved by creating a reward system for picking up garbage, making the neighbourhood more environmentally friendly.</p> <p>Hold a litter clean-up contest with the youth centre.</p> <p>Install garbage cans in the neighbourhood with the municipality's support.</p>



Remember the difference between problems, causes and consequences

The problem is an unsatisfactory situation you want to fix. The cause is the root of the problem. The consequence is the impact created by the problem.

Remember the difference between problems and potential solutions

Don't impose your solutions onto the analysis.

4. Project goals

4.1. Setting project goals

What's a project goal?

It's your project's desired outcome.

Overall goal: This refers how the project will improve the situation overall, usually on the national or local level.

Specific goal: This refers to a tangible improvement generated by your project. It's different from the overall goal in that it's a specific outcome you want to achieve using the resources allocated in a given period.



Features of a good specific goal that's...

Your goal should be:

Specific: It corresponds to one idea (*e.g., the goal can't involve both nutrition and literacy*). Choose what you want to focus on (*e.g., improving children's living conditions is an overall goal; teaching them how to read is a specific goal*).

Measurable: It's quantifiable so that you can follow up and assess your progress (*e.g., 300 kids have learned how to read, 80 people have been accompanied on public transit*).

Achievable: It's easily achieved and not ambitious (*e.g., we can only give knitting classes to the women signed up at the women's centre, not every woman in town*).

Realistic: It uses resources that are easily available (*e.g., if you want to hold a training session outside the city, make sure participants can get there*).

Scheduled: It can be achieved according to a set timeframe (*e.g., by spreading out sewing lessons over a year, participants will learn enough to find a job in the industry*).

So, in our example about the neighbourhood garbage problem:

The project's **overall goal** is to improve the neighbourhood's sanitation conditions.

The project's **specific goal** is to sustainably eliminate garbage accumulation in the neighbourhood's streets within a year.

4.2. Here's another SMART goal example

Problem:

- St-Loin-des-Coteaux's youth aren't taking classes offered in Région des Montagnes.

Cause:

- There isn't any public transit in Coteaux's regional county municipality (9,000 residents).

Consequence:

- Young people aren't involved in the community.

SMART goal:

- By June 2019, set up a carpooling network for 100 students from St-Loin-des-Coteaux. This will help them get to the two neighbouring regional county municipalities, where computer graphics and industrial design classes will be offered (as of September 2019).



Use your problem analysis from page 8. By transforming your problem into a solution, you'll have your project's goal.

4.3. Defining your specific goals

Problem	Solution	Goal
A lot of young people are unemployed because they don't have the necessary training.	Get them vocational training and support them in their job search.	Help 50 young people from X town by training them in masonry, welding and renovation management.





Use the **imperative** when writing your goals, it will make them look more professional.

4.4. Choosing a strategy

When you choose a strategy, you're choosing the best approach.

To avoid traffic jams, it's better to leave later and avoid the highway, which you normally take. This way, you'll save time and stress. Your strategy was to choose the best option.

What's a strategy?

An action plan designed to reach a goal.



A good project requires lots of trial and error!

4.5. Tweaking your project implementation

When you get into the weeds of your project's activities, finances, and technical and human resources (see *Step 3: Plan*), you might realize that your initial strategy won't work.

4.6. Use local knowledge and expertise

Don't forget that community residents have already tried to solve their issues. Their solutions aren't always perfect, but they can help you figure out new ones. You don't always have to start at square one!

Parents with children enrolled in a sporting activity carpool because there isn't any public transit in their town. One of the parents working in a neighbouring town also occasionally offers rides.

You have to take a lot of variables into account when you develop your strategy.



Watch out for easy solutions. *If they haven't been tested yet, it might be because there are hidden obstacles you still haven't thought of.*



4.7. Weighing the pros and cons of each solution

For this exercise, use our real-life example of an association for disabled people to build a **strategy analysis table**.

An association wants to start a project to help physically disabled youth enter the workforce. The diagnosis showed that because they don't have access to training, they can't get work. Employers are skeptical and think that they can't work. And because they don't have resources, disabled people can't participate in income-generating activities without help. Here are several strategic solutions to help them find work.

Strategy	Pros	Cons
1 Set up internships for disabled youth.	Can lead to job offers On-the-job training at a low cost Good preparation for entering the workforce	Young people aren't motivated by internships Employers don't want to train young people Young people get easily discouraged Youth are often unemployed after completion
2 Provide young people with micro-loans to help them start income-generating activities.	Empowerment Independence Challenging, particularly over time	High failure rate Loans are hard to pay back Debt
3 Educate businesses about how disabled youth can contribute through their skills and advocate for their employment.	Lower costs Helps break taboos and biases against disabled people Helps change people's mentalities	Motivation is short lived It's difficult to raise awareness



Be innovative and creative.

Don't start a project to grow produce just because your neighbour did.