Community Action Resources
for Inuit, Métis and First Nations

Assessing Needs

Evaluating

Planning

Toolbox

Making it Happen

Finding Resources

Planning

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE KIT

When asked "What is a community?", Aboriginal people often answer "A community is a group of people sharing and caring."

This series of manuals is about just that: sharing information and skills to empower people so they can better care for their communities.

Training in community development and program evaluation has been identified by Health Canada and by national Aboriginal organizations as a priority need.

In order to fulfil this need, training workshops were offered between 1993 and 1995 to approximately 300 Aboriginal people across Canada, most of them front-line health workers. The training was based on a generic package of resources on health promotion and community development called the *Community Action Pack*.

Experience and feedback received from the participants during the workshops and after they returned to their communities led to the development of this new kit.

Community Action Resources for Inuit, Métis and First Nations was developed specifically for Aboriginal people, taking into consideration their values, culture and way of life.

This kit is a self-help tool for Aboriginal people who want to get a community development project off the ground.

The series of six manuals contains information, tips, examples and ready-to-use charts that you can copy and use for yourself or to train others in your community. It is intended to be user-friendly, emphasizing questions such as what, why, when and how to accomplish the different steps of a community development project.

Community Action Resources for Inuit, Métis and First Nations uses a holistic approach, taking into consideration community development know-how and context as well as the human aspects that are part of the entire process.
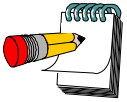
Look for the following symbols.
They will help you apply your skills
and knowledge.

	tips

	examples

	exercises

What is a community?

Let's take a moment to think about the word "community". Communities are not just a question of geography. People in a volley-ball league can be a community. A support group can be a community. Members of a church can be a community. Communities are people with something in common, something that is important to them. The members of a community depend on each other as they work together to accomplish challenging tasks. A community can be seen as a group of people:

- living in the same geographical area;

- sharing the same culture;

- with a common interest or concern; or

- with a shared sense of identity.

Add to or comment on this definition. What is a community to you?
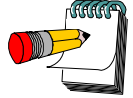
Community development: making communities healthier

The World Health Organization and Health Canada have defined health as more than the absence of illness and disease. Health is a sense or state of physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Health is an individual or group's ability to reach goals, to satisfy needs, and to cope with or change their environment. In a community context, it is the ability of a community to sustain itself in a caring and fulfilling way. In other words, health means looking after ourselves and others. It is promoted through having access to services appropriate to our needs. It is enhanced by living in a clean environment and by a spirit of community (feeling part of a group of people who care about each other).

This means that groups that are concerned with the kind of housing available in their community, reducing violence, developing the local economy or starting a self-help group for bereaved parents can be seen as improving and promoting the health of their community.

A step-by-step process

Is there a secret to turning a good idea into a successful project? Actually, there is no secret. Groups follow different paths to action, yet experience shows that successful efforts use some "tried and true" steps.

Most groups go through the steps of identifying needs, planning activities, finding volunteers and funding, evaluating and helping people work together through the normal ups and downs of an activity. *Community Action Resources for Inuit, Métis and First Nations* is built around these steps.

Starting a new activity is like planning a trip to a place you have never been.

Just as you need a map for your trip, you also need a map for your community activity. This map will help you figure out where you are, what has been accomplished, and point out what still needs to be done.

The following diagram is your map to the steps for community action that is described in *Community Action Resources for Inuit, Métis and First Nations*. Each circle represents a step in the process of developing an activity.

The interpersonal aspects of community action and the techniques needed to carry out a project, such as taking minutes in meetings, have been gathered together in the "Toolbox". This circle has been placed in the middle of the diagram because the "Toolbox" can be useful in all steps of the process.

ASSESSING
NEEDS

EVALUATING

TOOLBOX

PLANNING

MAKING IT
HAPPEN

FINDING
RESOURCES
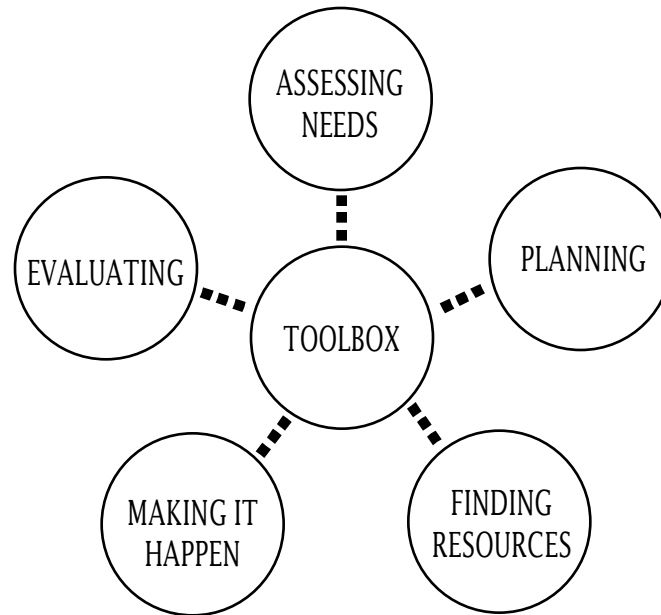
It is important to remember that every group follows its own path, which may be different from the one shown here. There is no absolute "right" way of doing things. You need to go with what works best for you.

The process described in *Community Action Resources for Inuit, Métis and First Nations* is intended to help you plan activities, not to tell you what to do. The diagram is like a map and you can take as many side trips as you like. There are no rules!

I. INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING

Planning – a step toward success

"Planning" can scare some people. Yet planning is an everyday activity. We all make plans. For example, to get somewhere, we plan an itinerary, and before going to the grocery store, we make a list.

Planning a community project can seem complex. Yet a structured and rigorous approach allows you to plan for SUCCESS.

Step by step

Planning is a structured step by step process. The steps can be determined and controlled in order to reach goals. This ensures that everything is in place to guarantee the success of a project.

Training goals

The goals are used to raise awareness of the importance of planning, the steps to achieve it and its concrete application.

Objectives

At the end of this training, you should be able to:

* understand the importance of planning and the consequences of not planning;
* put together a plan for a community program; and
* design and use planning tools.

Approach

Planning is viewed as a structured process that allows you to reflect and make good decisions. It is also viewed as a management tool for individuals, groups and organizations, whatever their size or the complexity of their operations. Without planning, you sail aimlessly without landmarks and risk running aground at any time.

II. WHAT IS PLANNING?

Definitions

Planning is a method of organizing for success. It is examining where you are now, deciding where you would like to be within a certain time and taking the necessary steps in getting there.

Planning is reflecting and deciding in advance what to do, how to do it, when to do it and who does what.

You wake up and it's 8:00 a.m. You have a 9:30 a.m. appointment with the nurse for a blood test.

In the right-hand column, write the activities in the order you have to do them.

Breakfast	( )
Get dressed	( )
Get washed	( )
Get up	( )
Leave for the nurse's office at 9:15 a.m.	( )
Get a blood test	( )
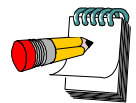
What did you do in this exercise?
You planned. You reflected and decided on:

• your objective
• how to move forward
• when to do it
• who will do it.

Who plans?

Everyone plans! It is part of daily life. Planning means investing financial resources, time and energy in the organization of activities in order to reach a goal.

To be most effective, no single person should be responsible for the planning processes of an organization, association or society. Nevertheless, you can choose a group coordinator. It is a good idea to bring together a team composed of the following kinds of people:

- people who have assessed needs;

- staff;

- outside resource people;

- people who will work on the project; and

- people who will be affected by the project.

Bringing together this kind of team ensures that planning will be consistent with targeted needs and results.
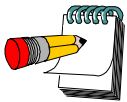
Think about bringing together a planning team for your project. Write down the names of people who could be part of it:

-

-

-

-

Two levels of planning

There are two levels of planning:

a) short-term planning

    Short-term planning focuses on one year (or an even shorter time frame). It must be operational or, in other words, identify specific qualitative and quantitative results.

b) long-term planning

    The organization orients its activities and sets objectives to be achieved over a period of two to three years. This is orientation or strategic planning.
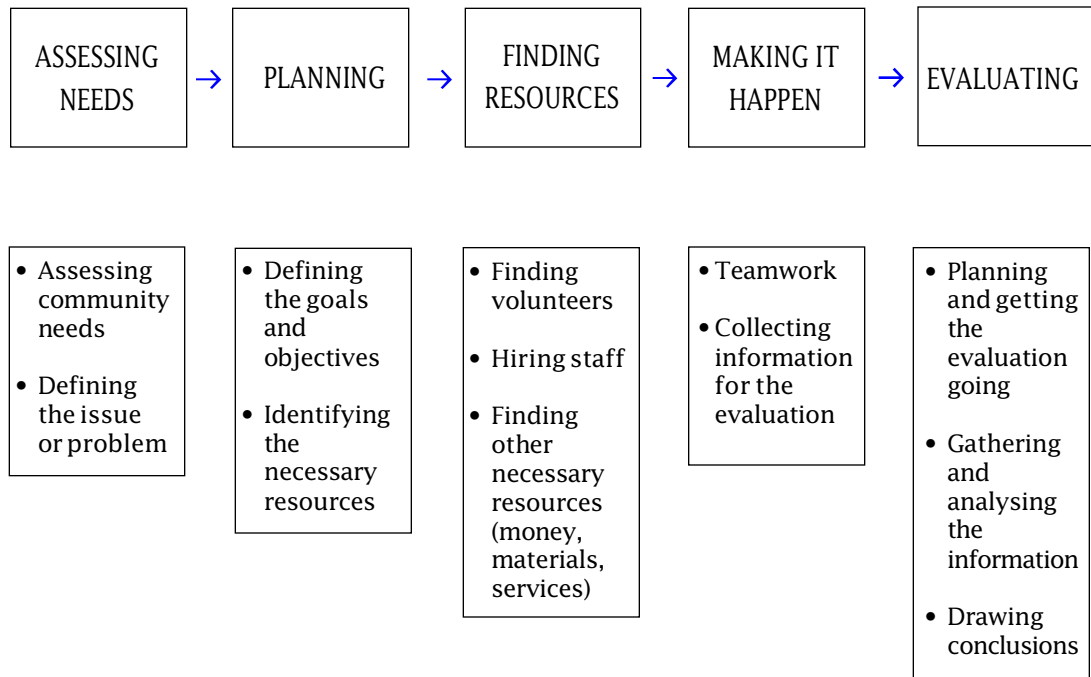
    These two levels of planning are included in the planning process described in this training.

Planning in the life of a program

Planning is the step that follows assessing community needs. Good planning ensures your project will go well. The following diagram demonstrates the importance of planning in the management of a community action project.

ASSESSING NEEDS	→	PLANNING	→	FINDING RESOURCES	→	MAKING IT HAPPEN	→	EVALUATING

• Assessing community needs • Defining the issue or problem	• Defining the goals and objectives • Identifying the necessary resources	• Finding volunteers • Hiring staff • Finding other necessary resources (money, materials, services)	• Teamwork • Collecting information for the evaluation	• Planning and getting the evaluation going • Gathering and analysing the information • Drawing conclusions

Remember

Planning is identifying:

?

> Where are we?
>
> • creating an atmosphere of trust
> • analysing the situation

?

> Where do we want to go?
>
> • What is our potential?
> • Who are we?

?

> How can we achieve it?
>
> • priorities, goals, objectives

?

> With what means?
>
> • steps to take?
> • opportunities?
> • workplan?

?

> Have our efforts been successful?
>
> • monitoring the progress
> • evaluating the results

III. WHY PLAN?

Since planning is a structured process, it provides you with a system for all community action projects. It is an integral part of your work.

Planning can help:

- organize your activities so they are consistent with the priorities you have set;

- reduce the margin of error;

- prepare for change;

- get the best out of your resources at the most appropriate time;

- create an atmosphere of trust and security;

- ensure follow-up, even when the people who work on the project change;

- create a solid base for your project; and

- your project succeed.

IV. HOW TO PLAN?

Planning is a structured process comprising six steps:

- formulating your mandate;

- developing your strategy;

- establishing long-term goals;

- establishing short-term objectives;

- determining how the impact of the processes and activities will be measured; and

- producing a workplan.

Each step has precise objectives. The diagram on the following page gives a general idea of the tasks to be accomplished.

It is important to take the six steps into account during the planning phase of your project. You can tackle the steps in the order that best suits you.

Note:

The first two steps of the process involve tasks that can be given to small working groups. The other steps must be carried out by the planning group.
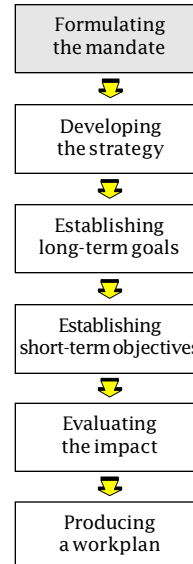
Planning process

Formulating
the mandate

What are the role, services, clientele and strengths of your organization?

Developing
the strategy

What needs do you want to respond to?
What are your organization's fields of interest?

Establishing
long-term goals

What do you want to accomplish?
What changes are you aiming for?

Establishing
short-term
objectives

What specific and measurable results do you want to achieve?

Evaluating
the impact

How will you know if the objectives have been met?
What impact are you hoping for?

Producing
a workplan

Who will do what, when, how, with whom, with what, etc.?

The following pages examine each step of the planning process in detail.

Formulating the mandate

Understanding the present helps you plan for the future. All serious planning is based on an analysis of the organization's current state.

Formulating the mandate

↓

Developing the strategy

↓

Establishing long-term goals

↓

Establishing short-term objectives

↓

Evaluating the impact

↓

Producing a workplan

In order to paint a current picture of your organization, take a few minutes to answer these questions:

- What is the role of your organization?

- What are your main services and products?

- Who are your most important clients?

- What makes your group unique?

- What are the advantages of your services and products?

The answers to these questions will help you obtain an overview of the state of your organization.
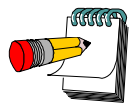
The state of your organization

To analyse the current situation, you may have to gather data on your organization's members. You can use the following methods for surveying: questionnaires, meetings and interviews. These methods were examined in detail in the manual entitled "Assessing Needs".

If you decide to use a questionnaire, the control list provided below will help you obtain good results.

1. State the questionnaire's goal.

2. Indicate the return date.

3. Start with general questions (e.g., name, address, telephone number).

4. Start by asking easy questions.

5. Categorize questions by themes or objectives.

6. Ask questions about the current state before you ask about the future.

7. Give all the information that is needed to answer the questions.

8. Vary the formulation of the questions.

9. Add a brief introduction if the question is difficult.

10. Foresee questions about the workplan and relevant issues.

11. Provide space for answers and extra comments.

12. Avoid questions that are too vague.

13. Test your questions.

14. Finish on an optimistic note.

15. Include a pre-stamped and self-addressed envelope.

Your mandate

Once you have information about the current state of your organization, you will be well prepared to create a mandate or review an existing one to see if it is still valid.

The mandate contains precise terms adopted by the organization's members to justify its existence. It describes its function or its reason for being.

In other words, the mandate
describes the organization's mission.

Here are two examples of mandates:

• To gather funding from commercial companies to give disabled
children the special services they need.

• To enrich the life of elderly people by providing them with a meeting
place and appropriate activities.

Examples
to help you
understand

If you want to check the accuracy
and validity of your organization's
mandate, you can ask your members
the following questions:

• Does our mandate describe what
we are accomplishing?

• Which parts of the mandate are
still valid for our organization?

• Which parts are no longer valid?

Activities should correspond to the
mandate and not the other way
around.

Take a few minutes to answer these questions. Do you think your mandate
needs to be reformulated? If so, start by taking notes on the ideas it should
contain. Writing the mandate is the next step in this manual.
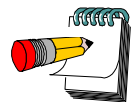
If you do not have a mandate, ask
your members during a meeting or
through a survey to describe in one
sentence why the organization
exists. Then organize the results so
the statements describe what you
do and what you represent. A
mandate is not a slogan, but an
exact description of your
organization's reason for being.

This list of questions will help you write or revise your mandate:

• Does your statement start with a verb?

• Is it simple and clear?

• Does it describe "what" and "how"?

• Does it conform to reality?

• Does it precisely describe what your association is and what it does?

• Does it take all the members into account?

• Does it leave room for growth and development?

• Does it consist of a single sentence?
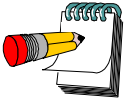
As you have no doubt noticed, a mandate constitutes a rallying cry to begin planning. Try to write down your organization's mandate. To help you, use the list of questions provided above.
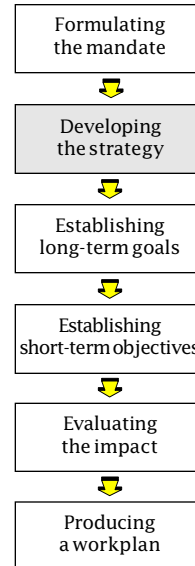
Developing the strategy

Now that you know your organization's mandate, you will be able to set priorities for activities, programs and projects.

Elaborating your strategy involves identifying:

- your members' fields of interest;
- the needs to be fulfilled and desired changes;
- the obstacles to be overcome; and
- the chance of success.

```
┌─────────────────┐
│  Formulating    │
│  the mandate    │
└─────────────────┘
        ⬇
┌─────────────────┐
│  Developing     │
│  the strategy   │
└─────────────────┘
        ⬇
┌─────────────────┐
│  Establishing   │
│ long-term goals │
└─────────────────┘
        ⬇
┌──────────────────┐
│   Establishing   │
│short-term objectives│
└──────────────────┘
        ⬇
┌─────────────────┐
│  Evaluating     │
│  the impact     │
└─────────────────┘
        ⬇
┌─────────────────┐
│  Producing      │
│  a workplan     │
└─────────────────┘
```

The members' attention is focused by identifying fields of interest. These are the zones of commitment that require everyone's cooperation if the results are to be satisfying.

In an athletic association, the fields of interest could be:

- train the trainers
- organize matches
- determine regulations and roles of officials.

Examples
to help you
understand

Your organization's fields of interest are probably associated with programs, issues and problems to be solved.

To identify needs and desired changes, re-examine the results of your needs assessment. Relying on the group's mandate and its fields of interest makes it much easier to decide which needs, concerns or problems deserve attention.
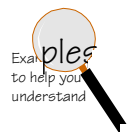
Identifying obstacles that must be overcome and evaluating your chance of success means your group is paying attention to everything that could influence the project. The group should decide where to concentrate its efforts or, in other words, what constitutes your project's strategic points. After deciding how to tackle these points, you might even need to reformulate your mandate.
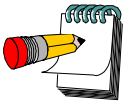
Think about your organization. Identify the fields of interest that you must take into account in your planning process. List four or five of them.

-
-
-
-

With reference to your organization's mandate and its fields of interest, identify which of the changes targeted in your needs assessment you would keep. List three or four of them.

-
-
-
-

Based on the knowledge you have of your group, your project and the way your community functions, identify two to three obstacles that your group might encounter and how you plan to overcome them.

Obstacles	Solutions
•	•
•	•
•	•

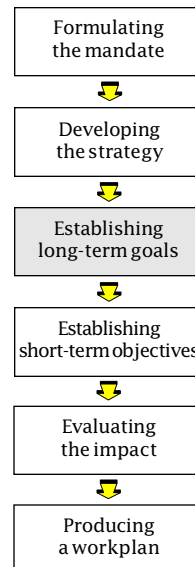## Establishing long-term goals

The steps of the planning process have not yet required teamwork. The next step is better suited to a workshop that brings all of the members of the planning group together.

Identifying priorities

Establishing long-term goals means priorities must first be set. This task allows your organization to specify the importance that it places on what it is now accomplishing and what it will accomplish in the future, given its human and financial resources. You express your statement of purpose when you determine your priorities.

How to identify priorities

There are several ways to identify priorities, but they all require that you consult as many members of your organization as possible. This consultation can be carried out by the planning group.

| Formulating the mandate |
| Developing the strategy |
| Establishing long-term goals |
| Establishing short-term objectives |
| Evaluating the impact |
| Producing a workplan |

It should allow you to identify:

- what works well;
- what needs to be improved; and
- the results expected in a few years' time.

Based on these elements, you can give priority to activities in order to:

- obtain desired results;
- maintain the quality of what already works well; and
- improve the quality of what does not work as well.

Here are some tips to help you gather suggestions during your consultations:

- Use the "brainstorming" method. Get ideas down on paper as they come up, without judging or interpreting.

- When you don't have much time, divide the questions among the different groups. Each group starts by tackling a different point, so that when time runs out, all the questions will have been dealt with.

- Use a data-gathering tool during the workshops, such as the consultation form model outlined below.

Consultation form model

Field of interest: _____

Names of participants: _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

- What works well in this area of planning?

  -
  -
  -
  -

- What needs to be improved?

  -
  -
  -
  -

- Imagine that two years have elapsed and, as a result of our planning operation, our association has attained its objectives and resolved its problems without difficulty. Describe the situation as you see it.

- In light of the answers that you have just given to the three preceding questions and your experience within the organization, indicate your priorities in the area of planning and list the first six in order of importance (from the first to the sixth).

    1.

    2.

    3.

    4.

    5.

    6.
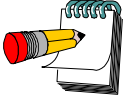
Think about your organization and choose one of the fields of interest that you identified in the preceding exercise. Try to answer the following questions:

- What works well in this area (3-4 elements)?

  -
  -
  -
  -

- What needs to be improved (3-4 elements)?

  -
  -
  -
  -

- Imagine that two years have elapsed and your objectives have been reached. Describe the situation as you see it.

- In light of these answers, indicate your project's priorities in order of importance (4 priorities).

  1.
  2.
  3.
  4.

How to define goals

You must transform priorities into goals. They explain your project's purpose and reflect the strategic points identified as priorities.

Here are examples of statement of goals:

- to improve the quality of training
- to reach a wider audience
- to increase our funds.

You will notice that a goal is:

- a general statement
- a targeted result
- easily understandable
- a reflection of everyone's intention.

Examples to help you understand

To help you transform your priorities into goals, you can use the following process:

Defining goals	
What to do?	How?
1. For each field of interest, identify three to four priorities to be attained over the next three to four years.	Workshop of the planning group divided into sub-groups according to the field of interest.
2. Provide participants with examples of statements of goals.	See examples on this page.
3. Ask them to draft goals that correspond to each priority.	Instructions: The goal must start with an action verb in the infinitive.
4. If necessary, use a data-gathering tool.	See model on following page.

Goals identification model	
Field of interest: _____	
Participants: _____ _____	
_____ _____	
Priorities	**Corresponding goal**
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

In the preceding exercise, you identified your organization's four priorities. Now draft the corresponding goals.

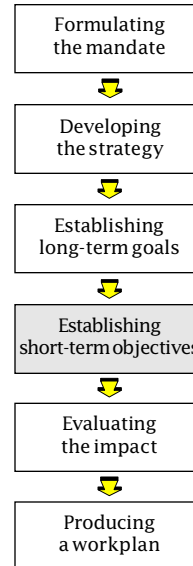| Priorities	Goals
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
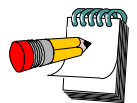
Establishing short-term objectives

For this step, you should ask "Where do you want to go?" This does not mean re-examining your organization's mission. It means specifying the results you seek in a given time or, in other words, your short-term objectives.

What is an objective?

Objectives are the specific and measurable results you wish to achieve. They are detailed and fit in a short time frame. They provide a thorough description of the changes that your project or plan targets over the long term. They must be closely related to your goals, so when you achieve your objectives, you also reach your goals.

Formulating
the mandate

Developing
the strategy

Establishing
long-term goals

Establishing
short-term objectives

Evaluating
the impact

Producing
a workplan

Objectives also contain infinitive verbs. They specifically describe:

- what you want to accomplish;
- what will be done;
- how it will be done; and
- when it will be finished.

Here are some examples of objectives:

In the coming year, give six lectures on Aboriginal role models and their accomplishments.

Convince half the smokers in your community to participate in a "quit-for-a-day" special challenge.

Distribute a fact sheet on adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse to a specific district or region.

You can see that these objectives are:
- specific
- realistic
- measurable.

Take a few minutes to write down two to three objectives with the following goal. To improve the quality of training for our club's hockey players.
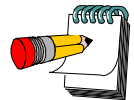
Objectives:
-
-
-

Your objectives should describe:
- the desired result
- what you are going to do
- how you are going to do it
- when you will finish.

They must be specific, understandable, realistic, measurable and stimulating.

Here is a tip to help you check if your objectives are well formulated:
When you write your objectives, make sure you clearly state:
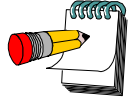- what
- how
- when.

How to identify specific objectives?

To identify your organization's specific objectives, divide the planning group into subgroups according to fields of interest and complete the following tool in workshops:

Field of interest: _____
Goal: _____

Corresponding objectives			
1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year

Take a few minutes to describe some of your organization's objectives. To do this exercise, refer to one of the goals defined in the previous exercise and complete the following chart by:

- identifying one of your organization's goals (refer to the preceding exercise); and
- writing two to three objectives which you will achieve over the first and second year and which correspond to your goal.

Your organization's goal : _____

Corresponding objectives	
1st year	2nd year
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

• Do your objectives start with an infinitive verb?
• Do they describe what you want to do?
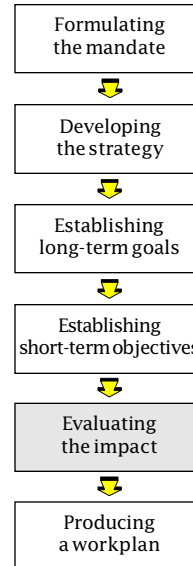
Evaluating the impact

Once you have defined your objectives, how will you know when you have achieved them? To evaluate their impact, the objectives must be measurable.

You have to ask yourself:

- When will the follow-up be done?

- How will it be done?

A follow-up will indicate if there are gaps between what you expect and what really happens to ensure results are attained. A follow-up allows for any necessary adjustments.

This step in the project planning process determines when and how the follow-up will be carried out during the development of the project.

Formulating
the mandate

Developing
the strategy

Establishing
long-term goals

Establishing
short-term objectives

Evaluating
the impact

Producing
a workplan

A workplan is not complete unless it anticipates control points at different intervals during the project. You must follow the progress of the actions and evaluate the results.

| Objectives	Follow-up
In the coming year, give six lectures on Aboriginal role models and their accomplishments.	Using a very simple questionnaire, ask people short questions such as: "Which sport do you associate Kim Awashish with?" "Is Kay Linklater a painter, a sculptor or a singer?"
Convince half the smokers in your community to participate in a "quit-for-a-day" special challenge.	Conduct a telephone survey in your community to evaluate the proportion of smokers who successfully took the challenge to quit smoking for a day.
Distribute a brochure on adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse to a specific district or region.	Have the health worker ask each adult he or she sees over a three-week period: • if they received the brochure • if they read it • what they think about it.

You will note that the follow-up tool is simple and lets you measure the impact of the action.

As part of project planning, you can start thinking about the importance of following up on your results. It will help if you refer to the objectives you drafted in the previous exercise. Select one of these objectives and state when and how you will follow it up.

My objective:

When I will follow it up:
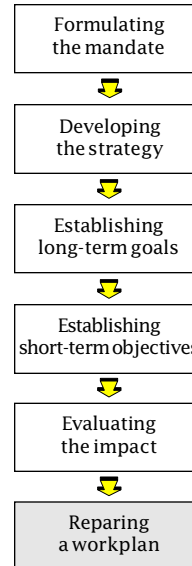

How I will follow it up:
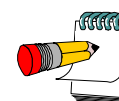
Preparing a workplan

At this point, the following
questions need to be answered:

- How should you proceed?
- When should you act?
- Who will accomplish what?

This involves identifying the means,
timetables, operations and people
in charge. This is a short-term
planning activity because you
define individual tasks that allow
you to reach objectives.

Formulating the mandate
Developing the strategy
Establishing long-term goals
Establishing short-term objectives
Evaluating the impact
Reparing a workplan

How to prepare a workplan

You must first determine how to
achieve each objective. You should
list them and then determine their
logical sequence.

Examples
to help you
understand

Here is an example:

You want to organize an annual event to honour two Elders. You hope to raise at least $500 to buy them a gift.

Your project involves several activities. First, you will have to list all of the activities that will let you complete your project (what):

- print the invitations
- find volunteer musicians
- reserve the hall
- get help from collaborators
- find speakers to talk about the most important events in the life of each of the Elders
- set a date
- write the invitation
- distribute the invitations
- buy gifts
- etc.

Next, you need to determine the logical sequence of activities:

1. get help from collaborators
2. set a date
3. reserve the hall
4. find volunteer musicians
5. write the invitation
6. print the invitation
7. hand out invitations
8. find speakers to talk about the most important events in the life of each of the Elders
9. buy gifts
10. etc.

Once you have determined "what", you have figured out how to carry out your project. This step consists of defining who does what and when.
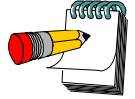
Activities (What)	Person in charge (Who)	Timetable (When)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

Once you have identified "who", you have figured out who is in charge of each activity and divided the tasks among the different participants. Once you have identifed "when", you know the date when the activity should end and the amount of time that will be devoted to it.

Take a few minutes to think of one of the objectives of your community project and list what you need to do to achieve it.
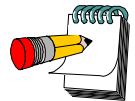
My objective is: _____

The list of operations (4-5) is:

-

-

-

-

-

Place these operations in a logical sequence. Complete the following chart:

Means (What)	Person in charge (Who)	Timetable (When)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Once this chart has been completed,
ask the following questions:

- Is each operation directly linked
  to the targeted objective (what)?

- Does each operation correspond
  to a specific task?

- Is the person in charge capable
  of fulfilling this task?

- Is the timetable realistic?

Positive answers to these questions will ensure the success of your
workplan.

Make sure you describe only the operations that are linked to the
first-year objectives. Most forecasts that extend beyond 12 months will
not be applicable when the time comes.