

Project Planning Worksheets

Step 1: Identification

Identify Sustainability Challenges

I will be moving to a new school (American School of Dubai) in August. In attempting to determine the direction I will take with regard to Service Learning I will need to determine the mindsets, structures and patterns of behavior that underlie the schools culture as well as identify appropriate direction.

Why is this important to you?

I am being brought in as, I believe, the first K-12 Service Learning Coordinator of the school. Given natural divisions it is important to recognize early the underlying structures, stakeholders, etc. who will be part of the dynamics of changing the "ethos" of the school.

What other issues is your central challenge connected to?

I am being brought into the school as an external "expert" in ensuring appropriate action-based direction for the school. I am told that the school is "on board" but it is hard to imagine that every member of the community is equally engaged and committed. Moving forward will largely depend on the manner by which change is handled to ensure general 'buy in' and sustainable presence.

Step 2: Setting Your Project System Change Goals & Outcomes!

Now that you are inspired, informed, and have developed a clear focus for what you want to achieve, you can decide how to take action.

First, define your project by setting goals. Next, come up with an effective action plan to make your goals materialize.

Setting Smart Goals

Good goals are the key to great projects

- S** pecific - Answers the six "W"s: "Who," "What," "Where," "When," "Which," "Why"
- M** easurable - Concrete criteria to measure progress helps you stay on track
- A** ttainable - Visualize yourself achieving your goals. As you grow and develop, your goals become more attainable.
- R** ealistic - You must be both able and willing to work towards your goals. Your goal is probably realistic if you really believe it can be accomplished.
- T** angible - If you can see or feel the end product, it becomes more measurable and easier to attain

What is your specific goal do you want to achieve?

Goal Statement:

Implementing a robust and meaningful K-12 service learning program at the American School of Dubai.

Example project Goal:

"To implement systems thinking in the curriculum K-12."

What would be some possible outcomes if your project is successful in achieving your goals?

- The understanding of that service learning mission at ASD.
- A visual framework linking service learning experiences (e.g. concept map).
- A list of indicators representing appropriate service learning in the ASD context.
- A systematic system of supporting teachers with service learning.
- A framework and set of tools intended for moving service learning forward.
- Data related to the utilization and outcomes of service learning at ASD.

Project Idea Description (how it will work, what should happen, etc.)

A structure that will allow faculty and staff to:

- ***Identify elements of “good” service learning***
- ***Be supported in initiating and expanding service learning experiences***
- ***Be trained in service learning***
- ***Utilize key tools (eg. Compass) in address service learning projects***
- ***Demonstrate their successes***
- ***Have a forum of communication related to sustainability & service learning***

Step 4: Identifying Possible Barriers and/or Challenges to my Project Idea

Think about possible barriers and challenges that you will have to overcome to get your project launched and successfully implemented.

Overcoming Challenges

You may encounter challenges, or unexpected outcomes, as you carry out your action plan. This is normal! If you are working in a group, bring your entire team together to review the project and reflect on the situation.

To deal with a challenging situation, you must first **understand** the problem. After you have gathered enough information to understand your problem, you can try and **brainstorm** solutions. Once you **choose** the best problem solving strategy, and give it a try, you can **evaluate** the outcome. Did your strategy work?

POSSIBLE BARRIERS / CHALLENGE	HOW CAN I OVERCOME THIS?
Since I am new to the school, it seems possible that an “outsider” bringing in a “new” method might be met with resistance in practice.	Conversations with administration (to determine scope and structure of support) Educating community on elements, variables and benefits to service learning
Cultural differences that do not support sustainable behaviors.	Education. Conversations. Training.
Funding may be limited	Identify types of funding and what they are intended for. If necessary, propose further funding and link to educational benefits of students.
The concept of “service learning” is different for many people.	Providing a common framework, common vocabulary and common expectations for service learning as well as connections to sustainability.
Given that I’m new to the school I will need a “team” to get started and know the institutional memory of ASD.	Start with a working group, the Learning Team (formal team I’m associated with) and search out teachers who are already involved with sustainability and/or service learning (e.g. garden coordinator, Global Issues teacher, etc.)

Overcoming Challenges

You may encounter challenges, or unexpected outcomes, as you carry out your action plan. This is normal! If you are working in a group, bring your entire team together to review the project and reflect on the situation.

To deal with a challenging situation, you must first **understand** the problem. After you have gathered enough information to understand your problem, you can try and **brainstorm** solutions. Once you **choose** the best problem solving strategy, and give it a try, you can **evaluate** the outcome. Did your strategy work?

TIP: Each situation is unique, and “cookie cutter” solutions are not always available. While you carry out your action plan, try to surround yourself with positive influences and connect with helpful resources. Stay focused, enthusiastic and determined!

Step 5: Convincing Others to Join Up!

Every winning campaign, initiative, and group have one thing in common: a dedicated team. Though great leaders like Gandhi and Nelson Mandela might have been household names, it required great teamwork and coordination to get the job done.

While one person can, and does, make a difference, you'll have more support, power – and not to mention fun! – acting as a team.

Tips on forming a group

If there are not enough people around you to form a group about a specific aspect of climate change (like one championing energy efficiency), try starting out with a broader approach, like acting on climate change in general. Then, as a group, you can brainstorm to pick something specific.

A few tried and true ways of attracting people:

- Ask your friends
- Poster in School and in your communities
- Set up a public meeting
- Call or email relevant organizations
- Use Twitter, Hi 5, Facebook, or other social networks

Brainstorm: What are some ways that you could find others who are interested in acting on the environmental sustainability issues that you want to address?

Some strategies for attracting other people to work with me...

1. Identify colleagues who are ready to be “first movers”
2. Have many meaningful conversations to identify interested parties
3. Host a “talk” related to sustainability & service learning
4. Ask for volunteers from the community
5. Contact parties already doing sustainability/service related activities
6. Identify areas in the curriculum where sustainability and action are addressed

Step 6: Identifying the Type of Team knowledge and skills that you need for your Project

What Makes a Great Team?

- There is effective and on-going communication
- Everyone is treated as an equal, and feels like they belong
- A sense of fun and openness can be developed through shared events to know each other
- There is a common understanding of project goals
- Each team member is motivated to achieve the desired goals, and takes problem-solving together
- Roles and tasks are well-defined and equally distributed
- The leader consults with team-members and wants them to share in important
- Creativity is encouraged, and mistakes are seen as a learning experience
- Team members respect each other, are patient and tolerant, and act with emotional intelligence and understanding
- Team members are able to express concerns in a constructive manner

You will certainly need to have an array of diverse skills and strengths on your team to help you to cover all your bases and to better ensure success of your project.

In the table below, identify the skills and strengths that you need and who that you know could fill that role to work with you on your project team.

Description of Skill, Strength or other Competency	Names of people that you know who can fill this role	Email and Phone contact
Knowledge of the community (inside the school and outside the school)	Student leaders, parents, influential teachers	
Has "leverage" in school culture	Principals, influential colleagues (?)	
Has good marketing skills	Publications, journalism, public speaker, tech department, etc.	
Strategic thinkers	Director of Learning, service coordinators (if there are any)	
Is "on the ground" in terms of knowing people, local contacts, etc.	Local teachers, long-standing members of the community	

Step 7: Evaluating and Monitoring Your Progress

Along the Way:

At the end of your project, you will want to be able to know how much of a difference you really made, so that you can see if you achieved your objectives. This process is called “Evaluation.” You should also check in at different stages of your project to monitor your progress along the way.

Monitoring your project can help you make sure that everything is on track by choosing indicators of success for each of your objectives. The more specific your “indicator”, the easier it will be to evaluate your achievements. Carrying on from before, the example below uses “enough money raised to install composter” as an indicator of success.

<p>Possible Indicators Of Success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of people who said, in an evaluation form, that they learned from your project• The amount of waste being composted instead of land filled• The number of people involved with your project (team members and participants)• The amount of greenhouse gases reduced• How many projects have been inspired by your work	<p>Example:</p> <p>Overall goal: Run a student-led composting campaign at our school</p> <p>First Steps:</p> <p>Date: May 08</p> <p>Activity: Fundraising</p> <p>Indicator of success: Enough money raised to install composter</p>
---	--

Tips for Evaluation:

- Keep your evaluation simple and relevant. Measurable outcomes are great.
- To avoid bias, try to gain inputs from a lot of different sources. Ask your participants, your partners and your team members what they thought.
- You will probably learn that the project has unexpected outcomes, both positive and negative. Think about how the project has influenced and affected the participants, your community, your organization, and even yourself.
- Include details on factors that negatively impacted your project (were these truly outside your control, or were they risks that could have been avoided?)
- Spend some time highlighting commendations for the future, so that when similar projects are launched, they are more likely to have a greater impact.

Success Indicators

Brainstorm a few indicators that you can use to measure, assess, monitor and track various aspects of your project to help you know that you are on the right track with your strategy and that you are making some impact

Key Indicators	How will you collect the data
Creation of a service learning committee	Is the committee formed?
Creation of database of key service learning indicators (characteristics based on community input)	Online document (or website) indicating current partner organizations and service learning projects.
Set up structures related to best practices and faculty and student empowerment.	Number of participants and feedback on training programs related to service learning.
Strategic plan creation.	The creation of a strategic plan (within one year of my arrival) integrating sustainability and service learning in accordance with guidelines set up administration.
Establishing baseline indicators for sustainability and service learning	Creating a set of indicators deemed most important in establishing and maintaining service learning.
Engaging students in service learning	The number of student participants (by division) participating in service learning activities.
Connecting service learning to the school's mission and vision.	Survey data regarding perceptions related to connections between service learning and school mission.

Sustain Your Action

Make Your Mark Last Longer

Sustaining a project for a long time can be a major challenge. Even if you decide not to continue your project, think about the ways that people involved in your project can sustain their interest in taking action against Climate Change.

Sustainability is about:

- **Having a Clear Time line**
- **Collaborating With Other Organizations:** By spreading responsibility for your project across several different groups, you're building a stronger support structure for the future. If one group discontinues their support, at least there are others who can take on more responsibility.

- **Building Strong Alliances with Adults & Mentors:** Adults & mentors can be a vital source of wisdom, financial resources, and technical expertise that is often required to take a onetime project to a more long-term venture.
- **Plan for Leadership Transition:** You may not always be the person in charge of your project! Leaving the right information so that a new leader can take over is essential. Put together a package of useful information for the next project leader.
- **Keep Good Records and Manage Knowledge:** Keeping good records of your contacts, how you do things, and your achievements will help you to sustain the effect of your project in the future. This includes documenting what you have learned through the process of evaluation.

Describe the Sustainability Aspect of your project idea – i.e. how does it link to and affect the different domains of Sustainability (Environment, Economics, Society and Human Wellbeing).

N: Ideally identifying ways to increase student/nature interaction / Conversations about value of nature / Outdoor service opportunities / Service learning engagement involving ecology and nature.

E: Budgetary elements of service learning projects / Transport-related issues / Trying to keep service learning local rather than international

S: Social benefits of involvement in service learning / Generation of a more service-minded community / Leadership development / Developing Change-makers / positive interaction with local community / addressing authentic community needs

W: Supporting populations in need / Focusing on personal health (perhaps) and wellbeing in local communities

Sustainability Action Plan

Take some time to go over the steps that need to be taken in order for you to achieve your project goals. The following charts will help you to create your “Action Plan” and prepare for any challenges that might arise.

Step	Activity Description (Action)	What actually do you need to do? (Your Objective)	What help will you need? (People, resources, financial)	How will you know you are successful? (what is your success indicator?)	Time frame (when?)
	Survey	Interview, observe, research data, history, etc.	Support from current SL Coordinator, Learning & Curriculum Team, activity advisors, etc.	Putting together a comprehensive documentation of present status of SL at ASD.	Semester 1
	Vision / Aim	Determine the direction and limitations of my job (jurisdiction, limits, goals, etc)	Administrative team	Interview all administrators and SL related educators	Semester 1
	Baseline Indicators	Determine the indicators important to the community and educational leadres	Principals, Director, Head of Learning	Interview all leaders to determine indicator preferences	Semester 1
	Create a team	Put together a group of Change makers to define practical direction for SL.	Administrative support	Establishment of “committee” related to SL (shoolwide and divisional)	Semester 2
	Strategic Plan	Develop a 5 year plan for SL	Educator, advisor, administrator and student involvement	Creation of 5 year plan (including KPI)	Semester 2
	Action Plan	Develop an action plan for SL	Educator, advisor, administrator and student involvement	Creation of a series of yearly action plans (including benchmarks) with regard to SL infusion, expansion and advancement.	Semester 2