WP2 - Social Action Toolkit

How to Prepare for/Reflect on Youth Social Action

Learner Handout

Social Action Toolkit

How-To Guide

Title: How to Prepare for/Reflect on Youth Social Action

Introduction:

It may seem logical, but when preparing for a project, it is crucial to start with analysis and reflection. These are extensive and complicated processes in some situations, but necessary for a good upstream performance.

In short, preparation and pre-reflection are essential to ensure that youth social action projects are effective, sustainable and have a significant impact on the communities they are targeting. By investing time in proper planning, young people can increase the chances of success and make a positive difference in the world around them.

Step 1: Needs analysis	By reflecting on the social situation or problem to be addressed, young people can better understand the real needs of the target community or group. This ensures that the project is designed to respond to those specific needs and not just to superficial assumptions or perceptions. A simple technique for analysing the reality of a specific problem is the "SWOT analysis". SWOT is an acronym that stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Opportunities and Threats. It is a tool widely used in business, but can also be applied to various social situations and community problems. The steps to perform this technique are as follows: 1. Identify the problem: Clearly define the problem you want to analyse. 2. List the Strengths: Identify the internal strengths or available resources that can help address the problem (skills, assets, knowledge, support networks...). 3. Identify Opportunities: Identify external opportunities that may benefit the resolution of the problem (policy changes, collaborations with other organisations, technological advances...). 4. List Weaknesses: Recognises internal constraints or challenges that could hinder the solution of the problem (lack of resources, lack of expertise, financial constraints...). 5. Identify the Threats: Analyse the external factors that could represent a threat to the solution of the problem (competition, changes in regulations, economic problems...). 6. Reflect on the analysis: Once you have identified the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats, you should reflect on how they relate to each other and how they impact on the problem at hand. 7. Develop strategies: You should use the results to develop concrete strategies that promote the strengths and opportunities, while addressing the weaknesses and minimising the threats. These strategies can guide the approach and implementation of the project.
Step 2: Reflecting on needs and specifying objectives	With the needs identified, the group should reflect on the objectives to be set and for this they can use the SMART technique. This approach provides a clear and

	precise structure for defining objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. Before starting to apply the technique, it is necessary that the participants are clear about the basic concepts: ● Specific: The objective should be clear, specific and concrete. You must answer questions such as what you want to achieve, who will be involved, where it will take place and what are the expected results. ● Measurable: The objective should be measurable or quantifiable in some way. Define indicators that allow you to assess progress and achievement of the objective. ● Attainable: Make sure the objective is realistic and achievable. Assess the resources available and the capacities needed to achieve it. ● Relevant: The objective should be relevant and consistent with the specific needs you are addressing. Make sure it is aligned with the problems or challenges you want to solve. ● Time-bound: Set a deadline for achieving the objective. This provides a sense of urgency and helps to maintain focus over time. Steps to apply the SMART Method with the previously identified needs: 1. Formulate the objective: Using the information gathered on the needs, create an objective that meets the SMART criteria. Make sure the objective is sufficiently specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. 2. Share and discuss: Present the objective to others involved in the project or decision making. Listen to their comments and make sure they are aligned with the understanding of the needs and feasibility of the objective. 3. Adjust if necessary: If necessary, make adjustments to the objective to ensure that it meets the SMART criteria and is in line with identified needs.
Step 3: Evaluation	With the objectives in place, the actual project can begin to be drafted and planned. One of the most important things that often remains in the background when drafting the project is the evaluation, but not only the final evaluation of the results, but also the continuous evaluation during the different stages of the project. For the project to run smoothly, to be focused on the objectives and to be coherent with the needs, the group of people in charge of implementing and managing the

	project must reflect and analyse the actions and activities that are being carried out throughout the course of the project. Continuous evaluation will allow them to make necessary changes and modifications to the activities or maybe even to the objectives themselves. In order to carry out a continuous evaluation, the following steps must be followed: 1. Performance indicators: Establish key performance indicators at the beginning of the project to measure progress towards objectives. 2. Milestone tracking: Break the project into milestones or stages and track them periodically to assess progress towards each milestone. This helps to identify any delays or deviations early and take corrective action. 3. Surveys and questionnaires: Conduct surveys and questionnaires of team members, collaborators or project beneficiaries to gather feedback on their perception of the project's progress and effectiveness. 4. Regular team reviews: Conduct regular meetings with the project team to review the current status, identify challenges and opportunities, and make informed decisions about next steps. 5. Review the project plan: Conduct regular reviews of the project plan to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate as the project progresses and circumstances change.
Step 4: Participation and engagement	When young people take the time to reflect and prepare, they are more committed to the project. This increases motivation and active participation, which improves the likelihood of sustaining interest over time. By participating in the early stages of planning and reflection, team members and stakeholders feel involved in the decision-making process and bond with the project. This creates a sense of ownership and emotional commitment to the success of the project, as well as helping to identify the roles and responsibilities of each team member. By knowing clearly what is expected of them, participants feel more empowered and committed to their contribution to the project. Reflection beforehand enables participants to better understand the context in which the project will take place. This helps them to approach challenges and obstacles with greater confidence, which increases their commitment to overcome them, and helps to set realistic expectations about the outcomes and potential challenges of the project. When participants have a clear vision of what they can

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	achieve and how they will achieve it, they are more willing to commit and persevere over time. In short, prior preparation and reflection in a project provides a solid foundation and a clear vision of what you want to achieve, which helps to foster active participation and commitment from all those involved. By involving participants from the outset and providing them with the necessary tools and support, an environment is created that is conducive to the success and achievement of the project's objectives.

Conclusion:

- **Step 1: Needs analysis:** Identifying needs before starting a project is a crucial step in ensuring that the project is relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable.
- **Step 2: Reflecting on needs and specifying objectives:** Having clear needs-based objectives is essential for effective planning, successful implementation and meaningful evaluation of any project.
- **Step 3: Evaluation:** Ongoing evaluation is essential to the success and effectiveness of any project. It provides valuable information to make informed decisions, improve performance, adapt to changes and ensure that the project is aligned with the real objectives and needs of the community or target group it is intended to benefit.
- **Step 4: Participation and engagement:** Prior preparation and reflection in a project provides a solid foundation and a clear vision of what you want to achieve, which helps to foster active participation and commitment from all those involved.

Troubleshooting:

During the preliminary process of reflection and preparation of a project, a number of difficulties may arise that could hinder the proper development of the project. These may include: a lack of sufficient information or data to have clear and focused reflections on the issue, lack of clarity in the objectives, disconnection with real needs, lack of resources, lack of support, lack of coordination, poor communication...

To overcome these difficulties, it is important to spend time and effort on thorough reflection and preparation before starting any project. Involving all relevant stakeholders, having adequate information and being realistic in planning are key elements to ensure the success and effectiveness of the project.

Social Action Toolkit

Case Study

Module Title	**How to Prepare for/Reflect on Youth Social Action**		
Case Study Title	FISAT		
Type of resource	Case Study	**Type of learning**	Self-directed learning
Duration of Activity **(in minutes)**		**Learning Outcome**	● To analyse experiences of concrete social action projects. ● Visualise the methods of action of a social action project.
Aim of Activity	The Ángel Tomás Solidarity Initiative Foundation was founded on 4 September 2008, giving continuity to the work carried out by the Don Bosco Cooperation Association to promote the social projects of the Salesian Province of San José in Valencia. Its projects include childcare centres, day centres, emancipation flats, educational support projects, immigrant care projects, urban camps for young people at risk of social exclusion and training and volunteer promotion programmes. By looking at the different approaches and projects of social action and inclusion that this foundation carries out, young people can learn different methods of action in the field of social action.		
Introduction	FISAT has 9 different lines of action that work in different ways and are adapted to your reality: 1. Social and labour market integration of young people 2. Promotion of children's quality of life 3. Support for migrants 4. Women and equal opportunities		

	5. Residential and emancipation resources 6. Orientation and family mediation 7. Health and prevention of drug dependence 8. Community development 9. Awareness-raising, promotion and support for volunteers The foundation works in all these areas following the educational-preventive style of Don Bosco, promoting comprehensive inclusion and networking with institutions and other entities to unite synergies and strengthen its capacity to respond to people.
Challenge	Volunteering is a fundamental value of its projects: many of them have arisen and continue to arise thanks to the efforts of volunteers who consider that their free contribution to society is an essential tool for change. Training is one of the fundamental pillars of FISAT volunteering, as it is understood as the process of integration and reflection of the volunteer experience from the person him/herself to the world. That is why they offer a training itinerary to all the people who join their projects as volunteers. This is very interesting and useful, because it helps the volunteers to get to know the space, to prepare themselves for their volunteering, for their participation in the project. This training is divided into three: ● Basic training: online or face-to-face training that is offered at the beginning of the journey as a volunteer. It provides an overview of the current social panorama, the characteristics of volunteering, as well as the most important aspects of FISAT, the projects that make it up, and the Salesian charism as a fundamental pillar. Also part of the basic training is the training module dedicated to getting to know its Child Protection System, based on good treatment. ● Specific training: This consists of the indications and contents received by the volunteer when they start a specific project. The aim is to provide the necessary knowledge to develop their work in the specific context of the project. ● Continuous training: they are committed to transformational volunteering and, as agents of change, volunteers are offered spaces for continuous training and personal growth, in which they can reflect on their work and the realities they encounter.

	It is essential to train volunteers not only in the entity they are going to work with, but also in the whole context of the project and the society or target group they are going to work with. It is also important to take into account the continuous training of the volunteer, the work contexts can change during the course of the project and the volunteers must be trained in what is necessary to adapt to the changes. Volunteers should also be included in the processes of reflection and evaluation of the project so that they can contribute their vision.
Assignment	Mentoring in a volunteering process is essential to enhance the commitment and performance of volunteers, as well as to provide a supportive environment and personal growth. It also contributes to a more enriching experience for both the volunteers and the organisation or project in which they participate. Click on the following links and read and view the content related to mentoring: ● MENTOR UP – Course (backslash.es): Online training platform, review modules 2 to 5. ● MentorUp_Manual_IO2-short-version-EN.pdf (mentorup-project.eu): Mentor's manual, extended course content of the platform. Questions and exercises: ● If you have had any volunteering experience, has there been accompaniment and mentoring as shown in the course? ● Would you be able to prepare a training session or an introduction to the project? ● Write a timeline or agenda of topics that you consider important for the explanation and contextualisation of someone new to a project.

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Call to Action Activity

Theme	How to Prepare for/Reflect on Youth Social Action		
Activity Title	Mapping of social entities		
Type of resource	**Call to Action Activity**		
Photo			
Duration of Activity (in minutes)	**1 hour**	**Learning Outcome**	• Learn how to search for existing entities in your locality on a specific topic • Learn how to distinguish between the objectives of the entities
Aim of activity	The main objective is to provide participants with the tools and steps to follow so that they can investigate the entities that exist in their immediate reality.		
Materials Required for Activity	• Computer and internet • Digital tools has QR generator and Canva		

Step-by-step instructions	**Step 1: Delimiting the object of our mapping** We need to identify the reason and purpose of this mapping. Remember that mapping is a means to an end, not an end in itself. **Step 2: Research** There are different techniques and strategies for this information gathering, such as: ● Surveys and interviews with various stakeholders and trusted actors in the territory. ● Review of official documents, regulations, agreements, contracts, etc. ● Meetings with officials from public or private institutions in the area of influence. ● Participant observation. ● Review of journalistic notes through different media. Obtain information on at least 10 entities that exist in your locality and that could be useful to you. **Step 3: Stakeholder analysis** In order to identify the actors we are dealing with, we need to think about the dimensions by which we are going to assess them. These can be:

- By responsibility: People with whom you have or will have legal, financial and operational responsibilities under current regulations, contracts, policies or practices.
- By proximity: People with whom the organisation interacts, including internal stakeholders or those with long-standing relationships with the organisation, or those on whom the organisation depends on its day-to-day operations and those who live near production sites.
- By representation: People who, through regulatory or cultural/traditional structures, represent other people.
- However, the most common categories are as follows:
- By dependency/interest: These are the people who are most dependent on their organisation, e.g. employees and their families. Here you can analyse whether the actors are in favour (relationships of trust and mutual collaboration predominate), undecided/indifferent or against (relationships of conflict predominate).
- By influence: People who have or will have the potential to influence the organisation's ability to achieve its goals, whether their actions can boost or impede its performance. These are people with informal influence or formal decision-making power. At this point it is possible to analyse whether actors have high, medium or low influence.

Step 4: Map design

Next, the mapping is done graphically. The design of the map can be to your liking, we recommend using a map of your locality and marking the entities on it. You can use QRs that give more information such as the objectives of the organisation or the contact person you have found.

	It is recommended that each symbol that is placed has a legend, in addition to being able to make connections through arrows that tell us about the type of relationship.

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