



Community Survey

Goals can be anything you choose, but even the best goals can fail because your wider community lacks the vision your team shares. If your wider community isn't brought into the project planning process early-on, and their perspectives and visions are not incorporated or considered in your team's project goals, they are less likely to engage in or accept the project. Finding a middle ground between your vision for the future and a realistic solution your community wants is difficult to figure out. This is why it is important to include the wider community in your decision-making processes.

Purpose for a community survey:

- ❖ To build understanding, acceptance and consensus in the community on potential proposed project goals, and to help the team decide which project goal to pursue.

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1. Building Consensus

You should be involving the entire school or community in choosing which project to work on. This will increase engagement and acceptance from the general population by cultivating buy-in, which is the willingness of people to actively support or participate in your project. In doing so, you are bridging the larger community into a meaningful decision-making process with you! This increases the success of your project and is a stepping stone to building collective power, or better yet, *community power*. It will hopefully remind people about climate action steps they can take in their community (even before your project starts) and makes climate action more accessible and tangible.

Community surveys can provide a meaningful way of reconciling differences between your vision and the community's vision for project goals, and to determine what is realistic and tangible for both your team and the wider community. Community surveys can be very impactful because they help build consensus in the community on potential proposed project goals. As a part of your project, you will be doing a community survey to help your team find a goal that already has some level of community support. Not every goal will work for every community, and some goals will need more capacity than you currently have to achieve.

By involving your wider community into the decision-making process of your projects you will be cultivating a new version of changemaking within yourself and those around you.

2. Qualitative & Quantitative Feedback

Building consensus requires qualitative (non-measurable) and quantitative (measurable) feedback from members of your community. This will give you data to work with to ensure the goal you choose has enough information to not only succeed, but be measurable (if possible!). An example of this is if one of your project goals is to get students to be zero waste at school, some quantitative feedback would be asking how much plastic they use when eating lunch, or how many plastic water bottles they use in a day. This will give you good data to look at after the project is completed so you can send out another survey collecting new data. Then you can compare the two from before and after the project and see how much emissions you reduced.

2.1 Qualitative feedback

- ❖ Conversations with leaders:
 - Have 15 min conversations with at least 5 student leaders in your school (e.g., student club leaders, and students), or 5 leaders in your community/school (e.g., administrators, teachers, non-profit leaders, community centre or policy personnel).
 - Discuss each of the 3 - 4 potential project goals your team has come up with, understand which idea would appeal most to them and/or the students they lead.
 - Use the [Relationships in Organizing Guide](#) for details on how to run community meetings.
 - **Please see [Safety During Meetings section of the Relationships in Organizing Guide](#) before meeting with leaders.**

1.2 Quantitative feedback

- ❖ Community survey
 - Create a 10-15 question survey for the general population based on the 3 potential project goals your team chose.

- Use this survey to gauge the expected engagement level for each of the ideas as well as their potential impact (i.e. if the project is encouraging reusable water bottle use, ask how many one-use bottles the students are currently consuming per week).

3. Outreach for Survey Feedback

To make your surveys effective, it's important to use outreach strategies to ensure you get enough responses to be able to make an informed decision on which project has community support.

Tips for survey outreach:

- ❖ Brainstorm strategies to reach a 30% response rate for the school.
 - Sharing it on social media: Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
 - Share it in the student newspaper.
 - Share it with any friendly administration in the school.
 - Share it in classrooms, if it is possible to have physically printed copies.
 - Send it to all teachers digitally to share in class.
 - Work with your teachers to get all the students in each of your classes to take the survey.
- ❖ Brainstorm strategies to reach a 30% response rate for the community.
 - Sharing it on social media: Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
 - Share it in the local newspaper, ask them to share it on social media.
 - Share it with any administration within the community (e.g.,: librarians, city hall/city staff, youth groups, and businesses).
 - Share it in community centres, churches, libraries, if it is possible to have physically printed copies or digital copies.
 - Send it to all allies digitally, ask for them to send it to any of their contacts.
- ❖ Give at least one week for people to fill out the survey. Ideally, it will be two weeks.

A survey can be done and distributed in a couple different ways. Because of COVID-19 most of the surveys will need to be filled out online. A great digital tool to

use is Google Forms. This will allow you to make a survey that anyone can fill out with the link, and you can use text boxes for longer answers or checkboxes for multiple choice questions.

Keep in mind that this may create bias in your survey responses. You are likely excluding everyone that doesn't have access to a computer, technology or internet. Oftentimes, these can be vulnerable, local income and frequently marginalized communities. These are the communities that are often most adversely impacted by climate change impacts, and are unfortunately those least heard in decision-making processes and discussions. It's important to understand that due to the pandemic, there may not be a way to avoid this, but try to whenever possible find ways that include all people from the community.

4. Survey Question Examples

Below are some questions you might want to find out in the survey (or leader conversations). These are only suggestions and your team can determine your own questions based on your needs. You may find it helpful to pilot these questions and send them to a friend outside of your team to ensure you have feedback on what you are asking before distributing it to the wider community.

- ❖ Out of the three problems, which do they prefer being addressed and why?
- ❖ Is this a problem and/or solution they have heard of previously? Has it been previously talked about already? Maybe: If it was already talked about, but no action happened to address the problem, why was that? What were the challenges and reasons for it's failure? Are there any obstacles they know of about applying this solution and/or addressing the problem?
- ❖ For each problem or solution figure out:
 - On a sliding scale if it matters to them
 - On a sliding scale if it matters to the community
 - Why or why not for each?
- ❖ Regardless of which problem and/or solution they chose, what vision do they have for that problem and/or solution in their community?
- ❖ If a problem and/or solution is about behavioral changes, like reducing plastic water bottle use, find out how many plastic bottles they use per week currently. This will allow you to more accurately strategize to achieve your goal.
 - Keep in mind that this goal could have structural or systemic problems that make it difficult for people to change their behavior. An example could be that your school has a policy against bringing glass bottles into classrooms. These structures, whether policy or funding, could get in the way of people making these changes. It might be wise to ask questions that expand further into these structures to see if you can implement this into your goal. For further readings on structural or systemic issues, see the Iceberg Model Guide.
- ❖ Ask them if they would like to help in building collective power to make one of those solutions happen. Make sure that you have a plan for following-up

with respondents who are interested in participating, and intaking them to join your group! Check out the [Recruitment Guide](#) for more information.

- If they are a student they can be in your club.
- If they are a community member they can be an ally.
- ❖ Any information they have about any of the solutions to the suggested problems (i.e.: groups to contact, similar projects in different cities, past projects that were similar in the community).

Thank them for taking part, and let them know their answers will guide a decision in the project you will be focusing on as a team! Make sure to get their contact info (i.e. email address and/or phone number) if you haven't already so you can give them updates.