TIME 2 VOLUNTEER

Empowering you to do extraordinary things

Social Action
'How To' Workbook

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Celebrate and evaluate your Project

Introduction

What is Social Action?

Social Action is people coming together and taking action to tackle common concerns that are important to improving people's lives and communities.

It involves people giving their time and resources for the common good, from volunteering, community organising or simple neighbourly acts. When people come together for social action, communities are heard and power begins to shift, creating real change for good. Key points to remember for social action are:

• Carried out by individuals or groups of people working together

• Not compulsory and not for profit

• For the good of others - individuals, communities and/or society

• Bring about social change and or value

You might hear and see words such as community organising, co-production, outcomes and indicators, or other phrases. We've included a helpful Jargon Buster at the end of this workbook.

Social Action Workbook

When individuals or groups identify issues within their community and decide to take action, it is important to do it safely and ensure correct planning and risk management has been taken into consideration.

Please read the following Social Action 'How To' Workbook for advice and guidance on how to develop your own Social Action Project. Not all the sections in this workbook will be necessary for everyone or for every scenario, but it's always handy to have the information, just in case.

There are links to a range of fantastic resources throughout this workbook, however, these have been collated and can also be found on a useful links document here: **https://time2volunteer.org/resources/volunteers/social-action**

We hope that it inspires you to make a difference to your life and community! For additional advice and support, please contact us, details can be found on our website: **www.time2volunteer.org/contact**

Have an Idea?

Have you got an idea on how to improve things in your local community? Or do you see something every day and think 'I could make that better for everyone'?

What if your idea is so big you don't know where to start? You know you'll need help, but you don't know who from.

What if your idea seems so small that there must be a reason no one else has done it? You could make a difference but you're not sure you're allowed.

These handy hints will help guide you through the process of social action, no matter how big or small your idea is. All good ideas must start somewhere!

Read these two examples below and see if they help inspire an idea.

Lena wanted to start playing tennis in their local town but there were no facilities. They knew Brenda used to help with sports in the community so had a chat with her. Brenda couldn't help but offered to introduce Lena to Sally. Sally was able to help Lena get some funding to advertise in the local area to ask more people if they liked tennis. Lena now has 50 people who want to play tennis. From this, they found Harez who is helping them with founding a group to bring tennis to the town.

Dave wanted to tidy up the beach where he lived, as he always picks up rubbish walking his dog there. He spoke to local café owner Lukas, who thought it was a great idea. They spoke with other people in the area, who offered to help, but felt it wasn't safe or clean without equipment. Lukas and Dave had litter pickers and buckets donated, and now leave them outside the café so people can tidy the beach. The beach is tidier, Dave enjoys his dog walks and notices other people picking up rubbish.

Write your idea below, you can refer back to it when needed, and keep the end goal in sight. If the idea escapes you, or it is complicated, add to it whenever inspiration strikes.

Notes:

Start a Conversation

The best thing to do with an idea is to share it! It's often hard to know where to start when you want to get people to join you in action.

If you have an idea that will create social action in your community, start a conversation about it and really listen to what is said. You may have a clear idea about what's wrong and what needs to change, but do others see things the same way?

You might start with your friends or family, your neighbours, the people you work with, but then you need to go beyond the people you know. Reach out to people you never meet or talk to, through knocking on doors, standing at school gates, going into community centres, visiting churches, and working men's clubs. Everyone has something to offer.

The important part of these conversations is to listen and look out for these three things:

- **What do people really care about?**
- **Do they want something to change?**
- **Are they prepared to be involved?**

These conversations aren't a formal consultation, but they do give us valuable understanding and awareness into our community.

• You will find out about what is really going on beneath the surface.

• You will hear powerful stories of people's lives.

• You will find out what people love about where they live and what they are angry about.

• You will uncover real problems and explore the possibilities for change.

• You will find leaders.

• You will challenge people to act.

Who do you think you should talk to about your idea?

Notes:

Do your Research

You have your idea, now you need to do a bit of research. You need to look at the community you want to bring it to. This is known as place-based working and is important in establishing successful social action.

Here are a few questions to get you started:
- Is my idea already happening?
- Has it happened before?
- Can I make it happen here?

If you break down the questions further, you will start to build a fuller picture of the possibilities your idea holds. It's also a great way to tweak your idea before you invest a lot of time or resources.

Is my idea already happening?

- Can I help the people who already do this?
- Does it happen nearby, and would they help me?
- Can I learn from this?

Has it happened before?

- Why doesn't it happen now?
- Was it successful?
- Can I learn from this?

Can I make it happen here?

- Do you have the resources?
- Do people want it to happen here?
- Who can help me?

Notes:

Once you have looked at how to connect with people and research your idea, you will need to look at an overview of it. This type of planning can help fine tune your ideas and is also helpful if you want to look at applying for funding in the future.

What's the level of interest?

• Are you happy with this?

• Can you promote more interest in it?

Do people agree with your idea?

• Is the idea wanted by everyone it could affect?

• Have other ideas been explored & discussed?

Is the idea needed?

• Are the people it is for going to use it?

• Will the project be used by the community?

The great ideas we have won't always work for everyone. Have a look at the examples below:

Julie wants to plant a vegetable garden on a patch of grass outside her house for a community garden. However, the neighbour's children play football there. Is there a compromise for a vegetable garden and an open space for football? What do the rest of the neighbours want? Is Julie just annoyed with the football? Are the children able to play football at a nearby local park? Without talking to everyone we don't know if the idea is wanted.

Mohammed wants to start a drama club. He loves drama and has a couple of friends interested. He also wants to help young people on his estate. Mohammed starts the drama club at a village hall with no planning, and no one turns up. He hadn't found out about the other drama club on the same day at the school that is really popular. This group might have been needed, but Mohammed didn't do all the research to find the right time and place.

Some of the research you need to do here won't be possible without using connections to the community. These connections might have been made earlier in the process through conversation.

You might want to take a look at the next section on connecting with the community and its resources.

Notes:

Community Resources

As part of the research stage of developing your idea, you will come across communities that can support or be part of your idea. Within these communities you will find the people that can lead you to others, unlock doors and help identify resources.

It is important to identify these resources, to get a better understanding of what is possible, and finding people to connect with can support your idea becoming a reality. Making connections and building community trust and understanding is so important in social action – together we are stronger.

Here are some simple prompts to try and identify resources and people:

What is available in the community?

• Think of things like groups, organisations, clubs, as well as buildings and infrastructure.
• Think of natural resources like green space and open spaces.

Is there a space where lots of resources come together?

• A community hall, library, school, or church?
• Can you access this space and find out what is going on?

Who is involved?

• Who can offer guidance or help to lead it?
• Who makes things happen?

How can you help these connections happen?

• Let people know what you are looking to do and encourage them to take part.
• Link up with leaders, groups and spaces that could benefit from your idea.

Notes:

Skills to Consider

As you connect with people, through reaching out and listening, you will come across many different opinions and lived experiences. When people connect over a common goal, they begin to develop their own ideas for change.

Skills, strengths and knowledge are often within your community waiting to be discovered. Sometimes the person with that skill, strength or knowledge is just waiting to be asked to help or share.

What skills does your idea need?

Do you need administrative skills?

• Letter writing, telephone calls, organisation, or planning skills

Do you need financial skills?

• Understanding funding, bid writing, collecting money

Do you need communications and marketing skills?

• Creating flyers, posters, social media posts, writing press releases, talking to media or organisations / business who could support

Do you need practical skills?

• Building, coaching, gardening

Do the skills need to be formal qualifications?

• Coaching, legal representation, accountant

Does someone have an interest or experience?

• Marketing, some coaching, peer mentoring

Notes:

Communicate your Idea

There will be different stages when you might need to communicate your idea. From getting the conversation started, promoting it far and wide, to shouting about the impact it has had on the community.

Whatever stage you are at, how do you get the message out there?

There are many different types of communication channels to help you do that.

Not all these methods will work for every idea, so along with knowing what you want to say, you need to know how you are going to say it. Tone, language, and marketing method are as important as the message.

The below table can help you narrow down your options and come up with a suitable marketing and communication plan.

Context, Aims and Objectives	**What do you want to achieve?** • Greater awareness • Involve people in an idea
Plan	**What will make it stand out?** • Will you use other groups or partners to help? • Is there anything else you can use?
Audience	**Who do you want to tell about your idea?** • Gender • Age • Groups or organisations
Key Message	**What do you want to say?**
Where	**Where will you tell people about your idea?** • Door canvasing / word of mouth • Local press • Local groups, clubs, events • Posters / flyers • Video streaming sites • Social media • Existing website • Radio / TV
When	**Look at timescales** • When do you want to advertise? • How far in advance? • How long do you need to plan the advertising? • Is advertising ongoing? • How long will it take to get media printed?
Actions	**Make it clear to others what needs to be done:** • Who's action it is? • When does it need doing by?
Lessons learnt (after the process)	**What could you do differently?** • What took longer than expected? • What was easier than expected?

If the above method doesn't work for your idea, you could try the thought shower method below. Go as deep as you can into every point, as it helps you get a better understanding of your idea and how to market and communicate it best.

Who?
• Who is this for?
• Who will be involved?
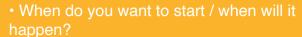• Who needs to know?

What?
• What is the idea / project / opportunity?
• What commitment are you asking?
• What is it called - does it cover what you want to say?

Why?
• Why are you doing it?
• Why will it be different / new?
• Why will people do it / what are the benefits?

When?
• What's the time commitment?
• When do you want to start / when will it happen?
• When can people join in?

How?
• How can people get involved?
• How much money / time do people need?
• How much experience do people need?

Notes:

Fund your Idea

Depending on the size and scale of your project, you will probably need to take into consideration what it might cost to deliver your idea and how you will find the money to cover any costs.

Costs could be required to get your idea heard for example, promotional flyers, posters, or putting on small events to raise awareness or get people involved. There could be costs involved to purchase items needed to deliver your idea, such as gardening equipment, if you're looking to create a new outdoor garden space or simply tidy up an overgrown area in your community. There may be costs required to purchase or hire equipment and resources. Other cost considerations are insurance and in some cases surveys and feasibility studies may be required, if your idea is a larger, more complicated or a longer-term project.

If your idea does involve costs, you'll need to consider how you are going fundraise for it.

Below are different ways to fundraise for your project idea:

Firstly, what is meant by the term fundraising?

The principle of fundraising is to raise money by asking for it – it's that simple!

It is the process of seeking and gathering voluntary financial contributions by engaging individuals, businesses, charitable foundations, or governmental agencies.

Secondly, a plan and budget should be in place for your project idea.

Before you start to fundraise, a plan and budget should be drawn up for your project idea. What costs are involved? The detail and depth of a plan will depend on the idea. For instance, a three-year fundraising plan to take over a building for community use will look different to a simple budget to fund tools and materials for a garden makeover or litter picking project.

Fundraising Event	When planning an event or activity, you would ask similar questions to what has been asked previously in this guide.
	• What is it?
	• Who is it for?
	• What time commitment is involved?
	• Do you need help from others?
	• What costs are involved - room / space hire, stall holders, food, drink, equipment hire, marketing / promotional materials
	• Can you get anything for free? To hire free event equipment, vist Smile Vaults: www.smilevaults.org
	• Are permissions needed?
	• Is insurance needed?
	• Is it worth doing? After you planned a budget, what would you expect to raise after your costs have been covered.
	Have a look at the document below for further considerations and support to plan an event: **Organising a voluntary event: a 'can do' guide**

Sponsorship Activity	**For sponsored events, such as 10K races, sponsored walks, swims and other personal challenges you may want to consider the following:** • What is the cost to take part, entry fees, clothing, is any special equipment needed? Costs can affect what you need to fundraise to make it worthwhile doing. • Do you have a pool of people who will support you with sponsorship? • Do you have people who can promote what you're doing to their social and work networks? • Social media is a good way to promote what you're doing and getting wider support than just immediate family and friends. • Provide multiple ways people can support you, for example text giving, online giving page and sponsorship forms.
Businesses	• Businesses are increasingly keen to contribute to their local community and this often involves supporting charitable / community-based projects. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), where businesses consider their social, environmental, and other responsibilities, is now an important part of many companies' activities. It brings benefits such as recruiting and retaining motivated staff, improving brand awareness and helping to increase sales or profits. • When considering which businesses to ask, do your research. Does their website talk about 'giving back' and charitable activity? Do they give an idea of what the business likes to support? • Try to find a reason why you're asking a particular business for support - does your idea link to their business ethos? For example, if your idea to clear up or develop a local green space, choose businesses where the environment is important to them. Try to link your ask to their business. • Be direct with what you are asking for, avoid simply saying can they support? Businesses are busy and don't have time to second guess. What support do you want? A monetary donation, raffle prizes for an event, materials / equipment, employee volunteers to help with your project? They are more likely to respond if they know what you want. • If you do receive support, communicate how your project went, or keep them informed of how it is going / developing. • Always thank them for their support. They might help again in the future. Build good relationships with those who help you. • And remember a no now, maybe yes in the future. It can often be about timing.

Local Grants / Funders	• Look into local funding that might be available. There are local organisations that can support / offer advice on your project idea and funding options. Click on the link to find out more: **Funding - VCSE - East Riding: Beecan**

Notes:

Legal Considerations

We briefly touched on this in the practicality section with areas to consider such as is it legal? You need to pay attention to this section and the links to resources provided as there are important things to consider, so you and your community don't get caught out.

Is it legal?

• Do you need additional permissions such as to close roads or serve food and drinks? Have people got the qualifications needed if necessary?

Do you need permission?

• Road closure

• Food and drink

• Licencing (e.g. lotteries, raffles, race nights, entertainment, serving alcohol)

• Access

Is it safe?

• Health & Safety

• Food & Drink (food hygiene)

• Insurance

• Risk Assessments

It's important to know that Health & Safety is everyone's responsibility whether you are a charity, community group or residents delivering social action. The above, for most projects doesn't need to be complicated. Simple, common-sense steps should cover what you need to successfully deliver your project, however, it's important you understand what is required to ensure it is both legal and safe.

The below links will provide the information you need around permissions, licencing, food and drink, health & safety, and insurance.

Health and safety for community groups | Resource Centre

GT Food Safety guide

NCVO Running a Charity

HSE mobile app

Volunteering: How to manage the risks - HSE

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations:

• You should encourage equality, diversity and inclusion.

• You should encourage dignity and respect for all, where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.

• You should create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.

The equality act of 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. Protected characteristics are:

• Age

• Disability

• Gender reassignment

• Marriage or civil partnership

• Pregnancy and maternity

• Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)

• Religion or belief

• Sex

• Sexual orientation

For more information view the below easy read document:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/ government/uploads/system/uploads/ attachment_data/file/85039/easy-read.pdf

Notes:

Celebrate your Project

Now is a great time to thank everyone who supported your idea and project and celebrate it with your community.

Some of the below ideas will also gather more interest from people for continuing the project or starting their own.

How can you share what your project has achieved?

• Put on a thank you event and invite everyone who was a part of the project

• Write thank you notes to everyone who was a part of the project

• Update any social media or website that you or the project has

   - Share to others and tag local organisations and news offices

• Ask local newspapers to write a piece on the project

• Let your local council / volunteer centre know

• Nominate yourself or other people for a local volunteer award

• Offer your experiences and knowledge to people

   - Give a talk at a community centre, group or school

• Let people know your future plans for the project

• Let Time2Volunteer know so we can feature you on our website!

Notes:

Evaluate your Project

Your idea and project have come to life, so it is now a good time to review what you have achieved.

Evaluating a project is a great way to see the impact it has made on your community. It can help you to decide if you would do it again and how you could improve it next time. Gathering quantitative data like numbers and qualitative data like case studies and what people said about it, will give you a baseline to improve on future ideas and projects, and support funding options.

To gather this information, you will have to use the conversation and communication skills you've gained throughout your idea and project.

How can you evaluate your project?

• Think about your own positive and negative experiences of the project

• Ask for case studies and quotes from people that the project supported

• Gather numbers of people that the project supported

• Ask people who supported the project about the positives and negatives they experienced

• Gather the numbers of people who supported the project

• Find out how many hours people spent supporting the project

• Find out how many connections you made with people and organisations

• Look at where the project sits now:
  - Is it well known in the community?
  - Do people wish it could continue?
  - What difference has it made?
  - Have other people come forward to do something similar?

Through evaluating your project in this way, you will be given feedback and hopefully learn lessons on what worked well, and what could be improved next time. It will also help to secure future funding if you are able to show the impact / benefit of your project.

What have you learned?

• Did you have the time and resources to do all that the project tried to do?

   - Will you need more people to help next time?

• What did you find easy and enjoyable?

• What was more challenging and how could you make it easier?

• Do you have a wider understanding of your community?

   - Can you share this with others?

• Is the project something that could continue, or did it come to a natural end?

   - Do you want to develop it or pass it on to someone else involved?

Notes:

Jargon Buster

Aim

Why your group exists and the effect it wants to have. A summary of the overall difference you want to make.

Baseline

What the situation is like before anything happens (before intervention).

Case Study

A record, often written or filmed, of the development of a person, group, or situation over a period of time.

Community

A specific group of people who all hold something in common. The word 'Community' is associated with two key aspects: people who share a location or place, or people who have a shared or common interest. This second group are sometimes described as communities of interest.

Community Capacity Building

Enabling individuals, groups and communities to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision making and service delivery. This could include enabling communities to provide & manage services to meet community needs.

Community Development

A process where community members are supported by agencies to identify and take collective action on issues which are important to them.

Community Engagement

A communication process between organisations and the community.

Community Organising

An approach to community empowerment & development that focuses on relationship building, and mobilising peoplepower to take action and address community issues and improvements to be made.

Consultation

A level of community engagement where people are asked to express their views and opinions about a particular service or proposed change, before any final decisions are taken.

Co-production

A relationship where professionals and citizens share power to design, plan, and deliver support together, recognising that both partners have vital contributions to make to improve quality of life for people and communities.

Data Protection

See GDPR

Empowerment

Process by which people equip themselves with the knowledge, skills and resources they need to take control over decisions and resources.

Equality and Diversity

Term used to mean that individual as well as group differences will be recognised.

Evaluation

Using information from monitoring to judge and understand the performance of an organisation.

GDPR

A legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information, and how to protect that data.

Indicators

A way of knowing that an outcome has been achieved, or to show progress against an outcome.

Intervention

It describes the point at which a professional, such as a social worker, implements something that is designed to facilitate a change in their client's lives. The word is derived from the principle that social services do not 'take over' the lives of people they work with, but take specific, targeted steps or 'intervenes' at appropriate times.

Monitoring

Collecting and recording information in a routine and systematic way to check progress against plans and enable evaluation.

Outcomes

The meaningful and valued change or effect that occurs because of a particular activity or set of activities. Outcomes may be achieved over a relatively short period, or they may be longer-term in nature.

Participatory Appraisal

A range or collection of approaches and methods which enable local people to conduct, prepare and analyse their own surveys and research.

Peoplepower

The power or pressure demonstrated by large numbers of the public in non-violent ways.

Place Based Working

A person-centred approach used to meet the unique needs of people in one given location by working together to use the best available resources and collaborate to gain local knowledge and insight.

Resources

Everything an organisation draws on to carry out its activities. These will include the people, equipment, money and services it needs. They may also be intangible, such as time, morale and knowledge.

Social Inequality

Differences between groups in society. Social inequality can be related to; differences in incomes, gender, ethnicity, age, disabilities and health issues.

Third Sector Organisations

See Voluntary Organisations.

Voluntary Organisations

Organisations involved in activities like housing, community care and training whose management committee members are volunteers, i.e. unpaid. May employ paid staff.