



Creating A Social Action Project

A **Social Action Project** is a step-by-step, comprehensive strategy that helps you reach your desired goal of creating positive social change in your community. We suggest that your Team take the following steps to develop your Social Action Project:

1. Identify various problems in your community and select one to address.

Start by encouraging every team member to suggest problems in the community that they want to address. All ideas are welcome and of equal value. Write them all down on a large sheet of paper or message board for everyone to see and consider. Explore all the pros and cons of taking on each issue including how your team might try to solve each problem.

Once you have considered all the options, vote to identify one issue that you want to tackle. If you have a long list of ideas you may want to vote a couple of times: first, to narrow down the entire list to the top 3, 4, or 5 problems and then a second vote to select the one issue that your team wants to tackle.

2. Research the problem thoroughly.

Research is a key to your success. You need to thoroughly understand your community's problem before you can figure out the best solution. To start, identify the various aspects of the problem and have different team members research each area. Often time it is a good idea to have members work in pairs or trios on the research.

Research locally: Meet with local officials, counselors, and other experts who are knowledgeable about the problem and possible solutions.

Research globally: Conduct research online to find other communities with similar problems and possible solutions.

3. Select a Solution.

After your Team has conducted your research get together and share your findings. Narrow down the possible solutions by considering these criteria among others:

- **Feasibility** - What is a realistic, attainable goal for your team?
- **Scalability** - How many people will your Social Action Project help? Can it be expanded in your community?
- **Repeatability** - Can your Project be replicated in other communities?

- **Sustainability** - Can your Project continue on its own after your Team's direct participation and without further funding from us?

As a Team, discuss possible solutions and then vote to select one solution to address your problem.

4. Create and implement your solution as an Action Plan.

1. Identify the actions you want to take to address your local problem.
2. Organize your plan into a set of steps with specific goals, and assign team members as individuals, pairs, or trios, to be responsible for each part of the plan.
3. Identify specific and quantifiable goals that your team wants to accomplish at each step in the process. Quantifiable goals are objectives that can be measured in terms of social impact and change.
4. Develop a budget and timetable for your project.
5. Develop a method for measuring the progress or success of your solution to your community problem before you start and after you complete your Social Action Project.

5. Measure your social impact.

Successful **Social Action Projects** change people's lives for the better. The result is called **Positive Social Impact**. Measuring Social Impact considers four stages:

- **Inputs** - Inputs are the resources your team puts into your project including your time, money, and materials.
- **Outputs** - Outputs reflect the direct results of your team's action in your community. For example an output might be a change in a drunk driving law or delivery of 100 meals to hungry members of your community.
- **Outcomes** - Outcomes are changes to people in your community in less tangible ways. For example an outcome of a team's teenage suicide prevention program could be increased awareness of community members to the problem.
- **Impacts** - Impacts are the outcomes minus an estimate of what would have happened without your work. For example, if your team implemented a teenage suicide prevention program and the community awareness of the problem rose from 20 percent to 80 percent, your Impact would be 60 percent.

Initial Survey

In order to measure the Social Impact of your Social Action Project you need to start by conducting a survey or study when you begin your Project. This initial measurement will establish a baseline for evaluation at the end of your project. At the conclusion of your project you will conduct a second study in order to **Measure the Social Impact** of your Social Action Project.

Examples:

- A. If your goal is to reduce the number of teenage attempted suicides in your community, you need to find out what the number of attempted suicides is before you start. To do so you may want to interview counselors, psychologists, and community health care professionals in the area before you start your Project.

- B. If your goal is to provide healthy food to people in need, you may want to interview directors at a local food bank to find out how much food they have available before you start your Project.

- C. If your goal is to clean up a local playground by removing graffiti, trash, and other problems, you may want to take photos of the site and quantify how much trash and graffiti is in the area.

Final Survey

The follow-up study at the end of your Project will help you determine the **Social Impact** of your Social Action Project.