



Community Capacity Building Tool

A tool for planning, building and reflecting on community capacity in community based health projects

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Literature Used in the Development of this Tool

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The development of this tool is featured in *Health Promotion International*.

The development of measures of community capacity for community-based funding programs in Canada. Mary Frances MacLellan-Wright; Donna Anderson; Sarah Barber; Neale Smith; Brenda Cantin; Roxanne Felix; Kim Raine. Health Promotion International 2007; doi: 10.1093/heapro/dam024

Abstract:

<http://heapro.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/dam024?ijkey=CK9piYfJPZeNLnz&keytype=ref>

Full Text:

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How to use the Community Capacity Building Tool

This document is a planning tool to help you build community capacity in health promotion projects. The tool gives you a snapshot of where you are—and where you still might go—in building community capacity, for your project.

Using the metaphor of a journey, the tool lets you evaluate or track your location in a health-project journey. *Just started*, *On the road*, *Nearly there*, and *We're there* are the four mapping points. We suggest you use the tool in small groups with people involved in your project to generate ideas.

What is the Community Capacity Building Tool?

The “tool” is really nine features that together, describe community capacity. Each feature is presented with questions for your project group to discuss. As you discuss the questions, you record your answers to help further planning. The tool features are:

1. Participation
2. Leadership
3. Community structures
4. Role of external support (for example, a funding agency)
5. Asking why
6. Obtaining resources
7. Skills, knowledge, and learning
8. Linking with others
9. Sense of community

At the beginning of each feature page is a boxed explanation of the feature you will discuss.

A note about this tool's development: This tool was developed through a research project that drew on the expertise of practitioners and researchers from across Canada. For the purpose of the research project, the term Community Capacity was defined as: “sustainable skills, organizational structures, resources, and commitment to health improvement in health and other sectors, to prolong and multiply health gains many times over” (New South Wales Health Department, 2001, p. i).

What are the steps for using the planning tool?

1. *Read first.* Before starting with page 3, read the filled in example on page 1. **For each feature, read the boxed definition at the top of the feature page before moving through the questions that follow.**
2. *Discuss.* Together discuss your answers to each question, and then decide which of the four mapping points (*Just started, On the road, Nearly there, and We're there*) best describes where your project is.
3. *Fill in the form as you work through the questions.* If any questions do not apply to your project, leave it blank and write N/A in the describe box.
4. *Use the Results Summary Section on pages 20 & 21 to summarize your responses for all nine features.* This will give you a snapshot of where your project is at for each of the features. Mapping the features on the graph will help your project team determine what feature(s) to concentrate on strengthening.
5. *Be realistic.* Building capacity for participation, for example, differs for every community. Projects don't always progress in straight lines; they may circle around. Use the planning tool to help you travel as far as you realistically can at this point in time in your project.

Some terms we use in the Community Capacity Building Tool

<i>Project team</i>	Members of the community who work together to guide the project. This group typically includes the project coordinator and others with an interest in the project such as members from the target population, other organizations, and the community. Some examples of project teams are coordinating committees, steering committees, and project advisory committees.
<i>Target population</i>	People in your community whom you are trying to reach to create change. The organizations or people that you reach directly as a result of the project.
<i>Community</i>	In this tool, the word community refers to the people or organizations that you hope will benefit from your work with the target population. For example, for a project that changed school policies on food available in schools, the affected community would be the children, parents, teachers, and principals. The target population for the policy change would include the school boards, principals, and teachers.

Feature 1 - Participation - EXAMPLE

Participation is the active involvement of people in improving their own and their community's health and well-being. Participating in a project means the target population, community members, and other stakeholders are involved in project activities, such as making decisions and evaluation.

1. Have you actively involved community organizations in your project?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified what groups we should involve</i>	<i>We have identified the groups who should be involved.</i>	<i>We have contacted groups that should be involved.</i>	<i>The groups are involved.</i>

Describe: *As a project team, we have identified that various local church groups, the local beat cops, and the John Howard Society should be invited to become involved in the project. These groups would have a lot to offer the youth we are working with!*

2. Have you actively involved a representative range (such as different sexes, ages, ethnicities, and sectors) of target population members in your project?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified who to involve.</i>	<i>We have identified the range of people who should be involved.</i>	<i>We have contacted representatives from the range of people who should be involved.</i>	<i>We have involved a range of representatives from the target population.</i>

Describe: *Because of the culture of the community we are working with, we have been able to get men out to the project meetings but the women still do not feel comfortable attending. We are currently working with the community on how to overcome this barrier.*

3. Have you overcome barriers to participation of the target population in the project? Examples include training, skills, transportation, childcare, language, location, and meeting times.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not thought about what barriers keep people from participating.</i>	<i>We are learning about the barriers that make participation difficult.</i>	<i>We have identified barriers to participation and have begun to overcome them.</i>	<i>Our work to overcome barriers has increased participation.</i>

Describe: *The people who are involved in the project have very busy school and work schedules. We have tried to schedule project activities around people's schedules but have not been successful – we still can't offer childcare on a regular basis – and transportation remains an issue.*

4. Are you using different methods to inform everyone about the project? Examples include meetings, e-mail list serve, the media, and newsletters.

Just started <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified different ways to inform people about the project.</i>	<i>We have some ideas but we're unsure how to proceed.</i>	<i>We have taken some steps to communicate project information.</i>	<i>We are effectively using different methods to communicate the project.</i>
Describe: <i>We haven't thought of a formal method to communicate with everyone involved in the project - so far we have just used posters and word-of-mouth to communicate project events.</i>			

Feature 1 - Participation

Participation is the active involvement of people in improving their own and their community's health and well-being. Participating in a project means the target population, community members, and other stakeholders are involved in project activities, such as making decisions and evaluation.

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<i>We have not yet identified what groups we should involve.</i>	<i>We have identified the groups who should be involved.</i>	<i>We have contacted groups that should be involved.</i>	<i>The groups are involved.</i>
Describe:			

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Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified who to involve.</i>	<i>We have identified the range of people who should be involved.</i>	<i>We have contacted representatives from the range of people who should be involved.</i>	<i>We have involved a range of representatives from the target population.</i>
Describe:			

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Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not thought about what barriers keep people from participating.</i>	<i>We are learning about the barriers that make participation difficult.</i>	<i>We have identified barriers to participation and have begun to overcome them.</i>	<i>Our work to overcome barriers has increased participation.</i>
Describe:			

4. Are you using different methods to inform everyone about the project? Examples include meetings, e-mail list serve, the media, and newsletters.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified different ways to inform people about the project.</i>	<i>We have some ideas but we're unsure how to proceed.</i>	<i>We have taken some steps to communicate project information.</i>	<i>We are effectively using different methods to communicate the project.</i>
Describe:			

5. Are there other activities you are doing to increase participation?

Yes

No

If yes, describe:

Feature 2 - Leadership

Leadership includes developing and nurturing both formal and informal local leaders during a project. Effective leaders support, direct, deal with conflict, acknowledge and encourage community members' voices, share leadership, and facilitate networks to build on community resources. Leaders bring people with diverse skill sets together and may have both interpersonal and technical skills. Finally, an effective leader has a strategic vision for the future.

6. Have you defined the key roles and responsibilities of project and community leaders involved in the project?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet defined the key roles and responsibilities.</i>	<i>We are defining the key roles and responsibilities.</i>	<i>We have clearly defined the key roles and responsibilities.</i>	<i>We have clearly defined and implemented the key roles and responsibilities.</i>
Describe:			

7. Do you have reporting guidelines to ensure the project leader(s) are accountable to the project team and the target population?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have no guidelines on what and how the project leader(s) should report.</i>	<i>We are developing guidelines on what and how the project leader(s) should be reporting back.</i>	<i>We have guidelines in place that let the project leader(s) know what and how to report.</i>	<i>We have guidelines in place and the project leader(s) are reporting to the project team and target population.</i>
Describe:			

8. Have you encouraged and supported the involvement of informal leaders in the community in the project? Examples include requests for involvement and mentoring.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified the informal leaders in the community.</i>	<i>We are in the process of identifying the informal leaders in the community.</i>	<i>We have identified the informal leaders in the community and are developing ways to support them.</i>	<i>We nurture and support informal community leaders.</i>
Describe:			

9. Are there other activities you are doing to enhance leadership?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, describe:	

Feature 3 - Community Structures

Community structures refers to smaller or less formal community groups and committees that foster belonging and give the community a chance to express views and exchange information. Examples of community structures include church groups, youth groups, and self-help groups.

10. Have you developed links with pre-existing community structures?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We are not yet aware of other community groups or committees that exist within the community.</i>	<i>We have identified other community groups or committees.</i>	<i>We have contacted other community groups or committees.</i>	<i>We link with other community groups or committees to expand the reach of the project.</i>
Describe:			

11. Have you identified areas for improvement in community structures that your project could work on? Examples are project management and policy development.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified areas for improvement.</i>	<i>We have identified areas for improvement.</i>	<i>We are working on areas for improvement.</i>	<i>Our efforts have resulted in stronger community structures.</i>
Describe:			

12. Have you created new community structures that help community members?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet considered how our project can support the formation of new structures.</i>	<i>We know that supporting the formation of new structures will benefit the community.</i>	<i>We actively support the formation of such structures.</i>	<i>As a result of our project, new community structures have formed that help community members express views and exchange information.</i>
Describe:			

13. Are there other activities you are doing with community structures?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, describe:	

Feature 4 - External Supports: Funding Bodies

External supports (funding bodies) such as government departments, foundations, and regional health authorities can link communities and external resources. At the beginning of a project, early external support may nurture community momentum.

14. Do external supports provide you with project-related information? Examples include contacts, research, best practices, and new tools.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We didn't know that external supports could provide us with project-related information.</i>	<i>We know that external supports can give us information, but we haven't asked them for any.</i>	<i>We have asked external supports for help in getting the information we need.</i>	<i>We have received information that we need from external supports.</i>
Describe:			

15. Have you asked for project-related technical expertise from external supports? Examples include proposal writing, evaluation support and financial management.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We didn't know that external supports could provide expertise.</i>	<i>We know that external supports can give us such help, but we haven't asked them for it.</i>	<i>We have asked external supports for technical expertise.</i>	<i>We have received technical expertise that helps our project.</i>
Describe:			

16. Have you asked external supports for financial support for organizational operations and your project?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet sought additional financial support.</i>	<i>We have identified possible sources of additional financial support.</i>	<i>We have submitted proposals for additional financial support.</i>	<i>We receive financial support from multiple sources.</i>
Describe:			

17. Do your external supports have policies that support your project work in taking action on issues?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Our current external supporter(s)'s policies do not support the actions our community wants to take.</i>	<i>Our external supporter(s) have identified the need for policy change to support community action.</i>	<i>Our external supporter(s) are developing policies that will likely support community action.</i>	<i>Our external supporter(s)'s current policies support community action.</i>
Describe:			

18. Do you have other information you wish to provide about other external supports?

Yes

No

If yes, describe:

Feature 5 - Asking why

Asking why refers to a community process that uncovers the root causes of community health issues and promotes solutions. The community comes together to critically assess the social, political, and economic influences that result in differing health standards and conditions. Exploration through “asking-why” helps refine a project to reflect the community needs.

19. Have you explored the root causes of issues targeted by your project? Examples of root causes include lack of social support networks and barriers to accessing health services.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet thought about what the root causes of issues targeted by projects are.</i>	<i>We are considering root causes and how they might impact the project.</i>	<i>We have examined the root causes of issues targeted by the project and are incorporating our insights into project planning.</i>	<i>Our project activities take into account some of the root causes of issues.</i>
Describe:			

20. Have you involved the target population in the process of asking why?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet involved the target population for this purpose.</i>	<i>We have a plan to involve the target population in this process.</i>	<i>We have involved the target population in reflecting on root issues.</i>	<i>We are actively involving the target population in identifying the root causes.</i>
Describe:			

21. Have you involved the target population in finding solutions to root causes of issues?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet thought about whom in the target population we could work with to find solutions to root causes.</i>	<i>We have identified key people in the target population to involve in finding solutions to root causes.</i>	<i>We have an agreement with key people in the community to find solutions to root causes together.</i>	<i>We have an effective process in place to work with the target population to find solutions to root causes.</i>
Describe:			

22. Are there other activities you are doing to explore root causes or involve the target population in asking why?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, describe:	

Feature 6 - Obtaining Resources

Obtaining resources includes finding time, money (other than from funding bodies), leadership, volunteers, information and facilities both from inside and outside the community.

23. Do you have access to internal resources needed for the project's success? Resources can include community members' skills and meeting spaces.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified what resources there are in the community.</i>	<i>We have identified community resources.</i>	<i>We have started contacting people in the community to access the resources we need.</i>	<i>We access the resources we need from the community.</i>
Describe:			

24. Do you have access to external resources needed for the project's success? For example, resources and materials developed in other communities or workshops offered by outside agencies.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified what resources there are outside the community.</i>	<i>We have identified what resources there are outside the community.</i>	<i>We have started contacting people outside the community to access the resources we need.</i>	<i>We access the resources we need from outside the community.</i>
Describe:			

25. Are there other activities you are doing to maintain access to internal and external resources?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, describe:	

Feature 7 - Skills, Knowledge, and Learning

Skills, knowledge, and learning are qualities in the project team, the target population, and the community that the project team uses and develops.

26. Is the project team developing the skills and knowledge, or accessing the skills and knowledge, needed for the project's success? Examples include experience with the media, new software, evaluation, and in influencing policy.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet identified what skills or knowledge we need.</i>	<i>We have identified the skills and knowledge we need.</i>	<i>We have started taking steps to increase our skills, knowledge, or access to these.</i>	<i>We have the necessary skills and knowledge, or access to these, to make our project successful.</i>
Describe:			

27. Have you provided the target population, and community members with opportunities for learning? Examples include hosting workshops, giving presentations or providing agency in-services.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet provided learning opportunities for these groups.</i>	<i>We have identified learning opportunities for these groups.</i>	<i>We have provided learning opportunities for these groups.</i>	<i>The target population and community members have taken advantage of the learning opportunities we provided.</i>
Describe:			

28. Are there other activities you are doing to increase skills, knowledge, and learning?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, describe:	

Feature 8 - Linking with Others

Linking with others refers to linking your project with individuals and organizations. These project links help the community deal with its issues. Examples include creating partnerships or linking with networks and coalitions.

29. Are you networking with diverse sectors to gain support for the project? Examples include government, educational groups, and law enforcement personnel.

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet considered who we should be networking with to support the project.</i>	<i>We know who we should be networking with to support the project.</i>	<i>We are in communication with the relevant groups to support the project.</i>	<i>We communicate with a broad network of groups that help support the project.</i>
Describe:			

30. Have you provided information to the project links?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet considered what information we could provide our project links with.</i>	<i>We have an idea about the kind of information we could provide to our project links but we haven't done it yet.</i>	<i>We have started to share information—but inconsistently.</i>	<i>We have established a process to share information consistently with our links.</i>
Describe:			

31. Have you received information from your project links?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet considered what information our project links could provide us with.</i>	<i>We have an idea of the kinds of information we could use from our links, but we haven't accessed any.</i>	<i>We've started to receive needed information—but not consistently.</i>	<i>We have established a process to consistently receive information from our links when we need them.</i>
Describe:			

32. Have you worked with project links to take action on community issues?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet considered taking collective action.</i>	<i>We think collective action might work but we are unsure about how to proceed.</i>	<i>We've started to take collective action—but not consistently.</i>	<i>We have established an effective process to take collective action when needed.</i>
Describe:			

33. Are there other activities you are doing to link with others?

Yes

No

If yes, describe:

Feature 9 - Sense of Community

Sense of community, within the context of a project, is fostered through building trust with others. Community projects can strengthen a sense of community when people come together to work on shared community problems. Collaborations give community members confidence to act and courage to feel hopeful about change.

34. Does your project contribute to a sense of community among community members?

Just started <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road <input type="checkbox"/>	Nearly there <input type="checkbox"/>	We're there <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>We have not yet considered how our project could contribute to a sense of community among community members.</i>	<i>We see the benefit of building a sense of community among community members but are unsure about how to proceed.</i>	<i>We are in the process of building a sense of community among community members.</i>	<i>Our project activities have generated a sense of community among community members.</i>
Describe:			

35. Are there other activities you are doing to contribute to a sense of community?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, describe:	

Reflect on your project experience. Bearing in mind that you cannot do everything at once, what features would you and your project team want to strengthen at this time?

Record your list in the table below.

Area to Strengthen	How this will be achieved (action plan) <i>(This is an optional question)</i>

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Optional Activity: Results summary page

Print this page then plot your location on the graph. Keep it for your group's reference.

