Creating Goals & Objectives for Service

Bonner Curriculum

Overview:

Setting goals and objectives is an important part of framing one's service. It is one of the key steps in strategic project planning and assessment. Goals and objectives provide a foundation to assess one's work and the impact of one's work in an ongoing way. Whether the work is community service, civic activism, or other projects, a good set of objectives can be tracked and measured, providing information to consistently learn from and improve one's efforts. This training is focused on teaching participants how to formulate and write clear goals/objectives. It presents and guides participants through several straightforward steps of objective writing.

This training may be used in conjunction with a more entertaining and fun training like *Goal Setting with BHAGS*.

Category:

Community partnerships; advising; project planning and management; goal-setting; impact and evaluation

Level:

Any

Recommended Bonner Sequence:

This training is recommended for Bonner students during the first year, in conjunction with preparation for completing Community Learning Agreements for their service, but it can be used at any time during the Bonner experience. This is an excellent activity for one or two Class Meetings, introducing the Objective Writing principles, then giving students an opportunity to work on theirs and come back to share them. The content can also be revisited at later stages, when students' service projects have become more complex.

expectation	explore	experience	example	expertise
	♥	♥	♥	♥

VALUES: ALL - community engagement, community building, diversity
(modifications may be made to apply framework to other levels or areas)

Type: Structured activity suitable for workshop or during regular meeting. The activities included may be broken down over a period of time, so as to allow for evolution of skill and thinking.

Focus or Goals of this Guide:

To provide participants with a keener understanding of the elements of creating and writing goals/objectives.
To give participants an opportunity to experiment with objective-writing for their own projects.

Materials:

Flip chart and markers, pre-written
Copies of the writing objectives worksheets (see end) for all participants.

How to Prepare:

This training will guide you through a plan of instruction about setting objectives. The training essentially presents the elements of objective writing followed by presentation of an example and hands-on trial of objective writing for participants using the worksheet following the trainer's guide.

How to Do/Brief Outline:

1)	Introduction to Objectives Writing	suggested time 10-15 minutes
2)	Review of Worksheet	suggested time 10 minutes
3)	Practicing Objective Writing	suggested time 25 minutes
4)	Review	suggested time 10 minutes
5)	Discussion and Wrap	suggested time 15 minutes

Part 1) Introduction to Objective Writing
Suggested time: 10-15 minutes

This first step in the training is to introduce both yourself and the topic. You might want to use a brief interactive warm-up for introductions or getting everyone focused. *(See the handout of Games, Games, Games).*

Note why you are providing the training and how participants will apply the information to their lives. It is suggested that you use prepared flip charts to present the topics. First, you should clarify what exactly an objective is. Do a brainstorm to ask the participants what they think an objective is. Then, introduce the following definition that you will use for the purpose of objective writing.

An objective is:
A precise, measurable statement of what you or your program intends to achieve during a specified period of time toward a particular desired outcome.

It is essentially a statement about what will change.

The basic components of an objective are:
Description of the activity or service to be provided (e.g. tutoring)
Expected result of the activity or service (e.g. increased reading level)
Tool to measure the impact of the provided service or the quality of the provided product (e.g. pre/post reading level test).
Standard of success the project hopes to meet (e.g. average increase of at least one reading level)
Number of service recipients or individuals whom benefit (e.g. 25 middle-school youth).

The worksheet includes all of these elements.

Also objectives should be **SMART**.

S	**–**	**specific**
M	**-**	**measurable**
A	**-**	**attainable**
R	**–**	**realistic**
T	**-**	**time-bound**

Why are objectives important?
Objectives are important because they are the measurable factors by which the success or failure of one's efforts, a project or a program is decided. Furthermore, strategies are developed with specific roles and responsibilities are developed based on the objectives.

If you are doing this to introduce the Community Learning Agreement, which includes a student's goals/objectives for service, you may want to review that document here.

After presenting these topics, give these **examples** of objectives:

I hope to assist in improving the math skills of the five children I am tutoring, so that they can do long division and multiplication of fractions without any help. (example from CLA – Quickstart Guide)

To increate the awareness of 100 expectant mothers in the Running River Region of the health risks associated with smoking and drinking during pregnancy through an educational curriculum facilitated by the team with the result that 80% of participants show an improved understanding of the associated health risks as measured by a pre-event and post-event survey (another example from CLA- Quickstart Guide).

To improve the reading level of 25 middle-school youth through tutoring as measured by an average increase of at least one reading level, on a reading level test, to be administered before and after the project.

To recruit 20 high school student, by the end of the semester, from high school for a training program given by Stetson University students.

To provide 40 hours of parenting training to 100 teen parents, resulting in 80% enrollment and 50% participation in the activities of a six-month parent-child education program.

From here move on to the review of the worksheet (attachment).

Part 2) Review of Objective Worksheet
Suggested time: 10 minutes

Give all participants in the workshop a copy of both the "Sample Completed Objectives" (see attachment).

At this stage the most straightforward approach is to walk participants through the "Sample Completed Objectives" worksheet. To make it less lecture-like, have different volunteers/participants read different sections, and engage the group in interactively digesting the material. Talk the participants through sample objective writing, having them draw on their own service placements.

Part 3) Practicing Objective Writing
Suggested time: 25 minutes

Pass out the worksheet "How to Write Objectives". Have participant's pair up, particularly those from the same organization/program. Using their program or organization as the base, have them (each) work through the worksheet designing objectives for upcoming service projects or events. Give participants 25 minutes to complete this task.

They can use the sample worksheet as a reference, and should ask questions as needed. Remind them that the final objective should not only cover all the five steps but should be SMART as well.

You, as the facilitator can monitor and coach participant's progress, assisting individuals or small groups as needed. As time progresses and participants complete portions of the worksheet, stop the groups' efforts for a moment, and have an individual or pair share a portion of their process like completed sentence for the "Describe Your Activity Section" or "Choose Your Evaluation Measure." As a facilitator, guide this sharing and provide people with coaching.

Part 4) Review
Suggested time: 10 minutes

There are two approaches to Review. (This can happen during the same session or a follow up meeting). Choosing between one or the other depends largely on the dynamics of your group. If participants know each other fairly well and are involved in the same organization, exchanging objectives with another pair may be beneficial. However, if the participants are involved in different projects, or are less comfortable sharing and critiquing each other, reviewing objectives in a large group might be the better choice. A third option is to review the objectives individually during One-to-One Meetings. All are described below. It is up to you as the facilitator, to decide which approach is more appropriate for your group.

In any case, review and feedback should be based on the SMART principles. Input can not be "Your activity seems inaccurate or stupid" or "We don't do that." Participants from different pairs who are in the same organization won't necessarily generate the same objectives. The intent of the training is for participants to learn the key components of good objective writing, and to gain practice with objective writing. It is not a competition for ideas or for intellectual judgment.

PAIRS: After the pairs finish writing their objectives, have them re-copy the statement onto a separate piece of paper, and exchange it with another pair. Every pair should read some other pair's statement and assess its "SMART"-ness. Remind participants what SMART stands for. Pairs should productively critique the objective, citing both what is good and what could be improved. As the facilitator, monitor pairs exchanges.

LARGE GROUP: After the pairs finish writing their objectives, have them circle up. Explain that everyone will now be sharing their completed objective statement. Ask for a volunteer to go first, and write their completed objective up on the flip-chart. All participants should assess the statement for its "SMART"-ness and share their input. After the group has identified what needs work, you as the facilitator should provide the person presenting with input on how they could improve the statement. If their evaluation measure seems inaccurate or inappropriate, offer ideas. Indicate if they haven't identified the who, what, when, where, why etc. Student presenters should take notes on these areas for improvement, as they will be asked to implement them and present a revised statement. All pairs will present their statement and then critiqued by others in the group.

ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS: Give students the expectation of creating their service objective (and possibly learning goals as well) for their CLA. Set up time to review these objectives during the One-to-One Meeting time. Again, use the SMART principles as a guide, but also diverge into broader discussion about the service placement and student's motivation and resources available to achieve such objective.

Part 5) Revision (post-feedback, in this or other session)
Suggested time: 10 minutes

After completing the process of review, have pairs take a few minutes to revise their statements incorporating the groups' input for improvements.

Part 6) Discussion and Wrap

Have the group circle up again, and a few pairs present their previous statement and their new revised statement. After some participants have shared their revised statements, take a couple of minutes to talk about what the next steps after setting objectives might be.

These next steps may include producing the methods for evaluation. Have participants identify what these are and have a couple share with the group.

Sample Completed
Objectives Worksheet

Why have an objective?
The importance of an objective is to measure the project's services, document outcomes, and demonstrate success.

What is an objective?
An objective is a precise measurable statement of what your program intends to achieve during a specific time period toward your desired outcome.

Steps to a Measurable Objective:
1. Describe your Activity
2. Define your Desired Result
3. Choose your Evaluation Measure (methods/instruments)
4. Define your Standard of Success
5. Describe your Beneficiaries

1)   Describe your Activity
A good objective will contain an activity statement which describes who does what, when, where and with whom.

Before you describe your activity, think about the following questions:	Example
What is the one thing your program will do?	Host a Building Blitz day
Who will do this activity?	Students of Habitat for humanity
With whom will the do this activity?	Deland community and students
When/how often will they do this activity?	May 5, 2000
Where will they do this activity?	Various sites in the community
How will they do this activity?	Build 3 Homes

A complete description of an activity might look like the following:

<u>The students of the Habitat for Humanity chapter will host a Building Blitz on May 5, in order to build three homes in the DeLand community.</u>

2)   Define your Desired Result

Your desired result reflects the impact of your group's activity on your beneficiaries (or stakeholders). It should answer the question, "What happens because we did this activity?" Use only one result per activity. If your activity has multiple impacts which most do, choose the most meaningful impact that will be measurable in the program year.

Before you describe your desired result, think about the following questions:	Example
What types of things does your **group** report happening as a result of this activity?	3 homes built
What types of things do you think your **beneficiaries** (stakeholders) would report happening as a result of this activity?	Students will learn more about community residents
What are these things telling you?	Increase community relations

A complete result statement might look like the following:

<u>Three homes will be built and the students and community residents will learn more about each other.</u>

3)   Choose your Evaluation measure (methods/instruments)

Measures help you determine the impact of your services. The measures you list describe the means you will use to know if your activity has achieved the desired result. List an instrument, which is a specific tool for collecting and documenting information (e.g. a survey, a phone log, pre/post test), when writing your measure for each objective.

Before you describe your choice of measures, think about the following questions:	Example
Examine your intended result. What is it that you want to see happen?	3 homes built and the residents and students will learn more about each other
What concrete indicators might you look at to determine if what you wanted to happen did actually happen?	The homes being constructed and the residents and students communicating with each other
Which instrument would best capture what you are looking at?	Construction log of homes being built and survey of students and residents

What are the **advantages and disadvantages** of each measure?	Log: it is easy, may not capture all the stages Survey; easy to administer, people may not be able to read, people may not have time to complete the survey.
What **resources** do you have?	Experiences Habitat staff who have evaluated these types of events before.

A complete list of measure might look like the following:
   A construction log will represent that building of three homes, additionally, the students and residents will complete a survey to gather information on their experience serving with each other.

4)   Define your Standard of Success

The standard of success indicates who and what will change, as well as by how much, for each measure you choose. Be realistic!! You are the best judge of how much change can be expected as a result of your activities.

Before you write about your standard of success, think about the following questions:	Example
On what will these individuals show change or accomplishment?	3 homes built and students and residents communicating more with each other
What is the minimum number of people (number or percentage) affected by your activity?	12 residents of the three homes, 60 students and 20 residents who are volunteering their time
To what degree will they show this change or accomplishment?	90% of the students and residents will have increased communication
Over **what time period** will they show this change or accomplishment?	Over the course of the Building Blitz day

A complete standard of success might look like the following:
   Three homes will be completed by the end of the Building Blitz day. 90% of the students and resident will report an increase in communication with each other and increased learning from each other.

5)   Describe your Beneficiaries

The description of your beneficiaries is a reasonable reflection of the number of individuals you plan to reach with your activity. Include in your count those who are directly affect.

Before you describe your beneficiaries, think about the following questions:	Example
What types of people benefit from your activity?	New homeowners, students, community residents
Of those benefiting, who receives the most direct benefit?	For our purpose as a campus organization, the students
How many people or organizations directly benefit your activity?	12 residents for the three homes, 60 students and 20 residents who are volunteering their time
What are some **descriptions of** your beneficiaries?	Students: freshman-seniors involved in service and will go onto careers in nonprofits. Residents/Homeowners: lived in the community on average for 28 years, low-income, intergenerational families living together.

A completed description of beneficiaries might look like the following:

60 students and 32 community residents will benefit from the communication between both groups. 12 residents will directly benefit from the building of their new home.

A complete objective combines all of these components and looks like this:

Sixty students and 32 community residents will participate in a Habitat for Humanity Building Blitz day on May 5, 2000. The day will result in the students in the construction of three homes and increase communication between the residents and students. We will measure success by a log of completed homes and a survey of students and residents (90% of the students and residents will report that their involvement in the building blitz has increased the communication between both groups).

Compared to:

The Building Blitz will build three homes and people will get along.
(not-SMART objective)

How to Write Objectives Worksheet

Why have an objective?
The importance of an objective is to measure the project's services, document outcomes, and demonstrate success.

What is an objective?
An objective is a precise measurable statement of what your program intends to achieve during a specific time period toward your desired outcome.

Steps to a Measurable Objective:
1) Describe your Activity
2) Define your Desired Result
3) Choose your Evaluation Measure (methods/instruments)
4) Define your Standard of Success
5) Describe your Beneficiaries

1) Describe your Activity

A good objective will contain an activity statement which describes who does what, when, where and with whom.

Before you describe your activity, think about the following questions:	Example
What is the one thing your program will do?	
Who will do this activity?	
With whom will the do this activity?	
When/how often will they do this activity?	
Where will they do this activity?	
How will they do this activity?	

A complete description of an activity might look like the following:

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2) Define your Desired Result

Your desired result reflects the impact of your group's activity on your beneficiaries (or stakeholders). It should answer the question, "What happens because we did this activity?' Use only one result per activity. If your activity has multiple impacts which most do, choose the most meaningful impact that will be measurable in the program year.

Before you describe your desired result, think about the following questions:	Example
What types of things does your **group** report happening as a result of this activity?	
What types of things do you think your **beneficiaries** (stakeholders) would report happening as a result of this activity?	
What are these things telling you?	

A complete result statement might look like the following:

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3) Choose your Evaluation measure (methods/instruments)

Measures help you determine the impact of your services. The measures you list describe the means you will use to know if your activity has achieved the desired result. List an

instrument, which is a specific tool for collecting and documenting information (e.g. a survey, a phone log, pre/post test), when writing your measure for each objective.

Before you describe your choice of measures, think about the following questions:	Example
Examine your intended result. What is it that you want to see happen?	
What concrete indicators might you look at to determine if what you wanted to happen did actually happen?	
Which instrument would best capture what you are looking at?	
What are the **advantages and disadvantages** of each measure?	
What **resources** do you have?	

A complete list of measure might look like the following:

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4) Define your Standard of Success

The standard of success indicates who and what will change, as well as by how much, for each measure you choose. Be realistic!! You are the best judge of how much change can be expected as a result of your activities.

Before you write about your standard of success, think about the following questions:	Example
On what will these individuals show change or accomplishment?	
What is the minimum number of people (number or percentage) affected by your activity?	

To what degree will they show this change or accomplishment?	
Over **what time period** will they show this change or accomplishment?	

A complete standard of success might look like the following:

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5) Describe your Beneficiaries

The description of your beneficiaries is a reasonable reflection of the number of individuals you plan to reach with your activity. Include in your count those who are directly affect.

Before you describe your beneficiaries, think about the following questions:	**Example**
What types of people benefit from your activity?	
Of those benefiting, who receives the most direct benefit?	
How many people or organizations directly benefit your activity?	
What are some descriptions of your beneficiaries?	

A completed description of beneficiaries might look like the following:

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COMBINE THE FIVE STEPS

A complete objective combines all of these components and looks like this:

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