
Strengthening Our Communities

A Guidebook for Community Youth Programs



Youth programs strengthen our communities by bridging the gap between young people and other community members. These programs are essential as they provide opportunities for youth to gain practical job and life skills while providing essential community services.

After all, community is more than where we live, it is about relationships, and the interactions between all people, living beings and the environment.

-Harmony Foundation

Recognition of Harmony Foundation's valuable contribution to global education and cooperation includes the **United Nations Environment Programme's Global 500 Award** in 1992 and the **1994 Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship**.



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STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES

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STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES: A GUIDEBOOK FOR COMMUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMS

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PREFACE

- The Purpose of this Guidebook
- What is a Successful Community Youth Program?
- The Need for Community Youth Programs
- Harmony Foundation and its' Community Youth Programs

The Purpose of this Guidebook

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Strengthening Our Communities: A Guidebook for Community Youth Programs is based on the experiences of two successful community youth programs sponsored by Harmony Foundation in Victoria in 1996 and 1997, *Improv-Eco* and *Youth Ecommunity Project*. These programs provided opportunities for young people to gain valuable life and career skills through community service. This Guidebook is designed to facilitate the implementation of successful community youth programs across Canada. Based on Harmony Foundation's practical experience, this Guidebook will provide community organizations, facilitators and leaders with practical information, details and insights into the successful operation of a community youth program. The Guidebook will enable local organizations to provide programs that offer opportunities for young people and valuable learning experiences for all community members.

Community youth programs, such as *Improv-Eco* and *Youth Ecommunity Project*, are valuable because they build stronger communities and bridge the gaps that exist between people of different ages and backgrounds. By providing young people with opportunities to interact with, learn from and educate members of the community on critical local issues, a community youth program acts as a catalyst for building a stronger community based on trust, respect and cooperation.

The young people involved in these programs gain practical life and career skills, experience, and a sense of self worth as they are empowered by the

differences they are able to make in their community. Participants gain transferable skills in communication, conflict management, problem solving, team building and project planning and delivery. In addition to these transferable skills, the participants gain the motivation and self-confidence necessary to pursue their life goals.

What is a Successful Community Youth Program?

The youth of today are especially aware of the problems facing the world; problems they will inherit along with the responsibility for finding solutions. In the 1990's, young people are dealing with a society in major transition. They must be flexible, adaptable and open to the many changes occurring in society. Today, challenges faced by young people are also opportunities for them to express their individuality and passion by working in areas meaningful to their specific interests and goals. Young people require support from their communities to succeed in meeting the challenges they face, and to find opportunities to contribute to the communities in which they live.

Practical Tips & Examples:

To assist the reader in gaining a clear understanding of how to implement a community youth program, we will provide *Practical Tips & Examples* throughout the Guidebook. These sections include examples that describe real situations encountered in Harmony Foundation's community youth programs and further clarify particular issues key to the design and implementation of a successful community youth program.

Youth and other members of the community need to have a chance to work together, build understanding relationships and form mutual respect while implementing meaningful community projects. Often, a wide gap exists between young people and other community members. There is an urgent need to bridge this gap, encourage understanding and empower young people by offering them experiences and opportunities that will allow them to positively contribute to their community.

There are many critical issues that affect our communities. In a successful community youth program, young people are able to come together with community members of all ages and backgrounds to discuss, plan and make a positive difference in important local issues, that include:

- poverty and social inequality;
- community safety;
- respect for diversity in a multicultural society;
- independence of seniors and respect for the elderly;
- health and the environment;
- opportunities for youth to gain meaningful work experience.

A successful community youth program provides opportunities for young people and other members of the community by incorporating the following key objectives:

- to provide the participants with a valuable learning experience that enables them to:
 - learn practical life and job skills,
 - work independently and as individuals on a team,
 - make a difference in their community through hands-on work experience,
 - focus on a suitable career and obtain relevant experience;
- to enhance young people's skills in team building, leadership, problem solving, communication, and group facilitation;
- to assist young people in identifying career goals and opportunities, to improve job search skills and career preparation;
- to involve young people with other community members through community service projects.

The Need for Community Youth Programs

For the past several years, the labour market has been failing young Canadians, giving them few places to put their energy, enthusiasm and education to use. Community youth programs assist young people in defining their interests and values through concrete projects that give them a true sense of accomplishment and practical work experience.

Lack of opportunities fuel discord and misunderstanding between generations. There is an urgent need for communities to bridge the gap between young people and other community members. As community members, it is our responsibility to involve our young people in future plans by offering them experiences and opportunities that allow them to positively affect their community. Youth and other members of the community need to have the chance to work together, to exchange ideas and to learn from one another.

Canada is a country founded on diversity. Because of this diversity, it is important that we instill a sense of respect and understanding in people of all ages and backgrounds. Community youth programs promote understanding by involving people of different ages and varied backgrounds in meaningful community projects.

Community youth programs are unique as they offer a "win/win" situation for both the youth involved and other members of the community. The positive growth and development of young people who participate in these programs has a positive effect on the community on an ongoing basis. The sense of understanding that is fostered among community residents involved in the program helps young people to feel included in their community. The combination of young people working with other community members increases mutual understanding and stimulates new energy and ideas which strengthen our communities.

Harmony Foundation and its Community Youth Programs

Harmony Foundation was established in 1985 on the principle that cooperation and education are the cornerstones of a successful transition to a sustainable society; one committed to development based on sound environmental practices and progressive social programs. The Foundation is a charitable organization recognized nationally and internationally for its leadership in multisectoral cooperation and the creation of innovative training programs and educational materials for educators, youth, the workplace and community.

Our society is increasingly facing new economic, social and environmental realities that require changes in our lives. Harmony Foundation believes that cooperation is the only way to meet these challenges and that a prosperous and healthy society depends upon continued investment in environmental progress. Educators and community leaders are well placed to affect this positive change and to reach a wide audience. We are dedicated to providing opportunities for educators and community leaders to build their skills and knowledge. This in turn, will give them the capability to create a wide variety of successful, practical projects. We are also committed to working in partnership with other organizations to establish worthwhile results and reduce conflict around environment and development issues. These partnerships work to maximize education results and minimize administrative costs. Harmony Foundation strives to build bridges between business, government and community organizations, demonstrating the practical benefits of multisectoral cooperation.

Harmony's Institute for Environmental Values Education provides innovative training and resource materials for educators and community leaders who act as catalysts for positive results in their communities and schools. The Institute has developed a highly successful eight day residential Summer Program and is developing a new Training Package, *Building Sustainable Societies: A Training Package for Educators and Community Leaders*.

Harmony Foundation's positive approach to resolving contentious issues has attracted the support of many distinguished organizations and individuals who share our commitment to

Practical Tips & Examples:

The Value of Partnership

By working in cooperation with other community members and organizations, the participants of Harmony Foundation's community youth programs ensured that their contribution was valuable to the larger community. By partnering with a broad range of organizations, for example; local women's shelters, seniors' organizations, schools, community centres and food banks, meaningful projects were implemented that addressed a broad range of essential community needs. In planning and implementing these projects, the participants gained practical experience and skills and had the opportunity to:

- gain respect for diversity in our community;
- understand intergenerational differences;
- work with and educate children;
- create a safe, healthy environment for people of all ages and backgrounds;
- understand the importance of our health and the health of the environment.

education and cooperative action. Recognition for Harmony's valuable contribution includes the United Nations Environment Programme's Global 500 Award in 1992 and the Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship in 1994.

*Practical Tips & Examples:****Harmony Foundation's Youth Programs***

In 1996, Harmony Foundation received funding from Youth Service Canada, a division of Human Resources Development Canada, to sponsor the Foundation's first community youth program: *Improv-Eco*. *Improv-Eco* brought together twelve young people in Victoria between the ages of 18 and 24. The participants spent 35 hours a week on the program and received a small living allowance. For six months the group worked together on community projects and as an improvisational theatre group. The improv group performed skits based on their community work experience to raise awareness and stimulate discussion on critical environmental and social issues and their relationship to community values.

By combining improv theatre with community service projects, *Improv-Eco* addressed critical issues in a manner that was relevant, accessible and entertaining. The use of improv theatre allowed the participants to gain valuable skills and attitudes necessary for them to realize their personal goals. *Improv-Eco* improved the participants' motivation and self-confidence and provided them with transferable skills in communication, conflict management, problem solving and team building.

Improv-Eco began as a program using improvisational theatre to educate school children and community members about environmental and social issues. As the program evolved, several projects were begun in partnership with members of local community organizations. The involvement of these organizations was a useful learning experience for both the members of *Improv-Eco* and the community. The importance of working in partnership with local organizations will be further explored in Chapter 2.

The participants worked in cooperation with local organizations on projects that addressed critical environmental and social issues in the community. By working on different projects, the participants gained hands-on experience in several related areas. The combination of projects dealing with both social and environmental issues facilitated the understanding that the two are infinitely interrelated. This mixture of project experiences ensured that each participant was able to maximize their learning throughout the six month program. In addition to their work on valuable community projects, *Improv-Eco* participants took part in a mentor program and a series of workshops on self awareness, labour market evaluation and career development. This work continues through Harmony's second youth program, *Youth Ecommunity Project*.

PART I: HOW TO PLAN A COMMUNITY YOUTH PROGRAM



How to Design a Successful Program

- 1.1 Meeting an Identified Community Need
- 1.2 Program Goals and Focus
- 1.3 Planning the Program Calendar
- 1.4 Creating a Productive Office Atmosphere
- 1.5 Community Involvement

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1.1 Meeting an Identified Community Need

For a youth program to be successful, it must meet the identified needs of the community. We live in a diverse country and each community has its own specific issues and opportunities. A community youth program that addresses meaningful local issues will receive strong support from local organizations and the youth involved will have the opportunity to make a significant difference.

In order to clarify which issues are of particular importance to your community and its young people do some local research:

- talk to community members, leaders and organizations;
- review local newspapers and publications to find out which topics are frequently covered;
- identify local components of global problems;
- conduct a survey of the members of the community;
- attend a meeting of city council, local service clubs or the Chamber of Commerce;
- visit local youth groups and find out what concerns young people.

Become familiar with community programs or activities that have addressed similar issues in your area. Meet and talk with the people involved in previous programs and find out what successes and failures they have experienced. Gathering information on the needs of the community and the experiences of other local programs is important in the successful design and implementation of a community youth program.

1.2 Program Goals and Focus

A successful community youth program will have firmly established goals based on the identified needs of the community. From the start, the program must have a clear set of goals and a specific focus. Sample program goals might include:

- providing community education;
- improving community safety;
- offering a service to a particular group of people;
- working in a special area of concern such as health care, crime prevention or environmental conservation.

The goals of the program need to be clearly stated in the initial stages, as does the focus of the program. A clear focus will contribute to successful program planning and the appropriate choice of projects and partners. Clarity of program goals and objectives will ensure that the participants and the project partners are working towards the same results. For example, it is important to be aware whether the main focus of the program is career development, community

service or another pre-determined goal. The overall goals of the program must be established according to the priority areas of focus. See Appendix 1 for sample summary and evaluation sheets that may be used by the program coordinator to ensure participants maintain focus and meet goals.

1.3 Planning the Program Calendar

As each group of young people will have differing strengths, it is important to consider the knowledge and skills of the participants when planning the program. The calendar must be planned to allow sufficient time for each component of the program. The key program components to consider in planning the calendar include:

- career development;
- mentoring;
- labour market evaluation;
- self development, life skills training;
- communication skills, networking;
- team building, group dynamics;
- project planning, preparation and evaluation.

Each program component will require varying amounts of time depending on the knowledge and past experiences of the participants. The program coordinator can obtain useful information from potential participants on their past experience and knowledge through questionnaires filled out at the time of application as further discussed in Chapter 4. This information is useful in planning the program calendar and allocating time to the various program components.



Goal Setting:

Setting goals is the first step to a successful program.

Set SMART goals.

Specific:

Make sure your goals are specific.

Measurable:

Measurable means you have a way of knowing whether you are able to reach your goals.

Achievable:

Your goals should be obtainable within the program.

Realistic:

Set small goals that may be obtained while you reach for large ones.

Time-bound:

Your goals must be tied to a specific time-frame. Set and adhere to reasonable deadlines.

(Source: Community Environmental Projects, Environment Canada, 1995.)

1.4 Creating a Productive Office Atmosphere

The office needs of each program will vary depending on the projects that the youth are involved in and the amount of time that the participants spend in the office. Based on our experience, it is suggested that the program have an office space that the participants have access to for their collective project work. It is also important to ensure that there is some private space available to work quietly, without distraction, for example when working on career development plans. The project coordinator also will require access to private space for individual meetings with participants.

If a program uses one space for home-base, meetings, career development, project planning and office administration, this space must be carefully arranged with appropriate office etiquette and policies enforced. It is important to maintain a professional atmosphere in the program office. With numerous young people involved in the program and several projects taking place concurrently, it is critical to consider the efficient design of the office space and to carefully implement office guidelines.

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1.5 Community Involvement

In order to establish a presence in the community the program sponsor must plan the program with sufficient foresight. Adequate time should be allowed in advance for the program sponsor and the coordinator to raise awareness in the community and to promote the program to local organizations. The involvement of local organizations and members of the community is integral to the success of a community youth program. Throughout the program the community can be involved and lend support in several areas including:

- fundraising and donations;
- acting as partners in projects;
- lending office space, equipment and supplies;
- attending program events or activities;
- advertising and creating awareness of the program;
- assisting the youth in the planning and implementing of projects;
- donating time and expertise to the youth;
- sharing business knowledge and professional insight as a mentor.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Planning Partnerships

A clear example of the foresight required in program planning is in *Youth Ecommunity Project's* Seniors' Outreach Program. This project was part of Harmony Foundation's second community youth program. However, the initial idea of partnership on this project was originally discussed with Silver Threads Service; a local seniors' organization during Harmony's first youth program *Improv-Eco*. In order for this project partnership to be realized, the idea was presented first to the Executive Director and then to the Board of Directors of Silver Threads. At this point, further discussions were held with the particular staff members who would be working on the project with the young people, date and time commitments were decided on, office spaces re-arranged and insurance coverage clarified. The entire process took several months to establish a realistic partnership that would meet mutual goals and provide a unique service to the community.



How to Secure Successful Project Partners

- 2.1 Importance of Project Partners
- 2.2 Qualities of Appropriate Partners
- 2.3 Providing Adequate Structure

Working in partnership with supportive organizations is vital to the success of a community youth program; interaction of this kind ensures a quality learning experience for the participants, and produces valuable initiatives for communities. The presence and cooperation of partner organizations throughout the implementation of a community youth program is necessary as it encourages project self-sufficiency, after the participation of the young people is complete.

2.1 Importance of Project Partners

Young people working in partnership with other community organizations benefits community members and organizations by:

- assisting community organizations in their vital work;
- providing an efficient use of human and financial resources;
- offering an improved level of expertise to community projects undertaken by the youth;
- providing participants with hands-on work experience and community contacts;
- strengthening the impact that each project has on the community.

By cooperating with community organizations on meaningful projects, young people gain a multitude of life skills and experiences, including:

- group leadership and the ability to work as part of a team;
- respect for diversity in the community;
- knowledge and understanding of intergenerational differences;
- increased patience and compassion for children;
- how to create a safe, healthy community for people of all ages and backgrounds.

One of the most effective ways of improving our community is for people to work together. Partnerships represent an innovative approach to achieving positive results. Partnering with diverse organizations enhances the positive contributions

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Practical Tips & Examples:

A Successful Partnership

The Sandy Merriman House garden project - where participants created an organic vegetable and herb garden for a Victoria women's emergency shelter - is an example of a successful partnership. The youth produced a manual for staff and residents of the shelter, which carefully explained how to maintain, and continue to benefit from, the garden project after the involvement of Improv-Eco had ended.

felt by both participants and partner organizations alike. To maintain diversity, and build a strong skill base, consider selecting possible partners from:

- local schools and community colleges;
- community centres and service clubs;
- seniors' centres and women's transition shelters;
- local arts and recreation organizations;
- other youth groups, clubs and associations;
- local business community.

2.2 Qualities of Appropriate Partners

Many community organizations are interested in working in partnership with young people on valuable community service projects. In order to ensure that the program is successful and its goals are met, it is important to consider each potential partner carefully before a commitment is made.

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The program coordinator should understand each partner's motivation for being involved in the community youth program, and ensure that appropriate project partners will provide the participants with:

- support in the planning and implementation of valuable community service projects;
- a challenging, supportive work experience;
- a structured learning experience into which young people can channel their optimism;
- an opportunity to contribute to the building of a better community.

Effective Partnerships Thrive Under:

- effective management;
- efficient and forward looking planning;
- inspired leadership;
- mutual understanding of values and objectives;
- effective communication.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Working in Teams

In *Improv-Eco*, participants were grouped into teams of four, each team worked on three different community projects over a six month period. Each team spent three full days per week, working with partner organizations on specific community projects. By working in smaller teams each participant had the opportunity to work closely with a few other participants on a specific project that allowed them to gain hands-on experience. It was the responsibility of the program coordinator to work with partner organizations in providing teams with the necessary tools and supervision to plan and implement each specific project.

2.3 Providing Adequate Structure

A successful partnership requires a continuing commitment to both the partnership and to its goals. In order to provide the participants with a valuable, fulfilling experience, it is necessary that each partner organization share the goals of the program. If the youth are involved in the planning and implementation of a project about which they feel passionate, they will be motivated to excel and will experience a true sense of accomplishment. However, if the youth are relegated to sweeping floors and stocking shelves, their learning experience will not be as meaningful as one that involves them in interacting with, and helping, people. Many non-profit organizations are in need

of assistance and certainly, routine tasks can provide valuable life and work experience. However, it is crucial that partners provide participants with a structured project experience

that is valuable, productive, and enables the youth to gain transferable career skills while making a difference in their community.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Project Partnerships

What Did Work

A successful partnership existed between *Youth Ecommunity Project* and Silver Threads Service. A team of *Youth Ecommunity Project* participants worked with staff and members of this local seniors' service centre to develop an Outreach Program which involved young people providing services and activity programs for seniors. This partnership was a *win/win* situation as the young people gained many transferable skills and valuable experience from their project work. Both staff and members of Silver Threads gained fresh insight into their daily activities and enjoyed the additional services and creative programs that were made possible by the youth. Perhaps the most important benefit of this partnership was that it provided a unique opportunity for interaction and sharing of knowledge between young people and seniors.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Project Partnerships

What Did Not Work

In *Improv-Eco* a team of participants volunteered at a local food bank. The objectives of this project were to provide the community with an essential service and to allow the participants a unique opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the issue of diversity in their community. This project was not a successful partnership as the participants spent most of their time on menial tasks and were not able to interact with the community members who used the food bank. Though the participants were providing an important service to the community, this project did not provide any opportunity for the young people to gain knowledge nor were their efforts appreciated. This project proved the importance of securing committed project partners who share the goals of the program.



How to Choose a Program Coordinator

- 3.1 Duties of the Coordinator
- 3.2 Skills Required by the Coordinator
- 3.3 Precedent Setting and Behaviour Modelling
- 3.4 Support for the Coordinator
- 3.5 Timeframe for Hiring the Coordinator

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The organization sponsoring the community youth program will need to hire a program coordinator or assign an existing staff-member to the position. Since the success of the program will be affected by the skills, expertise and resourcefulness of the coordinator, the selection of a suitable person is an important step in the planning of a successful program.

3.1 Duties of the Program Coordinator

The program coordinator's duty is to work with the participants in the planning and implementation of specific community projects. The coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the program goals are being met and that each project or activity is within the program's overall focus. In addition, the coordinator monitors the progress of the participants to ensure that they are moving towards a meaningful and successful learning experience as a group and on an individual basis. The program coordinator may also be responsible for program administration.

3.2 Skills Required by the Program Coordinator

The coordinator of a community youth program should demonstrate the following skills and experience:

- a high degree of organizational ability;
- patience, diplomacy and tact;
- understanding for young people and the challenges that they face;
- experience in mediation and dispute resolution;
- excellent communication skills;
- work or volunteer experience in the local community;
- ability to lead a team of young people;
- experience working with teams or community groups.

In choosing a program coordinator, the sponsor organization should consider a person who has a youthful perspective, a great deal of initiative and a firm understanding of the problems that today's youth face. The coordinator must be dedicated to helping each participant achieve their personal goals. However, it is important to emphasize the need for the coordinator to guide the participants to take the initiative to meet their own goals rather than organizing and providing every opportunity for them.

Another key area of qualification is the candidate's ability to access community contacts and resources, since the coordinator is responsible for accessing local educational resources and stimulating project connections in the community. The creation of a network of community contacts encourages local support of the program and provides the participants with knowledge and local contacts.

3.3 Precedent Setting and Behaviour Modelling

Perhaps the most effective leadership technique used in ensuring program productivity is the modelling of appropriate behaviour. The young people participating in a community youth program are in the process of forming opinions and impressions about the world and the people in it. The behaviours that the participants see, the attitudes that they witness and the styles of leadership and program management employed will have an impression on the participants and should be considered carefully.

A program coordinator must always be aware of the attitude and level of professionalism displayed. This program is meant to provide the participants with realistic life and work experience. It is essential that the coordinator, the program sponsor, the group facilitators and the project partners model appropriate behaviours that effectively combine professionalism with understanding. This is a challenge that is particularly important for the program coordinator to meet.

3.4 Support for the Program Coordinator

Although the program coordinator is primarily responsible for the success of the community youth program, the sponsor organization should provide support and expertise to the coordinator. One of the main objectives of this type of program is to encourage cooperation and partnerships among community members and organizations. The relationship between the coordinator and the sponsor organization should be no exception to this key objective. Throughout the program, the sponsor organization should maintain a close working relationship with the coordinator in order to provide project management expertise as well as administrative support. To help with the daily administration of the program, it is suggested that the project coordinator have an assistant or a colleague who is able to provide support when needed.

3.5 Time Frame for Hiring the Program Coordinator

In planning a successful community youth program, it is essential that the sponsor organization hire a program coordinator in advance of the program start date to allow adequate time for program planning, networking and participant selection. As discussed in Chapter 1, a substantial amount of research and planning are involved in this type of program. It is strongly recommended that the program coordinator begin the planning and organization of the program at least four weeks prior to the start date of the participants.

This time frame will allow the coordinator sufficient time to tend to the many details involved in planning the program, especially in fostering meaningful connections with community organizations. The planning of a successful community youth program depends significantly on the foresight and organizational skills of the program coordinator. Chapter 10 will further discuss some preliminary steps involved in setting up the program.



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How to Recruit Program Participants

- 4.1 Advertising the Position
- 4.2 Selecting Potential Participants
- 4.3 Ensuring Balance and Diversity in the Program
- 4.4 Understanding and Communicating Goals

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4.1 Advertising the Position

To encourage a successful turnout of participant applications, it is important to effectively advertise the positions available. The opportunity for participation in the program should be put forth in an upbeat, colourful advertisement that details the opportunities that this position will provide young people and the community. The sponsor organization should include their name and phone number on all advertising as this may stimulate some interest in the project within the community.

The advertisement for participants can be posted in local high schools, universities, colleges, youth organizations, community centres and other areas where young people congregate as well as in local employment centres and newspapers. To encourage the application of motivated young people it is important to clearly advertise the program as an exceptional opportunity to make a difference in the community, while gaining valuable career and life skills.

4.2 Selecting Potential Participants

It is recommended that the program coordinator create a detailed application form and questionnaire to be filled out by each potential participant at the time of application. The information supplied on the questionnaire will assist the coordinator in the screening process as it will provide detailed information on each participant's interests, experiences and level of motivation and dedication to the program. It is also suggested that information meetings be held so that potential participants can learn more about the program and ask questions before applying.

Each potential participant chosen for an interview should be asked the same questions to ensure equality in the selection procedure. In an interview, the program coordinator might consider the following in choosing a promising program participant:

- level of commitment to the program and its objectives;
- ability to work as part of a team;
- ability to work productively with minimal supervision;
- level of motivation and interest in personal growth and career development;
- reasons for wanting to participate;
- skills/abilities, strengths/weaknesses;
- previous job and life experience;
- understanding and respect for procedures/ground rules.

In the interview stage, it is important to identify the participant's goals and interests and confirm that they match the overall objectives of the program.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Sample Advertisement

Are you:

- 18-24 years old?
- energetic and responsible?
- interested in contributing to your community?
- in need of practical job training and experience?
- ready to make career plans?

If you answered yes to the above questions, consider: participating in Youth Ecommunity Project!

Participants will work full-time for 25 weeks on meaningful community service projects with seniors, school children, people with disabilities and other members of our community. This is an excellent opportunity to gain practical, hands-on job and life experience and to develop a personal career plan. This program begins November 4, 1996. Participants are eligible for a small living allowance and a bonus upon project completion.

If you are ready to make a commitment to your future and the future of our community, pick up a Youth Ecommunity Project information package at:

*Harmony Foundation
1183 Fort Street
Victoria B.C.*

For more information: attend an information session on October 2 or October 8 at 7:00 p.m.

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4.3 Ensuring Balance and Diversity in the Program

To ensure a successful community youth program, consider the balance of talents, knowledge, education, backgrounds and experiences in the group. It is also important to maintain a balance of participation by local young people and those who are new to the community. In our experience, local youth involved in the program are more likely to exhibit a strong sense of community and a true concern for local issues.

In Chapter 1, we discussed the importance of considering the overall experiences and qualifications of the group in the planning of the

program. It is likely that the group will be diverse and the participants will have varying levels of expertise and differing areas of interest. To effectively deal with group dynamics throughout the program, the coordinator must be aware of the diversity of the group and make decisions and plans accordingly.

A community youth program brings together young people from different backgrounds to work as a team and with other members of the community. The participants learn to get along and work with people who are different from themselves. This experience teaches compassion and understanding, broadens horizons and prepares the young people for life in a diverse

world. Although a community youth program with a diverse group of participants may face additional challenges in meeting the needs of the participants, it will certainly provide a unique and beneficial learning experience for all involved.

The coordinator can ensure a fair representation of the community by aiming for a balance of participants of different gender, ethnic origin and other unique backgrounds. It is critical that the recruiting process is not in any way discriminatory.

4.4 Understanding and Communicating Goals

Early in the application stage, the goals and expectations of the program should be communicated to the participants to ensure a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what they can expect from the program. A key issue in the successful functioning of a group is that each member's expectations coincide with the general program goals. Mutual understanding of program focus and goals is integral to the overall success of a community youth program.

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One of the most critical challenges of community and group work is achieving both individual and group goals. If each individual has a complete understanding of the goals of the program and how their individual goals relate, a process can be established that enables the participants, project partners and the coordinator to meet their goals and achieve success. A healthy group can be a source of support, stability and focus that enables people to achieve tremendous fulfillment and results. The first step in achieving these results is the open communication and understanding of goals.

In the next step of the recruiting process, the project coordinator reviewed all of the submitted applications and arranged interviews with potential candidates. From the interviews, 15 young people were chosen to participate in the program.

The use of two information nights was effective as it provided the project sponsor with an indication of the interests of the young people and the candidates with a clear understanding of the goals of the program. This process was successful as it encouraged application from those who felt their personal goals were well suited to those of the program.

Practical Tips & Examples:

The Recruiting Process

To recruit participants for Harmony Foundation's second community youth program, *Youth Ecommunity Project*, an information package was prepared that included an application form, a questionnaire and a fact sheet that describe the basic details of the program and invited interested applicants to attend one of two information nights. Advertisements were run in local newspapers and posted throughout the community encouraging young people to pick up an information package and attend an information night. On each of the information nights, the project sponsor and the project coordinator met with interested applicants, described the activities and objectives of the program in detail and answered questions. See Appendix 2 for the information package used in *Youth Ecommunity Project's* recruiting process.

PART II: COMPONENTS OF A COMMUNITY YOUTH PROGRAM



Community Service Projects

- 5.1 Making a Difference
- 5.2 Involvement of Participants
- 5.3 Maintaining Focus of the Project
- 5.4 Designing a Community Service Project

A successful community youth program challenges young people to invest their time, energy and expertise in initiatives that positively affect their communities. In planning and implementing meaningful projects, young people gain self-esteem and practical work experience, while providing communities with valuable services. Community service reaffirms the ability of an individual to make a valuable difference, instills feelings of compassion and respect, and provides hands-on life and job skills training.

5.1 Making a Difference

Your community project will make the biggest difference if it involves the participants in valuable projects that will benefit the community long after the involvement of the participants has ended. As noted in Chapter 2, working with community partners will help to ensure that demonstrated needs are being met, and will allow the participants' work to continue to provide results after their involvement has ended.

5.2 Involvement of the Participants

The participants should be involved in as much of the planning, implementation and completion of each community service project as possible. This involvement will provide them with valuable experience and administrative skills, as well as an appreciation for the amount of preparation involved in each project.

Involving the participants in every stage of the project allows them to gain a sense of ownership and responsibility for their work, which in turn contributes to an improved level of dedication to the program and its projects.

5.3 Maintaining Focus of the Project

As projects evolve and the program progresses, it can be easy to lose sight of the overall focus of the program while performing the daily tasks at hand. To successfully achieve the goals of both the program and the individual participants, the program coordinator needs to ensure that each person involved in the program maintains a clear focus and is constantly aware of the program goals.

We recommend that at the startup of the program, the Project Coordinator and the participants establish a clear set of group norms that coincide with the goals and focus of the program. It is important to periodically make time for the group to evaluate the program and its projects, in light of the group norms and program focus. Such a review allows the coordinator to reaffirm that the group is progressing continuously

Practical Tips & Examples:

The Value of Community Service

As discussed in chapter 2, during Harmony Foundation's *Improv-Eco*, a group of four participants worked on a project where they planned and implemented an organic garden at a local women's transition shelter. The idea for this project came from a young woman in the group who turned her concern for a local issue into a meaningful project. From her idea, she and three other young people transformed a pile of rubble into a beautiful creation that supplied local women with healthful produce, medicinal herbs and a beautified environment. Through their work on this project, this diverse group of young men and women became team mates. Together, they dug in the dirt, obtained donations, laid brick paths, planted seeds in the garden and developed a mutual respect for each other's talents. Valuable lessons like these make a community youth program successful and provide lasting memories.

The Sandy Merriman Garden Project is an example of a successful community service project, implemented by young people that made a difference.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Maintaining Focus

A typical week at Youth Ecommunity Project:

<u>Monday:</u>	morning: large group meeting & discussion afternoon: career development workshops/educational speakers
<u>Tuesday:</u>	full day: teamwork on community service projects
<u>Wednesday:</u>	morning: participants work on group projects afternoon: individual career development/mentoring
<u>Thursday:</u>	full day: teamwork on community service projects
<u>Friday:</u>	morning: teamwork on community service projects afternoon: group meeting for smaller teams

How Youth Ecommunity Project Maintained Focus:

In *Youth Ecommunity Project*, each of the three small project groups met once a week to 'debrief' and discuss the events of the week. This weekly meeting proved to be an effective tool at improving group communication as well as maintaining focus of group project activities. In addition, each Monday morning, the entire group met together to update one another on their projects. Weekly group meetings are a valuable way to ensure that each individual is productively working towards both individual and group goals.

toward its goals with the initial program focus clearly in mind.

Refer to Appendix 1 for an example of a weekly progress report form used to monitor progress of *Youth Ecommunity Project* participants. To ensure that goals are being met and the program focus is clear, participant evaluations and group discussions are required. Program projects and partnerships should also be assessed regularly to ensure that goals are met. By closely monitoring the projects and group progress, the coordinator can ensure that the project partners are successful in assisting the program and its participants to achieve goals and maintain focus.

5.4 Designing a Community Service Project

To ensure the success of your community youth program, consider the following points when planning a community service project.

Real and meaningful responsibilities:

Participants must be given real, significant responsibilities—meaningful not solely in light of the group, but for the individual participant. An appropriate project is one that is challenging, and involves planning, hands-on work and human interaction.

Service to the community:

The community service project should meet an identified community need and *benefit the community directly*. Ideally, more than one organization within the community will benefit from the project.

Teamwork:

Program participants should work in teams of three or more people, allowing them practise of such transferable skills as: patience, diplomacy, time management, cooperation, communication and compassion.

Focus:

Service projects should be focused in one or two areas; our experience showed that a successful program concentrates on no more than one or two areas of activity. In order to maintain the clear focus of the participants, the program should establish realistic objectives, and communicate them clearly to the participants.



Partnership:

To encourage sustainability of the project, the planned service activity should involve partnership with other community organizations, in addition to the program sponsor. Such a collaboration helps to ensure the long-term viability of the project.

Design and delivery:

In order to ensure a beneficial learning experience for all participants, the program coordinator should endeavour to involve the young people in many stages of the project including: project design, planning, implementation, and delivery, as well as completion and closure of each individual project. This experience provides the participants with a sense of ownership of the project and a deserved feeling of accomplishment.

(Source: Youth Service Canada, *Manual for Project Coordinators*, 1996.)

A successful community youth program includes carefully planned community service projects that effectively incorporate several key issues, including full participant involvement, clear focus and consistent assessment and evaluation. For additional information on planning community service projects and program partnerships, review Chapters 1 and 2.



Mentor Program

- 6.1 *Goals of the Mentor Program*
- 6.2 *How to Choose a Mentor*
- 6.3 *Ensuring a Successful Mentor Relationship*
- 6.4 *Expectations of Mentor and Participant*

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Today's job market presents many challenges for young people — it is often difficult to enter the workforce with limited practical work experience, and few personal contacts. These difficulties make the mentor program an important part of a successful community youth program. In working with a mentor, participants gain practical, hands-on work experience, exposure to a potential career field of choice, and a valuable network of potential career related contacts.

6.1 Goals of the Mentor Program

The goals of the mentor program are to provide an opportunity for young people to obtain first hand exposure to a career of interest, along with practical and relevant work experience, which is certainly a prerequisite for most jobs, regardless of education, training or willingness to learn. Career development can be a frustrating process for young people who lack the experience required to get the very job, that will provide them with the work experience they need. The mentor program was designed to break such a crippling cycle.

In working with a mentor, a young person is given the opportunity to gain relevant work experience and a "foot in the door" of their chosen career field. This program provides the participant with a chance to prove their abilities gain the recommendation of their mentor. The mentor

program is, then, a valuable exercise in career exploration, allowing participants to reaffirm their interest in a particular field or (of equal value!) save them from pursuing an unsuitable career any further.

6.2 How to Choose a Mentor

Often, young people are unsure of their individual skills and abilities, or unclear about what particular skills are required to succeed in various career fields. Prior to choosing a mentor, we suggest that the participants spend time exploring their strengths and clarify their abilities as they relate to the current labour market. The process of career exploration will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Selecting a Mentor

In *Youth Ecommunity Project*, participants arranged informational interviews with potential mentors. Based on these interviews, each participant selected the mentor with whom they were best matched. Each mentor was given a package of information describing the details of the program and outlining the expectations of the mentor program. See Appendix 3 for an example of a Mentor Contract.

Once the participant has identified a potential career of interest, the program coordinator can assist in identifying local organizations or individuals who might be willing to volunteer their time as a mentor. It is advised that each participant conduct several 'informational interviews'. In addition to the valuable experience this exercise will provide, it will aid the participants in their choice of a mentor. The project coordinator should work with the participant in selecting and contacting the mentor to ensure a practical match. We suggest that the coordinator is involved in the selection process, not only to assist and support each participant, but to ensure that the goals of both the mentor and the participant are matched and met. With this in mind, it is essential that participants take the initiative to choose a mentor and take responsibility for ensuring a successful match.

6.3 Ensuring a Successful Mentor Relationship

In order to ensure a successful mentor relationship, the participant and the mentor must share a commitment to the program and the learning process involved. A productive mentor will allow participants to take on real responsibilities, providing them with practical training and knowledge, which in turn gains enthusiastic, high-energy interest in the explored field. This exchange allows each participant to prove their worth and gain self-confidence, while their mentor is provided with an eager intern.

6.4 Expectations of Mentor and Participant

Discussing the mentor program with potential mentors and participants requires clear explanations of the program details, as well as the expectations and responsibilities of each person involved. For a mentor program to be successful, the coordinator, the participants, the mentor and the organization for which the mentor works, must be aware of the following expectations. (Consider including these points in a Mentor Fact Sheet!)

A mentor should expect:

- a responsible, enthusiastic individual who is dedicated to learning all aspects of an organization or a position;
- the participant to work with him/her for an established time each week for a previously agreed upon number of weeks;
- to maintain a close working relationship with the program coordinator, including updates and progress reports;
- to be represented as a supporter of a community youth program.

A participant should expect that the mentor will:

- share insight into the daily operation of an organization, or duties of a position;
- provide exposure to practical skills, resources and information;
- allow the opportunity for career-related work experience;
- provide support, wisdom and assistance;
- keep the coordinator informed of progress or potential problems.

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The program coordinator will:

- ensure liability insurance is in place for the participant;
- inform the mentor of any changes to the proposed schedule;
- monitor the progress of each participant's mentor program;
- consult each mentor in the evaluation of a participant's mentor program.

With the appropriate combination of research, planning and clearly defined expectations, the mentor program will provide excellent learning opportunities for all involved. In addition, a strong mentor program will raise awareness of your community youth program and act as a springboard for successful partnerships that add valuable services to the community.



Career and Life Skills Development

- 7.1 The Career Development Process
- 7.2 Incorporating Career Development
- 7.3 Key Points to Consider
- 7.4 Skills and Experiences Gained
- 7.5 Tapping into Community Expertise

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The choices made, and not made, with respect to our careers have a profound impact on our lives. A successful community youth program will recognize the importance of career development in the personal growth of youth. Activities that assist the participants in the development of appropriate and personally meaningful career plans should be incorporated into the program.

7.1 The Career Development Process

The creation of a career plan requires exploration. A career plan should not be the result of a single decision, it should evolve from a series of learning activities involving:

Exploration of self

- opportunities to explore and clarify interests, abilities, values, beliefs and sources of personal expression as foundations for career direction;

Exploration of the labour market

- opportunities to research and make sense of information, resources, trends, educational requirements and training opportunities;

Increasing Employability

- opportunities to acquire skills to make successful "next step" transitions. Examples include transferable skills, such as self-management, problem solving, cooperation, initiative and action planning (completing a career plan with backup options, resume and application completion, successful interviewing and job search skills);

Adaptation

- opportunities to "try out" newly acquired skills in a variety of coached environments with opportunities to adapt to changing demands and to demonstrate transferable skills.

(Source: *Building Better Career Futures: Canadian Guidance Counselling Foundation, 1995.*)

Career *development* is a process which evolves over a lifetime. There are no "right" or "wrong" career decisions. The development of our work/life plan is made up of many career choices as we meet the challenges that our life brings us. The real challenge is to embrace change and commit ourselves to accepting the process of lifelong learning and adaptation to the ever changing realities of life.

In this decade, it is estimated that an individual may change careers up to six times during their lifetime. An individual must have transferable skills and abilities that can be adapted to the changing workplace. A community youth program will provide young people with the opportunity to develop practical skills and positive attitudes that will prepare them to be better managers of this lifelong process. A successful program will motivate youth and better equip them to direct their own career future.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Youth Ecommunity Project's

Career Development Program

Youth Ecommunity Project was a twenty-five week long program that devoted one day per week to career development. The career development program was divided into three key sections. Section 1 was implemented in the first eight weeks and included a series of workshops, skill training seminars and self exploration exercises aimed at assisting participants in identifying their strengths and abilities. Section 2 included a twelve week series of informational workshops on various career opportunities and labour market analysis. In Section 2, participants spent time researching potential career fields, conducting informational interviews and mentoring. Section 3 was implemented in the final five weeks of the program, one day per week was spent on additional self and career exploration exercises, workshops and seminars where the participants spent time assessing their mentoring experience, developing a career plan and preparing for their job search.

7.2 Incorporating Career Development

In Chapter 6 we discussed the mentor program as it relates to career development. In our experience we found it beneficial to provide the participants with training in self exploration and labour market exploration prior to the choice of a mentor. This training assists the participants in identifying a potential career path and choosing an appropriate mentor.

7.3 Key Points to Consider

There are five messages key to the career development process. These messages form the basis of a program called "Engage". The purpose of this career development program is to motivate young people to become "engaged" and take control of their own career development.

Change is Constant:

We are constantly changing. Our world is constantly changing. Say goodbye to the old idea that you must pick an occupation and stick to it. Adaptability could soon be the most important skill to have, both inside the workplace and out.

Keep Learning:

You don't stop growing just because you haven't gotten any taller. You don't stop learning after you finish high school. There are opportunities for learning and growth all around you. Inner space is the last frontier.

Focus on the Journey:

Life is not a destination. Getting there is actually much more than half the fun. Which is perfect because, as you evolve and life evolves around you, the place you thought you were heading may not look so enticing anymore. You may have decided you would rather go off in another direction, or to somewhere else that has not shown up on your map.

Follow Your Heart:

Find out what you want. Go after what is really important to you. Let your dreams shape your goals. Use the energy your dreams give you to help you learn the skills and take the risks you need to take to make those dreams - or any part of them - a reality.

PART II: Components Of A Community Youth Program

Access Your Allies:

There are people out there, in your family, your school, your community whom you respect and trust. They can be useful in assisting you in getting where it is that you want to go.

(Source: *Building Better Career Futures: Canadian Guidance Counselling Foundation, 1995.*)

By incorporating these five key messages in the career development component of the program, you will be on the track to success with your community youth program.

For further information on career resources, please see the Resource section at the end of this Guidebook.

7.4 Skills and Experiences Gained

The participants of a community youth program gain numerous skills and abilities that are transferable to future career plans and useful in everyday life. These skills are gained from every aspect of the program. The career development component of the program is meant to provide the participants with practical information and tools to

assist them in the creation of a career plan. The community service projects provide the participants with hands-on work experience and valuable life skills, while the mentor program allows them the opportunity to gain insight into potential careers. The following list identifies some of the particular skills, abilities and attributes that participants will gain from a well designed community youth program:

- interpersonal, communication and listening skills;
- time management skills;
- conflict management skills;
- self discipline and ability to work as part of a team;
- ability to work independently;
- public speaking skills;
- self-confidence;
- compassion, understanding and acceptance of others;
- self-assessment/personal awareness;
- decision making skills;
- vocational goal planning;
- effective work habits and behaviours.

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Practical Tips & Examples:

Community Support

Improv-Eco was successful in receiving support from community members in donating their time and expertise to the program for educational seminars. The career development component of the program involved many speakers from the community who donated their time to speak to the young people and provide training in many areas including: financial management, business skills, entrepreneurship, interview skills, networking, informational interviews, group dynamics, public speaking and more . . .

This show of support was essential to providing a quality career development program on a limited budget and proved that members of the local community are prepared to assist young people in entering the workforce.

Through this program, participants will be exposed to a broad range of practical life experiences that are unique in comparison to the usual classroom or job training. From these experiences, participants will gain a wealth of knowledge and experience that will assist them in achieving their future career and life goals. The participants will be challenged to put their talent on the line for their communities, to work on meaningful projects and to produce real results.

7.5 Tapping into Community Expertise

In coordinating a successful community youth program, the involvement of the community is essential.

By involving local people in the program, the participants will be exposed to a wide range of opinions and expertise and make valuable connections in the community that will assist them in obtaining their future goals. In addition, by working with local people, your program will receive recognition that will be beneficial in raising awareness and encouraging program support. It is recommended that you invite local people to share their experiences and expertise with your group. By interacting with professional people with similar career development histories, participants will be encouraged and may obtain a clearer vision of their personal goals.





Group Dynamics

- 8.1 Group Discussions
- 8.2 Decision Making
- 8.3 Teamwork
- 8.4 Suggestions on Effective Group Leadership

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Group dynamics are one of the most critical elements of any program involving individuals working together as a team. When any group of individuals is brought together, there will be differing opinions, experiences, personalities, values and ideas. This diversity is what makes life

exciting and certainly what makes many groups unique.

In order to work with a diverse group to achieve productive results, the issue of group dynamics must be approached in a diplomatic manner that enhances individuality and encourages cooperation. A successful community youth program will incorporate a positive, proactive approach to dealing with group dynamics. This chapter will discuss a few of the key areas in a community youth program that involve group dynamics.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Devoting Time to Group Dynamics

To ensure a successful community youth program, time must be devoted to group dynamics. A large part of a successful group dynamic is based on the existence of a safe, trusting atmosphere among team members. To aid in team building, consider planning a workshop or event that allows participants an opportunity to get to know and trust one another. By building an open, trusting relationship among the participants and the program coordinator early in the program, many potential communication problems can be avoided.

Chapter 9 will describe *Improv-Eco's* use of improv theatre as an effective team building exercise. Similarly, *Youth Ecommunity Project* held a workshop on 'Diversity Among Young Canadians'. In this workshop, Charles Boehm-Hill of the National Coalition Building Institute, worked with participants to create a trusting, supportive group atmosphere through exploration of scenarios where young people have encountered discrimination (for more information on Mr. Boehm-Hill please see Resource Section).

8.1 Group Discussions

In the successful coordination of a diverse group, a diplomatic approach is required. In a youth program, group discussions occur regularly and require an effective facilitator to ensure their effectiveness. In group settings, the voices of a few are often heard, to the frustration of the softer spoken individuals. The program coordinator should not always be required to act as referee in group discussion. It is a beneficial learning experience for each member of the group to facilitate a group discussion and ensure order is maintained and each individual is allowed the opportunity to speak.

8.2 Decision Making

Another situation involving complex group dynamics is the process of decision making. It is suggested that each discussion have a designated facilitator to ensure that all voices are heard. The facilitator can reiterate the points made in the discussion and expedite the decision making process. A diverse group of energetic young people will have many varying ideas and theories on every subject. Designating a group facilitator will expedite the decision making process, ensure equality and save time. In order to clarify the role of the group in the discussion, it is important to alert the participants at the outset whether their

role is to advise the coordinator or to make the decision as a group.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Monitoring Group Dynamics

In *Improv-Eco* a co-facilitator was elected from the group to assist the Project Coordinator in facilitating group discussions. The co-facilitator's duty was to monitor group discussions and ensure that each group member was invited to share their thoughts. This proved to be a valuable learning experience for the participants as they gained communication skills from acting as co-facilitator and also an increased understanding of the process of effective group discussion. In addition, this was a successful way to involve the participants in monitoring their own group dynamic.

The talking circle is one form of ensuring fairness in a group discussion. The group chooses an object that will be held by the person whose turn it is to speak. When one group member holds this item, the others must pay respect and acknowledge that person's right to speak. In the experience of *Improv-Eco* it was necessary to elect a facilitator to ensure that each person had the opportunity to voice their opinion.

while, at the same time effectively contributing to team goals.

Throughout *Youth Ecommunity Project* and *Improv-Eco* the large group of participants was placed into smaller teams of 4-5 that worked together on community service projects. The reason for the smaller groupings was to ensure productivity and maximize the experience for each participant. By working in smaller teams on three different projects each participant was exposed to a variety of practical experiences and provided with many opportunities to gain transferable skills.

8.3 Teamwork

Through their work on community projects, the participants gain valuable experience in working as a member of a team. Teamwork is an essential part of the program as participants learn to adapt to and work with others. Working as an individual who is part of a team is a valuable skill that participants will use in every aspect of their future personal and professional lives. It is important for young people to learn to maintain their independence in a group

8.4 Suggestions on Effective Group Leadership

There are no simple recommendations for smoothing the transitions that will arise as the group forms and grows together. From our experience we can only suggest that the program coordinator act as a role model for the participants in encouraging diplomacy and fair judgement. In order to ensure the success of the program, the coordinator must at times use his/her own judgement in dealing with group dynamics.

To effectively lead and manage the group, the coordinator must balance managerial skills with understanding of issues affecting young people. As discussed in Chapter 3, the program coordinator must understand and be supportive of the challenges that young people face. At the same time, the coordinator must maintain the focus of the group and ensure productivity. In addition, good relationships among the participants are central to a constructive group dynamic. In order for a program to succeed, it is imperative that the participants of the group treat one another with respect at all times.



PART III: HOW TO IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY YOUTH PROGRAM



CASE STUDY: Use of Improvisational Theatre

- 9.1 Using Improv-Eco as a Model
- 9.2 How Improv was Used
- 9.3 Benefits of Improv Theatre Training
- 9.4 Skills Gained from Improv

9.1 Using Improv-Eco as a Model

Harmony Foundation's first community youth program, *Improv-Eco* added a unique component to the community youth program by using the innovative medium of improvisational theatre to convey environmental messages to the community. Improvisational theatre draws on the audience for suggestions around which the actors model each skit. The nature of improv theatre is that it is creative, unrehearsed, there are no scripts and it is fun! The improv theatre training was a useful tool as it boosted the participants' self-esteem and improved their communication skills. This chapter will provide a model of how an additional, unique element, such as improv theatre, can be added to the other components of a community youth program

It is not our suggestion that every community youth program should use improv theatre to improve self esteem and train young people in communication, time management and problem solving skills. Rather, we want to illustrate one

method which can be used in a community youth program to the benefit of the youth and the program as a whole.

There are many other ways to provide the participants with the experiences that the *Improv-Eco* participants gained from using improv theatre, for example; consider involving participants in public speaking programs, debates, community discussion groups or other interactive options that promote community involvement and increase self-esteem. As program sponsor or coordinator you should consider the alternatives and choose the creative method that best enables your program to achieve its goals.

9.2 How Improv was Used

The participants in *Improv-Eco* had little training in theatre in the beginning of the program. In the second week of the program, Johnson Moretti, past director of the Canadian Improv Games, spent five days training the young people in improv theatre. This intensive week of training provided the participants with skills and abilities that they had not imagined they would gain. Improv promotes cooperation and trust. As a result, the *Improv-Eco* participants quickly learned to trust one another and to work together as a successful team.

Improv is a unique and creative way to grab an audience's attention. As the audience's suggestions steer the content of the skit, improv allows only for a subject to be addressed on a superficial level. Our experience showed that in order to be successful, it was crucial to follow up a

performance with a discussion of the topics addressed. School children responded particularly well to this sort of interactive learning and the results proved very successful when a performance was followed by an educational discussion.

Throughout the program, the participants used their improv skills in performances at various community venues. The members of *Improv-Eco* performed at community centres, elementary schools, parties, meetings, conferences and outdoor festivals. The use of improv proved to be valuable as it raised awareness of critical environmental and social issues in a manner that was entertaining.

For more information on improv training contact: Johnson Moretti, 881 Bellevue Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 5A9; (613) 729-8832.

9.3 Benefits of Improv Theatre Training

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The use of improv proved to be valuable as it provided the opportunity for the group to trust one other and to work as a team. As the participants became more proficient at improv, they honed their skills in public speaking, communication, time management, quick thinking, problem solving, leadership, cooperation and team building. In addition to these transferable skills, the participants gained self confidence and increased their self esteem. Some of the key skills gained from improv will be discussed later in this chapter.

In addition to gaining relevant skills, the participants of *Improv-Eco* gained many contacts in the community through planning and coordinating their improv performances. The improv component of the program complemented the community service projects and the career development component, as it enabled the participants to interact with community members and raise awareness of the program. The improv performances gave the participants a reason to network and a venue to display their charisma and talent. The program itself received recognition and press coverage because of the unique spin that improv provided.

9.4 Skills Gained from Improv

The use of improv theatre provided the participants with the opportunity to develop and improve numerous skills and abilities. The following transferable skills and attributes were particularly important in contributing to the overall success of *Improv-Eco*, as they were used throughout each element of the program.

Increased self confidence - The skills gained from improv are valuable life and career skills. Perhaps the most important benefit from improv training is the increase in self confidence that many of the participants experienced. In *Improv-Eco*, there were two participants who were very shy and seldom contributed to group conversations. After two months of improv practice, these same two participants stood together in a performance and sang aloud to a crowd of more than five hundred people. The ability to speak in front of a large audience is a valuable skill that will assist these young people in achieving their personal and career goals.

Communication skills - Another important skill gained from improv theatre is communication. In order to successfully perform, the participants were required to effectively communicate their ideas in a clear and concise manner to their team mates and to the audience. Further to this, in improv, effective listening plays a critical role. Each participant learned to listen openly to the members of their team. A cardinal rule in improv theatre is "no blocking". These skills were used often in the program and contributed to the productivity of the group.

Time management and problem solving - In improv training, the participants learned how to "think on their feet" and how to solve problems quickly and effectively. This proved to be a valuable skill throughout the program. In the community service projects, the participants were required to solve problems that arose and manage their time effectively in order to plan and implement each project in the allotted time. Through improv and their team work on community projects the group learned how to meet deadlines, manage their time and solve problems under pressure. These important skills were essential to the success of the program and are transferable to the participants' future career and life plans.



How to Set up the Program

- 10.1 Setting Up a Home Base
- 10.2 Creating Community Awareness
- 10.3 Encouraging "In-kind" Donations
- 10.4 Planning Speakers, Seminars and Workshops

In the initial stages of a community youth program, there are many arrangements to be made in preparation for the start-up of the program and the arrival of the participants. In the weeks before the commencement of the program, many essential program elements need to be arranged.

10.1 Setting Up a Home Base

If the program sponsor does not have an appropriate meeting space for the participants, the coordinator will need to secure office space, furniture and office equipment for use throughout the program.

The type of office space required for the program will vary depending on the particular projects with which the group will be involved, the number of participants and the amount of time participants will spend in the office. In any case, the program requires a home base, a place for messages, meetings, and project planning. The situation of the sponsor organization and the services available to the coordinator will affect the particular needs of the program office. Locating and equipping a suitable office space is one of the first steps in setting up the program.

Creating Community Awareness

In creating awareness of your youth program, consider the following key points:

- Why** you need to create awareness of your program
- Who** needs to know
(public, partners, directors, elected officials)
- What** should you tell
(level of detail, progress updates)
- Where** you do it
(in town, office, mall, schools, public forums)
- When** is the best time
(beginning, during, end)
- How** should you do it
(media, special event, displays)

(Source: Community Environmental Projects, Environment Canada, 1995.)

10.2 Creating Community Awareness

A. Community Leadership

Creating awareness within the community is a key element in the success of your youth program. Enlist the support of your elected officials. By keeping community leaders, local business and community groups informed of your progress on an ongoing basis, you will foster a supportive relationship and encourage support for future community programs that will build on your success.

There are many effective ways to create awareness of your program among members of the community. Consider producing a fact sheet that briefly explains the mission of the sponsoring organization and the mandate and objectives of the youth program. This fact sheet may contain information on specific projects the youth will

work on, expected program outcomes and goals, as well as an invitation for community support. Distribute this fact sheet throughout the community. If there are specific items that your program requires (e.g., computers, office space, project supplies, etc.), consider listing these on the fact sheet. Follow-up on the distribution of the fact sheet by calling key organizations to confirm that they have received it and to further enquire about their interest in supporting your program.

B. Press

Prepare a press release announcing the kick-off of your community youth program. Consider planning an opening ceremony or special event that will provide you with a specific reason for inviting members of the community to attend and learn more about your program. Follow-up on the press release and obtain contact names for local media sources, including newspapers, radio stations, local television stations and magazines.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Taking the Lead in the Community

While it is important to keep your community leadership informed of what you're doing, opportunities may present themselves for your project to take the lead on important community issues. During the first week of the program, the participants of *Youth Ecommunity Project* undertook a large group project that made a difference in the community and provided them with a unique opportunity to work together as a team.

The participants of *Youth Ecommunity Project* surveyed over 200 youth (ages 16-24) in Victoria on civic issues of concern to young people. The group compiled their surveys, analyzed the data and presented their findings to the mayoralty candidates one week prior to the civic election. Through this project the group educated young people on where, when and how to vote and provided a voice for many local youth to express their concerns to the mayoralty candidates. The Civic Youth Forum was an exciting way for the participants of *Youth Ecommunity Project* to get to know one another through a meaningful project that provided them with a sense of ownership of their program and inspired them to make positive contributions in their community.

Keep these contact names on file as they will assist you in establishing a working relationship that will contribute to future media coverage of the program.

Seek the cooperation of your local newspaper. A series of articles and a few supportive editorials can give your program legitimacy, a high community profile and encourage local support. In explaining the goals and objectives of your community youth program to the media, your message should be simple, explain the importance of the program to the community and invite community members to lend their support to your worthwhile program.

10.3 Encouraging "In-kind" Donations

To successfully plan and implement a community youth program, it is necessary to seek donations and support from the community. Often local businesses and community organizations will make "in-kind" donations to non-profit organizations in the form of furniture, office supplies, computers, project materials and other supplies as well as professional time and expertise. Remember that 'saving money' is a resourceful alternative to 'raising money'.

To encourage local support, explain to potential donors the benefits of their support. In exchange for their support, local organizations will be provided with a unique opportunity to associate themselves with a successful, community-based youth program. In addition, donors will be assisting young people in the implementation of valuable community projects. Potential donors should be informed that every opportunity will be taken to recognize their involvement in this successful community youth program. Be sure to give recognition where it is warranted throughout your program, this will assist you in encouraging support of future programs. Program supporters deserve your recognition and thanks.

10.4 Planning Speakers, Seminars and Workshops

As discussed in Chapter 7 the experience of *Improv-Eco* showed that many members of the community were willing to donate their professional time to speak to the group and conduct seminars and workshops for no cost or in exchange for a small honorarium. We recommend that the program coordinator approach local professionals and educational institutes to request volunteer speakers. In addition, the coordinator and the participants should make use of community resources and information sources and attend local educational seminars.

By attending local seminars and educational events, the participants of the program will be exposed to new contacts and sources of information accessible to them in the future. Additionally, by making use of existing local resources and seminars in lieu of paying guest speakers for private presentations, the coordinator will be able to operate a successful community youth program on a tight budget.

As discussed in Chapter 1, it is important to plan the program calendar prior to the commencement of the program. By creating awareness of the program and requesting "in-kind" donations from local organizations and community members early in the program, the coordinator ensures that the setting up of the program goes smoothly and topics are addressed in a timely manner. If a community youth program is set up efficiently and in advance of the program start date, the coordinator will be in a position to plan the rest of the program with adequate foresight and ensure the overall successful of the program.



Implementing Program Guidelines

- 11.1 Importance of Issuing Guidelines
- 11.2 Absentee/Lateness Policy
- 11.3 Mentorship Guidelines
- 11.4 Participant Conduct Contract
- 11.5 Insurance/Safety Policy
- 11.6 Transportation Policy

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11.1 Importance of Issuing Guidelines

The implementation of guidelines is a key element in the successful coordination of a youth program. Guidelines must be established, implemented and fully communicated to everyone involved at the outset of the program.

The early implementation of program guidelines requires adequate foresight and planning by the program coordinator prior to the selection of participants. This point takes us back to the discussion in Chapter 1 on the necessity of establishing clear goals and communicating them to the participants in the initial stages of the program. Similarly, specific program guidelines should be communicated to the participants as early as the interview stage. There are many areas of the program which require guidelines. In particular, our experience proved that guidelines will need to be established for the following issues:

- absentee/lateness;
- mentor program;
- participant conduct;
- transportation;
- payment procedures;
- program insurance/safety;
- career development plan.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Enforcing Guidelines

Even the most successful community youth program may encounter difficulties or have a problem participant who acts outside of the program guidelines. When a participant does not adhere to the program guidelines the coordinator must use constructive discipline to remedy the situation promptly. By applying swift, constructive, disciplinary action the program coordinator will deter future infractions and maintain a productive, fair atmosphere conducive to learning.

Some of the key issues mentioned above will be discussed later in this chapter.

Once guidelines are implemented, there must be a clearly established penalty for not adhering to them. Guidelines and policies are useless if they are not consistently enforced. As a successful leader, the coordinator must clearly state and enforce the policies. Guidelines are only as effective as their enforcement. Be fair, constructive and consistent.

A community youth program is meant to provide the participants with practical work experience. The nature of this type of youth program is unique. It provides the participants with a one of a kind opportunity to participate in elements of program planning and project implementation. It is critical that the coordinator ensures that the participants are provided with realistic, practical experiences and work ethics that adequately prepare them for the job market. The knowledge gained from this program should be applicable and transferable to future employment. It is important that the participants be responsible for conducting themselves within realistic guidelines set according to the abilities of the group.

11.2 Absentee/Lateness Policy

Absenteeism and lateness disrupt program productivity and should be monitored closely. The program coordinator must establish a policy that is applicable to the nature of the program. It is our suggestion that a participant is allowed a set number of sick days with pay. After missing these days, each additional missed day should at least result in lost payment. It is advised that the coordinator disallow absence in addition to the established sick days or enforce a strict penalty for additional missed days. Consider implementing a policy that requires medical certification of an illness that results in missed days.

Our experience proved that absence by participants without valid reason could lead to poor group morale. This is a critical issue and must be considered by the coordinator. In order to maintain the enthusiasm of participants and ensure equality, all participants should be required to attend every part of the program. Participants should not be allowed to use their sick days as days that they "don't feel like coming to work".

Lateness is an issue that must be monitored closely. Create a policy on lateness; a penalty of extra work or a deduction in payment. When participants arrive late to meetings, projects, or any other daily routine, it causes disruption, misinformation and wastes the time of those who were prompt. To ensure the productivity of the program, unnecessary lateness and absence cannot be tolerated.

11.3 Mentorship Guidelines

Chapter 6 provides an in-depth look at the concept of mentoring and how to implement a successful mentor program. In order to ensure the success of the mentor program it is necessary to implement guidelines for both the participants and the mentors. The participants will have a deadline for completing their research, contacting and confirming their mentor. It is necessary for the coordinator to ensure that each participant finds a mentor by the predetermined date.

Guidelines are required regarding the conduct of a participant during their mentorship. Topics to consider forming mentor guidelines on include:

- absence on a mentor day: the participant is to inform both the coordinator and the mentor prior to absence.
- tasks that a participant is not permitted to do with a mentor or partner organization: consider the program's insurance policy, for example: are participants insured for driving motor vehicles?
- dress code: the coordinator might request that participants wear a shirt with the program logo on it for identification while mentoring.
- work habits: each mentor situation will vary, however participants might be provided with guidelines on what the coordinator expects from their performance with a mentor, e.g., particular achievements or end results.
- mentor reports: participants may be expected to complete weekly updates on their mentorship and have the mentor sign daily attendance forms to be remitted to the coordinator.

See Appendix 3 for an example of an *Improv-Eco* mentor contract which clearly outlines the guidelines of the mentor program for the mentor. We suggest that each mentor sign a copy of this contract to indicate their understanding of the guidelines. For further information on mentoring, review Chapter 6.

11.4 Participant Conduct Contract

A preliminary set of guidelines regarding participant conduct in the program should be distributed and reviewed with each participant on the first day of the program and posted clearly in the program office. It is suggested that the program coordinator prepare a participant conduct contract that each participant signs to indicate their understanding of the program guidelines and codes of conduct.

Youth Ecommunity Project's participant conduct contract included a policy prohibiting consumption of alcohol during program hours and allowed smoking of tobacco only in designated areas. The contract clearly outlined the scheduled program hours as well as deadlines for required assignments. Other points addressed attitude and outlined the need for participants to treat one another, the program coordinator and partner organizations with respect. Also covered in the contract were program specific issues such as office etiquette, phone answering policies and insurance requirements for program related vehicle use.

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11.5 Insurance/Safety Policy

A successful community youth program is a safe one. To ensure the safety of all individuals involved in your program it is important that appropriate insurance coverage and safety guidelines are in place. The project sponsor must ensure that appropriate comprehensive liability insurance is in place for all program activities.

Before the program begins, the program sponsor and coordinator should consult their local insurance representative and be certain that sufficient policies exist in regards to participant safety as well as liability and safety of the sponsor and partner organizations. Be aware of any exclusions in the applicable insurance policies, e.g., driving of a motorized vehicle.

It is the program coordinator's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate insurance is in place and create program safety policies accordingly. These policies will be project specific and should be established by the coordinator after a complete examination of the applicable insurance policies. To be successful, your program must never endanger the participants or any individual involved in the program. Strict safety procedures must be established, made known to all involved, and adhered to throughout the program. See Appendix 4 for an example of a *Youth Ecommunity Project* partner contract which outlines safety requirements for program partner organizations.

11.6 Transportation Policy

Transportation is another issue that will require guidelines. The coordinator should establish whether or not the participants will be reimbursed for program related travel expenses and at what cost. Research your insurance policy and ensure that participants have safe driving records and adequate insurance coverage before allowing them to drive for program related purposes. Guidelines must be established in regards to reimbursements for transportation costs to ensure equality in procedure.

If a program requires a great deal of transportation by the participants, the coordinator might choose to seek an "in-kind" donation of bus passes from a local transportation authority. Otherwise, a coordinator may choose to leave the transportation costs to the individual participants. Transportation requirements will vary in each program. The suitable policies should be implemented at the beginning of the program to avoid misunderstandings.

Consider the issues discussed in this chapter, implement appropriate guidelines, communicate them to all involved early in the program and enforce them throughout. By doing so, your program will avoid many potential problems and unnecessary disruptions.



Now it's Your Turn!

12.1 How to Make a Difference in Your Community

12.2 About Youth Service Canada

12.1 How to Make a Difference in Your Community

Take the following steps toward making a difference in your community:

- **INQUIRE:** talk to community leaders and organizations to determine interest in sponsoring and participating in a community youth program;
- **RESEARCH:** look into possible sources of funding, contact local, provincial and national sources to find out what grants or funds are available from government, corporations and foundations;
- **PLAN:** set realistic goals, adhere to an established schedule and evaluate your progress regularly;
- **ORGANIZE:** schedule a meeting where interested parties can share ideas and discuss the value of a youth program in your community;
- **PROMOTE:** circulate your ideas, your vision and your action plan to other community members in order to encourage support;
- **DOCUMENT:** keep clear records of activities, events, contacts, accomplishments and results.

Practical Tips & Examples:

Keys to a Successful Community Youth Program

- a focus on learning through service-related activities;
- partnerships with community organizations;
- young people in positions of leadership with real responsibility;
- inspired, creative leadership from the program sponsor and the community;
- clear responsibilities for all parties;
- efficient program administration, proactive planning;
- inclusion of life and job skills training and evaluation;
- **PASSION** — without which, a program will not achieve its potential impact on the community or the participants.

(Source: Youth Service Canada, Manual for Project Coordinators, 1996).

PART III: How To Implement A Community Youth Program

With community support, effective organizational skills and consideration of a few key principles, you can implement a successful youth program in your community. Everyone involved in the program will enjoy a productive, meaningful experience that will ultimately lead to the building of a stronger community.

12.2 About Youth Service Canada

Youth Service Canada (YSC) is a national action program that is mobilizing community-based organizations across Canada to develop working opportunities for youth through service. This dynamic and unique federal youth initiative was developed to give young people who are having difficulty entering the labour market, either through lack of skills or opportunity, a renewed sense of hope and accomplishment. Human Resources Development Canada, the federal department responsible for YSC, recognizes that,

while YSC will not single-handedly solve youth unemployment, the program will give out-of-school and unemployed youth between the ages for 18 and 24 the opportunity to gain relevant experience while developing their personal skills through service to their community. Youth Service Canada projects last from six to nine months and involve ten to twenty participants.

For more information on Youth Service Canada contact your local Human Resources Centre of Canada or:

Human Resources Development Canada
P.O. Box 1306, Station "B"
Hull, Quebec J8X 3Y1

or call 1-800-935-5555.

You can also visit HRDC's youth homepage at:
<http://www.youth.gc.ca>



APPENDIX 1a

Weekly Summary Sheet

To be completed by participants.

Date: _____

Project Week #: _____

Name: _____

1. Events/Project Activities that you were involved in this week:

2. What new knowledge or skills did you gain last week?
(This might include meeting someone or doing something that had a special impact on you) Please explain:

3. In the following weeks, how do you feel you can use the above mentioned knowledge to contribute to the overall success of the program?

4. What knowledge or skills would you like to acquire more of in future weeks?

5. Please explain three things you enjoyed last week.

6. Please use the back of the page to record any other thoughts and feelings on your individual progress and activities as well as those of the group.

APPENDIX 1b

Performance Evaluation Form

This form should be completed in advance by the project coordinator and used as a guide during participant performance reviews.

Date

Name

1. What strengths have you contributed to the program so far?

2. What have you gained from the program?

3. A. Clarify the goals you wish to accomplish through your participation in the program.

B. Do you have any suggestions on how we can work with you to reach these goals?

4. The following is a list of key elements of the program. Rate yourself from 1-5, considering the following:

1. Exceptional 2. Above Average 3. Average 4. Needs Improvement 5. Unsatisfactory

	Coordinator	Participant
Group contribution/quality of work	_____	_____
Attitude	_____	_____
Commitment/initiative	_____	_____
Teamwork	_____	_____

5. What areas do you feel you have room to improve in?

6. Formulation of an Action Plan: steps required to improve performance and achieve goals.

7. Do you have any other comments or concerns that you would like to discuss?

APPENDIX 2

Information Package For Participants

To be distributed to potential program participants.

YOUTH ECOMMUNITY PROJECT

WHY?

In a diverse and rapidly changing community such as ours, gaps too often exist between people of different backgrounds, ages and experiences. This program will provide local youth with the opportunity to work on valuable projects that strengthen our community and bridge the gaps that exist between young people and other community members. It is difficult for young people to get ahead today and break into the job market. This program will assist the participants in making important career choices.

RESULTS?

Improv-Eco, Harmony Foundation's first community youth program was a success. Out of the program, several valuable community projects were implemented including; the creation of an organic garden at a local women's emergency shelter, the creation and implementation of environmental education modules for elementary school children and a storm-drain painting campaign conducted with people with disabilities.

On the last day of the program, of the original twelve participants, six had been offered full-time jobs, two had started their own business and the others were putting their career plans into place and attending job interviews. Through this exciting program, the young people gained transferable skills, experience and valuable contacts in the community.

WHAT?

15 young adults (ages 18-24) will work in teams on local environmental and community projects. The projects will provide the participants with hands-on job and life experience and offer valuable services to the community.

Projects may include; creating environmental education modules for elementary schools, providing an outreach program for seniors and implementing environmental projects with people with disabilities. Participants will also be involved in career development and a mentor program.

WHO?

Youth Ecommunity Project is a project of Harmony Foundation. Harmony Foundation is a registered charity which develops environmental education programs for educators, children, youth, the workplace and communities.

Principle funding for this project has been provided by Youth Service Canada, a division of Human Resources Development Canada. Youth Service Canada aims at strengthening our communities by channeling the energy and enthusiasm of youth into projects which serve the community.

WHO?

The ideal candidate for *Youth Ecommunity Project* is someone who is:

- a team player;
- dependable;
- motivated to contribute to the community;
- wanting to make a career plan and learn new skills;
- optimistic and has a positive outlook on life.

WHEN?

Project hours are from 8:30-4:30 Monday to Friday. *Youth Ecommunity Project* will begin on November 4, 1996 and continue until May 9, 1997. There will be a total of 25 project work weeks plus a two week unpaid break for winter holidays.

Participants will receive a living allowance of \$200 per project week. Upon completion of the project, participants are eligible for a completion bonus of \$2,000 (some conditions apply).

APPENDIX 2 continued

*Complete and return the application forms to Harmony Foundation, Attention:
Youth Ecommunity Project Coordinator.*

Participant Questionnaire

To be completed by program applicants.

NAME _____

(Use space on back if necessary)

1. Why do you want to participate in Youth Ecommunity Project?

2. What do you hope to gain from Youth Ecommunity Project?

3. Are you available on a full-time basis from November 4, 1996 - May 9, 1997?
(Note: the program will take a break from December 21-January 5.)

4. Youth Ecommunity Project includes a mentor program where each participant selects and works with a mentor who will provide them with insight into a particular career field. What career fields might you like to explore?

5. How long have you lived in Victoria?

6. Have you participated in other career/life skill development courses or programs? If yes, what was your experience?

7. What hobbies or interests do you have?

8. Please briefly explain your current goals.

9. What do you think is the biggest social issue:
(A) in Victoria?

(B) in the world?

10. What do you think is the biggest environmental concern:
(A) in Victoria?

(B) in the world?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Plan to attend an information session on:

Wednesday, October 2 or Tuesday, October 8

7:00 p.m.

at Harmony Foundation, 1183 Fort Street

Victoria, B.C.

No phone calls please

APPENDIX 3

Sample Mentor Contract

To be completed by each mentor.

Hello and thank you for participating in *Youth Ecommunity Project's* mentor program! Please read and sign this letter, return one copy to me and keep the other copy for your records.

THE MENTOR PROGRAM:

The mentor program is a valuable opportunity for the *Youth Ecommunity Project* participants to explore various career options and gain experience in the workplace.

Each participant is required to contact a person who is involved in a business or career that the participant is interested in. Wednesday is the day that we have dedicated to mentoring and the hours that each participant will spend will vary in accordance with the mentor's schedule.

INSURANCE:

Human Resources Development Canada provides the participants of *Youth Ecommunity Project* with a Comprehensive General Liability Insurance policy. This policy extends to accidents or occurrences that happen because of an activity related to our project. **Please note:** this insurance policy does not cover the operation of any motorized vehicle. Although the participants of *Youth Ecommunity Project* do have insurance coverage, please understand that it is also your responsibility to ensure that during the course of their work with you the participants will be provided with appropriate training and supervision to ensure that the proper safety processes are known and followed.

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SCHEDULE CHANGES

We have incorporated some flexibility into the mentor program to allow us to accommodate the busy schedules of the people with whom we are working. However, to assist us in our scheduling I request that if you are unable to work with the participant on any Wednesday, please call the office at 385-3040 and advise me in advance. If for any reason, the participant is unable to attend on any Wednesday, I will advise you in advance. Unless you and I have otherwise arranged, each participant is required to spend time every Wednesday with a mentor. Please contact me if any concerns arise around attendance or other matters.

Yours sincerely,

Please sign below:

Project Coordinator
HARMONY FOUNDATION

Signature of Mentor

I thank you in advance for taking the time to fill in the following:

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: _____

NAME OF MENTOR/ORGANIZATION: _____

ADDRESS: _____

WORK PHONE: _____ HOME PHONE: _____

TIME AVAILABLE ON WEDNESDAYS: _____

APPENDIX 4

Sample Partner Contract

To be completed by each project partner.

Dear Project Partner,

Thank you once again for agreeing to work with Harmony Foundation's *Youth Ecommunity Project*. Please sign and return one copy of this agreement to me and keep the other copy for your files. This agreement will ensure our mutual understanding of the key issues relating to the project partnership between your organization and Harmony Foundation.

Program Schedule:

As a reminder, our team of five *Youth Ecommunity Project* participants will be volunteering at your organization on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of each week, beginning on Tuesday, November 12, 1996. Beginning in January, the time spent on Friday may be reduced to a half day to accomodate our Mentor Program. I will keep you informed of any schedule changes as the program progresses.

The regular working hours of the project are 8:30 - 4:30 each day with a one hour break for lunch. The Youth Ecommunity Project will be taking a winter break from December 21, 1996 - January 5, 1997.

Criminal Record Check:

Please be aware that each participant is required to complete a criminal record check prior to the commencement of the program. I will advise you of the results prior to November 12.

Insurance:

Human Resources Development Canada does provide the participants of *Youth Ecommunity Project* with a Comprehensive General Liability Insurance policy which carries a limit of liability of \$5,000,000.00. This policy extends to accidents or occurrences that happen because of an activity related to one of the projects that involve the young people. This insurance policy does not cover the operation of any motorized vehicle.

Although the participants of *Youth Ecommunity Project* do have insurance coverage, I wish to make it clear that it is also your organization's responsibility to ensure that during the course of their work the participants will be provided with appropriate training and supervision by your staff to ensure that the proper safety processes are known and followed.

Schedule Changes:

Please consult me if there are any adjustments to the regular activities that the participants are performing and if there are any significant changes planned for the projects. *Youth Ecommunity Project's* policy on absence and lateness is that a participant is required to report to both the Project Coordinator at the project office and to the partner organization in the event of absence. Repeated absence and lateness will affect the participant's ability to complete the program. Please keep a record of participant attendance and contact me if you have any questions or comments on participant attendance or work habits.

I look forward to maintaining a close working relationship with you to ensure that this project partnership meets our mutual goals. I appreciate your support and the opportunity to work with your organization. Please contact me throughout the program with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Project Coordinator
HARMONY FOUNDATION

Signed in agreement:

Spokesperson: Partner Organization

Date _____

RESOURCES

A. Useful Publications:

- Bezanson, Lynne and Hopkins, Sareena. Building Better Career Futures, Incorporating Career Development into Youth Service Canada. Canadian Guidance Counselling Foundation, Ottawa, Canada, 1995.
- Bolles, Richard Nelson. What Colour is Your Parachute? 10 Speed Press, Berkeley, California, 1997.
- Bolles, Richard and Victoria B. Zenoff. The Beginning Quick Job-Hunting Map. 10 Speed Press, Berkeley, California, 1979.
- Canadian Youth Foundation. Directory of Youth Organizations and Programs in Canada. Canadian Youth Foundation, Ottawa, Canada, 1995.
- Cormick, Gerald et.al. Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Putting Principles into Practice. National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, Ottawa, Canada, 1996.
- Covey, Stephen. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change. Simon and Schuster, New York, USA, 1990.
- Environment Canada. Community Environmental Projects: From Needs Assessment to Evaluation. Minister of Supply and Service Canada, Ottawa, Canada, 1995.
- Harmony Foundation of Canada. Discovering Your Community: A Cooperative Process For Planning Sustainability. Harmony Foundation of Canada, Victoria, Canada, 1994.
- Human Resources Development Canada. The Stay in School Initiative: Ideas That Work. Minister of Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, Canada, 1996.

- Human Resources Development Canada. Youth Service Canada: Manual For Project Coordinators. Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa, Canada, 1996.
- Keirse, David and Bates, Marilyn. Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types. Prometheus Nemesis Books, Del Mar, California, 1984.
- McKenzie-Mohr, Doug. Promoting a Sustainable Future: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing. National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, Ottawa, Canada, 1995.
- National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. Model Round Table for Youth Kit. NRTEE, Ottawa, Canada, 1994.
- De Rosenoll et. al. The Canadian Stay-In-School Mentor Strategy. Peer Systems Consulting Group, Victoria, Canada, 1993.

B. Some Organizations Involved In Leadership And Youth Programs:

Boys and Girls Clubs of Newfoundland and Labrador

Building 810, Pleasantville

P.O. Box 8700

St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 4J6

Phone: (709) 722-5556

Fax: (709) 722-5576

Canada World Youth

2330 Notre-Dame Street West, 3rd Floor

Montreal, Quebec H2X 3R4

(514) 931-3526

Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation

411 Roosevelt Avenue, Suite 202
Ottawa, Ontario K2A 3X9
(613) 729-6164

Canadian Youth Foundation

215 Cooper Street, 3rd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0G2
(613) 231-6474

Environmental Youth Alliance

P.O. Box 34097, Station D
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 4M1
Phone: (250) 737-2258
Fax: (250) 739-8064

Harmony Foundation of Canada

1183 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3L1
(250) 380-3001

Executive Director: Michael Bloomfield
e-mail: harmony@islandnet.com
Project Coordinator: Joanne Fraser

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)

P.O. Box 1306, Station B
Hull, Quebec J8X 3Y1
1-800-935-5555

The Youth Resource Network of Canada (YRNC) is a web site developed by HRDC. YRNC links young people to a range of information on careers, jobs, programs and services from all levels of government as well as from community organizations across Canada.
<http://www.youth.gc.ca>

Job Education Training (JET) for Youth

3 - 1099 Kingsbury Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2P 2P9
Phone: (250) 694-0019

Life-Role Development Group Limited

14005 - 105th Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 0Z1
Phone: (403) 451-1954 or 1-800-513-2811
Fax: (403) 455-0516

Miramichi Big Brothers - Big Sisters Inc.

410 Water Street
Miramichi, New Brunswick E1N 1B7
Phone: (506) 778-2444
Fax: (504) 778-2417

National Coalition Building Institute

Vancouver Island Chapter
185-911 Yates St. Suite 610
Victoria, B.C. V8V 4Y9
(250) 480-7667
Contact: Charles Boehm-Hill

National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

1 Nicholas Street, Suite 1500
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7
(613) 992-7189
Contact: Carla Doucet
<http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca>
e-mail: admin@nrtee-trnee.ca

The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth

233 12th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T2R 0G9
Phone: (403) 263-0643
Fax: (403) 263-0643

Virtual High Learning Program

1810 West 16th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V2J 2M2
Phone: (604) 739-5942
Fax: (604) 739-6903

YMCA of Halifax

2006 Gottingen Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 3A9
Phone: (902) 421-1825
Fax: (902) 423-8530

For more information on organizations, see the **Directory of Youth Organizations and Programs in Canada**, published by Canadian Youth Foundation.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HARMONY FOUNDATION

Major Awards

- Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship, 1994.
- United Nations Environment Programme, Global 500 Award, 1992.

Major Endorsements

- Canadian Teachers' Federation
- United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary National-level Project

Advisory Services

Harmony Foundation has on numerous occasions acted in an advisory role to government, corporations and non-governmental organizations, for example: The Earth Summit; Pitney Bowes; Westin Hotels & Resorts; B.C. Ministry of Education; LePages Ltd.

Major Projects to Date

- Designed **ECOMMUNITY**, a multi-stakeholder training program to assist communities in the development of a sustainable community plan.
- Established the **Institute for Environmental Values Education**, which includes the production of numerous environmental publications and resource materials as well as the Summer Program, a dynamic, interactive training program for community leaders and educators from across Canada and around the world.
- Created **Improv-Eco**, providing young people with life skills through community service.
- Developed the **Sustainable Development Curriculum Initiative**, which provides an overview of environmental education and the practical realities of change that must take place for this vital education to be successfully implemented into the school system.
- Established **Green Works**, a workplace training program facilitating the design and implementation of environmental programs.
- Held National Forum **Our Common Future: A Canadian Response to the Challenge of Sustainable Development**, Peterborough, Ontario, 1988.
- Harmony has also participated in numerous programs and conferences organized by others, either giving talks or practical workshops on environmental practices, environmental values and environmental training.

Major Publications and Educational Resources

- *Discovering Your Community: A Cooperative Process for Planning Sustainability/A La Découverte de Votre Collectivité: un processus coopératif de planification de la pérennité*, 1994.
- *ECOMMUNITY: Working Together for Environmental Action*, A Sustainable Community Project using Nelson, B.C. as a model, 1993.
- *Growing Up Green: An Overview of Environmental Education for Children*, 1993.
- *Growing Up Green: Environmental Action Wheel/ La Roue d'Action La Croissance Verte*, 1993.
- *Canada/Mexico/United States Environmental Education Cooperation Report*, 1992.
- *Positive Action for the Environment* (video), 1991.
- *Community Action Projects Booklet*, 1991.
- *Environmental Considerations for Planning a Conference or Meeting*, 1992.
- *Earthworms - Nature's Recyclers: An Integrated Unit for Primary and Junior Students*, 1992.
- *Workplace Guide: Practical Action for the Environment/Guide pour le milieu de travail: vers la santé environnementale*, 1991.
- *Community Workshops for the Environment/Ateliers communautaires au sujet de l'environnement*, rev. ed. 1991.
- *Home & Family Guide: Practical Action for the Environment/Guide pour la famille et la maison: la protection de l'environnement au quotidien*, 1989.
- *Our Common Future: A Canadian Response to the Challenge of Sustainable Development*, 1989.

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[Ottawa: (613) 741-4538]

**Projects implemented by participants of past
community youth programs have included:**

- creating an organic garden at a women's transition shelter
 - working with people with disabilities on environmental projects
 - providing companionship and support for the elderly
 - educating school children in waste reduction and composting
 - designing and implementing community green spaces
 - promoting safe bicycling in elementary schools
 - mentoring teen-age parents
 - refurbishing abandoned buildings for the homeless
 - assisting with community policing efforts
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