



ENGAGING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

An Introduction to Community Partnerships

EXPLORE

- Identify what resources exist in your local community
 - Partner with agencies, businesses, neighbours and community leaders in order to maximize resources and address gaps
 - Begin a conversation with community stakeholders from which a relationship can be fostered
 - Mobilize the church community in the local neighbourhoods so that Jesus may be known by our presence
1. **Prayer Walking** – Begin your discovery with prayer walking. This practice can help you see and understand your community more fully by being present and having eyes to see who lives around you and what is important to them. Through prayer walking, God can reveal opportunities and uncover areas to understand more deeply.
 2. **Connecting with your Community** – Spend time considering the geographical area you would like to focus on (Note: if your area includes only residential structures, determine where the assets that support these residents are located [ie. school, grocery store or bank in closest village]) and incorporate them into your scan.

Identify key stakeholders from a few different groups (businesses, schools, community leaders, service providers/organizations) that are a part of, or provide resources to, the community you are targeting. Create a contact list to call (aim for 5-10).

3. **What Questions Should we be Asking?**
 - a. First, introduce yourself and the reason why you are calling. (eg. as a faith community you would like to work together to support the community).
 - b. Ask how they are doing at this time. *What is going well/what are they celebrating? What are some current challenges?*
 - c. Ask about what assets they have to offer the community. (eg. a building, man-power, networking)
 - d. What do they see as opportunities for the community to work together?
 - e. Ask if you can pray for them.

4. Retain the Contact Information:

- a. After calling the various stakeholders, reflect on the resources and capacity you and your church have.
- b. What partnership opportunities did you uncover that would mobilize your congregation in areas where they are gifted, interested, and/or able to serve?

DISCERN

Collaborating/Partnering with our Community

1. How well do we know our community?
 - *Do we know the resources in our community?*
 - *How do we understand the needs in our community?*
 - *How do we identify who are the most vulnerable?*
2. Whom do we already partner with in our local community and how might we strengthen our connection?
 - *How might our relationship need to shift at this time?*
 - *Who in our congregation already has connections with other local organizations? Build on those relationships.*
3. What would a planning process look like?
 - *The community continues to change, our community partners' needs continue to change*
 - *Do we need to research things like food security? Who else in our community is already doing this research?*

Coordinating Diaconal Work

1. How do we coordinate efforts as deacons and church leaders for optimal impact in our community?
2. What tools, resources, and methods can we use to coordinate our efforts?
 - Tracking, record keeping, communication
 - Eg. Slack, Google Docs, other platforms?

Asset-Based Community Development Principles (ABCD)

1. How can we balance our activities - lean more into *transitional* and *transformational* activities, as opposed to primarily transactional? Why is this important?
 - a. Suggested Reading: *"Helping without Hurting in Church Benevolence"* by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert
 - b. Suggested Viewing: *The Chalmers Centre*: <https://chalmers.org/resources/the-small-group-experience/>