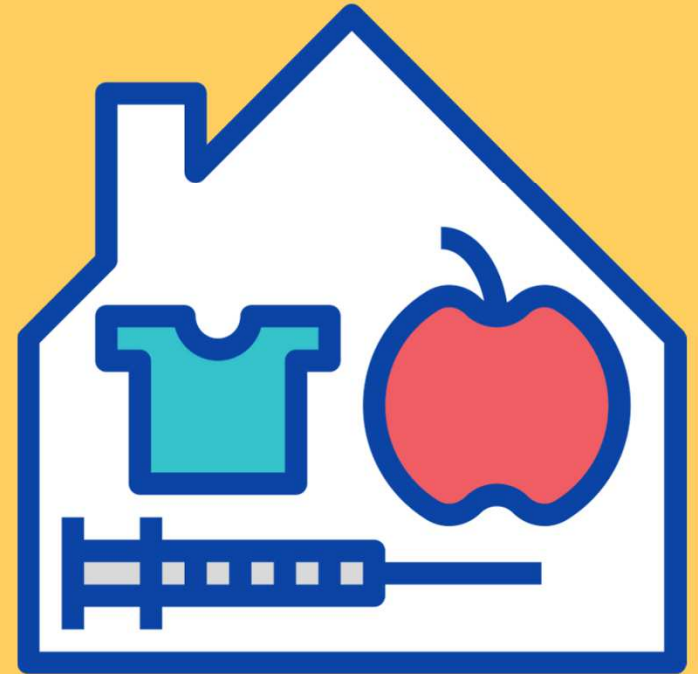# Rotary

Identifying Community Assets and Needs

—

Linda Mayger,
Saucon, Center
Valley

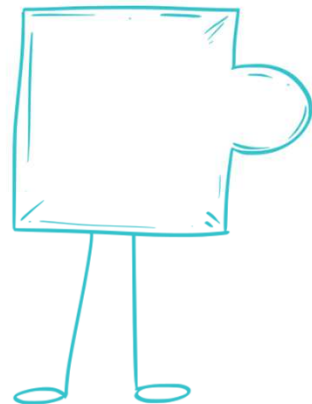Taking the time to learn about the community, maximizes your ability to make an **impact** as you:

- discover the best opportunities for service
- uncover areas of potential friction

Sustainable
projects are
community led
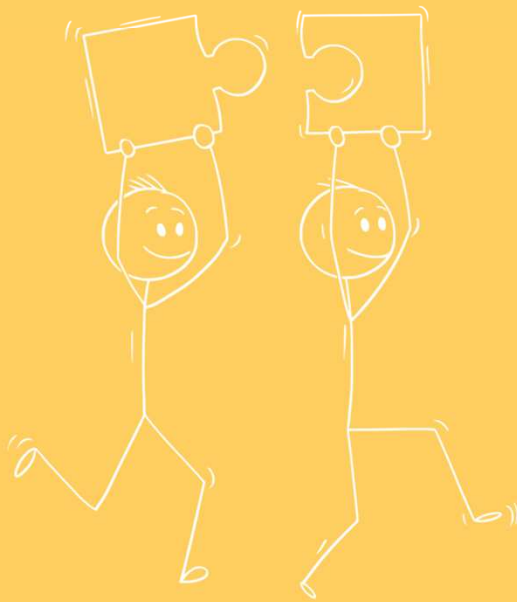and leverage
exiting networks.

ASSESS BOTH NEEDS **AND** ASSETS

Needs are known issues, overlooked challenges, opportunities for growth.

Assets reveal strengths, potential partners, and workable solutions.

PURPOSES OF ASSETS & NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Reveal **information** you do not yet have to provide a framework for solving community problems.

Build **relationships**, trust, and community ownership of the solutions.

Conversations with just one or two people aren't enough to understand a community.

Involve a variety of local stakeholders.

Engage them in a meaningful way.

GLOBAL GRANT ASSESSMENTS MUST

Include at least 2 stakeholder groups that represent the community fairly.

Use a formal methodology.

Assess more than infrastructure.

Include both current assets and needs.

Connect the project to the community assessment.

GLOBAL GRANTS COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Use this form to report community assessment findings to The Rotary Foundation when you apply for a global grant.

Assessing the strengths, weaknesses, needs, and assets of the community you plan to help is an essential first step in designing an effective and sustainable global grant project. See Community Assessment Tools for full instructions and helpful tips.

This form will help you report the results of your community assessment, and it's required when you apply for any humanitarian or vocational training team grant. Complete a separate form for each beneficiary community (e.g., school, health care system, or village), using information that is both current and specific to each community. Remember, you can't use global grant funds to cover the cost of doing an assessment, but you can use district grant funds.

Beneficiary community or institution

Click or tap here to enter text.

Groups in the community that would receive a clear, direct, and immediate benefit from the project

Click or tap here to enter text.

Beneficiaries' demographic information, if relevant to the project

Click or tap here to enter text.

Who conducted the assessment? (check all that apply)
☐ Host sponsor members
☐ International sponsor members
☐ A cooperating organization

Global Grants Community Assessment Results (September 2017)　　　　1

Assessments can be conducted by your club, the international Rotary partner, or another partner.

What methods did you use? (check all that apply)

☐ Survey

☐ Community meeting

☐ Interview

☐ Focus group

☐ Asset inventory

☐ Community mapping

☐ Other Click or tap here to enter text.

Formal method(s)

Who from the community participated in the assessment?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Participants

List the community needs you identified that your project would address.

1.
2.
3.

List any needs you identified that your project would not address.

1.
2.
3.

Needs addressed and unaddressed by project

List the community's assets, or strengths.

Assets

Considering the needs and assets you listed, explain how you determined the project's primary goal.

Click or tap here to enter text.

← Use needs and assets to justify project

How would your project's activities accomplish this goal?

Click or tap here to enter text.

← Theory of action

What challenges have prevented the community from accomplishing the project's goals?

Click or tap here to enter text.

← Current challenges

How is the community addressing these challenges now?

Click or tap here to enter text.

← Current solutions

Why are the project's activities the best way to meet this community need?

Click or tap here to enter text.

← Rationale

Although this process is required for global projects, local projects also benefit from intentional needs and assets assessment.
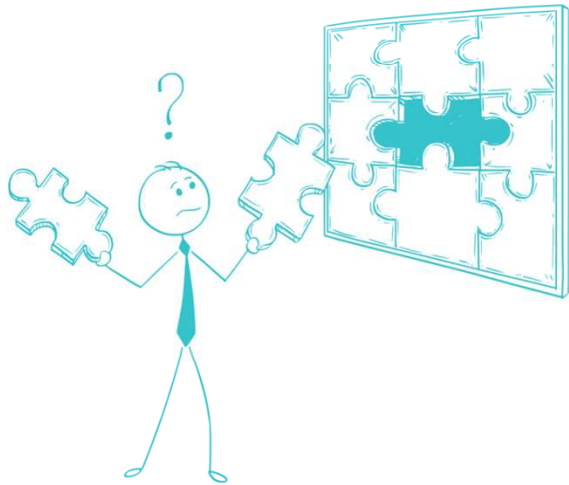

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

A resource for Rotary projects

Rotary

TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

- Community meeting
- Asset inventory
- Survey
- Interview
- Focus group
- Community mapping

AVAILABLE DATA

Also look for credible data from local, regional, or national governments, NGOs, or CBOs

COMMUNITY MEETING

—

A community meeting, sometimes called a town hall or public forum, is either a formal or informal public gathering that brings together local residents to discuss issues, voice concerns, and express preferences for community priorities.

COMMUNITY MEETING ADVANTAGES

- Can involve a fairly large group of people at one time
- Can help identify respected community leaders to involve in a project
- Can help discern the significance of a variety of issues

COMMUNITY MEETING CHALLENGES

- Can be difficult to maintain an open, comfortable, relaxed environment
- Can be difficult to keep the conversation on topic
- May be influenced by social constraints including gender disparities, power dynamics, cultural norms, etc.
- May be dominated by one or two vocal participants to the exclusion of others

COMMUNITY MEETING HOW TO'S

Consider appointing a respected community member or a representative from a local organization to facilitate the meeting.

Before organizing a meeting, define your objectives and provide training for your facilitator

Facilitator leads discussions on issues related to the community's strengths, potential challenges, and/or proposed solutions.

A notetaker records the discussion.

ASSET INVENTORY

An asset inventory identifies the types of resources in a community, including its physical environment, institutions, services, events — and especially its people. Participants highlight the individuals, places, and things they find valuable.

- What is special about your community?

- What products are made in your community?

- What events take place in your community?

- When and where do people gather, and what do they do together? Include religious, social service, sporting, entertainment, and other types of gatherings.

- Who do you know? What skills do they have? What do they own? What knowledge might they share with others?

- Is there an enterprising spirit in your community, either in business or civic/cultural activities?

- What topics or issues interest a significant number of community members?

- What institutions exist in the community, both private and public?

- Who are the formal and informal leaders of the community? Who do people listen to?

- How does information spread in your community?

- What services are provided in your community? Who provides them?

- What natural resources are found in your community? Which areas have open space?

- What skills or knowledge in your community should be passed down to the next generation?

- What businesses exist in your community?

- What volunteer activities exist in your community, both formal and informal?

- How do community members demonstrate that they care for and trust their neighbors?

- What utilities and services are available in the community or institution? What payment or financing systems are in place to pay for goods and services?

- Does a governing body help manage services, create and enforce rules, and perform other critical functions?
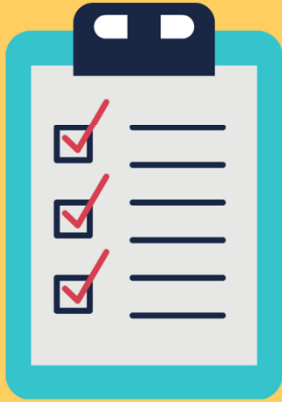
ASSET INVENTORY ADVANTAGES

- Leverage available resources
- Encourage the creation of broad, inclusive networks to effect change
- Help identify areas of community member interest

ASSET INVENTORY CHALLENGES

- Data analysis can be time consuming.
- Organizing assets and identifying connections can be difficult.
- Interests, skills, and other nonphysical assets can be easily overlooked.

ASSET INVENTORY HOW TO'S

Invite a small diverse group of community members to conduct the inventory.

Use strong facilitators so all participants have the opportunity to contribute.

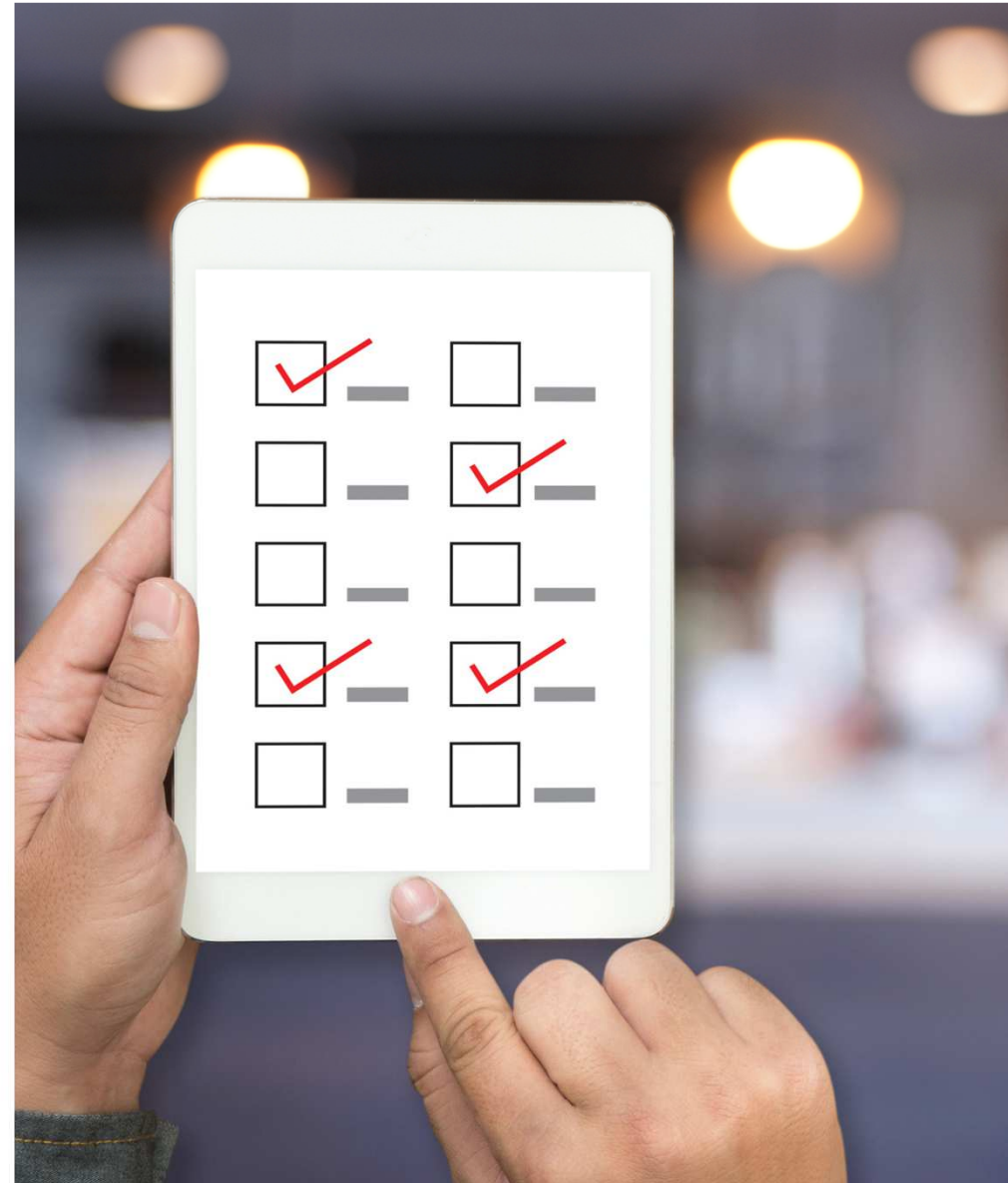Assets include physical, human, and social capital.

Organize results by category and document connections between them.
Use assets to create coalitions and networks to address community issues.

SURVEY

An asynchronous method for collecting information and opinions.

SURVEY ADVANTAGES

- They can be administered remotely.
- Tech tools have made them easy to create and analyze.
- They can be repeated.
- They can be completed anonymously, encouraging candid responses.
- They're generally inexpensive to administer.

SURVEY CHALLENGES

- Obtaining personal contact information can be difficult.
- Internet access may be limited
- Phone surveys may be subject to sample or interviewer bias.
- Response rates are generally low.
- Written surveys are ineffective with illiterate populations.
- Written surveys don't allow for follow-up questions.
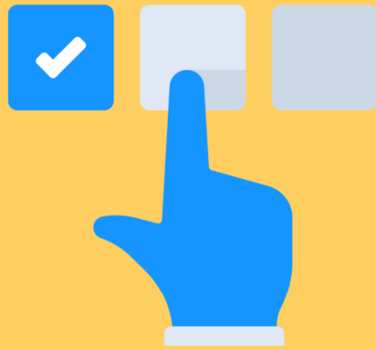
SURVEY HOW TO'S

Explain your purpose

Keep it short and simple

Wording of questions is key. Avoid leading questions, ambiguous terms, and loaded language .

Pilot the survey.

Consider how you will analyze the data. Open-ended questions allow for nuanced responses but are more complicated to analyze. Some platforms report "Check all that apply" questions in a difficult format.

INTERVIEW

Interviews are one-on-one conversations between a facilitator (the interviewer) and a community stakeholder (the respondent).

INTERVIEW ADVANTAGES

- Can be conversational and spontaneous.
- Most accurate and thorough way to obtain qualitative data
- Effective with illiterate populations.

INTERVIEW CHALLENGES

- Time consuming.
- One respondent at a time.
- Requires practice and some degree of skill.
- Not anonymous/social desirability bias

INTERVIEW HOW TO'S

Design questions that address your goals.

Identify target population.

Establish rapport before beginning questions. Be conversational.

Ideally, one person asks questions while another takes notes.

Ask people to elaborate and ask follow up questions.

FOCUS GROUP

A focus group is a carefully guided discussion used to determine a target group's opinions on a particular idea. It can help you determine how the stakeholders believe community issues should be addressed.
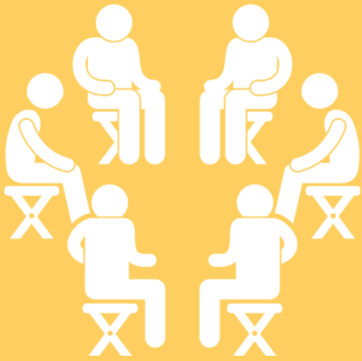
FOCUS GROUP ADVANTAGES

- Group dynamics can provide useful information.
- Similar benefits as interviews, but can accommodate more people.
- They're effective with illiterate populations.

FOCUS GROUP CHALLENGES

- Group think. Unlikely to surface controversial opinions.
- Discussions can be dominated or sidetracked by a few individuals.
- Analyzing data can be time consuming.
- They provide information about the group, not individual participants.
- Cannot assure confidentiality.

FOCUS GROUP HOW TO'S

Design questions that address your goals.

Identify target population. Ideal size is 6 to 12 participants.

Establish rapport by getting participants talking and feeling comfortable.

Ideally, one person asks questions while another takes notes and keeps time.

Ask people to elaborate, respond to comments, and ask follow up questions.

COMMUNITY MAPPING

In this facilitated activity, individuals or groups draw a map of their community, marking certain points of importance and noting how often they visit these places. A facilitator leads a discussion about the maps, while another facilitator records the discussion.

WHAT TO MAP

▸ Places of residence

▸ Places of importance to participants, such as markets, religious centers, schools, community centers, parks, businesses, fields, water sources, government offices, health clinics, police stations, and recreational areas

▸ Places used for defecation, especially in relation to institutions, areas where people congregate, and water sources

▸ Places where participants spend the most time, using different colors to indicate daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly visits

▸ Places where they enjoy and don't enjoy spending time, indicated by different colors

▸ Places they'd like to add to the community, indicated by sticky notes or small squares of paper

COMMUNITY MAPPING ADVANTAGES

- Identify how people use community resources and any barriers to accessing them
- Compare perceptions of the importance of various community resources

COMMUNITY MAPPING CHALLENGES

- Analyzing results can be a difficult process, because the information is gathered in a visual format.
- Drawing conclusions from the maps and determining next steps may require additional assessment activities.

COMMUNITY MAPPING HOW TO'S

Keep groups small — ideally no more than 20 participants, divided into subgroups of four to six.

Separate participants into small groups by gender, age, ethnicity, profession, etc., to encourage diversity among the maps.

Help each subgroup draw a map based on its own perceptions of the community. The variety of maps will yield a wealth of information.

In a large group, compare and discuss the maps.

Find a well-connected individual, group, or organization that can introduce you to local stakeholders.

Consider the makeup of the community. Ensure you include a diverse cross-section of relevant groups (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, religion, income level, vocation).

Remain open minded.
Don't presume to know what the community needs or what challenges it faces.

Empower stakeholders.
Speak with people, not at them.
Ensure stakeholders are an active part of any initiative.

Avoid promising a project before your club makes a formal decision.

POWER DYNAMICS

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"When you go into a developing community, the people there will take whatever help you want to bring. They're not going to say no to a project. But that doesn't mean that my idea of their greatest need is the same as theirs."

— Mike Wittry, President, Rotary Club of Roatan, Islas de la Bahía, Honduras

Relationships
Ownership
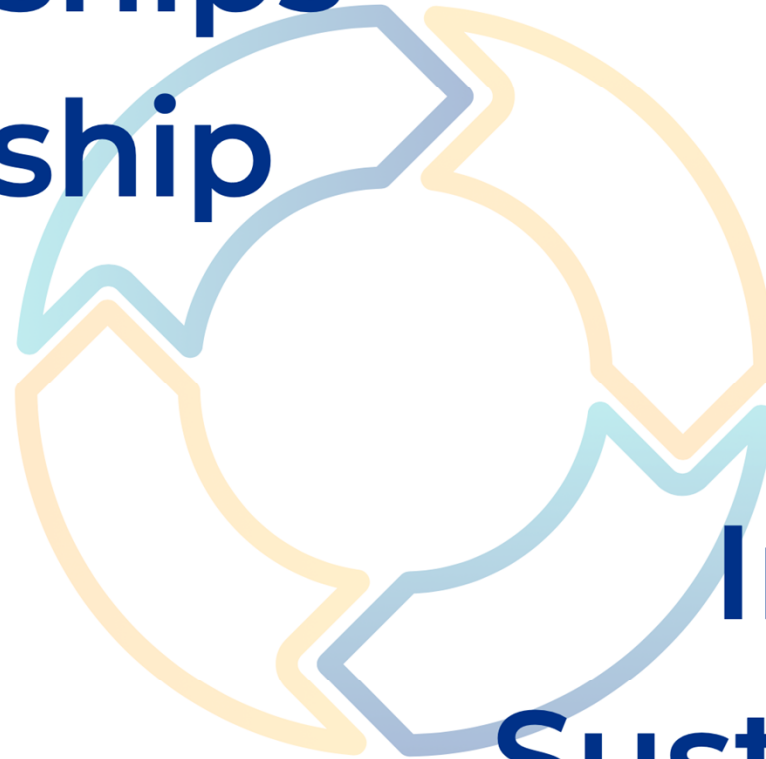
Impact
Sustainability

contact me: lndmayg@gmail.com