

The Importance of Community Needs Assessment in Activist Work

Presented by [Radical Reference](#)
Volunteer Librarians Heather McCann
and Lana Thelen at the New York
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Community Needs Assessment: Background

- Who/what is a community?
 - Community of location
 - Community of idea
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- What is a community needs assessment (CNA)?
 - A way to assess norms, opinions, needs of a community
- Why do it?
 - To help determine what steps to take
 - Empowers the community to take an active role
 - Evaluation of effectiveness of earlier programs
- When is a good time for a CNA?

Tools

Before you begin

- Describe your community
- Determine what you want to know (be specific)
- Set up a time line for the CNA

Strategies for collecting information

- Think about what methods are going to work for you
 - Evaluate your resources (time, budget, expertise)
 - Think about your community, what are the members more likely to respond to? What information do you seek?
 - Interviews
 - Community forum/public meeting
 - Surveys (paper, electronic)

Evaluating, Implementing, and Reevaluating

- What themes emerged?
 - Pull apart the information into universal themes and group together
- Write up your findings
- Develop a plan of **action**
 - What are the resources needed? (Human, group, funding, space, time, etc)
 - What is a realistic timeline? Step-by-step...
 - What sort of partnerships can you make with other organizations? Are you duplicating any efforts?
- Re-evaluate! How did it turn out? What will you change next time? What can other groups learn from yours?

Resources Worth Mentioning

The Community Toolbox <http://ctb.ku.edu>

The Foundation Center (Grants) <http://foundationcenter.org>

Hunter, D., Bailey, A., & Taylor, B. (1995). *The art of facilitation: how to create group synergy*. Tucson, AZ: Fisher Books.

Soriano, F. (1995). *Conducting Needs Assessments: A Multidisciplinary Approach (SAGE Human Services Guides)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cahill, C. (2007). The personal is political: developing new subjectivities through participatory action research. *Gender, Place and Culture*. 14 (3), 267-92.

Questions?

Don't forget to ask your local librarians for help!

Heather McCann heather.lyn.mccann@gmail.com

Lana Thelen lanamt@gmail.com

<http://radicalreference.info/anarchistbookfair/2008/cna>