“We must concentrate on what we can do and erase ‘can’t,’ ‘won’t’ and ‘don’t think so’ from our vocabulary.” - Cardiss Collins

It’s been said that you need to plan your work and work your plan. Putting in the time and effort early in your planning process will make your work more thoughtful and probably more successful.

In this Helping Hand Guide, you will learn about:
- Choosing the issue
- Setting a project goal
- Assessing your current status
- Creating a plan
- Delegating responsibilities

### CHOOSING THE ISSUE

After you have done your research on your focus area, you should have a good idea about the specific issues facing your community. The process for choosing the issue your project will address will be similar to choosing your focus area.

💡 Brainstorm! Make a good list of all the issues in your community related to your focus area.

✔️ Organize your ideas.

✔️ Narrow down your choices.

✔️ Reach consensus.

### SETTING A PROJECT GOAL

Now that you have your issue, you have to decide what you want to do about it. The first step in planning your project is deciding on a clearly defined goal. In simple language, your goal is what you want to do.
A common guide for setting goals is SMART. Your goals should be:

**S**: Specific  
**M**: Measurable  
**A**: Attainable  
**R**: Relevant  
**T**: Time-bound

**Specific** - What exactly are you going to do? You should be able to answer this question with a clear, concise statement.

**Measurable** - How will you know if you have been successful? You must develop a concrete way to measure your progress and determine if you have achieved your goal.

**Attainable** - Can we actually do what we plan? You want to set your goal high enough that you have to work hard to achieve it, while not setting it so high that it is impossible.

**Relevant** - Will what you do matter? Remember that your project is designed to create change around a specific issue in your community. Plan your project so that it directly relates to what you are trying to achieve.

**Time-bound** - When is your work finished? Well defined goals should have a starting point and an ending point. Having a set time frame allows you to measure the success of your efforts. When you have finished working on your goal, you can set another to take your project to the next level.

✔ Follow the brainstorming/group discussion process to decide on the goal for your project.

### ASSESSING YOUR CURRENT STATUS

Before you go any further in the planning process, you should take a few moments to think about the resources available to you and some of the obstacles you might face. You will probably return to this section later in your planning process. Here are a few questions to consider:

- What are our strengths?
- What are our weaknesses?
- Who would be willing to help us?
- Who has good information to share with us?
- Which people or organizations would be good partners for us?
- What specific talents will we need to complete our project?
- If we do not have the necessary talent in our group, who could we ask to join or partner with us?
- What financial resources do we have for our project?
- If we do not have the necessary financial resources, who might help us find more?
- Could our work have a positive impact beyond our goal?
What obstacles might we face?
Who might oppose our work?
Could our work have any negative impact on anyone or anything?
How could we prevent any negative impact?

**CREATING A PLAN**

Okay, enough talk. Let’s get to work! The planning process has four parts – Goals, objectives, strategies and tactics. For the sake of demonstrating, let’s use one of the issues from the [Helping Hand Guide to Choosing Your Focus Area](#). We will use Young people don’t go to the dentist regularly.

✓ **Goal** – What will we do?
Provide access to basic dental care for at least 100 young people in our community in the next 12 months.

✓ **Objectives** – How will we do it? Be specific!
   A. Assess young people’s dental care needs
   B. Provide supplies and training for preventative dental care
   C. Provide at least one dental care clinic where dental health professionals come to the community to treat young patients

✓ **Strategies** – What must we do to meet our objectives? Again, be specific and provide a time frame.
   **Objective A: Assess young people’s dental care needs**
   - Strategy 1 – Create a survey – Month 1
   - Strategy 2 – Use the survey to gather information – Month 2 and 3
   - Strategy 3 – Compile the information from the surveys – Month 3

Create strategies for each objective.

✓ **Tactics** – What specific tasks must we do to carry out our strategies?
   **Objective A – Strategy 1 – Create a survey in Month 1**
   **Tactics**
   - Identify a dentist and get his/her contact information – by middle of week 1
   - Contact the dentist and make an appointment to talk with him/her – end of week 1
   - Compile a list of questions for the dentist – middle of week 2
   - Meet with the dentist in person or by phone to determine survey questions – end of week 2
   - Create the survey and make copies – end of week 3
   - Test the survey out on a few people to see if it meets our needs – middle of week 4
   - Make changes to the survey if necessary – end of week 4

Create a list of tactics for each strategy.
By the time you have finished writing all of your tactics for all of your strategies for all of your objectives, you should have a very solid plan to meet your goal!

DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITIES

No one person can or should do everything. To delegate is to entrust another person with a task. Because you have such a specific plan, assigning tasks should not be difficult.

Delegating tips
- Keep people’s strengths and interests in mind
- Try to balance the work – one person shouldn’t have all the hard tasks
- Check in with people to make sure they are getting their tasks done in the allotted time
- Give support where needed
- Give people room to do it their own way

Create a planning sheet to keep track of your progress. Here is an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>ASSIGNED TO</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DONE</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify dentist, get contact info</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Doctor Martin 234-5678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact dentist, make appointment</td>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Appointment set for March 11th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compile questions for dentist</td>
<td>Mary, Pierre, Susan</td>
<td>March 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONGRATULATIONS! You have planned your Bridge Kids project!

Here are a few more things to keep in mind:
- Expect that things won’t always go according to plan.
- When you can, allow extra time to complete your tasks.
- Stay flexible. Modify your plan if you need to do so.
- Remember, this is supposed to be fun! You want to push yourself, but don’t let your project get too stressful.
- Embrace failure! The only people who never fail, are those who never try. When something doesn’t go according to plan, think about why it happened, what you could have done differently and incorporate what you have learned into your next effort.
- Get help! You have the other members of your Bridge Kids Group, your Advisor, your supporters, other Bridge Kids around the world, and Bridge Kids International staff cheering you on. Use us!
- Celebrate your successes – even the little ones!