

RP101: Plan for Success

Overview

RP101 - Plan for Success was initially designed and prepared by Brenda Herchmer with input from Cindy Underhill and editing by Caroline Sparks. Development was funded by the Arctic Inspiration Prize. RP101 was substantially revised for Program delivery by Caroline Sparks.

Description:

This learning event introduces the importance of planning in recreation settings. Although the purpose of each plan may vary, planning is about making a difference. Outcomes-based and strategic approaches make it easier to identify priorities and develop plans for recreation that benefit individuals and the community.

Learning Objectives:

- Explain how planning for recreation can help to realize individual, social and environmental benefits.
- Identify some basic planning concepts that are part of a recreation programming cycle.
- Show how a longer-term vision or outcomes can be achieved through planning.

Required Learning Activities:

- RLA: Outcome or Output?
- RLA: Prepare a Plan

Week 1:

Planning starts with getting a good understanding of where you are and determining where you want go. A plan addresses the gap between now and the future and requires an understanding of to accomplish and how to do this. Planning is the first phase of a recreation programming cycle and leads into design and delivery as well as evaluation. Planning needs to be flexible to adapt to the local context and community, and the plan's purpose. Successful planning emphasizes the benefits of recreation and how to achieve desired outcomes.

Key teaching points:

Planning is something we all do. You might jot down a to-do list or plan a trip out on the land. We work for businesses that depend on strategic plans to guide operations; our associations rely on program plans and budgets; and we live in communities where priorities are often laid out in an official community plan. Although planning in our personal lives is very similar to planning a successful program, most people don't receive formal training about how to plan.

In recreation, planning is always important because there is never enough time or money. A plan helps to set priorities that will determine where to spend time and money. Planning happens at various levels for events, programs, facility improvements and trail development. Recreation leaders may plan alone, with a small group, with stakeholders and across sectors, or with their community. There are many different types of plans and no set rules about what each must be called. In general:

- Strategic plans set the overall direction and big picture goals for an organization or community.
- Operational or implementation plans outline how the goals of the strategic plan will be reached. These are usually the responsibility of staff and are done annually.
- Program or project plans are a detailed overview of an individual program or project. They may use the framework of a logic model or of a strategic plan.
- Annual plans provide operational details such as staffing and budgets.
- Work Plans are individualized annual plans developed by each staff outlining priorities and tasks.

Outcomes guide our work in the field of recreation and are the reason why your program, your group, or your department exists. Outcomes are benefits or changes that participants, groups or communities experience during or after their involvement in recreation. Outcomes are something that were not there when they started. Usually the change is for the better (positive), but in some cases the change gets worse (e.g., chronic disease).

Outputs are different to outcomes; outputs are things a leader produces through their activities and can usually be quantified.

Reflective questions to encourage learning:

- Why is planning important?
- What are some of the things to consider in your planning approach?
- What is the difference between an outcome and an output?
- Are outcomes the same as the benefits of recreation?
- Share one specific situation that recreation could potentially address in your community. Describe the desired change (outcomes) for this situation. Identify a couple of activities (outputs) that could help achieve this change.

Week 2:

A planning process involves a series of steps or activities which should be adapted to the local context, community and planning purpose. Preparing to plan, engaging others, collecting information, drafting the plan; these activities are all part of planning. Key planning terms and familiarity with different planning frameworks can make the work of planning a little easier. Regardless of how simple or complicated a plan is; a plan should show what you want to accomplish and how you will get there.

Key teaching points:

Outcomes-based planning can be shown in the flow of a logic model. **Inputs** are the resources invested into a project such as staff, funding, materials, or supplies. **Activities** are things you do like advertising, workshops, or training to carry out the project. **Outputs** are produced through the project or from activities you do. **Outcomes** are short or long-term changes that are expected from the project such as changes in knowledge, awareness, behaviour, and skills.

Strategic planning begins with a vision of the future and describes the actions that will make progress towards it. **Vision** reflects people's hopes and dreams while **values** guide decisions and behaviours based on what is fundamentally important. A **mission statement** describes what an organization does, for whom, and how. **Goals** are broad strategies that are often written to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. **Objectives** are more specific actions or ways to achieve the goals.

Not all planning is done the same way. And, planning does not always progress neatly from one phase to the next. Planning that is flexible, adaptable, and ongoing results in plans that are better suited to community. For example, Indigenous planning is about using Indigenous ways to achieve outcomes defined by Indigenous people and communities.

Reflective questions to encourage learning:

- What factors should be considered when determining a planning approach?
- Reflect on other learning events in which you were a participant. What did you learn in those that will influence your approach to planning?
- Share one example of when would use a strategic approach to planning. Who would be involved? What would be the focus? How would the plan be used (implemented)?

Required Learning Activity #1: Outcome or Output?

Complete by: Wednesday before the first conference call

This RLA takes less than 10 minutes. For each statement (10) in Activity #2, decide if it is an outcome or output. To complete this RLA, just try it. Don't worry about being 'wrong'. On Thursday's conference call, we will discuss outcomes in more detail.

- Outcomes are benefits that participants, groups or communities experience during or after their involvement in recreation. Outcomes are a change-- something that was not there when the program started. Usually the change is positive.
- Outputs are activities we do or things we produce. Recreation leaders have more control over outputs than they do over outcomes.

Required Learning Activity #2: Prepare a Plan

Complete by: Sunday after the second conference call

1. Choose one specific situation that recreation could address in your community. Consider the examples shared on the conference calls.

2. For this situation, prepare a project, program or event plan; or a strategic plan for an association or group. Use an outcomes-based or strategic planning approach.
3. Develop your plan using the Outcome-Based or Strategic Planning templates, or create your own format. Post your plan in the forum by the due date.

Resources:

- RP101 Presentation
- Strategic plan framework template - https://files.recnorth.ca/LEres/RP101_Strat-Plan_Template.pdf
- Outcome-based framework (logic model) template - https://files.recnorth.ca/LEres/RP101_Outcomes-Framework_Template.pdf

Activities:

- 2 Required Learning Activities
- H5P activities:
 - Planning... What's your Take
 - Become familiar with planning terms
 - Outcome or Output?
- Outcome or Output – extra statements
 - Over 13 participants registered for the activity.
 - A total of 10 workshops were conducted.
 - Youth demonstrate an understanding of leadership skills.
 - Teens demonstrate leadership strategies during a community initiative.
 - Children demonstrate improved social skills.
 - Participants feel comfortable communicating within the group.
 - Program revenues cover costs of program.
 - Six new partnerships were developed through the initiative.
 - One or more new programs are offered.
 - Children indicate a greater belief in their ability to successfully accomplish tasks.
 - Instructor-to-child ratios are maintained at 1:6.
 - Parents indicate they understand the value of the program to their child's development.
 - Customer service complaints decrease by 20%.

References:

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