

STEP 2

CONDUCTING A NEEDS ANALYSIS

This guide explains what a needs analysis is, and why identifying needs in the community is an important part of your project development.



LAND OR ASSETS BASED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS CAN OFTEN BE DRIVEN BY AN OPPORTUNITY (SUCH AS THE LAND BECOMING AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE), RATHER THAN A NEED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. A NEEDS ANALYSIS WILL:

- **HELP YOU IDENTIFY THE NEEDS AND DEMANDS WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY**
- **ESTABLISH HOW THESE NEEDS MIGHT BE ADDRESSED**
- **HELP YOU DESIGN YOUR PROJECT TO RESPOND TO ONE OR MORE SPECIFIC NEEDS**
- **HELP YOU SENSE-CHECK YOUR IDEAS**
- **HELP SECURE ONGOING SUPPORT FROM THE WIDER COMMUNITY AND FROM FUNDERS**

TYPICAL NEEDS IDENTIFIED AND RESEARCHED IN COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- employment opportunities
- affordable housing or specialist housing
- local supply chain (such as food or fuel)
- local income generating opportunities
- specific services/sectors (such as tourism, retail, health/social care for the elderly, youth services)

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION CAN BE USED?

You will need to gather a wide range of information to prepare your needs analysis. Some of it will be readily available; other data will be more of a challenge to find. Some of the information you need will consist of data and statistics, while the rest will be qualitative.

Once you are clear about the kind of information you will need to formulate your needs analysis, you should then identify the most accurate and accessible sources. The internet is an obvious place to start; however more locally significant information may be accessed in other ways.

National	Regional	Local	Community
UK Census	Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Community Council	Previous studies undertaken by other groups
Index of Multiple Deprivation	Local Authority	Local Authority	Local Community Plan
Other Government statistics	Health Boards	Citizens Advice Bureau	Surveys
Government studies	Local branches of national agencies	Third Sector Interface	Schools
Research by national agencies	Regional charities	Local charities	Charities working locally
Research by universities			Community consultation



WHAT IF YOU CAN'T FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

During your research, you may come across similar projects that have been undertaken in other places. Try to make contact with the relevant groups and ask them how they went about their needs analysis. Your HIE Development Manager should be able to help you identify such groups. If while conducting your research you are finding it difficult to find the relevant information on a local level, you should consider conducting community consultation to fill these specific gaps in local knowledge (see 'Early community engagement').

WHO SHOULD CARRY OUT THE NEEDS ANALYSIS?

Allocate specific tasks to various board/committee members. For example, someone who works for the local authority might find it easier to access general statistics and data about the community. If your project is complex, you may be able to secure funding to pay someone to conduct the work on your behalf.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO BEAR IN MIND

At every stage of the process, you should always stop to review, reflect and ask - why are we doing this? This should ensure your project is addressing a genuine need and that it is widely supported.

Sense check whether the aims of the project match the aims and objectives of your organisation. Maybe there will be a need at some point to amend the aims of your group or to establish a new group to take the project forward.

Be aware of national, regional and local policies such as the Scottish Government's Scotland's Economic Strategy, HIE's operating plan, and local authority structure plans and single outcome agreements. If your project reflects priorities highlighted in these policies, it is more likely to be supported.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE SEE

www.hie.co.uk/ten-steps

or contact us on community.assets@hient.co.uk

