OL 241 Assignment One Homework
Online Learning. OL 241 Writing Your Local Climate Action Plan: https://training.csd-i.org/courses/writing-your-local-climate-action-plan/
Center for Sustainable Development: https://training.csd-i.org/

This week's resources:
Class Home Page 241
Download Class Documents:
Assignment One Discussion
Assignment One Homework
Magee Example Project Assignment 1
Summary of Ten Seed Technique Word Doc.
Ten Seed Technique Workshop Lesson Plan
Ten Seed Technique How-To Card
Ten Seed Technique Book

Assignment 1. What's the real problem?
This first week's assignment will take longer that any of the assignments over the next 8 weeks. This is why you have three weeks for it. This gives you time to explore the online course structure and resources, to read the discussion, and to engage with a small group of community members who are concerned about climate change and would be willing to participate in a community needs assessment.

This assignment also has two components: a field component and a written component. I would suggest printing this assignment out by downloading it from Downloading Class Documents.

The three weeks also give you time digest a lot of new concepts. Here are some of the things that you will need to digest:

Important Overview of problems, underlying causes and negative impacts.
In this course you are going to jump right into a series of brand-new concepts. This course is about developing sustainable, fundable, impact-oriented projects – and you start right away in Assignment One. Here are some background ideas.

When you meet with your community to do the Ten-Seed needs assessment, they will present you with a mixture of needs, problems, underlying causes, grievances and negative impacts. Your job as a facilitator is to encourage them to say everything that is on their mind. Their Ten-Seed vote will prioritize the two or three things that are the most important to them – so this will simplify your job.

Your job is to be an interpreter. You will need to sort their array of challenges into three things:
1. Two or three (**three maximum**) important problems (that they prioritized)
2. The underlying causes of those problems
3. The long-term negative impacts that the problems cause

Problems for the purposes of this course are the visible and compelling elements of the needs assessment. These are the things that human beings can relate to. For example, crops dying in the field or fields damaged by floodwaters are visible, compelling problems. You can see these, you can feel the pain and the farmers' suffering. You can relate to them. But if the community lists (for example) climate change induced drought – realize that this is not a problem – it is a cause of a problem. Look for the visible, compelling problem that droughts cause.

Underlying causes in this course are the components that are the causes of the ultimate problems that your community identified. Droughts (in our example) and a lack of knowledge of potential solutions are good examples of the underlying causes that lead to crops dying in the field. Underlying causes tend to be related to events (drought) or knowledge (lack of knowledge of solutions to climate challenges).

Negative Impacts are the long-term negative outcomes of the problem. Flood damaged fields can reduce a farmers income and take years to heal reducing a farmers ability to lead the prosperous, meaningful, productive lives. Negative impacts are long-term outcomes – 3 to 5 years away. They are the ultimate reason why we are interested in working in climate action plans. It is terrible to see damaged feels – and you want to fix them right away – but the ultimate goal is to develop prosperous, well-educated community members that can work together to contribute to their families and communities. So your project is going to address the immediate problem (damaged fields) with the long-term goal of: (positive impact) healthy, productive, well-educated community members.

Therefore, your job in evaluating the Ten-Seed assessment has two main components:
1. Problem/cause/negative impact
   a. Figure out what the visible, compelling problem is (if all that the community comes up with are causes, ask them about what the ultimate problem is or use your observational skills)
   b. Figure out what the underlying cause is for that problem
   c. Figure out what the long-term impacts are
   d. Fit them into an outline exactly like the one in Magee Project Example Assignment 1.

2. Keep your problem/cause/impact outline short (two or three things maximum) and incredibly simple. The goal of the course is to learn how to develop projects – and you need start off with a simple project to learn the steps. If your community raises several challenges to be addressed – you can return and develop action plans for those challenges also—but after you have learned how to do it in this course. If you are going to benefit from this course, you need a very, very simple project.

Getting Started on the Field Component.
Part 1: The Needs Assessment
Download the Summary of the Ten Seed Technique, the Ten Seed Technique3 Activity Lesson Plan, the How-to Card, and the Magee Project Example from the Download Course Documents. I would recommend role-playing the Lesson Plan with a colleague for practice. Make adaptations to the lesson plan that would be appropriate for your community situation and context.

Find a group of community members that either you or one of your community contacts already has a trusting relationship established with. Set up a 3-4 hour meeting with eight or 10 community members. Please try and meet with community members that represent the ultimate beneficiaries (mothers, fathers, families, farmers, ranchers – whoever describe the community you are working with); try to avoid basing you assessment on a meeting exclusively with people in higher positions: mayors or city council members for example.

Work through the lesson plan with the group. I like to have an easel with large sheets of newsprint where I can quickly jot down ideas as they are voiced in the discussion. After the group has come up with a good set of needs/problems, let them have a short coffee break. I will take that 15 minutes to organize the list so that similar things are grouped together. I then like to take another sheet of newsprint on a table and draw a large rectangle with perhaps 12 smaller squares inside of it and then draw a simple illustration in each one that represents one of the needs/problems. An example could be if there is a housing shortage, draw a little child's drawing of a house.

Then, have everyone leave the workshop area. Give each one of the participants 10 seeds, or beans, or small stones. Only one person should go into the workshop area at a time to use their seeds to vote on the needs. They should select the needs which **THEY** feel are the most important. It is their decision if they want to put all 10 seeds in one square or if they want to distribute them around several different problems.

After each workshop participant has had a chance to cast their votes, you can count the total seeds in each square and quickly write up a prioritized list ordered by the number of votes each problem received. This is a good time for the participants to have an open discussion about the results of the vote.

> **Important:**
> You should take a minute alone with the prioritized list and make a determination whether the items on their list are problems or underlying causes.
>
> You should also make the determination if the prioritized list represents two or three unrelated projects such as some health needs and some agricultural challenges . If that is the case, organize the list so that health needs are in one place and agricultural challenges in another.
>
> For the purposes of the course, I want you to develop a very simple, easily defined project. It would be a good idea to let the participants come to an agreement on which project should be attempted first. In our example above, you could ask them if they would prefer to work on the health component or the agricultural project first.

Getting Started on the Written Component
Part 2: The Simple Project Outline
Take the project component that you agreed to work on with the community and write an outline (just exactly like on the Magee Project Example) of:
1. One or two (**maximum 2**)
2. An underlying cause or two
3. Some of the long-term negative impacts that will result from the problem.
4. A short paragraph (Problem Statement) that is nothing more than the combination of the three things in the simple outline above. The problem statement is not an introduction to a proposal, nor a paragraph of background information. It is simply the problem, the underlying causes and the negative impacts copied and pasted together in order.

I find that annotating these components in red (like in my example) makes it easier for me to combine them into an organized problem statement.

Part 3: Including a Climate Component
Since communities frequently don't connect problems to climate change – or they don't understand the implications, I might add a climate change component to the assignment in order to make sure it is included. This is meant to be complementary to the project outline based upon community identified need – not a substitute. So if your outline had one problem, a new CC problem could be a second. If your outline had one underlying cause, a new CC related underlying cause could be a second.

Climate related challenges and solutions.
Based on the 10 seed assessment exercise, can you see a link between any of the identified problems and changing climatic conditions? If so, what is it? Did the community members themselves identify any such linkage as either a problem or an underlying cause?

It is important for us to be aware of the community's interest level and/or understanding of how climate change may be affecting their lives. This will help us when it comes time begin appropriately transferring this knowledge to them. Similarly, we can't discount the problems that they identified even if they aren't CC related: These are important to them and keeping them in the problem outline will ensure community ownership of the project.

Consequently, your simple project outline may be a mix of traditional community problems and solutions combined with climate problems and solutions. This is normal. Please remember to keep your outlined problems to one or two.

Climate Solutions Homework Component:
1. If during the 10-seed needs assessment your community members did not list/prioritize a problem linked to climate change, list one additional problem in your outline with an underlying cause linked to an element of climate change. Note in bold red that **YOU** have added this.
   Example: **New underlying cause related to climate change that I added to the outline since the community did not identify one.**

2. If they listed a CC potential problem but were not be aware of its connection to an underlying cause related to climate change, please reflect back to the context and list an underlying cause linked to an element of climate change to the outline. Note in bold red that **YOU** have added this.

3. If your community did identify a problem or underlying cause with potential CC links, note in bold red that the **COMMUNITY** identified this.

This is very simple and can be seen in the Magee Project Example for what this should look like.

Follow the Magee Project Example exactly – it is what we are looking for. Pull it up on your screen and type right over it.

The complete Assignment One homework to turn in will be:
1. The full list of needs/problems with the number of votes each received (Photos too please if possible! Attach a few separately or paste them onto page 2 – don't mix them in the main homework)
2. A simple project outline of problems/causes/negative impacts of the chosen project idea.
3. A short paragraph (Problem Statement) that is nothing more than the combination (copy and paste) of the problems/causes/negative impacts in the simple outline above. Look at my example to see how simple it is – no embellishments.
4. Your climate solutions (problem and or/underlying cause) added into project outline if necessary.

Very, Very, Important:
We are going to be presenting to you new, cutting-edge ideas in community-centered, sustainable, impact-oriented project design. At the end of the 12 assignment (241 & 242), step-by-step process you will have a brand-new perspective on this process that you don't have today – in this first week. You will need to trust our guidance in the early stages.

You may struggle with two challenges in the first two assignments.

The first challenge is that some initial projects are too complex. Projects that are too complex are difficult to get funded, difficult to manage successfully, and from the learning experience of this course, their complexity will overshadow your learning experience.

The second challenge is project drift; you have a great idea for your project in the first assignment, which changes a little in the second assignment as you creatively think about solutions, and it changes a little bit in the third assignment – and so on – until pretty soon you have a project that is a different project from Assignment One.

You will need to lock in on the project developed in weeks one and two as the project that will be used for the entire 12 assignments. Each week, I need to go back and refer to your first and second week assignments throughout the rest of the 12 assignments. If you have changed the project, I lose the ability to keep track of the project's direction and I will return it to be fixed.

The advantage of staying with your original project is three-fold:
One, you will learn the system of refining one single project covered over 12 weekly steps.

Two, the assignments build on each other from one week to the next – so you will be able to refer back to your early assignments to make sure that everything is included in the process. For example, Assignment 6 is an expansion of Assignment 2. Assignment 7 is an expansion of Assignment 6. Assignments 11 and 12 are compilations of the previous 10 assignments.

At the end of the 12 weeks, you will have both a well-designed project class documents that you will need for an initial donor presentation.

Go to Magee's Example Project Assignment 1 to see what this could look like.

See you next week.