

Building Dynamic Groups



BUILDING A VISION FOR A GROUP, ORGANIZATION OR A COMMUNITY

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to assist citizens in thinking about their organization – whether it is a group or a community – what it is, its features, and what makes their organization unique.

Materials Needed: Index cards, pencils, large sheets of newsprint, tape, magic markers, crayons, or other creative materials.

Time Needed: 30 minutes to 1 hour depending on size of the group.

Instructions:

1. Divide the group into small groups of five to eight people.
2. Provide five minutes for each person to collect his/her own thoughts. How do you see your organization? How would you describe it to a stranger? What images come to mind? Record these thoughts on an index card.
3. Share thoughts within the small group. Now, translate those thoughts into a picture of a **playground** that expresses your thoughts about what you would like to see evolve in this organization. Think about the colors you choose to use, the activities you place on the page, the people and types of people you are including in your drawing. Draw the features of the organization on a large sheet of newsprint or encourage use of any art materials to help in creation of this picture.
4. Allow ten to fifteen minutes for the participants to draw their representation of the “ideal” organization.
5. Reconvene the total group and give each group five minutes to present their “picture” of the community.
6. After each group has made their presentation, discuss the following questions:
 - What were the common features identified?
 - What were the unique features identified?
 - What are the strengths of the organization?
 - What are the limitations of the organization?
 - What picture of the organization is beginning to emerge?
 - How was this exercise helpful in finding a clearer direction for the organization?

Reference: adapted from Sustaining Action, 1993