



PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

This Project Canvas is a tool that will help plan, communicate and refine your project in a simple, visual way.

This tool will help you out to:

- ✓ **SKETCH OUT IDEAS FOR MULTIPLE PROJECTS QUICKLY**
- ✓ **STRUCTURE DISCUSSIONS AND GIVE YOUR PROJECT IDEAS SHAPE**
- ✓ **FOCUS ON THE THINGS THAT WILL MAKE YOUR PROJECT A SUCCESS**
- ✓ **EASILY SHARE A ONE-PAGE PROJECT PLAN AND GET FEEDBACK**
- ✓ **CONTINUALLY REFINE YOUR PROJECT PLAN AS YOU TEST ASSUMPTIONS**



ABOUT THIS TOOL

From organising a regular clean up of your local park to developing a service that will support vulnerable people, there are many ways to help others and make a difference in your community.

In all cases you will need a solid project plan to be successful. One that describes the issue you are trying to solve, how your solution will work, how people will benefit from this, and what resources you will need to achieve this.

The Project Canvas is a tool that provides a simplified overview of a project, and which makes it easier for your group to design it, help others understand it, and get the support you will need to make it a reality.





HOW TO USE IT

Bring your group together to discuss ideas for your project and how you see it working.

Use the Project Canvas template to structure your conversation. Complete sections 1 through 12 of the Canvas in order, starting with describing your purpose and the needs you will tackle, and moving on to who you will work with, and the activities and results you will deliver. Then consider the associated risks and resourcing.

Carefully consider the associated questions set out in more detail later in the Further Guidance section. Write down the answers in the template or use sticky notes on a floor or wall. Get creative. Constructively challenge your assumptions as you go along, and note down where more information is required.

Check out the completed Canvas provided. The example used is the Refugee Access, a project that tackles the digital exclusion of displaced populations.

When your Canvas is completed, take stock and consider the whole picture. Explore the connections and trade-offs between each section. Is the overall picture plausible? Are there things that you need to revisit or think differently about? Then take time to involve others in your conversations, to validate your ideas and build support for your project.





PROJECT CANVAS

1. **Project Purpose:** Why are you doing the project and what difference will it make?

PROJECT DEFINITION

STAKEHOLDERS

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

2. Problem statement

What are the main community concerns you are responding to?

3. Scope of Project

What should the project cover, and what will be outside of its scope?

5. Beneficiaries

Who will benefit from the work of the project?

7. Outcomes

What positive changes will you bring about for beneficiaries?

9. Project Activities

What needs to be done to reach intended beneficiaries and make a difference?

4. Project Objectives

What do you want the project to accomplish?

6. Project Partners

Who will you work with to support beneficiaries?

8. Key Indicators

What will be the signs you are making progress?

RISKS AND RESOURCES

10. Resources

What resources will you need to deliver the planned activities?

11. Risks

What possible events and circumstances could threaten the project?

12. Success Factors

What makes your proposed solution more likely to be effective than those that have gone before?



EXAMPLE: REFUGEE ACCESS

1. Project Purpose: Displaced populations have better connection and access to technology that enables them to build better futures for themselves and their families

PROJECT DEFINITION		STAKEHOLDERS	PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
<p>2. Problem statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refugees face many restrictions as they move through various places, fleeing persecution, violence, and atrocities Most refugees do not have access to computers and many of them do not know how to use them Connection is not a luxury, it's a lifeline The digital exclusion of refugees hinders social integration, self-reliance, employment, and access to services 	<p>3. Scope of Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within scope: digital skills, connectivity, learning, and learner support Outside of scope: direct advice on employment, welfare and other services 	<p>5. Beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families that are granted refugee status and are accommodated within the city 	<p>7. Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved IT skills and employability for refugees Better access to online services and connection Stronger cross-cultural integration 	<p>9. Project Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laptops and other devices donated to refugee families Classes to teach refugees basic computing skills, organised in schools Students volunteer to teach and support local refugees Assisted by volunteer interpreters from within refugee communities
<p>4. Project Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 250 refugees to increase their digital literacy 100 families to benefit from improved connectivity 	<p>6. Project Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local families, community groups and businesses donate laptops Schools provide access to a physical space, teaching materials and computers Local refugee support groups to provide outreach, referral and follow-on support 	<p>8. Key Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # student volunteers # of refugees participating # families receiving donated laptops/devices % of learners able to fulfill independent online tasks 		
RISKS AND RESOURCES				
<p>10. Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to computers Host location for classes Training materials Volunteer tutors Interpreters 	<p>11. Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapidly increase in refugee numbers Language barriers Ongoing internet access remains difficult Donated laptops can be unreliable Resistance from some school boards 	<p>12. Success Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well trained student tutors Consistently high quality training Authenticity of community outreach Trusted volunteer interpreters Co-ordination with local support groups 		

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EXAMPLE: REFUGEE ACCESS

1. Project Purpose:

PROJECT DEFINITION		STAKEHOLDERS	PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
2. Problem statement	3. Scope of Project	5. Beneficiaries	7. Outcomes	9. Project Activities
	4. Project Objectives	6. Project Partners	8. Key Indicators	
RISKS AND RESOURCES				
10. Resources		11. Risks	12. Success Factors	



FURTHER GUIDANCE

There are a number of things to think about when completing the Project Canvas.

1. PROJECT PURPOSE

Every great project has a clearly stated purpose that is widely understood and supported. What difference will your project make for your community, society or the environment? Distill your core purpose into just one or two sentences.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The issues affecting communities are often complex and entrenched, so take time to understand the problem(s) you're attempting to solve. What is the main community concern you are responding to? How widespread or urgent is the problem? How do you know the problem exists? Keep in mind that the obvious problem may be the consequence of a deeper set of causes that you need to address for the project to be successful.

3. SCOPE OF PROJECT

Your project can't do everything at once, so prioritise where you will focus your efforts. What should the project cover? What elements will be outside of its scope? Think about the resources required and what is realistic to take on & where others are better placed to do certain things. You can also add to the scope of your project later once you make some progress.

4. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Objectives define what a project is trying to achieve, shape the activity required, and determine how success can be measured. What do you want your project to accomplish? Ensure that your objectives are SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. Sense-check your objectives to make sure they are consistent with the project scope you have agreed.

5. ALLIES & OPPONENTS

It's unlikely that you will be able to help everyone, or will need to. Take time to consider the target beneficiaries for your project. Who is affected by the problem and in what ways? How many are in this target group? Where are they located? Think carefully about the people, families or communities that will benefit most from your work and how you will engage them in your work from the beginning to validate the problem and help inform solutions.

6. PROJECT PARTNERS

It's unlikely that your project will be able to resolve complex social or environmental problems on its own. Who else is already looking at the problem or working to solve it? How could you collaborate with them to achieve more together? Look into other interested local groups, service providers, and government departments that are already working on the issue.

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7. OUTCOMES

The activities of your project should lead directly to outcomes that will improve the situation and help resolve the problem. Explore what success will look like for your project. What changes, benefits, learning or other effects do you intend to bring about for beneficiaries? It's best to focus on a small number of project outcomes that matter most to the people you are trying to help. State the objectives simply and in broad terms (i.e. to 'improve', 'increase', 'reduce' etc.).

8. KEY INDICATORS

Consider how you will know your project is successful. What will be the tangible signs that you are making progress and achieving the things you hoped for? Focus on a small set of performance indicators or measures for each main outcome. These should provide a balanced account of your work, be clear, credible and countable. When setting your project indicators think about the practicalities of how you will track and report on the indicators.

9. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Every project will have a set of tasks, activities or work required to achieve the project objectives. What needs to be done to reach intended beneficiaries? How will you resolve the difficulties that beneficiaries are facing? Which activities are essential to success? When describing your activities try to break them down into manageable parts and ensure they are sufficiently detailed.

10. RESOURCES

Most projects require a combination of time, money, and expertise to achieve their intended results. What resources will you need to deliver planned activities? Which resources are already available to the project team? Where are there gaps? Remember that not all resources are equal; some are more essential to project implementation than others. Think creatively about where you can source the missing resources. If you need to apply for grant funding, you can use the content of your Project Canvas as the basis for your proposal.

11. RISKS

Let's face it, life has uncertainties and it's unlikely that all aspects of your project will go as planned. What changing events and circumstances could have the biggest effect on your project? What are the implications of these threats? What can be done to reduce the probability or impact of these risks? You can't completely remove uncertainty, so identify and keep likely risks in mind but don't spend unnecessary effort to totally avoid them.

12. SUCCESS FACTORS

Finally, you are bringing forward an important solution to a social or environmental problem. What makes your project more likely to be effective than those that have gone before? Or sufficiently different from related activity? Think about how you will apply new methods, ideas, or approaches to solve the problem. Think about the recipe for success of your project.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Thanks for taking the time to check out this guide.

Motivated to learn more? Social Shifters has put together a wide range of practical courses and resources to help you plan, start and grow your project idea.

Visit socialshifters.co to discover more or listen to **The Social Shifters Podcast** to hear incredible stories from young innovators from around the world!

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