



## Conduct a Community Needs Analysis Local Action Guide

JCI Active Citizen Framework

*The JCI roadmap to create sustainable impact*

A community needs analysis involves data collection, community engagement and collaborative analysis to ultimately determine what the greatest needs facing the community are and their root causes.

### Why

It is important to conduct a community needs analysis because it can help ensure:

- Your organization remains credible within the community
- The projects you create are relevant to the community's needs
- You are addressing the root cause of a community's challenges
- You have community support for your project
- You create a project that will provide sustainable solutions

### Who

Any active citizen passionate about creating positive change can initiate a project in their community. Those involved in the needs analysis process should include:

- JCI Project Directors
- JCI Project Team Members
- Community stakeholders working to address the need
- Community stakeholders affected by the need
- Active citizens in the community eager to support

### When

A community needs analysis should be conducted when:

- You want to start a new project in the local community
- An on-going project is no longer having the desired impact (Maybe you need to go back and investigate the community challenge!)
- You have identified a community to enable to achieve sustainable impact

### How

1. Organize a needs analysis team among whom tasks can be distributed. This can eventually become your Project Team!
2. Identify an overarching challenge within the community.
  - a. Not sure where to start? Begin by:
    - i. Watching the local news or reading the local newspaper
    - ii. Asking local members what community issues they feel passionate about.
3. Gather existing data and information about the community, the challenge identified and resources to support sustainable solutions to it.
  - a. Search for census and demographic data on the community
  - b. Review surveys, reports, and literature about the challenge in the community and resources that exist to address it.



- c. Search online for other relevant and credible information related to the challenge in the community.
4. Define your needs analysis objectives by defining questions you have to answer to determine the root cause of the community.
  - a. *Example: How familiar is the community with this issue? What has been done or is being done to address this problem?*
5. Create a needs analysis plan for collecting data, answering your questions and achieving your needs analysis objectives by outlining the following:
  - a. Which stakeholders can best answer your questions (The mayor, those affected by the problem, etc.)
  - b. What is the best way to ask them (A survey, interview, community forum, etc.)
  - c. What specific tasks must be completed to collect the data (create the survey, set up the interview, promote the forum)
  - d. Who will be responsible for those tasks and what is the deadline
6. Once your plan is finished put it into action and start collecting data until you have answered all your needs analysis questions.
7. After data collection is complete, analyze the information to determine the root cause by asking:
  - a. What are specific needs related to the overarching community challenge?
  - b. How are these connected to one another?
  - c. What is the priority need for the community?
  - d. What are the root cause(s) of that need?
8. After determining the root cause(s), outline a problem statement that will guide you in formulating a sustainable solution.
9. Share the results of your needs analysis with the community in advance of collaborating for a sustainable solution.
  - a. *Example: Too many children in the community are overweight due to a lack of nutrition education and opportunities for physical activity.*

### What Comes Next

After collecting and analyzing data on community needs, the next step is to begin formulating projects that address the core challenges and their causes and provide long-term solutions that have maximum impact in the community.

### JCI Resources to Support

Local Action Guides: Conduct a Community Survey, Interview Community Stakeholders, Conduct Community Focus Group, Organize Community Forum

Templates: Needs Analysis Plan Template, Community Survey Template, Interview Guide

Worksheets: Analyzing Community Needs Worksheet

### External Resources to Support

Links:

- Community Toolbox (<http://ctb.ku.edu>)





## Conduct a Community Survey Local Action Guide

### JCI Active Citizen Framework

*The JCI roadmap to create sustainable impact*

A community survey is a method of asking a group or community members what they see as the most important needs of that group or community.

Common characteristics of community surveys include:

- Pre-set list of questions to be answered
- Pre-determined sample of the number and types of people to answer the questions
- Conducted in-person or by phone, written or electronic response.
- Results of the survey are summarized, distributed, discussed and used to take action for sustainable impact.

### Why

Creating, distributing and analyzing a community survey and its results can be important to conducting a community needs analysis because surveys:

- Can collect information about behaviors, needs and opinions related to the challenge you are investigating
- Can add credibility to your needs analysis and sustainable solution
- Are a primary source of information meaning someone is directly asked for a response to a question

### Who

Any active citizen eager to learn about their community's attitudes towards certain issues can organize a community survey. Those involved in this task should include:

- Members of the needs analysis team to create, distribute and analyze
- Members of the JCI Local Organization and partners to test the survey
- Community stakeholders to take the survey and discuss results

### When

A community survey should be conducted when:

- You need to reach a large number of people
- You need statistically valid information about a large number of people
- The information you need to answer your needs analysis questions isn't readily available through other means
- You need a quick and efficient way of getting information

### How

1. Determine the purpose of the survey. (*Which needs analysis questions do you need answered by distributing the survey?*)
2. Determine how much time you have to create, test, administer, and analyze the survey and its results. Create deadlines to keep yourself on track in conducting your survey.
3. Determine whom you will survey to represent the opinions of the target community. (*General public, those affected by the issue, those working to address the issue, etc.*)

4. Determine how many people you want to ask. *(The more surveys you get back the more precise your results and to get more surveys back you have to ask more people)*
5. Decide what method you will use to collect your survey data. Ask yourselves these questions:
  - a. How will it be administered? *(In-person, electronically, over the phone, by mail)*
  - b. Who will administer it? *(If it is conducted in person will participants know the individual administering it? The more personal you make it, the higher the return rate will be.)*
  - c. What resources are needed to distribute the survey? *(If it is mailed you need to provide envelopes and stamps for participants to return the survey)*
6. If you choose to create your own survey, the next step is to write your questions. When preparing the questions bear in mind they can take many forms including:
  - a. Open-ended – Often “how” or “why” questions that are designed to prompt more than one or two word responses
  - b. Close-ended – Prompt yes or no answers
  - c. Multiple Choice – Allow you to find out more information than close-ended questions and results can be compiled more easily than open ended.
  - d. Scale/Rank – Respondents asked to rate items on a response scale
  - e. Demographic – Questions to help you better understand the background of the sample population surveyed
7. Draft the survey (try to keep it at one page -front and back- for participants)
8. Test the survey to make sure questions make sense and it is not too long.
9. Administer and collect the survey responses. Ensure that participants are aware of what they are consenting to answer and be thoughtful if asking sensitive questions.
10. Analyze the survey results in relation to the overarching challenge and its causes.
11. Summarize and share the survey results.

## What

After conducting the survey, results should be used as part of the needs analysis process to determine the root cause(s) of the priority issues facing the community to then craft projects that provide sustainable solutions.

## JCI Resources to Support

Templates: Community Survey Template

Worksheets: Analyzing Community Needs Worksheet

## External Resources to Support

When choosing to conduct a survey, it is always easier to see what reliable survey tools have already been created. Listed below are free electronic survey websites that you can use to administer your survey:

- Google Survey: <https://www.google.com/forms/about/>
- Survey Monkey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com>



## Interview Community Stakeholders Local Action Guide

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*The JCI roadmap to create sustainable impact*

Interviews with community stakeholders are conversations with a purpose. They are a method to collect information about the community and its greatest needs.

### Why

Community stakeholder interviews can be important to conducting a community needs analysis because interviews:

- Can provide in-depth information on a particular topic from an expert.
- Can give insight on assumptions and perceptions of activities in your community
- Can lead to new information you wouldn't have expected to learn because of the spontaneity of the interview process
- Can develop relationships with potential partners

### Who

Any active citizen passionate about creating positive change can interview community stakeholders to learn more about the challenges facing the community. Those involved in the interview process could include:

- JCI Local Organization Board of Directors
- JCI Project Director and team members
- Members of the needs analysis team can interview and gather information
- Community stakeholders who can inform can be interviewed

### When

A community stakeholder interview should be conducted when:

- You want to gather information from an expert on the community and its needs
- To ensure an accurate and thorough perspective of the community is collected from a particular stakeholder
- To identify opportunities for collaboration with a specific organization or leader

### How

The following steps are to be followed for a face-to-face interview.

#### Before the Interview

1. Determine the purpose of the interview by asking yourself what questions you need answered.
2. Set up the interview using the purpose as a guide. (Stakeholder might want to know why you want to interview them)
3. Conduct research to have advanced knowledge about the stakeholder and the topic you want to gather more information about.
4. Prepare a list of questions and talking points to guide the interview with the stakeholder. Use open-ended questions that begin with "Why" or "How" to facilitate more in-depth answers.
5. A few days prior to the interview remember to:

- a. Remind the stakeholder of the interview and re-confirm the date, time and location for the meeting.
- b. Review your research and interview questions
- c. Gather any JCI informational materials you plan to bring to introduce your JCI Local Organization and the work you do in the community.
- d. Determine the appropriate attire to wear for the interview

### During the Interview

6. Begin the interview with small talk to build rapport and to initiate a relationship.
  - a. Small talk can include discussing the weather, referencing something from the news or information that sparked your interest when researching.
7. Ensure stakeholders know about JCI and why you are there to interview them. If not:
  - a. Restate the purpose of the interview
  - b. Introduce your JCI Local Organization and demonstrate your commitment to creating sustainable impact.
8. Ask your prepared list of interview questions. As you ask the questions and the interviewee answers remember to:
  - a. Listen! Present yourself aware and interested and react with emotion to what you hear while remaining neutral on community challenges until your organization can develop an informed opinion.
  - b. Do not accept yes or no answers, ask for them to elaborate.
  - c. Take good notes during the interview.
    - i. If you have a recording device, ask for permission prior to using it, but still take notes about non-verbal communication and interview highlights.

### After the Interview

9. Immediately following the interview, thank the stakeholder for their time.
10. Maintain communication to let the stakeholder know how the information is being used and opportunities to collaborate for impact.

### What

After interviewing community stakeholders, use the gathered information to identify the priority need. Share the results of your needs analysis with the stakeholders interviewed as well as the sustainable solution formulated, and the impact created from that project.

### JCI Resources to support

Templates: Interview Guide, Needs Analysis Plan Template

Worksheets: Analyzing Community Needs Worksheet

### External Resources to support

Links:

- Community Tool Box (<http://ctb.ku.edu>)
- *Guide for Conducting Community Leader Interviews*. New Jersey Library Trustee Institute. September, 2006. Cuesta MultiCultural Consulting. [http://www.njstatelib.org/lfb\\_files/imported/Trustees/Trustee\\_Institute/commintrvguide.pdf](http://www.njstatelib.org/lfb_files/imported/Trustees/Trustee_Institute/commintrvguide.pdf)

## Conduct a Community Focus Group Local Action Guide

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A focus group is a small group discussion lead by an experienced facilitator that keeps the group focused on a specific topic. It is used to gather opinions on a designated topic from a certain community group and/or community members to then guide future action.

### Why

Organizing focus groups can be important to conducting a community needs analysis because focus groups:

- Provide information about a certain population, group or minority within the community
- Gather a greater variety and depth of opinion on the community and its needs
- Can yield a lot of information in a short amount of time
- Are structured in a way that not only discusses the community's challenges but also their potential solutions

### Who

Although any active citizen can take the initiative to organize a focus group there are key individuals that need to be involved to conduct a successful discussion.

- An experienced facilitator who is not only familiar with the topic discussed but the individuals participating in the group
- Focus group participants who share something in common related to the community and/or challenge being discussed, and are ready to give their opinion on the matter
- A member of the needs analysis team who can take notes and record the focus group discussion. It is important that the participants know that this individual will be present.

### When

A focus group should be organized when:

- You want to ask in-depth questions that cannot be asked in a survey
- You want to gather the opinions, experiences and perspectives of a specific group within the community
- You want to build relationships with those affected by the community need

### How

1. Determine the purpose of the focus group by asking yourself what questions you need answered.
2. Identify a leader for the focus group who:
  - a. Has experience facilitating groups
  - b. Knows something about the topic
  - c. Will relate well to the focus group participants
  - d. Will work together with you to give you the outcomes you want
3. Identify a recorder to write down not only what is said, but also non-verbal communications.
4. Determine who should be invited to participate in the focus group. These individuals should be a representative sample of those whose opinions and/or experiences you are

concerned about. A good number to aim for is 6-10 participants in the group. You can always host multiple groups if there is a lot of interest in .

5. Determine what incentives you will offer to people to participate in the focus group. It is possible people will join just because they want to help, but there may be instances where an incentive is necessary. (Food, drink, recognition, child care, etc.)
6. Confirm the meeting logistics including a venue, date, time, length, and number of participants.
7. Invite your participants. Depending on the group of people you intend to involve you may have to find more creative ways beyond an email to invite someone. Always remember, personal contact works best.
8. Work with the focus group facilitator to prepare questions. The question list will serve as a guide to help achieve the purpose of the focus group. Remember to use simple and open-ended questions that begin with “why” or “how”.
9. A few days prior to the meeting send out reminders to the facilitator, recorder, participants, venue and anyone else who is involved.
10. Conduct the focus group. A common sequence of events for many focus groups is carried out by the leader and goes something like this:
  - a. Thank people for coming
  - b. Review the purpose and procedures of the focus group.
  - c. Ask an opening question and then use your question list to guide the focus group.
  - d. Ensure everyone has an opportunity to answer each question.
  - e. At the end give everyone a chance to share final thoughts.
  - f. Inform participants about what comes next.
  - g. Thank the group for coming!
11. Maintain communication with the participants to let them know how the information is being used and for future opportunities to create impact.

## What

After the community focus group is conducted, review the information collected and analyze it to help identify the priority need and it’s root cause(s). Share the results of your needs analysis with the participants as well as the sustainable solution formulated.

## JCI Resources to support

Local Action Guides: Collaborative Brainstorming

Templates: Needs Analysis Plan Template

Worksheets: Analyzing Community Needs Worksheet

## External Resources to support

- Community Tool Box Conducting Community Focus Groups: (<http://ctb.ku.edu>)
- *Toolkit for Conducting Focus Groups*. Rowan University.  
(<http://www.rowan.edu/colleges/chss/facultystaff/focusgrouptoolkit.pdf>)



## Organize a Community Forum Local Action Guide

JCI Active Citizen Framework

*The JCI roadmap to create sustainable impact*

A community forum provides the community the opportunity to share their concerns and vision for meeting the community needs.

### Why

Organizing a community forum can be a key part of your needs analysis because it:

- Generates awareness and understanding in the community about the issues
- In one setting, generates community feedback on their perceptions of needs
- Facilitates community involvement and builds relationships with potential partners
- Increases the community's support for you and your group

### Who

Any active citizen involved in the needs analysis process can help organize a community forum. Those involved in the community forum should include:

- JCI Project Director and team members
- Community stakeholders working to address the need
- Community stakeholders affected by the need
- Active citizens in the community eager to support
- An impartial moderator
- Speakers who are experts on the topic to be addressed

### When

A community forum should be conducted when:

- There is not enough community engagement.
- Want to develop a team and partnerships to conduct a project
- Need greater understanding of the community's perceptions

### How

#### Plan the Forum

1. Decide on the objectives of the community forum, which will help in determining the format and agenda.
2. Plan the logistics of the forum.
  - a. Location – Ensure an adequate space at an accessible, comfortable and public location such as a library, school or religious building.
  - b. Time – Hold the forum at a time that will not conflict with work or school. Set a firm ending time so that participants know what to expect.
  - c. Publicity – Publicize to ensure a broad community representation. Utilize social media, fliers, PSA's, press releases and ads. Personal invitations are an effective way to ensure key community leaders are in attendance.
  - d. Refreshments –Serve light refreshments to make people comfortable as they discuss the challenges they face.

- e. Materials – In addition to audio and visual equipment needed, large paper, easels and markers can be affective materials for large group discussions.
3. Decide on necessary participants to run the meeting.
  - a. Find an unbiased moderator with good listening and group process skills that can facilitate the meeting and keep up the energy in the room.
  - b. Request people to act as recorders to write down the conversations brought up.
  - c. Consider inviting speakers who are experts on the topic, but be cautious as this could inhibit community members from contributing.

### Conduct the Forum

4. Introduce the forum moderator and JCI project director.
5. Define the rules for the meeting:
  - a. Only one person is allowed to talk at a time.
  - b. All contributions and ideas are valued; allow everyone to participate.
  - c. No personal attacks on people.
6. Divide into small groups of 30-40 participants to allow for greater participation.
  - a. Ensure a moderator and recorder are in each group.
7. Opening questions for each participant to introduce themselves within their groups.
  - a. Say your name and what brought you here today.
  - b. In your opinion, what is the priority challenge related to the community's need?
8. Pose introductory questions to present the main topic and foster group dialogue.
9. Pose key open-ended questions that are focused on the community need.
  - a. What are the community challenges and consequences?
  - b. Who is affected and how so?
  - c. What resources are needed to address the challenge?
  - d. What people or groups could contribute?
10. Conclude with a summary of what was discussed and next steps for action.
11. Provide information about your JCI Local Organization and how you are planning to address the community need.
12. Provide a sign-up sheet for people who want to get involved in the project.

### What Comes Next

Utilize the ideas generated and concerns raised to shape your work as you formulate sustainable solutions.

### JCI Resources to Support

Local Action Guides: Formulating Sustainable Solutions

Templates: Needs Analysis Plan Template

Worksheets: Analyzing Community Needs Worksheet

### External Resources to Support

Links:

- Community Toolbox Conducting Public Forums and Listening Sessions
- Community Toolbox Making Community Presentations (<http://ctb.ku.edu>)



## Community Stakeholder Interview Guide

JCI Active Citizen Framework

*The JCI roadmap to create sustainable impact*

*Interviews with community leaders and important stakeholders are a critical element of community action. They can serve a variety of objectives including raising awareness of the community needs analysis, identifying major community challenges and seeking viewpoints of critical groups and individuals who could become project partners.*

*Often times interviews lead to topics of discussion you can't plan for, however it is always good to prepare an interview guide to ensure your questions stay on track and you achieve your interview objective. Use this guide to prepare for your community stakeholder interviews.*

Key Informant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Sector of Society: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview Question Guide:** *Fill-in with your intended interview questions so you can remember what you hope to learn from your key-informant interview.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_



## Create Your Community Survey Template

JCI Active Citizen Framework

*The JCI roadmap to create sustainable impact.*

*A community survey or questionnaire can gather information about people's attitudes and opinions directly from citizens and actually give community stakeholders the opportunity to rank issues and problems.*

*There are many different ways to plan, create and administer a survey which all depends on your organization and community's resources. Before you begin the actual development of the survey there are many questions you can answer that will help you in creating and administering your survey.*

Target Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Survey Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

How will it be administered? (Online, In-Person, Mail, etc): \_\_\_\_\_

Survey Question Types:

- **Multiple Choice:** Allow you to find out more information than close-ended questions and results can be compiled more easily than open ended.
- **Close-Ended:** Prompt yes or no answers or true or false responses.
- **Rating Scales:** Respondents asked to rate items on a response scale of possible choices.
- **Open-Ended:** Often "how" or "why" questions that are designed to prompt more than one or two word responses.
- **Demographic:** Questions to help you better understand the background of the sample population surveyed.

Discuss with your local organization how these question types are useful in gathering information. What type of information does the question ask for? What about this question type could prevent someone from wanting to answer the question?

Once you know the target participants for your survey and how you will administer it, search online to see if there are existing templates and/or platforms you could use to save your needs analysis team the time and energy it takes to create, test, distribute and collect the survey.

## Create Your Community Survey Template

*Rating questions are a great way to determine what the community not only finds important but how satisfied they are with those services or opportunities*

Service	Importance Rating	Satisfaction Rating
Example: Public Transportation		

- For each item rate the following
- How important the service is to you
    - 1 = Completely Unimportant
    - 2 = Somewhat Unimportant
    - 3 = Don't Know/Care
    - 4 = Important
    - 5 = Very Important
  - How satisfied you are with the service
    - 1 = Completely Unsatisfied
    - 2 = Somewhat unsatisfied
    - 3 = Don't know/care
    - 4 = Satisfied
    - 5 = Very Satisfied

*Demographic questions can help paint a more accurate picture of the community and people you are surveying. Specifically demographic questions can tell you about the composition of your community's population and such characteristics as education, to household structure and more.*

Year of Birth:	Number of children in household:
Marital Status:	Race/Ethnicity:
Gender:	Household Income:
Years lived in the community:	Postal Code:
Education level:	Employed, Un-employed, or Self-Employed?

*Open response questions are a good way to give survey participants an opportunity to provide any other information they feel is important about the community.*

1. *What is the best thing about your community?*

*True or false questions can be a great way to not only simplify your survey questions but also their responses and therefore the work to analyze them.*

1. True or false, you would leave your community if you could?    True    False

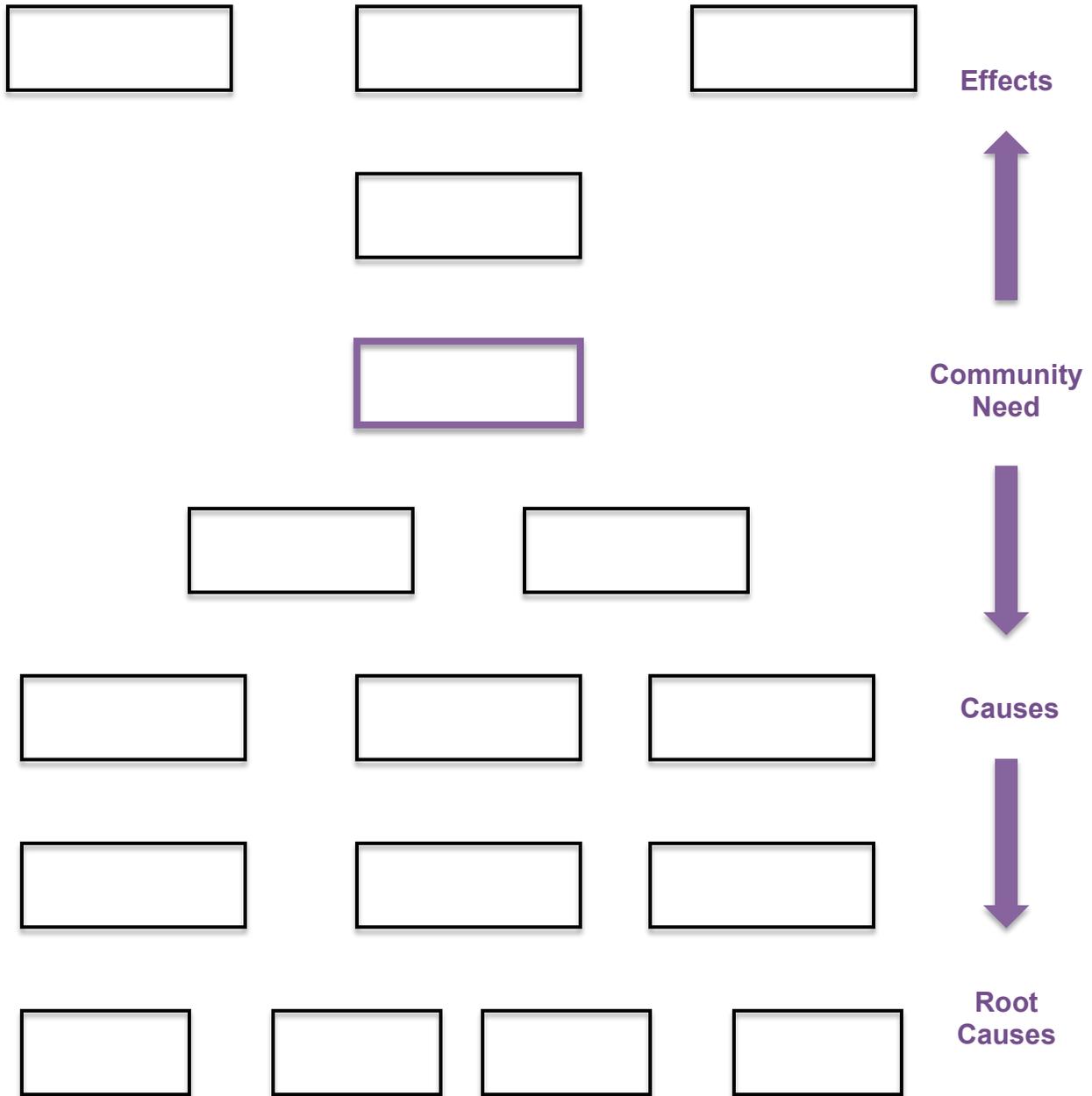
2.

3.



**Analyzing Community Needs Worksheet**  
“Getting to the Root of Your Community’s Problem Tree”  
JCI Active Citizen Framework  
The JCI roadmap to create sustainable impact

*A problem tree provides an overview of all the known causes and effects to an identified problem. Analyze the results to your community needs analysis to identify causes and effects of your community need. Draw connections between primary, secondary and root causes. As you fill out the worksheet continue asking yourself “but why?” (Why does that problem and its causes exist) until you reach the root of the problem tree.*





**Community Needs Analysis Plan Template**  
 JCI Active Citizen Framework  
*The JCI roadmap to create sustainable impact*

Needs analysis questions	Stakeholders who can answer	Preferred data collection method to ask	Action steps necessary to collect answers to needs analysis question	Person Responsible	Deadline	Cost
What has been done in past to address the need?	Mayor	Interview	Contact Mayor to schedule	Tom	Dec. 1 <sup>st</sup>	
			Prepare interview guide		Dec. 8 <sup>th</sup>	
	Those affected by problem	Focus Group	Identify facilitator	Sara	Dec. 1 <sup>st</sup>	US \$50 for food/drink
			Invite participants		Dec. 8 <sup>th</sup>	

