



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Objectives**
- to identify priority organizational and member needs
 - to choose those most crucial to future success
- Time it takes**
- 1 hour
- What you Need**
- flip chart and markers
 - completed activities from “Clarifying Our Purpose” and “Situational Analysis”
 - handout "A. Critical Needs and Questions" and "B. Focus Groups with Members” (You may cut the copies in half.)
- How it's Done**
1. Tell participants that now is the time to identify critical needs for the next two to five years. It is an opportunity to begin to phrase these needs using questions such as "how", "what" and "should": *(e.g. if the issue of many and competing women's organizations needs to be addressed, this might be restated as "How can we increase collaboration and reduce competition among women's organizations over the next three years?")*

Another important step in needs assessment is to check our assumptions about members' needs. This can be done through "focus groups", discussion with specific subgroups *(eg. based on age, level of involvement, type of work)* to explore interests. To get a sense of how to prioritize findings and confirm members' needs, the group will work on two different activities. Afterwards, they will share results.
 2. Group half the small organizational groups into "A" and half into "B". Allow thirty minutes for the following activities. Advise that selected groups will report.

Distribute handout "A" and request each subgroup in A to: 1) review their findings from "Clarifying Our Purpose" and "Situational Analysis"; 2) discuss and select four to eight of the most critical needs faced by their organization over the next two to five years; 3) rewrite these critical needs in the form of questions.

Distribute handout "B" to the subgroups in B. Ask them to: 1) identify two different focus groups in their membership with whom they might discuss member needs; 2) revise the focus group guide to fit their organizational findings; 3) plan a five minute skit with members and one facilitator covering one or two topics.
 3. In plenary, ask one group from A to report on their results and process. Ask one group in B to perform their role-play and invite comments and constructive suggestions.
- Variation**
- For point 3, display findings from A groups on wall and have more B groups perform their role-plays.

A. Critical Needs and Questions

Directions:

1. In your group, review your findings from "Clarifying Our Purpose" and "Situational Analysis".
2. Discuss and select 4-8 of the most critical needs faced by your organization over the next 2-5 years.
3. Rewrite these critical needs in form of questions, e.g. how, what, should.
4. After about 30 minutes, at least one group will report on the process and findings.

Critical Needs Selected	Needs Re-phrased as Question(s)

B. Focus Groups with Members

Directions:

1. Identify different focus groups in your membership with whom you might discuss member needs (e.g. different ages, work).
2. Revise the focus group guide below to fit your needs, e.g. to fit findings from "Clarifying Our Purpose" and "Situational Analysis".
3. Plan a 5-minute skit on 1 or 2 topics with 1 focus group and 1 facilitator. Remember to indicate the location and the methods used e.g. taking notes or using a flip chart.
4. After about 30 minutes, at least one group will perform their skit followed with total group discussion on the process.

Example of a focus group guide: Revise it for your needs!

'We want to understand how you, some of our newest members, have experienced your involvement in _____ over the last few years. We also want to find out your thoughts on what you want from your involvement in _____ over the next several years and what would make it an effective organization for you. First we'll ask about your experience. Then we'll ask about your needs for yourselves and your views on _____ and the community.'

"Our aim is to understand how the organization can best meet your needs and involve you."

Topics:

participation	reception	goals
meetings	projects	public action

Probes:

How have these met and how do these meet your needs? Why? What might be improved? How? What you can contribute?