

Sport

in the Neighbourhood

1 RESEARCH THE COMMUNITY

The first step in the process is to find out about the community in which you plan to conduct the program. Having a good understanding of the demographics of the community will be vital in developing a program that will work.

Define the community – who and what?

(remember a community could be defined by things such as geography, race/culture, age, religion or other factors)

After deciding on exactly who your community is you might consider investigating things like:

- The number of people
- Age demographics
- Socio-economic status
- Family composition
- Where people reside (if your community isn't bound by geography)
- Number of children per household.

Identify organisations and services that currently exist

Find out what relevant services, groups and clubs exist such as:

- Schools and pre-schools
- Tertiary education institutions
- Neighbourhood centres
- Community centres
- Family centres
- Youth services
- PCYCs
- Sporting clubs
- State/federal government agencies
- Local council offices
- Service clubs e.g. Apex, Rotary, Lions.

How can you get this information?

Sources might include:

- Community members – word of mouth
- Local council
- Chamber of Commerce
- P&C (parents and citizens)
- Library
- Phone-book
- Internet – Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS),
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

TIP It is unlikely that statistics as well as information on existing agencies and services will all be available from the one source so you might consider using a combination of these sources to get the information you need.

What other similar projects are already running in the community?

It is a good idea to check if anything similar is already in existence in your community (or those nearby) to avoid doing something that is already happening. You might also learn valuable information about how to establish your own program through researching other initiatives.

TIP It might also prove useful to find out what services these organisations are currently offering in the community. Knowledge of such services might help in developing partnerships during the planning and implementation of your initiative.

1 RESEARCH THE COMMUNITY

The importance of understanding the community

Gathering data, facts and stats on the community gives you an understanding about who your community is and how it operates. Each piece of information you gather will tell you something.

Certain information may prove useful in putting together a program that suits the community. For example if you know that the majority of adults in your community commute to work you could surmise that holding your program straight after school may mean you will find it difficult to get volunteers because they are either working or traveling.

Lessons from Sport in the Neighbourhood

For the SITN program we used the wealth of knowledge of the agencies represented on the KBT Community Network. Agencies like Wyong Council and Housing NSW provided a lot of useful demographic and statistical information. Local community members who were in touch with their community also reported back to us on what was really going on in the community.

Building meaningful relationships with key community members is paramount. Take the time to build trust and remember that community members have the best knowledge about their community.

RESEARCH THE COMMUNITY – SUMMARY OF KEY TASKS

- Define the community
- Gather information about the community
- Record and keep information gathered
- Use this information to guide the planning process.