Using Logic Models

Encouraging the Use of Logic Models in Local
Community Change Initiatives

Community Wellbeing
Ball State University

Introduction

This workbook will introduce you to exercises designed to help you learn new skills and become more effective in working with logic models. Section 1 will help you recognize how logic models can be useful for your initiative. Section 2 will walk you through exercises to help you learn logic model basics. Exercises in Section 3 will provide you with some tools and skills to use as you work to develop a project-specific logic model.

Community Wellbeing

This educational session was developed as part of the ***Community Wellbeing*** initiative at Ball State University. The overall mission of ***Community Wellbeing*** is to ***develop a network of confident and supported leaders who are working to create great places for people to live, work, and play by strengthening community assets and co-producing wellbeing-enhancing change for people from diverse groups.***

What we value:
- Relationships
- Varied backgrounds
- Change

What we encourage:
- Personal/professional growth
- Human ingenuity
- Collective intelligence

Contents

Section 1: Why Logic Models?

Logic models come in many forms. In general, they provide a visual representation of the current understanding of how program components work together to encourage movement toward intended outcomes. Because they typically help add clarity to complex situations they have gained popularity in the past decade. Logic models are useful for all work groups but become particularly valuable when working with large community teams who are more informally connected.

Logic models can improve program success rates by:

- Encouraging conversations about how the planned activities will achieve the desired results.
- Serving as a communication tool to allow everyone to visually see the current understanding of the situation and anticipated outcomes.
- Allowing documented "best practices" to be highlighted within the project plan.
- Depicting graphically the logic behind how the complex initiative components work together.
- Helping illuminate potential barriers and obstacles.
- Serving as a reference point for everyone involved.
- Providing the foundation for program planning and evaluation.

As we start through this process, please remember that there are no wrong ways to develop logic models! Instead, our intention is for everyone involved in your initiative to have a similar understanding of how investments and activities come together to produce change.

What should logic models include? The basic components for the format you will be introduced to include INPUTS, ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, and OUTCOMES. The INPUTS and ACTIVITIES represent your planned work, while the OUTPUTS and OUTCOMES highlight your anticipated results. We will also talk about clearly articulating a SITUATION STATEMENT and overarching
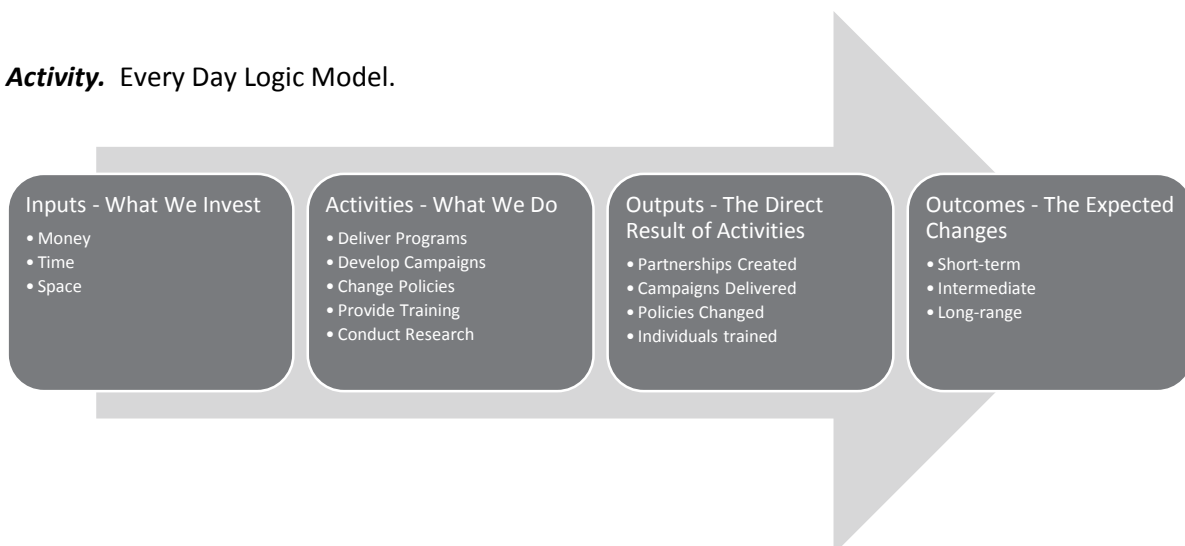
GOAL to guide your work and about identifying both ASSUMPTIONS and EXTERNAL INFLUENCES that may impact your project's success.

When should you start working on your logic model? It is never too early to start thinking about the structure of your logic model! The conversations your group will have during this important time can guide planning, implementation, and evaluation activities. Also, keep in mind that a logic model is never finished…at least not until the project is brought to a close. Instead, you should be continuously updating your model. As you progress through your project and you learn more and gain clarity, you should make adjustments to your logic model. Sometimes these adjustments are just small tweaks. They can also be very substantial revisions.

Activity. Using the space below, describe your project/initiative to me.

Section 2: Logic Model Basics.

In the last section we identified the basic components for the logic model format we will be using as SITUATION STATEMENT, GOAL, INPUTS, ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, and OUTCOMES.

The general format we will use to represent our program logic is based on the model presented by the University of Wisconsin Extension Services:

Descriptions and Characteristics of key components

SITUATION STATEMENT – A SITUATION STATEMENT describes the current context related to the issues or problem you are trying to impact. Take time to clearly and concisely frame the particular challenge that your work will try to solve. You may also hear this statement referred to as the problem or issue.

GOAL – The GOAL represents the answer to the question, "What are you trying to accomplish?" The answer to this will also provide a solution for your situation statement. Sometimes this is also referred to as the objective or the long term outcome.

INPUTS – The INPUTS are the various resources that go into the initiative. These include money and financial resources, personnel and other human resources, space and other physical resources, and a variety of other contributions.

ACTIVITIES – The ACTIVITIES are the services, events, tools, and technologies that are intentionally deployed using the identified resources. These include coordinating partnership and program development efforts, providing personal and professional development opportunities, conducting research and planning sessions, and deploying technologies and campaigns.

OUTPUTS – The OUTPUTS are the direct product and tangible results of the activities. These work products can serve as an early indication of progress. The difference between OUTPUTS and SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES can be confusing, and often these are reported together. OUTPUTS are the direct result of the ACTIVITIES, and they may or may not demonstrate movement toward the expected change. OUTCOMES are directly related to the expected change. OUTPUTS can include sustainable partnerships, improved knowledge and understanding, policy change, completed planning/research reports, campaigns kits, communication plans.

OUTCOMES – The OUTCOMES are the specific changes that are expected… the desired results. These are often described as short-term, intermediate, and long-range based on the relative time required to achieve them. These can include changes in behavior, knowledge, skill, and level of functioning.

- Short-term – improved knowledge related to conducting Health Impact Assessments, increased clarity of partner roles, elevated interest in forming a strategic alliance, increased interest in developing community-campus partnerships, improved understanding of the link between great places and economic development.
- Intermediate – working coalition in place, improved cohesiveness among project partners, increased use of placemaking strategies in community-level decision-making, policy changes, active community-campus work groups.
- Long-range – improved wellbeing, enhanced community vitality, growth in the local economy.

Activity. Every Day Logic Model.

Inputs - What We Invest	Activities - What We Do	Outputs - The Direct Result of Activities	Outcomes - The Expected Changes
• Money • Time • Space	• Deliver Programs • Develop Campaigns • Change Policies • Provide Training • Conduct Research	• Partnerships Created • Campaigns Delivered • Policies Changed • Individuals trained	• Short-term • Intermediate • Long-range

Steps for Developing a Logic Model

Now that you are familiar with some of the basic components let's look at a process that you can follow as you develop your logic model.

- Step 1 – Develop a situation statement related to the desired change and an accompanying "overarching" goal.
- Step 2 – Identify the primary purpose for your logic model (planning, evaluation, consensus building, communication).
- Step 3 – Examine the research, best practices, and existing knowledge base related to the situation.
- Step 4 – Explore underlying assumptions and external influences.
- Step 5 – Create linked ACTIVITY – OUTPUT/OUTCOME statements.
- Step 6 – Arrange logic model components.

Step 1 - Develop a situation statement related to the desired change and an accompanying "overarching" goal.

Developing a clear situation statement related to the desired outcome is one of the most difficult and time consuming tasks. Your statement should include a brief background about the situation, an explanation of desired change and why it is valuable, and an assessment of what will happen once the change is in place. The goal will explicitly state the final outcome that you expect to achieve.

Examples.

Situation Statement: Placemaking has emerged as a promising approach for encouraging economic growth and vitality in communities. Some creative leaders have adopted placemaking practices and are experiencing success. This has led several communities throughout Indiana to express interest in also embracing this approach, but many community leaders are unclear of where to begin. The purpose of this logic model is to provide a visual representation of how tool development efforts, conferences and workshops, and coaching/mentoring/technical assistance can come together to create community leaders who are confident in moving forward using a placemaking approach in their communities.

Goal: A network of community leaders who are competent at deploying placemaking strategies.

Situation Statement: Universities and communities have worked together in different capacities across the years. Some of those ventures have proven more

successful than others. Today's climate makes these partnerships more important than ever. With the decline of the tax-base in communities and decreases in state funding for institutions of higher learning, these partnerships have never been more important to pursue. Working together, creative leaders will be able to share expertise as well as other resources to enhance community vitality and create exceptional learning environments.

Goal: Community-campus alliances that allow students to learn under the mentorship of both faculty and business/community leaders while they help provide solutions to real-world problems.

Situation Statement: Wellness Hubs show promise in supporting the continuing personal and professional development needs in communities. Combining both formal and informal opportunities to learn with environments/settings where individuals can practice their new skills allows for optimal development of new, healthier habits. Creating these spaces in neighborhoods will be challenging. Using a community-engaged approach may increase both the value and the sustainability of these efforts.

Goal: Neighborhood-placed Wellness Hubs that provide personal and professional development opportunities to residents.

Situation Statement: Creating environments where parents are equipped to make informed choices related to their children's health and wellbeing is a challenging undertaking that will require many community agencies and organizations to work together. Identifying opportunities for both collaboration to occur and collective impact to be realized in informal networks is an important step in this direction that requires a new style of leadership and the development of new tools and skills.

Goal: Parents who choose wisely when making decisions that pertain to the wellbeing of their children.

Activity. Agreeing on a situation statement and goal.

Take some time now to reflect on the current situation related to the proposed change. Use the space below to write down some of the key elements you think should be included.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Write a situation statement

- **Background:**

- **Desired Change:**

- **Why Change Is Valuable/Needed:**

- **Your Assessment of What Happens Once Change Is In Place:**

Step 2 – Identify the primary purpose for your logic model.

While logic models can have many uses, understanding the primary purpose for your logic model will help you focus in on the key elements that should be included. Is your plan to use the model as a guide to your internal team to help improve awareness and clarity of the situation and the direction for the initiative? Will the model be used to attract investors or other stakeholders? Is the goal to elicit conversations among your community partners?

Who do you see as the audience for the logic model you are working to create?

_____

What do you hope will occur as a result of creating the model?

_____

_____

Step 3 – Examine the research, best practices, and existing knowledge base related to the situation.

During this third step, spend time highlighting key findings related to your initiative. For now, think about what you need to know to be successful in moving your initiative forward.

Have you tried similar initiative before or seen other communities/organizations who have worked in this area? If yes, who would you need to contact to learn more, and what specifically would you like to know?

_____

_____

What are some of the key challenges that you perceive, and why are they challenges? How have others dealt with these challenges previously?

_____

_____

Based on your current understanding of the situation, what else do you need to know before taking the next step?

_____

_____

Step 4 – Explore underlying assumptions and external influences.

Unfortunately, everything related to your initiative may not be within your control. This step allows you to think about influences that you need to consider and formulate plans for how you will address these influences.

ASSUMPTIONS – Assumptions are the underlying beliefs we have about our initiative, the people involved, and the way the activities will work. When you think about your initiative, what are some to the ASSUMPTIONS you have? Do you make the assumption that if you offer a class people will sign up? Are you assuming that everyone cares as much about the change that is prompting your efforts as you do? Are you assuming that once people learn more about the issue they will take action?

Let's look briefly at a simple logic model. We know that for a gas-powered car to start it needs gasoline. We also know that you are notorious for trying to stretch the time between filling up your car as far as you can. One morning when you are leaving for work, your car won't start. In this setting it would make sense to put together the logic:

Get Gas   Put Gas in Car   Car Starts
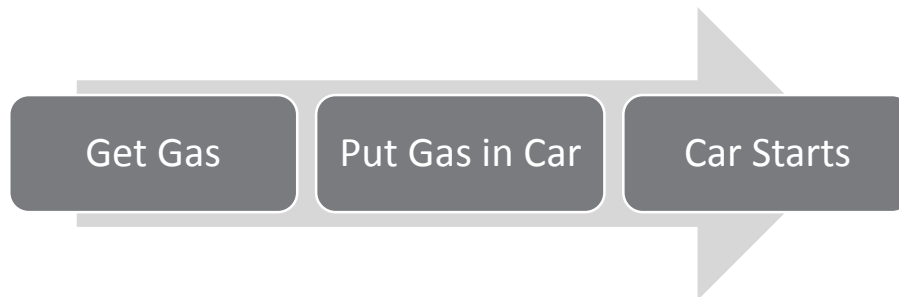
Some of the assumptions include:

- You can find/get gas
- Something else isn't wrong with the car
- The gas you find will be the right kind for your car
- The gas tank will hold the gas once you put it in the car

Can you think of other ASSUMPTIONS that may be related to this example?

A key question to help guide your thinking as you work to clarify ASSUMPTIONS related to your initiative: ***Why do you think/believe the planned work will achieve the expected outcome?***

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES – Many different external factors can influence the success of your program. Media, demographic patterns, political environment, climate, changes in local policies/priorities are just a few of the potential EXTERNAL INFLUENCES. As you begin learning to develop logic models, you will want to reflect on some of the EXTERNAL INFLUENCES on your initiative. As you become more seasoned in developing models, you will find yourself actually starting to plan around many of the EXTERNAL INFLUENCES.

Some external influences may include:

- The price of gas
- A gas shortage/gas rationing
- Gas refinery fire

Can you think of other EXTERNAL INFLUENCES that may be related to this example?

Activity. General discussion - key assumptions and external influences related to your initiative.

Step 5 – Create linked ACTIVITY – OUTPUT/OUTCOME statements.

Working backward from your goal, what are some of the OUTCOMES you expect to achieve?

Activity. Write potential OUTCOMES on sticky notes. Remember to write them as an OUTCOME…something that has been achieved. For now, don't spend time dwelling on whether the item as you have written it is an OUTCOME or OUTPUT.

Focusing in on ACTIVITIES and OUTPUTS

For each ACTIVITY you plan, you need to justify why you believe you will get the proposed OUTPUT/OUTCOME . If you plan 6 weeks of educational sessions around improving parenting skills, what evidence do you have that the specific sessions you offer will actually lead to improved skills as a parent? You can think of this process as a series of "if-then" statements. Keep thinking IF WE __(do this)_____ THEN WE WILL ___(get this)_____, AND WE KNOW WE WILL GET THIS BECAUSE ___(justification)_____.

Some examples of linked statements include:

- If we DESIGN PUBLIC SPACES WITH AT LEAST 10 GREAT THINGS TO DO IN THOSE SPACES then we will SEE INCREASED TRAFFIC AND USAGE OF THOSE SPACES, and we know we will get this because THE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THE PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES EFFORTS IN MULTIPLE COMMUNIITIES SUGGESTS THAT YOU NEED AT LEAST THIS NUMBER OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PUBLIC SPACE TO ATTRACT A DIVERSE GROUP TO THE SPACE AND CREATE REGULAR USAGE.
- If we DEVELOP REAL-WORLD LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS then we will IMPROVE THE LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THOSE STUDENTS, and we know

we will get this because STUDENTS WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED IN THIS TYPE OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE REPORT IMPROVED SATISFACTION AND KNOWLEDGE/SKILL DEVELOPMENT.

- If we ARRANGE FOR 2 YEARS OF HOME VISITS FOR NEW PARENTS then we will GET A REDUCTION IN INFANT MORTALITY, and we know we will get this because RESEARCH IN PILOT STUDIES IN OTHER COMMUNITIES HAVE SHOWN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES.

Activity. Write ACTIVITIES and OUTPUTS on sticky notes. Keep the ACTIVITY and resulting OUTPUT linked…but on separate sticky notes

IF…INPUTS…THEN…ACTIVITIES; IF…ACTIVITIES…THEN…OUTPUTS; IF…OUTPUTS…THEN…OUTCOMES; IF…OUTCOMES…THEN…GOAL!

Step 6 – Arrange logic model components.

Once you have collected and organized the information for your initiative following Steps 1-5, your final challenge becomes putting everything together in a logic order. As you start out doing this, you may have difficulty linking everything together. Spend time working through logical progressions using a continuous "if…then…if…then…" chain. Do the chains that you propose make sense? Is it realistic to expect to get what is proposed? Does the science/thinking support the progression? In the skill building section, we will use Post-it Notes or other movable cards to help facilitate this! Remember…the goal here is to come up with a one-page graphical depiction of the logic that is driving the actions and outcomes for your initiative.

Section 3: Putting It All Together

Sidney Harris
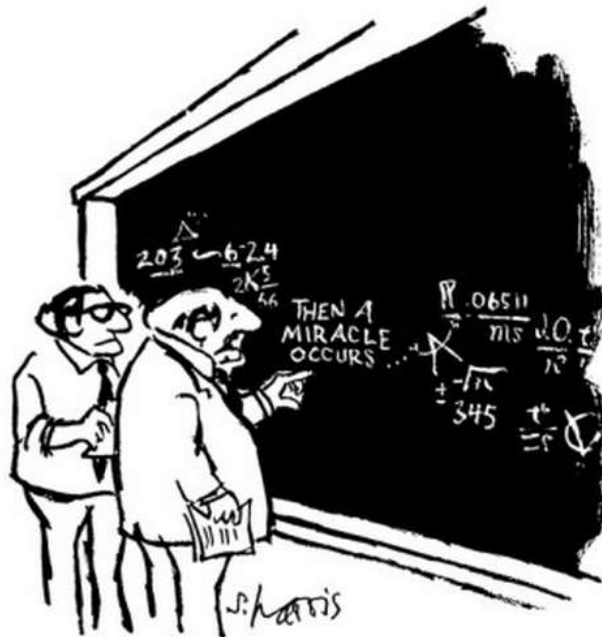
"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

Section 3: Putting It All Together

Program: _____ **Logic Model**
Situation:

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	*Participation*	*Short*	*Medium*	*Long*

Assumptions	External Factors

Section 3: Putting It All Together

Program: _____ **Logic Model**
Situation:

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	*Participation*	*Short*	*Medium*	*Long*

Assumptions	External Factors

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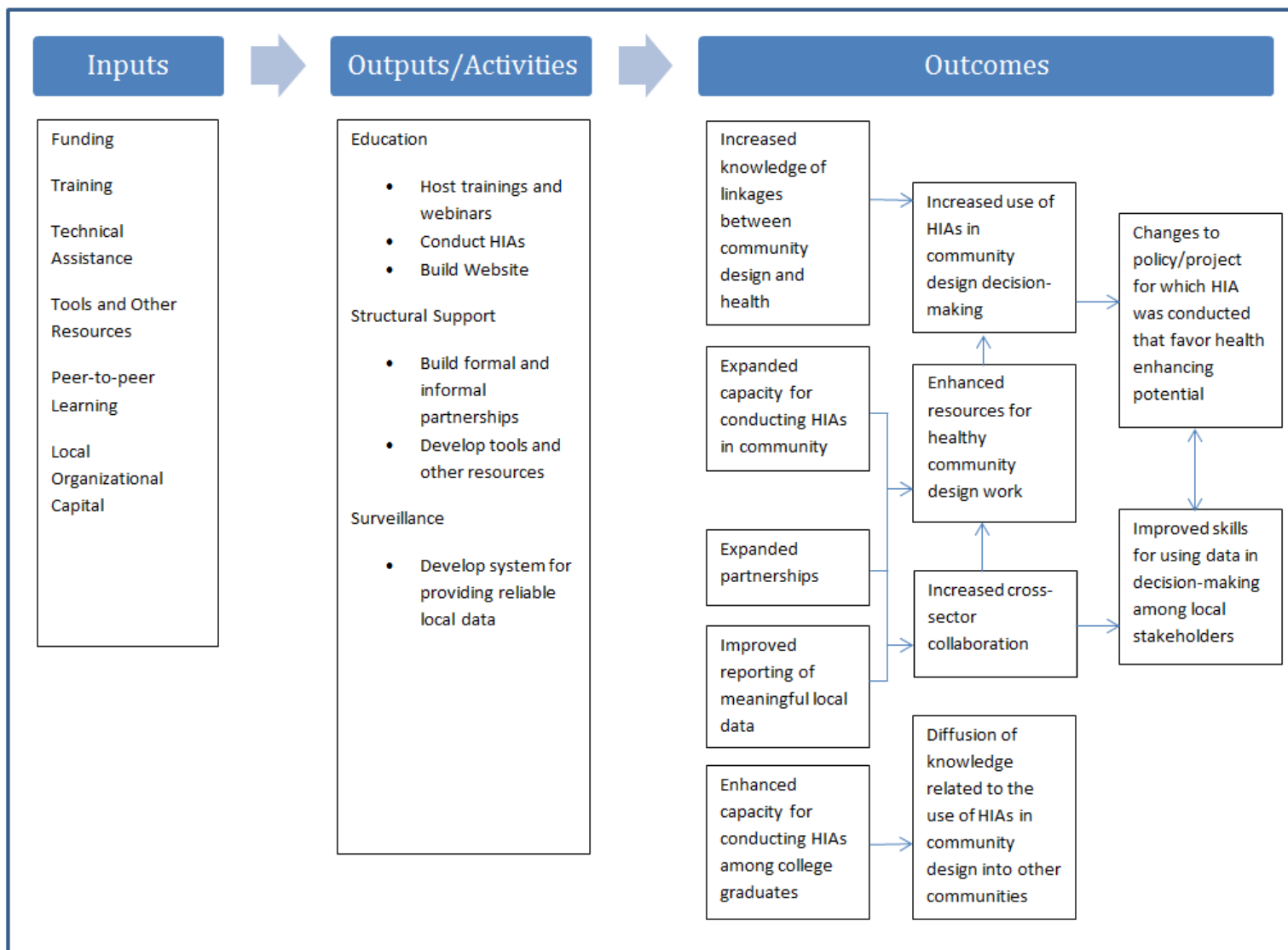
Section 3: Putting It All Together

Figure 1. Program Logic Model for Community Engaged Change: Whitely Neighborhood Alliance

Inputs	Outputs/Activities	Outcomes – Impact
		Short Term Medium Term Long Term

Document current Whitely experience (needs, interests, and expectations of community members) from community perspective

Individuals involved have improved understanding of population

Continued practice allows partners to enhance skills and abilities

Partnership grows into a strategic alliance

Whitely Community Council Leaders

Ball State Faculty

Whitely Community Members

Ball State Students

Financial Resources

Time

Inputs related to "winning" intervention

Organize personal and professional development opportunities to support individuals involved in partnership

Individuals involved have improved skills and abilities

A "winning" (community favorite) intervention strategy is identified

Coordinate a novel, participatory process for developing and prioritizing intervention strategies

Develop, deliver, and evaluate the "winning" intervention strategy

An ongoing, community-university alliance working to impact health and well-being at the neighborhood level

1