



HW#2: Simulated Development Project

Fall 2007

Carnegie Mellon



Introduction

- ***Purpose:*** To give you some experience in engaging in participatory research and development
- ***You will be given:***
 - The broad outline of a problem
 - A development partner
 - A faculty advisor
 - A team of classmates to work with
- ***It is up to you to:***
 - Find out what the full context and needs are
 - Negotiate a proposal with the development partner
 - React flexibly to unforeseen events
 - Build capacity with the partnering organization and community
 - Evaluate outcomes and plan for sustainability
 - Provide interim and final reports

Your development partner

- Your partner has an idea of what the organization wants, and what the needs of the community are. This idea may be well founded or not.

- Your task is to:
 - Understand their perspective
 - Consider all viable solutions
 - Then either validate their original idea of a solution, and make it real *or* persuasively recommend an alternative solution

Simulation details

- We are basing the simulated participatory research and development on actual experience.
- You don't know what the *project* is on day one.
- Information will be incomplete.
- Situations will change.
- It is up to you to:
 - Manage relationships
 - Manage the project
 - Manage change

Simulation details contd.

- Each week, you will be communicating with your partner.
- Your partner will provide feedback.
- In some instances, you will provide your partner and faculty advisor with a plan (e.g. needs assessment and capacity-building plan).
- We will provide simulated outcomes of that assessment or plan.
- The simulated outcome will only be as good as your plan, so you must be *meticulous about details in your plan.*

Technical solution

- The technical soundness of your proposed solution is fundamental to the project success
 - Human, social, and institutional issues are important, but equally important is the technology solution.
 - An excellent participative assessment and inspired capacity building are for naught if the technical solution is not functional and robust.
 - Know the domain
 - ICT/Computing
 - Human needs by domain (healthcare, agriculture, etc.)
 - Know the limits of the technology

Challenge #1

- Understand the problem
 - Do background research on the partner organization and the community in which your project will be implemented.
 - Learn to ask the right questions and to collect information in a professional manner.

Assignment #1

- Meet with your team and discuss a strategy for addressing the problem. Make sure you distribute the work effectively according to the strengths of your teammates.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask your partner.
- Get feedback on your strategic plan and list of questions from your faculty advisor.
- Set up a meeting with your partner and assess the problem using your list of questions as a guide
- Produce your first report (*due Thursday September 27 via BlackBoard*) describing the following:
 - The community and partner organization you are working with
 - A clear articulation of problem you propose to solve (your partner should agree with you on this)
 - The challenges you expect to face
 - Any other details relevant to understanding the problem



Challenge #2

- Propose a solution
 - Make sure the solution serves the needs of your partner and the community.
 - Make sure your partner understands the strengths, weaknesses, and costs of your proposed solution.
 - Think carefully about the sustainability of your proposed solution.

Assignment #2

- Meet with your team and design a solution to the problem you proposed to solve. Make sure you get frequent feedback from your faculty advisor and from your partner.
- Make sure you think about milestones, timeline, budget, and observable outcomes, that you design a set of capacity-building measures to implement with your partner to create sustainable change in the community you are working with, and that you include an evaluation plan to assess the project.
- Produce your final report (*due Thursday November 1 via BlackBoard*) describing the following:
 - An executive summary of your report
 - An updated understanding of the problem and the challenges you faced
 - Your proposed complete solution (including evaluation plan etc.)