**Connecting with Collaborators**



**Introduction**

In this assignment, you will combine the information you gathered from the[**Developing Strong Community Relationships**](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/envisionyu/chapter/developing-strong-community-relationships/) and [**Turning Problems into Possibilities**](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/envisionyu/chapter/turning-problems-into-possibilities/) exercises to create a project plan. Once you’ve learned how to do this, you can refine and apply this method throughout your life to make positive change in areas that interest you.

For instance, imagine you are interested in an environmental issue in your neighbourhood, and you discover your local Member of Parliament (MP) has made the environment part of their campaign promises. If you started to volunteer with the MP’s team, you could look for opportunities to raise your MP’s awareness about your concerns and encourage them to take action. Relationship building and supporting the interests of your collaborators can be a very effective way to initiate change rather than waiting for others to take the lead.

### ****Learning Outcomes:****

By the end of this activity, you will be able to:

* Identify possibilities for building relationships with collaborators and gaining experience (e.g., volunteering, placements, etc.) connected to collaborator activities.
* Organize the information you collect into a plan of action.

**Step 1: How can I connect with potential collaborators?**

Using the information, you have gathered in [**Developing Strong Community Relationships**](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/envisionyu/chapter/developing-strong-community-relationships/), select two or three potential collaborators most closely connected with your potential project and your own interests. You will be able to engage more effectively if you select potential collaborators with whom you genuinely empathize or feel strongly about. How will you initiate contact with and support these people?

Tips for initiating strong collaborative relationships:

* In what ways could you engage with your potential collaborators in activities and initiative they are already organizing? Following their socials is a good first step for learning about these.
  + For example, Kim Yee wants to get high quality children’s books into the homes of newly arrived Korean refugees and immigrants. One group of collaborators she identified are independent publishers of children’s books. She researched these online and after compiling a list began following these publishers on Instagram where they learned many of them were participating in the annual Word on the Street (WOS) festival in Toronto. She learned WOS was looking for volunteers and so applied. By volunteering for the event, she could speak with people who share her passion for the value of good children’s literature and are therefore collaborators in her project. This was an easy and fun way for Kim Yee to find people who would be interested in her project and could advise her on how to proceed.
* Which of the possibilities for connecting with potential collaborators are most available to you?
* Look at ways you could get involved with your potential collaborators as part of your degree through [work-integrated learning opportunities](https://www.yorku.ca/laps/get-experience/work-integrated-learning/)
* What skills, knowledge or experience can you offer to support your potential collaborators?
* What types of opportunities to connect would you like to have, but can’t find?
* If you were to pitch this possibility of this time of opportunity, who could you pitch it to and why did you choose them?

How will you initiate contact with and support your collaborators?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Step 2: How can I contribute?**

At the end of [**Developing Strong Community Relationships**](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/envisionyu/chapter/developing-strong-community-relationships/), you identified the questions you would like to ask your potential collaborators. Once you’ve contacted your potential collaborators through email or by using one of the strategies in the previous sections, set up a meeting to speak with the 2-3 people you identified and ask them the questions you prepared. Listen for ways that you can contribute to whatever the needs or activities they identify as high priorities that align with your own interests, knowledge and skills. Record what you learned below:

What is their interest in the problem?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

What is their perspective on what is needed to solve the problem you identified?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Is this a priority for them? If not, why not? What is more important to them?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

How has what you learned changed your understanding about the problem and what you thought would be a good solution?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Do you feel still want to be or should be involved in this? Why or why not?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Would they like to be involved in the project? If so, in what capacity, if not, why not?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Step 3: What are my next steps?**

Based on the information that you have compiled, what are your next steps? Answer the Action, Purpose, Detail and Contact Information for each person who has said they would like to be involved in the project.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| My action plan: |  |
| Purpose: |  |
| Details: |  |
| Collaborator’s contact information |  |