COMMUNITY OUTREACH TOOLKIT

Your team will not be the first to address the issue you have chosen. This is to your advantage! You can learn more about the problem and build upon the work that has already been done using a combination of your unique perspective and valuable information gathered from the community. This outreach tool kit will give you skills that will allow you to collect new information and perspectives with which to inform your solution.

What is a Community Resource?
Community resources provide expertise on the issue a team has chosen to study. In addition they offer their knowledge about the project you have chosen. WAC students identify and interview community resources who also have experience in the area they have selected, in order to take advantage of this information that already exists.

Keeping an open mind will help you identify the right partner(s) for your project. Students can contact anyone they would like to interview and may choose to interview more than one community resource. There is not “a perfect” type of community resource. And remember, one organization, company, or individual does not “speak for” OR represent an entire community. Resources may be any of the following:

● Businesses - are generally considered “for-profit” and a company or entity engaged in commercial or industrial activities.
● Charities - are dedicated to giving direct assistance, such as money, food, shelter, or medical care to those in need.
● Community-Based Organizations (CBO) - are committed to improving a specific community's social health, well-being, and overall functioning.
● Educational Institutions - are Colleges and Universities to advance learning, conduct research, and provide degrees in various subjects.
● First-Person Accounts or Personal Stories - are told by someone who experienced the problem or was part of the action to help solve a problem.
● Government Agencies - are Federal, State, or Local Government operations that have oversight and administration of specific functions.
● Non-Government Organizations (NGO) - operate independently from any government but may receive funding from government resources to take actions on a very large scale internationally.
● Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) - use their income and profits to do work that supports their mission. The profits gained are to benefit the community they serve.
● Professional Associations or Societies - is a group of people who share the same profession or professional interest and work together to solve problems, often issues of public interest.
Preparing for a conversation - Review a Community Resource’s website first!

Community resources spend a considerable amount of time thinking about solving a problem or making a situation better. But, like you, they are not the first to focus on, or be impacted by, the Issue.

An excellent way to impress your community resource is to demonstrate you've taken the time to understand the importance of their work. In addition, it shows you are serious about your project and respect their time- you will likely be able to answer some of your preliminary questions by thoroughly reading the resources website!

Some website pages and key terms to look for:

- **About Us** pages or simply "About" or "Who are we" pages provide an overview of the mission, vision, goals, objectives, staff, and recent news and media mentions.
    - Look for **vision statements** that communicate what the organization believes are the ideal conditions for the community and how things would look if the problems were addressed.
    - Look for **mission statements** that detail what the group or organization aims to do and why. Mission statements are similar to vision statements, but they are more concrete, concise, and outcome-oriented.
- **Goals, Values, or Objectives** are "action-oriented" and defined as the ideal **outcomes** the organization hopes to achieve, the type and amount of change it wants to take, and how long it should take to make the change.
- **Staff pages** will feature the individuals who work there and, sometimes, the **board members** or **volunteers** who support fundraising, operations, and outreach. Sometimes you can find **contact information** for specific employees on this page, so check here for individuals you may want to reach out to!

Prepare to reach out and introduce yourself and the WAC program

Planning ahead for any outreach you do to community resources and for any conversations you have scheduled will leave a good impression with your resources! Preparation lets them know that you value their time and have already done some preliminary research about the topic of discussion.

In order to get the interest of a person or organization, you will need an elevator pitch. This is a quick summary of what you want to talk about. It's called an elevator pitch because it should be short enough to present during an elevator ride. How long is that? 30 seconds! Think about commercials. They are not very long and need to grab your attention. The same logic is used to develop and deliver an elevator pitch. There are three parts to a pitch:

- Who we are (the students/school/WAC)
- What problem are we looking at (who/where)
- Why do you think THAT person or organization can help you as you design a solution? (What insight can they lend to your team?)

You can use this sample elevator pitch whenever explaining the program in a brief manner:

"The World Affairs Challenge enables student teams to collaboratively design solutions that address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at the community level."

Your project will need an elevator pitch as well! Here is a template and step-by-step breakdown of a quality elevator pitch.

Step 1: Introduction Who we are? Introduce yourself!
Hi! We're from (School Name), and we're participating in the World Affairs Challenge Program this year.

Step 2: Problem What problem are we looking at?
We're focused on learning about soil preservation in northern Colorado farmlands, and we know that talking to people like you is one of the most important ways for us to truly understand this issue and what's already being done to try to solve it.

Step 3: Goal Why do you think THAT person or organization can help you as you design a solution? (What insight can they lend to your team?)
Our goal is to understand this problem more deeply in order to then propose our own creative solution to it. Ultimately we want to be able to do something tangible to help solve this problem.

Step 4: Create a Project Pitch! Ok, it's your turn. Copy and paste the template below and fill in the blanks.

Hi! We're from _____ (school or location) and we're participating in the World Affairs Challenge

Program this year. We're focussed on learning about _____(problem) in _____(place), and we know that talking to _____ (people/organizations) like _____ (you/yours) is one of the most important ways for us to truly understand this issue and what's already being done to try to solve it. Our goal is to understand this problem more deeply in order to then propose our own creative solution to it. Ultimately we want to be able to do something tangible to help solve this problem.

Three Elevator Pitch Practice Tips
1. Set a timer and see how long it takes to say your pitch. You want to sound clear, not rushed. Rehearse it in front of the mirror.
2. Seek supportive feedback. Practice saying your pitch in front of others. Ask if it seems clear what you are describing.
3. Record your pitch. How do you sound? The more you practice, the more confidence you will have when saying it.

Asking Good Questions

The ability to ask good questions is essential for understanding and helping community resources *feel heard* and acknowledged in dialogue.

● You are asking questions to promote discussion, so simple questions are usually the most effective way to ensure clarity and focus.
● It is often tempting to ask a question and offer a menu of possible responses. For example, "Why is this happening, is it x? Is it y? Is it z?" It is generally better to ask the question and allow the community resource to respond. When you put out a range of possible options, it can seem like you are offering your own opinion or looking for a specific answer.
● In interviews, it is best to ask clarifying questions to avoid assumptions. Assumptions cause us to think we have a complete understanding of the situation. It can be hard to recognize your assumptions. Instead of basing your questions on what you think you know, ask for more information and clarification. For example, "When you said _____ what did you mean?" or "Could you tell me more about _____ so I can understand Better?"

Selecting Questions to Ask
The best practice is to prepare five questions for the interview. Ask your most important question first. You may not have time to ask all five questions, but if there is extra time in the discussion, it's better to be prepared. Some starter questions are located in appendix A.

Remember to Practice Asking Your Questions Ahead of Time!

Know Before you Interview: Best Practices & Interview Scheduling

An interview is a conversation with a purpose: gathering information to help you build your project. You can conduct an interview virtually, on the phone, or in person. The tips below will help you prepare to conduct a successful interview.

Assigning Roles
Usually, one or two team members participate in each community resource interview. Each team member participating in the conversation should be familiar with the step-by-step interview plan so the process goes smoothly. Below is a checklist of typical roles played by individuals in an interview. If you are conducting the interview alone, you will be responsible for each item.

- Who will extend the interview invite (by phone or email)?
- Who opens the conversation?
- When introducing yourselves, who will speak first, second, etc?
- Who asks which questions?
- Who takes notes?
- Who handles the tech set-up if you interview virtually?
- Who delivers the “Thank You” email/message?

Interview Invitations
When you ask to interview someone, you ask for some of their valuable time. Most people receive many emails or phone calls, which is why it’s important to be clear, concise, and polite in your request. If you do not receive a reply right away, sending a follow-up in three business days is appropriate. In today’s busy environment, it can be a challenge to get someone on the phone. Chances are you will leave a voicemail. Regardless of whether you send an email or leave a voicemail, there are several elements to include in your invitation:

- Your introduction
- Project elevator pitch
- The Ask (what you want from them- a brief interview- remember to define what “Brief” means! Ex. Do you only need 15 minutes? 30?)
- Availability (the best times to reach you)
- How you can be reached (email, phone)

Once you have received an email or phone reply, you will provide a confirmation message to “confirm” you have received the message and the date and time. If it’s a virtual meeting, in your confirmation email you will include a link to the meeting. Several email templates and phone scripts are located in Appendix B, including “follow-up” and “confirmation” messages.

Meeting Manners

Review the following to make the best first impression for telephone, virtual, and in-person interviews. It is poor etiquette to take screenshots, cell phone pictures, or otherwise record the meeting without permission. Remember, being polite reflects the type of person you are and demonstrates why you participate in the World Affairs Challenge program.

- Be ready at least 10-15 minutes early
- Find a quiet space with no interruptions
- Check headset or microphone for sound quality
- Turn off/silence your phone and computer notifications to avoid distractions
- Mute your microphone until you are ready to talk.
- Be respectful of the community resource's time
- Be prepared to take notes (on a computer or in a notebook).
- Always ask permission to record anything for meeting

Telephone Interview Tips

- Make sure your phone is fully charged
- Connect with your partner on WhatsApp, so you have a backchannel in case something goes wrong
- Always let someone know if you put them on speakerphone or will record the conversation
- Speak slowly, clearly, and at a reasonable volume
- Use a positive tone of voice when people cannot see your body language

Virtual Meeting Tips

- Dress professionally, and comfortably
- Is your background tidy? Distracting backgrounds are generally discouraged.
- Make sure your full name appears properly in the meeting.
- Avoid conversations with household members off-camera.
- Do not walk around while on camera during live sessions.

In-person Interview Tips

- Dress professionally, and comfortably.
- Stay mindful of your body language
- Map out the address and your transportation the day before
- Be sure to arrive 5-10 minutes early. **It is better to wait than to be late!**

Demonstrate Active Listening

Active listening allows the community resource to feel heard and included. By the end of the meeting, you should have a basic understanding of the community's concerns and needs.

Most important: Listen carefully to community members as they discuss their concerns and Priorities.Use the 80/20 rule. The goal of the interview is to understand what the community resource has to share. Therefore, the community resource should speak for 80% of the time and you (or your team) for 20%.

Active vs. Passive Listening. There is a difference between active listening and passive listening. An active listener focuses on what is being communicated instead of simply “hearing” what is said. A passive listener is not fully present for the conversation. The key to being an active listener is to be self-aware: Do you have difficulty listening or paying attention? If you are tired, are you easily distracted? When you are aware of your state of listening and what might impact that, you can better prepare.

Check out these active listening tips:
● Maintain eye contact (Unless, of course, you are the note taker).
● Don’t interrupt. If you have a follow-up question, write it down.
● Ask follow-up questions, so you have clarity on what was shared.
● Use non-verbal cues to show you are engaged.
● Do not snack during the conversation, or otherwise engage with any activity that is not relevant to the interview.

Note Taking
If you plan to type notes on a computer, be sure to mute your mic while typing. Have multiple pens and some paper nearby in case you experience a technical issue and need to take handwritten notes. If you handwrite your notes, you will need to transcribe them into a document that you can share with your team.
All notes should contain the date, who was in the meeting, the name of the community resource, and the list of questions asked. Once you have reviewed your notes for clarity and grammar, upload the document into the team’s Google Classroom Drive folder located in the Classwork tab so everyone can read it.
During the Interview
The interview will likely happen in this order:
1. Introduce yourself (name, school, location).
2. Briefly explain what you hope to gain from the conversation (use your elevator pitch!).
3. *** Ask permission if you want to record the conversation.
4. Ask your first question.
5. Before you say goodbye, Thank them (again) for their time.

After the Interview - **Say thank you!**

One of the easiest ways to show appreciation is to say Thank you. Sending an email thank you does not take a lot of time and is considered a high level of professionalism. When sending a thank you email, expand your message to more than one line - you can mention appreciation for the time they made for your conversation, the helpful information they offered you, or how you plan to integrate what you learned into your WAC project. Make sure you credit all team members in the message!

Thank You Note Tips
● Be prompt – one to three business days afterward is ideal.
● Double check names, titles, and spellings.
● Use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation and always proofread before you send.

Appendices and Resources

Appendix A: Starter Interview Questions

Here is a list of questions to consider for the community resource interview. The team can also create questions. *There is no requirement to use questions from this list.*

1. What was it that caused you to get so involved in this issue?
2. What fact, experience, or cause motivated you to defend the environment?
3. Do you think people take this issue seriously? Why or Why not?
4. How has Covid-19 affected the problem?
5. Could you give us some tips to generate greater awareness about our project?
6. What do you believe are the root causes of why this problem exists?
7. What challenges have you or your organization faced in championing this problem? How did you overcome them?
8. Share with us how you collaborate with other individuals or organizations?
9. Describe what has changed about this issue over the last 10 years?
10. How can more people become part of your efforts? Or community?
11. What do you think are the most important aspects to consider when setting up a project like ours?
12. What kind of resources do you think are needed to solve this problem?
13. How has access to resources changed over time?
14. Do you have any advice on implementing our project?
15. What are the future consequences if this problem is not addressed?
16. Describe a positive outcome you've seen or experienced around this issue?
17. Do you think this problem is often investigated or given the importance it deserves?
18. What advice would you give to young people worried about the environment?
19. What innovative projects have you implemented?
20. What future projects are you currently planning to do to address this problem?
21. What resources (podcasts, books, blogs, videos, etc) do you use to stay motivated or informed on this issue?
22. Are there resources or reports you can share to increase our knowledge on this topic?
23. Do you have any personal experience with this issue? How has that experience affected your work?
24. When did you notice you felt strongly about this issue?
25. Can you tell us more about [insert a specific issue]?
26. Who would you list as the key stakeholders in the community for this project?
27. In your opinion, who is often affected by this problem, issue or topic?
28. Share who you feel will benefit from this project?
29. Is there someone that comes to mind that has worked on this problem before?
30. Who is well respected or well-known in the community on this issue?
31. We have been thinking about doing _____ in an effort to help solve this problem. What do you think about this idea?

Appendix B: Interview Request Templates & Scripts

EMAIL: Interview Request Template

To:
Cc: (if you are interviewing with a team member, put their email in the "Cc")
Subject: Interview Request: World Affairs Challenge
Hello (insert person's first and last name)
We're/ I'm from _____ (school or location), and we're/ I'm participating in the World Affairs Challenge Program this year. We're focused on learning about _____(problem) in _____(place). We know that talking to people like you is one of the most important ways for us to truly understand this issue and what's already being done to try to solve it. Our goal is to understand this problem more deeply and propose our own creative solution. Ultimately, we want to do something tangible to help solve this problem.
Would you be available for a brief discussion by phone or virtual meeting on one of these dates and times? (provide at least three dates and times you will be available for them to choose from)
If more than one student is doing the interview, then add:
My team mate(s), _____ (Student Name(s)) will also attend this meeting.
Thank you very much for your time.
Respectfully,
Your Name (add pronouns)
World Affairs Challenge Program

EMAIL: Interview Confirmation Template

To:
Cc: (if you are interviewing with team members, put their email in the "Cc")
Subject: Interview Confirmation: World Affairs Challenge Program
Hi (First Name Last Name),
Thank you for your reply. We're / I'm excited to speak with you on (insert date and time).
If the interview is by phone, use: **We/I will contact you at the telephone number you provided.**
If by virtual meeting that your facilitator helps to set-up, use: **Here is a link to the virtual meeting:**
If the community resource provides a link to a virtual meeting they set-up, use: We/I will log into the virtual meeting you provided.
Respectfully,
Your Name (add pronouns)
World Affairs Challenge Program

EMAIL: Interview Request Follow-Up Template

If you do not receive a reply within three business days, sending a follow-up is appropriate.
To:
Cc: (if you are interviewing with team members, put their email in the "Cc")
Subject: Interview Request: World Affairs Challenge Program
Hello (insert person's first and last name),

You probably receive many emails, so we're/I'm following up to see if you might have some time to talk. Please let us/me know if you're too busy or if there's someone else we/I should reach out to for this information instead.
Thank you for your time.
Respectfully,
Your Name (add pronouns)
World Affairs Challenge Program
As a refresher, here is the original message:
(Insert your original message here unless it is automatically copied from your first email)

VOICEMAIL: Interview Request Script

When calling a person or an office, you will likely reach a voicemail (or be transferred to their voicemail). So practice saying the script a few times for confidence. Make sure to leave your phone number so you will receive a return call.
Hello,
I'm trying to connect with_____ (person's first and last name). I'm _____ (your name) from _____ (school or location), and I'm participating in the World Affairs Challenge Program this year. We're focused on learning about _____(problem) in _____(place). We know that talking to people like you is one of the most important ways for us to truly understand this issue and what's already being done to try to solve it. Our goal is to understand this problem more deeply and propose our own creative solution. Ultimately, we want to do something tangible to help solve this problem.
Would you be willing to speak with me briefly about our project? I'd like to set up a call or virtual meeting with you as soon as possible as our project has a short deadline. You can reach me by email at _____ or by phone at _____. I look forward to hearing from you.

LIVE CALL: Interview Request Script

If a person answers the call, after saying hello and introducing yourself, always state who you are trying to reach.
Hello,
I'm trying to reach _____ (person's first and last name) for a community resource interview. I'm _____ (your name) from _____ (school or location), and I'm participating in the World Affairs Challenge Program this year.
Once it is confirmed you are speaking with the right person, always ask if it is a good time to talk: **"Is this a good time for you to chat briefly?"**
I'd like to schedule 30 minutes of your time for an interview. My team is focused on learning about _____(problem) in _____(place). We know that talking to people like you is one of the most important ways for us to truly understand this issue and what's already being done to try to solve it. Our goal is to understand this problem more deeply and propose our own creative solution. Ultimately, we want to do something tangible to help solve this problem. Would you be willing to speak with me ("and one of my teammates," if applicable) for about half an hour? *(If they agree to meet with you, proceed to figure out a mutually convenient day, time, and location [in-person, by phone, or a virtual meeting].)*
Thank you for speaking with me today. May I have your email to send a confirmation? I look forward to talking with you more on [date and time]. If you need to reach me before then, my email is _____ and my phone number is _____. Thank you!

VOICEMAIL: Interview Follow-Up Script

If you do not receive a reply within three business days, you can call again or leave a follow-up voicemail.

Hello (person's first and last name),

This is _____ (your name) from _____ (school or location), and I'm participating in the World Affairs Challenge Program. You probably receive many phone calls, so I'm following up to see if you might have 30 minutes to talk. If you are willing to speak with me (and my teammate) about our project, I'd like to set up a call or virtual meeting with you as soon as possible as our project has a short deadline. You can reach me by email at _____ and my phone number is _____.

Please let me know if you're too busy or if there's someone else you recommend I reach out to for this information instead. Thank you!

LIVE CALL: Interview Request Follow-Up Script

If a person answers the call, after saying hello and introducing yourself, always state who you are trying to reach. Once it is confirmed you are speaking with the right person (or someone that can take a message to give to the right person), proceed with more details.

Hello,

I'm trying to reach _____ (person's name). I _____(called/ left a voice message/sent an email) a few days ago and I'm following up. I'm _____ (your name) from _____ (school or location), and I'm participating in the World Affairs Challenge Program this year. I'd like to schedule a brief interview.

If you are speaking to the person you wanted to reach, use this script:

Would you be available for a brief discussion by phone or virtual meeting on _____ (double-check the dates! Provide at least three dates, and times you will be available)

Thank you. May I have your email to send a _____ (confirmation / virtual meeting link)? I look forward to talking with you more on [date and time]. Bye!

If you are leaving a message with someone, use this script:

Do you know how I can reach _____ (person's name)? Or Would you be able to let _____ (person's name) know that I called and give them my phone number and email? Thank you! Bye!

References and Additional Resources

- **Community Tool Box, University of Kansas: https://ctb.ku.edu/en**
- **How to Follow Up with Someone Who's Not Getting Back to You: https://hbr.org/2021/01/how-to-follow-up-with-someone-whos-not-getting-back-to-you**
- **How to Introduce Yourself in an Email (With Examples): https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-introduce-yourself-in-an-email-2062812**
- **Perfect Pitch: How to Nail Your Elevator Speech: https://www.themuse.com/advice/perfect-pitch-how-to-nail-your-elevator-speech**