Short & *Snappy*
Community Service vs. Take Action

girl scouts
greater los angeles

Introduction
5 minutes

Girl Scouts are eager to find ways to better their community, especially when it comes to paying it forward and bringing their charitable intentions to life!

As they look for meaningful ways to contribute to their community, you can help sharpen their problem-solving skills and expand their definition of philanthropy by discussing community service and Take Action projects.

Community Service fills an immediate need in the community. It makes the world better for some people "right now." For example, collecting food for the local food pantry, gathering toys for a family shelter, or providing clothing to people who have suffered a disaster. These acts of kindness are important ways to help people but have a short-term impact.

Take Action projects address the root cause of an issue, and come up with sustainable, long-lasting solutions. There are three project types that fall under the category of sustainable.
1. Make your solution permanent, for example installing trash cans at a local park that didn't have any.
2. Educate and inspire others to be part of the change, such as creating a skit or song and presenting it to other people.
3. And finally, change a rule, regulation, or law, for example working with your school to implement a new recycling program in the lunchroom.

The best way to take action is to find something you're passionate about and connect it to your community. Offering a long-term solution rather than a short-term fix.

Depending on your Girl Scouts ages, you might need to clarify the differences between the two projects. A great to do this is to provide examples. For instance, a community service project could be asking for donations for a local women's shelter, while a Take Action project would be setting up a program where local businesses regularly donate unused items to the shelter teaching them about the shelters ongoing needs.

What's a Root Cause?
A root cause is the underlying reason for a symptom, problem, or issue. It's the event that initiates a problem or issue.

Both projects serve important needs, but at different levels. And girls' level of involvement with each progresses as they do through their years of Girl Scouting.

Every Girl Scout Journey Award ends with a small-scale Take Action project related to that award's theme. The Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are large-scale Take Action projects that take months (and sometimes years!) of planning and execution, so Girl Scouts who want to pursue these awards will need to understand the kinds of projects that qualify.

Activity

Choose one or more of the following activities to complete during your Short & Snappy Training. Activities two & three are best to be completed with girls but can be used during an adult training.

Activity 1 – Handout: Community Service vs. Take Action Worksheet
15+ minutes

1. Divide participants into teams.
2. Have a list of community problems or needs listed on poster paper or a board of some kind so everyone can see.
3. Distribute the "Community Service vs. Take Action" handout and ask each team to choose several problems/needs from the provided list and add to their worksheet.
4. Have each team develop a short-term project (community service) and a long-term project that addresses the root issue (Take Action) for each problem/need they have chosen.
5. After the teams are finished, ask one person from each team to share their solutions and explain how they came up with them. Then ask the larger group to add in any additional input.
6. End the activity with a general discussion, and have participants share any examples they may have.

Activity 2 – Handout: Community Mapping Worksheets
(Best done with Girl Scouts!) 20+ minutes
What is a community map? A community map is a drawing or a list that shows the community's needs and resources, including contacts that might help Girl Scouts when working on a Take Action project.

Instructions: Fill out the community mapping guide(s) using the guided questions below:

- What are the community's needs?
- What sparks an interest in you?
- What disappoints you about your community?
- Where do you see an injustice?
- Think about your own skills and interests.
- Group project: think about each girls' strengths.

- Include resources such as the library, animal shelters, parks department, but do not forget to include parents/guardians, friends, and the girls themselves under resources.
- If your group is having a hard time visualizing their community, take a walk around your neighborhood to get ideas.

Activity 3 – Handout: Mind-Mapping Tool
(Best done with Girl Scouts!) 10+ minutes
Create your own mind-mapping diagram using one of the issues facing your community.

Hand out one blank piece of paper for each participant. Then follow the instructions shown in the handout.

This short and snappy developed with help from the works of Girl Scouts of western Ohio and Girl Scouts of the green and white mountains.

Community Service vs. Take Action Worksheet

Choose several problems/needs from the provided list and add them to your worksheet. As a team develop a short-term project (community service) and a long-term project that addresses the root issue (Take Action) for each problem/need your group has chosen. Take some time to review the examples provided.

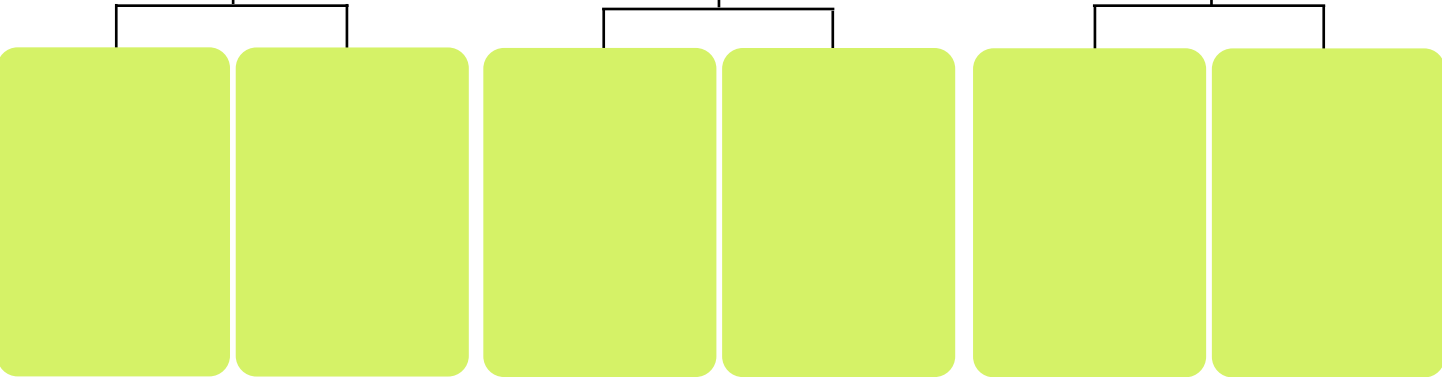| Issue/Problem	Community Service (Short-Term project)	Take Action Project (Long-Term project that addresses the root cause)
Soda cans and plastic water bottles are being littered at the park.	Participate in a park clean-up.	Work with the city to implement a new recycling program at the park. Then, work to organize an annual park clean-up with others in the community.
A local animal rescue group has a lot of dogs and cats in their care.	Making blankets and toys to donate to a local animal rescue group.	Help prevent pet over-population by creating a PSA or poster campaign for local spay and neuter programs.

Community Mapping Worksheet

Community Problem: _____ in _____
                                         Topic Area   Name of Community

Root Causes:
What is the "Why" behind the problem?

Possible Solutions:
What can I do that would address the root cause and solve the problem?

Identify Partners:
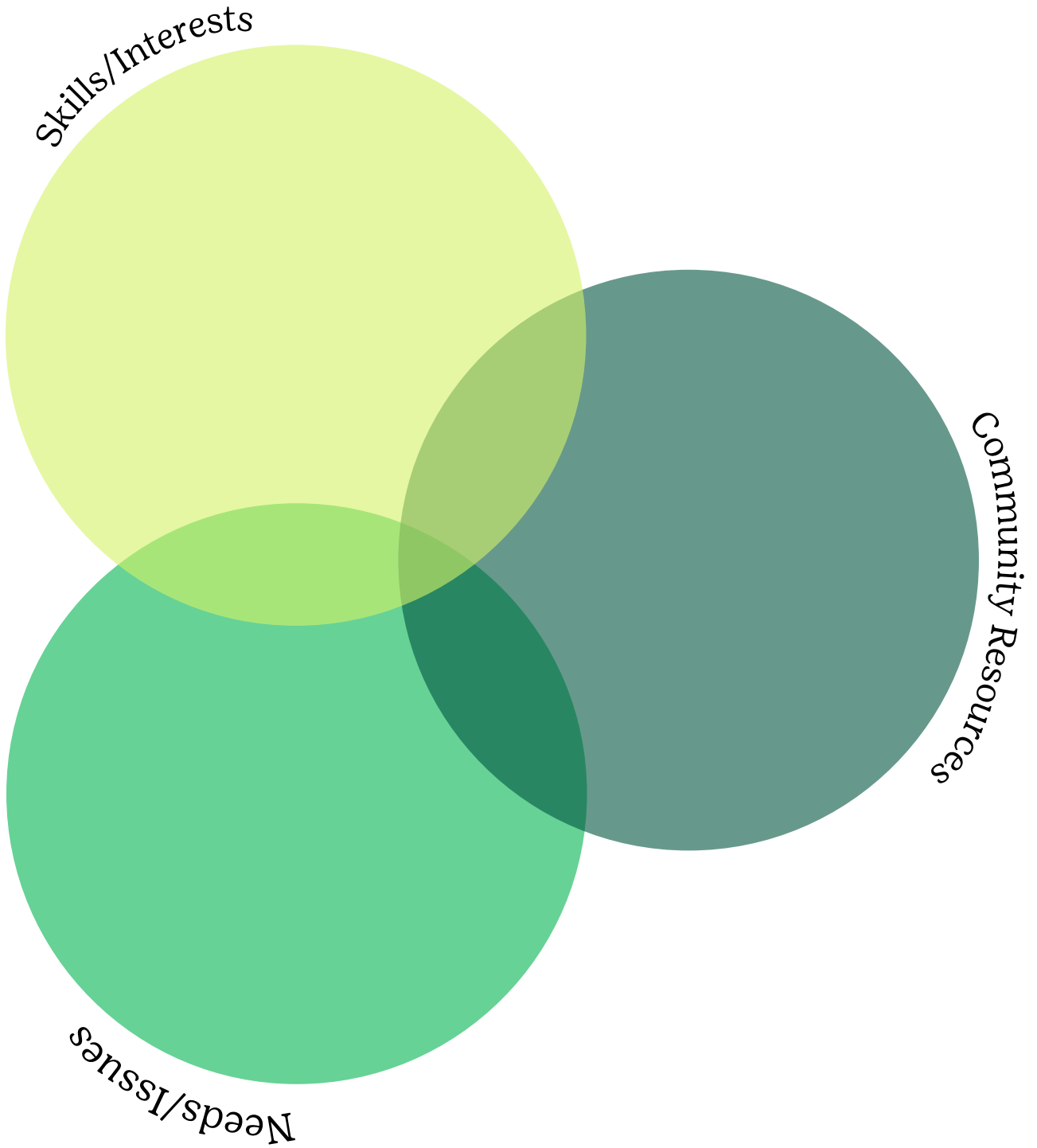**Who are the experts in my community that know a lot about this problem/topic?**

Potential Partner 1: _____

Potential Partner 2: _____

Potential Partner 3: _____

What's Next?
Now that you have found the root cause of the problem and have brainstormed possible solutions and partners, it is time to contact these partners and start developing what your project could look like.

Community Mapping

Skills/Interests

Community Resources

Needs/Issues

Mind-Mapping Tool

Hand out one blank piece of paper for each participant.

Create your own mind-mapping diagram like the one shown here, using one of the issues facing your community. Follow these instructions:

1. Write the community issue in the middle of the paper.

2. Think about what some of the causes of this issue are.

3. Connect the different causes you come up with to each other and to the main issue. How do the causes connect to each other?

4. Do you see the pattern? This activity will help you come up with different ways to approach a problem, as well as different ways you might go about addressing it.