JCI USA

LOCAL ACTION GUIDE

Project Chairperson/ Local Director

The purpose of JCI is to create positive change in communities throughout the world. Positive change only happens when concrete actions are taken. JCI is a grassroots organization where every action we stand for takes place at the local level.

You are where this concrete action begins. The results that you and your committee produce will determine the success of JCI as a whole. While your project may seem small, always remember there are thousands of other young active citizens like you leading initiatives through JCI to improve the world. Collectively, though your local actions, we can create a better future for all.

PROJECT PLANNING

As a local director or chairperson, you have been selected to be in charge of a certain area of activity within the Local Organization. You will be reporting directly to a Local Vice President, depending on the area of activity to which you are assigned. A Vice President is either in charge of internal activities, which primarily serve and affect the members on a local, national or international level, or they are in charge of external activities, which primarily serve or engage external stakeholders. Examples of activities assigned to a Vice President for Internal Affairs include membership development, internal communications, JCI Events and JCI Training. Examples of activities assigned to a Vice President for External Affairs include community needs analysis, community projects, partnerships, external communications and JCI partner programs.

Why Plan?
Now that you have accepted your assignment, begin planning your project or activity. Every activity must be aligned with the local plan of action and strategic plan. Be familiar with these Local Organization documents to ensure the activities under your responsibility serve to advance the primary goals of the organization. To be effective, every activity, no matter how simple, needs its own specific plan. Only by planning can you prioritize resources and foresee challenges.

Draft Your Plan
If your project involves an ongoing activity with the organization, meet with the prior director to learn about past activities and any existing plan. Ask for their evaluation of past activities and any recommendations as you move forward. As you work through the existing plan and make adjustments, consider transferring the existing plan to the online project planning system.

If your assignment is new, work with your assigned Vice President to outline your scope of responsibility and goals. When you begin planning your specific activities, use the online project planning system, which will provide step-by-step guide for organizing any event.

Online Tools
The online project planning system found at www.jci.cc provides many convenient tools and features for organizing your project, including online access for the committee members you assign, step-by-step planning and budgeting assistance and a partnership management section. The project planning system will also allow you to submit the plan electronically for local board of directors' approval and when finished, one-step posting to the local, national and international project galleries.

You may be assigned to an area of activity that does not involve events or meetings, such as communications or promotions. In that case, access other JCI action guides and manuals in the downloads section of www.jci.cc to assist you with your planning.

BUILDING A COMMITTEE

Based on the plan, you will have an idea of the number of committee members needed to successfully complete the activity.

Identify people within the organization who have shown interest or passion for the topic in the past. Their intrinsic motivation will lead to a more motivated committee. Consider ways to engage the individuals you have identified. You

may bring a sign-up sheet to a general membership meeting where members can indicate interest. Communicate with your Vice President to find out if there are any members they would like to assign or suggest for the committee. Then, follow up with those who have indicated interest or have been recommended so you can gauge their interest, availability and skills. Invite them to work with you on the committee.

Also, think about individuals, organizations, businesses or other stakeholders outside JCI who are interested in the topic. For young people who are not members, inviting them to join your committee may be a good way to introduce them to JCI. You may want to involve potential partners or stakeholders at an early stage so they feel invested in the process and more committed to seeing the activity succeed.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The First Meeting
Plan your first committee meeting shortly after the committee is formed to maintain the excitement and interest you have generated. Look for a time and location that is convenient for everyone. While committee meetings don't necessarily have to follow Robert's Rules of Order, it is important to prepare an agenda before every meeting to define the scope of the meeting and keep the discussion focused.

Email an invitation to the meeting with the time, date, location and agenda. Send a reminder email the day before the meeting.

At the first meeting, establish how frequently the committee needs to meet to achieve its goals. Think realistically about the amount of time needed for meetings. Consider schedule of key members and evaluate the time and location of the meeting to see if it will be convenient in the future. Schedule future meetings far in advance so committee members can make it a priority. Stick to the time allotted for each meeting. Refer to Planning Meetings and Chairing Meetings Action Guides for more information.

Present the idea of the project plan to the committee and discuss potential action steps. Ask for their feedback and suggestions about how to improve the plan. Engage everyone from the very beginning. As you make the first complete draft, confirm the commitment of each committee member to a certain area of responsibility for the project.

Obtain Approval of Plan
Submit the plan to your Local Board of Directors for approval. If you are using the online project management system, you will be able to do this electronically.

Moving Forward
After obtaining approval from the Board, meet with your committee to get to work. Delegate tasks according to personal strengths and interests. Give specific assignments with deadlines that you can follow up on. Don't leave a task unassigned or without a deadline. Keep committee meetings concise and on task. Allow for adequate discussion, but stay on agenda and reiterate decision once a certain action or decision has come to the forefront to confirm agreement.

LEADING WITH MOTIVATION

Managing the Progress
Maintain close communications with committee. Supervise group members, and be ready to help when difficulties arise. Recognize the workload of each person. Evaluate progress and hold each person accountable for what they are responsible for at every meeting. If they miss the meeting, follow up by email or phone to keep the project moving forward.

Resolving Conflict
In any group situation, conflicts may arise. Be prepared to mediate and settle differences of opinion diplomatically. Watch for people who say they will do something and don't follow through, as this can bring down the morale of the committee. If there is a committee member with persisting problems, talk to that person in private. Look for the root of the problem and work with them to decide if they need to be assigned to a different task, leave the group or another effective solution.

Building a Positive Attitude
Maintain an upbeat attitude and encourage teamwork and cooperation. Make sure the committee is aware of the current progress of the project, highlighting successes along the way. This will maintain forward momentum and motivate committee members to continue their commitment. Always praise in public and criticize in private to ensure positive group morale.

As the project Director/Chairperson, you set the example and the tone for the committee. Make decisions in the best interest of the project and the committee will follow your lead.