JUSTLOVE.

A Just Love Guide to Strategy and Impact Assessment

This guide will help you to ask three questions:

- **What do you want to achieve?**
- **How will you achieve it?**
- **How will you know that you've achieved it?**

We will mainly look at applying these questions to Just Love projects, but they can also be applied to events, and to your Just Love group as a whole.

Definitions

Sometimes we are faced with a load of words and phrases such as vision, mission, goals, objectives, purpose, values, strategy, impact assessment – and it can be hard to work out what they all mean. For the purpose of this guide, we will be using the following four terms:

Vision

- overall direction, purpose, future destination

Goals

- Steps to achieve the vision

Strategy

- Setting and moving through goals towards vision

Impact Assessment

- Determining the extent to which we are moving towards our vision, through our goals, and evaluating why

What do you want to achieve?

Once you know the broad area that your project will be looking at (e.g. homelessness/global issues/lifestyle) you can begin to **set a vision**. This should ideally be a short, concise statement that everyone in your team can remember and articulate. This statement will provide **clarity** and **unity**. People will be clear about where your project is aiming and what it's ultimate purpose and destination is. Your team can then have conversations about how best to move the project forward with this in mind. Often disagreements can arise if the vision is unclear – people might have a very different view about the usefulness of a particular event if they have different ideas about what the vision of the project is.

As you **set a vision** that **adds value** there are two things that are good to think about.

Awareness – As stated in the 'Starting Your Just Love' guide, it is crucial to know your city, especially if yours is a local projects. You will also want to know what is already going on in the area on which you are focussing. For global projects it will be worth reviewing our list of affiliated charities. As you do this it will be helpful to build relationships with these other organisations. You can then make decisions on whether/how to partner; you may want to run a project entirely of your own, but alternatively, you may want to run joint events. You can also run campaigns or events as a Just Love group on behalf of another organisation as (e.g. Stand for Freedom), or you can encourage students to volunteer directly with other groups.

Focus – As you become more aware of other work, you may find things that aren't currently being done that you could focus on and become very good at doing – whether that be a particular form of homeless ministry, or being the group that connects students to charities that need volunteers. Projects, companies, campaigns tend to work better when they focus on one thing and do it really well. If you focus on one thing then you can unite behind it, specialize in it, and become very good at it. However – you may feel that you are better off retaining a lot of flexibility with your vision and bringing focus as you set goals – for example, with a 'global' project you might want to keep a broad vision like 'inspiring and releasing Christian students to pursue global justice', and then narrow it down for a term or series of events to 'releasing Christian students to engage with global poverty through fundraising' or 'to engage with human trafficking through advocacy & prayer'.

Come up with a short, concise vision statement that your entire team can articulate.

Once you have set the overall direction of your project through a vision statement, it is good to **set goals** – specific steps towards your vision. These goals should be SMART – **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.** For a goal to be specific and measurable doesn't mean it has to be numerical (i.e. we want 50 students to attend this event/we want to raise £2,000 this week etc.) although goals like this might be helpful. Let's say you are running a speaker event – a non-specific goal might be 'we want people to be more interested in social justice'. You could make this goal more specific by saying something like 'we want the core membership of Just Love to have their theological understanding of justice deepened', or 'we want people new to Just Love to become more inclined to join a project'. Both of these are more specific in terms of the people targeted and the outcome desired, and can be measured qualitatively through testimonies. Goals should then be achievable (but still ambitious), relevant (to your vision) and time-bound.

Set SMART goals for your projects and events for the term (with reference to final section of this document).

How will you achieve it?

There will be different aspects to the strategy of each project depending on the issue focussed on – but two key aspects of any project are **recruitment** and s**uccession.**

We have found that there are 3 key factors in being able to recruit people to a project:

1. A **community** of passionate people – being part of a genuine community makes being a part of the project far more attractive. Furthermore, if the community is passionate about what they are doing, news about it will inevitably and naturally spread through word of mouth. (The *Just Love Guide to Teamwork 101*, although primarily for Just Love committees themselves, may also be useful for this).

   Think intentionally about how you can build this community, and review this every few weeks.

2. We talked in the previous section about being able to clearly articulate your vision, and **communication** of these to the people who might get involved (e.g. if you are giving an announcement about your project at a launch event) is vital. You should be able to say what your project is trying to achieve, what it looks like to be involved, and what drew you personally to be involved.

   Come up with a 30 second 'elevator pitch' about your project, and deliver this at the first few meetings of your project.

3. It is also vital that the project is dealing with a **tangible** issue. With local issues – if it's something like homelessness – people can see and know the people they are working with, and that can feel very real. This can be more of a challenge for global projects – if you are dealing with poverty or trafficking it can feel quite difficult to relate to, whereas if you are talking about a particular community whose names you know it can feel very different.

   See if it is worth narrowing down your focus slightly to achieve this tangibility.

4. **Succession** is one of the biggest challenges for student-run organisations. The recruitment factors above are important, but we also want to use the model of **tightropes and safety nets.** On the one hand, we want to give real responsibility, ownership and leadership opportunities (tightropes) to new/younger students, and we want to make sure that they are supported through this by a culture of encouragement, training and mentoring (safety nets).

You can find out more about the principle of tightropes and safety nets in the 'Releasing the Next Generation'

Following the 'releasing the next generation' session, intentionally identify future leaders of your

project and be accountable to the rest of your committee as you release them by putting this on the agenda in your committee meetings.

You will also want to think early on about **clear handover** of your project. This will include:

A clearly articulated history of what has worked

– while leading the project you and your committee will be aware of what has and has not been effective. Use the impact assessment frameworks as you go, and be ready to clearly explain what you have learned to the next project director.

A clearly defined scope for change

– there will be certain changes that will be acceptable within the current project vision, and others that may require it to be re-branded as a new project with a new vision. Either way, projects should have a specific and well-thought through focus, rather than trying to do many things at once, and the new project director should be aware of the appropriate scope for change.

How will you know that you've achieved it?

What is success?

The impact assessment process is already underway once you begin setting goals. As you set specific goals in line with your vision, you are defining what success looks like for your project. When thinking about what success is, and how we measure it, it is essential to spend some time in prayer asking for God's guidance.

What do we use to measure success?

Unless we think about measurement, notions of success can be a bit vague. It is important here to think about both quantitative and qualitative measures of success.

For example, to measure the extent to which we are engaging with, and bringing together, students around human trafficking, we can count the number of students at meetings as a quantitative measure. It could also be worth collecting testimonies as a qualitative measure – do students feel more passionate about the issue as a result of coming to the meetings? We might also want to think about the campaigning side. There can be quantitative measures here, such as how many people students spoke to during the campaign, or how many petition cards were signed. We can also have a range of qualitative measures, such as the way the public reacted to the campaign, the extent to which students enjoyed running it, or if the campaign was done in partnership with another organization, how pleased they were with the partnership. (We do suggest that you record quantitative measures around student attendance at events, volunteer hours in the local community, and money raised).

Write down what measures you will use to gauge the success of your project.

How do we collect this measurement data?

Quantitative data such as students attending meetings, money raised or petition cards signed is simple enough to measure, and if you stay organized you can keep thorough records through the year.

Qualitative data can be more difficult – it is possible to formalize

it with surveys, but this can feel too forced, and may not be necessary with the size of groups you'll be dealing with, since you should know the people involved in your projects

personally. Through just having normal conversations with members of your project you should be able to pick up a reasonable amount of qualitative data, and if there are particular aspects of the project you want people's thoughts on, you can ask questions more intentionally. For the most part though, if you have thought in advance about what success looks like, you are likely to be more attuned to the opinions of your members quite naturally.

Record data through the term to measure the success of your project.

Once you have set goals and measured the extent to which you have attained them, you can begin to think about why you have been successful (or not, as the case may be!) This will allow you to use the results of your impact assessment to adapt your events and projects so that they can be even more effective in future. As you measure success through the term, it is worth thinking about the question of 'why' as you go along – particularly as you collect qualitative data. The more information you have on this, the more likely you are to be able to use data effectively to shape the future of your projects.