

Social Accounting:

**A Practical Guide for Small Community
Organisations and Enterprises**

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Finally, thanks to John Pearce for introducing us to Social Accounting and Audit, and for providing encouragement and feedback on a draft version. While we have adopted the framework and approach to suit the context of small and primarily volunteer-based community organisations and enterprises, we hope that we have remained true to the intentions of Social Accounting and Audit.

Note

This document is a work-in-progress. What's presented here has been lightly tested with The Beanstalk Organic Food and with Fig Tree Community Garden, in Newcastle (Australia). More detailed testing is currently underway. We nevertheless felt that what we had done already was worth making more widely available. We therefore welcome questions, comments and feedback as we will be able to incorporate this into an updated version based on the more detailed testing.

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Introduction

There is growing interest in social accounting, but what is it? and how can it be applied to community organisations and enterprises?

Unfortunately, not a lot of information is readily-available on social accounting in the Australian context, and even less on social accounting for small, member-based community organisations and enterprises. This document seeks to fill these gaps. It provides an easy to understand guide on using social accounting in small community organisations and enterprises in the Australian context.

The guide explains what social accounting is, why it is important and how you can use it to help your organisation or enterprise. The guide is based on the three main steps that characterise social accounting:

- 1) Planning
- 2) Accounting
- 3) Reporting and Auditing.

It adapts these steps to suit small and member-based organisations and enterprises. It demonstrates the approach with material from two community enterprises in Newcastle (Australia), Beanstalk Organic Food Cooperative and Fig Tree Community Garden. These examples show how you can modify the steps and the approach to match your organisation or enterprise.

In this guide, we have tried to use a common-sense approach to social accounting. We hope that the guide confirms what you've already thought about social accounting (even in the back of your mind), and helps to put some structure and background around these thoughts. We hope that you will use the guide to carry out social accounting in your community organisation or enterprise.

How This Guide Came About

In August 2008, John Pearce from the Social Audit Network in the United Kingdom participated in a workshop on food-based community enterprises at the University of Newcastle, Australia. At the workshop John talked about the value of social accounting (see Cameron, 2008, 28-31), and two participating community enterprises expressed an interest in looking at how they could use social accounting.

From July to October 2009, two third year Development Studies students from the University of Newcastle (Carly Gardner and Jessica Veenhuizen) worked with these two community enterprises (The Beanstalk Organic Food and Fig Tree Community Garden) to help them with this task. As well as completing social accounting manuals for each enterprise, Carly and Jess drafted this overall document under the supervision of Jenny Cameron (from the University of Newcastle), and Jenny finalised the document.

What is Social Accounting?

Social accounting is a way of identifying how well your community organisation or enterprise is achieving its aims and values, and keeping track of the impact you are having.

Importantly, social accounting will allow you to see where improvements can be made so you can better achieve your aims and values.

Social accounting gains more meaning the longer you do it. Over time you will have a record of how your community organisation or enterprise has progressed and changed, and the sorts of impacts you have had. Social accounting is therefore a useful means of documenting your achievements and building a historical record of the organisation or enterprise for members (and any paid workers).

Social accounting can be used when reporting to funders on the outcomes of projects and initiatives. But it is important not to lose sight of the primary purpose of social accounting as a means for community organisations and enterprises to track for themselves how they are going.

How are we doing?

Are we meeting our aims?

What have we achieved over time?

Benefits

- Social accounting will provide you with an ongoing record of how your organisation or enterprise has developed and changed over time.
- You will get feedback on how things are going from the range of people involved in your organisation or enterprise.
- You will be able to identify the areas where things are working well and not so well—and you can use this information to help continue what you are doing well and make improvements to change what's not working so well.
- You will know how well you are achieving your aims and values.
- You will have a record of what your organisation or enterprise is doing and the sorts of impacts it is having—information you can use when applying for grants and funding, for reporting on grants, and for promoting what you do.

Challenges

No staff, no
time, no
budget!

For small, member-based community organisations and enterprises the biggest challenge is finding a way to regularly carry out social accounting with no staff, no time and no budget! It is therefore important that the social accounting process be as simple as possible so that it does not impose too heavy a burden on members (while still achieving the benefits of social accounting).

The following pointers might help you with social accounting:

- Don't be overly ambitious. Start with only one or two social accounting activities so that you have initial success. Add extra activities over time.

Start small

The Social Audit Network website has a wonderful example of the Social Accounts from the Community Enterprise Unit, where the organisation says "We have chosen to focus on Aims 1 & 4, thereby omitting Aims 2 & 3 this time. This is because we did not want to set ourselves up to fail by being over ambitious" (2008, page 18).

Keep it
simple

- Try to build your social accounting activities into the regular activities of your organisation or enterprise.
- Keep the social accounting tools simple and straightforward so that they are easy to administer and analyse.
- Make sure you act on the results so that the social accounting exercise has real outcomes and benefits for your organisation or enterprise.

Act on
results

A social
accountant

- You could consider having a dedicated social accounting position on your management committee (in the same way that you will have a treasurer's position).

The Steps

Social accounting is perhaps most developed in the UK, where initiatives such as the Social Audit Network provide training and support in social accounting (see www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk). Much of this work has been for large-scale and relatively well-funded social enterprises, and it is based on three overall steps:

- 1) Planning – identification stage
- 2) Accounting – deciding on the scope and setting up the social accounting system
- 3) Reporting and Auditing – collecting information and submitted to an external auditing body (Pearce et al 2005).

Social accounting for small, member-based community organisations and enterprises follows these overarching steps, but the steps have to be modified to suit the scale and capacity of this group of organisations and enterprises, as follows.

- 1) Scoping – identifying key elements of your organisation or enterprise
- 2) Accounting – designing and conducting your social accounting system
- 3) Reporting and Responding – reporting back to your stakeholders and responding to the findings.

The three steps

For those organisations and enterprises who are interested, the Social Audit Network website has guidelines that can be used to augment Step 3) and complete a self-verification (see <http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk/images/socrepforCT/app%2010%20verification%20checklist.pdf>).

While you're on the Social Audit Network website it's also worth having a look at another DIY Kit based on Social Accounting and Audit. This one is for Community Transport Organisations to report on their social, economic and environmental performance and impact (see http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=113&Itemid=92).

Step 1: Scoping

Decide on the scope of your social accounts

The first step is to identify three key elements of your community organisation or enterprise:

- values, aims and objectives
- activities
- stakeholders.

It's important to identify these elements of your organisation or enterprise as these will help you decide on the scope of your social accounting activities—what values, aims and objectives are you monitoring? what activities (or programs) do you want to know about? what stakeholders do you want feedback from? These elements will be interconnected: for example, identifying your activities will help you identify your stakeholders. An excellent overview of the role of objectives and activities in social accounting is in the *Accounts in One Page* document on the Social Audit Network website (see <http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk/images/PDF/accountsin1page.pdf>).

This step can be a simple process of sitting down with a few members and a few pieces of paper or a whiteboard to draw up a list in each category: 1) values, aims, objectives; 2) activities; 3) stakeholders. You will probably have most of this information already, so this step serves as a way of defining and confirming the characteristics of your organisation or enterprise. Having done this, you can then move on to the next step and start to design your social accounting system.

Step 2: Accounting

The second step is to design and conduct your social accounting process in order to gather information from your stakeholders about how well you are achieving your values, aims and objectives. As noted in the challenges section above, initially you might only focus on one or two values, aims and objectives, or several activities or programs, and gather information from only a few groups of stakeholders. Over time, you would then develop a more comprehensive social accounting system.

The overall design of the social accounting system will vary depending on the characteristics of the organisation or enterprise (from Step 1). For example, the Beanstalk Organic Food is structured around a series of clearly defined and regular activities that involve distinct stakeholder groups and reflect the objectives of the enterprise. These are summarised in the table below.

A social accounting system to match your organisation or enterprise

Stakeholders	Activities	Most Relevant Objectives
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy produce from Beanstalk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop direct links between the sustainable organic farming communities and the urban communities of the Hunter Valley To build consumer awareness of sustainable agriculture and empower the community to consume ethically
Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop direct links between the sustainable organic farming communities and the urban communities of the Hunter Valley To offer farmers fair prices and support them through difficult periods
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up and pack away the produce pick-up point Manage the checkout Order produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To foster community skill sharing
One Paid Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures the system runs smoothly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a viable and sustainable community organisation
Committee of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures the system runs smoothly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a viable and sustainable community organisation

Starting with stakeholders

The social accounting system for Beanstalk therefore focuses on the stakeholders and getting information from them about the activities they are involved in, and the extent to which the related objectives are being achieved.

It's worth noting that, to date, Beanstalk has only focussed on current members, but an important stakeholder group to gather information from is past members. One important piece of information from past members is why they left. There is anecdotal evidence that members have left Beanstalk because they start growing more of their own backyard vegetables, but this is yet to be investigated more rigorously through something like a social accounting process.

Fig Tree Community Garden runs very differently so a different social accounting approach is required. Fig Tree operates as an "open door" community garden where anyone is welcome to drop by and contribute in whatever way they would like (e.g. picking produce, planting produce, weeding, watering). There are some regular activities such as a monthly working bee and pizza oven lunch, but on the whole the garden operates on an unstructured and flexible basis. To match the characteristics of this community garden, the social accounting system is designed around the five values that shape the community garden:

Starting with values

- organic growth;
- sharing
- community building
- education
- a fun environment.

Information related to these values is gathered from as many people as possible who use the garden (i.e. the stakeholders).

Depending on the characteristics of your organisation or enterprise, (and drawing from the information you have collated in Step 1) you will need to come up with your social accounting approach: like Beanstalk, will you start with your stakeholders? like Fig Tree, will you start with your values, aims and objectives? will you start with your activities?

Once you have identified your overall social accounting approach, you need to **develop tools** to gather information from stakeholders.

Tools for gathering information

For example, The Beanstalk Organic Food gathers information from its members, farmers, volunteers and paid coordinator by using brief surveys with open and closed-ended questions. The survey form for members is on the next page (and more material is in the next section, pages 16+). The survey asks members to rank the features that are most important to them, and these features directly relate to the objectives from the table above:

Objective	Related Survey Item
To develop direct links between the sustainable organic farming communities and the urban communities of the Hunter Valley	→ Connection to Farmers
To build consumer awareness of sustainable agriculture and empower the community to consume ethically	→ Opportunity to buy sustainably produced produce → Opportunity to learn more about sustainable farming

Several other survey items relate to other objectives: opportunity to volunteer (relates to skill sharing); chance to connect and socialise (relates to viable and sustainable community organisation).

Surveys with members and farmers are conducted once a year. Volunteers work for four week blocks so their survey is done at the end of their volunteer period. The paid coordinator completes a survey each month. Importantly, like the one-page survey on the next page, the materials are all designed to be quickly completed by stakeholders. For example, the annual members' survey is designed to be completed by members while they are standing in the queue waiting to pay for their box of produce. The survey form also tells people why the information is being collected, and what will be done with it (including the possible use of quotes in the seasonal newsletter). The survey is also designed to be easily collated by the volunteer social accountant in Beanstalk (see pages 20-23).

Developing easy-to-use tools

ANNUAL MEMBER SURVEY

This survey is for the members of Beanstalk to provide feedback on what they most value about Beanstalk and where they think Beanstalk can do better. The surveys are collated to build an overall picture about what's working well and not so well. The results are used to help improve how Beanstalk is run. We do this every year to track the effects of changes we make.



1. How long have you been a member of Beanstalk? Less than a year
 More than a year
2. What do you most value about Beanstalk? Number the boxes from 1 to 6 with **1 as the most important.**
- Connection to farmers
 - Opportunity to volunteer
 - Low cost, organic produce
 - Opportunity to buy sustainably produced produce
 - Opportunity to learn more about sustainable farming
 - Chance to connect and socialise with other members

2a. Is there anything else you value about Beanstalk? Please specify:

*3. What do you think is the best thing about Beanstalk?

*4. What do you think Beanstalk could do better?

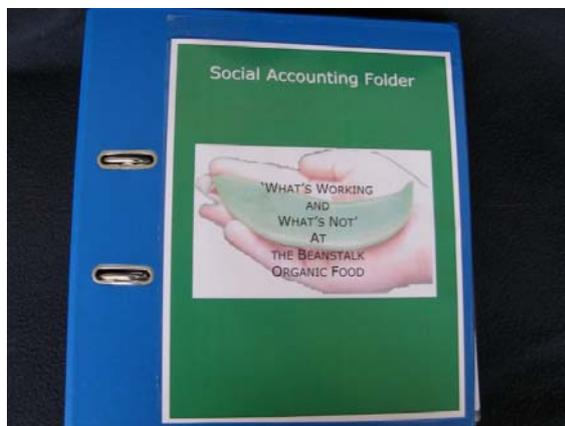
Thank you for your time and feedback

*Please note comments may be used in the seasonal newsletter. No names will be used.

For the Committee of Management, Beanstalk uses a **workshop** format. In the first part of the workshop, committee members work in pairs and then as a whole group to reflect on and discuss highlights and lowlights. In the second part, the social accountant presents the findings from the surveys with stakeholders (i.e. members, volunteers, farmers and paid coordinator), and committee members review the findings and decide on whether and how to respond (drawing also on their own highlights and lowlights).

A workshop
with the
Committee
of
Management

For Beanstalk all the materials (blank forms, completed forms, summaries of results) are kept in a **Social Accounting folder**.



Keeping all
the tools
together in
one place

An open notebook for anyone to write or draw in

Like Beanstalk, Fig Tree Community Garden also uses a short **survey** to get feedback from people who use the garden. But because people can drop by Fig Tree anytime, Fig Tree also has an **“I was here” book** that is always available for people to write comments or draw pictures in to reflect their thoughts on the garden. The paid workers also complete a **Visitor Tally Sheet** as a way of keeping track of people who drop by the garden and why.

The next two sections contain examples of the tools that Beanstalk and Fig Tree are using. These two enterprises are primarily using surveys, but there are a host of tools that can be used to gather information from stakeholders.

Taking photos

For example, in your organisation or enterprise you might find that for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds it is appropriate to give out disposal cameras and ask people to **take photos** of the things that they think best illustrate the good and the bad aspects of a project. People could tell you stories about the photos which you then record, summarise and analyse (in terms of what the stories tell you about how well you are achieving your values, aims, objectives). You can find out more information about the photo voice method at www.photovoice.org.

Telling stories

Story telling might be another appropriate medium for people to provide insights. The Most Significant Change (MSC) method provides useful insights into the systematic use of stories for monitoring and evaluation, and could be adapted for social accounting purposes. You can find out more about MSC from the following guide:

Davies, Rick & Dart, Jess, 2005, *The ‘Most Significant Change’ (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use*, Version 1, Available online at <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf> or http://www.clearhorizon.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2008/12/dd-2005-msc_user_guide.pdf, viewed 16 July 2010.

Another document with information about methods that you could adapt for social accounting is:

Cox, Eva, 2002, *Social Audit Cookbook*, The Reichstein Foundation, Melbourne, http://www.stepone.org.au/media/1899/social_audit_cookbook.pdf, viewed 1 July 2010.

When using surveys and other methods to collect information it is important to try and collect data that is reliable. In social research reliability is used to refer to the consistency of the data collected. In the context of social accounting, the main concern is whether respondents would give the same answers to a survey (for example) that was administered by different people. However, you need to consider how best to apply this principle to your organisation or enterprise. For example, if you want insights from young Aboriginal people it may be appropriate for someone who works closely with the young people to gather this information (as the young people may only be prepared to talk to someone they know and trust). In this case, the social accounting report could include a statement about how the information was collected, why it was collected in this way, and the possible impact of this on the veracity of the findings. The main point here is to be transparent about the process you have used.

Reliability –
is it a big
deal?

It's also worth remembering that the tools also do not have to be precise. For example, the Visitor Tally Sheet that Fig Tree uses is not a precise measure of how many people come to the gardens, it simply provides an indication of who's using Fig Tree and why.

Whatever tools are used, they need to be part of a social accounting process that is built around five considerations:

1. make sure the overall approach matches the characteristics of the organisation or enterprise
2. design tools that “get at” the most important information (i.e. information that relates to values, aims and objectives)
3. design tools that are easy to use and collate
4. design tools that are appropriate to the groups you want to collect feedback from
5. establish an easy-to-follow system so that social accounting can become part of the routine of the organisation or enterprise.

The five key
things to
think about

Step 3: Reporting and Responding

In the reporting stage, all the results from the various tools have to be assembled into the one overall document. Make sure you include any material relevant to the social accounting process. For example, as discussed above it might be necessary to include a statement about how information was collected, why it was collected in this way, and the possible impact of this on the veracity of the findings.

To highlight the main findings you might also prepare a short summary report (and this document will certainly be easier to hand around to members and other people who might be interested). A good example is the four-page summary document by the Community Council for Somerset in the UK (see <http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk/images/PDF/CommCounSomerset2008.pdf>).

Like the financial accounts, the social accounts should be presented at the Annual General Meeting (or similar) of members. Ideally the report would have been previously discussed by the Committee of Management (or similar) for them to devise actions and responses to any key findings (either findings that show where the organisation or enterprise is working well or where things are not working so well).

Report back
in terms of
values, aims,
objectives

When reporting results, it is important to return to the original intention of social accounting to identify how well values, aims and objectives are being met and how things may have changed over time. As an example, the All Saints Action Network Social Accounts addresses each objective individually and provides:

1. a statement of the objective
2. a statement of how the objective was assessed
3. a summary entitled “What our stakeholders said”
4. a summary entitled “Our analysis of their comments”.

These Social Accounts are on the Social Action Network website (<http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk/images/PDF/ASAN2007.pdf>, see pages 24+). This format is very easy to follow, as you can focus on each objective, one at a time, and see what feedback the stakeholders gave and the main lessons the organisation has drawn from the feedback (and what they are going to do in response).

Use tables and other techniques to try and summarise the key information. For example, Uusix - Workshops in Finland (2006) uses a 7-point scale to summarise how well they are going, with each point on the scale being represented by faces ranging from

😊⁺⁺ to ☹️⁻⁻ (see http://www.exchange2improve.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/17b_uusix_social_accounts2006.pdf).

It's also worth looking at how the summary Social Audit Report from Streetwize Communications uses cartoons and other graphics to succinctly communicate the overall results (see http://www.streetwize.com.au/pdf/social_audit_book.pdf).

In terms of responding to findings, the results can be used to change or refine how the organisation or enterprise operates, or to reconsider the values, aims and objectives and to change or refine these to better reflect what the organisation or enterprise is doing. Either way, these are issues for the Committee of Management (or similar) and members to consider.

Use tables and other graphics to communicate main points

Application I : The Beanstalk Organic Food

As discussed above (pages 7-8), the activities in The Beanstalk Organic Food based around five key stakeholders:

- farmers, who supply produce
- members, who purchase produce
- volunteers, who do the weekly set-up and pack-down; run the checkout and do the weekly ordering
- one paid coordinator, who ensures the whole system runs smoothly
- Committee of Management, who also ensure the whole system runs smoothly.

Beanstalk therefore collects information from these stakeholder groups to get feedback on how things are going. Importantly, the tools used to collect this information have been designed to reflect Beanstalk's objectives. This means that the end of year reporting can highlight how Beanstalk is going in relation to achieving its objectives.

What follows is the tool that is used with the volunteers who do the weekly set-up and pack-down. These tools and the related explanatory materials are extracted from Beanstalk's Social Accounting Folder. Notice how the explanatory material highlights the importance of reporting in terms of the objectives (see pages 20 & 23).



**VOLUNTEER SURVEY
SET UP AND PACK DOWN**



VOLUNTEER SURVEY SET UP AND PACK DOWN:

Why:

- Beanstalk relies on the help of volunteers, so it's important to get their perspectives so we can learn how we are going with our volunteers. Their feedback will help us to improve the volunteer-experience at Beanstalk, as well about help us figure out ways to encourage more members to volunteer.
- Overall the information from this survey will tell how well we are achieving our objective of Creating a viable and sustainable community organisation.
- Another objective is Fostering community skill sharing, so this survey is also designed to find out how well we are achieving this objective.

When:

- When each group of volunteers have finished their four-week block of volunteering.

How:

This one is pretty easy:

- Make sure there are enough surveys ready for the final week in the volunteering block
- Give each volunteer a survey (and a pen to fill the survey in!)
- Ask the volunteers to put their finished survey in the Social Accounting Folder.

You could then do a summary of the surveys every few months—or it could be done in one big stint at the end of the year. Instructions for how to do this are a few pages over, after the survey form.

VOLUNTEER SURVEY: SET-UP AND PACK-DOWN

This survey is to help Beanstalk learn more about what it's like to volunteer at Beanstalk. This will help Beanstalk figure out what things are working well as well as problems that we might to address. Please be honest and take your time.



Volunteer Activity (Please Circle) Set-up / Pack-Down

1. **Is this your first time volunteering with Beanstalk:** (Please Circle) Yes / No

2. **How many times have you volunteered with Beanstalk this year?**

(Please Circle) Once / More than Once

3. **What made you decide to volunteer with Beanstalk?**

4. **What have you learnt by volunteering with Beanstalk?** (Tick as many boxes as you need to)

a) Learnt more about how Beanstalk works

b) Learnt more about organic food and its benefits

d) Learnt more about some of the produce Beanstalk sells and how to use it.

c) Learnt new skills (please specify) _____

e) Other: (please specify) _____

5. **Do you feel your skills have been used?** (Please Circle) Yes / No

Comments: _____

*6. **What was the highlight of your volunteering?**

*7. **What was the low light and what could be done to change this?**

*Thank you for filling out this survey and for volunteering.
Hope to see you volunteering again!*

**Please note comments may be used in the seasonal newsletter. No names will be used.*



WHAT TO DO WITH THE INFORMATION FROM THE VOLUNTEER SURVEY

What Next

- These surveys can be summarised every few months or in one big stint at the end of the year.
- On the next two pages, you'll find a template to help you summarise the surveys. The first part has been filled in with hand-done tally marks so you can see just how easy it is. For the second part you need to type in people's comments and group comments that are similar.
- You should summarise the set-up surveys and pack-down surveys separately. If the results are similar you could put them together. But if the results are different you should keep them separate so you can try and identify why there are different results.
- Remember that this survey has been designed to give you information on two of Beanstalk's objectives:
 - To creating a viable and sustainable community organisation
 - To foster community skill sharing.

So when you analyse and report on this section of the Social Accounts, you should try to highlight how well Beanstalk is achieving these objectives, and think about things we can do to better to achieve these objectives (or to keep up a good performance!). To help you do this a template for reporting on the analysis of the surveys has been included.

VOLUNTEER SURVEY: SET-UP AND PACK-DOWN

SUMMARY TEMPLATE

SET-UP VOLUNTEERS

1. First-time Volunteering with Beanstalk

YES	NO
-----	----

2. First-time Volunteering with Beanstalk this Year

ONCE THIS YEAR	MORE THAN ONCE THIS YEAR
----------------	--------------------------

4. What's Been Learned

ITEM	NO. (1 tick = 1 tally mark)		TOTAL
a) How BS works			
b) Organic Food			
c) BS Produce			
d) New skills			
e) Other	No.	Types of Answers:	

5. Have skills been used

YES	NO
-----	----

3. Why people decide to volunteer

Type in comments, and group similar comments

6. Volunteering Highlight

Type in comments, and group similar comments

7. Volunteering Lowligh

Type in comments, and group similar comments

VOLUNTEER SURVEY: SET-UP AND PACK-DOWN

ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

Use this template to help report on the main findings from the survey. You could just highlight the main findings using dot points. You could also include some of the numbers from the survey results and even some quotes from the surveys.

CREATING A VIABLE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

What Beanstalk is doing well

Example of content:

- *Many comments about why people volunteer said things like “I was asked if I’d like to volunteer”; “I really like volunteering as a way of meeting up with people I’ve volunteered with in the past”; and “Volunteering at Beanstalk is FUN”. This suggests that Beanstalk is creating a strong culture of volunteering.*

Where we need to improve

Example of content:

- *This year only 5 people volunteered for the first time, while 35 people had previously volunteered. This suggests that we need to do more to get members who haven’t volunteered involved, and to introduce them to the culture of volunteering.*

FOSTERING COMMUNITY SKILL SHARING

What Beanstalk is doing well

Where we need to improve

OTHER FINDINGS

What Beanstalk is doing well

Example of content:

- *Around 1/3 of people said in their comments that a highlight of volunteering was meeting the farmers. This might be a good way to promote volunteering to people who haven’t volunteered.*

Where we need to improve

Example of content:

- *Almost half of the volunteers said they felt their skills hadn’t been used. This suggests that we need to find out more about people’s skills and devise ways for them to contribute these skills to Beanstalk.*

Application II: Fig Tree Community Garden

The social accounting system for Fig Tree Community Garden has been designed to reflect the “loose” that characterises the garden. As a result the social accounting tools are based around Fig Tree’s five values and corresponding objectives. The diagram below shows how this works. At first glance, it seems that there are a lot of tools, but as the inverse diagram on the next page shows, there are 6 tools, most of which serve multiple purposes.

The following pages then focus on one of these tools—the Events Feedback—and the accompanying explanatory material.

FIG TREE COMMUNITY GARDEN: FROM VALUES TO TOOLS

VALUE	OBJECTIVE	TOOL
ORGANIC GROWTH	➤ To allow Fig Tree to grow in a structurally organic way	➤ Visual Map
	➤ To provide the resources for community and sustainability	➤ Annual Questionnaire
SHARING	➤ To provide an open space which any member of the community can use and feel comfortable in	➤ Annual Questionnaire ➤ I Was Here”
	➤ To establish a system where volunteers are equally involved in the care of Fig Tree	➤ Reviewing Rosters ➤ Annual Questionnaire
COMMUNITY BUILDING	➤ To maintain an environment that attracts and provides for a variety of community members	➤ Visitor Record ➤ Annual Questionnaire
	➤ To provide a volunteering opportunity that encourages community participation	➤ Visitor Record
EDUCATION	➤ To provide resources for community members to come and learn about organic gardening and sustainability	➤ Annual Questionnaire
	➤ To provide an environment for community groups to use for educational purposes	➤ Visitor Record Sheet ➤ Events Feedback
FUN	➤ To ensure that fun remains the underlying motive for everyone involved in Fig Tree	➤ Annual Questionnaire ➤ I Was Here”

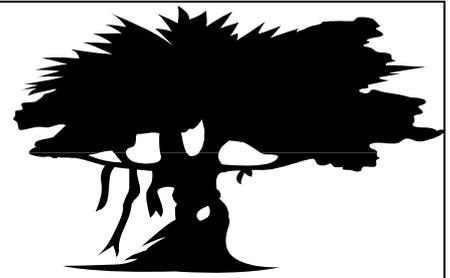
FIG TREE COMMUNITY GARDEN: FROM TOOLS TO VALUES

TOOL	OBJECTIVE	VALUES
ANNUAL QUESTIONNAIRE	➤ To provide the resources for community and sustainability	➤ Education
	➤ To provide an open space which any member of the community can use and feel comfortable in	➤ Sharing
	➤ To establish a system where volunteers are equally involved in the care of Fig Tree	➤ Sharing
	➤ To maintain an environment that attracts and provides for a variety of community members	➤ Community Building
	➤ To ensure that fun remains the underlying motive for everyone involved in Fig Tree	➤ Fun
VISUAL MAP	➤ To allow Fig Tree to grow in a structurally organic way	➤ Organic Growth
"I WAS HERE"	➤ To provide an open space which any member of the community can use and feel comfortable in	➤ Sharing
	➤ To ensure that fun remains the underlying motive for everyone involved in Fig Tree	➤ Fun
REVIEWING ROSTERS	➤ To establish a system where volunteers are equally involved in the care of Fig Tree	➤ Sharing
	➤ To provide a volunteering opportunity that encourages community participation	➤ Community Building
VISITOR RECORD	➤ To maintain an environment that attracts and provides for a variety of community members	➤ Community Building
EVENTS FEEDBACK	➤ To provide resources for community members to come and learn about organic gardening and sustainability	➤ Education
	➤ To provide an environment for community groups to use for educational purposes	➤ Education
	➤ To ensure that fun remains the underlying motive for everyone involved in Fig Tree	➤ Fun



EVENTS FEEDBACK

EVENTS FEEDBACK



Why:

- One way that Fig Tree Community Garden aims to enact its values of *Education* and *Fun* is by providing a space for all sorts of events—from educational workshops (e.g. on bee-keeping; container gardening; composting and worm farming) to Sunday afternoon bands. It's important to get feedback from people who organise these events and from people who come along and participate, so we can see how well we are achieving these values and what we need to do to better achieve them.

When:

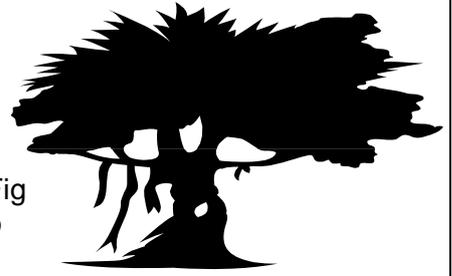
- During and after each event in the garden.

How:

- Before the event, give the person who is organising it a bunch of feedback forms, and a box for the completed forms; and show them where to put the box when the event is finished
- Ask the person who is organising the event to hand around the feedback sheets, and leave the box in a prominent position so people will know where to return their completed forms
- Ask the person who is organising the event to make sure they complete a feedback form themselves.

After a big event or after a couple of smaller ones you could do a summary of the feedback forms. Instructions for how to do this are a few pages over, after the feedback form.

EVENTS FEEDBACK



This form is to give Fig Tree feedback on the event you have attended. The results will help us figure out what's working well at Fig Tree, as well as highlight where there are problems that we need to address.

Name of Event: _____

Which best describes your role: (Please Circle) Participant / Organiser

1. Overall, how would you rate the event?

Terrible Neutral Fantastic

1 2 3 4 5

Please circle one number only

Why did you give the event this rating? _____

2. How would you rate the facilities and environment at Fig Tree for this event?

Terrible Neutral Fantastic

1 2 3 4 5

Please circle one number only

Why did you give Fig Tree this rating? _____

3. If you were an organiser, how many people attended your event?

*Thanks for your feedback.
Hope to see you at Fig Tree again.*

WHAT TO DO WITH THE INFORMATION FROM THE EVENTS FEEDBACK FORM

What Next

- After a big event or after a couple of smaller ones you could do a summary of the feedback.
- On the next two pages, you'll find a template to help you summarise the forms. The first part has been filled in with hand-done tally marks so you can see just how easy it is. For the second part you need to type in people's comments and group comments that are similar.
- You might need to summarise the feedback from organisers and participants separately.
- Remember that the form has been designed to give you information on two of Fig Tree's values:
 - Education
 - Fun.

So when you analyse and report on this section of the Social Accounts, you should try to highlight how well Fig Tree is achieving these values, and think about things we can do to better to achieve these values (or to keep up a good performance!). To help you do this a template for reporting on the analysis of the feedback has been included.

EVENTS FEEDBACK

SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Name of Event _____

Numbers who attended:

1. Rating of Event

	1 (Terrible)	2	3 (Neutral)	4	5 (Fantastic)
TOTAL NO.					

Reasons for the Rating

(Type in comments, and group similar comments)

Terrible

Neutral

Fantastic

2. Rating of Fig Tree

	1 (Terrible)	2	3 (Neutral)	4	5 (Fantastic)
TOTAL NO.					

Reasons for the Rating

(Type in comments, and group similar comments)

Terrible

Neutral

Fantastic

EVENTS FEEDBACK

ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

Use this template to help report on the main findings from the feedback on events. It's important to include a list of educational and fun events from throughout the year, and numbers who attended. You could just highlight the main findings using dot points. You could also include some of the numbers from the survey results and even some quotes from the surveys.

Date	Events with an Educational Focus	Numbers who attended
Date	Events with an Fun Focus	Numbers who attended

EDUCATIONAL VALUE

What Fig Tree is doing well

Example of content:

- *All of the 5 educational events held at Fig Tree were rated 3 or above (where 3 is a neutral response and ratings above 3 are positive). Comments included ...*

Where we need to improve

Example of content:

- *For one of the educational workshops, Fig Tree was rated 3 or below. The comments reported that it was a cold and rainy day, and that people were cold and wet. We might need to think about building more covered areas, or not holding workshop events in mid-Winter.*

FUN

What Fig Tree is doing well

Where we need to improve

References and Resources

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