



MUMS SUPPORTING MUMS

Planning your project

Planning together

The starting point is to get together as a group and decide what you want to do.

This is why it is a good idea:

- It will help you get your ideas together and plan what you want to do before you start completing funding application forms.
- It is easier to share out the work when everyone has been involved in planning what you are going to do.
- It will make it easier for you to complete an application form and help you make sure you don't miss anything out of your application.
- It will help you work out if there are other people or groups you want to work with to make your plan happen.

"People offer to help in lots of little ways because they have been involved from the beginning. You can share tasks around and it becomes easier to do. It doesn't get left to one or two people."

"We left it all to Mary. She was great at filling in grant application forms. She got us lots of little grants. But when she left we didn't know what to do or where to start and we really struggled to apply even for the annual grant from the Council."

You will find all the Hints and Tips on our website at www.otbds.org

Hints & Tips to get you started

Why we wrote Planning your project

Mums Supporting Mums links together small local groups led by mums. We've been developing ways for parents in rural areas to get together.

You will find Hints and Tips to help you if you want to set up local groups or activities. They include parents and toddler groups, informal groups in cafes, buggy walking groups and using social media, as well as tips to help you find the money to help your group with its activities.

One of the messages that comes up in all the Hints and Tips is that it helps when the group spends a bit of time planning what you want to do. Most of the time this takes a few minutes and fits in around the day-to-day contacts. But there are some situations when you need to give more attention to planning, such as when you want to develop what you do or apply for a larger amount of money.

We hope these will give parents in other parts ideas on what you can do.

Getting started

Get as many people together and have a short discussion about what you want to do. Write it up on flip chart paper or a big piece of paper so everyone can see it as you talk together. Ideas generate more ideas and your plans will be richer.

Ask yourselves some simple questions:

- What do we want to do?
- What can we do now and what do we need extra money for?
- How much it will all cost?
- When do we need the extra money?

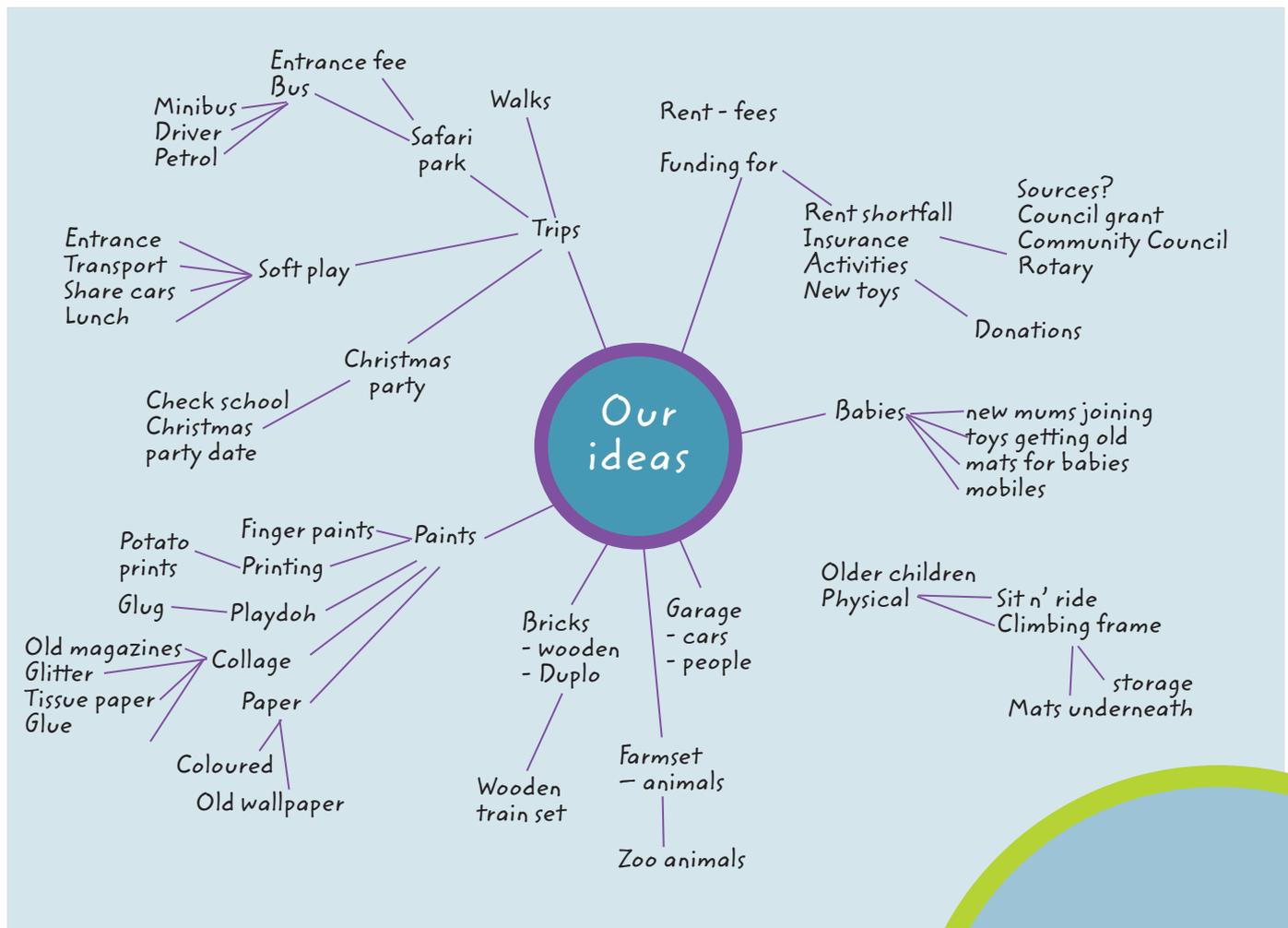
Some people might know where other groups got their toys or equipment from or know what bus companies offer reduced rates for groups. Some people might offer to find out who can run healthy eating sessions or fun music sessions for children and adults.

Writing it down

Once your ideas are flowing you'll want to write them down. We've shown you 3 ways that are each used by lots of groups for this stage in planning new things. Use whichever approach feels right for you.

Writing it down - a mind map

Some groups like to write their ideas in a mind map like this.



Writing it down – making a list

Some people find it easier to write things in a list

Things we want

Equipment – stronger equipment.
 Group use mats.
 Soft toys – baby toys, under 6 months.
 Books.
 Educational things.
 Boxes and storage crates.
 Trips and outings.
 Carpet/mats – roll up and store.
 Ballpit (got space to store in hall and hall committee applying for rack storage).
 Baby toys.
 Crafts – scissors, paper, paint, finger paint, glitter.
 Overalls.

Who do we want it for?

5 – 6 mums and 9 children.
 Talked to other mums – 1 or 2 mums expecting.
 1 dad.

Reasons why we want to do this

Educational/informal play.
 New experiences.
 Interaction.
 Children of own age and different ages.
 Good to get out of house meeting other people.
 Socialising.
 Reducing isolation.
 Women who don't come/new – and engaging with them.
 Mixing with others before going to nursery and school.
 Drop in/and occasional attending – women feel welcome even if they only come sometimes.
 Some people don't have cars/access to transport.
 Bus services – either doesn't exist or service is poor.

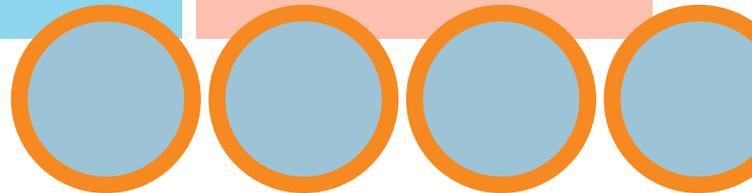
Who else can help and next steps

Health Visitors, staff at nursery and school – know mums in the area and can spread information.

Contacts at Third Sector Interface to help us with grant applications - Mary and Sam to phone them.

Contacts for our own fundraising in case we need it. Annie and Louise to co-ordinate this.

Ask other Mums and Toddlers groups if any of their members have equipment which their children have grown out of. Clare to follow up.



Writing it down – a planning chart

Some people find it easier to fill in a planning chart or template to help them get their ideas together.

Ideas	Who is it for?	When will it happen or when do we need it for?	Where will it take place?	Why is it needed?	What needs to be done?	Who will do it?
New toys	3 – 4 years olds	Next year - when the children have grown a bit	Toys will be used in the community centre	The toddlers are growing up and the current equipment is too young/small for them	Look at brochures/ internet research Talk to group in nearby town Ask health visitor their opinion Check out prices of toys	Claire, Mary and Joan

Example

A parents and toddlers group wanted new equipment because their equipment was getting old. We sat down as a group and came up with as many ideas and answers for each of the questions.

There were more babies and toddlers so we needed more things for them to play with as well as new things for the children to do.

We wanted a variety of things, including those that some of the group didn't get at home.

- Baby mats, changing mats, soft toys for babies, mobile with frame.
- Things for pretend play (garages and cars, trains, dolls, farm animals, pram).
- Sit and ride toys.
- Small climbing frame, mats to go round it.
- Balls, bean bags – indoor (soft sponge balls) and outdoor balls, different sizes.
- Paint and crafts (finger paints, paint, pots and brushes etc).
- Healthy snacks.

Why?

- More families coming, more babies, more toddlers, wider age range.
- Families living in small houses, great to have large indoor space to use sit and ride toys.
- Not easy to use paints at home.
- Wanted to have different types of toys than what we have at home.
- Families live in rural isolation, not many groups to attend.

When

As soon as possible. But we know that some funders take 3 months before making a decision so we have to think about that. We added extra things onto our list above (because some of the toddlers – would be 4 by then!).

How much

At the beginning we roughly thought we'd want about £2,000. We wrote a list of everything we'd needed, found out costs and added it all up – it came to £8,000. Eek!

Next steps

Because we were a small group and hadn't had much money in the past we decided we might not get it all at once. We applied anyway but had already planned what our priorities were.

Someone from the funder phoned to talk over the application with us. It helped that we had all been involved in the plans and lots of information to back up what we were asking.

They offered us some of the money we asked for – a bit over half. Hurray!

We got the rest of our list from donations of equipment and doing a fundraising event.

Making a project plan

A project plan set out the stages in actually making your idea happen:

- The main stages
- When they happen
- Who does the work

There are several ways of doing a project plan. This is one that we have found works well.

Timings	Stages	Lead people
September - October	Buy toys New posters and leaflets	Clare, Mary, Cathy
November - December	New toys in the existing group Buddy support for mums coming for first time	All
January - March	Start sessions at next village Publicity there	Katherine, Sally

You can make your plan cover several aspects of what you are doing if this makes sense for you.

Timings	Activities for parents and children		Telling other people	Lead people
	Stages	Lead people		
September - October	Buy toys	Clare	Talk to Health Visitors New posters more mums	Mary Cathy
	Design leaflets	Cathy		
November - December	New toys at existing group	Clare	Article for community newsletter and website Thank you and update to funders and people who gave donations	Mary and Sally Sally
	Buddy support for mums coming for first time	Clare to lead, all to help		
January - March	Start session in next village	Katherine, Sally	Publicity in shop, leaflets for Health Visitor to give out	Sally

The plan is there to help you make the project work well.

- You can use it to mark off tasks when they are done.
- You can update it when circumstances change.
- You can use it when you are giving progress or end of grant reports to anyone who gave you money or helped in other ways.

Planning and the trickier questions that funders sometimes ask

One of the situations when groups work on a plan is when they want to develop the group in a big way and will be making grant applications to funders.

Generally, funders ask more questions in these circumstances. These are our tips on the kinds of questions they ask and what you can do to provide the information.

What difference will you make?

Funders want to know a little more. They want to know what difference their money will make. They want to know things like

- Who will benefit?
- How they will benefit?
- How you know they need your project or activities?
- How will you know they have benefitted?

Some funders use different words to ask similar questions. They may ask

- What is the need for your project?
- What evidence do you have of this need?
- What are the outcomes that you want to achieve?
- How will you measure the outcomes?
- How will you know you've made a difference?

You can answer these questions in an easy, straightforward way

The amount of information you need to include will depend upon how much money you are applying for. The more money you are applying for the more information and evidence you will have to provide.

Awards for All have 'Scoring Guidance' that they use to help them decide if applicants have given enough information. You can see this on their website. It gives you some ideas of what sort of things, and how much, they are looking for. <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/scotland/awards-for-all-scotland>

"Usually one or two people write the final application but it helps if more people get involved at different stages. Everyone can be involved in one way or another. By asking everyone at the beginning you will get more ideas and suggestions."

Who is the project for? Who will benefit?

Try and think about as many different ways you can describe the people who will benefit. You can get into more of the detail about

- Women with young children.
- Families with young children.
- Families living in rural areas.
- Dads (might be dads who are not living at home with their children?).
- Women with young children living in rural isolation.
- Disadvantaged children (how are they disadvantaged?).
- Families who don't have access to any other local groups for children and parents to mix with others.

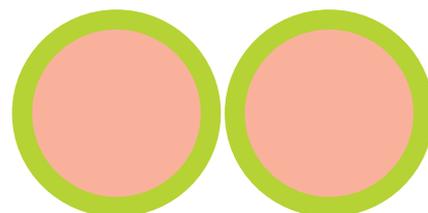
How do you know there is a need?

- We asked them – surveys, questionnaires, group meeting (focus group).
- We asked others – health visitors, community council etc.
- We found out about local statistics, changes in population, increased birth rates etc, new housing development coming soon etc.

Other research and information can also be useful

- Local statistics (Census – every 10 years).*
- Local area statistics (population, births, school roles, school meal take up etc) – local Council can help.*
- SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation).*

*You can look on the internet to get this information but contact your local Council first as they will have the information about your area and may be able to save you time looking. They may have this on their website or you may have to contact them. Each Council produces a Community Plan and there is usually a team who have responsibility for this and are a good starting point.



The difference - the outcomes

To explain this it can sometimes help to think about the change you want to bring about rather than what the project will be doing. These may be positive changes in people's lives or more widely in your community.

Try to explain the changes (the outcomes) in one phrase or one sentence for each.

- Women with young children will feel less isolated.
- Women will have increased self esteem.
- Children will learn how to mix and share with other children.
- Children will have more access to more activities.
- Parents will feel more confident in playing with their own children.

How will you know if you have made a difference - achieved these changes?

You need to think about how you will be able to show that you have made a difference. Some funders call this your evidence.

- Ask the women - how did they feel before they came and how do they feel now (more confident, less isolated and so on).
- Percentage of women saying they feel part of their community.
- People are more confident - taking part in discussion, helping out more in the group (observation by others, the person themselves tell you).

Where can you get this evidence from?

There are some very simple ways to gather the evidence

- Number of women coming each week (attendance record).
- Questionnaires.
- User satisfaction surveys.
- Case study examples.
- Discussion groups.
- Photos.
- Programme of healthy eating activities.
- List of craft activities organised for mums and children.

Background to Mums Supporting Mums

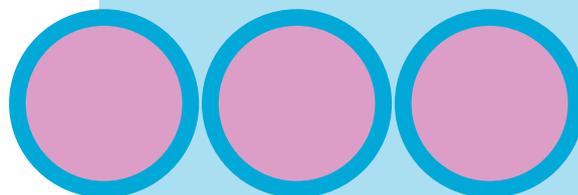
Outside the Box has been working in partnership with Healthy Living Network in Scottish Borders, Healthy Valleys in South Lanarkshire and Building Healthy Communities in West Wigtownshire, Dumfries and Galloway.

The project was aimed at women who wanted to develop small-scale support services and activities for themselves and for others. The aims of the project are to:

- Encourage women to develop small-scale services and activities that support parents and their children, which reflect the circumstances of people living in rural areas.
- Reduce the isolation many mums' experience.
- Point people to sources of advice that will help support their wellbeing.
- Encourage women to use the opportunities for learning and access to employment that are open to them.

The project was funded by LEADER programmes in Dumfries and Galloway, South Lanarkshire and Scottish Borders, Hollywood Trust, Comic Relief, NHS Borders, Big Lottery Fund and contributions from Healthy Valleys and Outside the Box.

There is more information about the project and updates on developments in each local area at www.otbds.org/mums



Further information and help

There are local organisations to help you. The local Third Sector Interface (TSI) might be able to help (they used to be known locally as CVS).

To find your local TSI go to www.vasotland.org

There is lots of useful information for setting up groups, constitutions, committees and sources of funding. Many of them include sections on planning the project such as the Community Toolkit at www.slcv.org.uk

Know How Non Profit

<http://knowhownonprofit.org/funding/fundraising/fundraising-events-and-challenges/events>

Five Minute Fundraiser

Video clips to help you
www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/guidance/five-minute-fundraiser/

Look for our other Hints and Tips on: Toddler groups, buggy walking groups, finding funds, social media.

Contact us

There is more on the Mums Supporting Mums project at www.otbds.org/mums

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