Student Title: Magee, Tim OL 201 Assignment 1
Student Date: May 8, 2015
Magee Example Project OL 201 Assignment 1
Online Learning. OL 201 Designing and Funding Non Profit Projects
Center for Sustainable Development: http://www.csd-i.org/ol-201-northern-nonprofit/

Use this Document as your template for your assignment.
Assignment 1. What's the real problem?
In April, 2015, I worked with the non-profit "Inland Valley Partners" who has a Food Pantry Program in Claremont, California. The program provides a bag or box of groceries which contains canned goods, cereal, powdered milk, cheese, butter and beans to last a family three to five days. They are interested in the continued improvement of their program—and in better addressing the needs of their community members. Although they serve three communities of people—the homeless, families living in poverty, and senior citizens—they decided to focus their first needs assessment on families living in poverty. They held a needs and assets assessment with 24 community members—10 men and 14 women. The assessment was focused on services that the food pantry could provide. Each person was able to voice needs and then vote on them with 10 pennies. These 24 people are representative of the approximately 2,500 members of families living in poverty that the food pantry serves each year. During the assessment they were also asked about what sort of skills and assets they might be able to contribute to the food pantry to scale up services and also to make it more sustainable.

The full list of needs/problems and the vote results:	Votes out of 240
A lack of access to sufficient fruits, vegetables, and meat products	71
Inconvenient times for food pickup that interfere with work schedules and parenting responsibilities	64
A lack of a place for raising their own vegetables	40
An inability to choose which food products go into the food boxes and in which quantities	40
A lack of transportation to the food pantry	25

The food pantry had already begun working on developing a more flexible pickup schedule. They decided to focus this new project on access to greater diversity of foods and to develop a more flexible system for choosing the food products. They felt that these two problem areas were somewhat interrelated—and that the transportation challenge was a different kind of project to work on—one that could be focused on a future date.

Community assets voiced by community members:	
Volunteer time at the food bank for organizing food and passing it out	
Volunteer time for helping to deliver food to senior citizens who don't have transportation	
Volunteer time for collecting food from a broader range of donors	
Tools for setting up a new vegetable garden	
Expertise in growing vegetables—and the ability to teach others	

These community assets are good news indeed. The way that the food pantry is currently organized is that volunteers from Claremont come and work at the food bank. The fact that the community of food recipients are willing to contribute volunteer time tremendously increases the flexibility of the food bank (such as opening hours), builds a sense of ownership in minds of the beneficiaries in the project (which can lead to long-term sustainability of the program) and also opens up a whole new level of communication between beneficiary volunteers and the regular volunteers. There's probably a lot to share!

This new project therefore captured these community defined problems laid out in a simple project outline. One of the first challenges was to unravel the mixture of needs, problems, causes and impacts that the community came up with and to organize their top priorities into the simple project outline below.

Realizing that for the purposes of the course I need to develop a simple project, I chose only the top two priority problems and chose only three underlying causes. I also kept the problem definitions and underlying causes very short, simple, to the point, and did not embed multiple ideas. My problem statement is a very simple aggregation of the problems, underlying causes and negative impacts—without the addition of grant proposal type project introductions.

Simple project outline of problems/causes/impacts:
Problems:
- A lack of access to sufficient fruits, vegetables, and meat products
- Community members not able to choose which food products go into individual food boxes and in which quantities/ratios most appropriate for their families

Causes:
- A lack of a place for community members to raise their own vegetables
- No program in place for collecting surplus food from restaurants, grocery stores, and local farms
- A lack of knowledge of family nutrition for better stocking the food pantry and in making healthy choices in the selection of food

Their negative impacts. Families suffer from food insecurity and a lack of food diversity that reduces their children's ability to concentrate in school, and also reduces the ability of adults to lead the productive, meaningful, prosperous lives they need to leave the cycle of poverty.

Problem Statement. 1,000 small children from 500 families in four cities surrounding Claremont California, suffer a lack of access to sufficient fruits, vegetables, and meat products due to a lack of a place for raising their own vegetables and a lack of a program for collecting surplus food from restaurants, grocery stores and local farms. They also suffer from an inability to choose their weekly food products from food pantry due to an lack of knowledge of family nutrition for better stocking the food pantry and in making healthy choices in the selection of food. Families suffer from food insecurity and a lack of food diversity that reduces their children's ability to concentrate in school, and also reduces the ability of adults to lead the productive, meaningful, prosperous lives they need to leave the cycle of poverty.

Forum Discussion Report. I posted a brief description about who I am, what I do and why I'm taking the course. I did not need any advice from classmates about my project outline—so I didn't post a question. I replied to two classmates who needed suggestions for adaptation components for their projects.