Community characteristics & orientation

Name:	Aliasgar Mithawala, Savan Pedhadiya
Community & UN SDG(s):	**Community:** Regina Humane Society (RHS), Organizations Receiving Food from RHS, and Suppliers **UN SDG Goals:** Goal 2: Zero Hunger – Ensuring food is distributed efficiently to those in need. Goal 12: Responsible Consumption & Production – Reducing food waste and improving how resources are managed.
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Instructions

Research the community you are most interested in exploring using links from the UN Sustainable Goals website (https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/) and others. In your exhaustive research, answer the following.

Community characteristics

Community life-cycle (current state)

Where is your community in its life-cycle?	What you need to focus on:	Special needs
☐ **Just forming** Need basic tools to connect, but not sure from there	Research and/or discuss the potential of some basic tools with members, explore what ideas it might give them, and see what they might bring in with them.	
☐ **Self-designing** Information stage, but with a strong sense of what it wants to accomplish	Contribute ideas to the design. Analyze systematically the implications of their community design for technology, infrastructure, and technology skills.	
☒ **Growing & restless** Ready to add new functionality to its tool configuration	Try to make this a community reflection and self-design event. Does their restlessness suggest a major change, such as a transition to a new platform?	• Right now, RHS manages food donations and distributions manually using Excel sheets, paper logs, and separate platforms for scheduling shifts. • Staff and volunteers have to deal with time-consuming tasks, like keeping track of donations and food distribution, while also manually compiling reports. • Suppliers donate food, but tracking these donations is cumbersome, and often errors occur with manual data entry. • RHS distributes food to organizations and individuals in the community. However, these requests are handled through phone

		calls and paper-based communication, making it hard to organize everything efficiently. **Current focus:** This project will be built exclusively for RHS during the 2-month timeline. **Future plans:** After successfully implementing the solution with RHS, it will be expanded to other non-profits in Regina, starting with the Al Ritchie Community Association.
☐ **Stable and adapting** Just needing some new tools	How much disruption will the community tolerate? How will the new tools be integrated into or affect existing practices?	

Constitution

Diversity: How diverse is the community?

Topic	Your notes
What are the different types of members and what are their levels of participation?	RHS staff (admins), volunteers who handle food distribution, suppliers who donate food, and organizations requesting food from RHS.
How spread apart is it in terms of location and time zones?	The system will first be implemented at RHS in Regina, with the potential to expand across the city to other non-profits.
What language(s) do members speak?	Primarily English. Future expansions could include French for a diverse user base.
What other cultural or other diversity aspects may affect your technology choices?	Some staff, volunteers, and organizations might not be highly tech-savvy, so the solution should be simple, intuitive, and user-friendly.

Openness: How connected to the outside world is your community?

Topic		Your notes
How much do you want to control the boundaries of your community? Does your community need	☐ To be private/secure ☐ Open boundaries ☒ Both private & public spaces	The system will have both private and public spaces. RHS staff will have admin access, while suppliers and community organizations will have limited access to submit requests or donations.
How does your community need to interact with other communities? Do you need common tools for sharing and learning with them?		At this stage, the system is designed for internal use by RHS, with future updates allowing it to include other non-profits organizations in the city.

Technology aspirations

Technology savvy, tolerance, & constraints: What are your community's technology interests and skills and patience thereof? What are the constraints imposed by technology factors?

Topic	Your notes
How interested is your community in technology?	The RHS team and volunteers recognize the importance of using technology to streamline food tracking, inventory management, and reporting. However, their current reliance on Excel, My Impact (for volunteer scheduling), and paper logs means they are used to manual systems. While staff members are open to learning new tools, volunteers may require simplified features and proper onboarding to ease the transition.
What is their capacity for learning new tools?	- RHS Staff: Comfortable with basic digital tools like Excel, email, and scheduling software but may need training on inventory tracking and automated reporting. - Volunteers: Varying skill levels—some are tech-savvy, while others (especially older volunteers) may struggle with new software. - Suppliers & Recipient Organizations: Limited engagement with digital tools—need a straightforward interface for entering donations and requesting food.
What is the range of skills? If their interests and/or skills are diverse, could it cause conflict or distraction?	There is a wide range of technical proficiency levels within RHS and its partners: - Tech-Savvy Users: Some users, particularly younger staff, are comfortable adopting new systems. - Moderate Users: Many staff members use Excel formulas and scheduling software but may struggle with a completely new platform. - Non-Tech Users: Some volunteers, suppliers, and smaller community organizations may have very basic digital literacy, leading to potential resistance or errors during data entry. To avoid confusion and frustration, the system should be simple, intuitive, and require minimal clicks to complete key tasks.
How tolerant are members of the adoption of a wide variety of tools?	Users prefer an all-in-one platform rather than juggling multiple systems. If the system is too complex or requires too many steps, adoption rates may be low.
How many technological boundaries are they willing to cross, e.g. sign in to more than one web-based tool, learn to use new tools, or give up old favorites? This helps you understand what level of integration you need.	- Multiple logins: Users prefer a single login experience to manage tasks efficiently. - New learning: RHS staff are willing to learn new tools, but volunteers and suppliers expect minimal complexity. - Transition from Excel/Paper: There is some resistance to moving away from manual tracking. To ease adoption, the system should offer automated reports similar to their current Excel formulas to maintain familiarity.
What are your members' technology constraints (e.g., bandwidth, operating systems, etc.)?	- Internet Access: RHS has reliable internet access at their office, but volunteers and suppliers may need mobile-friendly solutions as they work in various locations. - Device Compatibility: RHS staff use desktop computers, while volunteers and community organizations rely on smartphones. The system must be fully responsive for both desktop and mobile. - Software Familiarity: Users are comfortable with Excel and email but have no experience with advanced inventory or request management tools.
How much time are members able to be online and from where (office, home, field)?	- RHS Staff: Work primarily from the office and will use the system daily for inventory management and reporting.

Some people have limited online time, or are able to be online only in specific locations. Others are always on. Very diverse situations can affect participation	- Volunteers: Will only log in when necessary (to enter food distribution details or check schedules). - Suppliers & Recipient Organizations: Will only log in occasionally to log donations or request food, so their user experience must be quick and simple. - Some users may not have constant internet access, so a possible offline entry mode (syncing data later) could be useful in future versions.

Community orientation

Relevance to community: Use the range from 0 (no relevance) to 5 (high relevance) to determine what matters most to the community. Look at these from the perspectives of the different types of members (under "constitution"). Also discuss the "value-added" to each member group

0	1	2	3	4	5	Orientations	Variants	Key activities/your notes
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	**Meetings** Many communities place a great emphasis on regular meetings where members engage in shared activities for a specific time. Meetings, and the visible participation of members, assert the community's existence	☒ Face-to-face/blended ☒ Online synchronous ☐ Online asynchronous	Meetings are critical for training RHS staff, volunteers, and suppliers. Since the system replaces manual tracking with digital processes, regular training and check-ins will be required to ensure smooth adoption. Meetings will be a mix of in-person (for staff and volunteers) and online (for suppliers & community organizations).
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	**Open-ended conversation** Some communities maintain ongoing conversations as their primary vehicles for learning. Open-ended conversations are common when a community is co-located and people keep the conversation going as they "bump" into each other.	☐ Single-stream discussions ☒ Multi-topic conversations ☐ Distributed conversations	There should be an online discussion space (forum or support chat) where users can ask questions, report issues, and suggest improvements. This will help collect feedback from users at all levels (staff, volunteers, suppliers, and recipient organizations).
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	**Projects** In some communities' members want to focus on particular topics, go deep, and collaborate on projects to solve problems or produce useful artifacts. Learning is not just a matter of sharing knowledge or discussing issues. Members need to do things together in order to develop their practice. Projects usually involve a subgroup within the community	☐ Practice groups ☒ Project teams ☐ Instruction	The system will act as a collaborative platform between RHS, suppliers, and community organizations. Each user group has a defined role (Admins track inventory, Volunteers manage food distribution, Suppliers log donations, and Recipient Organizations submit food requests). This structured workflow aligns perfectly with a project-based approach.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	**Content** Some communities are primarily interested in creating, sharing, and providing access to documents, tools, and other content. Valuable and well-organized content is a useful resource for members	☒ Library ☐ Structured self-publish ☐ Open self-publish ☐ Content integration	A knowledge base (tutorials, FAQs, and user guides) should be created to help users navigate the system. Training materials must be accessible anytime, especially for volunteers who may not always have direct training sessions.
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	**Access to expertise** Some communities create value by providing focused and timely access to expertise in the community's domain, whether internally or externally. Communities with this orientation focus on answering questions, fulfilling requests for advice, or engaging in collaborative, just-in-time problem solving	☐ Questions & requests ☐ Access to experts ☒ Shared problem solving ☒ Knowledge validation ☐ Apprenticeship & mentoring	Since RHS doesn't have dedicated IT support, the system should provide clear guidance and in-app help features. Admin users should have access to best practices for inventory management, and suppliers should receive automated donation summaries to help validate their contributions.
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	**Relationships** Some communities focus on relationship building among members as the basis for both ongoing learning and being available to each other. This orientation emphasizes the interpersonal aspect of learning together. Communities with this orientation place a high value on knowing each other personally, emphasizing networking, trust building, and mutual discovery	☒ Connecting ☐ Knowing about people ☐ Interacting informally	The system will strengthen collaboration between RHS, suppliers, and recipient organizations. However, direct communication between these groups is limited in this phase. The system will facilitate data sharing but will not yet include community networking features (e.g., direct supplier-organization interactions).
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	**Individual participation** Learning together happens in the context of a group, but it is realized in the experience of individuals. People bring different backgrounds, communication styles, and aspirations to their participation in a community. People have different levels of commitment, they take on different roles, and they use tools differently	☐ Levels of participation ☒ Personalization ☐ Individual development ☐ Multi-membership	The system is designed with role-based access: - Admins: Manage food inventory and approve requests. - Volunteers: Log food distribution. - Suppliers: Submit food donations. - Recipient Organizations: Request food. Each role has customized access, ensuring a structured and secure participation model.

☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	**Community cultivation** Some communities are happy with loose self-organization and unplanned evolution, while others thrive on attention to community cultivation. They have a need to reflect on the effectiveness and health of the community to make things better, joined with a willingness to work on it	☐ Democratic governance ☒ Strong core group ☐ Internal coordination ☐ External facilitation	RHS will be the primary governing body for the system, meaning they will have full control over user access, approvals, and decision-making related to food distribution. Suppliers and recipient organizations will not have governance roles in this initial phase—they will only be system users (e.g., suppliers log donations, organizations request food). However, in the future, RHS may choose to delegate certain responsibilities to trusted organizations (e.g., allowing large recipient organizations to manage their own food requests more autonomously). This would shift governance from being RHS-only to a more collaborative model, but for now, RHS remains in full control.
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	**Service context** In some cases, serving a specific context becomes central to the community's identity and the ways it operates. They may live inside an organization, whose charter their practice needs to serve. They may have a mission to provide learning resources to the world or to recruit members widely. Or they may seek interactions with other communities whose domain complements their own	☒ Organization as context ☐ Cross-organizational ☐ Other related communities ☐ Public mission	The system is custom-built for RHS to replace their current manual process with an integrated digital solution. It directly addresses their food tracking, donation management, and volunteer coordination needs. Future updates may expand this service to other non-profits.

Scratchpad (other interesting insights, questions/answers, etc.)

- Anticipated Challenges & Solutions:

Challenge	Solution
Resistance to change from manual tracking	Hybrid transition (manual + digital), onboarding support.
Suppliers may not want to log into the system	Allow RHS admins to enter donations manually if needed.
Internet connectivity issues for field volunteers	Consider offline data entry that syncs later.

- **Questions and answers:**

1. **Will suppliers actually use this system?**
   Suppliers who want self-service → Provide a simple web form for donation logging.
   Suppliers who prefer RHS to handle it → Allow RHS staff to log donations on their behalf.

2. **How will RHS keep inventory data updated?**
   Volunteers log distributions in real time to reduce manual tracking delays.
   Dashboard insights to track pending updates.

3. **How do we prevent over-requesting of food?**
   If demand for a particular item is high, RHS can mark it as priority for donation.

4. **How will user access be managed?**
   Role-based access:
   Admins: Manage inventory, approve/reject requests.
   Volunteers: Log food distributions.
   Suppliers: Log donations, view donation history.
   Recipient Organizations: Submit and track food requests.