



Connecting with your community

Are you wanting to connect with your community in a meaningful way, but don't know where to start? Doing some research before you launch an activity or a program will help you to find out what is relevant to their needs. Here's five research ideas:

1. Census: if your country conducts a census, this is a good place to start. In some countries the census data is supplied for regions and local government areas with community profiles available covering information like the age of residents, cultural diversity, income and education levels, and family characteristics. Do a comparison with previous censuses to see how your community is changing and where there may be opportunities to provide connection and support.

2. Local politicians – make an appointment to see your local Member of Parliament and/or local mayor. They will have their finger on the pulse of what the community needs. Not only will you get some useful information, you will also be building relationships and raising awareness of your church.

3. Local media – are there any local newspapers in your suburb or town? They are a great source for identifying community needs and challenges.

4. Schools and hospitals – they are often operating with limited resources and are keen for community support. Does your local school need a kids' breakfast program or would the local hospital benefit from more volunteers?

5. Community groups – find out what community groups are already up and running. Could you partner with one of them to help make an impact in the community?