

Measuring the Strength of a Ministry

Introduction:

We all recognize the importance of monitoring for the success of programs and activities; however, most of us struggle to make the time to do it.

To help make the process a more user-friendly and encouraging exercise, Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC) adopted a tool that reflects the themes of planting, natural growth and fruit bearing. It is visual as well as numeric. Rather than only using numbers, and language of “good” and “bad”, it uses images found in creation to provide a clearer picture of the strength of a ministry.

DMC believes ministries need to assess their ministry capacity regularly to:

- Celebrate what it is doing well or better
- Identify areas that need growth or attention.

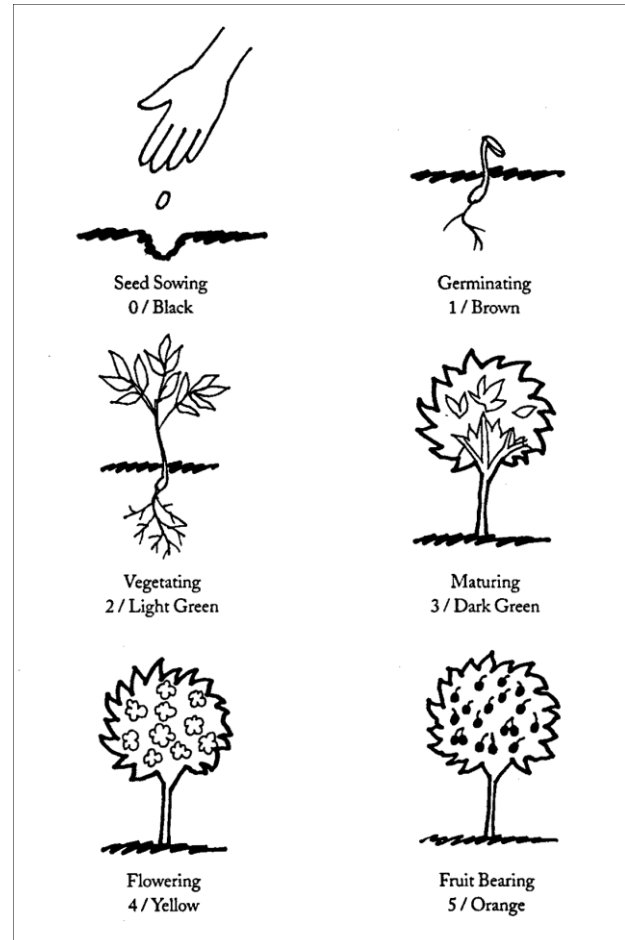
Characteristics of a Healthy Ministry:

Diaconal Ministries Canada uses several characteristics when describing a healthy project or program. Good growth in each of these areas is reflected in a healthy ministry. These characteristics include:

- Demonstrates a holistic Christian ministry
- Recognizes people’s strengths and responds to felt needs
- Promotes sustainable change in lives of the participants
- Involves the participants
- Connects with the local CRC
- Creates partnerships with the community
- Ensures accountability and evaluation
- Attracts long-term, local financial support

Measuring Growth:

As you review these characteristics you will often find that a ministry is stronger in some areas than others. That’s to be expected. One expects growth to occur in each area but not always at the same pace. The following chart shows the different stages of growth of a fruit tree. Each growth area is also represented by a number and a colour. When using this monitoring tool, a stage / number / colour is assigned to each area of the characteristics listed above.



Measuring Progress:

An Operation Manna funded ministry can use this tool to set goals for growth in specific areas each year. During the annual on-site review there is an opportunity to identify where growth has taken place. Over time one expects to see healthy growth in all areas of a ministry.

Diaconal Ministries Canada is willing to assist in identifying ways to grow a healthier ministry.

Measuring the Strength of a Ministry: *New Projects*

Project Name: _____

This form is intended to facilitate dialogue between an applicant for Operation Manna (OM) funding, an Operation Manna Committee member and/or a Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC) staff person, and representatives of the supporting Christian Reformed Church. It is to be used during an on-site visit, and contributes to the application review process.

Before the on-site visit: the applicant is asked to complete the form. Using the images of a growing tree outlined on the previous page, assess the strength of each characteristic and record the number and/or colour in the boxes on the right side of the page. Each section below (1-8) corresponds to the characteristics in the “Guidelines for Operation Manna Funding.” Similarly, the OMC member and/or DMC staff person will have reviewed the application and made an initial assessment of each characteristic using this form. The applicant should ensure there are enough blank copies of the form available for everyone scheduled to attend the on-site visit.

During the on-site visit: everyone in attendance is asked to contribute to the discussion. Participants other than the applicant and OMC member / DMC staff person should receive a blank copy of the form. This is an opportunity to listen, ask questions and discern together the strength of the applicant according to the 8 characteristics. The results of this review serve as a baseline which will help an applicant identify issues needing to be addressed, highlight opportunities for CRC involvement, and help DMC identify where staff may be able to provide organizational development support. The on-site visit is conducted each year that an OM ministry partner receives funding therefore this tool provides a valuable measure of organizational growth.

- To begin, the applicant provides a brief verbal summary of the ministry/program, and what is being requested in the application.
- Review together each of the 8 characteristics and using the images of a growing tree outlined on the previous page, assess the strength of each characteristic. Determine as a group the appropriate number and/or colour. The OMC member will record the group’s decision. Also take note of ideas/suggestions for nurturing growth.
- Conclude by addressing outstanding questions related to the application.

<p>1. A holistic Christian ministry: A ministry funded by Operation Manna is holistic. This is demonstrated in a ministry of compassion that responds to the whole person and includes a sensitive witness to the saving love of Jesus Christ.</p>	
<p>2. Responds to tangible, felt needs: The ministry focuses on people’s strengths while addressing significant needs. These needs should be clearly stated and the application should be clear on how the participants will be helped as a result of this project. A careful assessment of other agencies/churches working in this area is carried out at the outset to avoid duplication and ensure collaboration.</p>	
<p>3. Promotes sustainable change: The ministry desires that participants make sustainable change in their lives. Sustainable change refers to growth in the lives of people in the following areas: personal, social, spiritual and vocational.</p>	
<p>4. Involves the participants: Participants are actively involved in the ministry with input into the planning, delivery and evaluation of the programs. Participants are mentored to take on leadership roles in the ministry.</p>	

<p>5. Connects with the local Christian Reformed Church: Operation Manna believes that an active relationship between the applicant and the local CRC(s) is necessary to meet the mandate of the Operation Manna program. This should be observable through broad awareness and support by CRC members, as well as engagement in the applicant’s activities, especially by the diaconate. The CRC-OM “Connection” Questionnaire is used to measure the strength of this relationship.</p>	
<p>6. Creates partnerships in the community: The applicant builds on the strengths in the community by working with existing agencies and services, as well as other local churches to foster networking and collaboration.</p>	
<p>7. Ensures accountability and evaluation: Applicants regularly review their work including a careful assessment of outcomes compared to the project/program goals and objectives. This includes a review of the project’s organizational capacity, as well as the work of the staff and volunteers.</p>	
<p>8. Attracts long term, financial support: There is an expectation that an increasing amount of local funds will be committed to the project to make it locally sustainable after Operation Manna funding ends. The projected budget for the requested number of years of support must indicate how Operation Manna funding will be replaced.</p>	
<p>Other comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What challenges will this ministry face in the coming year? • What will be the greatest opportunity for meaningful ministry in the coming year? • What are some of the social justice issues in this community that relate to your particular ministry? How are they being addressed? 	
<p>Overall assessment and recommendation: (to be completed by the Operation Manna Committee member)</p>	
<p>In Attendance:</p>	

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____
 (OMC member)