

# 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.

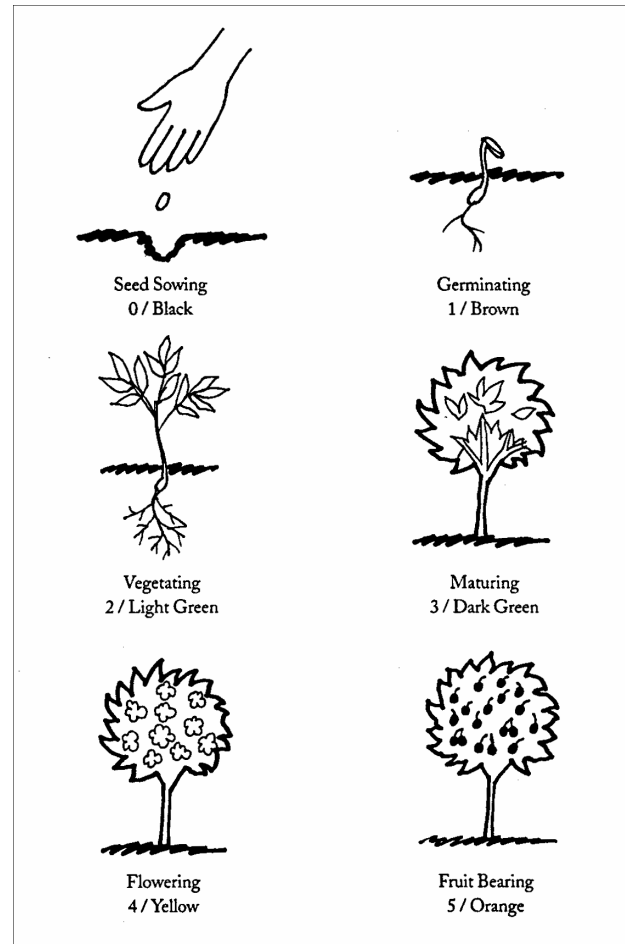
## Characteristics of a Healthy Ministry:

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:

- Practices a holistic Christian ministry that responds to tangible needs
- Promotes sustainable change in lives of the participants
- Empowers the participants
- Involves the local churches
- Creates partnerships in 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: *Existing Projects*

**Project Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

This form is intended to facilitate dialogue between an Operation Manna (OM) funded partner, an Operation Manna Committee member, and representatives of local churches. Together you will work toward measuring the strength of an OM ministry. Each section below (1-8) corresponds to the characteristics in the “Guidelines for Operation Manna Funding.” 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. The questions are intended to facilitate discussion. You are welcome to add your own. Space is provided for brief notes.

<p><b>1. Demonstrates holistic Christian ministry:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the mission/vision statement reflect a holistic Christian approach?</li>   <li>• How does a Christian witness come to a clear expression in your work?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Responds to tangible, felt needs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the ministry respond to clearly identified needs?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Promotes sustainable change:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the growth you have seen in people’s lives in the last 12 months in the following areas: personal; social; spiritual; and, vocational.</li>   <li>• How many people have made sustainable changes?</li>   <li>• How do you know the change is sustainable?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Empowers the participants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are the participants involved in helping to plan, deliver and evaluate the program?</li>   <li>• Are the participants mentored for leadership in the project / program?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5. Involves local churches:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the local church community involved in the ministry?</li>   <li>• How are area deacons and volunteers of local Christian Reformed Churches involved?</li>   <li>• Does the project regularly report to a local deacon / diaconate?</li> </ul>	

<p><b>6. Creates partnerships with the community:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are other community organizations involved in this program?</li> <li>• Have new partnerships been developed? And/or are new partnerships being developed?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. Ensures accountability and evaluation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the board provide overall direction and accountability for the ministry?</li> <li>• Is the ministry evaluated annually as to its effectiveness?</li> <li>• Do the staff receive annual evaluations?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8. Attracts long term, local financial support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a balanced budget in place with a plan for sustainable income sources?</li> <li>• What is the plan for replacing Operation Manna funds with alternate sources of funding when the grant declines or is completed?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Other comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there challenges facing this ministry in the coming year(s)?</li> <li>• What is the greatest opportunity for meaningful ministry in the coming year?</li> <li>• What issues of social injustice should the local community be aware of?</li> <li>• Other comments</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Overall assessment:</b></p>	
<p><b>Recommendation:</b></p>	

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_