



MU Global Framework

Mobilising and partnering in your local area – where do we start?



Purpose of resource

Part of the Global Framework calls us to “Mobilise and partner” – mobilizing churches and leaders, collaborating and connecting, and involving youth. This resource is offered as a starting place to help AMUA members to engage with one aspect of the Global Framework as they live into the Aim and Objectives of AMUA.

Using the resource

This resource is designed to be used over a number of meetings or discussion sessions enabling members to seek God’s direction, engage with the activities, gather information and learn skills along the way to partner with the community and mobilise the love of Christ through AMUA.

A framework of seven steps enables leaders and members to work through the resource sequentially.

Step One – Listening to God

Step Two - Listening to and observing the community

Step Three – What have you learned from listening and observing

Step Four – What is God telling you to do?

Step Five – Preparing for action

Step Six - Moving into action

Step Seven - Monitor, evaluate and learn

Leaders can choose to facilitate sections in each step as a longer workshop or include one section with each branch meeting.

Please do not move from Step 2 to Step 3 without conducting a community assessment between meetings. Use Step Seven regularly and at any stage of the process.

Prayer and Bible Study

Opening and closing prayers have been especially chosen for use with this resource.

When facilitating bible studies begin by asking members to read the passage silently for themselves. Then ask someone to read the passage aloud, sharing this task around the group each time. Encourage a time of discussing the passage before moving on to the set questions.

Step One - Beginning

Listening to God: Seeking direction for our work through prayer and bible study

Open with prayer

Use this prayer each time you meet to work through the resource.

Number 24 on page 74 of “*A worship and prayer book for MU Australia*”.

As you pray this prayer, do not just read the words, instead:

- focus away from yourself to your community,
- draw on the strength of God through the Holy Spirit to break away from those things that bind you, your fears and limitations.
- open yourself to a renewed vision for what could be achieved to bring more Christian love into your community.

Let us pray:

Loving God, as we continue our journey offering Christian love to others, we commit ourselves and our work to you.

Help us to live our lives hopefully, to face each task confidently and to meet other people joyfully. Help us to take our eyes away from ourselves and turn them on the world around us; to be less concerned with what we have accomplished and more with what remains to be done.

As a part of the worldwide Mothers Union, may we go forward with renewed vision to attempt greater things to your glory; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Bible reading and discussion

One of the challenges to AMUA work identified during the MULO process was the attitudes and capacity of members. This bible passage was chosen to help us consider our attitudes and motivation to action.

Luke 5: 17-26 (NIV Bible)

¹⁷ One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus.

¹⁹ When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk?’ ²⁴ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”

²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.”

The friends of the man suffering from paralysis believed that Jesus could heal their friend, but they could not reach Jesus. For some people this would be an insurmountable barrier and they would give up. Yet, for these friends, the barrier had to be overcome. Their faith in Jesus’ ability to cure their friend motivated them to “think outside the square”, to apply another strategy to reach Jesus.

Questions to ponder – share your thoughts with others as you feel able.

- After considering the actions of the men who lowered down their friend to Jesus, what can we learn about the way faith enables us to respond to those in need?
- The people in this biblical account glorified God as a result of healing. In what ways do we give thanks and glorify God for the blessings we enjoy?
- In what ways does your faith in Jesus Christ motivate you to action?
- How motivated are you to think of new ways to be an effective member of AMUA in your community?
- What are the barriers that might seem insurmountable when you consider mobilizing and partnering or collaborating with others?
- What challenges you when you consider mobilizing and partnering or collaborating with others?
- What skills might you need to improve your capacity and motivation to collaborate with people of all ages including youth?

(This point could form the end of one meeting/session)

Close the each meeting/discussion with prayer. Suggest using this collect from APBA page 583 as a focal point.

Loving Father, whose Son Jesus Christ has taught us
that what we do for the least of our
brothers and sisters we do also for him:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as he was the servant of all,
who gave up his life and died for us and yet
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Step Two - Listening and observing the community as a basis for action

Community needs assessment.

This section requires members to go into their community to find out more about who lives there and what services and organization currently exist. It is anticipated that this assessment of the community would be undertaken between meetings.

Your group may wish to begin compiling a list from local knowledge within the group, but this step is about going further.

While we may think we know about the community in which we live and/or work, there is much to learn by consciously listening and observing. Here are several strategies that members can use to learn about the vulnerable and marginalized in our communities.

Drawing on the skills in your group, ask members to use a particular strategy to learn more about their community. Use these strategies and others that come to mind, to undertake a detailed assessment of your community. Pray with members as they take up one of these tasks.

- Equipped with notepaper and pen or digital tablet to record your observations, take a drive around your community (preferably with someone else driving). Note down all the signs for community groups, organisations and services that you see.
- Either while out walking or driving, observe housing types, vacant shops, business closures, people on the street (expression, clothing, demeanor). Who is interacting socially (young families in public places, single parents, older people etc); who appears to be isolated?
- Use the resources of the local library to identify community groups, organisations and community services in your community.
- Use the internet to search your local government site (city council/regional council). See what you can find out about the population. Most sites have a link to a community profile (type community profile into the search bar for ease of access).
- Use the internet to search your local government site (city council/regional council). Note down the community groups, organisations and community services that appear on this site. Also note down any mention of contact persons and their details.
- Listen to members of the community who may share their insights into the needs of those who are those who are vulnerable and marginalized that community.

Prepare to bring your findings to the next meeting/discussion session.

Close the meeting/discussion with this prayer.

Loving Father, whose Son Jesus Christ has taught us
that what we do for the least of our
brothers and sisters we do also for him:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as he was the servant of all,
who gave up his life and died for us and yet
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Step Three – What have you learned from listening and observing?

Reporting back – who is in our community?

Begin with prayer including Number 24 on page 74 of “*A worship and prayer book for MU Australia*” (see Meeting One).

Recording: Suggest providing large sheets of paper for a scribe/ note taker to record the findings so the information can be displayed for all to see during the discussion time.

Reporting: Ask members to share their community assessment findings and discuss.

- *What have you learned about your community?*
- *What surprises you?*
- *Who were the people that attracted your notice?*
- *What issues capture your attention?*

Engage in a time of prayer for your community using the information from the community assessment undertaken by members. Remember the isolated, vulnerable and marginalized as well as each of the community groups, organisations and community services.

Pray this prayer again

Loving God, as we continue our journey offering Christian love to others, we commit ourselves and our work to you.

Help us to live our lives hopefully, to face each task confidently and to meet other people joyfully. Help us to take our eyes away from ourselves and turn them on the world around us; to be less concerned with what we have accomplished and more with what remains to be done.

As a part of the worldwide Mothers Union, may we go forward with renewed vision to attempt greater things to your glory; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Bible Study: Opening ourselves up to new possibilities for action.

Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

In this biblical passage we read about the practices of the members of the early church and how they lived out their faith.

- In this biblical passage the believers devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching and prayer as the basis for their ministry to others. In what ways should we prepare ourselves for action in our communities?
- In verse 45 the believers distributed money from selling their own possessions. How willing are we to share (goods, money, time etc) with others?
- Through praising God, the believers were able to form connections with others outside their group and bring people to faith in Christ. In what ways might we be able to bring Christ to people in our community?
- The believers shared what they had according to need. In your community, where and what are the areas of need that relate to AMUA's Aim and Objects and the Global Framework?

Step Four – God’s direction: what is God telling you to do?

Reflection and discussion

Reflecting on the bible study and in discussion of the results of the community needs assessment, consider these questions.

- *Who would you need to contact to further assess the likelihood of connection, partnership or collaboration in your community?*
- *What skills and resources are available among AMUA members in your area to mobilise these connections?*
- *What are the motivations and willingness of members to partner with an/any aspect of the community?*
- *What further resources do you need?*

After this meeting, ask members to pray regularly for God’s direction as you consider connecting, partnering and collaborating with your community.

Step Five - Preparing for action: what skills and equipment do we need?

Members join this meeting/discussion after a time of prayer and discernment.

Prayer:

Loving God, as we continue our journey offering Christian love to others, we commit ourselves and our work to you.

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Bible Study: Preparing ourselves for action

Matthew 10:5-10 (NIV)

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy,^[a] drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

⁹ “Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— ¹⁰ no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.

Jesus is giving his disciples instructions as he sends them out into the community.

- What does this biblical passage tell us about the way we should approach mobilizing, connecting and collaborating with the community?
- Jesus instructs his disciples to give without expecting payment. What do you expect to gain from connecting and collaborating with the community?
- The disciples went out unencumbered, but in faith. What baggage might be keeping you from action?
- How prepared are we to go forth in faith leaving our “baggage” behind?

Discuss the following questions.

- *What are our fears and limitations in regard to where God might be leading us to serve?*
- *Given the skills and resources we have among our members, where is God leading us to serve?*
- *What resources do we have among members that would enable us to partner with local groups/organisations/ services?*
- *How can we do it?*
- *What other skills do we need to develop before we move forward?*
- *How do we develop these skills?*
- *Do we have the confidence to discuss possibilities with leaders of local community groups?*
- *Do we know how to interact effectively with members of local government?*

Step Six - Action while continuing to listen and observe.

Over to you.

Plan a way forward that is relevant for your members in your context.

Move into action - just do it!

Close each meeting with prayer.

Loving Father, whose Son Jesus Christ has taught us
that what we do for the least of our
brothers and sisters we do also for him:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as he was the servant of all,
who gave up his life and died for us and yet
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Step Seven – Monitor, evaluate and learn

Pray:

Loving God, as we continue our journey offering Christian love to others,
we commit ourselves and our work to you.
Help us to live our lives hopefully, to face each task confidently and to meet
other people joyfully. Help us to take our eyes away from ourselves and
turn them on the world around us; to be less concerned with what we
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renewed vision to attempt greater things to your glory;
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Review the action/s as you progress.

- What is happening?
- Who is being affected by the action?
- Who is involved? Who else could participate?
- How effective is the action (while it is happening, when completed).
- What are we learning as we engage in action?
- What would we do again?
- What would we do differently next time?

