

ASIA FACULTY GUIDE

A guide for university/community
partnerships



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N) is a global movement of over 100 programs that connect university expertise with community-identified needs through student coursework. This guide provides a practical framework for faculty to transition from traditional teaching to experiential, community-engaged learning that produces real-world impact without requiring significant new funding or resources.

Faculty Benefits:

- Links teaching directly to live community challenges, increasing student engagement.

Research Opportunities:

- Projects can serve as the foundation for academic papers and future research.

Global Support:

- Access to a peer community, global case repositories, and training tools (e.g., EPIC 101).

Implementation Roadmap:

- Identify potential local government partners (e.g., municipalities, provincial offices, or village-level bodies) based on community resilience gaps.
- Frame the project as a step towards regenerative development that restores local ecosystems and social fabric.

Scoping:

- Co-develop a Scope of Work (SOW) to define deliverables, timelines, and responsibilities for students, faculty, and partners.

Project Management:

- Use student leads or structured check-ins to manage the workflow within the semester schedule.

Reporting & Hand-off:

- Package final student products into professional formats (Executive Summaries and Technical Reports) for the partner to implement.

Assessment:

- Conduct 360-degree evaluations to measure impact and improve the partnership for the next cycle.

WHAT IS EPIC-N?

The Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N) is the international network of about 100 university-based programs that partner with local governments or community organizations to address community-identified projects through student coursework. All programs in the EPIC-Network follow the five tenets of the EPIC Model. See the EPIC Model below:



- Respect **E**xisting administrative structures/individual responsibilities and incentives on all sides
- Create a genuine **P**artnership with local governments (or community organizations)
- Aim at **I**ntentionally improving quality of life
- Focus on projects that are **C**ommunity-identified, -driven, and -evaluated
- Catalyze multi-disciplinary collaboration and large **N**umbers (of courses, students, hours)

There are many academic and development networks, but EPIC-N offers something different: a practical model that links your teaching directly with community needs. Instead of being a discussion-focused network, EPIC-N supports real projects, provides tools you can use immediately, and helps you work more confidently with local governments. The model is flexible for Asian universities, where lecturers often balance heavy teaching loads, and it does not require new resources or funding to begin. EPIC-N also offers a global case repository, training opportunities, and a supportive peer community that makes it easier to start, sustain, and grow community-engaged teaching. Unlike many networks that focus on policy or research only, EPIC-N helps you do the work and show impact. START International, a close partner of EPIC-N, has been instrumental in expanding the Model within Asia.

View the EPIC-N website [here](#).

View the EPIC-Asia webpage [here](#).

View the EPIC 101 training [here](#).



WHY JOIN EPIC-N?

The network provides value to universities by advancing their mission, improving their students' learning experience, and enhancing their reputation with public and private donors. EPIC-N offers the following array of resources free of charge to its members with the goal of increasing the number, quality, performance, and influence of EPIC programs globally, and no dues or fees are required to join.

Start-up toolkit	Webinars
Listserv	Courses
Annual conference	Evaluation optimization
Networking opportunities	Global prestige and marketing
Trainings and site visits	Funding opportunities
Project library	Strategic partnerships
Technical assistance	Cross-campus grant-writing opportunities
Resources toolbox	Support on all the resources above

View examples of concrete Asia-based success stories below:

- [Greening Chatuchak: From Market Waste to Green Spaces with Kasetsart University](#)
- [Building Climate Leaders in Alor Gajah, Malaysia: A Path to Sustainability](#)
- [From Trash to Transformation: Universiti Sains Malaysia Students Help Communities Rethink Waste](#)
- [Bridging Climate Challenges: Empowering Communities in Vi  n An Commune, Vietnam](#)
- [Advancing Climate Change Awareness and Preparedness in the Agriculture Sector of Calamba, Laguna](#)
- [Creating an Ecosystem of Support for the Unhoused in Rangsit City Municipality](#)
- [Urban Consolidation Centers \(UCCs\) in Bangkok: Driving Green City Aspirations and Addressing Urban Challenges](#)
- [Strengthening Youth-Led Community-Supported Agriculture for a Sustainable Food System in Bandung, Indonesia](#)

HOW CAN FACULTY GET INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORK?

There are many ways for you and your students to engage with the community, and most do not require significant funding. Faculty can integrate community-based projects directly into their teaching or even connect them to ongoing research, as some programs have already published academic papers based on EPIC-project collaborations.

Below are examples of previous types of engagement:

1 **Connect a community-defined project into your course:** Project timelines may vary depending on the course and community needs.

2 **Directed or independent study:** Supervising students as they complete an assignment or special research project that responds directly to community needs.

3 **Internship:** Connecting students who want or need intern or field experience.

4 **Post-Doctoral Fellow project:** Applying the post-doc's time to a community-defined project.

5 **Additional academic credit:** Students may earn transferable, elective, or independent study credits (depending on university policy) by completing an extra community-based project.

6 **Undergraduate Research Scholars (URS):** Apply for a group of students (aspiring scholars) to work on a community-defined project.

7 **Thesis or Independent Study (IS):** Advising students who are seeking a meaningful topic by connecting their thesis or independent study project with real community needs.

8 **Dissertation Topic:** Guiding graduate students to identify and develop a dissertation topic aligned with a community's identified challenges.

9 **Faculty Consultation:** As a subject matter expert, lend your perspective with communities who need your expertise.

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government systems across Asia differ by country, but most share several layers of administration that work together to deliver public services, support communities, and coordinate development.

The categories below describe common forms of local government and community-related institutions.

1. Municipal and City Governments

These include cities, municipalities, towns, and urban districts responsible for everyday public services such as planning, waste management, transportation, and community welfare.

Their authority varies by country, for example, thesaban in Thailand, municipalities and cities in the Philippines, wards in Japan, municipal corporations in India, Union Councils or Union Committees in Pakistan, and mahalle units in Turkey.

2. Provincial, State, or Regional Governments

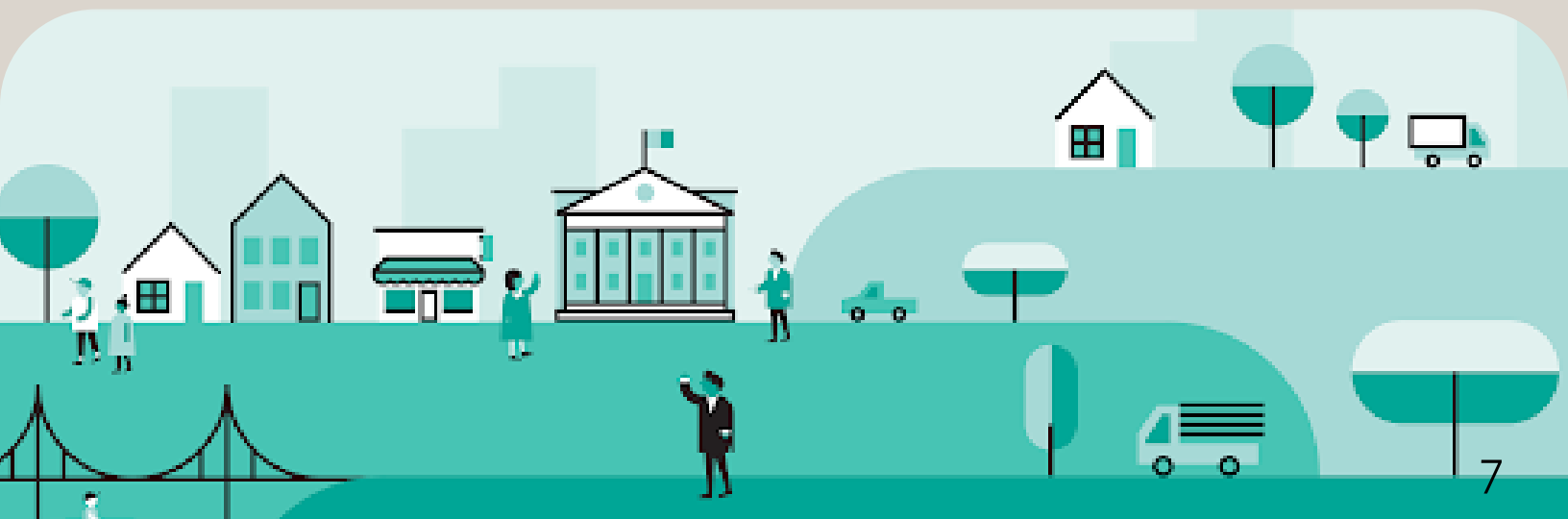
This level sits between the national government and local authorities. Provinces, prefectures, and other first-level administrative units, such as provinces in Thailand, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam; states in Malaysia; and prefectures in Japan, coordinate policies, allocate budgets, and support multiple municipalities and districts.

3. Districts, Subdistricts, and Local Administrative Units

Many countries have additional layers beneath provinces or cities to bring the government closer to residents. For example, Indonesia and Thailand use districts and sub-districts to manage local services, basic administration, and coordination with higher levels of government.

4. Community-Level Local Governments

Some countries have formal governance bodies at the neighbourhood or village level that directly engage with residents and help identify local needs. Examples include barangays in the Philippines and Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs) in Thailand. These bodies are often the closest to the community and play a key role in participatory projects.



5. Government Departments and Agencies Working Across Multiple Cities

Sector-specific government agencies often oversee services or planning across several municipalities or regions. These may include:

- Water and sanitation authorities
- Public works and infrastructure departments
- Environmental or disaster management agencies
- Transport and metropolitan planning authorities
- Social development or welfare departments

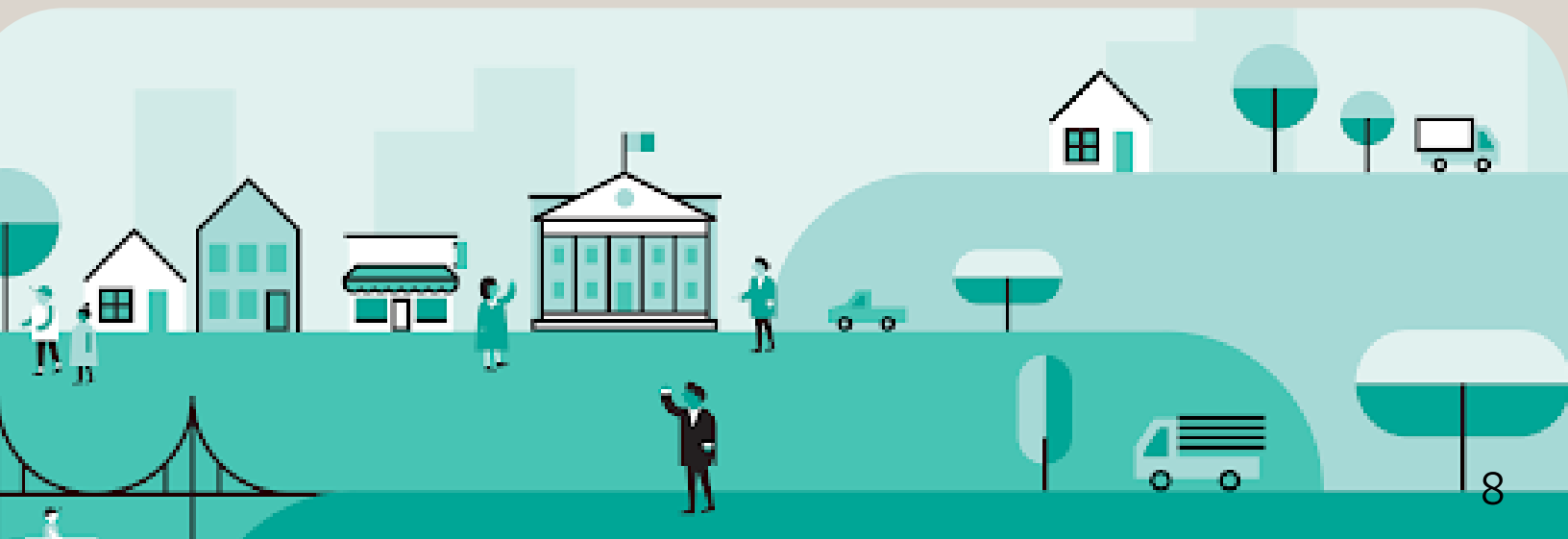
They frequently collaborate with both local governments and communities and can be key partners for university-community projects.

6. Community-Related Agencies Supported by Government

Some organizations are not governments themselves but provide essential community services with government support. Examples include:

- Community development offices
- Social welfare or protection centers
- Local environmental volunteer networks
- Public health units
- Housing, youth, or family service centers

These agencies often work directly with residents and are highly relevant for community-engaged teaching and research.



FINDING A LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Start small - Reach out to local government contacts that you have, for instance, an alumnus of your university. Ask to meet with them at their office and explore possible projects that they would like help with.

Meet the community where they are at - The EPIC Model grows from the strengths that already exist in the community. Visiting people in their gathering places, local offices, markets, or volunteer activities helps build trust. Meeting them in their own environment also makes communication more relaxed and reduces the distance between the university and the community.

Start a list - Local government staff frequently change roles or move to new departments. Keeping a basic list of names, positions, phone numbers or emails, and notes from past conversations helps you track interest and maintain continuity. This prevents partnerships from disappearing when staff turnover occurs.

Ask for referrals - If the person you meet is not the right contact, someone else in the department often is. Ending a conversation with a question such as “Is there anyone else you recommend I connect with?” often leads to new introductions and opens the way to more suitable partners.

Use your networks for warm introductions - If contacting an office directly feels intimidating, ask NGOs, alumni, or colleagues in your university network to introduce you. A warm introduction builds confidence for both sides and helps establish trust from the beginning.

FINDING A LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Propose a small pilot project - Many local governments prefer to start with a manageable activity.

You can suggest a short project such as a survey, mapping exercise, campaign design, or basic analysis related to one of their ongoing concerns. Successful small projects often lead to deeper collaboration.

Listen before proposing solutions - The first meeting should focus on understanding what matters most to the municipality. Asking questions such as “What issues are most urgent for your community this year?” helps build trust and ensures that the partnership responds to real needs rather than assumptions.

Clarify that the project will not create extra work for them - Some local governments hesitate because they worry about additional workload. Clarifying that students and faculty will take responsibility for the work, and that the municipality’s role is advisory, helps reduce concerns and increases willingness to participate.

To help you in your journey to make connections with local government affiliates, here is a list of local government organizations and networks in Asia that have regional or multi-country coverage:

- United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG ASPAC): <https://uclg-aspac.org/>
 - Represents local governments across the Asia-Pacific region. Members include cities, municipalities, provinces, and local government associations from more than 30 countries.
- CityNet – The Regional Network of Local Authorities: <https://citynet-ap.org/>
 - A network of municipalities, metropolitan authorities, and local government associations across Asia focused on sustainable urban development and city-to-city learning.
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (South Asia, Southeast Asia): <https://iclei.org/>
 - Supports cities and local governments across Asia in climate action, resilience, and sustainable development. Offices in Southeast Asia and South Asia work closely with municipalities in multiple countries.
- Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC): <https://www.adpc.net/>
 - Works with local governments across Asia to strengthen disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and climate resilience.
- ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN): <https://asean.org/>
 - Connects over 20 cities across the ASEAN region through a shared framework for smart city development, digital innovation, and urban planning.
- Local2030 – The Localisation of SDGs Hub Network: <https://www.local2030.org/>
 - A global UN-supported platform that includes many Asian cities working on SDG localisation, community development, and inclusive governance.
- The Beyond Lab (Evolving Sustainability): <https://www.thebeyondlab.org/>
 - Focuses on mapping narratives for the 'beyond 2030 Agenda' and regenerative practices.
- The SDG Transformation Center: <https://sdgtransformationcenter.org/>
 - Provides instruments to transition current projects into a theory-of-change approach for the post-2030 era.

WHO ON YOUR CAMPUS CAN HELP YOU

Universities often have many people already involved in community engagement, public service, or partnerships. Connecting with them can make it much easier to begin an EPIC initiative. The following places are good starting points:

- Check to see if there is an EPIC Model program on your campus. If so, this is a great place to start.
- Get in touch with your university community engagement office, or center for public service.
- Reach out to faculty who teach service-learning or community-based courses.
- Get in touch with your university's community or government relations coordinator.
- Ask colleagues who already have informal connections.

INITIAL MEETING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNER

In many Asian countries, building trust is essential before formal collaboration can begin. The first meeting is less about presenting your ideas and more about listening respectfully, understanding local priorities, and showing genuine interest in the community's well-being. It is essential to allow the local government or community representative to guide the conversation, especially when senior officials or respected community leaders are present.

The agenda below reflects common practices in Asian contexts where relationships, respect, and patience are central to successful long-term partnerships.

1. Welcome & Introductions (5 mins)

- Begin with warm greetings and brief introductions.
- Acknowledge the partner's position, experience, and role in the community.
- If appropriate, offer small courtesies such as expressing appreciation for their time or hospitality.

2. Overview of Collaboration Goals (10 mins)

- Clearly but gently explain that the meeting is to explore possible collaboration between the university and the local government.
- Emphasize shared values such as improving community wellbeing, supporting youth, or addressing local challenges.
- Avoid overly formal commitments at this stage; most Asian partners prefer to build trust first.

3. Community Needs and Interests (15 mins)

- Invite partners to share their challenges, local concerns, and priority issues.
- Listen attentively without interrupting. Showing respect for their lived experiences is essential.
- Take note of themes such as public health, education, environment, urban development, or local livelihoods.

4. Faculty Member's Expertise & Contributions (10 mins)

- Provide a simple overview of your academic background.
- Explain what your students and university can contribute, such as research, surveys, community engagement, or technical analysis.
- Share examples of past collaboration, especially those involving Asian communities or local governments.
- Keep the tone humble; avoid giving the impression that the university is “teaching” the community.

5. Local Government's Role and Resources (10 mins)

- Invite the partner to describe their responsibilities and ongoing initiatives.
- Ask what support or resources they can offer, such as access to local data, community networks, or assistance with logistics.
- Recognise that resources may be limited; showing understanding helps build trust.

6. Brainstorming Potential Project Ideas (20 mins)

- Explore ideas that connect community needs with university strengths.
- Encourage open discussion, but be sensitive to cultural norms. In many Asian contexts, junior staff may not speak unless invited.
- Identify a small number of ideas that are realistic, beneficial, and manageable for all partners.

7. Community Engagement Strategy (10 mins)

- Discuss how local residents, community groups, or volunteers can participate.
- Explore culturally appropriate methods for gathering feedback, such as community meetings, visits to local leaders, or informal conversations with residents.
- Emphasise that respectful engagement is essential and that the project should respond to local voices.

8. Funding and Resources (10 mins)

- Discuss possible funding sources such as local government support, small university contributions, national programs, or external grants.
- If no money is available, reassure the partner that EPIC Model projects often begin with minimal funding. Many successful projects start by using existing resources, student effort, faculty expertise, and small in-kind contributions like meeting spaces, access to data, or staff time.
- Talk openly about what each side can realistically contribute without creating pressure or expectations.
- Identify any financial or resource limitations early so the project can be designed in a realistic and manageable way.

9. Next Steps & Action Items (10 mins)

- Summarize the main points from the conversation and confirm which project ideas seem most promising.
- Agree on simple next steps such as a follow-up meeting, gathering additional information, or consulting other stakeholders.
- Establish a communication method that is convenient for the partner. Many partners prefer mobile messaging platforms instead of email, such as LINE, Zalo, Telegram, or WhatsApp. Ask which platform they prefer to keep communication smooth and accessible.

10. Closing Remarks (5 mins)

- Thank the partner sincerely for their time and insights.
- Express your hope for continued discussion and collaboration.
- In many Asian contexts, ending positively and politely is important for relationship-building.

Total Time: 105 minutes



CREATING A SCOPE OF WORK

Once you and your community partner have agreed on a project and selected the course that will support it, it is important to co-develop a scope of work. A clear scope of work helps prevent misunderstandings, ensures alignment among all parties, and provides a shared reference for expectations, responsibilities, and timelines. In many settings, especially when working with local governments or community leaders, a well-organized document also supports internal approval processes and helps maintain continuity even if personnel change during the project.

The scope of work should include the following items:

- Contact information
 - Faculty
 - Community project lead
 - Program manager (if applicable)
 - Student coordinator and contact information (if applicable)
- Course details
 - Course day, time, and location
- Project information
 - Project description
 - Project goals and objectives
 - Final deliverables
 - Project timeline
 - Data needs
 - Anticipated expenses
- Participant responsibilities
 - Community partner responsibilities
 - Faculty responsibilities
 - Program responsibilities (if applicable)
 - Student responsibilities
- Approvals
 - Signatures and time stamp for all participating project leads

sustainable communities
Partnerships and Possibilities

Title of Project:

Collaborators:

Collaborator Project Contact:
Borough Department: (Name)
(Phone)
(Fax)
(E-mail)

Principle: (Name), (Email)
Secondary: (Name), (Email)

University Project Contact:
Faculty Member: (Name), (Position)
(Department)
(Phone)
(Fax)
(Email)

Sustainability Institute: (Name), (Position)
(Department)
(Phone)
(Fax)
(Email)

The Project:

Description of Course: (Size, Type of students, Credit load, Syllabus, Learning Objectives)

Description of Project: (Problem, Purpose)

Course Objectives: (in regard to the project)

Community Partner Objectives: (in regard to the project; provided by the community partner)

Sustainable Communities Collaborative

1

WHEN PARTNERS PREFER NOT TO SIGN OR SHOW RESISTANCE

In some cases, a community partner or local government office may prefer not to sign formal documents. This may be because they do not have the authority to approve projects, they want to avoid internal complications, or they are unsure about long-term commitments. The same can also happen with lecturers, especially those who are new to community-engaged work or who feel uncertain about formal agreements.

If this occurs, it is helpful to reassure everyone that the scope of work is simply a shared reference to keep the project clear and organized. You may offer alternatives, such as confirming the agreement through email, keeping the document as an internal record for the university, or using a simpler, non-binding version that summarizes expectations. You can also ask the community lead for a non-binding template or a "verbal agreement checklist" to help navigate these sensitive situations without losing project structure. The goal is to create clarity without causing discomfort or placing unnecessary pressure on the partner or the faculty member.

Co-developing a scope of work through open communication and mutual respect creates a foundation of trust and helps both sides move confidently from planning to implementation.

See here for example scopes of work.

For additional information on how to scope and scale projects, see this webinar and these resources.

Find additional scoping resources here.



BASICS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Community-based projects benefit greatly from clear project management. In many universities, lecturers balance teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities, and it may feel like they must manage every part of the project on their own. This can be overwhelming, but project management does not need to be complicated. With a basic structure and shared responsibilities, both faculty and students can manage the work effectively.

A project manager may be the faculty member or a designated group of students. Whoever takes this role should understand the core responsibilities involved.

What does a project manager do?

- Responsible for completing the project within the expected timeline
- Coordinates communication between the community partner, students, and the university
- Supports the technical work required for the project
- Ensures quality of the work produced
- Helps communicate or present the project to the community partner
- Marketing

Project Manager Keys to Success

- Communicate clearly and consistently
- Plan ahead and coordinate tasks thoughtfully
- Delegate appropriate work to students
- Meet regularly to maintain smooth progress
- Ensure team members have the information and tools needed to stay within the scope of work
- Monitor the schedule and project progress
- Encourage and motivate the team, especially during busy times in the semester

Effective Team Members

- Communicate openly with each other and the partner
- Encourage one another to do their best work
- Keep commitments and meet deadlines
- Look for ways to simplify or streamline processes
- Remain flexible when circumstances change
- Share information early to avoid surprises
- Show reliability through consistent follow-through

Team Responsibilities

- Request and review the scope of work
- Understand the project's goals, tasks, and timeline
- Accept that revisions and feedback are part of the process
- Respond to constructive criticism with a positive and professional attitude

In many universities, especially in contexts where staffing is limited, lecturers may manage teaching, community work, and administration simultaneously. When faculty also serve as the project manager, it is especially important to:

- Establish a clear scope of work and revisit it during the semester
- Break the project into manageable tasks that students can complete step by step
- Set regular milestones to keep students engaged and on track
- Build time for adjustments, as both academic schedules and community needs may shift

Sharing responsibility with students not only reduces the lecturer's workload but also provides meaningful experiential learning opportunities. A simple structure of planning, communication, and check-ins can make the project manageable for everyone.

(Source: [UW-Madison CEE 578 / GLE 479 Capstone Design – Project Management Slides](#))

[View project management tools here \(including work plans, budgets, tracking sheets, invoices, and more\).](#)
[View an additional resource for faculty members engaging in project management here.](#)

UW-Madison CEE 578 / GLE 479 Capstone Design – Project Management

Jan Kucher, PE



Smart Communities Initiative Partnership Breakdown



HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE PROJECT

BEFORE THE SEMESTER STARTS:

TASK	WHY IT MATTERS	WHAT TO PREPARE
SCOPE & CHARTER	Keeps everyone working toward the same deliverables and success metrics.	<p>A 1–2–page project charter (goals, deliverables, success criteria, timeline) plus a Gantt or Kanban board. A good charter template appears in most faculty service–learning toolkits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project charter explanation and template• GANTT chart templates
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)	Formalizes roles, timelines, data–sharing, IP, and exit clauses; protects everyone.	<p>Draft an MOU with the partner, signed by you, the partner lead, and (if required) your department. Use language from your campus community–engagement office or adapt a public template.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Sharing Agreement• MOU Templates
COURSE ALIGNMENT	Ensures the project advances learning outcomes rather than hijacking the syllabus.	<p>Map each project milestone to a graded assignment or reflection; show this mapping in your syllabus addendum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example syllabus addendum

TASK	WHY IT MATTERS	WHAT TO PREPARE
<p>PROJECT-MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p>Gives students a real-world project management experience.</p>	<p>Shared repository (Teams, Google Drive, or Trello/Asana board)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACI matrix identifying who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>RACI template</i> • Issue/risk log seeded with known risks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ virtosoftware.com
<p>COMPLIANCE & APPROVALS</p>	<p>Avoids last-minute roadblocks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB application if students will collect or analyze data about people (surveys, interviews, administrative data). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ See here for sample IRB templates • Risk-management forms for any off-campus site visits. Your risk office may require waivers or travel notifications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Example of risk waivers
<p>ORIENTATION & TRAINING</p>	<p>Sets a professional tone and supports equity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on local government context (org chart, political sensitivities) • Ethics & confidentiality module • Tool training (e.g., GIS, project-management software)

During the Semester:

CADENCE

KEY ACTION

WEEKLY STUDENT STAND-UPS

Students report progress, challenges, and next steps in <15 min. You log issues/risk items raised.

BI-WEEKLY PARTNER CHECK-INS

Short agenda, sent 24 h in advance, followed by posted notes and updated action items.

MILESTONE REVIEWS

At each major deliverable (e.g., draft policy memo), hold a review with a rubric tied to the charter. Invite partner staff so feedback is immediate and authentic.

ONGOING RISK & CHANGE CONTROL

Keep your risk log live; if scope creep appears, negotiate formally via a *change request* documented in the MOU addendum.

End-of-semester close-out:

STEP	DETAILS
DELIVERABLE HAND-OFF	Package final products in both student-friendly and partner-friendly formats (e.g., executive summary + full technical appendix). Confirm acceptance in writing.
PARTNER DEBRIEF	30-minute virtual or in-person meeting to capture “What went well / Even better if...” Record insights for the next cohort.
STUDENT REFLECTION & ASSESSMENT	Require individual reflection linking project management artifacts (risk log, RACI, charter) to course theory.
EVALUATION & ARCHIVING	Collect partner satisfaction survey; store all project files where future cohorts can access them; note any MOUs that must be renewed.
RECOGNITION & DISSEMINATION	Thank-you letters, campus news blurb, or public presentation to the city council—helps sustain the relationship and showcases student work.

Reference to common documents:

DOCUMENT	TYPICAL OWNER
<u>PROJECT CHARTER & GANTT</u>	Faculty lead, updated by student project management team
<u>MOU/DATA-SHARING AGREEMENT</u>	Institution's community-engagement office + partner legal/administration
<u>RISK-MANAGEMENT PLAN & WAIVERS</u>	University risk-management office
<u>IRB PROTOCOL (IF NEEDED)</u>	Principal investigator (you)
<u>SYLLABUS ADDENDUM</u>	Faculty lead
<u>REFLECTION RUBRIC</u>	Faculty lead, shared with students & partner

TIPS FROM SEASONED PROJECT MANAGERS:



Front-load realism. Spend an extra week scoping with the partner before the semester; it pays off in fewer mid-term surprises.



Keep the MOU alive. Treat it like code—version it, and don't hesitate to push an update when the project pivots.



Model “managing up.” Show students how you negotiate timeline changes with a city department head; they rarely see that skill demonstrated.



Build an exit ramp. Document what happens if the partner's priorities change or the project falls behind (e.g., scaled-down deliverable).



Celebrate publicly. Spotlighting student work at a council meeting or in local media reinforces civic value and deepens the partnership. Remember to double-check all work with community partners before presenting to local officials.



WHAT TO DO

- Think about what kind of assignment makes the most sense for your course
 - A singular final project
 - A project for the entire course
- Engage in frequent communication with the community partner to ensure students are on the right track and the community goals are being met
- Set realistic expectations for the community partner- do not overpromise!
- If possible, invite the community partner to your class to talk about the project(s) with the students
 - This helps build a connection between the community partner and the students, and allows students to put a face to the project
- Pay close attention to project deadlines and deliverables
- Track project deliverables
- Evaluate the students and the community partner to gather feedback after the project is completed

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not go to the community partner with your own agenda. Listen to their needs and concerns and take the conversation from there.
- Do not overpromise on final deliverables. It is important to be realistic with what the students can accomplish within the designated time frame.
- Do not stop the communication with the community partner after the scope of work is completed. Stay in touch with them throughout the project lifecycle to gather feedback, guidance, and needed resources.

BASICS OF REPORT WRITING

Find below some tips on how to put together a final report:

- Draft Timeline
 - Before week 1: Gather high-quality images and other digital files.
 - Weeks 0-3: Work on rough draft of report, with text placeholders for Figures (images, tables, and other graphics).
 - End of Week 3: Rough draft with as many sections filled in as possible. Upload the draft and a folder of images to the server, even if you don't have all of the images you need yet.
 - Week 4: The faculty member will proofread the reports and provide feedback.
 - Weeks 5-6: Incorporate feedback and finish up any sections that were incomplete.
 - Weeks 6-7: Format the report in InDesign, Canva, or any other graphic design tool you have access to.
 - Weeks 7-8: After a review of the formatted document, the professor will send drafts to city staff partners for review and feedback.
 - Weeks 8-9: Gather and incorporate feedback from city staff.
 - Weeks 9-10: Finish and publish reports. Celebrate!
- Gathering student work
 - Gathering work from the students in your course is critical to the report-writing process. Students should be encouraged to upload all of their high-quality images and other digital files to your university server so that you can use them in the final report.
- Other report elements
 - Pull quotes
 - Sidebars
 - Figures
 - Figure captions

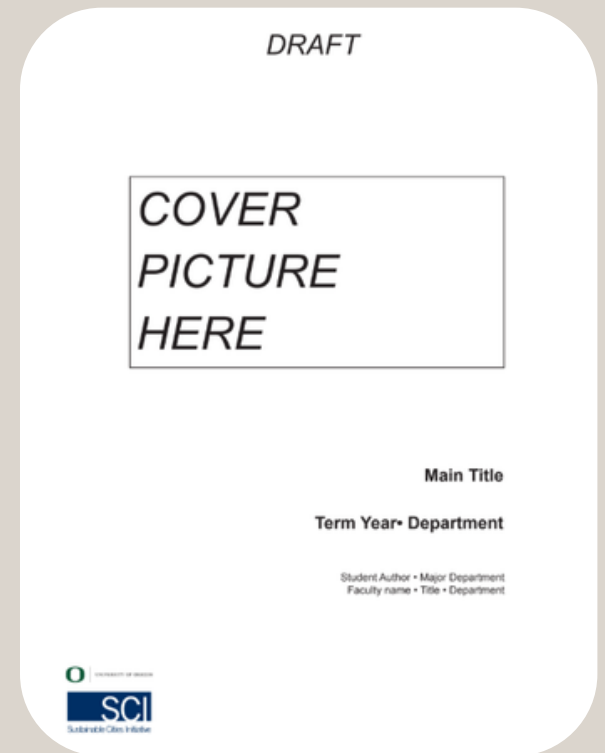
Report Structure:

- Cover page
- Acknowledgements: Remember to thank any local government staff, elected officials, community members, or other interested parties who helped you complete the project. It is also a good idea to thank other university faculty and/or staff who helped you with the project.
- Program information (if applicable)
- Course participants
- Table of contents
- Disclaimer: List any conflicts of interest or funding agencies.
- Executive summary (no more than 1-2 pages of summary recommendations aimed at local government staff and local policymakers)
 - Tips on writing an executive summary/policy briefs:
 - https://www.yorku.ca/lfoster/2006-07/sosi4440b/lectures/PolicyPaperWriting_TheExecutiveSummary.html
 - <https://info.legistorm.com/blog/how-to-write-a-policy-brief>
- Introduction
- The Problem / Current State / Policy Context: Discuss the current state of the issue
 - What's the issue? Describe the challenge or opportunity using plain language.
 - Why now? Explain urgency or relevance (e.g., new state mandate, budget pressure, equity goals).
 - Local framing: Include any relevant stats, trends, or existing programs from the jurisdiction.
- Methodology: How did you gather your information? (interviews, literature review, comparative analysis, etc.) Be brief and non-technical—it can help build trust in your document.
- Best practice cases / Possible interventions or alternatives
 - Consider using a structured format for each case or city, such as: location, practice, outcome/evidence of impact, relevance to current context
 - Include 3–5 diverse and comparable jurisdictions.
 - Focus on what was done, how it was done, and what the results were.
 - Highlight implementation strategies: staffing, funding, partnerships, policy change.

Report Structure:

- Analysis / Takeaways / Key insights
 - Common elements across successful cases (e.g., leadership commitment, stakeholder engagement, technology use).
 - Pitfalls to avoid, based on your research.
 - Equity & access considerations, if applicable
 - Financial impact to the local government
 - Connect findings to local capacity or constraints—what would need to be adapted?
- Recommendations:
 - 3–5 actionable steps the locality can take.
 - Include:
 - Quick wins (e.g., training or pilot project)
 - Medium-term strategies (e.g., policy revision, budgeting)
 - Long-term considerations (e.g., interagency collaboration, capital investment)
 - Each should include a brief justification and estimated feasibility (including cost and political feasibility).
- Conclusion
- Appendix/Appendices
- References

- **View guides for report writing [here](#)**
- **View poster guidelines [here](#)**
- **View report templates [here](#)**
- **View summary reports [here](#)**



ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION

- EPIC-N encourages all project participants to complete a 360 evaluation after the partnership ends. This involves evaluating the faculty, students, and community partners. To help with this, EPIC-N has put together professionally reviewed template surveys for each participant group. View the template surveys below:
 - [Community survey](#)
 - [Faculty survey](#)
 - [Student survey](#)
- EPIC-N suggests conducting long-term impact assessments with the community partner 2-3 years after the project ends to evaluate any lasting impacts caused by the students' recommendations. Find below some resources to help you with this evaluation:
 - [Long-term impact assessment template](#)
 - [Ripple Effects Mapping](#)
 - [A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping](#)
- [View an EPIC-N meeting on ripple effects mapping here.](#) (Passcode: N\$4kA#U)
- [View additional evaluation and assessment resources here \(including assessment calendars, EPIC-N's MEL framework, and more\).](#)

English

Characteristics - EPIC-N Template - Community Partner

\$(e://Field/Program) Community Partner Feedback Survey

Sometime this past year, you partnered with the \$(e://Field/Program) program at the \$(e://Field/University) and their faculty and students. The \$(e://Field/Program) program is part of the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N). Your efforts helped students and citizens learn about solutions to particular problems in your community.

Each year we gather feedback from community partners like you. Specifically, we will use your feedback to improve the future design, recruitment, and support of our programs. Please provide honest and candid responses. Your responses will be confidential. We combine responses we receive without your personally identifiable information. Even if someone reports something identifiable, we will combine those responses into categories such as "Other" to protect your confidentiality. We estimate this survey will take about 15-minutes to complete.

To start the survey click the button with the arrow to the right.

Please list the community you represented during this project.

How many projects did you participate in during the university partnership?

https://qualtrics.com/Q/8f8B68orB6ckA/gqzG6lSurveyPrtPreview?ContentSurveyID=5V_#MfGfUuThUJCAConnetL6onyD4UR

English

Required_Faculty_Post_Department_Project

You administered at least one course this \$(e://Field/Term%20or%20Semester) as an instructor for the \$(e://Field/Program) program at the \$(e://Field/University). You partnered your curriculum and students with a community to address certain community problems. Thank you for your participation and hard work. Each year, \$(e://Field/Program) staff gather feedback from instructors like you with help from EPIC-N, our national network of programs. Please take a few moments to provide some feedback to help improve the future design, recruitment, and support of our programs. Please provide honest and candid responses.

Your responses will be confidential. We combine responses we receive without your personally identifiable information. Even if someone reports something identifiable, we will combine those responses into categories such as "Other" to protect your confidentiality. We estimate this survey will take about 15 minutes to complete.

What is the name of the project you worked on this \$(e://Field/Term%20or%20Semester)? (If you facilitated more than one project this \$(e://Field/Term%20or%20Semester), please complete a separate entry of this form for each project)

English

Required_Student_Welcome and Demographics

You participated in the \$(e://Field/University) \$(e://Field/Program) program this \$(e://Field/Term%20or%20Semester). We would like to learn how this experience has been for you.

This survey measures the combined impact of the \$(e://Field/Program) and EPIC-N experience. The \$(e://Field/Program) program partners with EPIC-N to gather information from stakeholders about their experiences as participants. Thank you for your willingness to take this 15-minute survey to share your experience.

Required_Student_Projects_Post

Please list the name of the \$(e://Field/Program) course you participated in as a student.

Please select the name of the \$(e://Field/Program) project you participated in as a student.

The first questions are about your experiences in the \$(e://Field/Program) course.

TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- To get things done, you have to be willing to grind (and put up with local government bureaucracy, which can be crushing, but it can be worth it to get things accomplished)
- Come to the table ready to be the learner, not the expert
- Tap your network to identify new connections, think interdisciplinarily
- Stay attuned to local news and interests
- Practice self-awareness (power, airtime, etc.)
- Recognize and elevate community strengths
- Politics is inevitable. Learn about the politics surrounding any issue. Watching the local government political body meeting videos can help you get familiar with those issues.
- Be a sponge
- Listen and learn about how local government departments work together
- Listen to how elected officials talk to each other at the political body meetings
- Keep frequent communication with the community partner throughout the project lifecycle
- Tell your story of impact! This is your opportunity to get the work noticed by university higher-ups, and it can be used in future funding proposals.
- Remember the simple things: Can the partner access a campus parking space? Can they navigate campus buildings? Consider community partner ambassadors.
- Share norms/expectations for campus & community environments
- Get letters of support from community partners that speak to their involvement in the research.
- Plan for flexibility
- Manage your workload
- Remember that partners don't expect perfection
- Proactively manage student expectations



