

District Fifteen Altrusa International Inc. Strategic Plan – 2023 - 2028

VISION Altrusa is a leader among international organizations improving communities worldwide through a network of member clubs.	MISSION To improve communities worldwide by providing service, developing leadership, fostering international understanding, and encouraging fellowship through an international network of dedicated volunteers.	BRAND Leading to a Better Community BRAND ANCHORS Flexibility, Inclusion, Clarity	MEASURES 1. Member Numbers 2. Member Satisfaction Rating 3. Service hours and fundraising 4. Website hits 5. Social Media Connections
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INTERNATIONAL GOAL	DISTRICT FIFTEEN POU	Club Goals	STRATEGY & OUTCOMES	Club Outcomes/Goals
Inspire profile enhancing Service Projects - Promoting Days for Girls International Project - Enhance focus on Literacy	Reach into our communities with service		- Promote a diverse range of literacy-based projects through club use of the International Service Project Database and funding from the Foundation Grants programme, with 50% of clubs developing a new literacy project during the biennium. - Support the International Service Project by sharing ideas via DSB and IFF Days to support Days for Girls in the Pacific area, with 50% of clubs actively supporting Days for Girls this biennium.	
Enhance the flow of Altrusa information	Promote and build our Altrusa brand in our communities		Provide clubs with social media training, brand awareness, and marketing support materials to enhance promotion of Altrusa throughout New Zealand, with all clubs having at least two media and 20 social media placements per annum.	

Increase membership by 500 members by 2028 Recruit and retain a diverse membership	Grow and retain our members		- Improve membership recruiting skills through a conference workshop on “Better Storytelling” that at least 50% of clubs have members attending. - Develop orientation resources to improve understanding of and engagement with Altrusa for new members, with all clubs ensuring new members receive an orientation and all clubs running an orientation refresh event for existing members each year.	
Create a pipeline of strong Altrusa Leaders	Promote leadership opportunities and support upcoming leaders		Provide learning opportunities to develop a pipeline of future leaders for clubs and district through online and face to face events, with all clubs having representatives attend IFF Days, Conferences, and President Elect training annually.	
Inform, Update and Educate members			- Provide support to clubs in managing membership records and finances with all clubs having at least one member attend Treasurers and Group Tally Training online events when offered. - Provide web accessible resources that support club operations, with at least 80% of clubs showing use of at least one tool provided through the district or international website.	

2025 Overview/Plan

Goals:				
Month	Events	Speaker Meeting or Activity	Meeting Points for Discussion	Accent
February				
March				
April				
May				
June				
July				
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				

Managing Noisy and Toxic Meetings.

To manage noisy and/or toxic meetings, focus on proactive preparation, setting clear expectations, and fostering a culture of respect and accountability. This includes preparing and circulating agendas, keeping meetings concise and focused, and addressing unwanted behaviours directly and promptly.

1. Preparation is Key:

- **Agendas:**
Circulate detailed agendas in advance, allowing participants to prepare and focus on the topics at hand.
- **Scope:**
Determine the purpose and desired outcome of the meeting to ensure it's productive and efficient.
- **Relevant:**
Keep meetings relevant and stay on topic (agenda).

2. Setting the Tone:

- **Clear Expectations:**

Establish ground rules for respectful communication, active listening, and constructive engagement. *Eg Please put your hand up or stand and wait to be acknowledged by Chair before speaking and remind members not to talk while others are speaking.*

- **Respectful Language:**

Encourage positive and constructive language, avoiding personal attacks, negativity, or interruptions.

- **Time Management:**

Be mindful of time constraints and stick to the agenda to keep discussions focused and efficient.

3. Addressing Toxic Behaviour:

- **Neutralize the Toxic Individual:**

When a toxic and or noisy individual is present, try to stay curious and compassionate, asking questions and actively listening to understand their perspective.

Using the following statements to address your problem member:

- *"What I'm hearing is..."*
- *"I can understand that being frustrating because..."*
- *"What I'm feeling is happening is..."*
- *"Does this resonate with you?"*
- *"What can we do to address this together?"*

- **Be Direct and Honest:**

When addressing bad behaviour, be quick, direct, and honest, providing specific examples and outlining the impact of the behaviour.

"Share what impact the behaviour has had on you. Give specific, concrete examples of the bad behaviour and the impact that behaviour had."

You: "Hey [Name], I wanted to talk about something that's been bothering me. I've noticed that when [Specific behaviour, e.g., you interrupt me] or when [another specific behaviour], I feel [how it makes you feel, e.g., unheard or disrespected]."

Them: (They might respond defensively, deny the behaviour, or try to justify it)

You: "I understand that this might be hard for you to hear, but I need to be able to share how this makes me feel without being cut off or judged."

Them: (They might continue arguing or remain defensive)

You: "I appreciate you taking the time to listen to me. I need to make sure I feel respected in our interactions, and I've noticed that [specific behaviour] makes it difficult for me to do that. Can we agree that we can try to respect each other more when we're talking?"

Remember to:

- **Be calm and composed:** Maintain a respectful tone, even if they become agitated.
- **Focus on the behaviour, not the person:** Avoid making personal attacks.
- **Set clear boundaries:** What is and is not acceptable behavior.

- **Be prepared for their reaction:** *They might be defensive, angry, or try to manipulate you.*
- **Know when to walk away:** *If the conversation becomes abusive or unproductive, it's okay to end it.*
- **Challenge the Behaviour:**
When appropriate, politely challenge toxic behaviours or statements, emphasizing respect and professionalism.
See above
- **Model Positive Behaviour:**
Leaders should model the expected behaviours, demonstrating respect, active listening, and constructive engagement.

4. Fostering a Positive Culture:

- **Open Communication:**
Create a safe space for open and honest communication, where participants feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns.
- **Encourage Feedback:**
Implement a feedback mechanism that allows for anonymous and safe sharing of concerns regarding behaviours that disrupt team harmony.
- **Recognize and Reward:**
Acknowledge and celebrate positive contributions and behaviours to foster a culture of appreciation and respect.
- **Regular Reflection:**
Schedule regular team reflection sessions to discuss what's working and what's not, particularly concerning team dynamics and accountability.



Ten prompts to help keep your club healthy

Take 5 minutes at each meeting to discuss one of the questions below or complete one of the activities.

1. Google your club. What comes up? Are you happy with what you find? Can you improve what you find?
2. How do you greet prospective new members when they come to their first meeting?
3. Are new members encouraged to share ideas and given the opportunity to participate in projects? How can you ensure that they are heard and included?
4. Take 5 minutes to reflect: What's one thing your club does well to create a positive environment. What's one small thing you could improve?
5. Resigned or Retired members are your biggest promoters. How do you keep in contact and look after them? Could you do better?
6. Do your members feel truly connected and involved? Is the club meeting the reasons they joined? If not what can you change?
7. Ask each member what community issues they are passionate about e.g. food scarcity, loneliness in the elderly. Could the club do a project to support that passion?
8. How is the club promoting itself and club projects? Where else could you celebrate your achievements and efforts?
9. How can you encourage more community involvement in your projects?
10. Is the club actively promoting the organisations it supports through projects? Can you double the benefits of Altrusa involvement to the organisation by promoting what they do?

Bonus prompts:

Are there any tweaks you can make to your projects so they are more environmentally friendly?

Have a laptop with a screen at a meeting and look at the resources available on the District Fifteen and Altrusa International websites.

Potential resources and suggestions

1. Look at all of the places your club turns up when you google. Can you update your images to reflect the club now? E.g. District Fifteen website club photo. If potential members, partner organisations or donors are searching for you, what do you want them to find, what is the clubs culture/brand?
2. Assign them a buddy to greet them when they arrive and sit with them to explain what is going on during the meeting and. Follow up after the visit to see how they felt. Have a planned induction process. There are induction resources on the District Fifteen website. Consider a print out to give to potential members that outlines your current projects so that they know what is being discussed at the meeting. Check in during the meeting to see if they have questions.
5. Keep in touch! Send birthday cards, invite them to your social events and fund raisers, if they have a passion or skill set for a particular project, invite them to be involved. Send a personalised thank you card for their contributions when members resign or retire. Phone those who

resign/retire and thank them. This may prompt discussion around the reasons they left and give you the opportunity to change things if there were issues.

6. Have a box for people to anonymously drop their thoughts in and then share them at a meeting and discuss.
7. At the meeting before your yearly planning meeting, ask those members to come to the planning meeting with a possible project idea. Brainstorm the ideas. The Altrusa International webpage has a Service database that covers projects for most social issues so you may not have to start from scratch.
8. Your local newspaper. Social media is not for everyone but if you are interested, contact the Communications Committee for advice on how to set it up and maintain it. Your local community pages are a useful way to promote events and successes. Look at specific small local magazines e.g. Seasons. If you donate to museums or your Chamber of Commerce, are you utilising their newsletters to promote projects or events? If you are involved with local schools could you do an article for their newsletters?
9. See 7&8. Invite the community to a working bee to tidy up a local area. When you are at events promoting Altrusa, give the attendees an opportunity to do something hands on e.g. pack Distraction Packs. Plan a fun, free event for the school holidays e.g. a board games morning for grandparents and children. Invite them to bring an item for one of your projects and show them where it will be used.

Contributed by Megan Harding – Director, District Fifteen Board & DSB Submissions Editor 2025

Tips and Tricks for Effective Emails

Writing emails is easy, getting people to read them and reply is the hardest - How can we make it easier?

- Subject lines should be concise and reflect the topic.
- Keep emails brief – most people don't read them, they skim.
- Use **BCC** when emailing a large group – no one wants to scroll through half a page of email addresses before getting to the message
- Proofread before sending.

*A more comprehensive list will be in the next issue
of the Kiwi Altrusan*

Story Telling Connects with the Community

- Person – who was involved
- Problem/Need – Why it mattered
- Impact – What changed because of your club. This helps readers feel the heart behind your service

Engaging Members Who Don't Use Social Media

- Email Updates or printed highlights
- Phone trees or buddy systems
- WhatsApp or text groups
- Quick “meeting recap” summaries sent to all members

Facebook Best Practices for Community Clubs

A simple monthly posting rhythm:

- Project highlight
- Member moment
- Upcoming event

Member Spotlights & Volunteer Recognition

People connect with people. A quick spotlight template:

- Name and role
- What they enjoy about the club
- A recent contribution
- A fun fact spotlights build pride, belonging, and warmth across the club.