Participatory Appraisal:
Practitioner Pack

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Participatory Training

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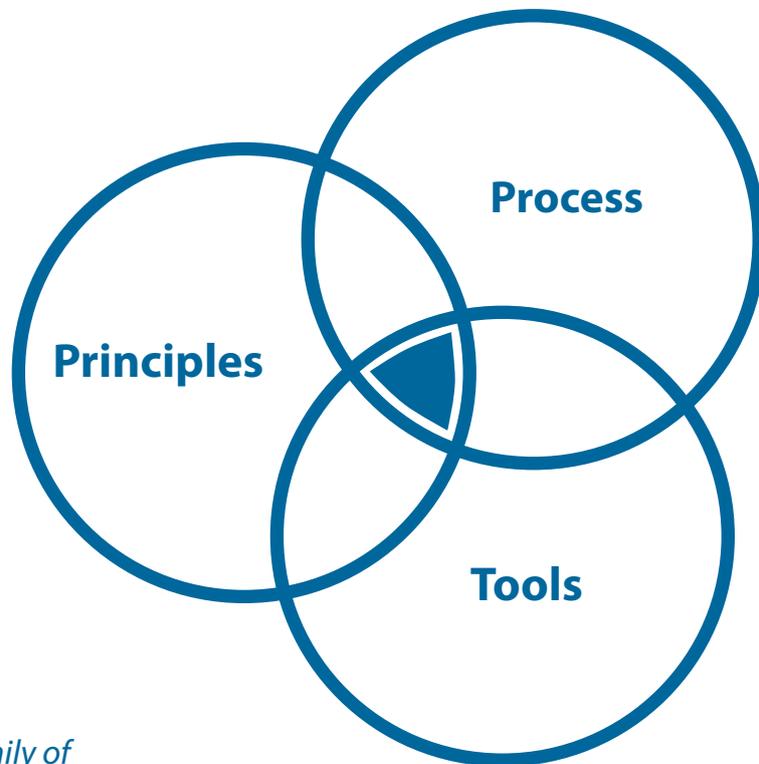*Participatory Training*

Practitioners Resource

Contents

Introduction

Introduction to Participatory Appraisal

Participatory Appraisal is a family of approaches and methods that values people's knowledge and experience and their ability to come up with solutions to problems that affect them.

A Participatory Appraisal is always carried out by a team of people. They use tools and techniques in place of traditional research methods like questionnaires and formal interviews to get people talking in a way that enables everyone to share their skills, local knowledge and expertise.

Many of the methods used in Participatory Appraisal are visual and make it easier for people to participate in discussions in ways they feel comfortable with. The tools can be used in meetings, with groups or individuals. Sometimes people participate for a few minutes, at other times for longer. The methods can be used wherever people are, at home, at bus stops, in school or clubs. The methods are effective with people of any gender, age or cultural background.

Participatory Appraisal makes a difference by providing opportunities for people, who are normally excluded from traditional consultation processes, to be involved in local decision-making. People are supported to identify issues and needs, decide on priorities and develop solutions that meet their needs. People are involved in developing and implementing locally-based solutions.

Participatory Appraisal provides workers from a wide range of professional backgrounds with an opportunity to learn about diverse communities and find out about the situations they are faced with on a daily basis.

Workers have the opportunity to develop a dialogue with communities, finding out what would really make a difference to people and working with them to develop new ideas and solutions.

Organisations and Agencies supporting Participatory Appraisal gain quality information and solutions based on local needs. As a result policy and strategy can change and adapt to the findings of locally based work.

A good Participatory Appraisal occurs when the underlying principles are respected, a good process is followed and the right methods are used.

Principles

Principles underpinning
Participatory Appraisal

Participation

Participatory Appraisal practitioners encourage people to demonstrate their views and voice their opinions. Community members are the experts in their own lives and others learn from them. The Participatory Appraisal process aims to support and empower people of different ages, gender, backgrounds and cultures to play an active role in decision-making and to take more control over their own futures.

Involvement

Involving everyone who has an interest in the issues is important. Participatory Appraisal tools and techniques enable practitioners to find ways of involving people who in the past have been excluded from decision-making. Learning from people and ensuring their voices and ideas are heard is a fundamental principle underpinning Participatory Appraisal.

Honesty

Participatory Appraisal practitioners need to be open and transparent about the process they are inviting people to take part in. People will generally participate more if they know and understand that something can be achieved through their participation. However, if there is only a small chance of positive change as a result of consultation, say so!

Practitioners also need to be honest with themselves. Personal opinions or professional interests should not influence the process. Keeping an open mind and actively looking for new ideas is important.

Flexibility

The approach adopted will be different for every community or situation; there is no universal blueprint to follow. Time to plan, prepare and reflect is essential. The basic tool bag will have to be adapted to meet the needs of different communities, and each situation will require new tools to be created. Be prepared to abandon tools that may have worked well in other situations and to try things that you haven't tried before.

Action

Participatory work should lead to new ideas, improved ways of working and ultimately change. Changes may result in service users taking new roles, new partnerships may be formed and services improved.

A Rigorous Ethical Approach

The principles underpinning Participatory Appraisal help to ensure the process is rigorous and ethical. It is vital that people are engaged in an honest way and that their contributions are valued and treated with respect. The Participatory Appraisal practitioners are responsible for translating the principles into action. The following checklist acts a guide to achieve this.
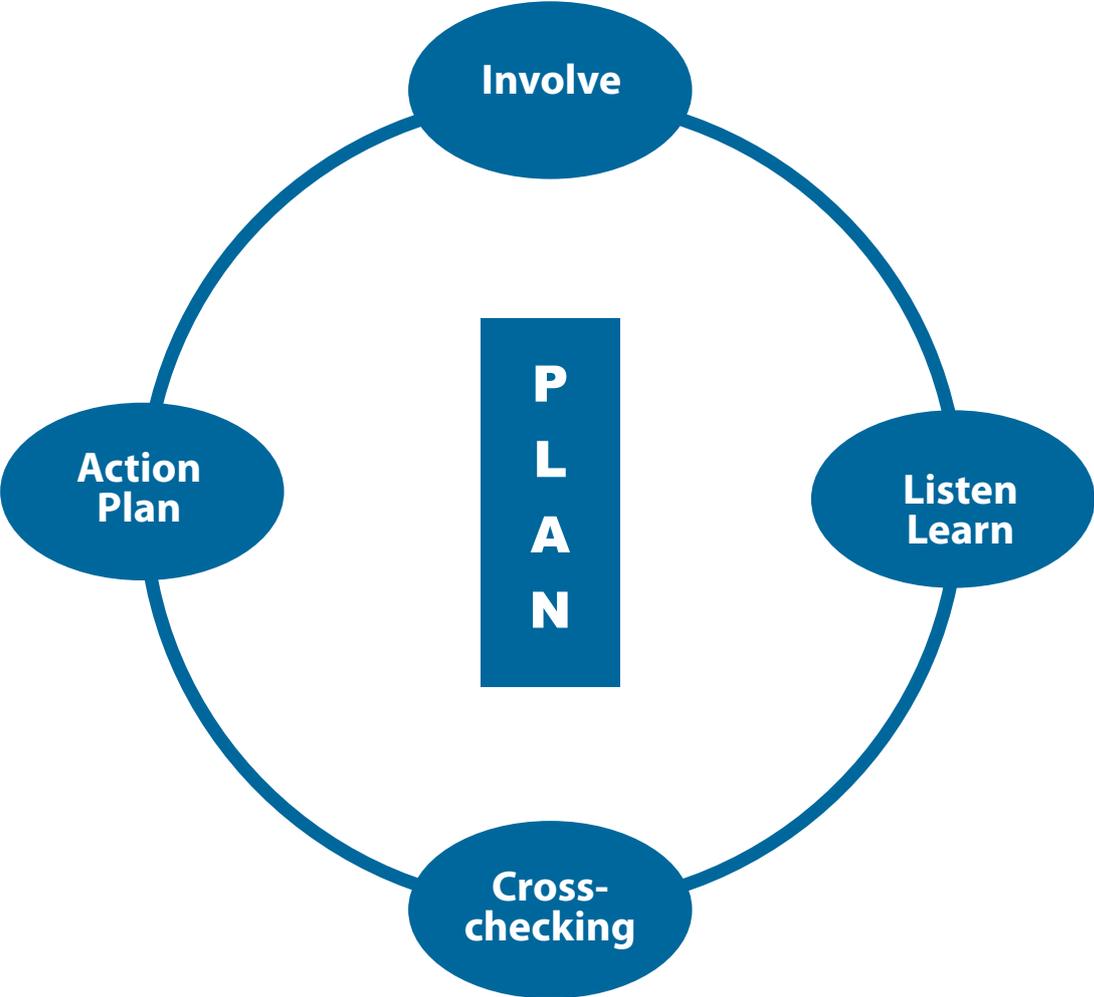
Planning the Research	
Why are you undertaking the research?	• Check if the information has been collected before • Decide what new research is required • Make sure the methods you intend to use are appropriate.

Before you start each interview	
Have your participants given informed consent?	• Be clear why you are carrying out the research • Explain who it is for and how the results will be used • Explain the overall process and where the particular interview fits • Make it clear how the outcomes of the research will be publicised and how they can have access to the results • Make sure participants understand that they are completely free to say what they want or stop if they feel uncomfortable.

Analysing the findings	
Is the information accurate? **How have you interpreted the information?**	• Check the results from different sources, identify where they support each other • Highlight odd or unusual findings • Involve participants in interpreting and checking the information • Feed back your research to participants and ask for their comments. • Show clearly how plans and decisions are based on the research and other sources.

Process

Process

The success of Participatory Appraisals depends on a good rigorous process. Planning underpins four key stages. Each stage is based on what was learned before and helps to shape the next stage.

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                    │ Involve  │
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The stages of a Participatory Appraisal

Plan:

- Negotiate the focus and scope of the topic or theme of the Participatory Appraisal with the organisation commissioning the work
- Bring together a Participatory Appraisal team. The team members should either live in the area or have experience of the topic or theme
- Collect and review secondary data; statistics, previous consultation exercises and other sources
- Discuss and develop your initial interview checklist and identify apparent gaps
- Plan the initial interview timetable, selection of tools and techniques, and personal safety guidelines
- You will need to include some unplanned time to visit additional community facilities, and to meet unplanned groups, as well as time to think and develop notes between interviews.

Involve people:

- Decide who you will need to interview, and which community groups you will need to meet
- Decide on best teams for different settings and different groups
- Find out where people meet, and ask if you can attend one of their meetings
- Attend meetings of community groups - and invite members of groups to join in the consultation exercise
- Different groups of people may require different methods and meetings at different times of day
- Consider who you might have missed and how you could meet them.

Listen and learn from people:

- Use the tools to help facilitate groups of community members
- Carry out one-to-one interviews with community members
- Set aside time to work in your team to make sense of the information you have collected
- Keep a record of who you have talked to the and tools used
- Record carefully the all the findings and collect information together

Cross-check information:

- Use the cross-checking tools to gather a variety of opinions and views
- Check the information you gain through careful probing
- Remember that the purpose is to learn from people
- Ask people to help identify patterns, differences, variations and contradictions
- Check results of previous consultation work and other data on the community with the people you are working with.

Action plan:

- Use tools to help people plan and prioritise.

- If it is difficult to get everyone to agree on certain findings, help people record the different views rather than attempting to reach a consensus.

- Help participants produce reports in the most appropriate format. Be creative. Use a wide range of materials and methods. Several different forms of reporting may be necessary for different audiences.

- Find ways to use the reports to verify the information and gain support for the findings.

- Support people to develop action plans, which include practical, realistic options or possibilities.

- Facilitate work with appropriate agencies to agree responsibilities.

- Keep people informed and involved.

Team work

A Participatory Appraisal is undertaken in a team. A team normally includes community members and workers from within the area and outside.

People take different roles and responsibilities but the team has overall responsibility for following the principles and designing the process. This includes organising interviews, assigning teams to undertake them, cross checking information, identifying missing groups or people, devising new questions or different lines of enquiry, analysing information, presenting the findings and supporting action planning.

The Tool Bag

The Tool Bag

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are at the heart of all Participatory Appraisals. All the tools are used within semi-structured interviews.

A semi-structured interview is a guided conversation in which only the topics are planned in advance. Interviewers do not use a formal questionnaire; instead they use a checklist of key questions related to each topic. Open-ended questions allow for new issues to arise.

Interviews can be with individual members of the community; a cross-section of the community could be interviewed on the same subject to gain a range of views and opinions. You may also need to interview key specialists in the topics you are interested in. Carrying out small-group interviews and facilitating discussions is a way of accessing the knowledge of a range of people. Group interviews need more planning and careful facilitating by someone with the confidence and ability to keep discussions going and to bring out important issues.

1. Preparing for an Interview

Work as a team to discuss and agree the interview theme and to draw up the Interview Checklist.

The Interview Checklist

Semi-structured interviews start with general questions and topics. The answers are used to focus and develop information during the conversation. These interviews are unlike questionnaires, as detailed, specific questions are not planned in advance. The majority of questions are created during the interview and the techniques allow more flexibility to probe for more details or discuss issues that arise.

The interview is guided in that a checklist is prepared beforehand to provide a framework for the discussion. The checklist can take various forms; it may simply be a list of topics about which you want to collect information; for example,

Topic: *Crime and Community safety.*

How safe do people feel living in this area?

What are the crime and disorder problems in the area?

What are people's coping-strategies?

Are there any particular coping-strategies for specific problems?

Or you may design a matrix form; for example,

Name_____ Date_____ Project_____		
Health issue	**ISSUES?**	**SOLUTIONS?**
Drugs		

2. Selecting the people you will interview

You will need to consider if the people you talk to represent the key interests in the community.   It may not be possible to get a representative sample of the population and it is more important to learn from the range of people in the population and be sure that you know who you have been in contact with.

Consider the ways people differ.

For example:
- Age (children, young people, middle-aged, the elderly,…)
- Gender (men, women, girls and boys)
- Sexuality
- Origins: (race, ethnicity, clan, caste, language groups,…)
- Occupational groups (types of work and jobs, unemployed, those in education, commuters, migrants, …)
- Local history (long term residents, recently arrived, refugees, …)

You may want to interview people with specialist knowledge of a subject or the community; people you interview may recommend others.   It is always useful to ask in interviews for suggestions of others that you should speak to.

New groups will emerge as important as the work progresses and it is important to be able to include people from outside your initial list.   It is likely that groups will be discovered to be made up of several smaller groups who may have different views and you may need to make additional visits to the same group.   This is why it is important to keep records of who you have heard from.

3. Agree on the roles of the interview team

For each interview there are three main roles: Facilitator, Observer and Reporter.
When there are only two people in the team they both have to cover the role of the observer and feedback to each other after the interview on their observations.

Decide on your team roles.   Decide on signals between you if you need to make changes without involving the participants.   For example; it may be useful to agree on a sign from the facilitator that they would like the other person to take over.   Share ideas on the Interview Checklist so that you are less likely to interrupt or distract each other.

The Facilitator role is to:

- lead the interview
- keep to the topic that has been chosen

  AND to be flexible and follow important changes that occur
- set the pace and style
- guide the Recorder, if necessary.

The Observer role is to:

- see who participates

  AND who does not participate
- see who dominates
- see who are the key informants
- notice what other bias there may be in the interview

  e.g. young or old, men or women, tribe or clan or family or caste etc.
- be ready to take over if the Facilitator needs help
- be flexible and follow important changes that occur.

The Recorder role is to:

- record the main observations
- record particular quotations
- make good copies of maps or diagrams
- get the names of key informants (where appropriate).

4. Conducting the Interview

Good Interviewers are:

- good listeners
- quick to make links with people and make them at ease
- sensitive to various moods, meanings, nuances, expressions and body language
- good interpreters of moods, silences, interactions and the words that are used
- alert and looking for leads, observing people, their reactions and possible tensions between participants
- willing to embrace error and accept that they will make mistakes and want to learn from them
- good facilitators who are able to encourage people to talk and have a range of ideas to trigger information-flow.

At the Interview:

- be casual, informal and friendly
- make it lively
- be flexible, yet controlled – the order of presentation of issues and asking questions is important
- be sensitive to the setting so that people can be comfortable (light, warmth, noise, are important as well as being overheard and being seen)
- arrange seating, so that everyone is at a uniform level
- begin interview by 'breaking the ice'
- lead up to important and/or sensitive issues
- probe; don't always accept the first answer as a complete statement and ask when you do not understand
- use: What? Why? When? Who? How? Where? to form simple questions
- try not to repeat questions - if need be, rephrase them politely
- politely terminate unfruitful interviews
- in group interviews, prevent individuals from dominating - give non-verbal cues to get people to stop; politely intervene, summarise, and then refocus discussion and address next question to other people
- at the end of interview, thank people.

Types of question

Closed　　　　　　Can only be answered Yes or No.

Open　　　　　　　Allow the interviewee a range of answers which might be long.

Leading　　　　　Suggests an answer or shows the interviewee the interests or views of the facilitator and makes it difficult to chose a different answer.

Double-Headed　Contains two or more questions. The interviewee has to choose which part of the question to answer.

Vague　　　　　　The interviewee may not understand what is being asked.

Ambiguous　　　Quite unclear what is being asked.

5. Reviewing the Interview

At the end of the interview you will need to reflect on how it went and what information emerged.

Some factors to consider include:

Was the person you interviewed able and willing?

- Did he or she have time to be interviewed, or should you have returned at a more convenient time?

- Did the person seem comfortable with the interview process, or did you sense some reservations?

- Were there people present who may have affected the answers of the person you interviewed?

- Were there other possible sources of bias that might have shaped the participants' contributions?

What knowledge did you gain?

- Is the individual's knowledge of the issue first-hand and direct?

- Was he or she eager to make authoritative statements about topics?

- Was the person in a position to provide accurate information on the subject?

- Is the information fact, rumour, or opinion?

- Was he or she painting a positive picture for a particular reason?

- Was the person trying to present a lot of problems because the Participatory Appraisal team are seen as people who can resolve all difficulties?

6. Recording Interviews

Recording semi-structured interviews can be more difficult than recording the results from a traditional questionnaire, since there will be a wide variety of answers and different people will raise different points.

Remember to:

- ask permission of those present to record discussion
- use a discreet note book (not a big clip board)
- record the detail of what is said
- record the detail of what has been observed and how the interview developed.

Always make follow-up notes after the interview, and check these out with other team members.

In some cases you will need to record key points word-for-word. Direct quotations can be very powerful even when the speaker is not identified.

In other cases you can summarise each interview into the main points that were raised.

Then create a number of categories of responses which can be turned into a table or chart to help you show how many people agree or disagree with different views.

Use the interview form on the next page to keep a record of every interview.

PA Interview Report Form

Date: **Facilitator:**
Location:
Community Group Details of the group you worked with – who took part: men, women, age, ethnic background, numbers.…
Which Tool(s) did you use? (If possible make a copy of diagrams produced – use the back of the paper if you need more space.)
What did you find out from the group? What themes did people raise?
Include here any notes on things you observed about the PA exercise For example: things that surprised you, who took dominant roles, who was present but did not take an active part……
Recommendations for cross-checking information Include here issues you feel need to be cross-checked

Maps and Diagrams

Diagrams and maps can provide a focus of attention whilst discussing an issue. A good diagram can represent a complex issue simply it can get those people talking who do not feel confident with words or writing. Used with semi-structured interview techniques diagrams can help you gather information from groups of people and involve them in decision-making.

1. Mapping

Maps are an important, non-verbal way of finding out how people view their area, and are often a good way of getting the community involved in the early stages of community-based work. Maps are a good starting exercise as the team members get an overview of the community area in which they are working. Maps will often suggest questions and discussion topics for use in later interviews.

What to do

Invite people to make a map of places that are important to them. This can give the participants the opportunity to guide the interview and discuss things that you might not have thought of.

Gather people together who know the area, and are willing to share their knowledge. Decide whether to work individually or in a group.

Choose suitable materials for drawing the map.

Facilitators start to help people to make the map by inviting them to draw a local community landmark or venue.

Once people have started, use the mapping process to ask more questions about the area. For example; ask what is in blank areas of the map, ask where would you buy milk, meet friends, …

2. Printed maps

You can also use street maps to allow people to point out important areas or places without having to draw a map from scratch.

What to do

Gather a range of maps covering larger and smaller areas. You may need to be creative with photocopying and enlarging existing maps.

Suggest different types of feature that could be identified on the map.

For example: good things, bad things, (things that should be changed) and things of special interest to your study (e.g. places we get food, leisure facilities (where we relax, play sports, …), health facilities, etc.)

Allow the participants to stick flags or sticky dots on the map to indicate different places. You can code the dots so that, for example, men and women use different colours.

A large map can be installed in a place where passers-by can very quickly make a contribution to the sharing of ideas on the area.   Participants may react to what they find already posted on the map.

If a map becomes too cluttered with dots or flags replace it with another.

Listen to the comments and observations; the discussion and ideas are more important than the map.
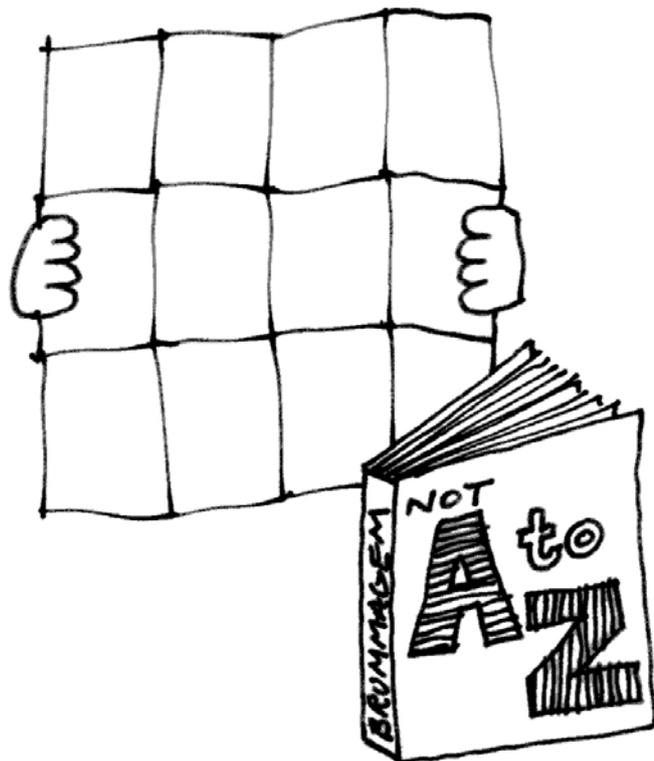
3. Circle Diagrams

A circle diagram is a useful tool to analyse the links between community organisations or between the organisations and the people in the community.

What to do

Gather people together who know the area and are willing to share their knowledge.

On a large piece of paper draw a circle to represent the community.

Generate a list of organisations working in the community, and write the name of each organisation on a circle of card.

Discuss the links each organisation has with the local community.

Decide as a group where to place the organisation circles on the diagram.

The distance you place the organisation from the community circle represents the strength of their link with the community; for example, *an organisation with strong community links would be placed close to the community circle.*

To explore the links an organisation has with its local community, place the organisation at the centre of the circle.

Generate a list of groups living in the locality; for example, *young families, asylum seekers.*

Write the name of each group on a small circle of card.

Discuss the links each community group has with the organisation.

Together, decide where to place the group circles on the diagram.

Participants place the community group at a distance from the organisation circle to represent the strength of the link between the community group and the organisation; for example, *a group of young mothers with strong links to an organisation would be placed close to that organisation's circle.*
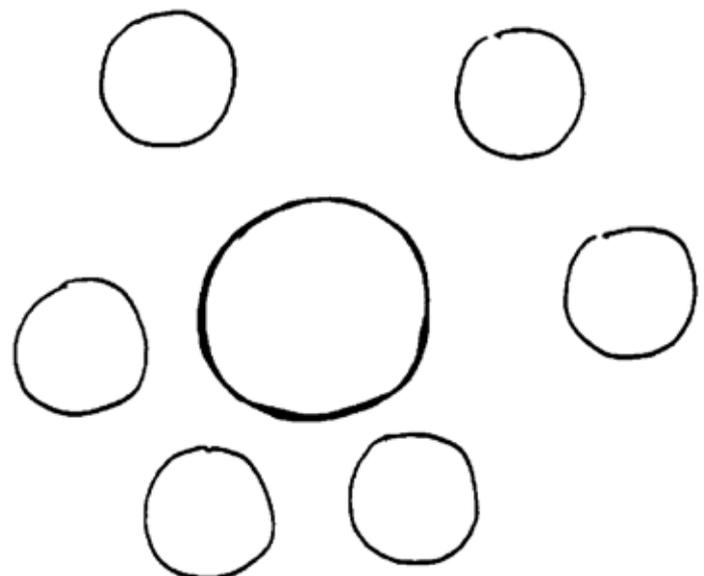
4. 'On the one hand…'

This is an exercis which helps groups of people to share positive and negative reactions to a situation.　It is a good starting tool to explore a wide range of ideas.

The exercise works well when people have been reluctant to talk or are only expressing positive or negative views.

What to do

Divide the group into pairs and give each pair some paper.

Invite each person to draw round one of the hands of his or her partner.
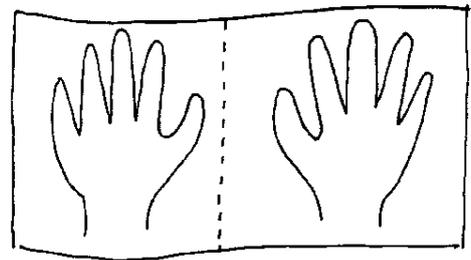
Encourage people to use the two 'hands' to write positive
reactions to a situation in the middle of one 'hand', and their negative views on the other.

When everyone has finished, each pair shows their 'hands' to the rest of the group and discusses what they have written.

5. Spider Diagram

Spider diagrams are a way of generating ideas with a group. They are a useful way of encouraging people to make connections between ideas.

What to do

At the centre of a page draw a circle. Write the subject or theme you are looking at in the centre of the circle.

Encourage the group to use the diagram to generate ideas.
Place each idea at the end of a line or spider's leg.

Use other lines to make connections between the ideas.
If it helps, put key words on the line to reinforce the connections.
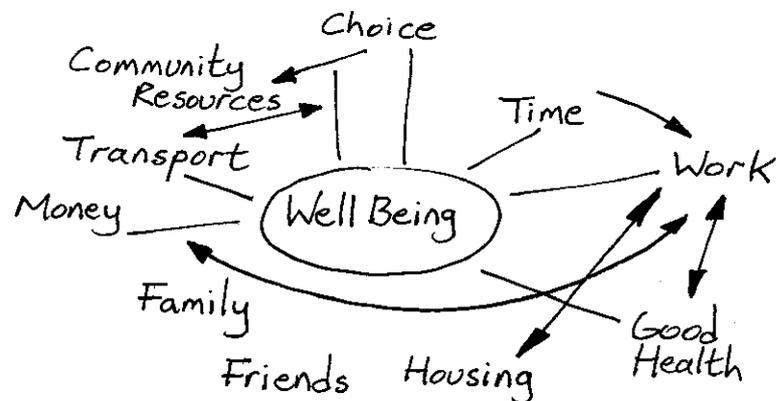
Use different coloured pens to group themes and make links.

Don't get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area go to another line.

Put all ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit.
Don't judge, hold back or discourage participants by the way you add their ideas.

6. Push - Pull Diagram

A push-pull diagram is a method used with groups to explore issues and to weigh-up the 'pros' and 'cons'. It can be used as a starting exercise but allows more thorough discussions of the issues and may be better used after some initial ideas have been developed in other starting tools.

What to do

Decide what issue you will use the push-pull diagram to explore; for example, *encouraging young mothers to get back to work.*

Gather people together who have experience of the issue, and are willing to share their knowledge.

Facilitators start to help people to use the diagram by listing all the factors which encourage young mothers back to work on individual post-it notes/arrows.

Place the post-it notes/arrows for change on one side of the paper.

Add all the forces that stop young mothers going back to work on the other side of the paper.

Rank each 'Push' and 'Pull', placing the post-it note/arrow closer to, or further from, the centre of the paper, according to the strength of the force.
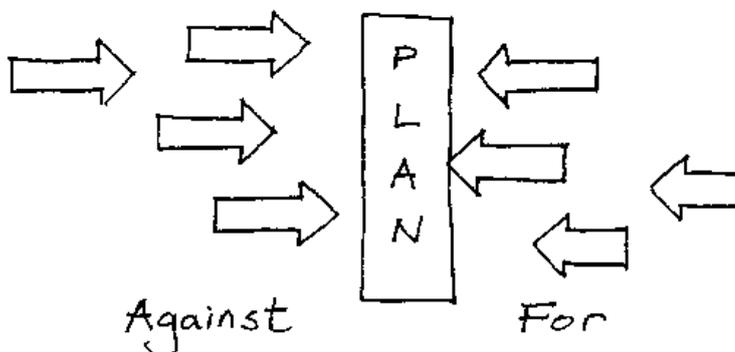
7. Time Line

A time line or memory line can be used to explore the history of an area, a project or services. This tool can be used as part of a semi – structured interview to find out important events of a community's history and examine changes over time including successes, achievements and difficulties.

What to do

Decide what time period you want to find out about. Identify a starting point. If this is the history of a community it might be the earliest memory of an older person. If it is a project, it might be the start of the project.

Use a long piece of paper, at least two flip charts joined end to end or a roll of paper, and draw a line to represent the time between that earliest point and the present. Leave some space at each end so you can go further into the past and into the future if you need to.

Ask participants for "important events or changes" that have occurred over this history. Mark them on the line. Post-it notes can be useful so that events can be moved
Allow participants to add events or changes.

Once the time line is created it is possible to probe on different issues. For example: if the building of a supermarket is put on the line you can ask where people did their shopping before this time. If a project was successful in gaining funding you can ask what impact it had on the organisation.
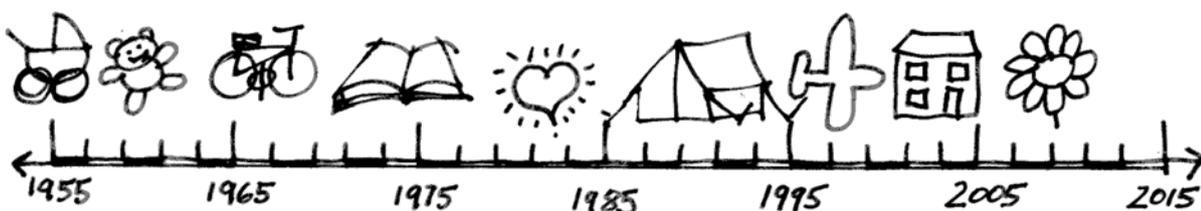
8. Issue Trees

Issue Trees are useful for facilitating more analysis and probing on issues that have emerged. The tools go beyond simple description of the situation and help participants to explore the underlying causes and sources of the situation. This makes it easier to decide on which issues could be addressed and in identifying potential solutions.

Stage One: Problem Tree
What to do

Decide what the problem is that you will use the Tree to help solve.

Why people don't use local community facilities?

Gather people together who are experiencing the problem, and are willing to share their knowledge.

Facilitators start to help people to create the Tree by placing the problem on the 'tree trunk'. Write each reason on a separate card or post-it note and stick each one on the tree.
Use the tree shape to group the reasons behind the problem. Place them on the roots of the tree. Keep asking the question 'Why?' to help probe.
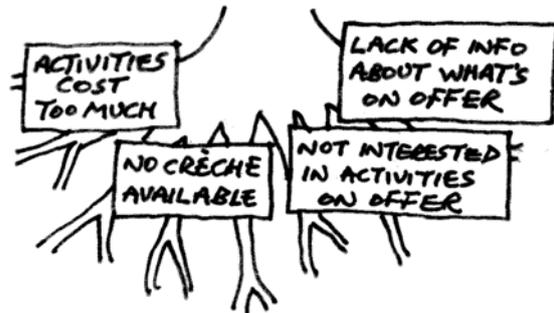

- *Activities cost too much*
- *Crèche not available*
- *Not interested in the type of activities on offer*
- *Lack of information about what is on offer*

Use the branches to explore the effects of the problem

It is important to facilitate the initial Problem Tree well. At this point be sure that the root causes do relate to the original problem. It is very helpful to use movable sticky notes so that the root causes can be rearranged during the exercise.

If the Problem Tree is done well each root will follow a logical sequence and it should be possible to see the links.
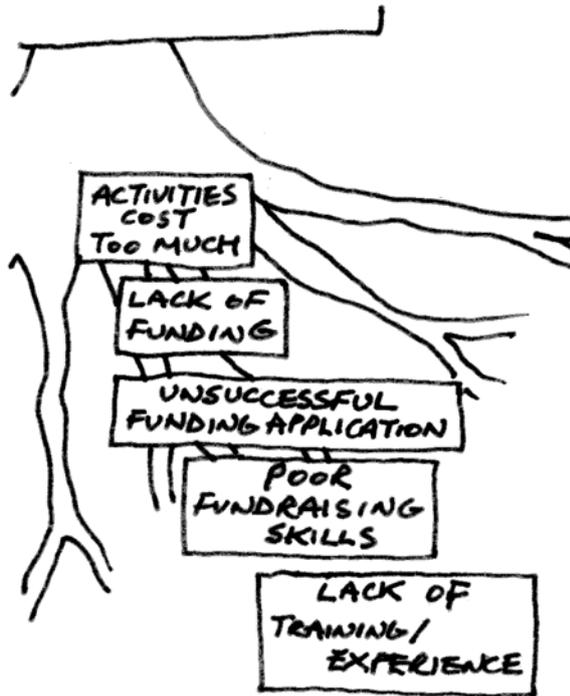
Stage Two: Solution Tree

Once you have explored the reasons behind the issues focus on one root at a time and turn each negative statement into a positive statement. It may be easiest to place the solutions directly on top of the problems that they replace.

Discuss which of the solutions are achievable and how they might be achieved.
Look at the bottom of each root. Does the solution, in our case training in fundraising, give you the first thing you need to do?

The possible solutions can be further assessed using Impact/Implementation Charts.
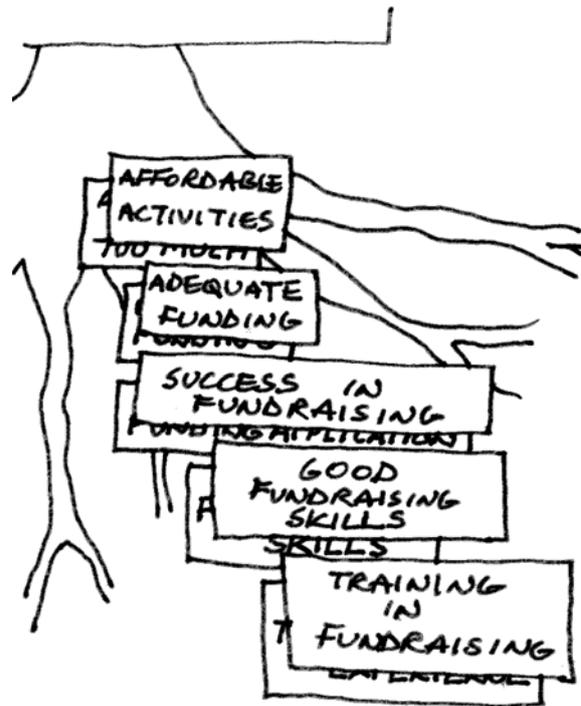
9 Impact Flow Diagram

This tool allows people to explore the impact of an event or activity. It can be used to develop ideas or plan a new project. It is a useful tool to use to discuss what would need to happen to make an idea or project successful.

What to do
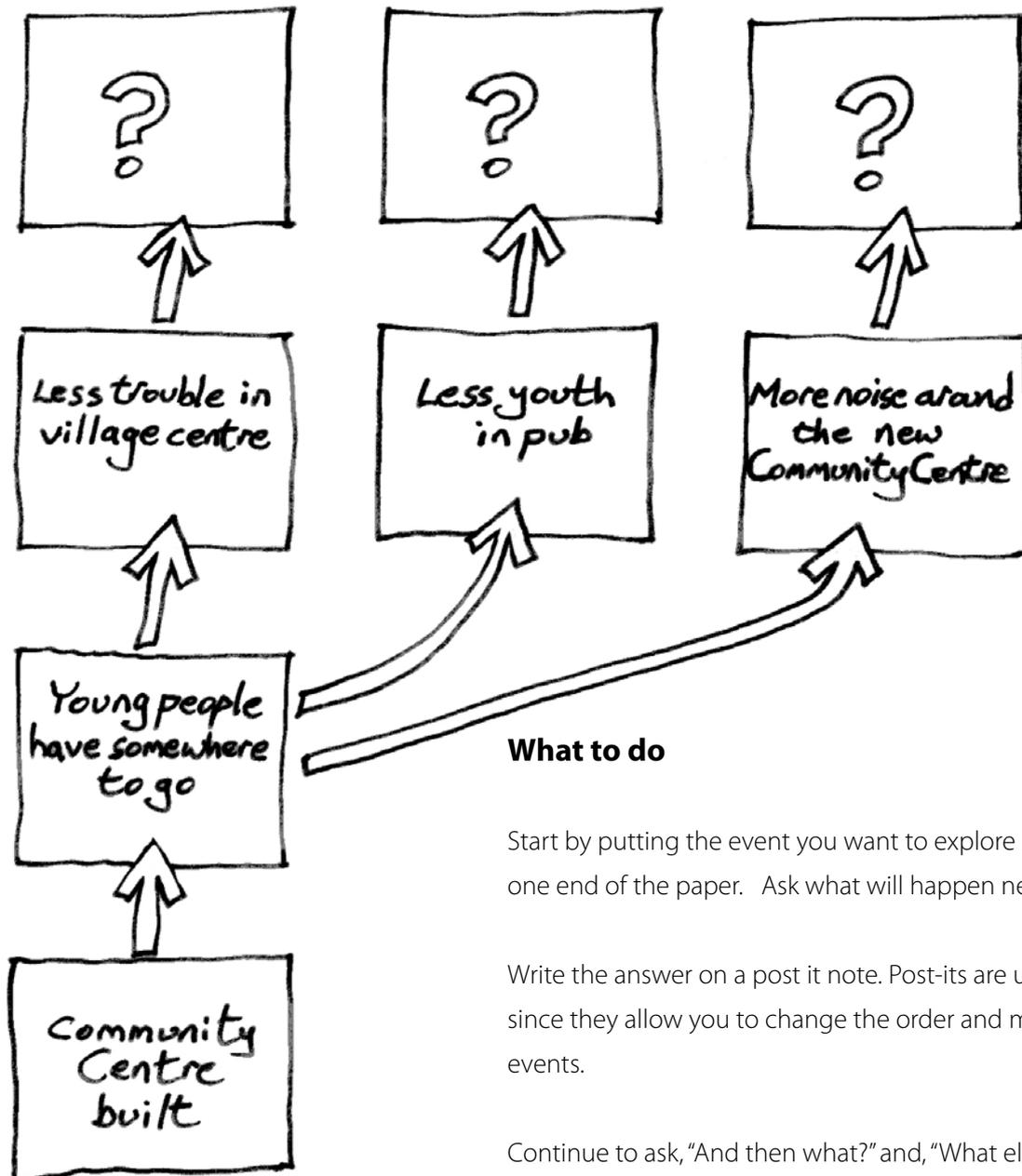
Start by putting the event you want to explore at one end of the paper.   Ask what will happen next.

Write the answer on a post it note. Post-its are useful since they allow you to change the order and move events.

Continue to ask, "And then what?" and, "What else will happen?"
Allow the participants to develop a chain or sequence of impacts.

It is important to help the participants to continue to think through the impacts. Be prepared to abandon chains of impact that are not useful.

10. Impact/Implementation charts

The impact/implementation chart will enable you to explore the feasibility of solutions with people. The tool involves ranking issues in two directions in two different steps. It can be very helpful at later stages of a Participatory Appraisal in prioritising and choosing possible actions.

The diagram has vertical and horizontal axes.

The horizontal axis ranks the impact of the activity on the beneficiaries:

High Impact, Medium, Low Impact.

The vertical axis explores how easy the activity is to implement: Easy, Medium, Difficult :

Impact / Implementation	High	Medium	Low
Easy			
Medium			
Difficult			

What to do

Work with people to generate solutions to a problem. Present the solutions to the group. It is helpful to have the solutions or actions on moveable bits of paper or card so they can be moved during the discussion to different places in the diagram.

For each solution ask if it would have a High, Medium or Low Impact on them:

Impact	High	Medium	Low
	Reductions available *Work with potential users to develop a programme of activities that meet local needs* *Publicity distributed via community networks*	*Better publicity in the local free press*	

Explore the feasibility of implementing the solution by asking if people feel that it is
Easy, Medium or Difficult to implement.

Use an impact / implementation matrix to sort the responses:

Impact Implementation	High	Medium	Low
Easy	*Publicity distributed via community networks*	*Better publicity in the local free press*	
Medium	*Work with potential users to develop a Programme of activities that meet Local needs*		
Difficult	*Reductions available*		

Ranking and Scoring

Ranking is placing things in order, relative to one another.   Usually in ranking there cannot be a tie and participants are obliged to discuss the issues until they can put one thing above or below the next.

Scoring is giving things a number based on a scale; for example from 1 to 5. Used carefully, ranking and scoring are very useful to help participants identify individual or group priorities.

People are invited to use the cards to rank the issues in the shape of a diamond. The reason they think is most important goes at the top of the diamond.
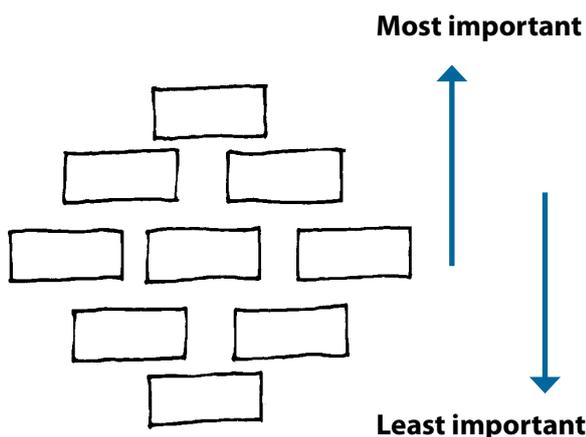
The next two important reasons go on the next line. Continue ranking the reasons to make the shape of a diamond.

1. Diamond Ranking

What to do

List the things you want to rank; for example, *the reasons people use local community facilities.*

Write each reason on a separate card or piece of paper

Most important

Least important

2. Dot Voting

Dot voting is a quick and useful way of introducing activities to people, and of gaining an overview of their ideas and opinions.

What to do

Begin by listing the suggested activities on a chart.

Explain to members of the group that they each have three votes, or 'dots'.
Ask people to read through the list of activities and to place the dots on the three activities they think should be a priority.

You can give people different numbers of sticky dots and allow them to stick them in different ways. If each person has six dots they can distribute them with 3 on their first choice, 2 on the next choice and 1 on the third choice. This may lead to more differences in the total votes for each option and facilitate decision making/

Another variation is to give people red, green and yellow stickers and ask them to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the idea by placing a sticker next to it.

Green = agree, red = disagree, yellow = no opinion
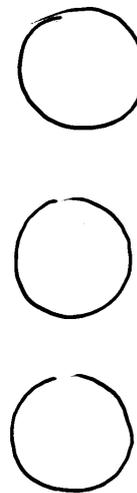
3. Ranking Lines

**A ranking line is a method used to share and collect basic information on an issue.
It is a very quick tool that can be used at almost any stage of an appraisal but is better as a
tool for collecting and sharing views rather than for prioritising.**

What to do

There are two ways of using the tool.

The first is where you are sharing basic information.

The extremes at each end of the line have an objective value.

For example:

How many years have you been in your current job?

The second is where you are sharing ideas, views or attitudes.

For example:

How much satisfaction do you get from your current job?

People are invited to respond to the question by making a mark on the line.

It is possible to use the tool to find out more about their views.

For example

What would have to change to make them move their mark?

Where do you think you would put your mark this time next year?

4. Matrix Scoring

Matrix scoring is a good tool to help people prioritise and look at how they feel about a number of different things at the same time.   It can be used to prioritise different possible actions, projects, sites or potential uses for resources.

What to do

Develop a list of things or criteria to be scored.

Explain the scoring system to participants

For example the scores could be:

- *1= not at all important*
- *2= not very important*
- *3= fairly important*
- *4= very important*
- *5= extremely important*

Each participant is invited to give their own scores for each of a range of activities or characteristics.

Criteria	Respondents						Total	Rank
	T	**U**	**V**	**D**	**X**	**Z**		
Cost of Activities within people's budget	*2*	*1*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		
Good range of activities on offer	*4*	*3*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*		
Reductions available	*1*	*2*	*1*	*3*	*1*	*1*		
Crèche available	*5*	*5*	*3*	*5*	*3*	*5*		
Confidence in the Community Workers	*3*	*4*	*4*	*1*	*3*	*3*		
Good range of activities that meet local people's needs	*3*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*5*	*5*		
Open and friendly	*5*	*4*	*5*	*5*	*4*	*4*		
Information available about what is on offer	*2*	*3*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*1*		

 Add the scores up and give it a rank. The group can then see the scores of different people and discuss which of the characteristics they think are the most important overall.

5. Matrix Ranking

Matrix Ranking is very like matrix scoring and can be used in the same situations. It can be used to explore differences in views on a range of ideas or options and lead to prioritisation or choices.

What to do

Develop the list of things, options or ideas that are to be ranked.

For example: **different means of transport.**

Develop a list of criteria for ranking the different items or options.

For example:

How would you choose which transport to use? What is good or bad about the option? how environmentally friendly is the option?

Allow the criteria for judgement to emerge slowly. You may need to turn negative criteria into positive so that the ranking is consistent, e.g. degrees of danger into degrees of safety.

Start drawing the matrix.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><th>Criteria for judging</th><th>Cost</th><th>Journey time</th><th>Comfort</th><th>Environmentally friendly</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th></th><th></th><th></th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">**Means of travel**</td><td>*Walking*</td><td>ꞏ</td><td>ꞏꞏꞏꞏꞏ</td><td>ꞏꞏꞏ</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>*Bicycle*</td><td>ꞏꞏ</td><td>ꞏꞏ</td><td>ꞏꞏꞏꞏꞏ</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>*Bus*</td><td>ꞏꞏꞏ</td><td>ꞏꞏꞏ</td><td>ꞏꞏꞏ</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>*Taxi*</td><td>ꞏꞏꞏꞏ</td><td>ꞏ</td><td>ꞏꞏ</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>*Private car*</td><td>ꞏꞏꞏꞏ</td><td>ꞏꞏꞏꞏ</td><td>ꞏ</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

In this example; walking is ranked 1 as cheapest and 5 as slowest whilst private car is ranked 5 as most expensive and 1 as most comfortable.

Let other criteria emerge for an initial list. Make it clear that more can be added later.
Have plenty of space and the ability to make the matrix bigger.

Use counters (seeds, stones, blobs of blu-tac, whatever is available) to give ranks or scores. Adding or taking away counters is much easier to do than changing written numbers and is easy to understand by people who are not literate.

Make sure that all the criteria are ranked in the same way; i.e. low is always best and high is always worst.   Do not allow ties in ranks but always ask participants to rank one higher than another.

Analyse the results by looking for consistent scores which may indicate a particularly well-liked or badly-liked option.

Never add up the ranks for each option but point out runs of high or low scores or unusual scores, probe for reasoning and understanding.

6. Pairwise Ranking

This tool helps people to prioritise or choose between a small range of options.   The tool is quite hard to organise but very easy for participants to carry out.   It can be useful in facilitation of decision making.

What to do

Draw up the list of things that are being compared along one side of a table.

Repeat the list of items along the other side of the table to make a grid.

	Apple	Pears	Oranges	Bananas
Apple				
Pears				
Oranges				
Bananas				

In this example, the participants are prioritising between four things: apples, pears, oranges and bananas.

Work on one side of the diagonal line and start asking the participants to choose one from each pair of items.   In each case, the participants choose one or other of the pair and the choice is entered in the appropriate box of the grid.

	Apple	Pears	Oranges	Bananas
Apple		Pears	Apple	Apple
Pears			Pears	Pears
Oranges				
Bananas				

In the example, the participants have chosen a pear in the comparison with an apple and have chosen an apple in comparison with both oranges and bananas.   They have chosen pears in comparison with oranges and with bananas.   They will next compare oranges with bananas.

At the end of the pair-wise comparisons the matrix should contain a range of choices which you can add up and present back to the participants as appearing to be their preferred choice. In our example, they seem to prefer Pears to the other options.

The discussions during the ranking and the final discussions are more important than the actual rankings. The participants may find it easy to make a real choice after they have used the tool and reached a new understanding of the issues.