

**VOICES AT
THE TABLE**

Participatory Action
Research Toolkit
for Inclusive Water,
Sanitation & Hygiene
Programmes.



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Introduction

The Voices at the Table toolkit is an integrated collection of theories, principles, activities and case studies. It draws inspiration from different disciplines, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches, that are all participatory and flexible and support participatory action research.

The activities and underlying ideas are accessible to beginners and will provide experienced researchers and facilitators with a new approach to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene focused participatory action research (known throughout the toolkit as PAR).

The toolkit has been created from the experiences of undertaking a participatory action research project in Eastern Indonesia starting in 2019 and is continuing at the time of writing this toolkit.

Through DFAT's Water for Women Fund, Plan International Australia, Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, Edge Effect and Arus Pelangi have been facilitating a WASH participatory action research project in Eastern Indonesia called, WASH and Beyond – Transforming Lives in Eastern Indonesia. Between 2019 and 2022, Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, and Edge Effect, supported by Plan International Australia, facilitated five PAR groups of women and people with disabilities in Manggarai and Sumbawa Regencies in Eastern Indonesia.

Starting in 2019, and continuing into 2023, Edge Effect and Arus Pelangi, supported by Plan International Australia have been working alongside one community of Waria in Nusa Tenggara Barat in Eastern Indonesia.

With thanks to Water for Women's Impact and Innovation Grant, Edge Effect, supported by Plan International Australia, Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, Arus Pelangi and all six participatory action research groups in Eastern Indonesia, was able to create the Voices at the Table toolkit.

In June 2022, each of the six participatory action research groups evaluated and assessed the many activities and tools used in the existing WASH and Beyond project and advised on the activities and tools most suitable for this toolkit.

Overview

Voices at the Table is divided into nine sections. Section one unpacks what participatory action research is, and how you can start to use the approach in the communities you work with. Section two covers relevant theories and principles that supports participatory action research. Sections three to eight focus on activities that align with a traditional project cycle. Section nine is case studies to help ground you in the project. At the end of the toolkit is a series of cards that have images of people undertaking different WASH activities. The cards are linked to a specific activity, but can be used in many creative ways other than the activity described.

The Voices At The Table toolkit was compiled by:

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Acknowledgments:

This toolkit would not have been possible without the contributions of the ninety-three women, people with disabilities and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, who shared their time, energy, and experiences with us in the project. We hope that this toolkit does your involvement and participation justice.

With Special Thanks to the project partners:

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Chapter 01

Participatory Action Research

7

What is Participatory Action Research?

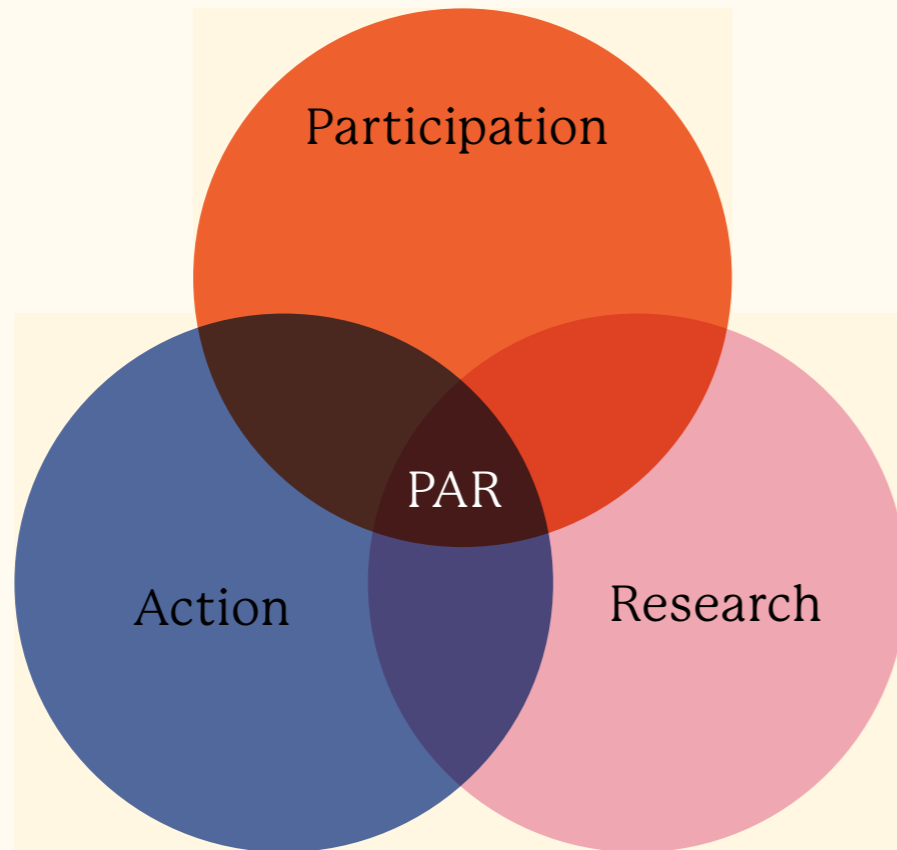
Participatory action research (sometimes called, PAR) is a method for changing the world. One way to understand PAR is to break it down into three parts: participation, action, and research.

So first, it is a research method: people involved in PAR are trying to understand how and why the world is the way it is.

Second, if people involved in PAR use action as a research method. Kurt Lewin, a founder of action research said, "if you truly want to understand something, try to change it."

When we try to change the world, we observe what happens, and we learn from that. The idea is that we cannot sit outside the world and analyse it.

Third, if people who want the world to change actively participate in all of the PAR steps. This includes people who are marginalised for different reasons. The idea is that change is not something done by politicians or experts or experienced civil society activists ... everyone can do PAR.



PAR Venn Diagram:
Participatory Action Research: Theory and Methods for Engaged Inquiry
By Jacques M. Chevalier, Daniel J. Buckles, p. 10

Is there a specific process for PAR?

PAR is often described as a series of cycles. Each cycle involves a workshop and then a period after the workshop when group members take action based on workshop analysis and decisions. The results of that action then feeds into the next workshop, and the cycle starts again. It is an iterative process. This means that each time participants go through a cycle, they will learn more about how the world works and how to change it. Lots of cycles might be needed to achieve the change that the group wants, and even after lots of cycles the group might have achieved only some change.

Workshops could be held over a few hours, a day, or over several days, depending on the tools being used in the workshop and how much time participants have. The action period between the workshops can be as long as you want: it needs to be long enough to do the action agreed at the previous workshop, but not so long that the group energy diminishes. For some groups the action period could be a week or two, for others its could be longer. The action periods do not all have to be the same length – some actions might happen faster than others.

Adapted from "What is Participatory Action Research" by Yolanda Wadsworth.
Source: aral.com.au/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html

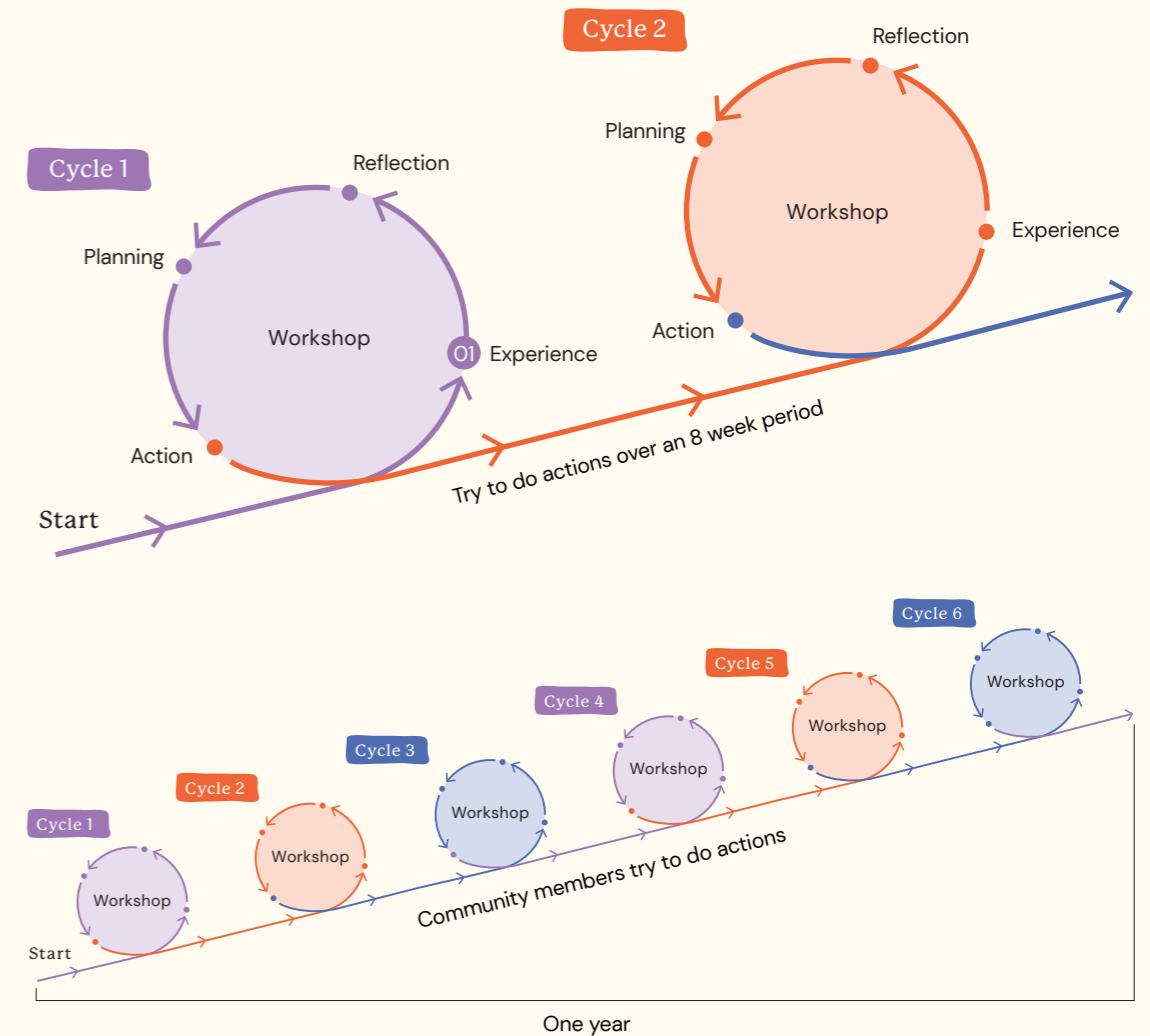


Diagram adapted from Phil Crane and Leanne Richardson (2000) Reconnect Action Research Kit, School of Human Services, Queensland University of Technology for the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. Available online at: [eprints.qut.edu.au/29347/1/Reconnect_AR_Kit_2000_\(2\).PDF](http://eprints.qut.edu.au/29347/1/Reconnect_AR_Kit_2000_(2).PDF)

Is there a specific set of workshop tools for PAR workshops?

No. Workshops often have 3 sections that lead to the action. The first section is when participants share relevant experiences or other evidence about things that they want to change. Lots of workshop tools can be used for this, some might involve people sitting in the workshop and sharing stories, or it could involve participants going out to do an activity (such as taking photographs or collecting survey data) that they bring back to the group.

The second is when participants reflect upon the experiences and evidence. Lots of workshop tools can be used, for example tools that help uncover root causes or that expose power relationships or assumptions in society. The third section is planning, and again lots of tools can be used by participants to explore the range of options they have to achieve change. The Voices at the Table toolkit provides a small selection of activities and tools, but there are lots of other resources that you can use.

If we don't know how long PAR will take, how do we plan and budget for it?

This is a genuine challenge for organisations familiar with traditional projects in which a plan or theory of change or log frame will set the objective, state the activities and explain how they will achieve the objective. The budget is relatively easy to create, consisting of staff time, activity and equipment costs, participant costs and other organisational costs. From a PAR perspective that kind of project planning makes false assumptions about the world and makes false promises to participants: there is no simple recipe for change that can be determined in advance.

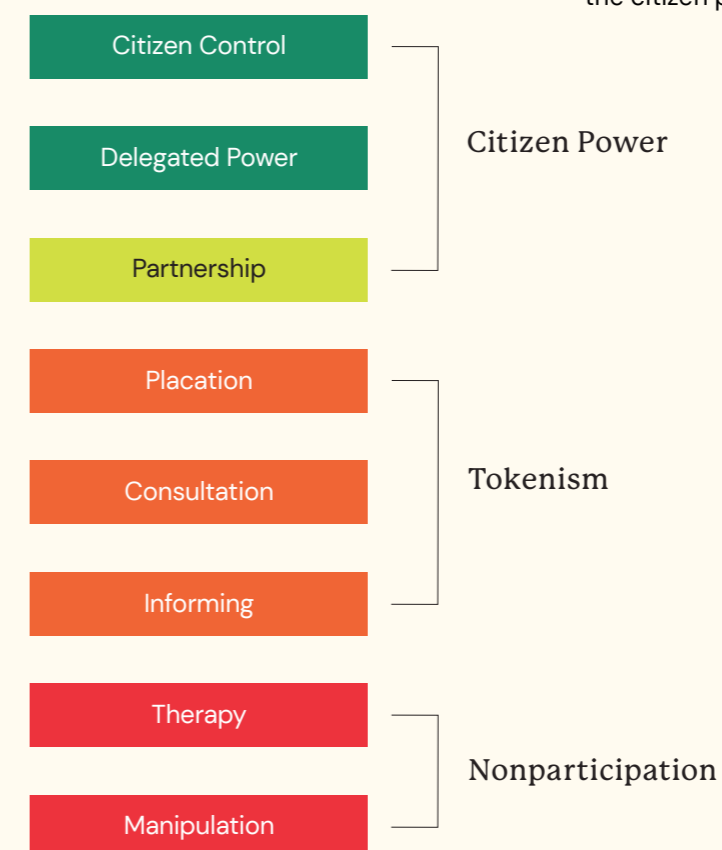
Organisations pursuing PAR need to take a much more flexible attitude to project planning and budgeting. One way to do start is to set a maximum time period and budget that your organisation can provide. You might create an indicative budget but allow for line item changes of much more than the usual +/- 10%, or budget for staff time as usual but create pools of funds that can be used flexibly for a range of costs for each PAR cycle. Your finance department and donor may resist this; but fight for as much flexibility as you can! You might need to make a bargain, for example, by agreeing to more frequent monitoring and revisions: if so, do all you can to avoid procedural administrative constraints of your organisation affecting the substantive work of the group. However, be honest about these constraints so that the group can make a decision about how to manage their response to the power that your NGO has if it is the holder of funds and the holder of the donor relationship.

What community participation is necessary for it to be PAR?

The idea of PAR is that people affected by the issue are part of the process of discovery, analysis, and testing of solutions. Within that, there are many different kinds and levels of community participation possible.

Some PAR groups might also include officials or experts as members. Sometimes that mix of people can be constructive, as the group has a range of ideas and experiences and connections to draw upon. Your role as facilitator may include establishing ways of working that include different forms of dialogue and knowledge, and to ensure that community voices are not dominated or overshadowed by official or expert voices.

A different approach is for the PAR group to consist solely of members of marginalised groups. This is sometimes called critical PAR. It draws upon the ideas of Paolo Freire, in which marginalised people rekindle their own sense of agency, build activist skills, and take a critical approach to the power structures that marginalise them. Your role as facilitator may include supporting the group to overcome feelings that they should not or could not take themselves take a leadership role; sometimes this means stepping back and providing space for the group to find its own way. This can be challenging for facilitators who may have been trained to step-in and solve issues or to manage group activities. Official or expert voices may be introduced to the group, but only if that is what the group wants, and on terms established by the group. Using Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, this approach is at the citizen power end of the ladder.



Sherry R. Arnstein's "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" First published in the Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969

Chapter 02

Principles & theories

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Pedagogy of the oppressed

Principles & theories: ↗

We are all leaders

Case study: ↗

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

People with disabilities mapping their own WASH journeys

Informed dignity of risk

Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

Over a lifetime of work, Paulo Freire created an approach to emancipatory education and a lens through which to understand systems of oppression in order to transform them. Freire flipped mainstream pedagogy on its head by insisting that true knowledge and expertise already exist within people. What is required to transform the world is dialogue, critical questioning, love for humanity, and praxis – the synthesis of critical reflection and action.

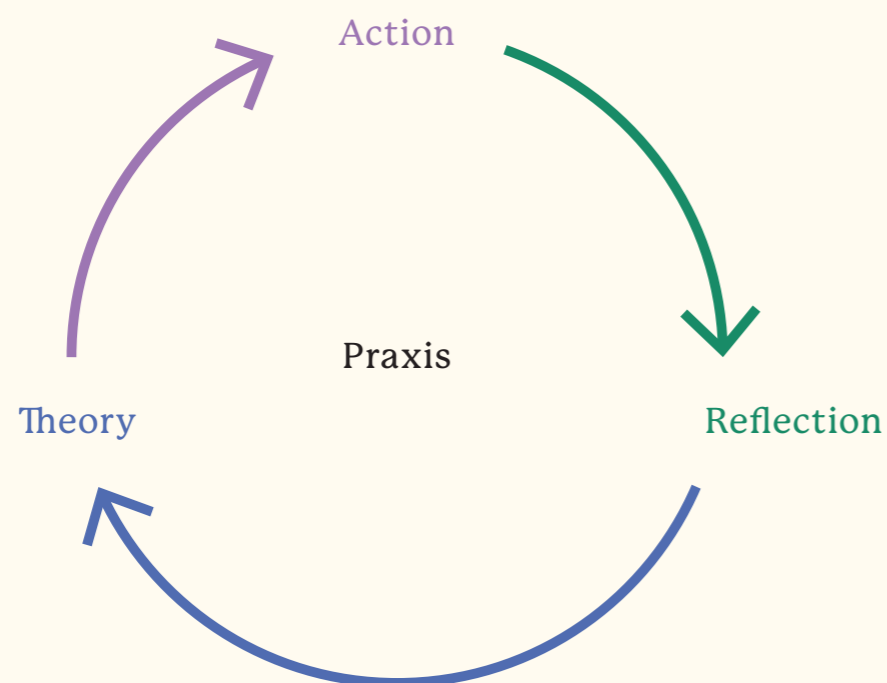
Dialogue and participatory action research are two practices heavily influenced by Freire that are now common in the fields of popular education, critical pedagogy (for example, Theatre of the Oppressed) and eco-pedagogy.

Freire explains that what most people think of as dialogue is really just debate, a zero-sum game in which people compete to deposit ideas into one another or name the world on behalf of others as an end in itself. In dialogue, on the other hand, both parties work together to name their world by exploring their lived experiences to identify common patterns and generate action.

Meanwhile, participatory action research is a community-led process in which people determine solutions to their problems by gathering data from their peers, analysing it, and then taking informed action. It's a model of community organising that builds the capacity and expertise of those on the front lines.

Unfortunately, many progressive movements today are still trapped in the "banking" approach to education, seeing the public as a passive receptacle of their information.

Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: Seabury Press.



Challenge patriarchy as you work

Principles & theories: ↗

Leave no one behind

We are all leaders

Safer space agreement

Case study: ↗

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

Informed dignity of risk

Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

Like other unjust systems of authority and power, patriarchy must be actively challenged in our daily lives and community practice if we are to work alongside under-represented groups in WASH participatory action research projects.

“Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence.”
— Bell Hooks

Patriarchy is a system of unequal power relations that gives men privileges in all areas of our lives – social, economic, institutional, cultural, political, and spiritual – while women and gender diverse people are systemically disadvantaged. Feminism is not about man-hating; it is about transforming the socially constructed and hierarchical ideology of patriarchy. Since patriarchy pervades society, it is no surprise that it pervades social movements as well. So, a commitment to feminist praxis that challenges the toxic impact of patriarchy in participatory action research projects is essential to building safe, accessible, and inclusive WASH projects.

Given the urgency of confronting big WASH issues such as access to safely managed drinking water, safely managed sanitation in homes, eliminating open defecation, access to basic hygiene services (such as soap and water), access to menstrual hygiene products, the intersection of WASH and environmental destruction, patriarchy and sexism within our participatory action research groups often remain unaddressed. Some male allies feel they are not capable of sexism, but simply believing in gender equality does not erase male privilege. If we want to challenge patriarchy, we must understand how our actions and assumptions are influenced by the prevalence of sexism in our consciousness and participatory action research projects.

Transforming gender roles is not about guilt or blame; it is about a lifelong learning process to effectively confront oppression.

Here are two ways in which sexism manifests itself in our WASH projects:

1. Women face an uphill battle to prove their intelligence and commitment as community members actively involved in WASH projects.
2. Water, sanitation and hygiene governance meetings are dominated by male speakers and leaders, while secretarial work, event management, childcare, and the emotional labour of supporting community well-being are largely borne by women. This gendered division of labour is a frequently reproduced patriarchal pattern.

Some ways to create participatory action research projects that are inclusive of women include: a shared division of labour and leadership; encouraging women's voices and leadership in non-tokenising ways; respecting self-identification by using self-identified names and pronouns; making our participatory action research groups safer spaces in which to raise and address issues; and not marginalising women's issues or placing the sole responsibility for inclusion on women.

We must also realise that we do not just want more women's representation; rather, we must actively facilitate and highlight women's own analyses and experiences of safe, accessible, and inclusive water, sanitation, and hygiene. Though patriarchy affects women, it distorts the humanity of people of all genders and reduces our ability to work together to implement water, sanitation, and hygiene projects.

This is an abridged version of a lengthier piece available on the [Colours of Resistance website](#).

Challenge ableism as you work

Principles & theories: ↗

We are all leaders

Leave no one behind

Safer space agreement

Dignity of risk

Case study: ↗

People with disabilities mapping their own WASH journeys

Informed dignity of risk

Like all other unjust and arbitrary systems of authority and power, ableism must be actively challenged in our daily lives and community development practice if we are to work alongside under-represented groups in WASH participatory action research projects.

Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that people with disabilities require 'fixing' and defines people by their disability. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as 'less than,' and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalisations of people with disabilities.

Within WASH participatory action research projects, ableism can look like:

- Lack of compliance with disability rights policies and laws.
- Segregating people with disabilities into 'targeted projects' rather than 'mainstream projects' simply because they are people with disabilities.
- Failing to incorporate accessibility into project plans.
- Organising project meetings / workshops in inaccessible spaces.
- Incorporating the assumption that people with disabilities want or need to be 'fixed' rather than the social, political, and physical environment is disabling.
- Refusing to provide reasonable accommodations in participatory action research projects.

Some ways to create participatory action research projects that are inclusive of people with disabilities include:

- Invite people with disabilities into mainstream water, sanitation and hygiene projects
- Encouraging people with disabilities leadership in non-tokenising ways
- Respecting people with disabilities as whole people – they may also be women, or young people, or elderly, or have diverse genders
- Respecting self-identification by using self-identified names and pronouns
- Making our participatory action research groups safer spaces in which to raise and address issues
- Not marginalizing people with disabilities issues or placing the sole responsibility for inclusion on people with disabilities.

Challenge heteronormativity as you work

Principles & theories: ↗

We are all leaders

Case study: ↗

Informed dignity of risk

Like all other unjust and arbitrary systems of authority and power, heteronormativity must be actively challenged in our daily lives and community development practice if we are to work alongside under-represented groups in WASH participatory action research projects (where safe to do so)

Most people think of heteronormativity as the concept that heterosexuality is the only, or "normal mode" of sexual orientation. Within the aid sector, we are starting to acknowledge that people who are romantically, physical and emotionally attracted to people of the opposite gender, a different gender or the same gender have always existed. That homosexuality and bisexuality are included in the diversity that exists within people and communities everywhere in the world. It is however important to acknowledge that heteronormativity is more than this. It is not only the assumption that a couple is made up of a man and woman (and therefore, a couple and a family always look certain ways) but also that man and women in the relationship always fulfil specific (binary) gender roles. There is men's work and women's work.

Within participatory action research projects, heteronormativity can look like:

- Lack of compliance with human rights policies and laws, including the Yogyakarta Principles
- The assumption that all households, romantic relationships, and families have a man and woman and that all families have a mum and dad.
- That there are specific women's roles and men's roles in WASH and that all WASH programming needs to be connected to these different gendered, binary roles (e.g., working with women around water issues and working with men around sanitation issues with no options for men to work on water, or women to work on sanitation or to do something completely different)
- Adding Sexual and Gender Minorities / LGBTIQ+ / people with diverse SOGIE in a list of vulnerable groups alongside elderly people, young people, ethnic minorities, indigenous people etc. and yet, embedding the ideology of heteronormativity in the project.

Some ways to include people with diverse sexualities, and people who prefer to undertake roles not linked to assumptions of gender include:

- Invite people with diverse sexualities and genders into mainstream WASH projects (where safe)
- Consult or partner with local LGBTQ rights holder organisations
- Support the leadership of people with diverse sexualities or who wish to undertake roles in WASH programming that do not align with gender norms or traditional gender roles.

Challenge cisnormativity as you work

Principles & theories: ↗

We are all leaders

Case study: ↗

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

Informed dignity of risk

Like all other unjust and arbitrary systems of authority and power, cisnormativity must be actively challenged in our daily lives and community development practice if we are to work alongside under-represented groups in WASH participatory action research projects (where safe to do so).

Cisnormativity is the assumption that there are only two genders, and that everyone's gender is the same as the binary gender assigned to them at birth. For example, that everyone assigned female at birth, identifies as female as an adult, and everyone assigned male at birth, identifies as male as an adult. There are many diverse genders outside of the female and male binary and by omitting, by-passing or excluding people with diverse genders, you are reinforcing discrimination and social prejudice.

Within participatory action research WASH projects, cisnormativity can look like:

- Lack of compliance with human rights policies and laws, including the Yogyakarta Principles
- Assuming people's pronouns or honorifics based on their appearance.
- Data collection tools that only have the option of men and women in the gender section
- Assuming people's sex characteristics align with their gender identity

- Making broad binary assumptions about gender and hygiene health needs. For example, that all women menstruate, and all men don't menstruate – this excludes trans women (who don't menstruate) and trans men (who may menstruate).
- Project communications, including reports and research publications that only recognise people with binary genders, and make claims of "all women" or "all men"
- Adding Sexual and Gender Minorities / LGBTIQ+ / people with diverse SOGIE in a list of vulnerable groups alongside elderly people, young people, ethnic minorities, indigenous people etc. and yet, embedding the ideology of cisnormativity in the project.

Some ways to include people with diverse sexualities, and people who prefer to undertake roles not linked to assumptions of gender include:

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We are all leaders

Principles & theories: ↗

Leave no one behind

Activities: ↗

Decisional balance

Problem and solution tree

Analysing the data

Case study: ↗

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

People with disabilities mapping their own WASH journeys

Informed dignity of risk

Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

We often think about leadership as someone having all (or most) of the power and control. Alternatively taking leadership can mean taking initiative on moving a WASH project or task forward, or taking responsibility for recognising what is needed, and stepping up individually or collectively to do that thing.

As PAR facilitators, it is important to foster models of dispersed leadership that promote responsibility, accountability, and effectiveness. If we really want to change the world, and ensure everyone has access to safe, accessible and inclusive WASH, we need more people stepping up to take initiative, not less. The more initiative that PAR participants take in WASH projects, the greater our collective capacity will be. Building collective power is one of the most important challenges of under-represented groups taking leadership and regenerating their communities.

It is important within a participatory action research project to create a culture where everyone invited to step up. This means stepping up in ways that make space for others to step up – where others feel invited to step up and take initiative, too. "Stepping up" can mean actively listening to and learning from others. It can mean taking time to recognise and value many different forms of leadership in the group. And it can mean looking for and nurturing leadership potential in others, who may not feel entitled to step forward uninvited or unsupported.

A culture that values healthy leadership is one that also prizes accountability, in which we are responsible for and accountable to one another. But this focus on accountability must go hand-in-hand with a group culture that values leadership.

Participatory action research is about encouraging community members to step into their full potential and shine as a collective of leaders working together for a better world.

Consensus is a means not an end

Principles & theories: ↗

Safer space agreement

Activities: ↗

Successes and learnings

Decisional balance

Assumptions map

Soft shoe shuffle

Case study: ↗

Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

Consensus decision making is an egalitarian and inclusive method of reaching agreement based in the active participation and consent of community members to collectively make a decision about their WASH project. Consensus decision making focuses on the underlying processes and values as the decision itself. The word consensus has its roots in the Latin word, *consentire* meaning, “to experience or feel together”.

Consensus stands in stark contrast to creating and leading a ‘community development project’ on under-represented communities in global south contexts. Consensus on the other hand is a prefigurative affirmation of a community’s power to organise, co-design and co-implement projects with the principles of direct democracy: horizontal, participatory, inclusive, cooperative, and non-coercive. Perfect for participatory action research WASH projects.

There are five common problems with consensus that can create frustration.

First, that consensus often reproduces majoritarian rule by creating groups of those in agreement versus groups of those in disagreement. This can be particularly problematic if it mirrors local contexts of the disadvantage of under-represented groups based on discrimination and inequality. Contrary to popular belief, consensus does not mean unanimous agreement. This misconception causes us to wrongly view dissent from some stakeholders (including community members from under-represented groups, alternatively, community or organisational stakeholders in positions of power) as a distraction or obstacle and increasing the pressure toward homogenising opinions.

Second, a few voices can dominate the discussion, a problem that tends to perpetuate power imbalances around race, class, gender/s, sexuality, disability, and education level.

Third, there is often a faulty assumption that silence implies consent, which can end up stifling broader discussion and the consideration of alternative proposals.

Fourth, PAR facilitators sometimes exercise overt forms of power-over rather than power-with by steering the conversations, plans and actions based on their own biases.

The fifth challenge with consensus is more fundamental and structural. Ironically, the seemingly benign notion that all voices are equal can hide the uncomfortable truth of systemic inequality. Almost inherently, the consensus process can absolve us of actively examining how power and oppression shape community spaces.

In an effort to address these problems, many communities use modified forms of consensus decision making – for example, prioritising and taking leadership from women, indigenous community members, people with disabilities, people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, expressions and sex characteristics and those most affected by decisions being made; facilitating small break out groups to ensure more engaged participation; encouraging more debate and discussion rather than just asking for people’s opinion once, and actively incorporating anti-oppression principles to prevent harmful and opinions from further alienating – and even harming – historically disadvantaged people and communities.

Consensus can be beautiful and transformative, but only when the structures and processes are meeting the needs and desires of those engaging in it. Otherwise, it can just be as shackling as more conventionally authoritative project design, implementation, and evaluation processes. Remember, consensus is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

This is an abridged version of a lengthier version on [Community Powered Responses](#)

Leave No One Behind

Principles & theories: ↗

We are all leaders

Activities: ↗

Identifying stakeholders and partners

Case study: ↗

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

People with disabilities mapping their own WASH journeys

Informed dignity of risk

Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

Leave No One Behind is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It represents the commitment of UN Member States to eliminate poverty, end discrimination and social exclusion, and reduce the inequalities that leave people without the rights and needs met and their strengths recognised.

Leave No One Behind is not only reaching poor people, but also about opposing discrimination and inequalities by disrupting their root causes. A major cause of people being left behind is persistent forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on gender, dis-ability, sexuality, and ethnicity, which leaves individuals, families and communities excluded and discriminated against – including in development programming.

Leave No One Behind compels us to focus on discrimination and inequalities (often multiple and intersecting) that undermine the agency of people as holders of rights. Many of the barriers’ people face in accessing community development related services, resources and equal opportunities are a result of discriminatory laws, policies and social practices that leave particular groups of people further and further behind.

There is a specific Sustainable Development Goal dedicated to water and sanitation. This is goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

In terms of the inclusion of underrepresented people, as focused within this toolkit, Goal 5 concerns itself with Gender equality. SDG 5 assumes that gender is shorthand for women (and doesn’t acknowledge any people who have diverse genders). Certainly, there is a need to focus on ensuring both gender equality and the rights of women are met in all areas of aid including WASH.

People with disabilities are explicitly included in the Sustainable Development Goals for the first time (in contrast to the Millennium Development Goals). Disability is referenced in various parts of the SDGs related to education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the SDGs. There is a need for a sustained focus to include people with disabilities in all WASH programmes and projects.

The Sustainable Development Goals do not explicitly include people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, expressions or sex characteristics, however, it is understood that they apply to everyone, everywhere and will ‘leave no one behind’. So, in this case, it is important for WASH practitioners and organisations, to include people with diverse people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, expressions or sex characteristics in WASH projects and programs where safe – to ensure we don’t leave anyone behind.

The UN approach to leaving no one behind is set out in the [Shared Framework on Leaving No One Behind: Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development](#).

For more information, go to sdgs.un.org/goals

Dignity of risk

Case study: Informed dignity of risk

Dignity of risk is the principle of allowing an individual or community the dignity afforded by risk-taking, with subsequent enhancement of personal growth and quality of life. First used by [Robert Perske in 1972](#), the term dignity of risk was used in relation to people living with disabilities, but can be expanded within development projects with under-represented communities and people. The term in essence connects to people being able to choose the level of risk that they engage in. It may be the risk of a successful project, or it may be connected to the level of risk specific people and communities face due to their gender, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, class etc.

Within all participatory action research projects, risk assessments should be completed with the community members you are working alongside, and the risk mitigation strategies should include strategies that participants identify.

There are many positives to using a dignity of risk approach, including:

- Positive risk-taking; greater personal autonomy
- Improves social interaction
- Participate in community development programs that align with their values and personality
- Self-determination and feelings of worth.

A dignity of risk approach also supports the localisation agenda of the aid sector.

7 Principles that underpin a ‘strengths based approach’

Principles & theories:

Creating a safety plan

Safer space agreement

Using a trauma informed approach

There is surprisingly little literature on strengths-based approaches to group work. Most of the available literature focuses on groups as part of a broader strengths-based approach to a particular issue or target group, rather than a strengths-based approach to working with groups.

The following are seven principles that underpin a strengths-based approach to group work.

- Focus on strengths, abilities & potential rather than problems, deficits & pathologies. This nearly goes without saying: it is the basis of strengths-based approaches.
- Recognise the strengths and expertise of participants. Everyone is a teacher and a learner. In strengths-based groups, everyone has something to contribute, and everyone can learn. Rather than being the expert, a facilitator's role is to recognise the expertise of participants and be open to learning as well.
- Actively involve participants in decisions about the programmes and projects they are to be involved in. Strengths-based groups are unlikely to run to a set agenda with a pre-determined outcome and instead are iterative. Because we recognise the strengths and expertise of participants, the group often plays an important role in shaping what happens.
- Focus on the whole person and recognise their social context. Rather than focusing on ‘deficits’ strengths-based groups focus on the whole person. People have a range of skills and knowledges based on their multifaceted identities and experiences.
- Use language that is strengths-based, non-judgemental, inclusive and future oriented. Clearly our language must be consistent with a strengths-based approach. In particular, when describing people and groups (under-represented or excluded rather than vulnerable) or when asking questions, we need to ask strengths-based questions that focus on the future rather than focus on the problem.
- Encourage experiences where group members can be successful. Working in groups can provide people with a range of opportunities to be successful. By creating supportive environments, participants can try new skills, activities, or behaviours without being ridiculed or reinforce assumptions of helplessness. Opportunities can include acknowledging insights and experience within the group, encouraging participants to take on new roles in the group or creating more complex hands-on activities.
- Recognise complexity and have a commitment to social justice. Many under-represented or excluded communities or groups face a range of complex structural, political, institutional, economic, and representational challenges that cannot be simply addressed by focusing on people's strengths. A major criticism of strengths-based practice is that it is closely aligned with neoliberal notions of individual responsibility and self-help and that it ignores structural inequalities. We need to recognise that strengths-based practice is not the answer to everything, and we need to address the broader issues that impact on under-represented communities and individuals.

Source: communitypoweredresponses.com used with permission.

Using a trauma informed approach

Principles & theories:

Creating a safety plan

Safer space agreement

7 Principles that underpin a 'strengths based approach'

Trauma informed practices acknowledges the impact trauma has on communities and strives to mitigate those effects. Many under-represented communities experience traumas such as poverty, sexual and gender-based violence, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and racism. These traumatic experiences can prevent people from building trust within their communities or participating in their communities. Using trauma informed tools and practices, helps eliminate some of those barriers by fostering connections between community members and supporting community resilience.

Individual Strategies

- Express understanding and acceptance of individual experiences and circumstances, even if they pose challenges to or complicate community-regenerating activities.
- Have multiple intentional interactions with individuals and families to engage them in a community-regenerative and ensure that these interactions are genuine and focused on building relationships and trust.
- Provide compensation for their time, energy, effort and work with PAR projects, and as community researchers. Not only is this fair and just, it supports people to feel a stronger sense of accomplishment or self-efficacy.
- Set realistic expectations and don't overpromise so that PAR participants will not feel disillusioned or re-traumatized if their commitment to a process fails to produce specific results or benefits.
- Meet community members where they are, eliminate barriers to participation, and make activities open, inclusive, accessible, and unthreatening.
- Provide opportunities for joy, physical activity, and fun.
- Provide community participants with opportunities to experience self-determination and a sense of accomplishment by using the principles, theories and frameworks in this toolkit.

Interpersonal Strategies

- Create safer spaces that are welcoming and accepting so that community participants can have positive experiences with other PAR participants and their fellow community members.
- Provide opportunities for community participants to share personal feelings, experiences, and stories in a supportive, non-judgmental context.
- Model healthy and respectful behaviours to help establish new norms and expectations for community interactions.

Being "trauma informed" or "trauma aware" means that we acknowledge that trauma is very common and can have a serious impact on people's lives. Trauma informed practices aren't judgmental (e.g., he/she/they are "good" or "bad" community members) and instead understand that all people need to feel safe and heard for them to make any significant personal changes. An integral part of Being Trauma Aware is using a strengths-based practice.

The Trauma Informed Community Building model described the following strategies:

Interpersonal Strategies (cont)

- Promote peer-to-peer strategies that build social capital and cohesion, and that position PAR participants to play important roles in the community-regenerating process, including social connectors, information providers, grassroots organisers, group facilitators, or cross-cultural liaisons, allies, and advocates.
- Integrate relaxation, mindfulness, and gratitude exercises into programs.
- Help PAR participants learn consensus decision making and conflict-management skills and build a stronger sense of mutual accountability and interdependence toward one another.

Community Strategies

- Follow the PAR principals that create visible and accessible opportunities for participation. Support PAR participants to be involved in decision-making and to experience the tangible benefits or results of positive community change.
- Ensure that communication is frequent, consistent, and dependable to build awareness of community-building opportunities and outcomes.
- Cultivate community leaders by building the knowledge, skills, and leadership capacities of PAR participants, and by creating formal and informal leadership opportunities for under-represented people with the WASH projects.
- Create opportunities for relationship-building among broader community members from different income levels and cultural backgrounds.
- Expand WASH programs incrementally (where possible) and build on past successes to install ownership and cultivate a long-term commitment to sustaining community-building programs.

Systems Strategies

- Ensure that community-building WASH work reflects the needs, concerns, priorities, and perspectives of all community members, and elevate under-represented community voices throughout the process.
- Increase the knowledge, skill, and capacity of local leaders, organizers, facilitators, and service providers to recognize trauma and utilise trauma-informed practices.
- Communicate honestly and transparently and invite community feedback even if it's critical.
- With your PAR group, co-develop and co-implement a long-term vision and community-wide strategy for addressing trauma, rebuilding relationships, and advancing justice, equity, healing, and health in the community.
- Support your PAR group to build strategic partnerships with trauma-informed partners, service providers, and funders; clearly define partnership roles, responsibilities, and expectations; and hold partners accountable to results.
- Provide opportunities and support for outside organizations to engage PAR participants and community members in authentic ways.

Creating a safety plan

Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind and have low vision, they can record their safety plans on audio notes on their phone, or use an audio recorder, and send them audio links they can play when they feel the need to listen to their safety plan.

A safety plan is to support participants when they have intense emotions linked to trauma they have experienced in the past. Especially when the PAR participants are unable to seek support from trauma informed professionals. There may be many reasons why people can't access professional psychological support, for example, due to poverty or due to lack of professionals in the geographic area. For some PAR participants, there may not be professionals that they feel safe with due to a lack of shared identities or experiences. For example, the inability to find a trauma informed professional who is also a woman, or has a disability, or has a diverse sexual orientation or gender identity. In some countries and regions, there may be legal and social barriers to finding a trauma informed specialist who supports people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. By attempting to do so, could cause harm by 'outing' the diverse SOGIE community group or PAR participants. Always consult with local LGBT RHO's when looking for trauma Informed practitioners to work with diverse SOGIE communities, as they can refer you if safe to do so.

To support participants to create a safety plan, develop a worksheet for participants with the follow questions:

- How do you know when you are so upset that you have lost control of your feelings? (For example, it may be that you start to shake, or sweat or feel dizzy)
- What do you do when your emotions get too intense?
- What has helped you in the past when you feel this way?
- What will be your plan for coping in a safe way when you become extremely angry or upset?

These things should be in PAR participants safety plans.

1. Something the PAR participant does which requires little or no outside assistance – they can do it by themselves (for example, take two deep breaths, count backwards from 10 to 1, look at photos of someone or something that they care about on their phone)
2. The last two things do require another person, place, or thing to complete (for example, remove themselves from the space, go get some fresh air, get a glass of water, call a trusted friend)

All these activities are centred on the PAR participant calming down when they feel themselves becoming emotionally charged and like they might behave in a way that is out of their control or healthy norm. This can be in moments of anger, irritation, or annoyance...but can also be in moments of confusion, sadness, and fear. People experience a wide range of emotions that can push us to act out on instinct and without thinking. The safety plan helps participants to be closer to centred and calm even when it is challenging.

Using a trauma informed approach – or working with people and communities who have experienced trauma requires facilitators to be adequately trained in Trauma Informed Approaches and ensure that community members have adequate support where safe.

Safer space agreement

Principles & theories:

Using a trauma informed approach

Case study:

Informed dignity of risk

Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind or have low vision, the safer space agreement can be written in braille for those who can read braille.

For those who have a reading app on their phone or computer, you can type the safer space agreement and send it to the participants.

Lastly, a voice recording of the safer space agreement can be sent to participants phones if they have smart phones.

Everyone, regardless of social status has equal opportunity of participation, and all members of the PAR group need to ensure that in all processes of working together equal opportunity happens.

Community participants have the right to a safer space where they feel their contributions have worth and are comfortable to share their needs, assert their boundaries, and develop their agency.

How we create, implement, and ensure safer spaces

Group guidelines/community agreements /safer space policies will be created by and for group members sharing PAR workshop spaces and associated gatherings.

PAR guidelines/community agreements are to be reviewed at the beginning of workshops and meetings each time a new person has joined.

Group guidelines/community agreements are working documents in continuous development and will be reviewed at every gathering.

Suggestions for group guidelines are:

- Treat others the way they want to be treated
- Always have check-ins
- API – Assume Positive Intent – not everyone comes in with the same set of experiences and knowledge, so assume that people have good intent. Please have positive intent yourself and be accountable for the impact of your actions and words as well.
- Confidentiality – share lessons learned; names and identifiers stay
- No shaming and/or belittling each other and ourselves
- Use "I" statements – speak from your own experiences rather than generalising

Group members are accountable to each other and the community at large, and are responsible for direct and open communication, transparency, and how we share and distribute power.

- Self-care: give care to ourselves, however that may be
 - Take breaks from meetings /organising if needed
 - Pass on/delegate responsibilities if needed
 - Saying yes and no when we mean it
 - Asserting healthy boundaries
- All spaces shared by members (i.e., meetings, events) must be as physically and socially accessible as possible
 - Wheelchair accessible entrances, washrooms, seating
 - If it is usual to take shoes off at the door, ensure it is not in the doorway, so the doors are always accessible
 - Sign language interpretation and /or live captioning
 - Hearing language interpretation
 - Childcare available onsite
 - As identified and agreed upon by the PAR group

This is not an exhaustive agreement template and is meant to serve as a sample, suggestion, and/or steppingstone for a more robust, sustainable, and relevant safer space agreement developed by the PAR participants.

Chapter 03

Identifying the WASH issue

29

WASH cards

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed
We are all leaders

Case study: ↗

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind or have low vision, describe the images, and ask the PAR participants which category the cards belong. Document though audio, the results for the participants to listen back to.

Purpose: To understand the different types of water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Step 1: Invite the PAR participants to sit in a circle and spread out the WASH cards, and ask the PAR participants to describe the different activities illustrated on the cards, and identify if the cards represent water, sanitation and hygiene.

Step 2: On one flipchart, write 'water' at the top of the page. On the second flipchart, write 'sanitation' at the top of the page. On the third flipchart, write 'hygiene' at the top.

Step 3: Invite the PAR participants to place the cards on the relevant flipchart, acknowledging that some cards may be relevant for more than one flipchart.

Step 4: Invite the PAR participants to draw or write additional WASH related activities that have not been captured in the existing images. Add these to the relevant flipcharts.

Step 5: Discuss the different water, sanitation and hygiene actions and ask if any of the WASH issues / challenges are a priority for the PAR group. The conversation and outcomes can feed into the participatory action research project goals and objectives if identified as a priority for the PAR group.



Water clock

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed
We are all leaders

Case study: ↗

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind or have low vision, use rope, string, or other tactile materials, and stick to the outline of the clocks. To document the water activities, type braille on sticky notes.

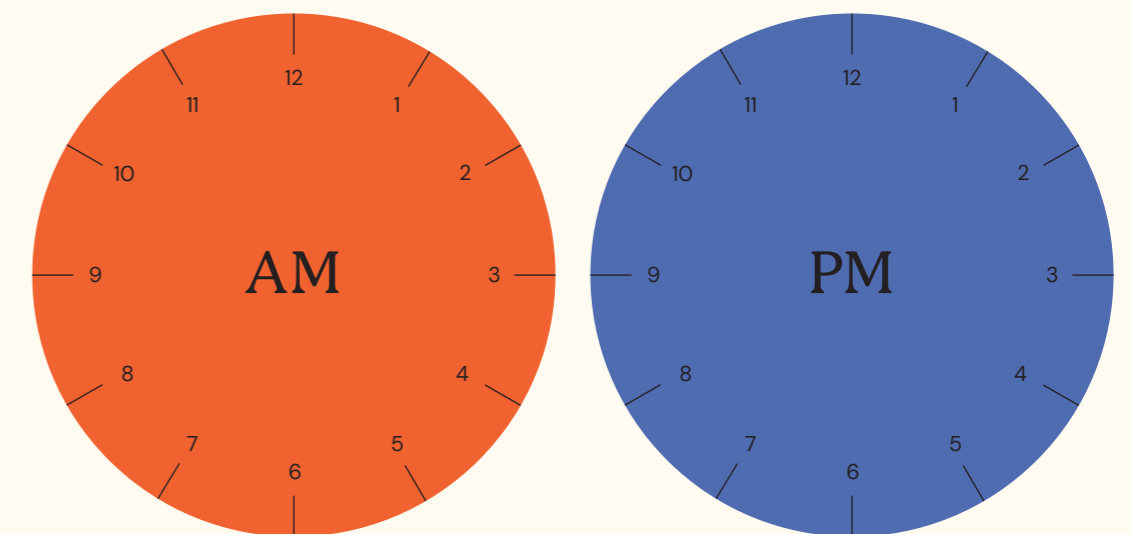
Purpose: To map the daily usage of using water in the household and identify the ways the PAR participants use water.

Step 1: Create two 12-hour clocks on flip chart paper with hourly time markers. One for am and one for pm.

Step 2: Invite the PAR participants to write or draw the different water related activities they engage on the am clock, and then the pm clock.

Step 3: Review the result by looking for trends or patterns in the clock.

Step 4: Discuss the different uses of water and ask if this is a priority for the PAR group. The conversation and outcomes can feed into the participatory action research project goals and objectives if identified as a priority for the PAR group.



Timeline

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed

We are all leaders

Case study: ↗

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

Purpose: To learn from WASH related change that has happened in the past and imagine potential WASH changes in the future through developing a timeline

This timeline activity helps to communicate stories of change and highlight WASH changes within a community in chronological order. It can be used to inspire PAR participants to aim for further WASH changes in their communities.

There are many examples of ways timelines can be used in the WASH participatory action research projects. Timelines can:

- Provide an overview of WASH related events
- Highlight critical WASH points in time
- Detail a WASH change agenda
- Track progress of WASH changes happening in a specific community or region.

Step 1: Ask the PAR participants to break up into small groups of 6–8. These groups may be based on where people live, or other shared characteristics.

Step 2: Share flipchart paper with each group and ask one person from each group to draw a horizontal line through the middle of the flipchart paper.

Step 3: In the middle of the flipchart paper, ask participants to draw a mark in the middle to indicate 'now'. It may be a circle or x or something else.

Step 4: PAR participants are now asked to think about any WASH related events that have happened in the past. It could be community meetings to discuss WASH related issues. It could be the building of new WASH resources. (Dam, water tank, rubbish refuse facility, etc)

Step 5: Ask PAR participants to reflect on those changes. What circumstances led to those changes? Was the community involved? If the PAR participants don't know the answers to these questions, then who can they ask? What community research can happen to answer these questions? Which stakeholders can help with this research?

Step 6: Considering the WASH events / changes that have happened in the past, it is now time to consider the WASH related changes / events the PAR group wants to see in the future. Ask PAR participants to write on sticky notes events or changes they want to see in the future. Place them on the flipchart considering how far into the future these imagined events or changes will be. 6 months? One or two or three years? (**Tip:** reflect on SMART goals)

Step 7: Once the timeline is complete, consider how this may fit in with the WASH goals, objectives or actions. How might this activity connect with the problem and solution tree?

Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind or have low vision, you can make the timeline tactile. Use ropes or string to outline an existing map. For specific WASH related places, you can use pre-cut out shapes for the participants to stick on the map. Shapes may represent specific resources or places such as a circle to represent wells, a rectangle to represent public toilets, or building shapes to represent government departments related to WASH. You can use sticky notes to write in braille with a braille slate and stylus. Local disability schools and disability rights holder organisations may be able to help with a braille translator.

For who have reading and writing challenges, you can ask them to draw small pictures / symbols instead of writing the core problem, root causes and outcomes.

For people who are deaf, having a sign interpreter present will help you communicate.

Community mapping

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed

We are all leaders

Activities: ↗

WASH cards

Timeline

Case study: ↗

People with disabilities mapping their own WASH journey

Purpose: In this activity, PAR participants can,
 1. Reflect on who is in the local community.
 2. Reflect on what resources are in local community
 3. Reflect on where particular WASH resources should be in the local community.

Step 1: Observe the community. PAR participants may want to walk around the community, take photos or draw pictures of landmarks and places of interest.

Step 2: Create your community map.

Step 3: Decide how to make a map that represents the physical community, town or village, and gather the materials. Options include draw or print a map. Download a map from the internet, or draw a map on the ground with chalk.

Step 4: Ask PAR participants to brainstorm community assets.

Consider human assets:

- Highlight major streets, streetlights, monuments
- Parks and other community spaces
- Places of worship
- Hospitals or medical clinics
- Government offices and places of decision-making power.

Consider environmental assets:

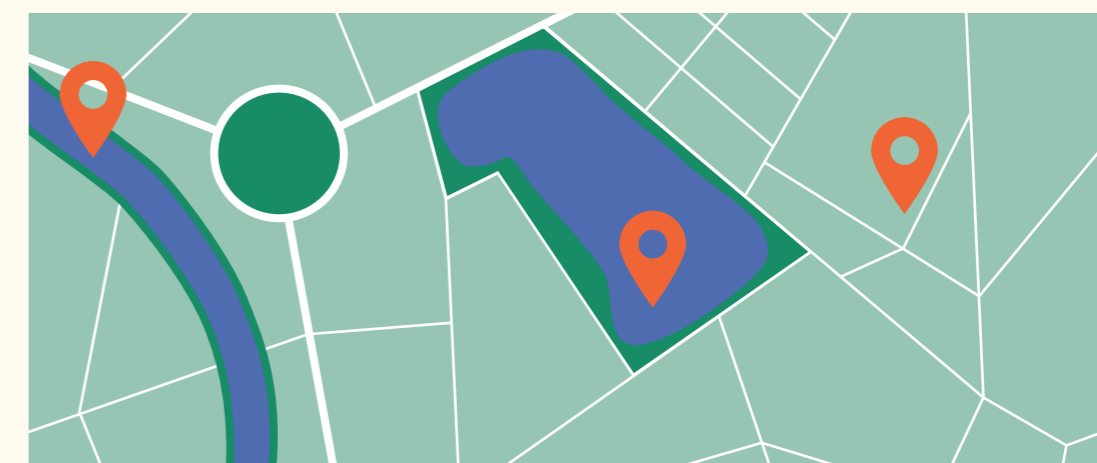
- Bodies of water
- Recycling centres, landfill, waste management
- Water facilities
- Power sources (coal, nuclear, wind, solar, geothermal power plants)
- Environmental places (watersheds, reservoirs, wetlands)

Step 5: Once you've drawn your map, use colours or stickers to mark community assets you have brainstormed.

Depending on your PAR WASH goals, you may want to draw where all the public toilets are, or the wells, water tanks or river tributaries for example. Do any of the marked features above serve more than just one WASH category? For example, toilets may always have water taps, and can be used to identify latrines and water tanks.

Step 4: Reflect on your map and consider if the WASH resources are meeting the needs of the community. If not, what needs to change? Should these changes be incorporated in the PAR project planning?

Variations: This activity can also be used to help PAR participants to identify the different stakeholders in a community.



Identifying the WASH issue

Chapter 04

Project planning tools

35

Setting goals, objectives, and actions

Principles & theories: ↗
Pedagogy of the oppressed
We are all leaders

Activities: ↗
Action template
Decisional balance
Assumptions map
Identifying stakeholders and partners
Problem and solution tree

All participatory action research projects need to have a clear aim of what you are trying to achieve (goals), and how you will achieve it (objectives and actions). Setting goals and actions will enable achievements, challenges, and outcomes to be identified and measured throughout the project.

It is important to remember that the goals of the project should not change, however, there are instances where the objectives change due to information and experiences (both positive and negative) throughout the participatory action research cycles.

Goals

The goals are a broad statement for what the project is trying to achieve, while the objectives describe the ways in which you plan to achieve your goal.

Goal: (example) Provide a sanitation / waste service so people don't throw their household rubbish in the river.

Question: What is the overall WASH goal for this project? (No more than two sentences. There can be more than one goal)

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Goal 4: _____

Smart Objectives

Objectives should be 'SMART' – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. This ensures they are clearly thought out and have characteristics allowing them to be easily assessed to determine whether they were achieved or not.

Actions are an integral part of the PAR method, must be agreed and undertaken by the community participants, and feed into the objective, which feed into the goal(s). It is important that there is a clear relationship between the goals, objectives, and actions.

Objectives describe the change you are hoping to bring about in the timeline of the WASH project.

Cross checking like the example below will help you make sure your objectives are "SMART".

Develop SMART objectives: Use the table to work through objectives to ensure they are 'SMART'

Objective 1: _____

S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Achievable
R	Realistic
T	Timely

Principles & theories: ↗
Pedagogy of the oppressed
We are all leaders

Activities: ↗
Goals
Decisional balance
Assumptions map
Identifying stakeholders and partners
Problem and solution tree

Action template

Actions are the types of research activities which address the WASH projects objectives. It is important for the PAR group to be clear about how these actions address the PAR groups objectives. It is important to be clear about how these actions fit with the change you are aiming for; remember to consider whether they fit with your objectives and goals.

Examples of actions can include:

- Undertaking a photovoice exercise to document the waste from individual households and how they currently dispose of it

Goal: Provide a sanitation / waste service so people don't throw their household rubbish in the river.

Objective: To develop a community sanitation service available to all households by December 2025.

	What	When	How	Who
Action 1				
Action 2				

It is important to remember that the actions can be as creative and innovative as is possible to imagine. There are no right or wrong types of actions, however it is important that they are accessible and achievable for the PAR participants and relate to the goal(s) and objectives.

- Community mapping of existing stakeholders who are invested in sanitation / waste services
- Consulting with the community about their sanitation / waste needs
- Developing and implementing a survey to understand how the community will use a sanitation / waste service to dispose of their household rubbish
- Developing and distributing sanitation / household waste service information using flyers, videos, social media about alternatives to existing household rubbish behaviours

Depending on the learnings from the actions undertaken in each PAR cycle, actions should be iterative and change with each PAR cycle. This is the cornerstone of the PAR methodology. As mentioned in explanation of the PAR methodology, this is a iterative research process, and the actions of each PAR cycle are based on the learnings of implementing the actions from the previous cycle.

Decisional balance

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed
We are all leaders

Activities: ↗

Goals
SMART objectives
Action template
Problem and solution tree

Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind or have low vision, you can make the diagram tactile by placing tape or sticking string on the paper rather than lines. You can use sticky notes to write in braille with a braille slate and stylus. Local disability schools and organisations of persons with disabilities may be able to help with a braille printer.

For who have reading and writing challenges, you can ask them to draw small pictures / symbols instead of writing words.

For people who are deaf, having a sign interpreter present will help you communicate.

Purpose: The tool can help the group decide on the suitability of each action.

You can work through this tool within one or several groups within the larger group, identify the pros and cons of addressing your given water, sanitation and hygiene goals, objectives and actions and help justify the action(s) your PAR group decides to take.

Complete the Decisional Balance tool for your identified issue to help determine if the action is justified.

Pros of change	Cons of change
Pros of not changing	Cons of not changing

Soft shoe shuffle

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed
We are all leaders

Activities: ↗

Decisional balance
Assumptions map
Check-in and check-out

Case study: ↗

Informed dignity of risk

Inclusion tip:

For people who have mobility challenges, allocated everyone cards with three different colours. A red card for disagreement, a blue card for neither agree or disagree, and a green card for agreement. When a PAR participant voices their view, the group lays down their coloured cards depending on their agreement or disagreement. When there is a majority of green cards, then the majority has spoken. Then follow step 7.

Purpose: To have a conversation and vote with your feet.

Step 1: Invite the PAR participants to stand in a circle.

Step 2: Clearly share the WASH issue, dilemma, or decision that the group is struggling with.

Step 3: Invite one participant to take a step forward and break the circle and make a certain statement about the dilemma or issue.

Step 4: Invite the whole group to show their agreement by standing close to the person with the statement, or disagreement by moving away from the person with the statement. The closer to the person indicates highly agree, and the further away indicates highly disagree.

Step 5: Invite more PAR participants to share their agreement or disagreement or caveats. As more people step forward to offer their views, group members shuffle to join whomever they agree with. As they do, they can offer their own addition to the views. If someone doesn't agree with any position presented, they can move to an unclaimed area of the room and state their own view. Again, people can shuffle over to join them if they agree.

Step 6: When there is a change in energy and people are very engaged, they may also tend to stop shuffling and continue the conversation standing. The PAR facilitator is required to use their discretion. If the conversation is flowing and all seem to be involved insisting on the shuffling may not be the best thing to do.

Step 7: When the group seems on the point of making a decision and there is a clear majority, move into a decision and ask the people in the minority position what they need to move into agreeing with the larger group. This gives greater insight, and voice to the needs and wants of the few, which may be from typically under-represented groups. Once these last views have been voiced, people can vote with their hands on the WASH dilemma or issue.

This exercise has been adapted from The Soft Shoe Shuffle by Deep Democracy.

lewisdeepdemocracy.com

Assumptions map

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed
We are all leaders

Activities: ↗

Decisional balance
Soft shoe shuffle
Check-in and check-out

Case study: ↗

People with disabilities mapping their own WASH journeys
Informed dignity of risk

Purpose: To validate any assumptions of the WASH goals, objectives of actions the PAR group has. This activity can be used as part of group consensus process. In essence, assumption mapping is a method to get actionable takeaways so that PAR group can successfully move their WASH goals, objectives or actions forward.

Assumptions are things we believe to be true, with little to no proof of them being true. A part of participatory action research is organising and validating the assumptions before moving onto the next steps.

Step 1: Create an assumptions map on a flipchart. The map has one vertical line and one horizontal line. At the top of the vertical line is the word 'Risky'. At the bottom of the vertical line are the words, 'Less Risky'. To the right of the horizontal line is the phrase, 'Difficult to validate'. To the left of the diagram is the phrase, 'Easy to validate'.

Step 2: Agree on the assumptions the PAR group are focusing on in this activity. Perhaps it is about the WASH goal of the PAR project (For example: provide a sanitation / waste service so people don't throw their household rubbish in the river). Perhaps the PAR group want to validate their assumptions of risk concerning their SMART WASH objectives (For example: develop a community sanitation service available to all households by December 2025.) Or perhaps the PAR group want to validate their assumptions about risk concerning a particular PAR research action. (For example, how risky it is to take photos documenting people throwing rubbish in the river)

Step 3: The vertical axis outlines the riskiness. Ask the PAR participants the question: "if this assumption is incorrect, how risky will the assumption be to the success of the PAR goal/objectives/ action?" (Insert as appropriate). Ask the PAR participants to write those assumptions on sticky-notes and place those assumptions on the top of the axis, which captures "risky" assumptions. Any assumptions that are not risky to your PAR groups WASH goals, objectives or action success are placed at the bottom axis.

Step 4: Across the horizontal axis, the left side is assumptions that are "difficult to validate", these are assumptions that will be challenging to prove true. The right side of the horizontal axis is the "easy to validate" assumptions. Ask the PAR participants to place the goal/objectives/action across the axis depending on how difficult or easy to validate the assumptions.

Step 5: PAR participants are to reflect on the assumptions map. What is risky and difficult to validate? What is easy to validate and is a less risky assumption? What is difficult to validate but less risky? What actions do the PAR community members want to decide upon?

Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind or have low vision, you can make the diagram tactile by placing tape or sticking string on the paper rather than lines. You can use sticky notes to write in braille with a braille slate and stylus. Local disability schools and disability rights holder organisations may be able to help with a braille printer.

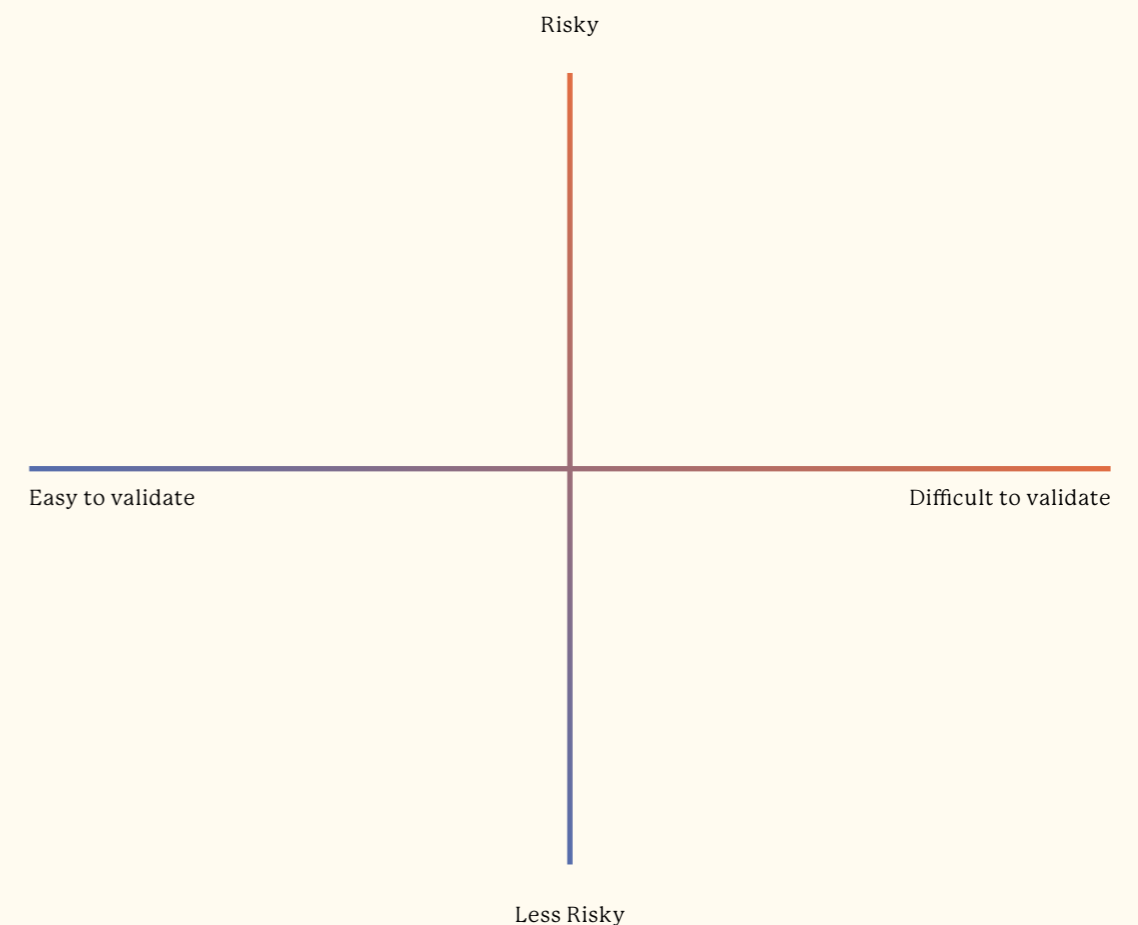
For people who have challenges writing, you can ask them to draw small pictures / symbols instead of writing words. For people who are deaf, having a sign interpreter present will help you communicate

Tip: Remember, these categories are subjective, and one assumption can be placed in multiple different quadrants. If this is the case, consider democratic processes that support consensus about how risky or not the assumption is.

Following the session, collect all the sticky notes and record all the notes in a document.

Take the sticky notes from the "easy to validate & risky assumptions" quadrant and create discussion questions for the groups next research action step within the PAR process. This way, the PAR group will be able to test out their assumptions within their communities to see if the pursuing.

Variations: PAR participants may want to use this diagram to identify the key stakeholders that would be valuable to map out assumptions with. You'll be gathering stakeholders for 60-90 minutes. The group will brainstorm different assumptions.



Chapter 05

Stakeholders & partners

43

Identifying stakeholders and partners

Who are community stakeholders? They are generally defined as people, groups, organisations or businesses that have interest or concern in the community. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the community's actions, objectives and policies. Some examples of key

community stakeholders are residents, community groups, civil society organisations, government workers (and the agencies they represent), business owners, village leaders, and other groups from which the community relies on.

Once you have identified the importance and the influence that your stakeholders have over the WASH goals, objectives and actions, you can use an influence / interest grid to visually organise stakeholders according to their influence (power) and how much interest they are in the project (for those most impacted by a project, has the highest interest).

With this analysis, the PAR participants can better understand how influential the stakeholders will be on the WASH project, and then decide different action strategies.

Completing a stakeholder analysis

Principles & theories: ↑
 Pedagogy of the oppressed
 We are all leaders
 Safer space agreement

Activities: ↑
 Spectrum of allies

A Stakeholder Analysis will help with:

- Identifying the stakeholders for the PAR project, including both potential supporters and blockers of the project.
- Identifying possible obstacles to the PAR project implementation.
- Grouping stakeholders by their level of influence, what is important to them, and/or what they could contribute to the process.
- Understanding how you can engage stakeholders to foster local ownership and create a sustainable WASH project.

Step 1: Brainstorm stakeholder groups. (PAR participants may want to refer to exercises such as the community mapping to help them visualise different stakeholders in the community)

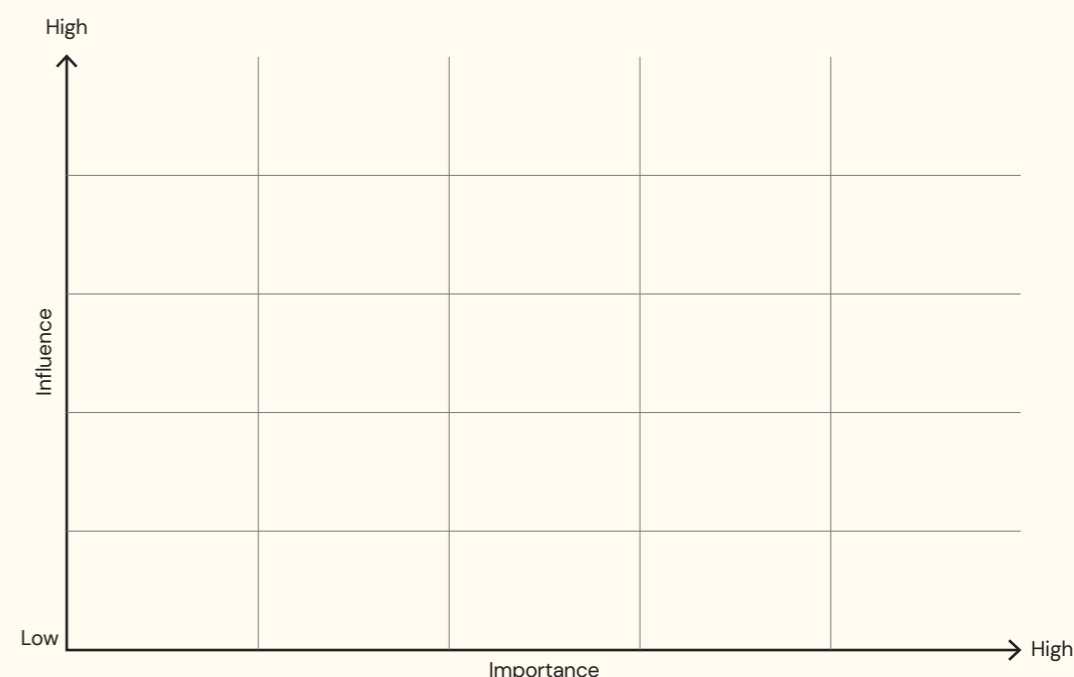
Step 2: Identifying categories of stakeholders and understand why they are important. Consider how interested they might be in a WASH project, and if that interest is positive or negative.

Stakeholder	Interest in Project	Positive or negative interest

Step 3: Priorities the stakeholders. Next the PAR participants need to rate the stakeholders between 1(lowest) and 5 (highest) in relation to their importance and influence. Importance is the priority given to satisfying the needs and interest of each stakeholder. Influence is the degree of power which the stakeholder has over the success of the WASH goals, objectives and actions.

It is not uncommon that the most important stakeholders may have little influence on the PAR projects success. Having a good understanding between those that are the most impacted by a WASH project, and those who have the most influence over a WASH project helps the PAR participants to understand the different power dynamics at play in a community, and where they need to focus their attention the most.

Stakeholder	Importance 1-5	Justification	Influence 1-5	Justification



Step 4: Understanding your key stakeholder. Once PAR participants have collected all the necessary information, they can put the information together into a final Stakeholder Analysis that connects different stakeholders with the WASH PAR project.

while others will be groups or individuals PAR participants may need to reach out to.

This final step will allow the PAR participants to identify potential risks, understand how the PAR project group are going to approach key stakeholders for support and decide which of the PAR participants is responsible for looking after each stakeholder.

Some of your stakeholders will be people or organisations the PAR participants have already established relationships with,

Stakeholder	Interest in project	Likely impact upon success	What do they contribute?	Potential risks	Approach to building a relationship with the stakeholder	Who is responsible?

Spectrum of allies

Principles & theories:

Pedagogy of the oppressed
 We are all leaders
 Safer space agreement

Activities:

Identifying stakeholders and partners

Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind or have low vision you can make the diagram tactile by placing tape or rope / string on the paper rather than lines. You can use sticky notes to write in braille with a braille slate and stylus. Local disability schools and disability rights holder organisations may be able to help with a braille printing.

For who have reading and writing challenges, you can ask them to draw small pictures / symbols instead of writing words. For people who are deaf, having a sign interpreter present will help you communicate.

Purpose: Locate allies and opponents along a spectrum from active opposition to active allies in order increase your own support, as well as shift support out from under your opponent.

Step 1: Draw a semicircle with wedges. The wedges closest to either end are the active allies and opponents, next in are passive allies. The group in the middle are neutral.

Step 2: Ask the PAR group to write down on sticky notes which stakeholders are most likely to be the most supportive least supportive, or neutral. As PAR participants identify groups and their location on the spectrum use the sticky notes to place them into the 'pie'. Encourage discussion and reflection. Aim for specificity.

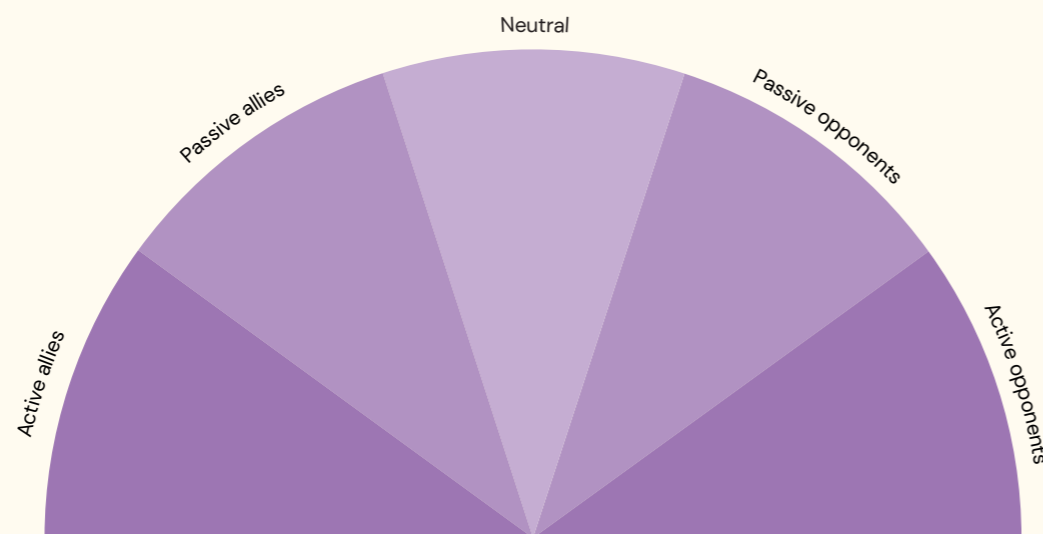
Step 3: Identify why people are neutral and discuss if there are ways to move them toward becoming allies. Also note where people may already have moved from one wedge to another and discuss why.

Step 4: Give the good news: in most social change campaigns, it is not necessary to win the opponent to your point of view, even if the powerholders are the opponent. It is only necessary to move some or all of the pie wedges one step in your direction. If we shift each wedge one step, we are likely to be successful in our WASH projects, even if the active opponents don't budge.

As the group develops its strategy and relevant tactics to ensure a successful WASH project, encourage the PAR participants to identify which wedge they are addressing and how they can move people in their direction. In making choices about who to reach out to, ask:

- Which groups do we have some access to, or credibility with?
- Which groups are not being reached?
- Given our group's purpose, which groups are we most suited to persuade?

Adapted from training for change: trainingforchange.org/training_tools/spectrum-of-allies/



Chapter 06

Planning and implementation

49

Problem tree & solution tree

Principles & theories:

Pedagogy of the oppressed

Activities:

- WASH cards
- Water clock
- Timeline
- Community mapping
- Successes and learnings
- Goals
- SMART objectives
- The iceberg

Case study:

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue
 People with disabilities mapping their own journeys.

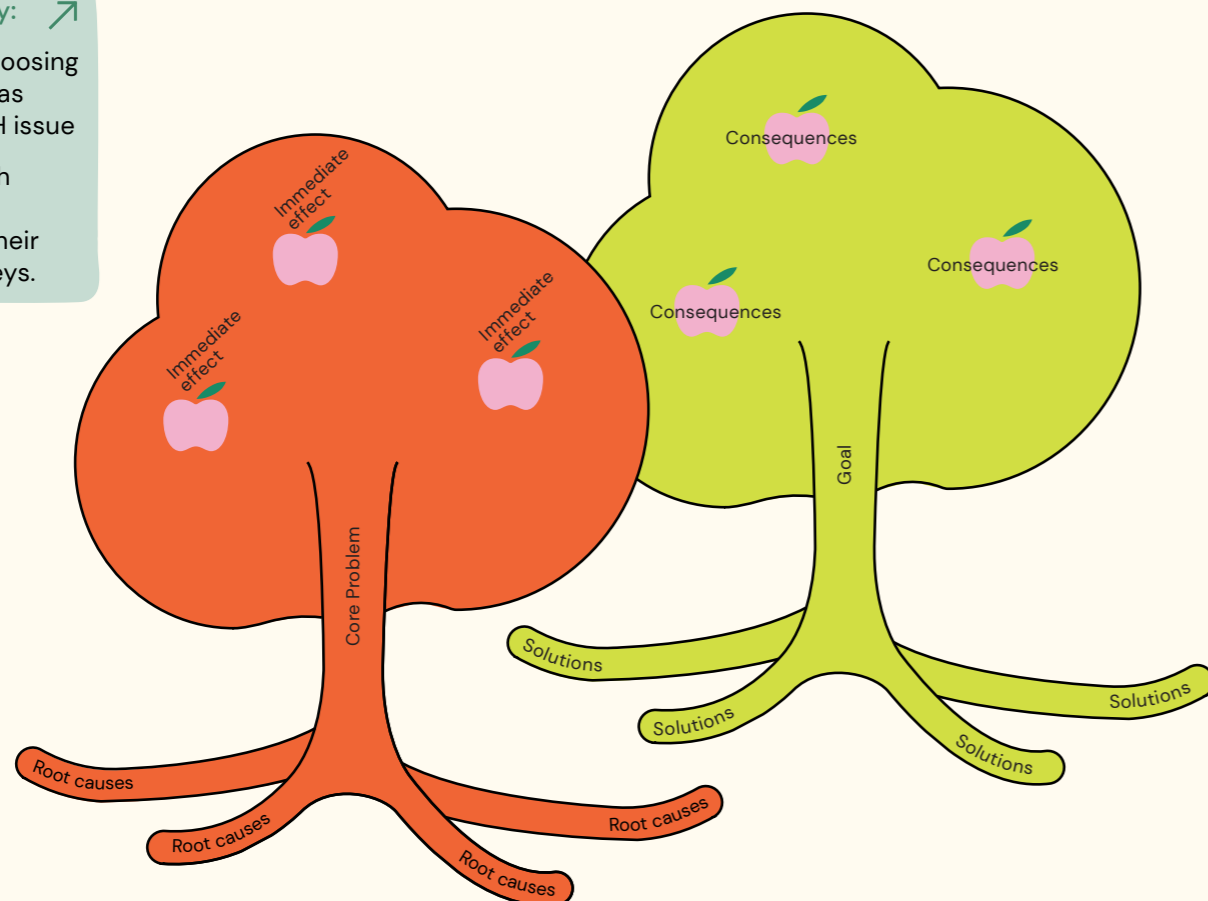
Purpose: A problem tree can provide an overview of all the known causes and effect to a WASH issue.

This is important in planning a participatory action research project, as it establishes the context in which the project is to occur. Understanding the contexts helps reveal the complexity of the WASH issue and this is essential in planning a successful change project.

A problem tree involves writing causes in a negative form (e.g., lack of knowledge, not enough money etc). Reversing the problem tree, by replacing negative statements with positive ones, creates a solution tree. A solution tree identifies means-end relationships as opposed to cause-effects. This provides an overview of the range of projects or interventions that need to occur to solve the core problem.

A problem tree

- Helps the planning of a WASH participatory action research project
- Provides a guide as to the complexity of a WASH problem by identifying the multiple causes
- Identifies particular actions that can be taken by the PAR group.
- Provides an outline of the project plan, including the actions that need to be undertaken, the goal and the outcomes of the PAR project.



Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind or have low vision, you can make the Problem and Solution Trees tactile. Rolled up paper to stick in the shape of a tree and roots works well. Cut out leaves to indicate the top of the tree where the outcomes are to be placed. You can use sticky notes to write in braille with a braille slate and stylus. Local disability schools and disability rights holder organisations may be able to help with a braille translator.

For who have reading and writing challenges, you can ask them to draw small pictures / symbols instead of writing the core problem, root causes and outcomes.

For people who are deaf, having a sign interpreter present will help you communicate.

Step 1: The first step in developing the problem tree is to identify the WASH problem that the project seeks to overcome. It may be worth discussion what the core problem is with stakeholder representatives. Ideally projects should have a specific problem (e.g., saving water inside the home) that they seek to overcome if change is to occur. A vague or broad problem (e.g., saving water) will have too many causes for an effective and meaningful project to be developed.

The core problem is written down in the middle of the paper on the main trunk of the problem tree.

Step 2: Once the core problem has been identified and written on the trunk of the tree, participants should consider what the direct causes and effects of the problem are. Each cause statement needs to be written in negative terms. There are a couple of ways to undertake this.

Purpose: A solution tree outlines the WASH initiatives, actions and projects which develop as logical solutions from the initial problem tree.

The solution tree is created by reversing the negative statements of the problem tree into positive statements.

The reverse statements in the solution tree can then help you consider what actions or interventions (solution) might lead to the identified positive causes, and what long-term WASH objectives might be met as a result.

Participants can either collectively brainstorm all the negative statements about the problem at hand, and a PAR facilitator writes each negative statement down on a piece of paper. The statements would then be placed on individual cards or paper, for the PAR participants to analyse and reorder. Alternatively, PAR participants could work through the cause and effect on a sequential basis, starting from the core problem. The immediate 'root' causes to the problem are written on the roots of the tree below that of the core problem. The immediate effect is placed above the problem as leaves of the fruits of the issue.

There may be need to decide on a PAR action to better understand what the problem is. This may be done with various actions, for example, the water clock to understand how people use water in their homes, community mapping to understand the problem at a community level, photovoice to document the issues, or story circle to understand how the problem affects specific community members.

Step 3: On the solution tree, write on the trunk the goal (rather than the problem).

Step 4: On the roots of the solution tree, write the solutions – (this mirrors the root causes on the problem tree)

Step 5: Now for the fruit of the solution tree – write the consequences of the solutions.

PhotoVoice

Principles & theories: ↗

We are all leaders

Activities: ↗

Analysing the data

Inclusion tip:

This is ideal for people who are deaf and have a hearing impairment, or people who have challenges reading and writing.

There are research projects that have used photovoice with people who are blind and have low vision. Further research into those projects would be necessary.

Purpose: For PAR participants to document their experiences or environment as a form of research.

In PhotoVoice, PAR participants take photos or to share their lived experiences and stories about the particular WASH issue they have chosen to work on. This method is a creative and inclusive type of research that is accessible for many people. It enables PAR participants to document what is important to them or happening around their community.

Step 1: PAR participants develop the WASH theme, any questions they want to answer, to guide individuals to take photos.

Step 2: If required, PAR participants can teach each other how to use a camera or smartphone.

Step 3: Individuals or groups take photographs to respond to a research question.

Step 4: PAR participants provide explanations of their photos (in writing or speaking).

Step 5: The facilitator invites PAR participants to look at each other's photos and analyse them by grouping photos with similar WASH themes together and identifying the WASH trends across them; counting similar WASH themes; and writing comments on photos about the themes (creating data)

Step 6: PAR participants critically reflect on the information coming through the data. Note takers record the responses and discussion using voice recording, and/or writing down notes.

Step 7: A photo exhibition can be a way of presenting a group's interpretation (meaning) of data that has been analysed.

The iceberg

Principles & theories: ↗

We are all leaders

Activities: ↗

Problem & solution tree

Setting goals, objectives, and actions

Case study: ↗

Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

Inclusion tip:

For people who are blind or have low vision you can make the diagram tactile by placing tape or rope / string on the paper rather than lines. You can use sticky notes to write in braille with a braille slate and stylus. Local disability schools and disability rights holder organisations may be able to help with a braille printing.

Purpose: Deepen your understanding of the problem, moving from “what just happened?” to “what beliefs keep the system in place?”

Developed by Northwest Earth Institute, the Iceberg is another way we drill down into the root cause of the problem our WASH participatory action research project may aim to address – shifting our focus from the current WASH related issue or event into underlying societal structures and mental modes. It can also help us move more directly into thinking about interventions in societal and cultural institutions. The events can be backlash or resistance towards the project. Backlash and resistance towards a particular group attempting to gain access to WASH resources. (for example, people with diverse SOGIE advocating for access to water pumps or bathrooms) or leadership positions in WASH activities (for example, people with disabilities or women representing their community at government led WASH forums).

Questions:

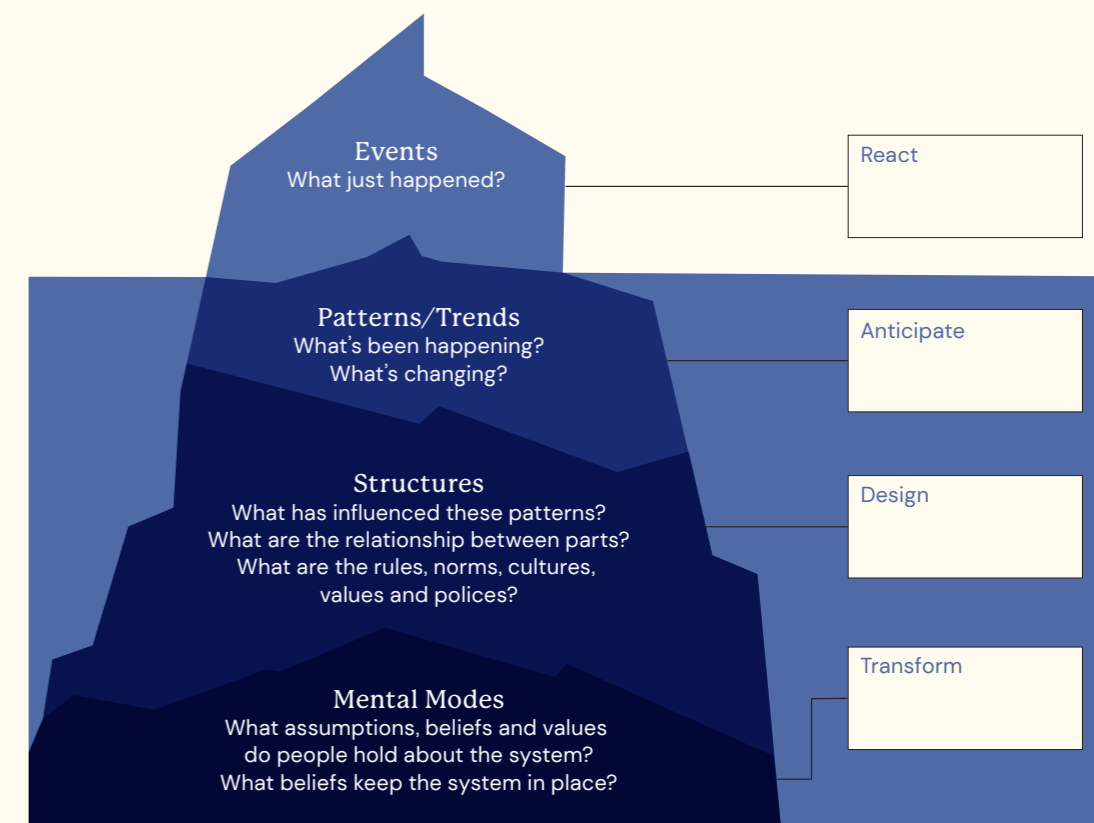
Events – React
What just happened?

Patterns and Trends – Anticipate
What's been happening?
What's changing?

Structures – Design
What has influenced these changes?
What are the relationships between parts?
What are the rules, norms, cultures, values and policies?

Mental Modes – Transform
What assumptions, beliefs and values do people hold about the systems?
What beliefs keep the system in place?

Source: This activity has been adapted from work of the Mobilisation Lab for planning campaign projects.



Analysing the data

Principles & theories:

Consensus is a means not an end

We are all leaders

Activities:

Community mapping

The iceberg

PhotoVoice

In Participatory Action Research, it is important that the PAR participants (who are the co-researchers) are involved in analysing the data that has been collected.

Participatory data analysis is a collective process of organising the data, identifying the trends in the data, establishing the meaning of the data, and deciding the implications of the research findings.

When we collectively analyse data, there are some questions that PAR participants can ask of the data:

- What sort of WASH ideas or actions are coming up in the data?
- What are some common WASH issues and responses (trends)?
- What are people regularly saying?
- What do different types of people say?
- Are there findings that are unexpected?
- What may explain the trends in the data?
- What are the key findings and conclusions?
- Do the WASH findings lead to any new WASH related questions?
- What are the implications for practice or change?

Data collected from participatory methods is usually qualitative (perspectives and experiences rather than statistics and numbers). Data can be collectively analysed through themes to give deeper explanation and understanding of an issue.

There are several steps for groups of people to thematically analyse data.

Step 1: Organise the data.

Before the group collectively analyses the data, the data needs to be organised so that it is manageable. Here are some tips:

Interviews and focus group discussions: Prepare documents with transcripts or notes of interviews and focus group discussions in large print (e.g., 14 point). This is so the document is easy to read. Key quotes from the interviews and focus group discussions can also be printed.

Stories: Prepare documents with individual stories in large print. This can be attached to PAR participants drawings or other depictions of their stories.

Photos: Print photos or organise slides of photos on an electronic presentation.

Drawings: Make sure drawings are clearly labelled with the question guiding the drawing (not the PAR participants name) and have an accompanying explanation in written text if required.

Mapping: Make sure all maps are clearly labelled with the question guiding the drawing (not the name of PAR participants).

Surveys: Prepare documents or slides with graphs and tables of the survey data.

Note: It is very important that the data is anonymous; that is, that names and personal details of PAR participants or community members are not included in the data that the group is analysing.

Step 2: Identify themes in the data.

Themes are the main ideas that describe the data. Key words are used to break down the data into individual themes or ideas. Coding involves highlighting parts of text or images and describing the theme of this data with a single keyword. Themes may be collectively decided before coding the data, or you might develop themes while you are coding.

Group of people can thematically code the data:

Interviews and focus group discussions: PAR participants can read through the transcripts or notes, and identify key themes in the data. A practical way to do this is to read the text together, collectively decide the WASH theme for this part of the text, and use scissors to physically cut out the text that applies to that theme and put it into a thematic pile. You will soon have lots of strips of paper with quotes / text that applies to each theme.

You can count the number of times a theme came up in an interviews or Focus Group Discussion to identify the most common themes.

Stories and anecdotes: PAR participants can thematically code stories and anecdotes with the same process as interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

Photos and drawings: Place all the photos or drawings on the ground. PAR participants can look at the images and identify themes to describe the information in the images. The code can be written on a sticky note and place the note on the relevant part of the image. There will soon be various sticky notes on different images. Alternatively, you can identify a single code / theme for each image, and then place all the images with the same theme in a single pile. Remember to keep the written explanation of the photo or drawing attached to the image.

Maps: Maps are coded using the same process as photos and drawings. You can also compare maps by putting the maps side by side and identify and discuss the WASH differences.

Surveys: PAR participants can label graphs and tables with sticky notes for WASH themes, or sort them into different types of WASH piles.

When all the data across the different methods are thematically coded, you then separate out all the data for each theme. This will make a pile with quotes, text, photos and graphs that have the same code.

Step 3: Identifying WASH trends within each theme

After the data is coded according to themes, we need to find meaning for the data within each theme. This involves group discussion to identify the trends or common findings within the themes. Some questions to ask are:

- What are the most common WASH issues or perspective within the data?
- How does the data show these WASH issues?

Step 4: Interpretation – finding meaning in the evidence

After the PAR participants have discussed the common trends within the chosen WASH theme, it is time to discuss and interpret the data; that is, to find the meaning of the data. To interpret the data, you can ask, 'What does the data tell us about our chosen WASH issue?'; and 'what does the data mean?'. The interpretation and analysis are always guided by the research questions and the change goal. It is also informed by an analysis to identify gendered experiences, and how gender intersects with other categories of lived experiences (such as race, age, sexuality).

Several participatory and accessible research methods can also be used by PAR groups to collectively interpret and summarise the data. Multiple maps can be combined into a single map. PAR participants may use timelines to collate the different steps in a community's journey or experience. PAR participants may create collective drawings to explain that PAR group's interpretation of the data and WASH themes / learnings. PAR participants may also create an overall story that brings together all the data and findings. Importantly, all these methods need to include a final discussion to summarise the meaning and key findings of the WASH data.

The interpretation of the data helps to finalise the key findings or messages of the WASH research.

Step 5: Checking findings with community

After PAR participants have analysed the data and identified key WASH related findings, it is important to check the findings with the broader community who were involved in the research. This might involve a workshop or meeting to report back the research results and hear their opinions.

Chapter 07

Risk assessments

57

The biggest risk is not taking any risk

Inclusion tip:

For people who are blind or have low vision, the diagram can be created using tape, string or rope to make the diagram tactile. You can use sticky notes to write in braille with a braille slate and stylus. Local disability schools and disability rights holder organisations may be able to help with a braille printer.

Purpose: For Community PAR participants to identify hazards, and mitigation strategies to adequately understand possible risks.

During the risk assessment process, PAR participants can review and evaluate their research actions to:

- Identify processes and situations that may cause harm, particularly to people (hazard identification).
- Determine how likely it is that each hazard will occur and how severe the consequences would be (risk analysis and evaluation).
- Decide what steps the PAR group can take to stop these hazards from occurring or to control the risk when the hazard can't be eliminated (risk control).

It's important to note the difference between hazards and risks. A hazard is anything that can cause harm, including accidents, emergency situations, conflicts, stress, and more. A risk, on the other hand, is the chance that a hazard will cause harm. As part of your risk assessment plan, the PAR group will first identify potential hazards and then calculate the risk or likelihood of those hazards occurring.

Step 1 Identify the hazards: The first step to creating your risk assessment is determining what hazards the PAR participants and project face.

Step 2 Determine who might be harmed and how: As the PAR participants assess the research action, ask them to think about how the PAR participants could be harmed by the research actions or external factors. For every hazard that you identify in step one, think about who will be harmed should the hazard take place.

Step 3 Evaluate the risks and take precautions: Now that the PAR group have gathered a list of potential hazards, they need to consider how likely it is that the hazard will occur and how severe the consequences will be if that hazard occurs. This evaluation will help you determine where you should reduce the level of risk and which hazards you should prioritize first.

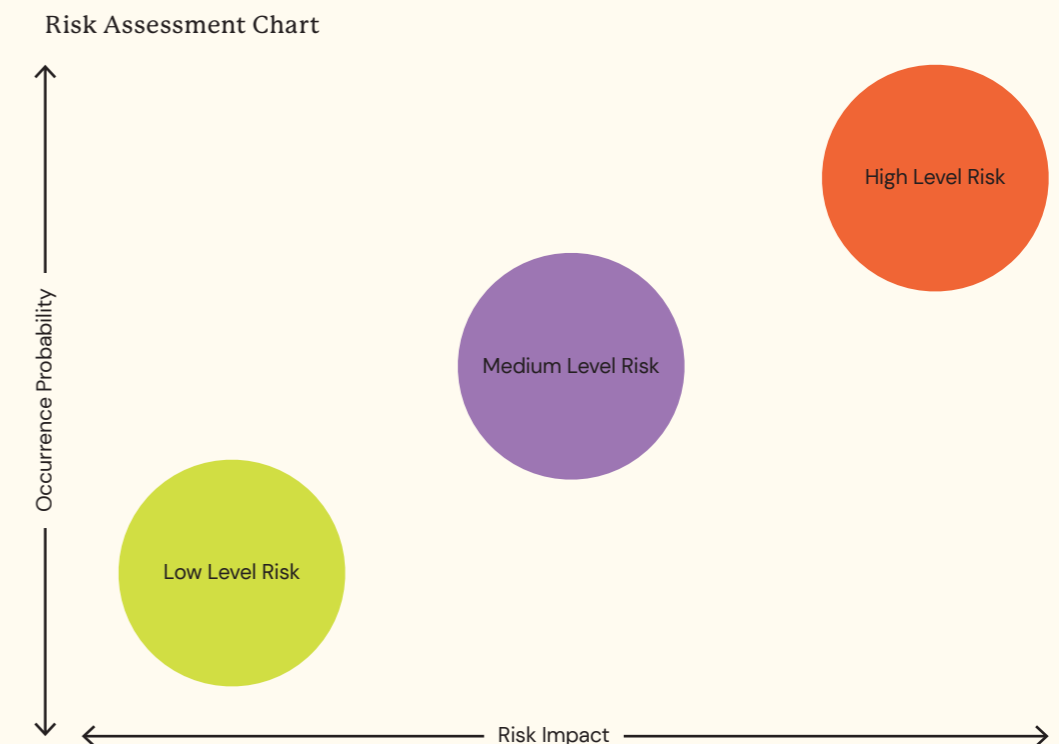
Step 4 Record your findings: Your plan should include the hazards you've found, the people they affect, and how you plan to mitigate them. The record—or the risk assessment plan—should show that you:

- Conducted a proper check of the place the research action will take place
- Determined who would be affected
- Controlled and dealt with obvious hazards
- Initiated precautions to keep risks low

Step 5 Review your assessment and update if necessary: The local contexts and environment is always changing, so the risks to the PAR participants and project change as well. As new equipment, processes, and people are introduced, each brings the risk of a new hazard. Continually review and update the risk assessment process to stay on top of these new hazards.

The risk assessment chart is based on the principle that a risk has two primary dimensions: probability and impact, each represented on one axis of the chart. The PAR participants can use these two measures to plot risks on the chart, which allows them to determine priority and resource allocation.

Research Action	Hazards	Risks	Impact



Chapter 08

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

61

Collecting feedback from the workshop

Principles & theories: ↗

We are all leaders

Activities: ↗

Successes and learnings

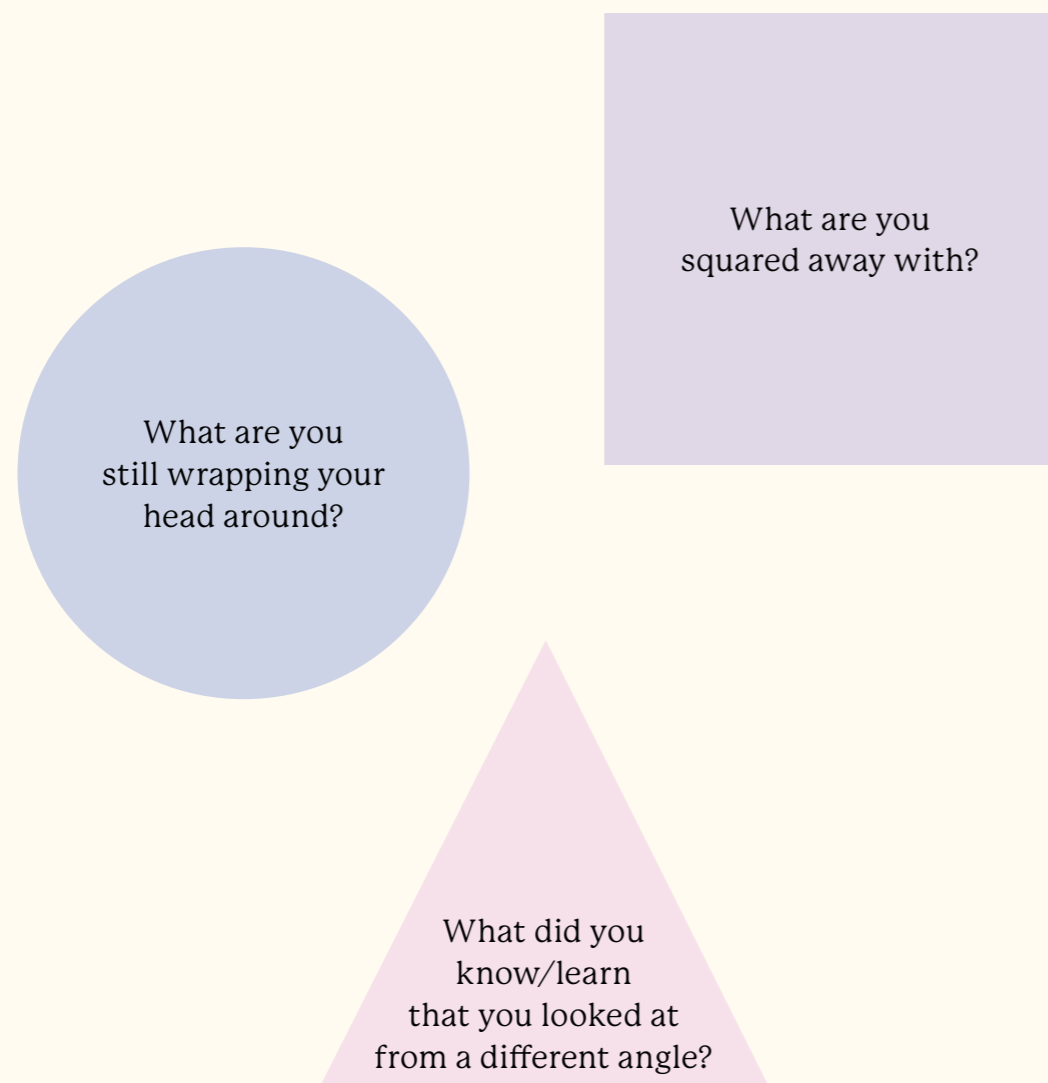
Inclusion tips:

For people who are blind or have low vision, you can cut out the shapes so they are tactile, and use a braille slate and stylus to write the words inside the shapes.

Purpose: Collecting feedback from PAR participants can be informative and help clarify future workshops. This Square/Circle/Triangle activity is one way to wrap up the session and ask for participant feedback.

Step 1: In small groups, ask participants to reflect on these questions and provide answers. Invite groups to report out on their discussions or name one thing under each shape that they would like to share with the larger group.

What are you squared away with? What are you still wrapping your head around? What did you know / learn that you look at from a different angle?



Story circles as evaluative collaboration

Principles & theories: ↗

We are all leaders

Activities: ↗

Successes and learnings

PhotoVoice

Inclusion tips:

This activity is ideal for people who are blind or have low vision.

For people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment, a sign interpreter may be required.

Rather than 'tell' a story, you can ask participants to draw a story.

Purpose: Using Story as Collaborative Evaluation highlights using a storytelling methodology as one way PAR groups can evaluate the impact of their WASH project. Instead of setting outcomes to measure against, the PAR groups can identify outcomes for themselves by telling a story about the project.

What changed for them? How did it happen? Why is it important?

A Story Circle is a group of people sitting in a circle, telling personal stories, led by a facilitator. Each Story Circle is different according to its purpose.

Story circles as a collaborative evaluation process offers a step up from the previous form filling and interview-based approach:

- It gives a better understanding of the very personalised, diverse outcomes that community members experience.
- It enables community members to have a say in defining what impacts they felt.
- It engages more people in understanding and learning from impact.
- It offered a more holistic approach to understanding impact and how it is achieved.
- It makes evaluation an enjoyable, creative, and meaningful experience.

There is no need for PAR participants to prepare a story in advance – the facilitators will help guide the topics of the story circle for evaluation – and it may flow in unexpected ways due to the participants.

It doesn't matter if the community participants jump about, stops and starts, or goes on tangents – often this is what leads to the best stories!

Allow sufficient time – everybody's story is different in length, and it is better not to be rushed and to have the time available – however, you can specify beforehand the boundaries around time.

There are 4 key questions, which frame the conversation between community participants and the story circle facilitator:

1. What did they do in relation to the project?
2. What changed for them because of their experience?
3. Why was that change important for them?
4. What were the main things about their experience that made this change happen?

We want people's responses to these questions and the conversations which surround them to be:

Personal

It should be their own experience and opinions, not the change they see in others.

Detailed

We want to hear the specifics and descriptions of people's experiences.

Focused

We want to hear about change they feel is attributed, at least in part, to the project being evaluated.

Strengths based

The emphasis is not on what people were before, but on change and why it's happened.

Check in and check-out

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed
Safer space agreement

Activities: ↗

Assumptions map
Evaluating inclusion

Case study: ↗

Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

Inclusion tips:

This is a good activity for people who are blind or have low vision and for people who have challenges reading and writing.

For people who are deaf and have a hearing impairment, sign interpreters may be required.

Purpose: For each PAR participant to have a voice on their expectations at the beginning of the day and share their assessment at the end of the day

Step 1: At the beginning of each day, invite the group to answer the following two questions. Suggest to the PAR group that they ‘pop when they are hot’ (Like popcorn, share when they want to ‘pop’ and are ready to speak, rather than speak in a circle)

- Why did you decide to attend today’s PAR workshop?
- What do you hope will be achieved by the PAR group today?

Step 2: When everyone who wants to share has, then the PAR facilitator records and reflects back to the group what answers they heard from the participants. They affirm that what the PAR participants hope to get out of today aligns with the days agenda, or the PAR facilitator asserts the agenda as different to the expectations of the group)

Step 3: Keep the agreed expectations / outcomes for the days’ workshop visible to reflect on at the end of the day.

Step 4: At the end of the day / workshop, ask the participants the following three questions. Suggest to the PAR group that they ‘pop when they are hot’ (Like popcorn, share when they want to ‘pop’ and are ready to speak, rather than speak in a circle)

- What worked well?
- What didn’t work so well?
- What do we do differently next time?

Step 5: Record the answers and adjust the next workshop to incorporate the PAR groups learnings.

This exercise has been adapted from Deep Democracy – The Lewis Method.

Additional tip: When people are gathered in group and are asked to participate in activities like the ‘Check-in and Check-out’ it is useful to practice ‘pop when your hot’. Rather like popcorn, it is about participants popping/ speaking when they are ready, rather than in a particular order or in a circle (even if you are sitting in a circle). ‘Pop when you are hot’ allows people to speak when they are ready. Alternatively, if you ask people to speak in a specific order, they may be too busy to think about what they want to say, than actively listening to the group.

Successes and learnings

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed

Activities: ↗

Goals
SMART objectives

Case study: ↗

Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

Inclusion tips:

For who have reading and writing challenges use drawings, pictures, objects, or storytelling to explore the topic (for example, by describing successes and challenges / learnings.

For people who are blind or have low vision, use storytelling to explore the successes, learning and gaps.

Purpose: To create and compare list and categories of WASH successes and learnings based on a group action.

Step 1: Invite the PAR participants to describe the action that was undertaken as a part of the PAR process.

Step 2: Give participants one to three cards and ask them to write one example or meaningful element of success on each card. They should use keywords and on the reverse side of the card, add details of the success. The contributions should be concrete, distinct in some way and relevant to the WASH related action.

Step 3: The PAR participants can place the cards together when they are the same, and below each other when they represent variations of the same types of success.

Step 4: Invite the PAR participants to write on another card their learnings on what they would do differently next time. They should use keywords and on the reverse side of the card, add details of the success. The contributions should be concrete, distinct in some way and relevant to the WASH related action.

Step 5: The PAR participants can place the cards together when they are the same, and below each other when they represent variations of the same types of learnings.

Step 6: Invite the PAR participants to write on the third card any gaps they see – what might be important but missing from the list of successes and learnings. They should use keywords and on the reverse side of the card, add details of the success. The contributions should be concrete, distinct in some way and relevant to the WASH related action.

Step 7: In each pile of successes, learnings, and gaps, invite the PAR participants to organise the cards into urgent and less urgent or less important.

Step 8: Ask the PAR participants to agree on the most urgent or important successes, learnings, and gaps to be shared when there is a group decision about the following PAR cycle actions.



Evaluating inclusion

Principles & theories: ↗

- Pedagogy of the oppressed
- We are all leaders
- Leave no one behind

Activities: ↗

- Goals
- SMART objectives
- Soft shoe shuffle
- Successes and learnings

Case study: ↗

- Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

Purpose: For the PAR group to evaluate the PAR facilitator(s) and the level of (shared) power that the group has within the PAR project. This exercise should be completed at the end of each PAR cycle.

Step 1: Explain to the PAR group that you would like the group to evaluate the facilitators / project management based on below criteria.

Step 2: Share an evaluation form with each PAR participant.

Ask each PAR participant to fill in the form based on their point of view.

Inclusion tips:

Due to the power over the community that the project team holds, it is recommended that the PAR group does this activity with the PAR facilitators leaving the room. This may not always be possible due to the support that the PAR group may need to complete the activity. If this is the case, you may find that the bias is towards the facilitators, and the answers decrease in scale as trust is built and the PAR participants feel more comfortable to answer truthfully.

For people who are blind and have low vision who can read braille, creating this document in braille is recommended.

For people who are blind and have low vision, or people who are illiterate, it may be useful to read out the questions, and have five tactile shapes that represent a different number that each participant holds up for each question. (Star for 5, hexagon for 4, triangle for 3, square for 2 and circle for 1. Then the PAR participants can feel which shape they have and share their answers by holding up the shape.

	1 (never)	2 (rarely)	3 (sometimes)	4 (mostly)	5 (always)
Coming together (engaging)					
When we come together as a group, is there enough trust between us so that we can share stories, fears, hopes and we know that other members of the group will respect our group rules?					
Is this group something I look forward to coming to? Is it a place that we are having an enjoyable time?					
Do we know where we want to go? (Grounding)					
Are we clear about what we are trying to achieve by being part of this PAR project?					
Are we on the right path? (Navigating)					
Are the group exercises that we're doing helping us to achieve what we want?					
Are we as community members leading the way or are the facilitators and those outside the PAR group leading or controlling?					
Are we travelling at the right speed? (Scaling)					
Are we spending the right amount of time on each stage of the workshop?					
Do we have the information we need to make our planning and action decisions?					
Are we learning? (Sense-making)					
Do we have a better understanding of why the problems (that we are trying to solve) exist in our community?					
Do we have new knowledge and ideas about how we can change our community?					

Chapter 09

Case studies

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Identifying the WASH Issues

– Women choosing sanitation as their WASH issue

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed

Challenge patriarchy as you work

Challenge heteronormativity as you work

We are all leaders

Leave no one behind

Safer space agreement

Activities: ↗

WASH cards

Water clock

Background

Yayasan Plan International Indonesia (YPII) and Edge Effect undertook a participatory action research process in the city of Ruteng, on the island of Flores, Indonesia. Initially, within the scoping phase of the project, working with the local YPII office and with local stakeholders, women were invited from three different urban villages (Kelurahans) to a workshop. In this two ½ day workshop, the project team share their hopes of undertaking a WASH project, the type of PAR process they would like to use, and the expectations the women should have of the project team. The project team facilitated activities that were connected to the issues of WASH, including using a version of WASH cards. The aim was to ensure that the women understood what the purpose of the project was (WASH) and to consider how WASH intersects with their everyday lives. After the workshop concluded, about 20 women decided to join in the project. About 8 weeks later the project team returned, and undertook more facilitated activities, that would help the women to identify the WASH issue they would like to work on.

Based on desk research, the geographical area had cyclic torrential rains and droughts, with many poorer villages, having no water mains, and no water supply pipes in some homes. Therefore, preparation made by the facilitation lead, in the event that the women would decide to focus on water.

In the first PAR cycle, the facilitation team again undertook a variety of activities, this time for the women's group to identify what WASH issue they would like to work on. Activities included further work with the WASH cards, the WASH clock and the WASH timeline.

The women chose to work on sanitation. For the facilitators, it was an unexpected answer, so the women were asked why they would like to work on sanitation. The women explained why with the following points.

Ruteng is known as one having a serious issue with rubbish, with plastic and other waste found in the streets and in vacant blocks of land. In the rainy season, the water pushes the rubbish into the open drains. This blocks the drains, and fills the drains, often breeding mosquitoes. The village children play in the drains, and it is common for the children to be infected with malaria and other mosquito borne diseases. The women and their families often cannot afford medical support when their children are ill with malaria, and therefore don't access medical interventions. Meanwhile, the water keeps blocking the drains, until there is so much water, it runs on the roads, and causes localised flooding. It is only then, when the water is under enough pressure, that the water is pushed out along with the rubbish onto the rice paddy fields that the women keep. With all the rubbish in the rice paddy fields, the fish they breed in the rice fields die, and the rice doesn't grow as well. As a result, rather than making money from selling excess rice and fish, the women are sometimes having to buy rice and protein from the market to supplement the produce from their rice paddies.

This process shows the importance of working with the local community in deciding the issues to be addressed and a positive outcome of using a participatory action research approach. The women didn't necessarily understand 'Water, Sanitation and Hygiene' as a thematic area before the project started, but working with them, they were able to understand how WASH affects their own lives. Further, because they were able to decide the issues to be address as most affected them, they were heavily invested it the project the whole time



Key points of effective PAR practice

Facilitating activities to help the local community have the information they need to make the decisions on what WASH issues most impact them.

Planning and Research

– People with disabilities mapping their own WASH journey

Principles & theories: ↗

- Pedagogy of the oppressed
- Challenge ableism as you work
- We are all leaders
- Leave no one behind
- Safer space agreement

Activities: ↗

- Community mapping
- Goals
- SMART objectives
- Action template
- Problem and solution tree

Yayasan Plan International Indonesia (YPII) and Edge Effect undertook a participatory action research process in the Indonesian town of Sumbawa Besar, in the province of West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

Working with a group of people with various disabilities, the PAR group participants decided to advocate for accessible toilets in the local park. The decision was based on two factors 1. That there were no accessible toilets in the middle of the town. 2. Being members of a dispersed community of people joined together by their shared experience of disability, they don't live in the same local villages that make up the city. They felt that if there were accessible toilets in town, they could meet, and see each other, and feel less lonely and isolated. Further they could provide each other with support when they experienced discrimination.

The project team facilitated the problem and solution tree activity, which resulted in a group theory of change. The group identified in the problem tree, that many people likely didn't know the toilets were inaccessible to many people with disabilities. In the solution tree, the group identified that they would have to form relationships with appropriate government departments and individuals in those

departments, and they would have to undertake an advocacy campaign. They realised that the group identified that an advocacy campaign had to be based on research to be taken seriously by the stakeholders. Proof that public toilets were generally inaccessible for people with disabilities, and that refurbishment or building new toilets was important. First the project team facilitated a community mapping activity, and the PAR group members identified all the toilets that would be considered public.

Then during the 'action' phase of the PAR process, the group undertook some action research. As a group they decided they would use photovoice as the research methodology, taking photos to tell a story of the groups inability to find an accessible public toilet.

Eight weeks later the project facilitators returned, and the group showed their photos. Their research showed that there were no accessible public toilets, and they realised the photos were not only 'research' but could also be used within an advocacy capacity. They then organised a meeting with local government to show their evidence. This was one of many steps in the process of advocating for safe, accessible, and inclusive public toilets.



Key points of effective PAR practice

That using easy activities such as the problem and solution tree, supports communities to develop their own theory of change.

Research methods can be creative and adaptive to local communities needs and their abilities.

Risk

– Informed dignity of risk

Principles & theories: ↗

- Pedagogy of the oppressed
- Challenge cishnormativity as you work
- We are all leaders
- Leave no one behind
- Safer space agreement

Activities: ↗

- Decisional balance
- Assumptions map
- The biggest risk is not taking any risk

Edge Effect along with Arus Pelangi, an Indonesian LGBTQ organisation, partnered together to work with the Waria community in the West Mangarrai Regency, in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. During the PAR process, the waria community identified they wanted to focus on advocating for safe and inclusive toilet access in the local market. This included that the market owners and business owners fund 1. a cleaner to ensure the toilets were always clean, hygienic and had enough water and; 2. Fund a security guard supportive of the Waria community – to enforce non-discrimination and to eliminate violence they sometimes experienced while using the toilets.

When deciding on the advocacy activities they would undertake, the waria community decided on filming their stories and sharing them with government, market and local business owners, and on social media.

Some of the PAR participants were concerned about backlash they may face when the broader community saw the films, and what the waria were advocating for, so the project facilitators led the waria community participants through various risk assessments. By identifying the risks themselves, as well as risk mitigation strategies, allowed the waria community to make an informed decision.

The initial outcome was that everyone would be involved in the creation of the community advocacy story, but not everyone would share their specific story. Some waria community members agreed to speak and be identified on film, some agreed to be filmed in the background, and some decided they didn't want to be filmed at all.

Once the films were created, the PAR facilitators returned and worked with the community to undertake the next steps, including a more specific strategy to ensure their target audience (local government and market / business owners) saw the films.

The project facilitators showed the PAR participants the films and asked them to undertake risk assessments once again. Due to how powerful and emotive the PAR participants found the films, and how identifying the films were, there was no longer consensus about how to release the films and to whom. Based on the mitigation strategies the waria community identified, they were able to trial showing the films firstly with allies in the community and get feedback on next possible steps.



Key points of effective PAR practice

The PAR participants have the most to lose and the most to gain from the PAR project, so it is appropriate for the PAR participants to identify their own risks and mitigation strategies.

That risk changes throughout projects based on many different factors. Practitioners cannot assume that consensus and consent at one phase of a project is consensus and consent at another phase.

Without regularly identifying the changes, and their impacts in a project, consent (even if previously given) is not informed. Everyone needs to have the most current information for consent to be informed.

Evaluating the PAR facilitation team

Principles & theories: ↗

Pedagogy of the oppressed

Challenge ableism as you work

We are all leaders

Leave no one behind

Safer space agreement

Activities: ↗

Evaluating inclusion

Edge Effect led six participatory action research groups across Eastern Indonesia made up of specific underrepresented groups. These groups included women, people with disabilities and people with diverse gender identities. At the end of each PAR cycle, in each group, Edge Effect would ask the PAR groups to individually evaluate the PAR facilitators on several inclusion features. (As specified in the evaluating inclusion activity).

At the beginning of the PAR process (cycles one and two) the facilitators received an almost perfect score from each person across the whole six groups. But as the PAR facilitators, spent more time with the PAR participants, formed deeper (appropriate) relationships, the almost perfect score started to drop a little. By PAR cycle three, the PAR facilitators were scoring about 75% from an almost 100%.

The deeper the professional relationships, and the deeper the trust, the more honest and trusting the PAR participants became. This allowed them to critically evaluate the facilitation team, without fear of retribution. In turn the critical feedback allowed the facilitation team to improve their inclusion practice, learning and reflecting and improving.



Key points of effective PAR practice

PAR facilitators hold positions of power and there is always a need for community development / PAR practitioners to work on sharing the power as a continuous process of improvement.

Building trust takes time, and it is worth the time to build trust.

Working alongside communities allows opportunities to learn, not just about places, and spaces and environments and issues, but also about how to improve your own practice. Praxis makes perfect.

