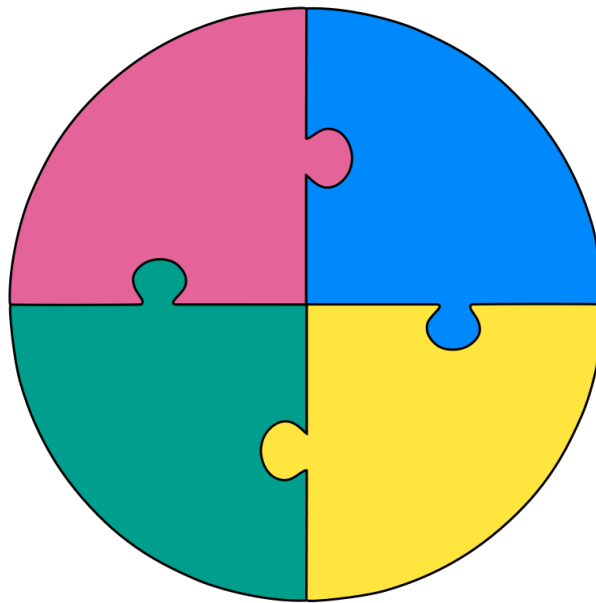


Community Research Resource Pack

To support scoping and needs analysis, evaluation of existing service provision and maximising impact within the community



Produced by

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Introduction

This resource pack is intended to provide a set of flexible guidelines and resources to support community-led research carried out by community organisations and other groups. It is not meant to be prescriptive, and you are welcome to choose which (if any) worksheets or stages you complete, start or finish at different stages of the research cycle, and/or work with different groups of people at different points of your research. You can also set your own pace for completing a cycle – it might take you a week, or it might take years!

We have tried to keep the pack concise. This means we have focused on elements such as the type of questions you may wish to ask, and ways you might want to think about your work. We haven't included details about specific research methods, as there are already lots of resources available to support you with these (some of which we have listed in the [Further Resources](#)). The Collaborative Poetics resource page, in particular, offers more detailed guidance and resources to support community-focused, creative and qualitative research, including worksheets and recorded presentations: <https://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/collaborativepoetics/resources/>.

This pack is licensed under an attribution-non-commercial-ShareAlike license. This means that you are free to use, share and adapt the contents for any non-commercial purposes as long as you credit us as authors and acknowledge any changes you have made to the contents (if applicable).

We would love to hear about how you've used the pack, and always welcome your feedback. If you would like to contact us, you can find our details at the end of the pack.

We hope you find this pack useful and wish you luck in your research!

Helen Johnson and Nicole Monney

Using this Pack

Who?

This pack is intended for use by:

- Community, voluntary or social enterprise organisations and groups.
- Grassroots, community-led groups.

Why?

Some of the reasons you may wish to use this pack include using the resources to:

- Develop and embed a culture of ongoing learning and testing across your organisation and the work you carry out.
- Better understand the impact of your work for your team or organisation and share your learning with wider stakeholders (such as your local community, funders, or policy- and decision-makers).
- Evidence change(s) over time, and check where community priorities may have changed, or where new ways of affecting change are needed.
- Evidence and demonstrate a case for action (such as community action, partnership development, advocacy, leverage funding, or policy change).

How?

The activities in this pack can be undertaken in any order and combination that you choose. They can also be paused and completed at a pace that works best for you. The guidelines and resources are designed to be flexible, and you are welcome to adapt them as needed.

We plan to offer additional, optional resources to support this pack, including a simplified version. Please contact us using our details at the end of the pack if you wish to find out more about these further plans and resources.

The Theory behind the Pack

The materials in this pack were developed using principles derived from the concept of 'everyday creativity.' Everyday creativity can be contrasted with the 'elite' creativity of eminent artists and other creative geniuses. It emphasises instead the day-to-day creative activities that people engage with around the world alone and in groups, to support their wellbeing, connect with others, learn new skills, or just have fun. These activities are wide-ranging, and include such things as arts, crafts, gardening, cooking and home inventing.

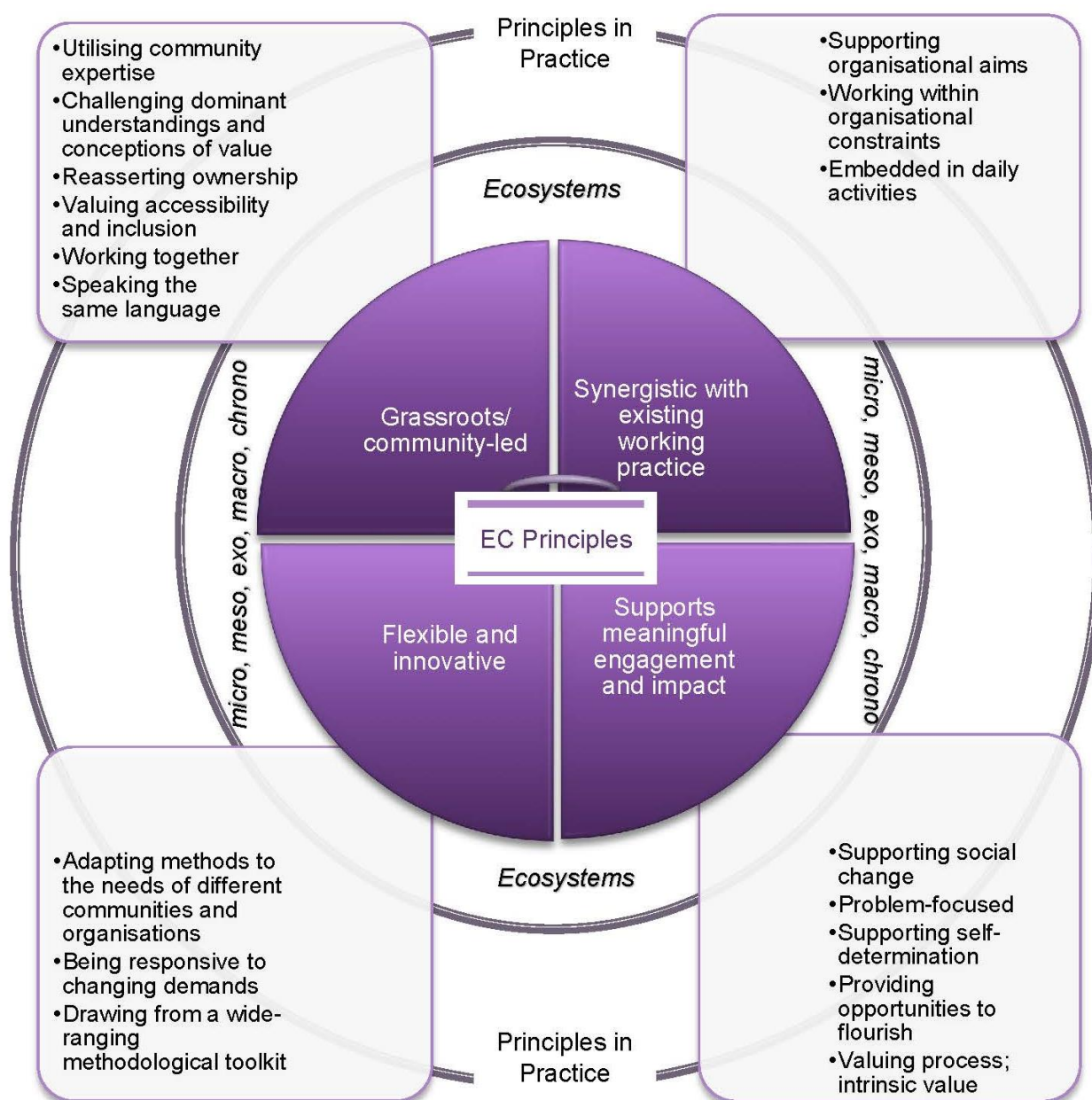
We used everyday creativity principles to develop and pilot this pack. They have helped us to ensure that the needs and concerns of communities remain at the heart of our research, and that we engage with communities in ways that work for them. Many of these principles are central to the work that community organisations already engage in, so it's likely that you will recognise at least parts of this model (Figure 1 below). Other principles, however, might be implicit in what you do, or even absent altogether. Either way, you might want to spend some time thinking about how this model applies to your existing practice and how you could build on this further.

If you have the time, we would recommend that you try to think of examples for how you might apply each of the principles. You can do this both in terms of your overarching aims/mission and for a specific piece of research. You can then re-visit these reflections at the end of a project, as part of the evaluation and forward planning process.

The Everyday Creativity Model for Community-Engaged Research

Figure 1 (below) shows the four core principles of the model, considering how these could play out in practice. The principles operate within micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono ecosystems, drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. A solid grasp of the nature and functions of these interconnected ecosystems is necessary in order for research to be meaningful, effective and impactful. This means, for example, that researchers must seek to understand how the experiences of community members are shaped by: the immediate institutions and groups with which the individual interacts, such as the family and neighbourhood (microsystem); the interconnections between these systems (mesosystem); the institutions and groups that indirectly impact the individual, such as local government or funding bodies (exosystem); the broader cultural practices, norms and values that affect micro, meso and exosystems, such as those underpinning education systems and the media (macrosystem); and how these systems and interactions play out over time (chronosystem). This principles are discussed in greater detail below.

Figure 1: The Everyday Creativity Model for Community-Engaged Research



1. Grassroots/community-led

Research should be designed, carried out and applied with the needs and concerns of communities at its heart throughout. While this principle is easy to agree to for many community organisations, it can be more difficult to apply in practice. Being truly community-centred means questioning our established ways of working and being prepared to relinquish some of our power. This includes the power we have to control what research outputs look like and how they are used. We need to work closely with communities to ensure that our values are consistent with theirs and that we are all speaking the same language as one another. We should remember too that the communities we work with are often diverse and may not share the same

priorities, values and understandings as one another. Ensuring that our work is accessible and inclusive, then, means having a good understanding of the varied needs of different community members, including those who do not play an active part in the research, but are nonetheless impacted by it. This diversity is also a strength however; our communities house valuable expertise and knowledge that can add significant value to our work.

2. Synergistic with existing working practice

Everyday creativity is about the kinds of creative activities that people choose to engage in as part of their normal, day-to-day lives. It meets needs that individuals have identified themselves, rather than seeking to fulfil an agenda imposed by an outside agency. Similarly, community-engaged research should meet need/s that community members recognise and respond to. In order to be practicable and effective, research also needs to support organisational aims and work within the resource constraints of the organisation. As with the first principle, this brings advantages as well as constraints. In particular, working in harmony with existing organisational and community practice means adopting a strengths-based approach that draws on the skills, knowledge and resources that are already in place within the organisation and community. This is more likely to result in successful, impactful research.

3. Supports meaningful engagement and impact

We are interested in research that makes a real difference to the communities at its heart. This means taking a practical, problem-focused approach that clearly identifies and supports meaningful social change. In order for this to be the case, we must effectively communicate our learning to key stakeholders and find ways to really engage them with this learning. It is important that communities themselves are able to define what is meant by meaningful engagement and impact, and that they are supported to play an active role in determining their own futures, rather than having solutions handed to them by others. Engagement and impact do not derive solely from research outputs though. Rather, the research process itself can be an important site for cultivating self-determination and providing opportunities to flourish.

4. Flexible and innovative

Everyday creativity draws our attention to innovation and flexibility. These are vital when carrying out research that seeks to centre communities and respond to real-world problems. Having a wide range of different methods for data collection and analysis to draw on facilitates this flexibility, enabling us to use appropriate tools to respond to different research questions, needs and audiences. In addition, a hefty methodological toolkit helps us to respond sensitively to changing demands throughout, as new questions and concerns become apparent. Creativity, in this context, means keeping an open mind and listening to communities, rather than assuming we know all of the answers at the outset. This can be easier said than done!

Overview of the Process

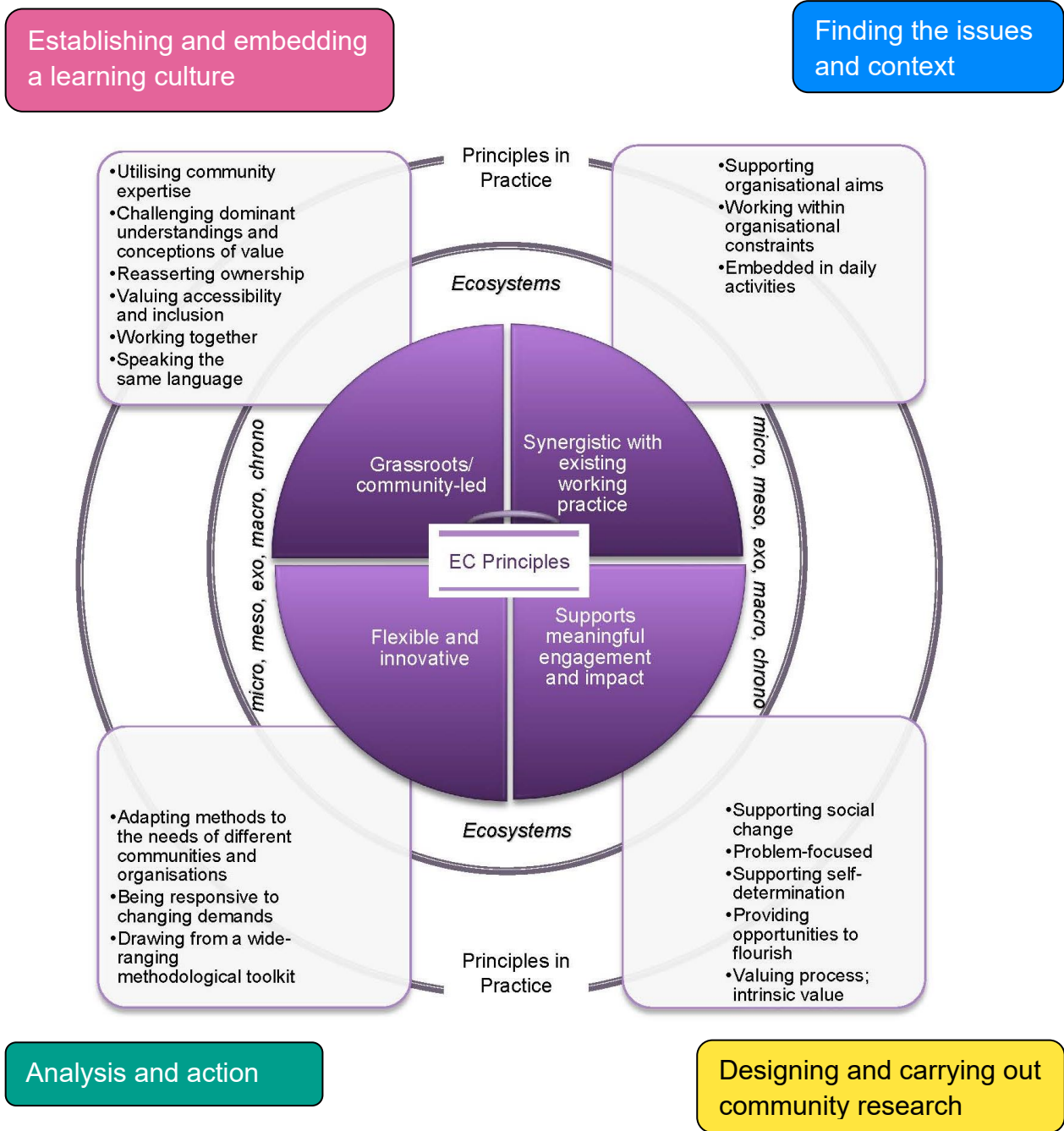
Figure 2: The four stages of analysis and action



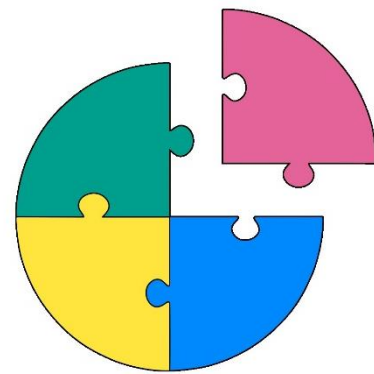
Mapping the Process onto the Model

Although all of the everyday creativity principles apply to each of the four stages, each stage resonates particularly strongly with a different section of the Everyday Creativity Model (Figure 1). The four stages of analysis and action (Figure 2) can therefore be mapped broadly onto the Everyday Creativity Model, as shown in Figure 3 (below).

Figure 3: Mapping the process onto the Everyday Creativity Model for Community-Engaged Research



Establishing and Embedding a Learning Culture



Topics

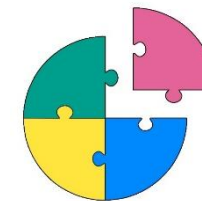
- Developing a community research team
- Who we are (individually and as a team)
- Strengths and values (individually and as a team)
- Knowledge, experience and skills (individually and as a team)
- Training needs and research capacity

Activities

Establishing our team and research capacity

- Project lead(s) amend Part One of Worksheet 1 as needed.
- Team members complete Part One of Worksheet 1 individually.
- Team meet to discuss their responses to Part One of Worksheet 1.
- Project lead(s) and team complete Part Two of Worksheet 1 together.

Worksheet 1: Establishing our Team and Research Capacity



Part One

Project Lead(s) should send the questions from Part One of this worksheet to the team members to complete individually before the meeting. Please note these are only guide questions and can be adjusted if needed.

What is my role in the team?

This can be your paid job or voluntary position.

What are my values? What is important to me personally, and within this role?

You may find it helpful to refer to the Everyday Creativity Model for Community-Engaged Research to answer this question, or to explore values and principles in greater depth.

What are some of my strengths?

For example, what would a friend, family member or colleague say are your best or strongest qualities?

Please share an example of something you have taken pride in, either in yourself or within your work. What is it about this example that made you feel proud?

What do I know about community research? What interests me about it? What are my concerns?

What research experience and/or training do I already have (if any)?

What skills and experience can I bring to this community research process?

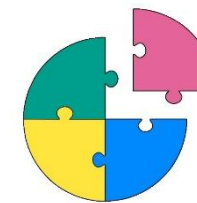
This could include local and community insight, or transferable skills like leadership, team working, time management, communication skills or computer literacy.

What research training needs do I have?

What else do you need to know or do, so you can be involved with this research process?

Part Two

To be completed as a team, following a discussion of individuals' responses to Part One of this worksheet.



As a team, what is important to us?

What are our values? What are our motivations? Why is our team important?

What are our strengths as a team, and as community researchers?

What are our concerns (if any) about carrying out community research?

What needs to happen before we can undertake a community research project?

Who do we need to involve or include? What skills are we missing? Do we have a shared understanding and purpose?

Given this, what are our priorities for action and next steps?

The Priority Triangle

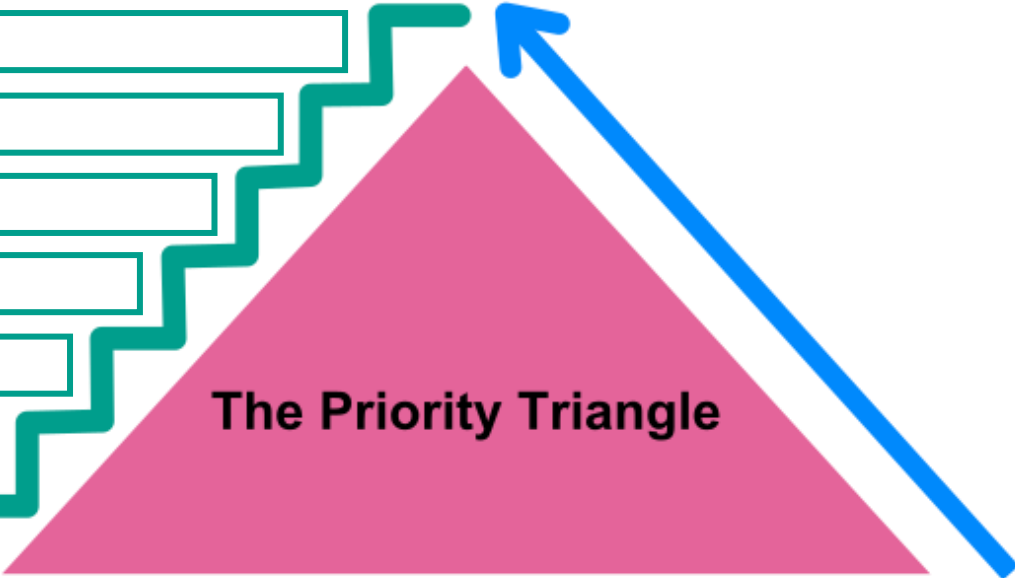
Complete a Priority Triangle (below) for each of your agreed priorities, by considering and adding the following details:

- A. Priority.** Which priority are we exploring?
- B. Ideal.** What do we want to happen?
- C. How do we get there?** What actions do we need to take to reach our ideal situation (B)? *List the actions in the boxes between C and B, as the next steps of your journey.*
- D. Where are we now?** How close are we to our ideal situation (B) at this moment? *Mark your current location on the arrow.*

A. Priority

B. Ideal

C. How do we get there?



C. How do we get there?

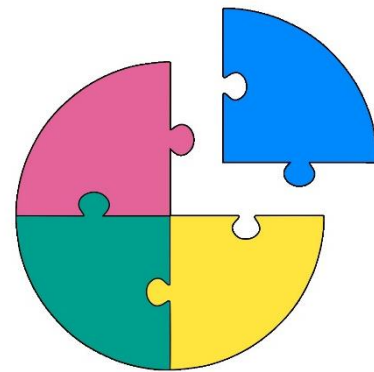
D. Where are we now?

What skills and knowledge do we currently have that will help us to achieve these priorities?

What training do we need to gain the skills and knowledge that we don't have yet?

Is there anyone who can help us with this? Where else can we look to for the training we need?

Finding the Issues and Context



Topics

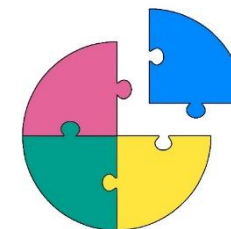
- Identifying the area of interest (community issues)
- Mapping existing knowledge
- Identifying gaps in knowledge

Activities

Setting the context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project lead(s) complete Part One of Worksheet 2 before team meeting. • Project lead(s) meet with team to complete Part Two of Worksheet 2.
Community insight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project lead(s) collate existing community insight and intelligence.
Reviewing academic literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project lead(s) complete Worksheet 3. • Project lead(s) update Worksheet 2 as needed, paying close attention to the sections cross-referenced with Worksheet 3.
Identifying gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project lead(s) take the revised Worksheet 2 back to team. • If no gaps are identified, complete Part Three of Worksheet 2 and move onto "Analysis and action" stage. • If gaps are identified by the team or community, or if there are notable differences in the way the issue is understood by these groups, revisit the final two questions in Part Two of Worksheet 2, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge gaps (what do we still need to know?) • Pathways to change (what needs to be put in place for change to occur?) • Quality and availability of evidence to support claims (how do we know?)



Worksheet 2: Setting the Context



Part One

Project Lead(s) should complete Part One of this worksheet before the team meeting.

Area of interest

Organisational context (microsystem)

What are the aims of our organisation, department, group and/or team? What is our purpose? Looking at your organisational governing documents, development plans, mission statement and/or funded activity plan may help you answer this question.

Community context (meso- and exosystems)

Given our lived experience, previous learning and existing knowledge, what do we already know about the wider community/ neighbourhood, and what is happening locally? What do we know about other groups and organisations working in this area? What other projects, services and/or activities are we aware of?

Wider context (exo- and macrosystems)

What policies or frameworks will inform our work? You may want to refer to local government strategic plans, national policies and/or professional standard frameworks here.

--

Main guiding themes

Use your answers to Worksheet 2 so far to identify areas of significance and important themes that need more thought. Look for shared or common features that appear across multiple contexts. Some examples of what those themes may relate to include: the kinds of people you aim to work with or for, the issues they face, any underlying factors affecting those issues, and shared (or conflicting) values.

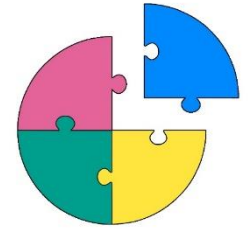
Intended outcomes

Consider outcomes you are already working towards, as well as new outcomes you have identified.

Outcome 1	Outcome 2
Outcome 3	Outcome 4

Part Two

To be completed in as much detail as possible in a team meeting. Leave gaps for unknown elements if necessary. You can always return to this later.



What are the community priorities?

How do we know?

Whose voices are represented here? Are any key perspectives missing? Do we have both statistical data to back up these observations, and data that gives a rich feel for understandings and experiences from the community and other key stakeholders? Who collected the data, and how might this have shaped what we know? Do we need more of either type of data?

Who should be involved?

List your stakeholders, including other organisations, services, groups, and community activists.

What is currently happening? What is working well?

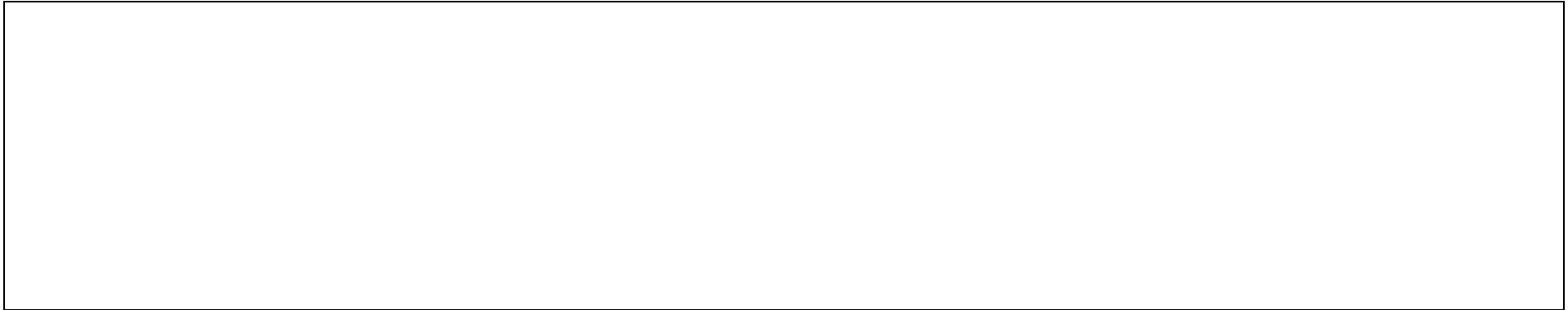
How do we know?

Whose voices are represented here? Are any key perspectives missing? Do we have both statistical data to back up these observations, and data that gives a rich feel for understandings and experiences from the community and other key stakeholders? Who collected the data, and how might this have shaped what we know? Do we need more of either type of data?

What don't we know?

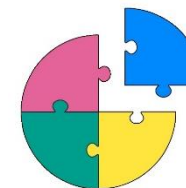
Where are there gaps in our knowledge? Whose voices are not present? How current (or outdated) is our knowledge? When did we last check in with the community? Are the priorities still the same as they were?

What do we need to find out?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write their answers to the question above.

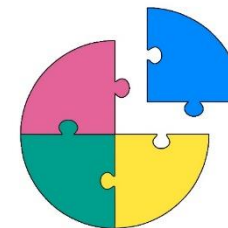
Part Three

Once you have confirmed there is sufficient knowledge and evidence for your project (Parts One and Two of this worksheet), including filling in any outstanding gaps (where applicable), you can complete this project activity plan in a team meeting. You may find it useful to refer to a logic model (such as [this one by Evaluation Support Scotland](#)) while you do this.



Priority	Resources Including people, materials, and locations	Activities to complete	Outcomes/outputs	Indicator measures How will we know we've achieved the outcomes?

Worksheet 3: Reviewing the Academic Literature



Part One

Project Lead(s) to complete Part One, using information from Worksheet 2.

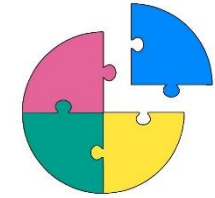
Guiding themes

Add the main guiding themes from Worksheet 2 to the table below.

Once you have identified your guiding themes, use them as search terms on a search engine like [Google Scholar](#) to find associated academic literature. Using more specific search terms will find more relevant texts, so try adding terms relating to the geographical locations or groups you want to focus on, or limit/sort the search results by the publication date to find more recent literature.

Once you have found some texts you want to read, you will need to find a way to access them. This can be difficult without access to a university library, but not impossible! You may gain access to texts by emailing the authors directly, checking research websites such as [academia.edu](#) or [ResearchGate](#), adding “.pdf” to your search terms, or searching for the document’s Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number (a unique code given to electronic publications).

Remember to be mindful about how many texts you read. You aren’t trying to find out everything there is to know about a particular topic, you just need to identify the key ideas and findings that will help you build the bigger picture. The [Further Resources](#) contains more information about carrying out a literature review.



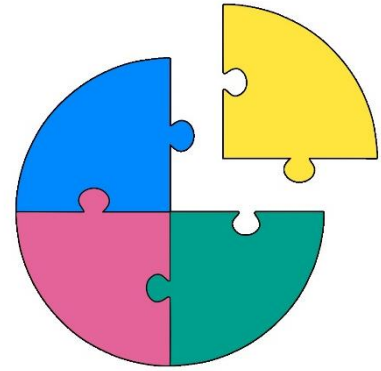
Part Two

Project Lead(s) to complete Part Two using findings from your literature review, and information from relevant sections of Worksheet 2.)

Source Title, author(s), and where/when it was published	Relevant Theme(s)	Method How do we know? Whose voices are represented here? Do the data use numbers, interviews or something else? Does the text give a rich feel for people's understandings and experiences?	What does this text suggest is important for similar communities? What works and why? What needs to be in place for change to occur?

Do these texts identify any outstanding gaps in our knowledge, or highlight any relevant areas for future research and development? What do we still need to know?

Designing and Carrying out Community Research



Topics

- Designing the community research project
- Learning about research methods
- Ethics and safeguarding
- Carrying out new research

Activities

Choosing your data collection method(s)

- Use Flowcharts 1 to 4 (below) and [Further Resources](#) to help you select the methods you want to use as a team.

Designing a study

- Project lead(s) complete Part One of Worksheet 4.
- Project lead(s) complete Part Two of Worksheet 4, either on their own or with the team.

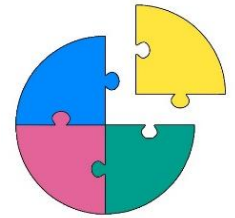
Ethics and safeguarding

- Complete Part Three of Worksheet 4 as a team.

Carry out new research

- Complete any further training needed for your team to feel confident in using your agreed methods.
- Work carefully as a team to ensure a trauma-informed approach to collecting and analysing your data.

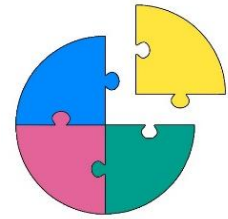
Choosing your Data Collection and Analysis Method(s)



The flowcharts below will guide you through some key decisions that will help you choose which of the major data collection methods are likely to be most suitable for your research. We recommend using multiple data collection methods in your research, including examples from the non-exhaustive lists below and/or the additional prompts and methods from the [Further Resources](#).

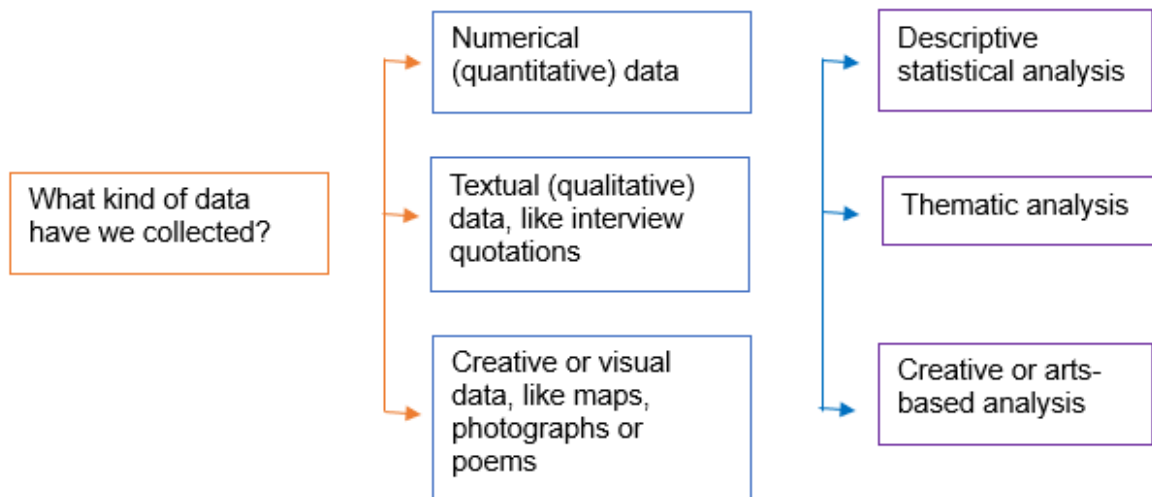
Flowchart 1: Deciding on Data Collection Methods



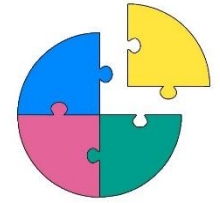


Flowchart 2: Deciding on Data Analysis Methods

As with the data collection flowcharts, the methods contained in Flowchart 2 (below) are only indicative and can be supplemented with additional approaches contained in the [Further Resources](#). You may choose to use a combination of methods; particularly if you have used multiple data collection methods and/or a questionnaire inviting written and numerical responses (which we would describe as using 'mixed methods'). You may also choose to change the form of your data at this point, for example by turning written (textual) data into numerical data by grouping responses into categories and counting the number of responses given for each category.



Worksheet 4: Designing a Community Research Project



Part One

Project Lead(s) to complete this section.

Area of interest

Copy this from the Part One of Worksheet 2.

What question(s) do we need to answer?

How will we find our answers? What method(s) will we use to collect data?

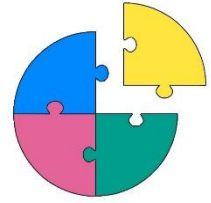
See the [Further Resources](#) for more information.

How will we analyse the data? What will the data we collect be able to tell us?

See the [Further Resources](#) for more information.

Part Two

This section can be completed by the Project Lead(s) alone, or as a group activity with the team.



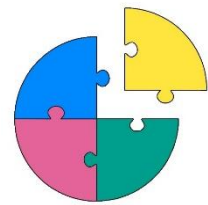
Where will we collect data?

Think about people in the community, staff members, and online forums. Be as detailed as you can, including the number of participants/outreach posts, how you will go about finding the people and forums, and who will carry out this work.

Who will analyse the data?

Will this be done by one person, as a group activity, or shared between several people?

What else do we need to learn before we are ready to use these methods? Do we need to access any training or other resources and, if so, what are our plans for this?



Part Three

Complete this section as a group activity with the team.

Creating an inclusive culture that cares for everyone (including ourselves, our research team, participants and communities) requires a trauma-informed approach. It is therefore important to spend some time thinking about how our practice is, or could be, trauma-informed.

Work through the (non-exhaustive) list of prompts below, thinking about the individual and group identities of your team, research participants, and wider community. Consider how these characteristics (and the intersections between them) may impact on people's ability to feel safety, belonging and purpose in your project. These factors can impact the power that people have within the project and their lives, which in turn affects the actions they are able to take. Take some time to think about the impact(s) of:

- Age
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Race
- Religion
- (Dis)ability and neurodiversity
- Language
- Social class
- Economic status/wealth

How will we ensure the physical, emotional and psychological safety of everyone who is involved in the project? What can't we control here?

How will we ensure that everyone who wants to participate feels included and a sense of belonging to the project?

How can we include people in different ways, and who can't we include at this point?

How do we ensure that everyone who is involved has agency and feels a sense of purpose in the project?

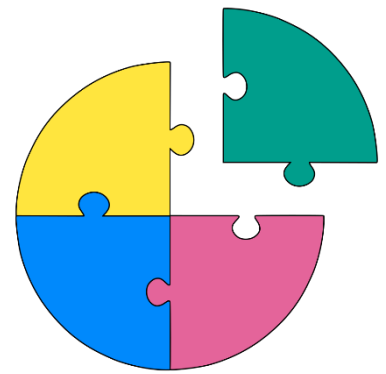
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Ethical and Safeguarding Issues

Complete the table below, referencing your relevant policies. Additional guidance on research ethics can be found in the [Further Resources](#).

What issues does this raise?	How will we protect against this?	What will we do if something happens?

Analysis and Action



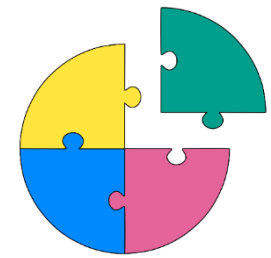
Topics

- Summarising the data
- Sense-checking the data
- Sharing learning
- Planning action

Activities

Recording findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete Worksheet 5 as a team.
Consulting the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project lead(s) present Worksheet 5 to the community to consult on findings, focusing on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do these findings make sense?• Are the findings useful?• Is anything missing? Is there anything else we need to know or do?• If no gaps are identified, move on to complete Worksheet 6 as a team.• If gaps in knowledge are identified that relate to the problem you are currently looking at, return to the “Designing and carrying out community research” stage.• If new issues or problems are identified, return to “Finding the issues and context” stage.
Sharing learning: taking action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete Part Three of Worksheet 4 as a team.
Carry out new research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete any further training needed for your team to feel confident in using your agreed methods.• Work carefully as a team to ensure a trauma-informed approach to collecting and analysing your data.



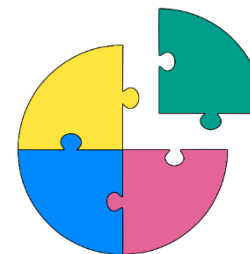


Worksheet 5: Recording and Analysing Findings

Complete this with your team as a group activity.

Research question	Headline findings from data analysis	How do we know? What kind of data does this come from (such as interview quotes, or population statistics)? What is particularly persuasive (for example: key statistics, or emotive quotes)? Add hyperlinks or references for any relevant details stored elsewhere (such as charts or lists of key quotes).

Worksheet 6: Sharing Learning and Taking Action



Part One

To be completed in a team meeting.

Who do we need to share our findings with?

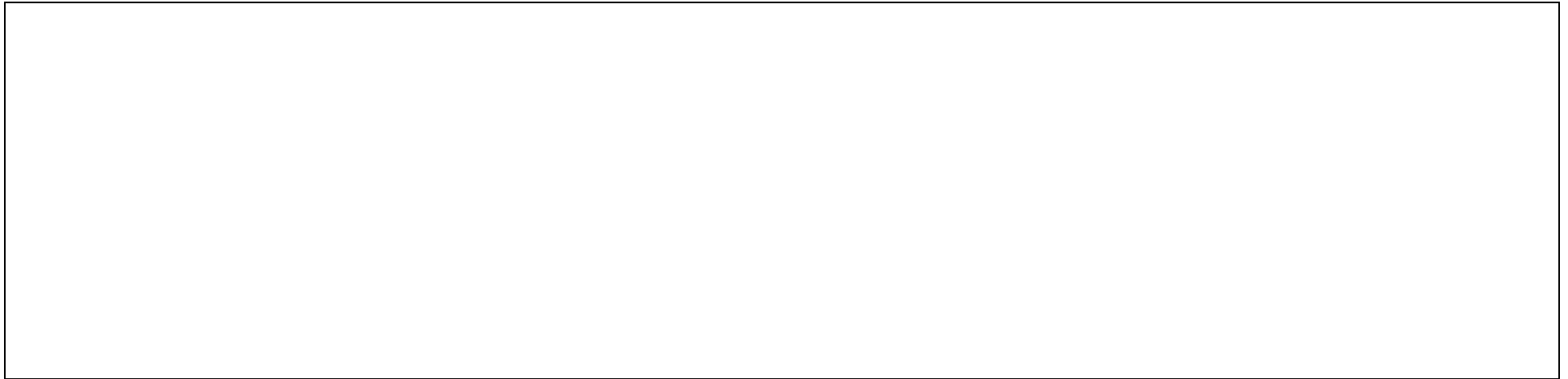
Include all research participants, anyone impacted by the research, and people with the power to influence the issues you care about in relation to this research.

What are the most important findings to share with these groups?

Use your responses in Worksheet 5 to help answer this question. You might also wish to highlight different things for different groups.

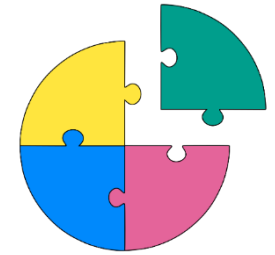
What is the most effective way of communicating with these groups?

Think about the best time(s), place(s) and format(s) you could choose to present your learning. These might be different for different stakeholder groups. Ensure you think of this as a two-way process and pay close attention to how you will work to ensure that other people actively engage with your research.



Part Two

To be completed in team meeting.



To what extent have the priorities identified in Worksheet 1 been addressed?

If you have identified any new priorities over the course of the research, you can add these in here too.

Priority	Areas addressed in research	Areas still to be addressed

Further Resources

This non-exhaustive list includes some easily accessible, online resources. An online search will also provide more examples of books and articles about research methods, and many universities also have their own websites for sharing data and publications.

There are a number of organisations that offer research methods training, including the [National Centre for Research Methods](#). We also recommend reading the latest edition of [Doing Your Research Project Guide](#) by Judith Bell, Stephen Waters and Helen Johnson, as an accessible guide to all stages of the research process for new researchers.

All website links below (in blue, underlined text) were correct when this pack was written. If you find they are no longer working, we recommend using Google to search for the key terms in the relevant description.

Creative research methods

- The [Collaborative Poetics' Resource Pack](#) and supporting resources for participatory and arts-based research.
- The National Centre for Research Methods' [podcast on Creative Research Methods](#).

Data repositories

- [Harvard University's Dataverse](#) (US-based, but with international reach).
- The UK [Office for National Statistics](#).
- The [UK Data Service](#)
- [Zenodo](#) (Europe-based).

Focus groups

- [Methods@Manchester Focus Groups](#) at the University of Manchester.

Interviews

- [Collaborative Poetics' audio-visual resources](#), and Collaborative Poetics' Resource Pack on [Writing Interview Schedules \(pages 185-205 and 225-226\) and Effective Interviewing \(pages 206-224\)](#).
- The National Centre for Research Methods' [podcast on qualitative interviews](#).

Academic literature reviews

- Collaborative Poetics' Resource Pack on [Doing an Academic Literature Search \(pages 123-126\)](#).

Questionnaires and surveys

- Guidance on [best practice in questionnaire design](#) by the Imperial College London.
- Qualtrics' [guide on how to design good questionnaires](#).

Research ethics: guidance and codes of practice

- The British Psychological Society's [Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines](#).
- The British Sociological Association's [Guidelines on Ethical Research](#).
- Collaborative Poetics' Resource Pack on [Ethical Issues and Concerns \(pages 24-27\)](#).
- The Social Research Association's [Ethical Guidelines](#).

Research questions

- Collaborative Poetics' Resource Pack on [Writing a Research Question \(pages 21-23\)](#).

Statistical analysis and data presentation

- [Andy Field's statistics website](#); especially [the section on descriptive statistics](#).
- TasCOSS Library's resource on [presenting quantitative data](#).

Thematic analysis (for qualitative data)

- [Collaborative Poetics' audio-visual resources](#), and Collaborative Poetics' Resource Pack on [Thematic Analysis \(pages 227-271\)](#).

About the Authors

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Nicole Monney is the Co-Production Manager for [the Trust for Developing Communities](#). A highly skilled development worker, with achievements spanning from executive and strategic leadership roles, program building and management, to frontline delivery and casework. Nicole has extensive experience working with communities disproportionately affected by social and economic inequality, is committed to principles of social justice and social equity, and fundamentally believes that people are the experts in their own lives. Nicole is a member of the Brighton and Sussex Medical School 'Time for Autism' Review Group and a champion for neurodivergence and autism.



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