



Introduction to co-production and participatory research

Workbook

In partnership with Alain Thomas Consultancy and the Communities First Support Network



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Introduction

This programme forms part of a capacity building programme which seeks to introduce participants to the theory and practice of community consultation / research. The programme has been piloted and tested with various different community groups and other relevant people and through the feedback provided by these people this resource has been developed as an effective approach to community engagement and consultation.

The programme is organised under four main headings

Theory

This will give participants a firm grounding in the theoretical debates that frame co-production and participatory approaches in the social research context particularly in relation to ethical considerations and conflicts.

It will equip participants with an understanding of the principles and practices of co-production in agency / 'community' partnerships, as understood from both the agency and 'community' perspectives.

It will give participants the necessary grounding to consider the application of specific methods in relation to co-produced / participatory research, assisting them in the design and practice of co-produced research in their continued development.

Practice:

This will introduce participants to the design and practice of research that is co-produced between academic/ professional and community organisations.

Through practice based workshops hosted and guided by experts in co-production, participatory and community action research across the disciplines of social sciences and community development, alongside interactive demonstrations/showcases participants will develop the skills required to design and conduct method specific co-produced social research, with specific consideration for the application of ethics in practice.

Participants will have the opportunity to develop and hone their research skills through an in-depth exploration of the academic, practical and ethical considerations relating to using a specific (self-selected) method and hands on experience of co-produced research.

They will explore how to select and develop methods appropriate to their research/ consultation objectives and questions as well as differing options for recording data.

There will be a large practical element and participants will be expected to contribute to the design and application of a piece of co-produced research which uses methods drawn from the social sciences and/or arts and humanities.

The research conducted as part of this unit will form the basis for unit 3: evaluation of co-production for those participants who wish to continue their studies.

Evaluation:

This will introduce participants to the evaluation and reporting of co-produced participatory research.

Through practice based workshops hosted and guided by experts in participatory community action research from across the disciplines of social science and community development alongside participants will develop the skills required to conduct basic data analysis, draw out themes and frame these within relevant conceptual debates.

Participants will have the opportunity to use their own data to create reports, exploring the differences between academic and other reporting and examining 'alternative' reporting methods such as arts-based and multi-media outputs.

Participants will be introduced to reflexivity as a method for examining research processes, using their own standpoint to critically considering methodology and practice.

Presentation of research findings:

This section will introduce participants to some of the debates surrounding engagement and knowledge transfer and production with 'communities' including notions of 'community', 'representation', 'engagement' and 'knowledge production'.

Focusing specifically on the social sciences and arts this will explore how to engage, communicate and inform the various communities that have been involved in the co-production process. It will provide a very brief introduction to some of the philosophical debates which ground social research and explore how these frame some of the current approaches to research partnerships.

Key readings:

- "Towards Co-Production in Research with Communities". Connected Communities: Durose, Beebeejaun, Rees, Richardson and Richardson.
- "Philosophies of social science: The classic and contemporary readings." Delanty, Gerard, and Piet Strydom (2003).
- "Researching social life" Gilbert, Nigel, ed. . Sage, 2008.
- "Becoming a Reflexive Researcher-Using Our Selves in Research" Etherington, Kim. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004.

The theory of participatory (action) research

First things first:

What is research ?

The systematic investigation into and study of sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.

Researching together or participatory research has many names:

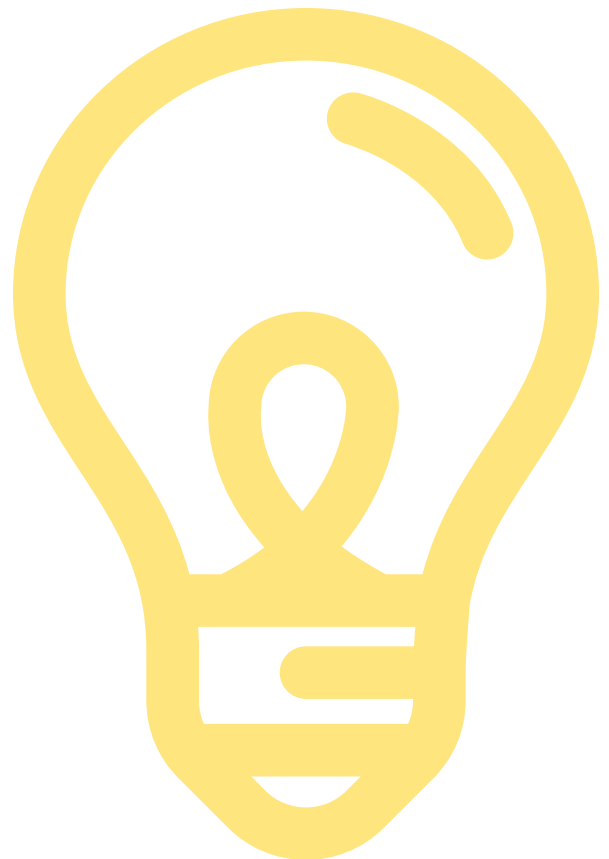
- Participatory action research
- Co-inquiry
- Co-production

How is researching together different?

- In traditional research there is a clear distinction between the 'researcher' and the 'subject' the researched.
- The co-inquiry approach involves working with people throughout the research stages in order to achieve equality between participants regarding their input to the research focus, design, methods and results.

Research for Change not just for Knowledge (Action Research)

- Although traditional research has tended just to try to understand something or report on something participatory "Action" research is focussed on actually changing things, particularly promoting social change.



Four main principles of a participatory approach

Cooperation:

- The idea of 'working with rather than on people'. This means some form of meaningful collaboration – a two-way conversation – between participants working together on a research issue that is of interest and importance to those involved.

Participation:

- A participatory worldview. This means a worldview based on participation and cooperation rather than separation and competition. It is based on the idea that all aspects of life are connected and that humans are active subjects.

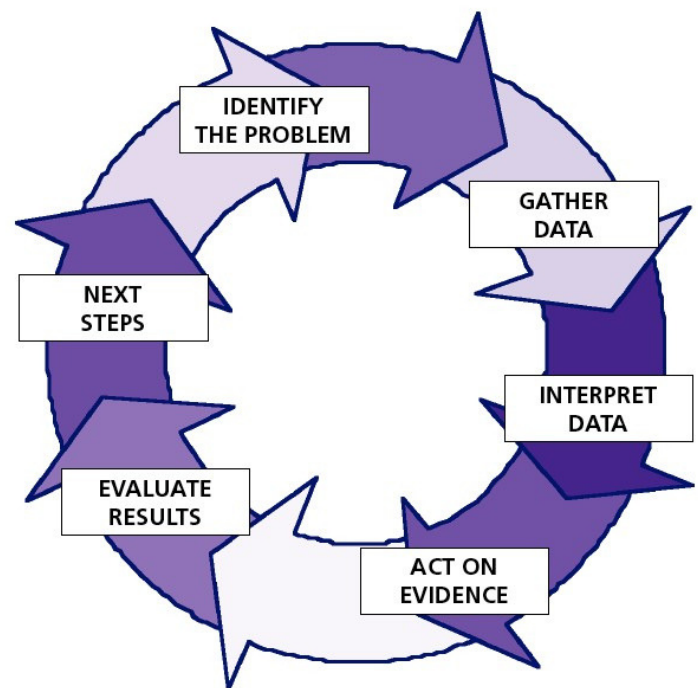
Equality:

- Equality in the research process. This entails mutual respect and appreciation between all participants and valuing all contributions, including expertise by experience.

Co-production:

- New research knowledge is 'co-produced'. This means that all participants work together on a research issue without privileging one type of knowledge over another, and they produce the research together and have co-ownership of it.

And we don't just do it once:



Some of the Phases of Systematic Action Research

- Identifying an area or focus;
- Collecting data;
- Organizing data;
- Analyzing and interpreting data;
- Taking action

Reflection on learning

Personal Development and Evaluation Records

Learning Outcome 1 - Day 1

Please show your starting point at the beginning of the relevant session.

At the end of the session please show how far you feel you have progressed.

- 1 I don't know about this
- 2 I have some knowledge about this
- 3 I know about this
- 4 I know a lot about this

Learning Outcome 1: Understand the theory of co-production

Start of session	1	2	3	4
End of session	1	2	3	4

Please evidence the scores you have given above for example by writing comments about them below, or attaching photographs, or inserting a link/reference to an audio recording.

Research ethics

- Doing things in a right and fair way is called ethics. So a right way is ethical and a wrong way unethical.
- When people do research together, it must be done in a right and fair way, it must be ethical.

The Importance of doing things properly

- All research needs to be:
- Systematic
- Fair
- Safely (So no one is hurt by the research either directly or indirectly)

Some of the things we need to think about when we do research together.

- Who has the power and control?
- How are people's stories used, recorded and kept?
- How do we include the things people want in the way the research is done?

Three Examples of Ethical Areas to Consider:

What harm or good does the research do?

- The rights people have to information and privacy.
- How researchers behave and present themselves

Basic Ground Rules: Respecting Each Other:

- Agree to treat each other well and with respect.
- Make sure everyone is listened to
- Realise some people will have different ways of seeing things.

How do we include people and treat them fairly

- Find ways to include people from different backgrounds and beliefs, especially people who are often left out
- Do something about anyone behaving badly or not treating people equally and fairly
- Making sure information and meetings can include and be understood by everyone.



This means we will

Help and support people to take part in making decisions

- Think about what skills and interests people have
- Share power more equally
- Use words everyone understands

Learning from each other

- This means we will all:
- Respect the knowledge and views of other people.
- Have time for people to share what we have learnt
- Working equally with others on using what the research finds to plan on what should be done next.

Confidentiality

When you are getting information from people you know or live near you must be very careful about keeping it private

If someone says something they do not want anyone else to know that must be kept private and not be used in the research, unless it can be changed so no one can ever know who said it

Social media is not private so let's be careful out there.

Limits to Confidentiality

- When you are getting information from people you know or live near you must be very careful about keeping it private
- If someone says something they do not want anyone else to know that must be kept private and not be used in the research, unless it can be changed so no one can ever know who said it
- Social media is not private so let's be careful out there.

Recap: Ethics

- Nobody can give you a comprehensive guide that can cover all aspects of ethical behaviour in research in all situations:
- But treat people with respect, honesty and look out for the safety of yourself and others and you won't go far wrong.

But we are all working together

Note taking and record keeping

Why good note-taking is important

Effective note-taking is an important practice in order to achieve a systematic approach to research. As you go about your research you will gather a lot of new knowledge and you need to develop reliable mechanisms for recording and retrieving it when necessary. But note-taking is also a learning process in itself, helping you to process and understand the information you receive.

Good note-taking...

- Helps you to focus on what is important in what you are hearing
- Helps you to understand and remember material, and make connections
- Helps you structure and identify emerging themes in what you are researching.

There can be problems...

- Note-taking can distract you from listening to what you are being told and interacting with those you are talking to.
- Note-taking can be time intensive.
- You can end up with lots of notes that you have to spend twice the amount of time going through to find out the important points!

Developing effective note-taking practices will help you to avoid these problems, and make your research and analysis less stressful and time-consuming.

Making your note-taking more effective

The two key principles are:

- [1] Be meticulous and accurate
- [2] Be active rather than passive.



Being meticulous and accurate about recording who said what and when and aim at identifying direct quotations that succinctly sum up what is being said “gold dust”. This means:

- Always recording the necessary details for any source you use **as soon as practically possible**. Don't wait till you've finished doing a set of interviews - you may forget what was said or the context.
- Having a clear system so that you know which of your notes are paraphrases of someone else's direct quotes or your own reflections.

The most effective note-taking is active not passive. Active analysis as you are going through the research process helps you to make meaning from what you are hearing rather than simply recording what is being said

Active note-taking means:

- Thinking about what themes are emerging from what is being said.
- Looking for answers to research questions that are emerging about the research topic
- Looking for themes and connections within the topic you're researching and to other topics.
- Writing some notes in your own words – reflecting what is being said together with your own explanation of what something says or means
- Recording direct quotes when it's important to have the exact words that someone else has used particularly when it succinctly sums up a theme or connection.

Making notes user-friendly

The most effective note-taking is active not passive. Active analysis as you are going through the research process helps you to make meaning from what you are hearing rather than simply recording what is being said

- Make your notes **brief** and be **selective**
- Keep them **well-spaced** so you can see individual points and add more details later if necessary
- **Show the relationships** between the main points (link with a line along which you write how they relate to each other, for instance or use highlighter pens)
- Use **your own words** to summarise - imagine someone has asked you "so what did x say about this?" and write down your reply
- **Illustrations, examples and diagrams** can help to put ideas in a practical context
- **Make them memorable** using: colour, pattern, highlighting and underlining
- **Read through** to make sure they're clear - will you or others involved still understand them when you come to do the analysis?
- **File with care!** - use a logical system so you can find them when you need them, but keep it simple or you won't use it.

Here are some points to remember for making your research notes user friendly

Use loads of HEADINGS for main ideas and concepts

Use subheadings for points within those ideas

Stick to one point per line

Underline key words

You can use numbering to keep yourself organised

Use abbreviations - and don't worry about using full sentences

Leave plenty of SPACE - for adding detail and for easy reading

Reflection on learning

Personal Development and Evaluation Records

Learning Outcome 2 - Day 1

Please show your starting point at the beginning of the relevant session.

At the end of the session please show how far you feel you have progressed.

- 1 I don't know about this
- 2 I have some knowledge about this
- 3 I know about this
- 4 I know a lot about this

Learning Outcome 2: To understand the importance of good quality recording e.g. through notes, recording votes, keeping a tally sheet etc.

Start of session	1	2	3	4
End of session	1	2	3	4

Please evidence the scores you have given above for example by writing comments about them below, or attaching photographs, or inserting a link/reference to an audio recording.

Participatory research techniques

Learning Outcome 3 - Day 2

Please show your starting point at the beginning of the relevant session.

At the end of the session please show how far you feel you have progressed.

- 1 I don't know about this
- 2 I have some knowledge about this
- 3 I know about this
- 4 I know a lot about this

Learning Outcome 3: To learn about different participatory techniques and understand how to use them

Start of session	1	2	3	4
End of session	1	2	3	4

Please evidence the scores you have given above for example by writing comments about them below, or attaching photographs, or inserting a link/reference to an audio recording.

Planning a participatory research approach

In planning a participatory research initiative it is important to adopt the same ethos of collaboration, co-operation and co-production that underpins all other aspects of participatory approaches. As outlined in the theory section of this booklet this involves agreeing on an objective, implementing a plan of action, reflecting on that action and amending that action based on the reflection.. Therefore in planning a participatory approach there are a number of other phases that need to be considered:

Forming a collaborative inquiry group

Engaging a diverse group of community members

- Developing the inquiry project
- Framing the research question
- Designing the research project (methods and planning)
- Establishing collective ownership and procedures
- Reflecting on group processes

Creating the conditions for group learning

- Agreeing on a methods for collaboration and power sharing
- Repeating cycles of action and reflection to generate learning

Acting on the inquiry question

- Putting plans and designs into practice
- Keeping reflective records
- Respecting ownership of group ideas
- Questioning honestly and differing perspectives
- Putting dialogue and reflection in to practice

Making meaning (capturing and interpreting the group's experiences)

- Understanding and sharing experiences
- Selecting methods for interpreting diverse experiences
- Avoiding common assumptions and questioning the status quo and established ways of doing things
- Checking validity by considering multiple perspectives and methods (Triangulation)
- Celebrating meaningful collaboration and congratulating those involved.
- Communicating and disseminating research findings to various audiences in appropriate ways

Continue the cycle by reconsidering the group, recreating the conditions for group learning, and so on.



Participatory research techniques

Learning Outcome 4 - Day 2

Please show your starting point at the beginning of the relevant session.

At the end of the session please show how far you feel you have progressed.

- 1 I don't know about this
- 2 I have some knowledge about this
- 3 I know about this
- 4 I know a lot about this

Learning Outcome 4: To be able to plan a piece of participatory research

Start of session	1	2	3	4
End of session	1	2	3	4

Please evidence the scores you have given above for example by writing comments about them below, or attaching photographs, or inserting a link/reference to an audio recording.

Analysing qualitative data in participatory analysis

What is Data Analysis?

- Establish new ideas and concepts
- Systematic approach
- Verifiable results

Analysis is like detective work and different people use different words

- Comparison
- Context
- Specificity

Analysis must be systematic

- Sequencing questions
- Coding the data i.e. attaching a label to allow axial coding
- No set limits to the number of codes attached/frequency of application
- Participant verification
- Debriefing between moderator & assistant immediately following focus group.

Analysis requires

- Time
- Simultaneous with data collection
- Analysis jeopardised by delay
- Care in scheduling

Analysis should enlighten

- Meant to raise understanding
- Provide interpretations rather than just findings
- Seek alternative explanations

Analysis is a process of comparison

- Compare data within results
- Compare ideas & views
- Compare rival explanations
- Seek disconfirming analysis
- Explain outliers, unusual cases and minority views
- There may be no unifying views except that participants express different views - that is also meaningful!
- Analysis is based on patterns of identification
- Not everything is worthy of analysis or can be analysed
- Beware of personal bias or pre-existing opinions
- You are the voice of the participants
- Visual representation of reality
- Leave the numbers out



Reflection on learning

Learning Outcome 6 - Day 5

Please show your starting point at the beginning of the relevant session.

At the end of the session please show how far you feel you have progressed.

- 1 I don't know about this
- 2 I have some knowledge about this
- 3 I know about this
- 4 I know a lot about this

Learning Outcome 6: To be able to analyse information gathered by using participatory techniques

Start of session	1	2	3	4
End of session	1	2	3	4

Please evidence the scores you have given above for example by writing comments about them below, or attaching photographs, or inserting a link/reference to an audio recording.

Capacity building programme

Learning Outcome 7 - Day 5

Please show your starting point at the beginning of the relevant session.

At the end of the session please show how far you feel you have progressed.

- 1 I don't know about this
- 2 I have some knowledge about this
- 3 I know about this
- 4 I know a lot about this

Learning Outcome 7: To be able to present and disseminate findings from an analysis of information gathered by using participatory techniques.

Start of session	1	2	3	4
End of session	1	2	3	4

Please evidence the scores you have given above for example by writing comments about them below, or attaching photographs, or inserting a link/reference to an audio recording.

