

An A to Z of participation

This A-Z covers both topics about participation, and some of the techniques which can be used along the way. Because the field is wide, the entries vary, for example:

- Some entries are self-contained, others are signposts to more detailed sections or further reading.
- Some techniques relate to the general question of how to approach participation, others deal with situation further down the process when a group or groups are acting together.

Generally the items are written for someone who is starting or managing a participation process, although some should be helpful for anyone seeking to develop groups or organisations.

Access

If you aim to ensure all sections of the community can be involved in meetings check these possible barriers to participation:

- Timing. Is this convenient?
- Place. Do people feel comfortable about the venue?
- Child care responsibilities. Should a crèche be arranged?
- Age. Should you go to meet children, young people, older people at schools, clubs etc – rather than expect them to come to your meetings?
- Formality and literacy. Will people be put off by the style of meetings and expectation of high levels of literacy and confidence?
- Cultural/racial issues. Should literature be translated? What cultural factors might be relevant to the timing and place of meetings, and provision of refreshments?
- Disability. Is the building accessible to people with disabilities? Should a signer be provided at meetings?
- Poverty. Should expenses be paid in some instances? Can you reassure people they won't asked to put their hands in their pockets?

Access is more than making it easy to meet or understand materials. For example do 'community leaders' reflect the interests of those they may claim to represent?

See also *Cliques, Equal opportunities, Listening, Special Events, Starting where people are at.*

Accountability

The lowest level of Government is the individual.

As people become involved and take a lead during participation processes, there may be questions about who they represent – and to whom they are accountable. Being accountable in an organisation means being answerable to those who give authority or responsibility – more senior staff, a management committee, members or perhaps funders.

When there is no formal organisational structure, accountability issues may be handled by clarifying roles and setting up temporary structures when you need to make decisions and take action. This a key issue for the practitioner managing a participation process.

See also *CATWOE, Leadership, Role of the*

Accountability checklist

In order to clarify your accountability consider:

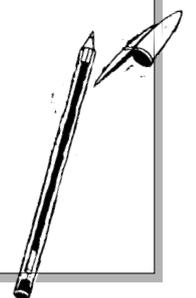
- Who can stop you doing something – or whose permission do you have to ask. When and why?
- How would you describe the part you are playing?
- Who will be affected by your actions, and what is their attitude likely to be?
- What authority do you feel other people should have in order to make decisions and take action?

practitioner, Stakeholders.

Acting together

The level of participation of Acting Together may involve short-term collaboration or forming more permanent partnerships with other interests. It is appropriate:

- When one party cannot achieve what they want on their own.
- The various interests involved all get some extra benefit from Acting Together.
- There is commitment to the time and effort needed to develop a partnership.



Action planning

After meetings draw up an action plan showing:

- The action or task (what are we trying to do)
- What has to be done first and by when.
- What has to be done second, third etc.
- Who is responsible.
- What resources of information, money, equipment, etc may be needed.
- How will you know you have achieved it – the criteria for success.

Action	By when?	Who?	Resources	Success criteria
1st task	By when?	By whom?	Money, tools?	OK because
2nd task	By when?	By whom?	Money, tools?	OK because
3rd task	By when?	By whom?	Money, tools?	OK because

Choose a different level if:

- One party holds all the power and resources and uses this to impose its own solutions (consider Information or Consultation).
- The commitment to partnership is only skin deep (consider Information or Consultation).
- People want to have a say in making decisions, but not a long term stake in carrying out solutions (consider Deciding Together).

See the section on *Where do you stand?* for more detail.

Action plans

Ideas won't keep, something must be done about them.

Alfred North Whitehead.

Action plans provide the answer to the question 'what do we do next?' They are 'to do' lists covering the what, who and when of next steps, and should be the result of workshops or other meetings where you make decisions during a participation process.

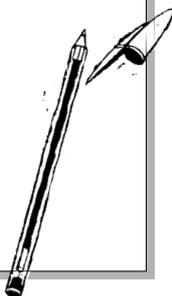
Activists

It is a general error to imagine the loudest complainers for the public to be the most anxious for its welfare.

Edmund Burke.

Activists are people who are actively involved in projects in their community, perhaps as volunteer workers or members of committees. Without their commitment little would be achieved. However, participation processes limited only to activists are unlikely to be representative or 'empowering': it is those who are not activists who need greatest support to become involved and achieve what they want.

See also *Access, Cliques, Community leaders, Empowerment.*



Administrative systems

I must create a system, or be enslaved by another man's.

William Blake

Blake probably had something grander in mind than filling a filing cabinet, but the principle applies. If you are working with any organisational structure, whether temporary or permanent, during the participation process you will need an administrative system which will involve some or all of the following:

- A card index box or database for contacts.
- A diary.
- Correspondence between members of the group, officials, funders, consultants etc.
- Minutes of meetings and action lists.
- Plans and proposals.
- Reference material.
- A filing system.

Without some sort of system you can't find the information you need, maintain agreement on what has been agreed, work effectively with other interests.

See also *Information systems*

Advertising

Advertising is what you do when you can't go to see somebody.

Fairfax Cone

The advantage of advertising when seeking to inform or involve people is that you completely control what and when your message appears. In addition a community newspaper will be grateful for revenue from advertising, and it opens up more local contacts.

The task of producing an effective advertisement will certainly help clarify what you are trying to achieve.

On the other hand advertisements, on their own, can appear over-formal and inflexible and are best used with other communication methods.

See also *Communication, Media, Networking.*

Agenda

It might be termed the Law of Triviality. Briefly stated, it means that the time spent on any item of the agenda will be in inverse proportion to the sum involved.

C. Northcote Parkinson.

The agenda tells everyone what is to be discussed at a meeting. It may also be used to describe the course of action someone is planning, but not disclosing – the hidden agenda. If you suspect that is the case, the key question is 'What are we trying to achieve?'

Agenda formation

In order to decide as a group what to cover in a meeting and, hopefully, disprove Parkinson's Law:

- 1 Prepare large pieces of paper labelled 'Content', 'Format', 'Practical details'.
- 2 Ask everyone to write items on Post-it notes and stick them to the appropriate sheet. Use prompts like:
 - What wouldn't you like missed from the meeting?
 - How will we run the discussion and make decisions?
 - What items require most discussion?
 - Will we need refreshments, a crèche?
- 3 Discuss the items and develop a consensus. Draw up the agenda, and keep the charts to check back after the meeting that people's expectations were met.

See also *Aims and objectives, Outcomes.*

Aims and objectives

'Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?'
'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the cat.
'I don't much care where –', said Alice.
'Then it doesn't matter which way you go', said the cat.

Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll.

Aims are a written description of what a group or organisation is trying to achieve, and the objectives are the methods by which they may do that. Aims and objectives are equally important in participation process: without them you don't know where you will end up. In dealing with group aims and objectives, don't forget that people have personal aims –

Clarifying aims and objectives

In order to clarify aims and objectives within a group:

- 1 Ask each group member to write a short statement completing the sentence 'this organisation exists to ...', read them out and record them on a chart.
- 2 Discuss differences and agree a joint statement.
- 3 Break the agreed aim into components and develop ideas for achieving each of these. Find common themes – these are the objectives or goals.
- 4 List what could be done to achieve each objective – the working methods.
- 5 Prioritise these and turn them into an action plan stating exactly what will be done by when.

Summarised from *Getting Organised*. The book *Planning Together* provides detailed advice on clarifying aims and planning group activity.

making new friends, getting out of the house, developing new skills – and it is important to acknowledge these, too.

See also *Mission, Purpose, Vision.*

Allies

It is well worth investing time with people who:

- Can provide personal support and act as a sounding board.
- Have experience of participation you can draw on.
- Can offer specialist knowledge and advice.
- Know the area well.

You may find allies among, for example, local groups, voluntary organisations, local councillors, colleges or universities running relevant courses.

See also *Community, Research, Stakeholders.*

Analogy

Being able to say 'it's like so and so' is a useful way of helping people understand what you are getting at, because you are then sharing the same 'mental map'. ('Mental map' is itself an analogy). Many of the quotations in this guide work through analogy or metaphor. Analogies may also be helpful in understanding a participation process, for example:

- Sport. Is it a level playing field for all involved? What are the rules? Who are the players and who are the spectators?
- A journey. Where are we now? Where are we trying to get to? What are the barriers?
- Cooking. What are the recipes for success? Are you running a restaurant – or helping people cook for themselves?

See also *Process as a journey.*

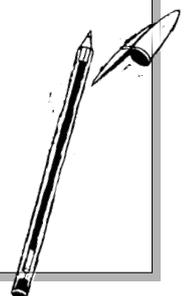
Apathy

What makes life dreary is want of motive.

George Eliot.

Apathy is the state of those people who don't want to get involved in what you are offering. Are they apathetic – or perhaps just not interested in the same issues you are? People have a right to decide their own interests and purpose, and their own level of participation. There's a fine line between creating awareness and telling people what they should have or do. What appears to be apathy may also be anxiety about becoming involved in something new and uncertain.

See also *Access, Awareness, Barriers to participation, Commitment, Empowerment, Level of participation, Ownership, Purpose.*



Approach

There is much truth in the suggestion, which I have often heard, that effective participation is more about approach than technique. If you put yourself in other people's shoes, start where they are at, are open and honest, and avoid jargon, you should go a long way to gain people's involvement. On the other hand all the techniques in the world will not overcome distrust and antipathy caused by a 'we know best' approach.

See also *Attitudes*.

Assessment

One of the first things to do in the early stages of a participation process is take stock of yourself and the situation. A good way to do this is to run a SWOT analysis and to do a Stakeholder analysis. More formally you may wish to undertake Community profiling, or Surveys.

See also *Parish Maps and Village Appraisals*.

Attitudes

Belief is harder to shake than knowledge.

Adolph Hitler.

Some of the main barriers to participation lie in the attitudes people bring to the process. Residents may lack confidence or feel action is not their responsibility. Officials may see getting the job done quickly as a top priority, even if it doesn't meet the needs of all concerned. Councillors may feel their power is eroded by sharing decision making with local people. Some of these attitudes are deeply rooted in people's self esteem or concerns about status, and will only change through a long process of personal development.

Techniques which draw out the underlying concerns and priorities of the different interests may help.

See also *Change, Commitment, Ownership and Stakeholders*.

Awareness

For people to become involved in any process or project they need to be aware it is happening, see some benefit or relevance to themselves, and feel confident about their role.

The three are closely linked – attempts to raise people's awareness will be more successful if they start by considering the interests of the audience, and what will be a comfortable way for people to respond. Start where people are – value their knowledge and experience.

Advertising, leaflets, videos and exhibitions all have a part to play. Networking and personal

contact may be more effective, particularly used with workshops techniques. Newcastle Architecture Workshop has produced a techniques pack *Awareness Through to Action*.

See also *Parish Maps, Starting where people are at, and Village Appraisals*.

Barriers to participation

When 10 people turn up to a public meeting which has been advertised for weeks the organisers blame apathy. However, people may be reluctant to get involved for all sorts of reasons:

- Cynicism
- Anxiety about the sort of meeting it will be
- Feeling they wouldn't be effective in any programme anyway
- Not wanting to fuss
- Experience of failure
- Low self-esteem

The book *Limbering up* offers a more detailed study of barriers. A good way to start planning a participation process is to throw up all the possible barriers you can think of, then work out how to overcome them.

See also *Access, Equal opportunities*.

Benefits of participation

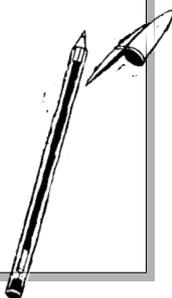
The benefits – and problems – of participation will be seen differently by the various interests involved. However, the general benefits often claimed include:

- People who feel they have a say are more likely to be positive about proposals.
- Fresh ideas may emerge.
- You may get help in kind or other resources.
- People are far more likely to be part of a long-term solution if they have some ownership of the early ideas.
- Involvement on one project or programme builds understand, trust and confidence which may be important on other occasions.

Besides these benefits of a better 'product' or outcome are the 'process' issues of helping develop people's confidence and skills. Benefits are most likely for all concerned when:

- The main interests agree on the appropriate level of participation.
- There is a common language to discuss issues and develop ideas.
- Appropriate methods are used to get as much agreement as possible on desired outcomes.

See also *Capacity building, Empowerment*.



Bottom up and top down

A term frequently used to distinguish change or activity among community interests (bottom up) from that in government (top down). Effective participation is likely to require both.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is one of the most widely used – and misused – aids to creative thinking. It was devised during the 1930s by Alex Gordon, working in an advertising agency in New York, and is defined as ‘a means of getting a large number of ideas from a group of people in a short time’. It should not be used as a label for any loosely-structured session where a group rambles around a problem in the hope of striking a solution. The guidelines for brainstorming are:

- Suspend judgement – don’t censor ideas.
- Free-wheel to drift around the problem.
- Aim for quantity of ideas regardless of quality.
- Cross-fertilise between ideas.

See also *Nominal Group Technique* which offers an alternative to brainstorming.

Budgeting for participation

Effective participation takes time and money. The resources you need will depend on the level of participation. You may need funds or help in kind for:

- Surveys.
- Communication materials – anything from leaflets to a video or exhibition.
- Meetings and workshops, perhaps including the cost of a facilitator.
- The costs of an on-the-ground presence, perhaps a temporary office or shop front.
- Training.
- Start up costs if you are setting up a new organisation.

Business planning

Any organisation created during a participation process which aims to keep going in the long term needs a business or development plan. For a voluntary or non-profit organisation the plan will balance the costs and income of three parts of its operation: the projects, products or services provided by the organisation; the core staff, premises and equipment; and any fund raising.

The business plan should cover at least three years and show how fund raising and any income earned covers the core costs.

Brainstorming

After you have defined the problem or question follow these steps. A group of more than five and less than 20 is best:

- Throw up every idea you can. Don’t discuss the ideas and don’t reject any – even if they are far-fetched.
- As the ideas come up record them on a list everyone can see. One idea may spark off another.
- When the ideas have dried up, cross off those everyone agrees are ludicrous.
- Look for common themes and possible solutions.

Campaigns

Although campaigns may bring to mind banner-waving protesters, the term is also used to describe ‘any programme or series of actions instituted by one group of people with the aim of achieving a change in resources, or in the form of an organisation, or in a decision-making process, over which another group or groups of people have considerable control’ when this is a bottom-up process (Christine Flecknoe).

A campaign by local people to create, for example, a playground, could involve information-gathering, surveys, public meetings, exhibitions, festivals, lobbying, meetings with officials and many other activities.

Campaigns are dynamic – they respond to events. As such they cannot be steered ‘top-down.’ If you are initiating a participating process you may have to deal with campaigns which target your own organisation. If that feels uncomfortable, consider:

- Is your stance appropriate? People may feel they should have more influence.
- Are you clear about your role? Are you wearing too many hats: go-between, facilitator at meetings, someone who controls resources?
- Have you spent enough time working through issues within your organisation?

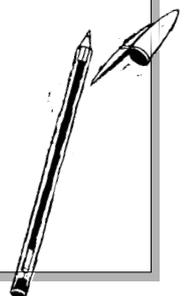
See also *Role of the practitioner, Stance*.

Capacity-building

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.

Chinese proverb.

Capacity-building is training and other methods to help people develop the confidence and skills necessary for them to achieve their purpose. The capacity people need depends both on their abilities and on the situation they face. You may feel capable of tackling one thing, yet feel completely differently about another task. For example, parents of young children campaigning for a play group might



feel ill-equipped to write a technical report to a council committee. But how many chief executives could run a children's tea party? The most effective capacity building is likely to be through 'learning by doing' rather than formal training courses.

Capacity building

In order to explore where a group lacks confidence and skills ask members to:

- 1 Write down what they would like to do but don't feel up to
- 2 Explain why they want to do it, and why they don't feel up to it
- 3 Write down the opposite of the reasons
- 4 Consider what would help them start feeling any of these things
- 5 Think of some practical actions they might take

Summarised from Limbering Up

See also *Confidence, Skills audit.*

Case studies

A case study is a structured description of a project or organisation. If you are creating an organisation, reading case studies may give you ideas for your own, although similarities may be difficult to see unless the case study is 'unpacked' around key issues. One way to clarify what you are trying to achieve is to try and write a case study of your own project as it might appear in a few years time. The checklist give you a possible structure for this.

Case study checklist

- Name, address, staff.
- Area of operation and date of formation.
- Aims and objectives.
- Legal status, management structure, membership.
- Source of funds
- Products, services, methods, activities.
- Outcome measures and summary of major achievements.
- Relationships with other organisations.

CATWOE

CATWOE is a mnemonic from Operational Research which helps clarify a situation or review a process: see the box for its use.

Change

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends upon the unreasonable man.

George Bernard Shaw.

Change is at the heart of all processes of

Using CATWOE

1 Use CATWOE to help identify the different elements:

- Customers – who are the victims/beneficiaries of the activities?
- Actors– who does the activities?
- Transformations – what things change as a result of the activities and what do they change into?
- World View– what views of the purpose of the activities are possible?
- Owners– who can stop the activities?
- Environment – what constraints (rules, roles, outside bodies, etc.) exist which might restrict the activities?

2 Brainstorm lists on charts under each of the headings.

3 Use the lists under Customers, Actors, Owners and elements of the Environment as a start for stakeholder analysis.

4 Use Transformations to prompt further thinking about information and resource needs, monitoring and evaluation.

5 Use World View to identify groups of stakeholders, and to start discussion of Building an image.

6 Use Owners and Environment as a start to thinking about barriers.

participation and partnership. It is more of a balance of changing the world and changing yourself than Shaw professes. For example:

- Changing one's attitudes in order to see the other person's point of view.
- Developing new skills.
- Developing trust.
- Increasing confidence.
- The physical and organisation change of developing a project.

Many of the techniques featured in this guide are tools for change.

Change in organisations

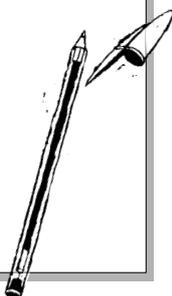
Many problems in participation processes arise because front-line staff are not backed up by colleagues in their organisation. However, any strategy for change will need the commitment of top-level management, co-ordination, and communication both inside and outside the authority.

Change is likely to produce resistance, and it is easy to blame 'the community' for problems which lie elsewhere.

See the sections *It takes time*, *Guidelines on how to...* See also *Force field analysis.*

Charitable company

This is an organisational structure which combines the advantages of a company (clear structure, limited liability) with charitable



status (tax and fund-raising benefits). The appropriate legal form is a company limited by guarantee, where the members of the Board are not paid, and the objects are charitable. There are disadvantages of charitable status – see below.

See also *Charitable status, Companies*.

Charitable status

If an organisation is being created as part of the participation process, the issue of whether to seek charitable status may arise. A charity is not a particular form of organisation, different from a company or community group. Both may be charities, if they are accepted and registered as such by the Charity Commissioners. (In Scotland and Northern Ireland registration is directly with the Inland Revenue.)

To be registered as a charity an organisation must restrict its activities exclusively to one or more of the following objects:

- The relief of poverty.
- The advancement of religion.
- The advancement of education.
- Other purposes beneficial to the community.

The benefits of charitable status include exemption from corporation tax, capital gains, capital transfer tax, and at least 50% of the business rate or council tax. The VAT concessions are limited.

Charitable status adds credibility to an organisation and enables it to apply to large charities for funding. In general charities can only make gifts to other charities. The greatest disadvantage of charitable status is that it restricts the political and campaigning activity of an organisation.

On another front, if any income generating activity is not directly in support of the organisation's charitable objects it may be necessary to create an associated trading company. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations provides advice on charitable status.

Charts

These may be flip charts – pads of large paper used with an easel – or simply lining paper tacked to the wall. Either way they are essential for creative thinking in groups. Committees need agendas and minutes – workshops need charts. In using charts:

- Use blutack or some other method to stick charts up as you write them, so people can see early work.
- Offer the pen to others in the group.

- Don't lose the work at the end of the session
Taking photographs of the charts is an easy way of keeping a record.

Cliques

Twenty per cent of the people in volunteer groups do ninety per cent of the work.

The Diamond of Psi Upsilon

A clique is a small number of people seen by others to be acting together to exclude them from discussion or decisions. The members of the clique may see themselves as over-worked and the only ones who care about the group or organisation. Whoever is right (and it may be both), cliques can be a significant barriers to wider involvement.

The clique would benefit from delegation and recruitment of other people to help. It may be possible to raise these issues at the start of a new project or participation process, run some workshops, and develop a new working group or steering group.

See items on the above issues for further discussion.

Commitment

Commitment is the opposite of apathy, and is most likely when people can see some point in being involved. A cynical view is that people become interested when you can answer the question: What's in it for me? However, people do become involved for a wide range of reasons which go beyond personal gain – for example sociability, and feeling they are doing something worthwhile.

The only way you can discover people's interests is by talking to them – which means networking and running workshops. Surveys may give you some starting points, but you won't gain people's commitment by quoting statistics at them. Before seeking commitment from community interests it is important to ensure you have the internal commitment of colleagues within your own organisation. This is dealt with at more length in the section *It takes time*.

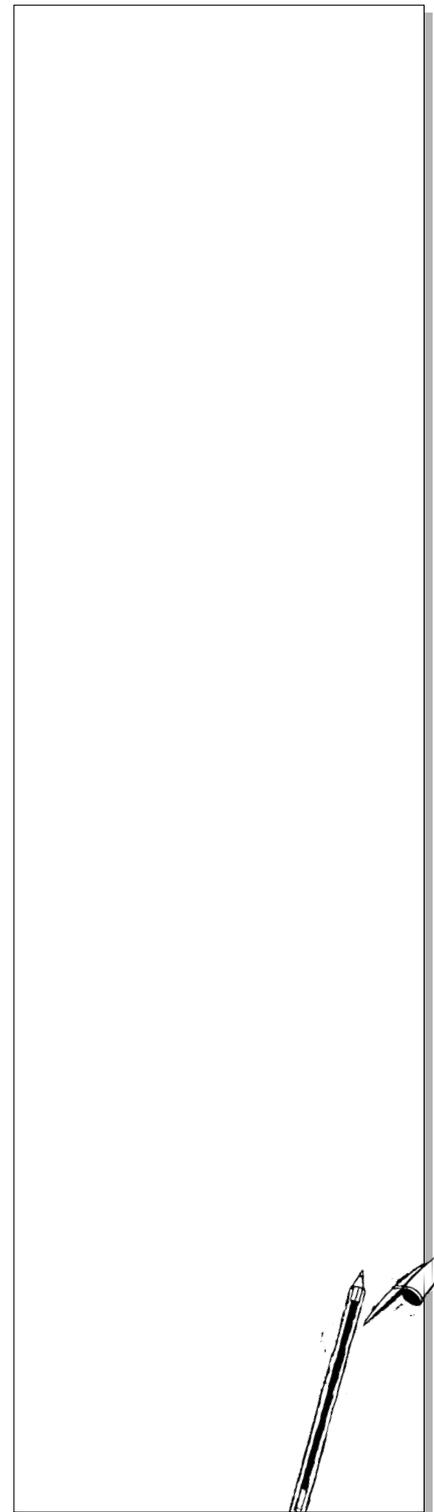
See also *Apathy, Attitudes, Networking, Ownership, Values*.

Increasing commitment

List the key interests when you feel you understand their main concerns. Put a * where you think they are and a + where you want them to be, in relation to your interests. The object of the exercise is to try to move them to the right. For example, on a project you might find:

Who	Against	Neutral	Support	Actively Supports
Neighbours		*	+	
Councillors	*		+	
Officers		*		+

In order to make the moves, think through why they are taking their current position, what benefits there would be for them to change, and how you might bring this home to them.



Committees

What is a committee? A group of the unwilling, picked from the unfit, to do the unnecessary.

Richard Harkness.

Committees are meetings with an order of business (the agenda) some agreed procedures and officers (chair, secretary) and records (minutes). They range from management committees, acting as a governing body, to sub-committees that may meet as and when necessary.

Committees are necessary to make formal decisions, but they are not appropriate for more creative activities like brainstorming, which are best done in focus groups and workshops.

The committee may simply take time out to break into small groups. It may be appropriate to follow a substantial creative session with a more formal committee meeting to endorse the action plan.

Committee checklist

In order to improve your committee meetings, get members to agree to:

- Read papers beforehand and bring them to the meeting.
- Check what they don't understand and find out any background.
- Turn up at the right time.
- Stick to the agenda.
- Listen to other people and consider their views.
- Think before speaking.
- Seek decisions on which all can agree.
- Record what needs to be done.
- Read the action minutes and take any action necessary.
- Report back on action taken.

See other items on the issues mentioned for further discussion.

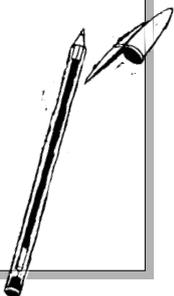
Communication

The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.

Sydney J. Harris

Communication should be seen as a two-way process of sending and receiving messages, and as such the basis for all participation. Effective communication involves considering how your message will be received as well as how you send it: the meaning of any communication is the response you get.

This meaning is influenced by how people see and judge you – their attitude – as well as the content of your message and the method you use. For that reason face to face may be more effective than glossy brochures or videos.



The obvious barriers to communication are:

- Lack of clarity about what you want to get across.
- Jargon.
- Hostility to you or your organisation.
- Lack of credibility in the message or the person giving it.

Communication checklist

In planning your communication, have you:

- Clarified what you want to get across?
- Identified your audience, and their likely interests?
- Considered what response you want ?
- Reviewed what materials, events or media would be most appropriate?
- Planned how to deal with responses?

See also Special events, Media, Presentations, Print, Vision.

Community

Do not do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same.

George Bernard Shaw

Community is a term so widely applied that it is in danger of losing any meaning, like 'members of the public'. Aren't we all? At worst it may be used by officials to mean anyone who is not 'us' – an undifferentiated mass of activists, organisations and uninvolved residents. Marilyn Taylor, in *Signposts to Community Development*, suggests it is more useful to think of a large number of over-lapping communities distinguished by the characteristics of their members, and the common interests which tie members together and give these characteristics a shared significance.

The characteristics might be, for example:

- Personal (age, gender, ethnicity).
- Beliefs.
- Economic status.
- Activities.
- Services provided or used.
- Place.

Common characteristics do not necessarily mean people identify with each other as a community. The factors which give these characteristics a shared meaning are a cultural heritage, social relationships, common economic interests, or the basis for political power. Communities may be short or long term.

Because individuals may belong to many different communities at the same time, different allegiances may pull in different directions. There are likely to be

competing and conflicting interests within communities.

See also items below and *Research, Stakeholders*.

Community architecture and planning

Professionals working within community architecture and planning apply community development methods in the built environment. They often work from or with community technical aid centres and see the community group or organisation as their client, even though they may be funded from charitable or public sources.

For typical techniques see *Design Games and Planning for Real*. Newcastle Architecture Workshop has produced a techniques pack *Awareness Through to Action*.

Community Businesses and Co-operatives

These are trading organisations which aim to combine local control, the creation of viable jobs for local people and financial sustainability. Community coops are controlled by the workers, community businesses are likely to have community representation on their management committees.

Community development

'Community development is concerned with change and growth – with giving people more power over the changes that are taking place around them, the policies that affect them and the services they use'. (Marilyn Taylor, *Signposts to Community Development*).

As such it is relevant to all levels of participation. It seeks to 'enable individuals and communities to grow and change according to their own needs and priorities' (Standing Conference on Community Development) rather than those dictated by circumstances beyond their boundaries. It works through bringing people together to 'share skills, knowledge and experience.'

See also *Community development methods*.

Community development methods

The methods used within community development will be particularly relevant to participation processes which seek to empower community interests. Marilyn Taylor in *Signposts to Community Development* lists the following main methods:

■ Profiling and policy analysis. Developing a community profile and analysing policies –

local, national, international – as they effect the community.

- Capacity building: training people in the skills that they need to achieve their goals.
- Organising by building sustainable and accessible organisations around issues that are defined by the community as important.
- Networking to build links between organisations where this can help to achieve objectives.
- Resourcing groups by linking them to outside resources and expertise.
- Negotiating to encourage service providers to adopt a community development approach, and assist people and groups in the community in their relationships with service providers and policy makers.

Community forum

A community forum is regular meeting of community activists and interest groups which may also involve local business, political, religious and social organisations. It may be useful for discussion of issues of concern to local interests, and for stimulating contacts and networking. A forum is not so good for turning discussion into action, where some complementary 'do it' organisation like a Development Trust may be needed.

Setting up a community forum

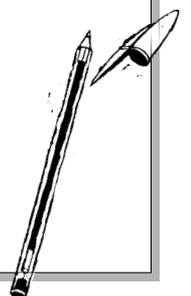
If you are setting up a forum:

- Ensure membership is as wide as possible, and avoid domination by any one interest group
- Consider splitting meetings into small groups and using workshop techniques so people have more chance to contribute.
- Seek an independent widely-respected chair
- Make any servicing of the forum - developing agendas, recording discussion - as independent as possible.
- Don't make the forum the only channel for consultation or decision-making.

See also *Networking, Structures*.

Community initiatives

A project or organisation where the impetus and control lies with community interests. Examples of organisations are community businesses and community co-operatives. Organisations like community technical aid centres, community trusts and development trusts may aim to serve community interests, but be controlled by governing bodies with a mix of community, public and private sector representation. Rather than attempting to categorise organisations as 'community' or not



solely on the basis of membership, it may be useful to consider:

- What is the organisation seeking to achieve, and who sets those objectives?
- Who benefits from its activities?
- Where does the money come from?
- Where does control lie?

See also *Community*.

Community leaders

The term 'community leaders' has been favoured by some politicians perhaps unwilling to come to terms with the range and complexity of interests within any community. It is much easier to think there are a few people to talk to than engage in complex participation processes. But to challenge that idea doesn't mean that individuals within any community of interest cannot take a leadership role.

See also *Accountability, Activists, Community, Leadership*.

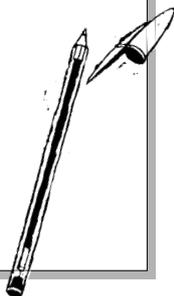
Community Operational Research

Operational research, or OR, has been used extensively in large commercial, industrial and service enterprises to assist problem solving and decision making. Community OR is different from traditional OR in style rather than content, in that it works with groups that usually have participative decision-making, a general suspicion of experts and need to operate on small budgets and voluntary time. For OR techniques which have been used with community and voluntary groups see SAST, SSM, Strategic choice. Contact the Community Operational Research Unit for further information.

Community planning weekends

This technique is based on the Urban Design Assistance Teams which originated in the United States. A multi-disciplinary team of professionals, community representatives and statutory authorities come together for several days to develop a strategy or master plan for an area. If well planned there will be:

- Considerable preparation through research, surveys and workshops with interested groups.
- Site visits.
- Facilitated workshops using a range of techniques during the weekend.
- A report covering physical design, finance, organisational structure and development process.



- Arrangements for public report backs and further community involvement.

Community profiling

Community profiling is a social, environmental and economic description of an area which is used to inform local decision-making. The pack produced by the School for Advanced Urban Studies offers a 10-step approach which deals with how to form a group to undertake the profile, gather and analyse data, present it, and use the results for planning action.

See also *Parish Maps, Village Appraisals*.

Community technical aid centres

Community technical aid centres are non-profit-distributing organisations that offer design, planning and other professional services to community groups. They take a community development approach, and some are controlled by their user groups. The Association of Community Technical Aid Centres will provide more information.

Community Trusts

Community Trusts are independent fund-raising and grant-making charitable trusts which serve a specific geographical area. If there is one in your area, they may be a useful source of information about community needs in the area, and may support community initiatives.

Community trusts raise funds from a wide range of sources, especially those previously untapped, with the aim of establishing an endowment fund. Interest from this large sum of capital is used for grant-making in the area. Community Trusts should not be confused with community development trusts (see Development trusts) which are geared towards economic and environmental practical action. The Association for Community trusts and Foundations will provide more information.

Companies

A particular form of company, the company limited by guarantee, is increasingly popular as an organisational structure for larger community initiatives and partnerships. Companies limited by guarantee do not have shareholders – instead their members agree to pay a nominal sum, often only £1, if the company fails. The rights of these members to appoint members of the governing body – the Board – are defined by the constitution – the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The company does not distribute surpluses as profits, but reinvests them in the company. If

the members of the Board are unpaid, and the company has appropriate objects, it can seek charitable status.

Development Trusts are usually companies limited by guarantee, as are many voluntary organisations. Companies limited by guarantee are also appropriate for partnership organisations with Board representatives from public, private and community sectors.

See *Voluntary but Not Amateur, and Just About Managing?* for more information on companies. See also *Constitution*.

Competence

Being competent means being able to say 'I know' and 'I can'. There is a sophisticated system of National Vocational Qualifications which classifies the competences appropriate to different jobs. Less formally you can consider what competences will be needed for any project or organisation you may be developing, both as a whole and for each role involved. Then carry out a skills audit to find how far you have the capacity to do what's needed.

See also *Capacity-building, Roles*.

Confidence

They are able who think they are able.

Virgil.

One of the major barriers to people's involvement is lack of confidence in joining in activities, groups or organisations which may be unfamiliar. In order to help:

- Suggest that people who are already involved bring along people they know.
- Run social events where people can get to know each other.
- If you must have formal public meetings run them towards the end of a process – otherwise they can be intimidating.
- Concentrate on workshops where everyone can have a say.
- Carry out a skills and experience audits to help people understand they have more capabilities than they may have thought.
- Tackle some projects which enable people to use their skills and provide early success.

See also *Capacity-building*.

Conflict Resolution

One fifth of the people are against everything all the time.

Robert F. Kennedy.

Within any participation process there are likely to be conflicts because of people's underlying attitudes, the outcomes they are

seeking, and the values they hold. The processes to resolve conflicts include consensus building, mediation and negotiation.

Resource Manual for a Living Revolution suggests that for successful conflict resolution the following elements seem to be necessary:

- Enough time to deal with the conflict.
- Defining the problem in terms which are clear and acceptable to all.
- Dealing with negative feelings in positive ways.
- Helping people identify in concrete terms what makes them unhappy with the situation – distinguishing between feelings and reality.
- For each member of the conflict to identify their real needs.
- An opportunity for individuals to unload feelings of hurt, fear etc in the presence of accepting people.
- To have at least one person – preferably uninvolved – to give special attention to the process.

See the books *Constructive Conflict management, Getting to Yes, and material on the Resolve programme from the Environment Council*. See also *Consensus-building*.

Consensus-building

Consensus building is a participation process where participants work together to try and reach a result which has benefits for both – a win/win outcome. It is an alternative to adversarial confrontation where one side is trying to gain supremacy – win/lose – or a compromise which neither side achieves what they want – lose/lose.

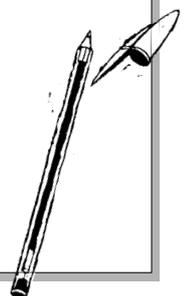
The Environment Council runs a Resolve programme of consensus building and has published an Action Pack by Andrew Floyer Acland. The key elements of the process are:

- A commitment of the parties to investing time and effort in interactive co-operation.
- Involving the participants in designing a staged process for consensus-building – and changing it if it isn't working.
- Using the process to develop relationships so the consensus is sustained.

Consensus in a group

In order to help a large group make a decision:

- 1 The whole group defines the problem.
- 2 The whole group Brainstorms possible solutions, and identifies several for investigation.
- 3 The large group breaks into small groups, which review the problem and develop more detailed solutions.
- 4 Report back, look for consensus, identify remaining issues, repeat the process if necessary.



- Exploring future needs and interests – not taking abstract positions.
- Helping participants understand each other's point of view.
- Testing options for agreement for the impact on every party.

Constitutions

As soon as any group seeks to take on a substantial project, it will need mechanisms for making decisions, defining roles and possibly raising funds and employing staff. A constitution is the document which sets out the rules for governing any organisation. It is necessary in order to:

- Ensure the organisation's aims are clear and agreed by members.
- Provide formal mechanisms for making decisions and resolving disputes.
- Clarify responsibilities and ensure accountability.
- Increase credibility with funders.
- Enable the organisation to apply for charitable status (if it wishes to).
- Register as a friendly society, industrial and provident society or company limited by guarantee.

The constitution provides a reference for these issues – but it doesn't solve them on its own. It can be far more productive to run some team-building and problem solving workshops than pick over the niceties of the constitution – provided legal requirements are always fulfilled.

Organisations may be unincorporated, in which case they have no separate legal existence, and are a collection of individuals, or incorporated as a separate entity, where the liability of individuals may be limited.

See Voluntary But Not Amateur for guidance on constitutions. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations provides advice.

Consultants

A consultant is someone who borrows your watch to tell you the time, and charges you by the minute to do it.

This quotation is, of course, a completely unfair view of consultants. Or is it? There are broadly two types of consultants, 'expert' consultants and 'process' consultants.

Expert consultants are appropriate when you have defined a problem which requires the application of knowledge and skills which you don't possess and, for whatever reason, don't wish to acquire. The success of the consultancy depends on getting the problem right, choosing the appropriate consultant, briefing them well,

providing information, accepting their recommendations, and being able to put them into practice. It doesn't work if you won't take the remedy – or what you need is more like therapy.

The process consultant is appropriate when the solution really lies with you, but you haven't worked out what it is, or don't have the confidence. The consultant's skill lies in asking the right questions and getting you to think through and apply the answers. It works if you work at it, and should be an empowering experience.

Process consultants often take a training approach, and can be useful in helping design and run participation processes. Beware of any consultants who offer quick fixes – see the section *Easy answers*.

See also Facilitation.

Consultation

Consultation is the level of participation at which people are offered some choices on what is to happen, but are not involved in developing additional options. It is appropriate where, for example:

- An authority or organisation aims to improve a service.
- There is a clear vision or plan for a project, and limited ways of carrying it through. Choose a different level – indicated in brackets – if:
- Your decision won't be changed by what people say (information).
- You are not clear what you wish to do and are seeking ideas (Deciding together).
- You don't have the resources or skills to carry out the options presented (Acting Together).

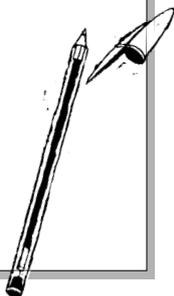
For more detail see the section Where do you stand?

Continuation

Continuation is the final phase of the participation process described in the section *It takes time*. Activities in this phase will depend in the level of participation. For example, on a consultation process tasks may include analysing and reporting back on responses; in a partnership-building process – acting together – a new organisation may be formed.

Control

Control in a participation process is determined by the extent to which any organisation or interest group can influence the outcome of the process. Different levels of participation reflect different levels of control: an organisation



- When it is important that other people 'own' the solution.
 - You need fresh ideas.
 - There is enough time.
- Choose a different level (suggestions in brackets) when:
- You have little room for manoeuvre (consider informing or consulting).
 - You can't implement decisions yourself (consider Acting Together or Supporting community initiatives).

See also *Decision-making* and the section *Where do you stand?*

Decision-making

'Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?'
 'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the cat.
 'I don't much care where –', said Alice.
 'Then it doesn't matter which way you go', said the cat.

Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll.

Decisions are about what to do next, and in the longer term. They are difficult enough for individuals, more so for groups of people who may not know each other well. Decisions are easiest if you are clear about aims and objectives (no apologies for repeating Lewis Carroll here). However, it is possible to make progress without a clear sense of purpose, if you have options from which to choose, and criteria. You can then develop an action plan.

Difficult decisions are problems. In order to solve problems and make decisions the following steps may be helpful – although life is seldom as logical. The Strategic Choice technique provides a more flexible, if complex, approach. Topics and techniques which may help are shown in brackets.

Delegation

Delegation is important in groups if they are to survive in the longer term. Although most

groups revolve around the enthusiasm of a few people, unless they share the load they will burn out and/or others will see them as a clique. To encourage delegation:

- Run workshops to share ideas and develop action plans.
- Set up small working groups to tackle specific tasks.
- Carry out a skills audit to see what talent there is in the group.

See also *Leadership*.

Design game

Community Land and Workspace Services have developed this modelling technique which uses a scale plan of the site, mounted on board. Moveable pieces, drawn to scale, are then used by the group to create their own design. It is best used:

- When the project is definitely going ahead.
- Where the site has definable boundaries, and is not too large.
- Where the participants have an intimate knowledge.

The benefits include:

- A sense of ownership which benefits long term management and maintenance.
- The process helps to form consensus.
- A fairly large number of people can be involved in a complex design process.
- It can help credibility of a management committee by spreading involvement to a wider audience.

Playing the design game

- 1 Survey the site, perhaps with residents or users, and assess the problems with them.
- 2 Investigate possibilities with the group: site visits, slide shows of examples.
- 3 Brainstorm a shopping list of possible elements, which are then drawn to scale.
- 4 The Main Game: the group moves pieces around on the base board plan to create their own design.
- 5 A Landscape Architect draws up the results for group discussion.
- 6 A detailed scheme developed to be built by a contractor, by the group themselves, or a combination of the two.

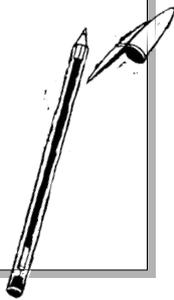
See also *Games and simulations, Planning for Real*.

Destruction testing

Look before you leap.

Anon

Once a group has arrived at what seems to be a solution, use the *Looking first* checklist on the next page before acting.



Decision-making checklist

- 1 Know who must be involved (Stakeholder analysis).
 - 2 Define the problem (Problem clarification).
 - 3 Decide the information you need, and find it (Research).
 - 4 Make sure everyone understands the information (Communication).
 - 5 Think of options (Brainstorming, Nominal group technique).
 - 6 Choose between them (Cost/benefit analysis, Kolb's four minute evaluation cycle, For and Against, Yes or No).
 - 7 If necessary gather more information and repeat 3-6.
 - 8 Make a decision about what to do (Force Field Analysis, Solutions, Voting).
 - 9 Act.
 - 10 Assess whether the problem has been solved (Plan, Act, Review).
- Adapted from *Getting Organised and How to Solve Your Problems*.

Looking first

1 Ask 'Who or what could prevent this from succeeding?' 'What would be likely to make that happen?'

2 Don't forget that the group itself could prevent the solution from working. So also ask 'If we wanted to make sure our solution fails, what would we do?'

3 Now list what the group should do to make sure that these possible causes for failure don't happen.

From Getting Organised.

Development trusts

Development Trusts have been defined as 'independent, not-for-profit organisations which take action to renew an area physically, socially and in spirit. They bring together the public, private and voluntary sectors, and obtain financial and other resources from a wide range of organisations and individuals. They encourage substantial involvement by local people and aim to sustain their operations at least in part by generating revenue.' (Creating Development Trusts, HMSO 1988).

Also known as community development trusts, they should not be confused with community trusts, which are fund-raising and grant-making bodies.

Development Trusts operate at the 'acting together' level of participation as partnership organisations, and are usually companies limited by guarantee. The Development Trusts Association will provide more information.

Development workers

The term is used here for full or part time staff devoted to the development of a project or process, using community development methods.

Benefits of on-the-ground workers can be:

- Reaching people who don't come to meetings.
 - A source of advice and support for local individuals and groups.
 - Someone with the time to service meetings and follow up action.
 - A channel to organisations that may provide resources.
- The potential pitfalls are:
- The worker controls the agenda of meetings and events.
 - People who might become involved are put off because they don't believe they can so well as a paid worker.
 - People do not develop new skills and become dependent on the worker, who may leave or change.

Guidelines for empowerment

If you aim to empower those involved in a participation process:

- Be explicit about what you are trying to do, and your role.
- Start where people are at – relate your proposals to their concerns.
- Use language and ideas everyone can relate to.
- Help clarify what the various interests are trying to achieve, individually and collectively.

- Look for agreement on the outcomes people want. If that is not possible, be clear who your actions will help.
- Build on people's skills and experience, rather than always expect them to step beyond them.
- Be realistic about what can be achieved.

See also *Community development and Community development methods*.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a working style which aims to help people achieve their own purpose by increasing their confidence and capacity.

See also *Communication, Confidence, Limits, Outcomes, Role of the practitioner and the section on Power*.

Enabling

Enabling is participation as if the participants mattered: helping people achieve their purpose at an agreed level of participation. It involves helping people understand, join in decision making, or participate actively in some initiative.

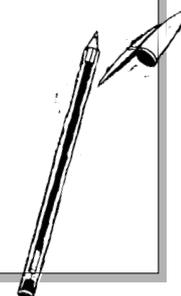
Equal opportunities

Considering equal opportunities means thinking about and challenging situations in which people may not participate fully because of, for example, their disabilities, culture, gender, ethnicity, learning difficulties. Equal opportunities mean taking participation seriously. The checklist below raises some of the issues to be considered.

Checklist

Consider:

- Do examples you use reflect only 'white' culture?
- Do you refer to temples, mosques, synagogues as well as churches?
- Does your language suggest norms which may not be shared by all – for example, wife and husband rather than partner?
- Do you use large enough type faces for people with visual disabilities?
- Is material produced in languages which reflect the cultural mix of the community?
- Do you provide a signer at public meetings?



Evaluation

Evaluation is checking whether you have succeeded, monitoring is checking how you are doing along the way. Both require criteria.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions may be used to highlight an issue, report on a survey, or offer people some options. As such they provide information, and allow some consultation. Unless they are part of a more substantial process they will not, in themselves, help people participate actively in making decisions. *Creating Involvement* provides guidelines for publicity and exhibitions.

Exhibition guidelines

- Involve the community you are addressing in preparing material.
- Avoid jargon – use familiar terms.
- Use memorable phrases or facts.
- Be imaginative in using illustrations, video and drama.
- Make sure you are relevant and timely – give people enough time to respond.
- Take the exhibition to people, perhaps using mobile displays.
- Provide back up information.

Exit

There are few things more demoralising for all concerned than to have the key person pull out part way through a complex participation process. Almost as bad is for someone who presented themselves as facilitator or enabler to hang in long after key issues have been resolved, or a group developed its own momentum and confidence. For that reason it is important, if you are managing a participation process, to consider how and when to leave as well as how to start.

Experts

Everyone is ignorant, only on different subjects.

Will Rogers.

It may be necessary to seek professional advice on several fronts: for example, it is important to consult a solicitor when setting up a charitable company if you are to avoid problems and delays.

The local Citizens Advice Bureau, and Council for Voluntary Service provide signposting to advisers. However, empowering participation processes are about finding out how to do things for yourself, and a good place to start is with the group you are working with.

See also Skills Audit.

Facilitation

Much of this guide is about facilitation – helping others think through what they want and organise themselves to achieve it. The role of the practitioner – as someone managing a participation process – is frequently that of facilitator.

Two books, listed in *Useful Publications*, provide detailed guidance on facilitating groups:

Change and how to make it happen covers preparation, team building, equal opportunities, problem solving, and planning. *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution* includes a section on facilitation, problems that commonly arise, and tools frequently used at meetings.

Five Ws plus H

The simplest questions are the hardest to answer.

Northrop Frye

Whatever you are planning to do five Ws provide a simple checklist to help you think of the issues:

What are you trying to do, decide, explain?

When must you start and finish?

Why is it necessary?

Who needs to be consulted, involved?

Where is it happening?

H stands for **How**, which you need to consider after running through the Ws.

See also Action plans.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are small groups of people who work through an issue in workshop sessions.

For and Against

Decide: to succumb to the preponderance of one set of influences over another set.

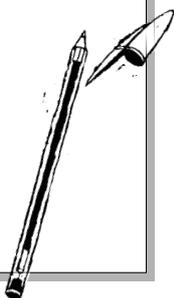
Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary.

An even simpler version of Cost/benefit analysis, also known as pros and cons.

Pros and cons

When, in decision making, you have more than one possible option which could provide a solution:

- Make two columns on a sheet of paper, one headed For and one Against.
- List all the points in favour and against, for each solution.
- Add at the bottom of each list any other factors which might influence you.
- Weigh the fors and againsts in making a decision.



Force Field Analysis

This is a technique for working out the forces driving towards a solution you want, and those against.

Force field analysis

1 Describe the problem as:

- The present situation.
- The situation as you would like it to be.

2 List the forces for, and those against. Underline those most important, and identify those you can influence.

3 Brainstorm how you can increase the forces for, and reduce those against.

The idea behind force field analysis is that you can achieve more by reducing the forces against than simply pressing harder – which may simply increase the resistance. Adapted from *Getting Organised*.

Framework for participation

This guide suggests thinking about three dimensions of participation:

- The level of participation which is appropriate, from simply providing information to offering support for independent community initiatives
- The phase of the activity, from Initiation to Continuation.
- The key interests, or stakeholders involved.

See the *Framework* section.

Fundraising

If the participation process is more than simple information-giving or consultation, there may well come a time when outside resources will be needed. In planning any fundraising consider:

- What do you need the money for, and how much? Do a Budget.
- When will you need it? Produce a Timeline.
- What will you do if you can't raise the total you need?
- Who is likely to give you the money?
- Why should they want to support you?
- Will you need more money later when initial funds are used up?

Games and simulations

Games and simulations offer some of the most effective techniques for helping people to 'play through' the issues and understand the interests of the different stakeholders. Designing simulations obliges you to think through who the different interests are, the

problems they may face, the rules by which they may operate and so on.

At their simplest simulations may involve taking a particular issue and getting people to adopt different roles and negotiate with each other. More complex simulations can run over several days.

I have listed two books in *Useful Publications*, one educational, and one about management games, but haven't found any references which are particularly relevant to participation process. The technique *Planning for Real* has achieved popularity not least, I suspect, because it is one of the few packages available. I have developed a 'Business Planning for Real' simulation in which a steering group or Board plays through different project, staffing and funding options aided by a computer running a spreadsheet and found that highly effective.

See also *Community planning weekends*.

Getting things done

It is easier to seek forgiveness than to ask permission.

Paddy Docherty.

How you make things happen within a participation process depends on the style you adopt, the role you play, and what you are trying to achieve. The style needed to run a project or organisation may not be appropriate for someone seeking to help others to understand problems and make decisions.

See also *Approach, Enabling, Facilitation, Leadership, Role of the practitioner.*

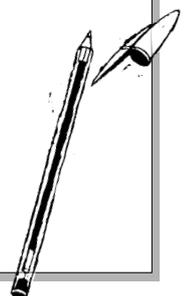
Groups

Understanding groups is important in participation processes because:

- Many of the participants – stakeholders – will be members of formal or informal groups.
- Working in groups – that is, holding workshops – is one of the most effective participation methods.
- Groups are generally necessary to plan and take forward projects.
- Well-tryed methods of developing and running groups can be more widely useful in participation processes

The most effective longer-term groups are those where people share a common purpose and can provide support for each other, recognising that each person brings different skills, ideas and attitudes. See two of the books in the *Useful publications* section:

Planning Together offers a detailed set of exercises particularly suitable for groups and groups within an organisation. These range



Agreeing your image

To develop agreement within a group about the way you wish to present yourself:

- 1 Write on a chart 'What image do we need if we are to meet our objectives?' Everyone writes down three words characterising the organisation.
- 2 People pair up and explain their choices.
- 3 Each pair in turn announces and explains their words. Write the words up on a chart. You could use Post-it notes and cluster similar terms.

4 Ask 'Who is the image for?' and discuss if the same image works for all. If not, make new sheets for each audience.

5 List ways the organisation relates to outsiders – e.g. telephone contacts, letter-writing. Small groups develop ideas on how to live up to the image.

6 Produce summary charts from 3, 4 and 5. Develop an action plan.

Summarised from *Organising in voluntary and community groups resource pack*. Resource 32.

from taking stock, developing and sharing a vision, to getting organised and evaluating progress.

Training and How to Enjoy It is a collection of training exercises covering groups and meetings; publicity and campaigning; equal opportunities; finance and funding; planning and problem solving.

See also *Team building*.

Icebreakers

Icebreakers are techniques to help a group of people get to know each other. At its simplest, just ask people to turn to their neighbour and come up with a few questions or ideas around a point you have raised. People usually start by explaining who they are, why they are there before getting around to what you asked – which is the purpose of the exercise.

Ideas

An idea is a feat of association, and the height of it is a good metaphor.

Robert Frost.

The book *101 Ways to Generate Great Ideas* provides sections on generating ideas yourself, and in groups. These include:

- Carry a pocket dictating machine.
- Close your eyes and let your mind wander.
- Don't say 'But, say 'And'.
- Have a brainstorming session.
- Use a facilitator.
- Make a clay model of the problem.

Or take Robert Frost's suggestion and think of an analogy – see that item. Ideas can be refined to become the options you need in order to make decisions.

See also *Options*.

Identity and image

We judge information by style as well as content – just as we form judgements about people by the clothes they wear. Corporate

identity is the designer's term for the way everything about an organisation looks and sounds, from the typeface of the letterhead to the way staff answer the telephone. This is important in participation processes because:

■ People are sophisticated in their judgements of identity. They will subconsciously check whether for example, your open, friendly, personal style fits with the aggressive, inflexible promotional material of your organisation. If not, they won't trust your ability to deliver what you say if that involves others in your organisation.

■ Working with a designer and writer to develop identity on a large project is an excellent way of clarifying what you are trying to say and to whom.

■ Once you have developed a strong sense of identity you have to live up to it. If presentation starts to outweigh performance, people will spot it rapidly. The resulting feeling of discomfort is a useful form of monitoring – either you deceived yourself at the outset or you are off course.

See also *Communication*.

Information

Knowledge is power.

Francis Bacon

Information is the level of participation which offers least involvement – it is more an essential basis for real participation at 'higher' levels than participatory in itself. It is appropriate where, for example:

- There really is no room for manoeuvre.
- The course of action doesn't affect others.
- At the start of a consultation or other process.

Choose a different level if:

- You are seeking to empower community interests. Information is necessary for empowerment, but seldom enough on its own.
- There are alternatives and others have a legitimate interest in developing them.

See the section on information in *Where do you stand?*

Information systems

Information systems are the means by which you organise the collection, storage and dissemination of information. These may include your internal administrative systems, the letters you write, print you produce, meetings you hold. The methods may include the use of information technology. A participation process requires an information system which can deal with:

■ The lack of a common language – jargon often gets in the way.

■ The lack of common ways of communicating – people don't all work in the same organisation, read the same papers, go to the same meetings. Information systems are particularly important if the organisational structure you are moving towards is a network. Information is the glue which hold networks together that may lack a formal constitution.

A basic system

A basic information system for participation might include:

- A card index or database of contacts.
- A range of ways of providing information – face to face networking as well as leaflets, meetings etc.
- A system for recording and reporting back what has occurred. This might be a bulletin, or follow up meeting for example.
- Appropriate elements of an administrative system.

See *Administrative system*.

Information Technology

To err is human but to really foul things up requires a computer.

Farmers Almanac for 1978.

Information technology is the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of information using computers and telecommunications.

Like all communication methods IT can work for or against the involvement and empowerment of different groups. As the cost of computing falls, small groups can manage their mailing lists, produce newsletters and even manage their accounts using computers. They can also waste a lot of time and effort. Before using computers:

- Clarify the aims and objectives of a project of organisation. If these aren't clear IT may just add to the confusion.
- Work out the type of information you are handling and the channels it must flow through (letters, mailing lists, newsletters, project records). This will define the software you use – word processing, database etc.
- Define who is responsible for managing the information flows.

In buying computers expect to spend as much on software and training as you do on the hardware – the computers, printer and other equipment. Expect to take some time to get a system up and running.

Some participation techniques use computers. See Priority Search, Village Appraisals.

Initiation

The first of four stages of the participation process described in the section *It takes time*. In this phase some event – a campaign, plans for a project, an offer of funding – triggers the need to involve different interests. The key issues are then who should be involved, and at what level.

See also *Stakeholders, Level of participation*.

Insurance

Groups undertaking any significant activities should check their requirements for insurance. For example:

- Public liability insurance to cover members of the group and public for personal injury or damage to property.
- Premises and contents.
- Employers' liability.
- Handling money.
- Use of vehicles.
- Professional advice indemnity.
- Trustees liability.

Consult another voluntary organisation or an insurance broker, and assign responsibility for maintaining insurance cover.

See the book *Voluntary but not Amateur*.

Kolb's cycle

Brenda Rogers offers this four minute method of making decisions in *How to solve your problems*.

Quick decisions

With a clock, first get clear what event or problem you are considering, then:

- 1** Spend one minute considering how you feel – emotions, not profound ideas.
- 2** Spend another minute reflecting on these feelings.
- 3** During the third minute ask yourself about your theories on **1** and **2** – why you feel that, what you expect to happen.
- 4** Take half a minute to reach a decision.
- 5** In the final half minute consider actions.

See also *Decision making, Plan, Act, Review, Yes or No*

Launch

A launch is the point at which you formally announce or celebrate a process or project. As such, a launch event can come at the beginning of a process – during the Preparation or Participation phase – or later during Continuation. The launch can be useful both



externally and also within an organisation:

- It provides a formal start line if used at the beginning, when you can outline the overall process and your stance.
- It is a good time to attract media coverage.
- It is an opportunity for social contacts.
- It is a deadline for making decisions and preparing materials.

See also *Communication, Identity and Image, Time Line.*

Leadership

To lead the people, walk behind them.

Lao-Tzu.

As a reaction against the stereotype of the autocratic leader, it is fashionable in some management development circles to suggest that everyone can be a leader – that is, everyone can try and fulfil their purpose in life, and help others do the same. That may not be how most people see the issue of leadership, but it can be another helpful way of looking at issues of confidence, capacity, empowerment and enabling.

Sandy Adirondack, in *Just about managing?* suggests it is helpful to think about the different management strengths needed within a group or organisation: the equivalent, perhaps, of leadership styles. She identifies: co-ordinator, shaper, innovator, evaluator, liaison, organiser, team builder, finisher, specialist.

Leaflets and newsletters

Some simple form of printed material will almost certainly be necessary in a participation process – but will not be enough alone to gain people's involvement. There is no substitute for knocking on doors or networking. If the participation process is lengthy, it may be worth considering a regular newsletter or bulletin to report back on surveys, meetings and other activities.

See also *Communication, Print.*

Leadership audit

Middlesbrough Borough Council uses a 'leadership audit' in community development work with 100 questions for members of groups or organisations. Participants choose statements which they feel are broadly true from a list which includes, for example:

- Everyone is usually involved in decisions affecting them.
- Morale is high.
- New ideas and suggestions are welcomed.
- We feel we can have influence on decisions.

The scores are analysed against the following attributes: vision, prioritising, motivation, interpersonal skills, political sensitivity, resilience, charisma, risk taking, flexibility, decisiveness.

The audit pack then suggests ways of correcting weaknesses.

Levels of participation

Levels of participation are the different degrees of involvement offered to others by whoever is starting or managing a participation process.

The levels used in this guide are Information, Consultation, Deciding Together, Acting Together, and Supporting Independent Community Initiatives. Methods for tackling problems and making progress are listed under each one.

No one level is necessarily better than another – each may be appropriate in different circumstances. However they do represent different balances of control between the different interests. Empowerment may be seen as helping people reach the higher levels – provided that is what they want to do.

See also *items on each level, and the section Where do you stand?*

Limits

Sometimes it is more important to discover what one cannot do, than what one can do.

Lin Yutang.

There's only so much any participation or capacity-building process can achieve, and it is important to agree what is realistic early in the process. People are more likely to accept limitations, if they are put openly and honestly, than disappointments later. That approach offers the different interests an opportunity to decide whether to get involved, or take some other action.

Listening

One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears.

Dean Rusk.

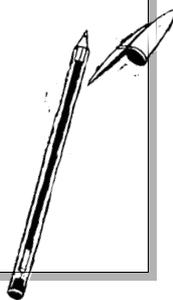
Listening is important at all stages of the participation process:

- To find out what people's interests are.
- To learn the language they use.
- To understand what role you can most usefully play.
- To find what people think of what is happening.

See also *Communication.*

Management committee

The governing body for a project or organisation, to which staff are accountable. In a company the management committee is the Board of directors. If the organisation is a charity the members of the management committee will be trustees. In appointing management committees it is important to



strike a balance between representation and competence. Little will be achieved if everyone on the committee has to learn how to manage an organisation. At the same time, a committee which has no representation of key interests may well find itself in difficulty.

See also *Committees and the book Just about managing? for detailed advice on management committees.*

Media

News is what somebody somewhere wants to suppress; all the rest is advertising.

Lord Northcliffe.

The media is mainly in the business of interesting and entertaining its users, and of selling itself or advertising. It is not there as a public service to promote your ideas or project. There are, of course, exceptions: public service announcements, community programmes, specialist publications, and the newsletters of local organisations. Parish magazines and what's on guides can be useful.

However, if you are seeking space in newspapers, on local radio or television, you will generally have to think news or features. Journalists judge what is news against 'news values' which vary between papers and stations, but generally include:

- Conflict (where's the row).
- Hardship (how many hurt, who is in danger).
- Oddity (that's unusual).
- Scandal (sex, corruption).
- Individuality (what an interesting person).
- Disclosure (we can reveal).

Local journalists have a more relaxed view than Lord Northcliffe, but you do need to consider what's in the story for them (and the editorial executive who will decide whether it goes in the paper).

Features writers may be less concerned with disclosure or scandal, but still need an interesting story to tell. Would your story be worth telling to a friend outside the project? If not, why should readers or viewers be interested?

See also *Press releases.*

Meetings

Meetings are at the heart of participation processes, whether social get-togethers, committees, workshops, or public meetings. See the checklist about meetings opposite.

See the publication *How to Make Meetings Work*, and also *Access, Committees, Public meetings, Workshops.*

Media checklist

- Consider why you want coverage – for example, to publicise an event, get enquiries, show supporters or funders what you are achieving.
- If possible identify a reporter covering your field, or link your story to other current events.
- Try and turn your story into an opportunity for pictures: essential for television, likely to get you more space in newspapers.
- Prepare a press release and expect to deal with newspaper reporters on the telephone. However, stay in touch with anyone you deal with and try to meet at some stage. Personal contacts generally produce more sympathetic stories, and are invaluable if you later face a difficult situation which could lead to adverse coverage.

Methods for participation

The methods for participation featured in this guide fall under three main heads

Techniques. Frequently used short-term interventions employed by consultants and trainers. They range from communication materials and simple workshop sessions through to more complex methods of decision-making like Strategic Choice.

Structures. Interim and longer-term organisational structures used in participation processes. They range from working parties and advisory committees to partnership organisations like development trusts, and community-based coops.

Longer-term programmes which may involve staff devoted partly or wholly to the programme as well as the use of techniques and structures.

See also the *Signposts* section

Meetings checklist

For effective meetings, consider:

- The style of the meeting. If it is to be a creative workshop rather than a committee, make sure people know that in advance.
- An accessible venue (public transport, disabled access).
- Child care (crèche, financial assistance).
- What information and notice is appropriate beforehand. In general, provide papers with options for formal meetings, but only an outline of the aims for a workshop so that people are spontaneous.
- Any aids you will need: charts, projectors etc.
- The layout of the room, and scope for breaking into small groups. Avoid a platform and lecture-style seating if possible.
- Good management of the meeting itself: see committees, public meetings, workshops.

Follow up to make sure that action has been taken and to inform people of the outcome.



Mind Maps

Mind maps or spidergrams are a graphical technique for exploring solutions to problems.

Drawing mind maps

- 1 Take a large sheet of paper, write your problem in the middle, and draw a line around it.
- 2 List all the reasons for the problem in a circle around the centre, each in a bubble.
- 3 Add in the solutions you can think of and connect these to any of the causes or people involved or situations connected with it.

Summarised from *How to Solve Your Problems*.

Minutes

Minutes are the formal record of meetings. As such they are an important reference point for any discussions or arguments about what was decided. They can be a spur to action as well. See the box below on how to develop action minutes.

Mission

Mission is what you wish to achieve. The term is much favoured in business management, but can confuse people with its military or evangelical overtones. 'Purpose' is an alternative, although it has a slightly different sense – I think mission has a stronger emphasis on end result.

See also *Aims and objectives, Outcomes, Purpose*.

Mistakes

There is nothing wrong with making mistakes. Just don't respond with encores.

Anon

You will certainly make them – at least in the eyes of some of those involved. Try and be

honest about what happened, and use the results to reshape the process.

See *Plan, Act, Review*.

Monitoring and evaluation

At the end of any piece of action you need to know two things that will aid future planning:

- How do we know we have been successful?
- What can we learn so that we can do it better, or what is the next step?

In order to do this you ideally need to be clear about aims and objectives or purpose, and criteria for judging success. Setting yourself the task of creating a system for monitoring and evaluation may help clarify the purpose and criteria.

Checklist

In planning monitoring and evaluation, consider:

- What are we trying to do?
- How will we know we have done it?
- What information do we need to collect and how do we collect it?
- When is the best time to evaluate how successful it has been?
- What can we count to use in monitoring and evaluation?
- Who externally will judge – and on what terms?
- What satisfaction are we looking for?

See also *Criteria, Outcomes*.

Muddle

If you find you aren't sure what to do next, or just seem to go around in circles, try one or more of these techniques:

- Check that you agree on your aims and objectives.
- Do a SWOT analysis.
- Brainstorm some new ideas.
- Develop priorities by drawing up a Time Line.
- Follow the Plan, Act, Review cycle.

See also *Problem clarification*.

Negotiation

Negotiation is 'a back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed.' (*Getting to Yes*).

Practitioners in participation processes are bound to get involved in negotiation as



Action minutes

Turn minutes of meetings into action plans by:

- 1 Creating a standard form with these headings.

Meeting	Date		
Attended by	Apologies		
Agenda item	Action	By whom	Deadline
Item 1	To do	Who	By when
Item 2	To do	Who	By when

- 2 During the meeting one member records the items and action to be taken. The chair or facilitator helps by making sure clear decisions are taken

- 3 Photocopy the forms and circulate at the end of the meeting.

Summarised from *Planning Together*.

different interests try and work out what they want from any situation, and have degrees of control over the results. You can end up trying to mediate between different factions, facilitating groups discussions, or negotiating between community interests and their own organisation. *Getting to Yes* advocates:

- 1 Separating the people from the problem. Put yourself in other people's shoes to see the problem from their point of view; don't attack the people, address the problem.
- 2 Focus on interests, not positions. Try and find areas where the outcomes you are seeking will overlap.
- 3 Invent options for mutual gain. Be creative in developing ideas which could serve to achieve the overlapping interests.
- 4 Insist on objective criteria. Agree ways of judging and reaching solutions which are agreed to be fair.

Networking

Networking is the business of making informal contacts, chatting, and picking up further contacts. It is the way to learn:

- What people are interested in – the issues they consider important.
- The sort of ideas and language they find familiar.
- Who are the key people and organisations – the stakeholders.

Some networking is essential before other more formal information-giving like producing leaflets, staging exhibitions and holding meetings. Two specific techniques are suggested in the book *Creating Involvement*:

- 1 Telephone trees. A group of people takes responsibility for ringing several others, who in turn ring a further round of contacts.
- 2 Co-ordinators take responsibility for keeping people in their street or block informed.

Nominal Group Technique

This technique – sometimes called Snowball – can be used with fairly large groups and is often more successful than Brainstorming with small groups.

See also *Action plans, Brainstorming*.

Options

As I learnt very early in my life in Whitehall, the acid test of any political question is: What is the alternative?

Lord Trent.

'There is no alternative' is seldom true. Options are the different ways in which you might

achieve what you want, or just take the next step. They are ideas on how to tackle problems and reach solutions.

In order to generate options use Brainstorming or Nominal Group Technique.

See also *Creative thinking, Ideas*.

Outcomes

The term 'outcomes' is used in this guide to describe those results of plans and actions which you are seeking to achieve.

Thinking in terms of outcomes which you may see, hear, feel as well as the more abstract aims and objectives should help clarify what to do to achieve what you want. One of the most important questions in any participation process is What outcome do you want?

See also *Aims and objectives, Plan, Act Review, Purpose*.

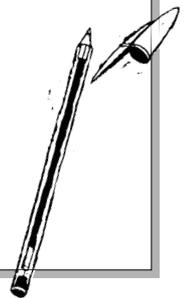
Ownership

The stake that people have in an idea, a project or an organisation is fundamental to their commitment. 'Not invented here' is a powerful block to gaining people's involvement – whether they are councillors, officers, professionals, business people or residents. For that reason early brainstorming workshops, where everyone has a chance to contribute ideas, are important.

See also *Control*.

Parish maps

A technique in which features of human and natural interest which local people value are shown on a map of the locality and publicly displayed. The maps can be any size, shape, scale or material – such as paint, ceramic,



Nominal Group Technique

- 1 Before the meeting clarify what information it is hoped to gather, then develop two specific questions.
- 2 At the meeting, explain the procedure and split into small groups of 6-8, each with a leader. Display the questions.
- 3 People work on their own (or in pairs) quietly for 10-15 minutes answering the questions.
- 4 Group members read out – and the leader lists – the results. Items are clarified or challenged if necessary.
- 5 Group members vote for their top 5 answers to each question.
- 6 In plenary session the group leaders display and explain summary charts, and an overall summary is made if possible.
- 7 The next stage depends on the content of the meeting, and where it is in an overall process. People can be asked to move back into small groups to take forward particular ideas. Alternatively, people may be given 5 stickers each and asked to vote for their priorities.
- 8 The meeting should close with a summary of what has happened and what the next stages are likely to be.

textiles or photography. Advice and information is available from the Parish Maps Project at Common Ground, who publish two useful booklets *Parish Maps* and *The Parish Boundary*. Rural Community Councils have helped with parish maps by providing information and support (contact ACRE for local addresses).

Participation

1 A process during which individuals, groups and organisations are consulted about or have the opportunity to become actively involved in a project or programme of activity.

2 The third phase of the participation process described in the section *It takes time*. In this phase whoever is promoting and managing participation engages with the range of interests in the community, using methods described in this guide.

See also *Easy answers and Guidelines on how to...*

Partnership

Partnerships are formal or informal arrangements to work together to some joint purpose. In my view:

■ Informal partnerships work best when the project is specific and can be achieved relatively quickly: the purpose is clear, and outcomes achievable.

■ Where the task is complex and long term it may be necessary to formalise the partnership through some constitution or contractual arrangement. This provides a structure for decision-making and agreeing ways of working.

■ What doesn't work is to try and tackle a wide range of issues through an informal partnership, particularly if the parties do not know each other well.

■ On the other hand, simply setting up a partnership structure doesn't solve the problems. You still need to work through clarifying joint purpose, values etc.

See also *Acting together*.

Past and Future

This is a simple technique in which a group uses past shared experiences to think about the future. See the box above.

Phases of participation

Participation is not achieved in one survey, leaflet or meeting – it is a process. People and groups need time to understand what is proposed, develop trust and work out what to do. This guide identifies four main phases in a

Past and future

1 Split into groups of 3 or 4

2 Provide each group with a large piece of paper label PAST at the top, and FUTURE at the bottom, and about 20 Post-it notes.

3 Each group member writes what they thought most worthwhile or successful in the past, and what they should be tackling in future. One point to a note.

4 People stick notes on the appropriate part of the paper, and cluster them when they are similar.

5 Small groups report back to the larger group.

Adapted from *Training and How to Enjoy It*, John Grayson.

participation process, and takes them as one of the main dimensions of the framework of participation. The phases are:

Initiation: something triggers the idea of participation, and a champion emerges for the process.

Preparation: the practitioner who will manage the process plans it with the promoter/champion, makes informal contacts and agrees a strategy.

Participation: materials are produced, events held, and other participation methods used to involve a range of interests.

Continuation: the proposals, projects or programmes agreed in the previous phase are taken forward

The section *It takes time* describes the phases in more detail.

Plan, act, review

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

Theodore Roosevelt.

In order to make regular checks on progress and keep your plans under review, see development of your participation process as a cycle:

■ Plan how you will achieve your aims.

■ Take action on the basis of these plans.

■ Review progress regularly.

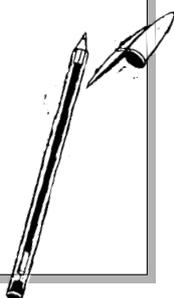
■ If necessary, modify your plans.

■ Put the new plans into action....and so on

Planning for Real

Planning for Real is a powerful technique for involving individuals and groups in decisions about their neighbourhood, a site or building by producing a three-dimensional model. The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation has produced a pack for the three-stage process:

1 Everyone from school children to residents and local workers are encouraged to be



involved in the process of preparing the model. A local skills survey may also be carried out.

2 The model is exhibited at different places around the locality – cafes, libraries, shops and pubs – with extensive publicity.

3 Workshops are held at which everyone is encouraged to place cut-out cards representing uses, problems or other issues on the model. Small groups concerned with specific issues rearrange suggestions and negotiate with other groups. An action plan is produced.

The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation produces a range of packs to facilitate the process. Planning for Real and similar model-based techniques can be very effective in involving people because they allow ‘hands on’ responses, do not rely on written material, and give everyone a say. If the technique is to be used honestly – rather than to create false expectations – it is important that:

- People are aware of the ‘real world’ constraints on making physical and other changes.
- It is clear where responsibility for decisions lies, and how far the ideas developed will be taken on by, say, professional designers who may be involved in the process.
- If there is to be some degree of community involvement in implementation, some organisational development takes place.

See also *Design Game, Structures and the book Creating Involvement for a longer discussion.*

Politicians

I have never regarded politics as the arena of morals. It is the arena of interests.

Aneurin Bevan.

Politicians—councillors, MPs—will be important stakeholders in any participation process. They are in the business of identifying different interest groups, and balancing priorities. On the one hand they may be a stumbling block, concerned about challenges to their power and status.

On the other hand they can be an invaluable source of contacts and influence. Like any other stakeholder it is important to see things from their point of view – to find what they are interested in, what they are seeking to achieve – and to get to know them informally. Try and judge their leadership style, and work with them accordingly. You may get more done if you let them take some credit.

See also *Leadership, Stakeholders.*

Post-it notes

A great technical aid to collective decision-making, and an improvement on basic Brainstorming. When running workshops give people pads of Post-its to write their ideas on, then stick them on a chart and move them around into groups.

Power

Behind participation processes lie issues of power and control. For example:

- Do all key interests have an equal ability or opportunity to participate if they wish?
- Who designs the process, and to whom are they accountable?
- Who sets the timetable and controls the funds?
- Who makes the final decisions?

Participation techniques can disempower people if they are used – consciously or unconsciously – to mask these fundamental questions.

See the longer section on *Power and also Access, Control, Empowerment, Ownership.*

Practitioner

The term used in this guide to signify the person most concerned with how a participation process is moved forward.

See also *Role of the practitioner.*

Preparation

The second phase in the process of participation described in the section *It takes time*. In this phase the practitioner managing the process should clarify key issues with whoever is promoting the process, make informal contact with interests in the community, and develop a strategy.

See also *Guidelines on how to...*

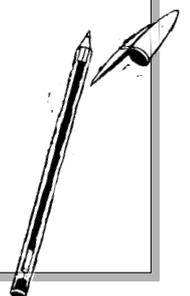
Presentations

Speaking without thinking is like shooting without taking aim.

Spanish proverb.

Presentations are speeches with props. These may range from a simple flip chart to slides and videos. However, the effectiveness of your presentation will depend more on careful planning than technology. See the checklist on the next page for some of the issues to consider.

See also *Communication, Information, Press releases.*



Presentation checklist

- Define your objective. For example: to inform the audience of our new project and explain how they can be involved.
- Brainstorm your main ideas using index cards or, if you have one, an outliner on a computer. (This is like a word processor with automatic sub-heading and sub-sub-headings).
- Keep the main ideas to not more than five if possible. Organise others as sub-points
- Put yourself in the place of the audience and think what impression they will get and questions they will ask.
- If necessary revise your presentation

with as much emphasis as possible on benefits for the audience.

- Prepare your visual aids – flip chart, slides – and a handout.
- Remember KISS – keep it short, and simple: one main ideas per sheet or slide. Use short phrases only as prompts to your presentation.

Presentations are most appropriate for informing and consulting rather than deciding together. However they are an excellent way of clarifying what you are trying to say – and getting feedback – at the start of any participation process.

Press Releases

Journalists are bombarded with press releases and bin most of them. Generally personal contact produces more result on important issues. However, you may well need to produce press releases to announce events, provide background, summarise reports or circulate speeches in advance.

See also *Communication, Five Ws plus H, Media.*

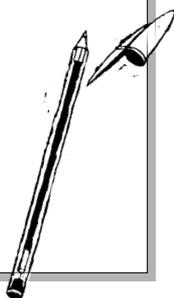
Checklist

- Write the release as a news story covering who, why, what, where, when, how.
- Use a short headline and an interesting first paragraph.
- Avoid jargon.
- Keep it short.
- Include lively quotes if possible.
- Use one side of the paper only, wide margins and double spacing.
- Date the release, and indicate if there is a time embargo on use.
- Provide a contact number for further enquiries.

Principles of participation

The advice in this guide is based on the following principles:

- Effective participation requires a planned process in which the key interests agree on the level of participation which is appropriate.
- Participation involves developing agreement on both what is to be achieved – the outcomes – and how it is to be done – the methods.
- Participation is a process of learning and development for all concerned. It takes time.
- People will only be involved if they understand each other, have the confidence to participate, and can see some point to it.
- The use of short-term methods and



techniques for participation requires understanding of the overall process, and skilled application. There are no quick fixes.

Print

Print is not always the most effective means of communication, but it is important everything of importance is written down and appropriate material is freely available. Among the print methods you may use are:

■ Committee reports and other formal papers. Are they freely available – and if not, why not? Few people may be interested, but making them available combats rumours and dispels mistrust.

■ Letterheads for a project or new organisation. These may seem simple, but raise important questions of what you are called, where you are based, and the way you present yourself.

■ Leaflets and posters. Useful in two ways. First externally – to promote meetings or give a simple explanation of your project. Second internally – challenging you to agree on what you are trying to say, to whom, and what response you want.

■ Newsletters. Worth doing if you have regular new information, or production is a good way of involving people. Bulletins linked to events can be effective. Drop newsletters if they become a chore or the self-congratulatory.

■ Folders. Instead of, say, a substantial brochure, consider a card folder containing a newsletter, leaflet, and inserts on letterheads. It is much easier to update.

■ Reports. Putting the results of a project between covers builds credibility. Considering the report during a project, not just at the end, may help you clarify what you are trying to achieve. If you are running an organisation, take trouble over your annual report for the same reasons.

See also *Identity, Information.*

Print checklist

In preparing print consider:

- Who your audience are.
- What response you want from them: are you informing, consulting, etc?
- The tone of your message – are you promoting yourself, or offering help?
- The use of illustration: pictures are worth quite a few words.
- Style and identity. A clear message and effective design carries more weight than lengthy waffle. Working with a designer will give you a fresh perspective on what you are trying to say.

Priority Search

Priority Search is a unique survey technique used by the Priority Focus Team, set up by Sheffield City Council, to conduct consultation exercises. The five stages are:

- 1 The key issue or problem is identified with the client, and a survey plan developed.
- 2 Focus groups, each of about 20 people, representative of those to be surveyed develop ideas for solutions around the key issue.
- 3 The solutions form the basis for questionnaire design.
- 4 The questionnaires are completed by the wider population.
- 5 The team analyses the survey results and produces a report for the client showing the consensus order of priority for all those surveyed, and the differences, common themes and trends among different groups in the community.

See *Creating Involvement*. for a fuller description.

Problem clarification

You can't find an appropriate solution unless you are sure that you are tackling the right problem. A lot of ideas, discussion, and decision-making suffer from a failure to keep asking: 'Is this really the problem?'

Clarifying problems

Here's a few ideas on how to make sure you are clear:

- 1 Explain the problem to someone else, simply. Listen to what they say.
- 2 Consider what would be a solution – what outcome you are seeking. Where are you now? What are the obstacles in getting from here to there?
- 3 Split what you may want from what you really need – and concentrate on the needs.
- 4 Do a SWOT analysis.

Problems

Problems are what make us think. In participation processes they are the barriers to progress, conflicts, uncertainties which make it difficult to know what to do.

See also *Barriers to participation*, *Decision making*, *Problem Clarification*

Process as a journey

Planning and carrying out a project or participation process can be seen as a journey. The key questions, and topics and techniques which may help answer them are:

- 1 Where are you now? (Assessment, Stakeholder analysis, SWOT).
- 2 Where do you want to be? (Outcomes,

Public meetings checklist

If you do hold a public meeting:

- Ensure good preparation and publicity.
- Research local concerns and focus on these rather than generalised issues.
- Keep any presentations short with opportunities for audience response.
- Consider running workshop groups with report back, rather than keeping everyone together all the time.
- Choose someone independent and locally respected as chair.
- Ensure the venue is easily accessible.
- Build on the results.

Purpose).

- 3 What is the best way to get there? (Action Planning, Decision Making, Options).
- 4 What barriers may you face? (Barriers to participation, Problems)
- 5 How you will know how far you have travelled? (Monitoring and Evaluation, Success).

Public meetings

Although widely used, public meetings are not the most effective method of involving people. While they may be useful for giving information, and gaining support around a clear-cut issue, they are poor vehicles for debate and decision-making. Classic public meetings with a platform party can easily be dominated by a small number of people, and become stage sets for confrontation.

See also *Access*, *Five Ws and H*, *Meetings*, *Presentations*, *Publicity*, *Workshops*. The book *Creating Involvement* provides further guidance on planning and running public meetings.

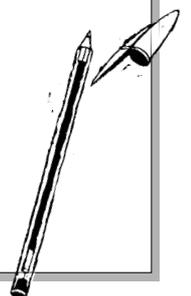
Publicity

There are three key questions to ask before embarking on any publicity:

- 1 Who are you trying to reach? For example, members of an organisation, the general public, sponsors, media, politicians.
- 2 What result do you want? For example, opinions, volunteers, funding, support.
- 3 How will you respond? For example, personal contact, leaflets, events or in other ways.

The answers to these questions will determine your choice of publicity method – for example, exhibitions, media, events, print or audio-visual.

See also *Communications*, *Identity and Image*, *Five Ws plus H*.



Purpose

'If one does not know to which port one is steering, no wind is favourable.'

Seneca

A statement of purpose, or mission statement, is a summary in a sentence or two of your intention – your aims and objectives. It may be the broad statement of the reason for a project or a group's existence. Statements of purpose may start out as broad intentions like 'we aim to create a better place to live and work'. They become meaningful when the aim is followed with statements of how: for example 'by providing advice and support for practical environmental projects'. There may be a number of these 'how to' statements which are objectives. If they are measurable, they become targets. Purpose will be important on two fronts:

- In clarifying why you are carrying out a participation process.
- In reaching a common view among those involved about what result – outcome – they want.

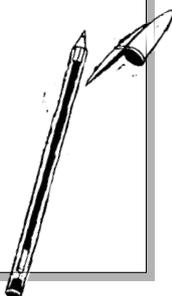
See also Aims and objectives, Outcomes, Vision.

Recruitment

Enlisting the support of people for a project, or their membership of a group or organisation, is most likely to be effective if you:

- Put yourself in their shoes – what benefit are you offering them?
- Provide a chance for people to think through what is involved, perhaps in a small group.
- Ask existing members to bring friends along.

See also Barriers to participation, Commitment.



Creating a statement of purpose

This may be done directly by working as individuals and a group on the statement, or by working up from options and objectives.

To create a statement directly

- Work individually to write down one or two sentences expressing your intention.
- Pool these and amalgamate by identifying areas of agreement, and discussing disagreements.

To work from options:

- Brainstorm specific ideas to achieve your aim.
- Summarise 8-10 of these on cards, with a paragraph description of each.
- As a group place them in order of priority.
- Reflect on the common theme which lies behind the projects, and the criteria you used to priorities.
- Develop the statement of purpose around the common theme, and a statement of values which reflects the criteria.

Research

Knowledge is a process of piling up facts; wisdom lies in their simplification.

Martin H. Fisher.

The research you may need to do in planning and starting a participation process will depend in part of the level of participation you are considering.

For example:

- For levels of information and consultation you will need to research and prepare clear proposals early in the process to put to other interests.
 - If you are aiming for Deciding or Acting Together, it will be more appropriate to delay research into options until this can be agreed together.
 - If you are supporting community initiatives, you may wish to support other people's research.
- Whichever level you are working at it will be necessary to find out who are the key interests.

See also Community, Stakeholder analysis.

Resources

In a participation process you may need two sets of resources: first the skills, money and equipment to run the process, and second, the resources for any project or organisation that develops from the process.

See also Budgets for participation, Fundraising, Skills.

Role of the practitioner

The go-between wears out a thousand sandals.

Japanese proverb.

Much confusion arises when people are not clear about the intentions and responsibilities of practitioners involved in participation processes. For example 'enabler' sounds fine, but people will be mistrustful if they feel that as well as facilitating the discussion you are making decisions on who gets what resources, and have your own agenda. If you are seeking to empower people, it is particularly unhelpful to act as a spokesperson for a group negotiating with authorities, or to act as go-between. It prevents the different interests getting to know each other and developing mutual trust, and can lead to filtering of information and closing options.

See also Enabling.

Roles in groups

One of the many benefits of working in a group is to be able to share responsibilities with different people undertaking different

parts of the work. You may all want to have an equal say, but even groups that work as collectives find it easier to have different individuals taking responsibility for co-ordinating a particular area of work. Whilst every organisation has different needs and different roles, the following checklist may be useful.

Group roles checklist

- Chairperson for the main committee.
 - Secretary.
 - Chairperson for working groups.
 - Treasurer.
 - Spokesperson.
 - Publicity officer.
 - Meetings organiser.
 - Volunteers organiser.
 - Work co-ordinator.
 - Administrator.
- You may want to rotate some of these roles around the group.

Roles of participants

Marilyn Taylor, of the School for Advanced Urban Studies, suggests that in planning participation a local authority should see those involved in three possible roles:

- As citizens who have certain political rights and duties, including the right to vote. As such they have an interest in every part of the policies and operation of any authority.
- As paymasters, people contribute a significant amount of the authority's finances and have a right to call the authority to account for the way it spends their money.
- As consumers, people use different services paid for by the local authority and sometimes provided by them (e.g. parks, education, highways, leisure, libraries, housing, waste disposal etc).

Shop front

A temporary office or shop front in the community you are working with shows commitment to meeting people on their own terms, rather than in meetings you have arranged. It provides an independent address and contact for any project. However, be careful that:

- The shop front doesn't substitute for the substance of what you are trying to achieve.
- You can afford the cost and have people to staff it.
- You aren't setting up a problem for someone else to take over.

Auditing skills

In order to find out what talent you have:

- 1 List the tasks you have to carry out in as much detail as possible, using a brainstorming session if necessary.
- 2 Choose 10 random tasks and ask each member of the group to:
 - Score each task 1 (no good) to 5 (very good) on how good they would be.
 - State what they would need to do to become very good (e.g. practice, training).
- 3 Pull your ideas together, and for each item list:
 - Who can do it, and how well.
 - What would be involved in getting more people competent.

Skills Audit

You may need to look no further than your own group for the expertise you need for your project or campaign.

Small Group

Large meetings and committees are not good for working through difficult issues. You can often make a lot more progress by taking some time out in smaller groups and reporting back.

Breaking into groups

In order to allow members of a large group a say:

- 1 Introduce the issue to the large group, and set tasks for smaller groups. State time limits, how to report back, and arrange where each group should go.
 - 2 Break into smaller groups of not more than 6 to 8. Meet and discuss the issue. Appoint a facilitator, recorder, reporter if necessary.
 - 3 Report back to the large group.
 - 4 As an alternative reshuffle into new small groups and report back to each other within the groups
- Summarised from Resource Manual for Living Revolution.

Socials

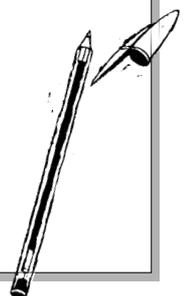
Among the committee meetings and workshop sessions allow time for social events where people can get to know each informally. People are far more likely to get involved in something which is fun.

Solutions

Simple solutions are like a bunch of spare keys. They seldom work.

Anon.

Solutions have to be custom-made for the problems they are going to unlock. They are reached by clarifying the problem, having ideas and generating options, and then decision making.



The book *101 Ways to Generate Great Ideas* has a section on Techniques to Develop Solutions. Most are oriented to commercial development; generally useful methods include:

- What words of praise will be said when you have a solution?
- List the attributes a solution may have, before trying to see it in total.
- Suggest a metaphor for the problem.
- Reverse the situation, then reverse the problem.

See also *Clarifying problems, Destruction testing, Options, and the Easy Answers section.*

Special events

Special events and festivals are one way to reach people who are not interested in formal meetings. Possibilities include parades, bringing in community artists, making models, holding exhibitions, getting school children involved through art work, drama or music, friendly competitions, involving local shops and businesses in events.

Special events bring fun and celebration into participation. However, they require lots of allies in order to plan and carry them.

See also *Allies.*

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who have an interest in what you are or may be doing, because they will be affected or may have some influence. For example:

- Who will benefit from your proposals?
- Who may be adversely affected?
- Who may help or hinder?
- Who may have skills, money or other resources?
- Who decides?

Stance

One of the most important decisions to be made in a participation process is the level of involvement offered to the various interests by whoever initiates the process – for example,

Consultation or Acting Together. Stance is the suggestion or assertion that a particular level is appropriate – which may not be generally accepted. For example, a local authority may start a consultation process but find that residents want more say. Negotiating stances is an important early stage of a participation process. See the section *Where do you stand?*

Deciding your stance

In deciding where you stand consider:

- What level of participation are other interests likely to consider appropriate?
- What level will your colleagues or others in your group accept or support?
- What skills and resources will be needed? Will you be able to follow through?
- Will you change your stance if others don't accept it?

Start where people are at

If you really want to involve as many people as possible, you have to go to them rather than expect them to come to you. That means:

- Going to their place rather than yours – homes, clubs, pubs, churches, mosques, Chambers of Commerce.
- Starting with other people's concerns rather than your own.

See also *Access, Special events.*

Staying involved

People need to experience some benefit or encouragement if they are to stay involved. The study *Limbering Up* found people stopped being involved because of:

- Disagreements.
- Nothing being achieved.
- Having no real say.
- Domination by a clique.

They were encouraged by:

- Feeling they would be effective.
- Experiencing success.
- Seeing peers involved.
- Feelings of personal benefit.

See also *Conflict resolution, Cliques, Confidence, Success.*

Steering group

If you are at the level of participation of Acting Together, and aiming to create a formal partnership, it may be appropriate to set up a steering group which is a 'shadow' of the



Stakeholder analysis

In order to think through the role of stakeholders:

- Consider who the key stakeholders are.
- Put yourself in their shoes: how are they likely to react?
- How might you wish them to react?
- What do you need to do to involve or influence them?
- Draw this up on a flip chart.

Who?	What is their likely attitude?	What response or change do you want?	What has to be done?
Stakeholder	Attitude	Response	Action

management committee or Board that you will be creating later. Adopt similar procedures for the steering group that you will use for the management committee – that should help ensure that early decisions are taken in the interests of the partnership, rather than simply the self interests of the various representatives.

See also *Board, Management Committee, Team building, Terms of reference.*

SAST

Strategic Assumption Surface Testing is a technique for a large group to examine different options for action and then develop a common action plan.

Strategic choice

Strategic choice is a sophisticated technique for making decisions and developing action plans in situations with many options and uncertainties. This can be done in a workshop session, or using Strategic Choice software – STRAD – available from Stradspan Limited. Strategic choice works through four modules:

- Shaping, where the main areas for making decisions are identified in order to provide a problem focus.
 - Designing, where you start to explore ways forward by seeing which combinations of options from decision areas could be combined.
 - Comparing, where the implications of different paths through the strategic problem are assessed.
 - Choosing, where you review what to do about key areas of uncertainty and move towards action plans.
- The book *Planning Under Pressure* provides a detailed description.

Structures for participation

Organisations like local authorities often favour participation methods which fit their own way of working – so they invite people to join committees, or set up other structures. Jerry Smith, of the Community Development Foundation, suggests there are five main classes of organisation used by local authorities:

- 1 Consultative bodies.
- 2 Councillor bodies usually based on wards or other local authority administrative divisions.
- 3 Joint bodies composed of councillors and community representatives.
- 4 Narrow-range community organisations like tenant co-operatives, community housing associations, and community economic development trusts.

Running SAST

- 1 The group splits into small groups and each takes an option to consider. The task of each group is to 'sell' its option in an uncritical 15 minute presentation to the other groups.
- 2 As each group makes its presentation the facilitator notes the main points on two charts, one headed 'actions' one headed 'advantages'.
- 3 After each presentation the audience questions and criticises, and these points are recorded on a third chart headed 'debate'.
- 4 The three sets of charts are exhibited, and

there is a final discussion to bring ideas together and plan next steps.

uring the final discussion

- The common 'actions' are turned into an action plan.
- The 'advantages' are translated into agreed criteria.
- The issues of 'debate' are clustered and treated as areas of uncertainty which may require further investigation.
- Activities to investigate these uncertainties may be transferred to the action plan.

- 5 Broad-range community associations such as neighbourhood and community councils.

Choosing a structure

Issues to consider in choosing a form of organisation include:

- Geography.
- Relationship to the political system.
- The relationship with new and existing bodies.
- Balance of community and local authority representation.
- The level of participation offered.
- Formal status of the organisation.
- Method of operation.

See also *Community forum, Community initiatives, Development Trusts.*

Success

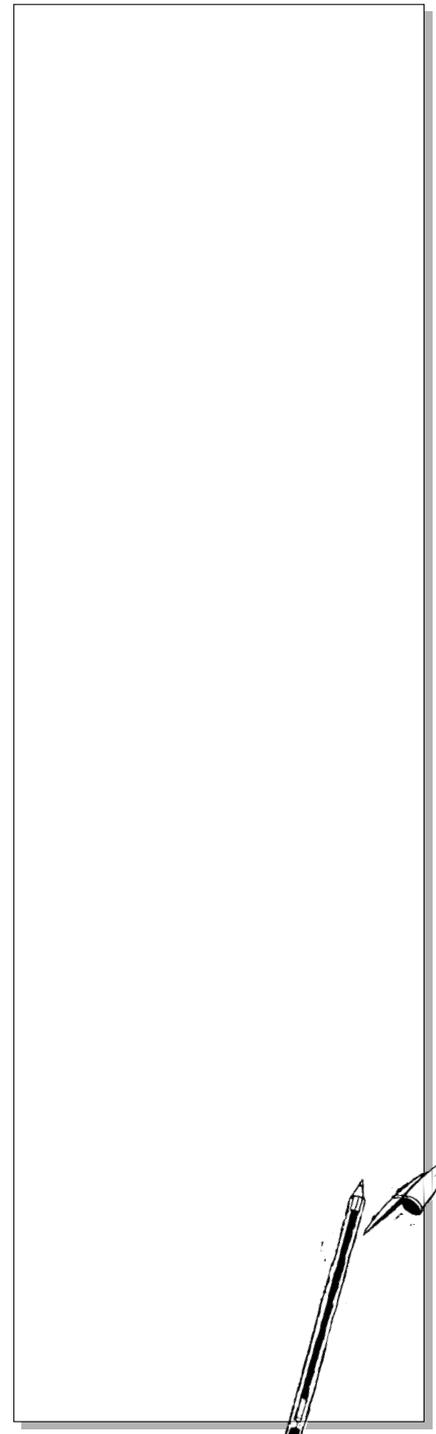
Success may take many forms in a participation process. Ultimately it may be associated with some 'product' – achieving your aims and objectives, or purpose. It may also be about a successful process – meeting deadlines and targets along the way, ensuring that people are staying involved.

See also *Criteria, Outcomes.*

Supporting independent community initiatives

Supporting community based initiatives means helping others develop and carry out their own plans. You can, of course, put limits on what you will support. It is the most 'empowering' level of participation – provided people want to do things for themselves. They may, quite properly, choose a lower level of participation. Supporting community initiatives is appropriate:

- Where there is a commitment to empower individuals or groups within the community.
- Where people are interested in starting and



running an initiative.
It is unlikely to be appropriate when:

- Community initiatives are seen as 'a good thing' in the abstract and pushed on people from the top down.
- Where there aren't the resources to maintain initiatives in the longer-term.

See the section *Where do you stand?* for more detailed discussion.

Surveys

Surveys provide an important starting point for participation processes. Whether they enable people to participate significantly in decision making, and subsequent action, depends very much on the way they are done:

- Questionnaire surveys – whether conducted by interviewers or completed by respondents – may be improved if local groups are involved in the design, collection and analysis. *Village Appraisals* are designed and carried out by local groups, who may then use the results to press for action or to start their own projects.

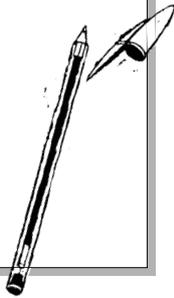
- *Parish maps* have provided the starting point for a large number of rural and urban projects. They offer wide scope for involvement because of the many ways in which they can be developed, and the focus on familiar features in the locality.

- *Priority Search* uses a focus group, representative of those to be surveyed, to generate ideas which become part of the survey questionnaire. However, taking action rests with the local authority or other body commissioning the survey.

See the book *Creating Involvement* for discussion of these and other survey techniques, and items mentioned above.

SWOT

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. It's a good



workshop technique for starting to plan a participation process, or review where you are.

Team building

The process of helping a group of people develop shared aims and objectives, values and a plan for putting them into action. People working together have more opportunities to get to know each other than, for example, members of a management committee meeting every month or two – so team building workshops can be particularly useful.

Most techniques for developing ideas and making decisions together will help with team building, because they help people understand each other's interests and priorities. Similarly techniques specifically designed for team building can be useful in participation processes.

See the book *Planning Together*.

Techniques

The term is used here to describe any short-term device which helps make progress in a participation process. This may be a brainstorming workshop, a task like writing a leaflet to help clarify what you are trying to achieve, or a more complex game or simulation.

Techniques are particularly useful for consultant, facilitators and trainers because:

- They are discrete pieces of work with clear preparation and results.
- If used well, everyone gets a sense that things have moved forward.
- They are a good way of breaking out of conventional committees and public meetings which may not have worked in the past. However, techniques should not be seen as 'quick fixes', but as milestones in a long term process. If people feel they are being manipulated, or made to 'jump through hoops' they will avoid further involvement or oppose further activities.

Using SWOT

When you are clear what your aim is:

- 1 Brainstorm issues under each heading. Strengths and weaknesses relate to internal matters for the group or organisation, opportunities and threats to the external. Divide up a chart, and ask people to fill in and stick on Post-it notes.
- 2 Draw up a summary and discuss how to build on your strengths, do something about your weaknesses. make the most of the opportunities, avoid or eliminate the threats.
- 3 Turn these conclusions into an Action plan.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Choosing a technique

In order to decide on a technique, using this guide:

- Browse through the A to Z to get an overview of possibilities.
- Review the level of participation and your stance, and the techniques recommended as appropriate.
- Review the phase of process, and recommended techniques.
- Use the Guidelines on how to... section.
- Read 'Easy answers' for some cautionary comments on techniques.

Terms of reference

Any subcommittee or working group should have clear terms of reference covering:

- The purpose and membership of the group.
- Who services it with agendas and minutes.
- How often it meets – and for how long.
- The topics or issues the group covers.
- The powers of the group to make decisions.
- What funding it has, if any.
- To which committee or group it reports back.

See *Just About Managing?* for a longer discussion.

Time Line

It takes time to save time.

Joe Taylor.

Everything takes longer than you think – even when you know it does. Drawing a timeline is a simple technique to set priorities among activities and events which must be completed within a given period of time

- Draw a horizontal line on a piece of paper.
- Graduate it into appropriate blocks of time (days, weeks, months). The first mark is NOW, the last the completion date.
- Think of all the tasks to be completed.
- Place the tasks on the time line in the order of when they have to be done, and which are the most important to do at a particular time.

See also *Workload planning*.

Trading company

Charities cannot engage in income-generating trading unless it is pursuit of their objectives. They can, however, set up subsidiary trading companies which covenant profits back to the charity. If you are considering this type of arrangement consult a solicitor and an accountant experienced in the field.

Trust

The most brilliant presentation will achieve little if the audience suspects they are being misled – and workshop techniques will fail if people feel they are being manipulated. Trust is an essential foundation for all aspects of participation.

In order to develop trust:

- Draw out and deal with any suspicions from past contacts.
- Be open and honest about what you are trying to achieve – and about any problems.
- Be prepared to make mistakes – and admit them.

- Meet people informally.
- Deliver what you promise.

Values

Values are statements of what we consider important. Since they may be emotive, political, and difficult to express, they are frequently hidden. However it is difficult to understand each other or reach agreement if we are unclear about values. For example, council officers faced with a tight project timetable may be frustrated by a community group which insists on numerous meetings, held in the evenings, leading to the appointment of a representative steering group.

The officers value cost-effective delivery of 'product' acceptable to their political masters and the Government; the community group values openness and democratic process. In groups where there may be underlying differences of values it is often most productive to concentrate first on what there is in common by discussing outcomes – what you would like to happen at the end of the day – and how you can get there. A group which has agreed aims and objectives may explore shared values by considering the image it wishes to present.

See also *Aims and objectives, Criteria, Identity and Image, Outcomes, Purpose*.

Videos

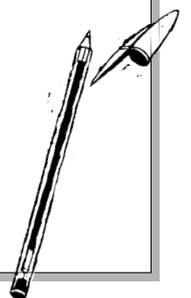
At first sight video might seem a powerful medium for launching an initiative, but it can be costly and inflexible if you have to pay a professional team. A well-scripted slide show is cheaper, easy to change, and gives you personal contact with the audience. Slide shows and twin-projector audio-visual presentations can be transferred to video. These don't compare with professional videos, but save carrying the equipment around to small groups.

See also *Communication*.

Village appraisals

This is a technique promoted by ACRE – Action for Communities in Rural England – through which local people use surveys to take stock of village life and encourage action by both volunteers and local authorities. A format has been established for local residents to carry out surveys of the services and facilities in rural areas, and there is computer software available. ACRE suggest a 12 stage process to use this:

- 1 Form a steering group
- 2 Decide the aims of the appraisal, and the area to be covered.



- 3** Consider how you plan to fund the project.
 - 4** Draw up a realistic timescale and consider publicity.
 - 5** Familiarise yourself with the software.
 - 6** Decide on the issues that are important to your community and list them.
 - 7** Use the 'menu' of questions from the software to design a questionnaire.
 - 8** Print, distribute and collect the questionnaire.
 - 9** Use the software to make a first analysis.
 - 10** Review the aims of the appraisal and produce a report with recommendations for action.
 - 11** Launch the report, and decide on the authorities to negotiate with.
 - 12** Review the situation after a year to see how things are progressing.
- Contact ACRE for further information.

Vision

You see things; and you say 'Why?' But I dream things that never were, and I say 'Why not?'

George Bernard Shaw

The idea of a vision of the future seems to me rather broader than purpose or mission, because it places more emphasis on values and approach – how you do things as well as the result you achieve. Vision may be a helpful term if you are using participation techniques that encourage people to create pictures of what they want, or develop models.

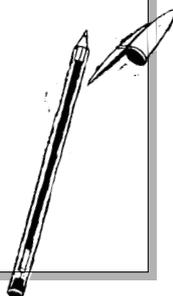
See also Limits, Outcomes.

Voluntary sector

This blanket term is often used to cover a wide range of organisations which are very different from each other:

- Self-help groups of people with a shared interest seeking to assist each other.
- Community groups of activists concerned with a locality or local issue.
- Small local charitable organisations with management committees and paid workers.
- National charities with local branches.
- Bodies like development trusts which may see themselves as not-for-profit companies. Each will have its own style of working, and community of interest. Although a very important route to these communities, they should not be seen as representing 'the community'.

See also Community.



Voting

Seeking a standard committee-style majority vote on a major issue is not an effective means of involving people in participation processes. However, simple voting techniques can be useful in small groups to decide between options.

Voting by ticks

For a group to decide quickly between different options or solutions:

- 1** List the possible options.
- 2** Make sure they are understood by everyone.
- 3** Give each voter ten ticks (or small sticky labels) to mark his or her choices. These can be spread through the list or allocated to one choice.
- 4** The item with the most ticks or labels wins.

From Getting Organised.

Why encourage participation?

Marilyn Taylor, of the School of Advanced Urban Studies, offers the following reasons for local councils and other authorities to consider promoting participation:

- Legislation or central government encouragement. A number of Acts impose consultation requirements, and many funding programmes also specify community involvement.
- Dissatisfaction with public service delivery has led to government seeking to remove services from local government control; councils have responded with decentralisation and devolution of powers which involve participation.
- Efficiency and effectiveness may be improved by involving the community and consumers. At the very least it forestalls conflict and can more positively bring new ideas, perspectives and resources into policy making and problem solving. Resources can be better targeted.
- Consumers are demanding involvement. These days people are more likely to take action on issues of concern to them.

See also Benefits of participation.

Working groups

A working group is a small group set up with a specific task to complete, with members chosen for their appropriate skills. Working groups are a good way of making sure interested people can get involved and make a contribution. In setting up working groups:

- Create clear terms of reference.
- Set a limit on how long they continue.
- Encourage creative thinking rather than formal committee procedures.

See also *Creative thinking*, *Time line*.

Workload planning

This technique – which combines action plans with a time line can be useful in planning participation process.

Workload planning

- 1** Set up a calendar of days, weeks or months for the process, with the period across the top of a sheet of paper.
- 2** Identify main events like meetings and publications as 'milestones' in the process, and position them as on a time line.
- 3** Work out the subsidiary tasks to achieve the milestones, including which must be started before or after others.
- 4** Draw these under each other as lines across the calendar, the length of line indicating time to complete, with start and finish points marked.
- 5** Allocate responsibilities.

Project management computer software is available to carry out workload planning, but can be rather time-consuming to use.

See the book *Planning Together*, Activity 30, for a fuller description.

See also *Time line*.

Workshops

Workshops are meetings at which a small group, perhaps aided by a facilitator, explore issues, develop ideas and make decisions. They are the less formal and more creative counterpart to public meetings and committees. As well as generating a lot of useful content, workshops provide a good opportunity for all concerned to get to know each other better – something which seldom happens at more formal meetings.

See the book *Creating Involvement for descriptions of different types of workshops*.

Yes or No

Spencer Johnson in *Yes or No: A Guide to Better Decisions* uses an extended journey metaphor for decision-making processes and offers a technique for making decisions which is similar to Kolb's cycle, and Plan, Act, Review. He argues that it is important to take decisions using both head and heart. With the head consider:

- Are you meeting a real need?
- Have you developed and thought through options?

Workshop guidelines

When running a workshop session:

- 1** Plan space and equipment:
 - Wall space or stands for charts.
 - Space for separate group working.
 - Coloured pens, Post-it notes, chart paper and blutack, coloured stickers/stars.
- 2** Agree with participants what is going to happen in the session
- 3** If using charts or handouts, check literacy and colour-blindness. Working in pairs or small groups can help to overcome problems.
- 4** Stick to an agreed timetable – keep an eye on the clock.
- 5** Write clearly, and encourage others to write on the charts – but don't force them.
- 6** Encourage work in small group (3-5), even if there is a lot of talking and input in the whole group sessions.
- 7** Speak clearly, and listen carefully to what people are saying – both in groups and in plenary sessions.
- 8** Check out understanding before writing on charts.
- 9** Be happy to make mistakes and admit them.
- 10** Don't establish yourself as the expert. Ask naive questions.

With the heart, ask:

- Am I being honest, and trusting my intuition?
- Do I deserve better?

