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“one voice has become two and two voices have become four ...and people now have a voice that is heard”

Manton Community Alliance (UK) on how Participative Budgeting has improved their organisation and community.



Toolkit for Participatory Decision Making



This Toolkit was produced by Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini in the framework of the project **“FLOWER – Fostering Local Opportunities for Women’s Effective Participation”**.

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Introduction

This toolkit has been compiled to assist organisations in applying the ‘Participative Approach’ in the any organisational activities that could benefit from the input of stakeholders; in particular the local community. Participative approaches aim to improve the functionality and reputation of services through co-planning and co-production in partnership with local stakeholders. The logic behind this approach is that a strong partnership between public bodies, the private sector and civil society is a cornerstone of efficient policy-making processes.

In this toolkit we provide you with advice, tools and examples of good practice, to enable you to implement this approach. Participative approaches is a category rather than a narrowly defined, specific approach and we have included examples, of the real world application of the principles of PDMA, such as ‘Participative Budgeting’, ‘Citizen’s Panels’ and their use across Europe.

Why Choose a Participative Approach?

Participative approaches not only provide a fresh new way to approach service design, but they also have the wider benefit of generating social capital through stimulating civic engagement; as those involved in one participative activity often go on to become more proactive citizens, strengthening the level of political and voluntary engagement in the community. Not only do practitioners benefit at an organisational level from the increased involvement and esteem of stakeholders, but they also benefit from the increased levels of community building that are commonly a ripple effect of these approaches.

Participative approaches strengthen the legitimacy of services by involving those who avail of them and by empowering sectors of society whose voices are often not heard, and people whose input is rarely sought. An example of this can be seen in the case of **participatory budgeting in the ‘You Decide’ program based in Tower Hamlets in London**; where efforts were made to reach out to under-represented sectors of the community. This was achieved by analysing those who had initially come forward to help through the use of ‘**equalities data**’ which allowed them to identify which groups were missing. This approach led to what they described as a ‘**representative event**’, an important characteristic for any approach based on democratic principles.

Not only do participative approaches benefit the stakeholders involved, but they also enrich the organisations who implement them, through the benefit of local knowledge and other valuable resources that stakeholders can contribute to its activities.

Participative approaches; promoting civic engagement in theory and practice

1. Participatory Decision Making Approach (PDMA)

In addition to the wider vision of empowered citizenship and strong communities, the popularity of Participative Decision Making can be explained by two key characteristics; it is a more socially inclusive model and it is a more suitable model.

The very nature of involving and empowering local people, to influence the ways in which local problems are combatted, is an inclusive concept. It fosters a collective approach to problem solving **in which different people’s perspectives and priorities are taken into account in local decision**

making. It has become increasingly apparent that complex problems cannot be solved by a single organisation. Problem-solving is a shared responsibility requiring action on the part of all stakeholders and the PDMA is an effective way to assist all stakeholders in fulfilling their social and civic duties. This process of inclusion encourages further commitment by citizens; both to their community as a whole and also to enabling, in whatever way they can, the success of local programs for which, they now feel a sense of ownership **due to their role in the programs'** realisation. The democratic nature of this process enhances the reputation of the organisation and its activities, and the benefit of the personal experiences and inputs of these stakeholders helps increase the effectiveness of local outreach which has benefitted from local knowledge and input.

It is a more suitable model because it contributes to a better allocation of decreasing resources and it ensures that full value is extracted from each input as stakeholders are encouraged to work together and cooperate on shared initiatives which will reduce duplication and improve results. In seeking out their input and contributions; it guarantees that the needs of targeted beneficiaries are met. In addition, the very act of encouraging voluntary contributions and civic engagement contributes to the long-term development of an area, as do the programs implemented as a result of participatory initiatives. Once in place, the local partnerships developed should be sustained as they have the potential to play other roles in promoting local development.

PDMA road map

It is tempting to describe PDMA as a straight forward, step by step process, in reality however, it is characterised by ongoing feedback loops and can be described as more of a continuous learning process; in which experience gained is incorporated throughout; as illustrated in Figure 1.

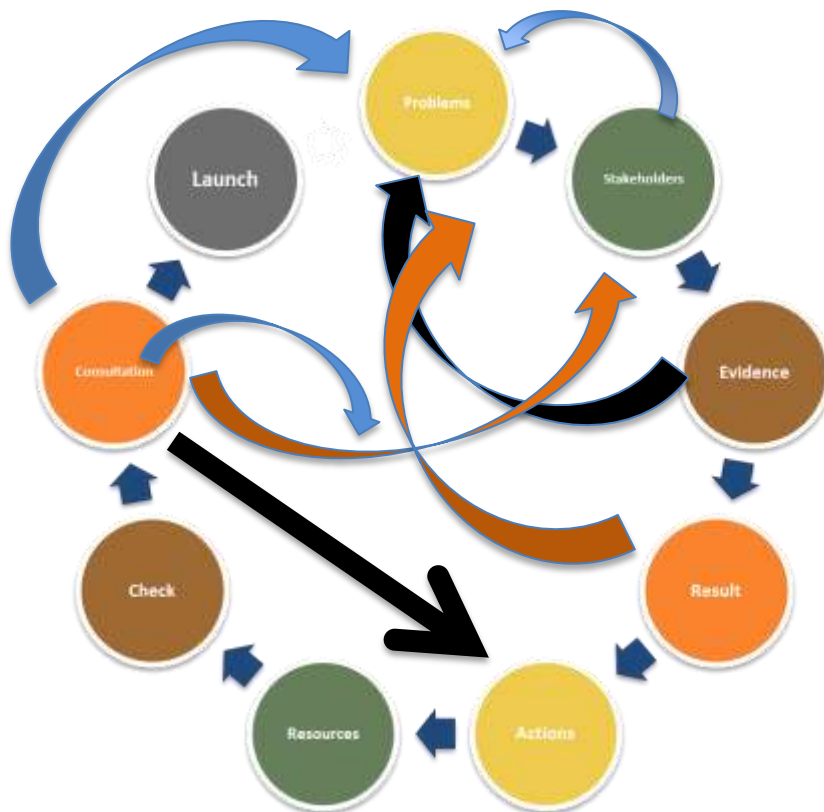


Figure 1 Feedback loop

In this toolkit, we have provided you with tools that can be used both; at particular points in this process, but also throughout as ongoing feedback may lead you to return to and slightly alter earlier plans, as your understanding of the many facets of the project deepens. For example, the SWOT or PEST analysis and 'Defining Problems Tool' are provided so to guide the 'Problems' phase of this process, but the problems identified and defined with these tools may be adapted slightly once other stages have been examined and have further informed the analysis.

PDMA application

This toolkit is designed to guide the application of the participative approach within your organisation and this is achieved through the provision of various tools designed to be used at various stages of the process described in the PDMA road map.

Problems

An organisation or project is established to address a particular problem or set of interrelated problems that exist. However there can often be a lack of consensus over the exact nature of a problem even within a single organisation or project team.

- The defining problems tool is a useful mechanism with which to identify and analyse the core problem to be addressed. A SWOT analysis is a useful tool for the analysis of the environment in which this problem exists and the competencies and shortfalls within the organisation that contribute to its capacity to engage productively in this environment. PEST analysis on the other hand describes a framework of macro-environmental factors used in the environmental scanning component of strategic management.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are the external organisations and groups who are affected by the actions of the organisation. They can be mobilised as a positive force in the achievement of organisational objectives through the use of the participative approach, and the chapters; 'Engaging with Stakeholders', 'Stakeholder Analysis' and the 'Stakeholders' Influence/Importance Matrix' are valuable resources in achieving this aim.

Evidence

Reliable data is an essential resource for the creation and execution of any project and there are many useful sources of data for the effective implementation of PDMA. The chapters 'Evidence based analysis', 'Force Field analysis', 'E-Participation tools and participatory information management' and 'Self-assessment tool: Implementation and Evaluation' all provide valuable information about how to go about collecting and utilising data.

Result

The effective analysis of data will lead to evidence based conclusions.

Actions

These data led conclusions will inform the actions which are then planned so to achieve the organisational or project aim. The chapter titled 'Action Table' will be a useful resource for this stage in the process.

Resources

Resources include, amongst other things, the money, skills, equipment and manpower at the disposal of the organisation. The resources available will be an important constraint and asset to an

organisation and a SWOT analysis is a useful mechanism with which to analyse these. PDMA has the benefit of leading to engagement with other organisations that may be willing to share their resources in the pursuit of a shared objective.

Check

This is the point at which you examine how the results of using the tools provided, such as the SWOT analysis and Problem tree, have confirmed or challenged assumptions relating to the organisation and its environment and what has been learned from the analysis.

Consultation

Stakeholders should be consulted on the results of analysis and the plans for moving forward.

Launch

A particular project or initiative, or even simply the use of PDMA, is launched by the organisation.

2. Participative Action Planning

Implementing the participative approach, whether it's within an organisation or as part of a specific project, requires creating a comprehensive plan of action. This action plan should be created throughout and as a result of this participation, rather than before, because its content should be led by the contributions made (URBACT 2011:41).

The action plan is a document detailing the strategy and plan of action for an initiative and while it is principally meant for use by the organisation itself, it can also be a useful document to present when seeking funding for projects planned. It is advisable to prepare several versions of the plan, if multiple audiences are envisaged. This plan should address all relevant aspects of the ultimate goal, being sought either by the project or organisation; these would include the social, political, economic and environmental dimensions of the problem being addressed (URBACT 2011:41-42).

Using the tools provided in this toolkit the following key components of the action plan can be developed;

1. Analysis of the local context
2. An agreed definition of the core problem being addressed
3. Agreed goals and measurable objectives
4. Actions described in detail and the proposed schedule for these actions
5. Budgetary details
6. Framework for service delivery
7. Description of the participative process
8. Risk Analysis (URBACT 2011: 45)

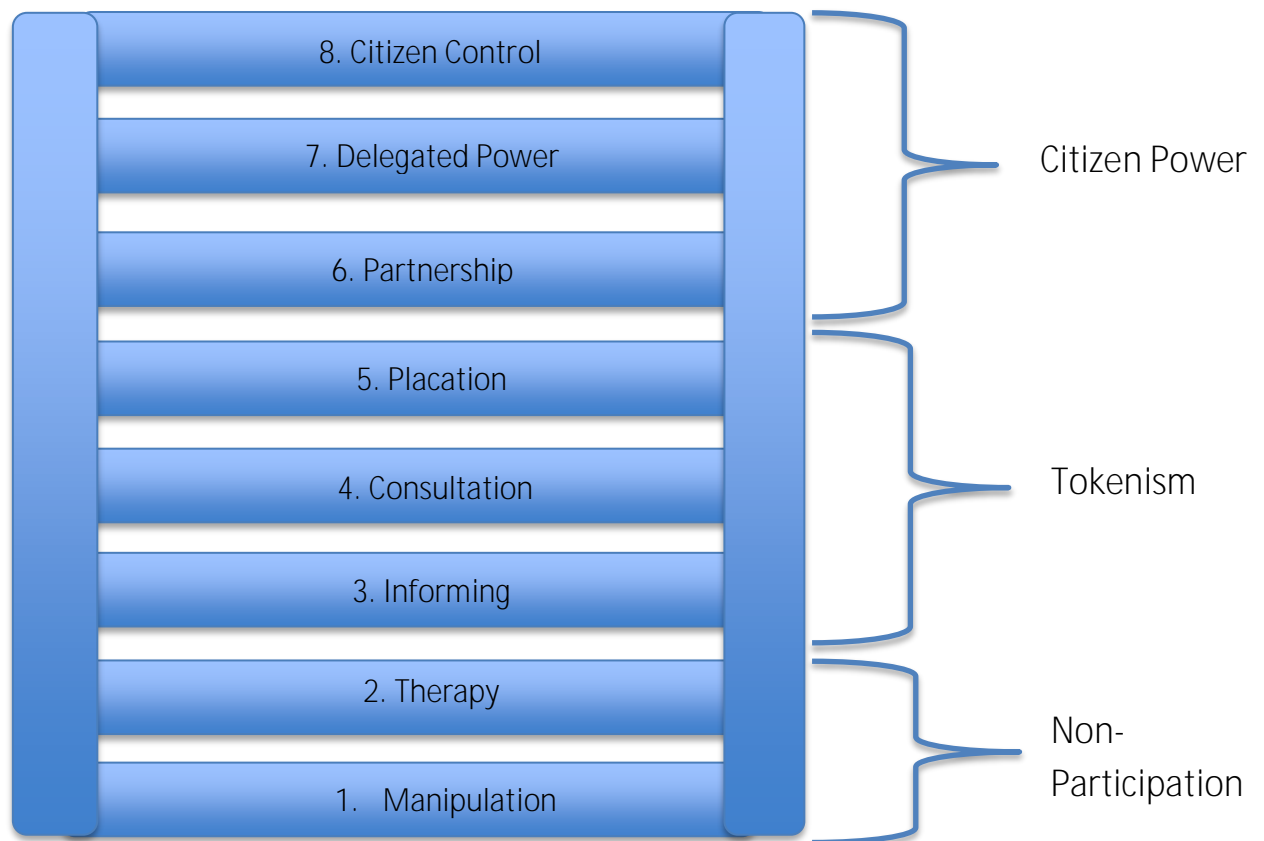
Levels of Participation

The extent of stakeholder participation will vary between initiatives as some approaches will encourage a greater level of citizen engagement than others, and in addition to this some approaches allocate a greater level of power and influence to participants than others.

Arnstein's Ladder of Participation is a tool used to describe varying levels of participation associated with the wide range of actions, ranging from Manipulation to Citizen Control, which the term

'participation' can include. Arnstein's scale includes eight points which fit into three categories beginning with 'non-participation' at the bottom, followed by 'tokenism' and finally 'citizen power' which tends to be the section into which genuinely participative initiatives seek to fit (URBACT 2011: 43).

Arnstein's Ladder of Participation



Non-Participation

Manipulation and Therapy are both examples of "non-participation", they are false substitutes for genuine participation, rather than empowering the community they are instead concerned with enabling 'power-holders' to further their own perspective by 'educating' or 'curing' the participants (Arnstein 1969).

Manipulation

This rung has understandably negative connotations; as it is associated with seeking out interaction from stakeholders like the community, without any intention to heed their advice or opinions. While stakeholders are contributing their input in good faith, the organisation has in fact only collected input as part of a public relations tactic; they think it will improve their reputation and/or legitimacy or because the exchange is an opportunity to market the perspective of the organisation.

Therapy

This could be summed up as interaction between stakeholders and the organisation or service provider that has been designed with the aim of reassuring stakeholders and perhaps allowing them to air grievances. Their input is however unlikely to significantly influence future activities, the

purpose of the exchange is simply to give participants the illusion that their opinions matter and will be considered in decision making so to appease them.

Tokenism

The rungs within this section are characterised by the fact that while they do indeed give those lacking power the opportunity to hear and be heard, participants are not empowered to take a genuine role in decision making. Their involvement is limited to attempting to influence decision makers (Arnstein 1969).

Informing

This is when the organisation seeks out other stakeholders to share information about relevant services etc. It is, however, a mostly one way exchange and input is not sought from the stakeholders themselves.

Consultation

This step is similar to 'Informing' except that there a conversation, rather than a monologue envisaged. Both the organisation and the other stakeholders will have a chance to contribute to the exchange.

Placation

This is similar to consultation, but it is specifically designed to placate stakeholders, too satisfy them that they have been heard and that their views will be taken into account. It is one step beyond a consultation in that not only are both sides given a chance to speak, but there is also a genuine effort made to convince stakeholders that their views will influence decision making.

Citizen Power

On each of these rungs, participants have been empowered with varying levels of decision making power; they are not just an outside influence, but genuine agents of power (Arnstein 1969).

Partnership

This is when the organisation works alongside other relevant stakeholders and together they make plans and arrive at decisions.

Delegated Power

In this case the organisation goes one step further and not only invites stakeholders to work alongside them, but actually delegates the responsibility for some tasks to the stakeholders themselves e.g. if an NGO were to trust a community group to organise and run a fundraiser to help finance an activity that would be run by the NGO for the benefit of the community.

Citizen Control

This is when citizens are empowered to such an extent that the organisation works for them rather than they for it. They have the greatest level of decision making power and it is their decision which tasks to delegate and to what extent they will share their power.

Scales of citizen engagement

Similar in purpose to Arnstein's ladder, the TOGETHER Network developed a 7 Point Scale of Citizen Engagement. The TOGETHER Network is an initiative dedicated to the development of new methods by which public authorities can engage with ordinary people. This goal is the realisation on a new **form of citizenship based on 'Co-responsibility' which based on the principle that it is better to**

engage citizens in decision making rather than just keep them informed. TOGETHER have formed this scale which includes 6 other levels of engagement building up this ultimate, 7th level which they have termed 'Co-responsibility' (URBACT 2011: 44)

7 Point Scale of Citizen Engagement



3. Engaging with Stakeholders

There are two key questions to address before proceeding with stakeholder analysis:

1. Who are our stakeholders?
2. Why do we need to involve stakeholders?

In the context of public participation, a stakeholder can be defined as any person, or group, who has an interest in the project or could be potentially affected by its delivery or outputs.

It is important to consider what different stakeholder's can contribute to the initiative in an effort to identify why their input is required. The logic behind involving stakeholders may vary and each case could have a slightly different reasoning. For example, stakeholders can:

- help to develop a common understanding of challenges, problems and priorities
- help to develop a joint approach to problem solving and action planning
- contribute to the implementation of the agreed actions
- help secure financial support
- help to develop ownership of actions defined to ensure support for an effective implementation

Identifying who should be involved and consulted is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of stakeholder engagement. Finding the right mix of participants and ensuring that no group is excluded, is essential to providing legitimacy and credibility to the engagement process. Stakeholder identification is a critical component of the participatory decision making.

At the beginning of the project; you should make a list of all relevant stakeholders and consider their current level of involvement. Reflect on how under-represented or un-represented stakeholders can be involved. Ensuring all relevant stakeholders are included will help offset risk of them feeling shunned and so combatting an initiative from which they feel they have been excluded.

While it is important to ensure that all stakeholders are considered and included to some extent, some stakeholders will be of greater significance than others to the organisation or project in question, the tools provided in chapters 7 and 8 can be utilised to decide which stakeholder's should be prioritised.

It may aid the process of analysis to categorise stakeholders based on certain characteristics, the types of categories chosen will depend on the individual needs of the organisation, but below are some examples;

- Target beneficiaries and end users (incl. representatives of civil society, private sector/ businesses, other public institutions concerned)
- Different departments and services within the local administration (incl. ones working across sectors to foster the integrated approach; different territorial levels should be considered (district, city, metropolitan area, region)
- Key local decision-makers, including local elected representatives (mayor, councillors, etc.)
- Potential funders (in case of EU funds could be Managing Authority of Operational Programmes (ERDF or ESF)
- Delivery supporters (e.g. Key players in the delivery of your Action Plan)

Stakeholders can be classified in different ways, e.g. according to geographic boundaries or location, or according to their belonging to the certain types of institutions. It is important to acknowledge that stakeholder groups are usually not homogenous entities. It is more likely in fact, that an identified 'stakeholder group' will be made up of a diverse mix of individuals.

It is important to be clearly identify what you hope to achieve from engaging with stakeholders, this can be referred to as the; 'stakeholder engagement goal'. This should be approached from the perspective of; first identifying your needs and then identifying what it is that you expect from stakeholders. To go about setting this stakeholder engagement goal, the following questions should be addressed:

1. Do we want that the stakeholders support us with information?
2. Do we want to consult them and get some valuable feedback?
3. Do we want them to be involved directly and work with us on a particular policy initiative, on a particular project?
4. Do we want to have them more in a role of partners and work together with us?
5. Do we need their support to empower us in representing a wider group of society?

Engagement with stakeholders is an open process. It is important to make available to stakeholders; a clear overview of the process or project you want to involve them. It will build up mutual trust and they will be more open to you. It is important to ensure inclusiveness and equal treatment for all. Of course there are more and less important stakeholders, nevertheless you need them all and you have to treat them equally well. It is very important that stakeholders are given easily understood, concise information about the process or project in which you hope to engage them. To achieve this you must present a clear outline of the:

- Framework and purpose of the process/project/initiative
- Timeframe
- Resources available
- Expected outcomes and outputs
- Expected contributions from the different players and what they can get out of it (incl. Taking part to transnational exchange and learning activities, receiving training etc.)
- Benefits in long-term and the sustainability of benefits.

4. Gender Budgeting

‘Gender-sensitive budgets’, ‘gender budgets’, ‘women’s budgets’ and ‘women’s budget statements’ refer to a variety of processes and tools aimed at facilitating an assessment of the gendered impacts of government budgets. These budget exercises use gender as a category of analysis. ‘Gender-sensitive budgets’ are not separate budgets for women, or for men. They are attempts to break down, or disaggregate, the government’s mainstream budget according to its impact on women and men, and different groups of women and men, with cognizance being given to the society’s underpinning gender relations¹.

Gender blindness

A budget appears to be a gender-neutral policy instrument. It is set out in terms of financial aggregates - totals, and sub-totals of expenditure and revenue, and the resulting budget surplus or deficit. As usually presented, there is no particular mention of women, but no particular mention of

¹ Rhonda Sharp (1999 forthcoming), ‘Women’s budgets’, in Meg Lewis and Janice Peterson (editors), Dictionary of Feminist Economics, New York: Edward Elgar.

men either. However, this appearance of gender-neutrality is more accurately described as gender-blindness.

The way in which the national budget is usually formulated ignores the different, socially determined roles, responsibilities and capabilities of men and women. These differences are generally structured in such a way as to leave women in an unequal position in relation to the men in their community, with less economic, social and political power. Until now, the average citizen targeted has been belonging to the ethnic majority (in EU, white), male, healthy, middle aged, middle class. Financial choices reflect the dominant culture and its related power relationships, because power is created through the concentration of resources. When addressing gender equality, then, it is important to understand and monitor how resources are distributed and what effects each assignment has on each gender.

A definition

Gender budgeting introduces a “gender equality perspective into the budgetary process to ensure an efficient allocation of resources based on identified needs, and to restructure revenues and expenditures to strengthen gender equality and women’s empowerment” (OECD 2010).

Gender budgeting is a complementary tool to gender mainstreaming and represents a tool with considerable potential for the promotion of necessary structural changes, enabling a reduction in discrimination within scientific organizations too. However, its application in such organizations is still very limited.

Gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming

Gender budgets are fundamentally about mainstreaming gender issues – about ensuring that gender issues are integrated into all national policies, plans and programs rather than regarding women as a **special ‘interest group’**. The objective of a gender-sensitive budget is to inform debate about policy and the appropriate allocation of public expenditure and taxation

Why gender budgeting?

The impact and the effects of policy measures differ significantly on men and women and such result needs to be taken into account when designing, programming and adopting the different policy options. Therefore, public stakeholders have to deal with gender issues and bear in mind that men and women play different roles in the society and the economic structure.

By using a bottom-up approach, gender budgeting initiatives promote the principle of equal opportunities on the labour market and raise the awareness of all the stakeholders (local administrators, professionals, civil society). The knowledge of institutions and civil society must be enhanced by providing information on the potential gender implications of a programme, policy or intervention and developing concrete actions to further support the adoption of innovative gender approaches.

The benefits of gender budgeting

GB is not a separate budget but it is simply a different point of view on Public administration budgets. It is a democratic exercise for transparency in public budget management. It is an evaluation activity that integrates the gender perspective at all levels of the budget procedure in order to achieve: equity, efficiency, transparency, awareness and accountability.

GB increases budgets transparency ensuring that policy measures effectively address the objective **of women's well-being**.

Possible results include:

- Enhancement of the ability of Public Institutions in addressing issues from a gender perspective.
- Improvement of the ability of Public Institutions in incorporating the gender perspective into the whole policy making process, in order to achieve a fairer and gender sensitive allocation of funds
- Building/reinforce gender competences

How to do it?

There are several ways to put in action gender budgeting activities, here are some:

- Awareness campaigns (seminars, workshops, good practice live presentations, media relations, dissemination toolkit, National Conference) to promote gender/equal opportunities approach among policy makers, administrators, social partners and all actors involved in employment policies and governance
- Exchange of good practices in order to share experiences and innovative solutions adopted to address gender-related problems (website, paper-based collection)
- Organisation of training sessions at local level to disseminate the gender budgeting principles, concepts, tools and methodologies to local administrators, professionals, civil society and support their adoption.
- Launch of pilot actions involving specific units in order to apply the gender budgeting principles to specific policy programmes and foster the institutional implementing capacity:
 - o Performing a gender sensitive context analysis
 - o Acquiring gender disaggregated data
 - o Applying gender codes to balance sheets
- Building up a network of stakeholders dealing with gender budgeting at national and EU level

Useful tools, references and examples of PDMA in action

5. SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis is a method by which to identify and categorise, all of the intersecting factors which influence the identified ‘core’ problem e.g. youth unemployment. The letters SWOT represent strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The first two; strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) are internal elements, strengths representing the positive internal elements and weaknesses; the negative elements that may be affected. Opportunities (O) and threats (T) however, are external positive and negative elements over which one has less control, but their influence can be mitigated, in the case of threats, or they can be availed of, in the case of opportunities, if efforts are made to predict, harmonise and adapt to them via effective planning.

The SWOT analysis is a useful mechanism with which to identify comparative advantages and with which to provide relevant evidence, both of which can be utilised to form and justify the strategic path that will be selected for achieving the defined objectives. It can be understood as a bridge by which to cross from the *‘the present situation (“where we are now”) to the future (“where we want to be after a defined time and using available resources”)*. Therefore, the SWOT Analysis is a very important element in the strategy building process’ (RegPol 2012: 1). In a more general sense, the **SWOT analysis’ headings provide a good framework for reviewing** the strategy, position and direction of an organisation, policy proposition, or any other idea. SWOT is not the only assessment technique that can be used, but is one with a long track record of effectiveness. The strengths of this method are its simplicity and application to a variety of levels of operation. First of all it helps to have a clear overview of your situation. Second, it is a simple tool that you can use in strategic planning and decision-making.

It is important to see a SWOT analysis as an active tool. It is not for just listing your strengths, but for building on your strengths. SWOT should help you to identify weaknesses to try to eliminate and also how to mitigate the effect of threats.

A SWOT analysis can be used to adjust and refine plans mid-course. A new opportunity might open wider avenues, while a new threat could close a path that once existed. It can offer a simple way of communicating the logic of your initiative or program and it can be an excellent way to organise information you've gathered from studies or surveys.

A SWOT analysis using the example of ‘Youth Unemployment’ Source: (Tubadji 2012: 22)

| | |
|--|--|
| Strengths | Weaknesses |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High participation in third level education • Guidance counselling service • Enthusiasm of the young people • Partnerships with local employers • Local support services for young entrepreneurs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low local labour force participation • Employment conditions for young employed people (low pay, short term contracts) • Mix match of available skills and available work • Some low-skill job placements leading to de-skilling of educated young people |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National internship program to provide workplace based training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued austerity measures at national level |

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National apprenticeship scheme • Grants available to young entrepreneurs • Youth guarantee introduced in the EU • Government programs to incentivise businesses to create more entry level positions • EURES and other EU funded employment resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emigration of young people (often the most skilled) • Increase in university fees • Entry level jobs being replaced by unpaid internships • Irregular demand for workers and seasonal unemployment |
|--|---|

6. PEST Analysis

The PEST analysis is a tool that allows you to further look into the macro-environmental factors that define the context in which your core problem situates itself. Within PEST, P stands for Political (political stability, government intervention), E for Economic (economic policies and context), S for Social and T for Technological factors (research and innovation, development, access to internet). Some analysts added Legal and rearranged the mnemonic to SLEPT; inserting Environmental factors expanded it to PESTEL or PESTLE, which is popular in the United Kingdom.

With respect to SWOT analysis, PEST has the advantage of looking into detail of all types of external factors that can characterize the environment in which your project is placed, but has the disadvantage of neglecting all the internal factors. For this reason, it is a good idea to combine the two to help provide you with the best analysis.

Just like the SWOT, the PEST analysis can be performed any time when it's needed, to better understand the big picture and the change your project is exposed to.

In the table below, which is the basic structure for a PEST analysis you can find some of the main types of factors that should be taken into account when performing such an exercise.

| | |
|---|--|
| Political <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax policy, • Labor law, • Environmental law, • Political stability; • Health, • Education • Infrastructure. | Economical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic growth, • Interest rates, • Exchange rates, • Inflation rate. |
| Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural aspects, • Health consciousness, • Population growth rate, • Age distribution, • Career attitudes. | Technical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&D activity, • Automation, • Technology incentives, • The rate of technological change. |

7. Defining problems tool

In advance of analysing problems, it is important to clarify what we mean by the term 'problem'. A problem is an issue or obstacle which makes it difficult to achieve a desired goal, objective or purpose. It refers to a situation, condition or issue that is yet unresolved. It is important to conduct an analysis to determine which problem is to be combatted by the organisation or initiative. Finding the right problem to solve is the most important part of the problem solving process because it is an essential step in choosing the most efficient solution.

Problem analysis is a necessary first step to any project so to ensure that the project is tackling the right problem. This can only be ensured through a conducting detailed problem analysis in a discussion with all Stakeholders. It is important that all stakeholders be involved so to provide a comprehensive and accurate map of the problems both primary and secondary that have been identified. This is to ensure an informed, insider perspective is utilised by the implementation team. Through discussion, reflection and feedback; stakeholder perspectives can be identified and a consensus can be formed on both the nature and ranking of the local problems to be addressed. **Often what initially appears to be the 'core' problem may, after analysis, turn out to be a secondary issue (URBACT 2013: 70).** Making a problem tree is often a useful method by which to categorise and identify problems in a simple graphical format, other useful methods include mind maps and a fishbone diagram but here we will focus on the 'Problem Tree'.

A 'Problem Tree' uses the concept of a tree to explain how problems can be categorised into causes, core problems and effects. This method of categorising problems can lead to more efficient solutions, as by tackling causes rather than just effects, long term solutions can be reached and multiple negative effects lessened by combatting just one core cause.

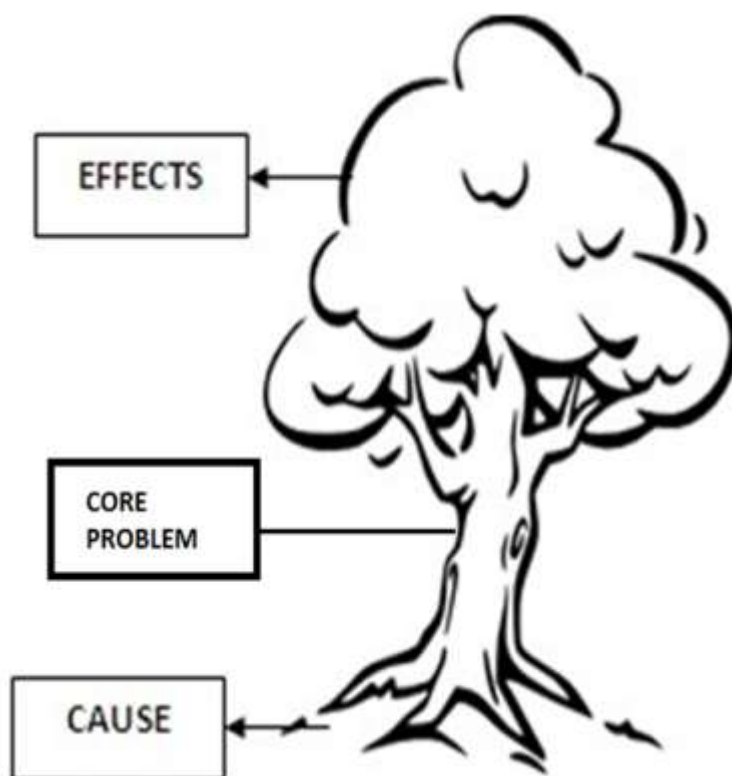


Figure 2 A problem Tree (To be improved by designers)

How to use a Problem Tree, Source: (URBACT 2013: 71)

1. Ensure that you identify problems before proposing solutions; the problem tree should be completed and discussed before the group jumps into proposing and debating possible solutions.
2. Identify the overarching theme of the types of problem that this project aims to address e.g. youth unemployment.
3. Involve all present at the meeting (which should include representatives of all relevant stakeholders) in listing all of the currently existing problems facing the local area, which they can think of, which relate to the chosen theme.
4. **Identify a 'Core Problem' which can be written on the trunk of the tree. This may involve trial and error, as well as extensive debate amongst those present.**
5. Categorise the remaining problems as either a cause or an effect.
6. Rank each of the causes and each of the effects depending on their relative significance and arrange them into hierarchy depending on how they interact e.g. if one causes another.

An example has been included; in the form of a diagram of a Problem Tree filled in utilising the example of Youth Unemployment.

Illustration - Problem tree for youth unemployment

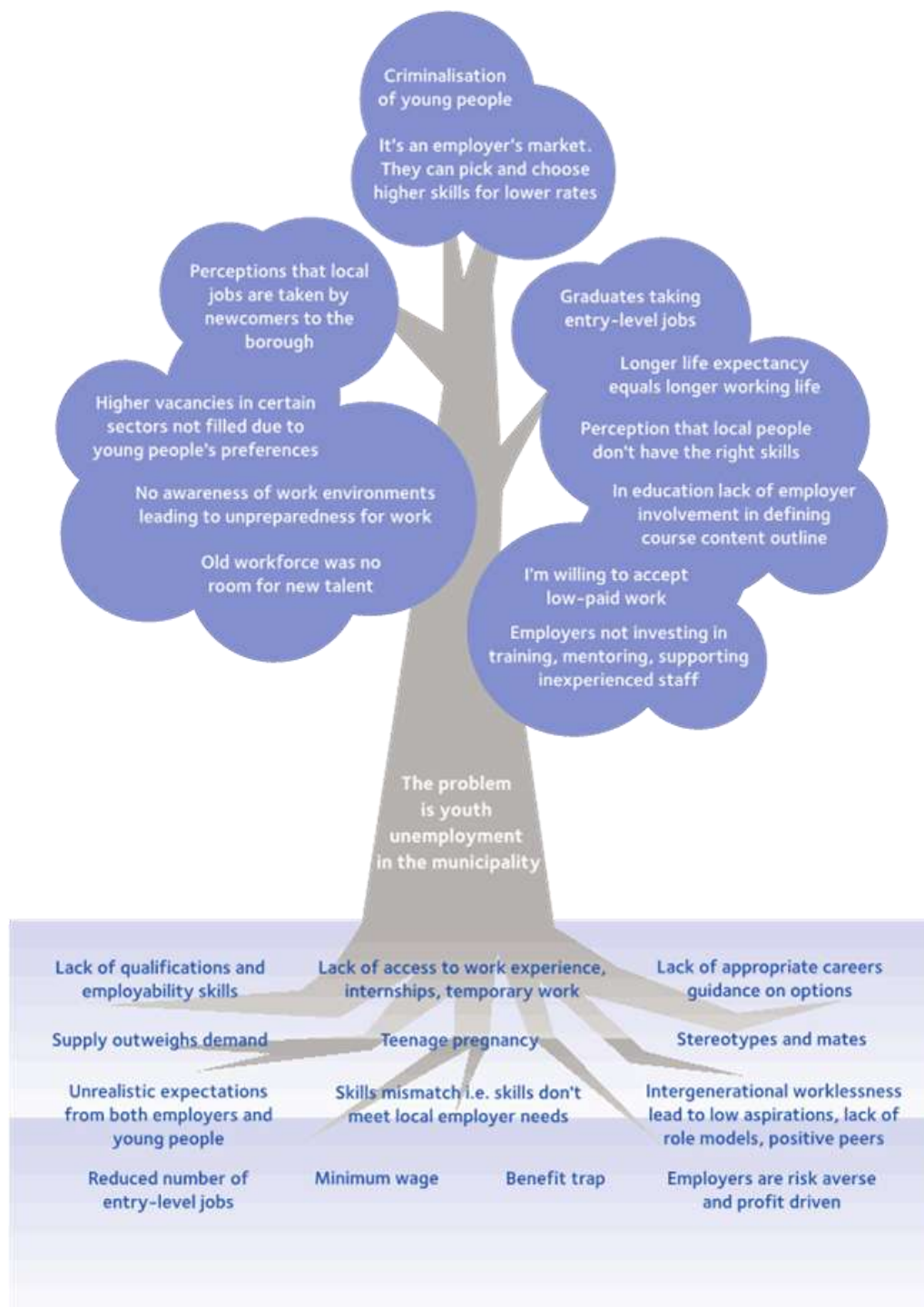


Figure 3 Example Problem Tree mapping Youth Unemployment, Source: (URBACT 2013: 71)

Once problems have been identified and graphed; move on to:

1. Defining problems and ensuring that all stakeholders agree with the definition chosen. (Below is a useful checklist to ensure problems have been defined, it is essential that problems be properly defined if appropriate solutions are to be chosen.)

2. Identifying possible lines of action, with the aim of combatting the core problem
3. Identifying potential constraints to these solutions.

Check list

The better your problem is defined, the higher your chances are of finding an effective solution

1. What is the problem?
2. **What isn't the problem?**
3. Where are the problems?
4. Who/what does the problem involve?
5. When does the problem occur?
6. What is the extent of the problem?
7. Is the problem getting bigger/smaller?

8. Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis is a methodology that helps you to identify '**stakeholders**' which are individuals or institutions that may directly or indirectly, positively or negatively affect or be affected by a project, programme or other initiative. It is important to consider the welfare and input of these stakeholders both for their own sake, and for that of the initiative.

The stakeholder analysis involves several activities:

- Identifying what could be the interests and motivations of your potential stakeholders
- Identifying stakeholders who have the potential to make the project/initiative unsuccessful (e.g. conflicting interests and relationships between stakeholders)
- Establishment of the level of involvement required by each stakeholder and the level of involvement they are willing to give
- Identifying stakeholders whose influence evolves during the project
- Determination of the communication media and style which is best suited to each stakeholder

The stakeholder analysis is crucial to the success of your project as it helps to:

- identify stakeholders;
- analyse which stakeholders are important, which are interested, which have sufficient power and influence;
- understand both the needs of your organisation and the needs of stakeholders.

A good starting point is to consider the individuals and organisations:

- You want/expect to benefit;
- **Who complain that you're not doing anything to resolve an issue;**
- Who have similar issues to address;
- Who may already be rolling out a programme that may be working towards common goals;
- Who may wish to fund or co-fund a project;
- **Who don't know about what you are trying to achieve but who are quick to criticise;**
- Who may be adversely affected by your project;

- The media.

There are many ways to identify stakeholders:

- One method is to take a look at prior project history. A similar past project may lead you to some stakeholders.
- Another method is a simple brainstorming technique: come up with names of individuals who may be affected by the project. A list of potential stakeholders or groups needs to be vetted and ratified by project sponsors, but offers a good starting point for an initiative with no historical archive.
- A third approach is to engage subject matter experts. Subject matter experts in the business can help identify potential stakeholder groups and possibly key individuals.
- A hybrid approach is to invite potential stakeholders to a meeting about the project. This will provide the stakeholders an opportunity to identify themselves. This first cut of stakeholders can be leveraged to help flush out additional stakeholders.

A few good examples of tools to promote identification and active involvement of stakeholders in the decision making process:

- an open call to reach out to the NGOs
- infobox
- building on an existing group
- questionnaire in relation to the topic

Through identifying the characteristics and interests of Stakeholders, the support of those who have cause to support the initiative can be sought after and maximised and, hopefully, the opposition of others can be minimised through early communication and compromise.

Stakeholders can be categorised into two ‘Primary’ and ‘Secondary’ Stakeholders depending on the nature of their involvement in the initiative. Primary Stakeholders are directly affected by the initiative (or the problem it aims to address) either positively or negatively, whereas Secondary Stakeholders are those with an **‘intermediary role’ such as; other organisations in the same or related fields, policy makers, local government and local experts or operating staff working in the sector.**

One way to go about this is through the use of a **‘Stakeholder Analysis Table’**. This table provides a structure within which to list all categories of relevant stakeholders, whether they are a primary or secondary stakeholder, the nature of their interest, their capacity to contribute and bring about change and a proposed mechanism by which to include them in the process (URBACT 2013: 64,65). Participative approaches are about not only involving stakeholders in implementation, but also making use of their input at every stage so to make the process as democratic and inclusive as possible. This can also contribute to a sense of ownership of the initiative or partnership with the organisation which may offset the risks of opposition from any stakeholders facing negative effects.

Below is an exemplary Stakeholder analysis table using the example of stakeholders in a local initiative designed to combat youth unemployment.

Stakeholder Analysis Table (URBACT 2013: 65)

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Issue: | Community based, Youth Unemployment alleviation programme | | |
| Stakeholders | Interests and how affected by issue | Capacity and motivation to bring about change | Possible actions to address stakeholder interests |
| Primary Stakeholders | | | |
| Unemployed Youths | Service users, who should access work as a result of intervention. | A sense of being listened to through use of participative methods can secure buy in and motivation of this group. | Focus groups and other research to help better understand barriers to their employment |
| Local Employers | Will benefit from the influx of new employees imbued with skills gained from the initiative. | May require persuasion as to potential of youths involved, but their input regarding skills sought can be invaluable. | Meetings with employers so to discover their needs and to encourage their cooperation. |
| Secondary Stakeholders | | | |
| Local Community | Will benefit from increased civic engagement and optimism as unemployment decreases and young people are assisted. Participative methods will also give them the opportunity to contribute to the initiative. | An insider perspective on the local context and prospective contributors to idea generation. | A public meeting to explain the participative approach and the specific organisation or initiative being targeted (youth unemployment). Follow up meetings to gather input, local perspectives and hopefully reach a consensus regarding an appropriate solution to the problem at hand (youth unemployment). |
| Education and Training providers | Prospective partners in implementation and prospective contributors to brain storming and planning processes. | Can provide expert advice, and delivery of training services so to match skill set of the unemployed to skills in demand in the job market. | Invite to early inception meetings and later engage as an implementation partner. |
| Local government | Prospective partners in implementation and prospective contributors to brain storming and planning processes. | Local politicians may see getting involved in participative methods that involve their voters as a good electoral strategy. May be a source of funding | Invite to early inception meetings and seek ongoing support which will help to build a relationship between your organisation and local |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| | | and local knowledge. | government. May help ensure commitment, longevity and, even funding; through links to national government. |
| Local employment agencies | Prospective partners in implementation and prospective contributors to brainstorming and planning processes. May feel threatened and resist intervention in their area. | May be resistant to change but also a source of expert knowledge. May have resources they are willing to share if involved in the process. | Seek input in early stages and hopefully as an established source of contact with targeted youths these agencies can refer prospective service users to your organisation and/or assist in implementation of initiatives. |
| NGOs and other organisations working with young people, the unemployed or both. | Prospective partners in implementation and prospective contributors to brainstorming and planning processes. | A source of expert or insider knowledge. May have resources they are willing to share if involved in the process. Good source of contacts. | Involve this group in idea generation meetings and discover potential for partnership. Depending on potential contribution; frame future interaction in context of partner in planning and implementation or just a source of advice and insight. |

9. Stakeholders' Importance/Influence Matrix

While it is important to be aware of the interests of all relevant stakeholders, it is also important to remember that the level of influence different stakeholders will have in achieving your organisational objectives will vary. For this and other reasons; stakeholders should be ranked according to what level of importance will be given to satisfying their needs and the extent to which the initiative affects those needs. Due to these other factors, however, a stakeholder's **importance** and influence may not be in line, rather these two measures exist on separate, intersecting spectrums and while some stakeholders will be high on one spectrum, they may be low on the other. A useful way of guiding, and mapping this process of analysis, is through utilising the 'Stakeholders' Importance/Influence Matrix' (URBACT 2013: 66).

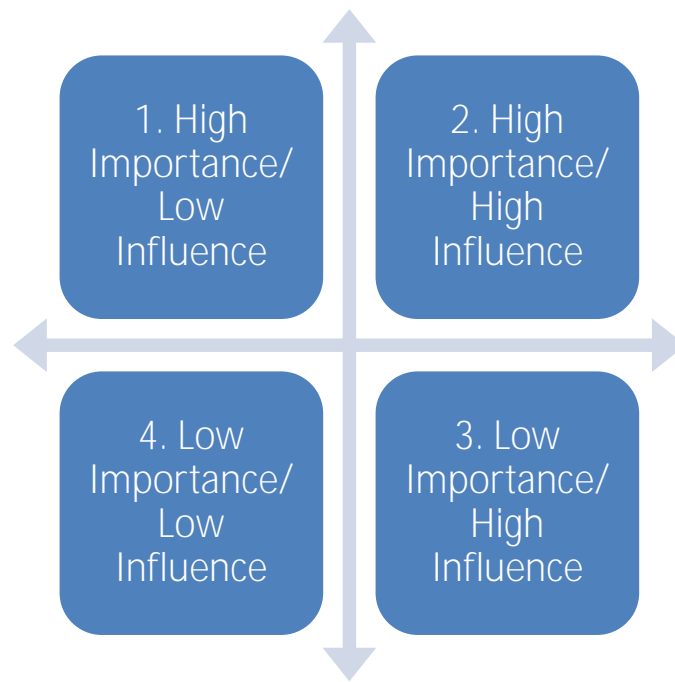


Figure 4: Importance/ Influence Matrix



Figure 5: Importance/ Influence Matrix using example of 'Youth Unemployment'

1. High importance, low influence
 These are stakeholders who are significantly affected by the initiative but lack the resources to influence the process. While they are not a powerful group, their needs should be taken into account as they may gain influence and hinder the progress of the initiative if their needs are not, at least somewhat, addressed.
2. High importance/ high influence
 These are stakeholders who are both significantly affected by the initiative and also in a position to influence its success. It is important to include these stakeholders so that they

utilise their influence to assist the success of the project, or organisation, rather than hinder it. Their needs should be given high priority and it is beneficial to include them to the extent that they feel a sense of ownership and personal investment in the success of the initiative.

3. Low importance/ low influence

These stakeholders are not particularly affected by the initiative and lack the power to influence its success or failure to any great extent. However it is still important to be aware of them and their needs, and to engage with them to some extent- even just by keeping them informed, in case either their importance or influence increases over time.

4. Low importance/ high influence

These stakeholders are a powerful group on which the success or failure of the initiative can depend, despite the fact that they are not highly affected or directly targeted by its activities. It is important to be aware of and communicate with them so to reduce the risk of them creating problems (URBACT 2013: 66).

10. Action Table

An action plan is an essential to ensure appropriate activities are implemented and well-coordinated so to bring about the objectives which the participative method has been chosen to accomplish. **Identifying the expected ‘results/ change, objectives, actions outputs and indicators are central elements of an action plan and establishing agreement on them is a crucial part of the action planning process’ (URBACT 2013: 74).**

There are some steps to complete before you can begin to fill in the Action Table.

1. With consideration for the problems identified with the help of the Problem Tree, identify what changes you hope to achieve.
2. **These broader ‘changes’ should be converted into SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) objectives.** This is so the success or failure in achieving them can be more easily evaluated. The solutions (actions) chosen are also more likely to be task-appropriate if the objectives are clear.
3. Develop a list of prospective actions to achieve these objectives. These actions can be filled into the action table which will prompt you to appropriately analyse each option under headings such as resources, timescale and key partners. This analysis will be useful in identifying which actions are the most feasible and appropriate for the task at hand.
4. One particularly important heading within **the Action Table is ‘Outputs’; this refers to the ‘tangible, measurable products of an action’ (URBACT 2013: 74) e.g. number of young people assisted in gaining employment.**

Sample Action Table using example of Youth Unemployment

| Action Table | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Expected Result | | | | | |
| Action Title and short description | Lead actor or agency | Key partners | Intended outputs | Timescale | Resources |
| CV clinics; local young people bring CVs to free | Local employment agency | Schools and other local organisations that employ | High quality CVs that present the skills, | One month of organisation and two one day events at | A venue, skilled volunteers (guidance |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|--|------------------------|---|
| workshops with guidance counsellors who give advice on how to write an effective CV | | guidance counsellors | experience and qualifications of those involved in the best possible light | the end of this period | counsellors), and an advertising budget to ensure the local unemployed youths are aware of the event. |
|---|--|----------------------|--|------------------------|---|

11. Evidence Based Analysis

Evidence-based Analysis refers to an approach which utilises the best available objective evidence; from research, background studies or gathered and analysed information, to identify and understand issues with the goal of arriving at objective, knowledge based conclusions.

Evidence based analysis is a valuable method by which to identify and understand issues so that decision makers can develop policies which will deliver desired outcomes effectively, with a minimal margin of error and reduced risk of unintended consequences. It is credited with being a neutral process by which to arrive at objective conclusions, this advantage comes from sound, comprehensive research.

This evidence can help us to...

- Reduce uncertainty; when we have doubts about whether this is the step we need to take.
- Increase logical clarity and consistency; it helps us to understand why the situation is as it is, and what could be done to improve it.
- Provide new perspectives and understandings of policy issues; **for example if we aren't** aware of the evidence of poverty in our area, we may not understand why the municipality is increasing the social housing budget for the area.
- Provide increased accountability to the public; it is very much linked with issues of awareness.
- Provide reliable facts and knowledge; people tend to trust data; they trust concrete figures to accurately explain a situation. These figures can be used to describe the development scenarios and poverty levels etc.
- Improve quality, inclusiveness and constructiveness of public policy debate; it is more difficult for people to avoid and deny their responsibilities when robust evidence is used to illustrate the scenario. It is more difficult to claim the situation is black when the evidence shows that it is in fact white.

At each stage of a project or policy initiative, you have to make sure that you have gathered relevant and sufficient evidence.

When we can use it?

Evidence at planning stage

At the beginning of implementing any sort of community based project, particularly in the case of Participative approaches which rely on high levels of community input, it is important to examine the evidence available regarding the local context in which you will be operating. You will want to

consider the economic context for example, which can be done utilising data on factors such as which industry sectors operate in the area, unemployment levels, inward and outward migration levels and even house prices. By utilising this kind of evidence, rather than simply making assumptions, you may discover some interesting nuances to what you already knew, or even prove assumptions to be inaccurate.

In addition to gathering and analysing data related to the local context, the experiences of other cities and regions who have implemented similar programs, projects or initiatives, can prove useful. Often there will be evaluations, case studies or other publications detailing the challenges and successes they met throughout the project and these can offer both good practice ideas and also an awareness of mistakes made by others may allow your project team to avoid these same blunders.

Evidence at implementation stage

Evidence gathered throughout implementation can be used to determine whether targets are being met at each step of implementation and the act of monitoring can in fact keep the project on track as monitoring activities are usually directly linked to project objectives. In this way evaluations carried at the end benefit from access to data collected throughout the process and so can reveal its evolution at each point rather than just end results that may not indicate opportunities for improvement in future projects.

Evidence at the closing stage

Evidence is often gathered at the closing stage of a project for the purposes of evaluation. This evidence can be compared to targets set to evaluate the **organisation's** success in achieving its aims. Evaluations will be most effective when there is data available from the beginning and from throughout the project in addition to from the closing stages. Surveys are a good way of gathering quantitative or mixed data that can reveal whether highly specific quantifiable targets have been achieved. However, often these quantitative results are somewhat lacking in revealing why the project has succeeded or failed; according to these statistics. Focus groups are both; a good learning experience for those involved, and they are also a valuable source of qualitative; explanatory, data.

Survey or Questionnaire

This is a useful method for gathering quantitative data, but open ended questions can also be included to supplement this, particularly if this is to be the only research tool utilised.

Survey questions should be designed to gather evidence to determine whether or not objectives have been achieved. The measures to be utilised should have been included in the project design and then it is simply a matter of formulating questions that will discover to what extent that which is being measured has occurred. The results that are being aimed for should be determined in advance of project implementation e.g. a goal of 30% or young unemployed participants finding employment within three months of completing a community program.

Surveys have the advantage of being a relatively cheap way to gather data that are accessible to even the smallest organisations that are operating within particularly restrictive budgets. Websites such as [SurveyMonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) can be utilised as a low cost way to create and distribute the survey and a further advantage of these types of websites is that data can be easily analysed using the website program without the need for assistance from a skilled researcher.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are small group discussions in which the chosen stakeholders discuss topics according to a chosen agenda or prompted by a prepared list of questions. There should be a facilitator and a note taker, both of these people should ideally, not be participating in the discussion itself so that they can focus fully on these roles.

An advantage of focus groups is that people tend to be less inhibited when speaking than when they are writing. They are especially useful as a means of gathering data on soft outcomes that may not show up in survey data.

Tips for facilitating a focus group

- Stories are extremely useful soft evidence. It is important to ask follow up questions on stories that may be potentially useful so that the message or lesson behind the story is clear, in addition to what actually happened.
- Always note who is speaking, record all names and also all demographic/diversity details.
- Focus groups can be a valuable learning experience for all involved, but the facilitator must ensure that the group does not get side-tracked and that information useful to the evaluation is extracted.
- **Pay particular attentions to 'whys' such as turning points, critical moments and key factors** including people, mechanisms and barriers.

Sources of Evidence

- Those who have addressed the same or similar issues e.g. other NGOs in particular, as well as other organisations, public, private and media for example; which also operate within Europe.
- The past/ some earlier attempts, what has been done so far by both your organisation and other actors in the area?
- Colleagues; colleagues can have extensive experience in certain areas and will also possess '**organisational memory**'. **This refers to the fact that they will have previously worked in other institutions and they may have witnessed the successful use of particular methods in other countries, regions or sectors.**
- Service users and citizens; this is an extremely important group because it is essential that you know and understand their needs, habits, values etc. if you are to develop a needs focussed service.
- Other cities that face similar challenges and have found a well-functioning solution. There may be a similar initiative to what you have envisioned operating in another nearby city; often you need not look too far to find an applicable success story.
- Science, research and data is always a good source, as it provides data sets, comparisons and analysis and other valuable evidence.
- Expertise- the assistance of an expert with the relevant skills and experience, for the task at hand, can be of great value.



Figure 6 Sources of evidence for the planning and/or the evaluation of a training program aimed at reducing youth unemployment

Thinking outside the box

However, often the most interesting evidence can be acquired by ‘Thinking outside the box’ and bringing some creativity and originality to the process of gathering data. This can be done by seeking external input. Since outsiders will not have been assimilated by organisational culture and picked up the blind spots that can result from this process; they can provide neutral, critical analysis and provide suggestions of how best to improve results.

Some sources of this kind of evidence include;

- Experts, or any relevant people or organisations whose input is not typically sought.
- Organisations working in a different area could be of assistance, in solving persistent problems, through offering alternative solutions.
- Providing the opportunity for people/ citizens to discuss and to propose solutions to their own problems can generate great ideas to work towards solving the problem.

Thinking Outside the box, an example: Anthropologists in Copenhagen

Anthropologists specialise in building knowledge through the combination of the social and natural sciences. Their involvement can promote the development of innovations in the process management.

An example of this can be found in a job centre in Copenhagen, Denmark. This job centre hired a team of anthropologists who, together with the job centre employees, analysed the entire job centre service process. They then worked together, with their customers, to develop creative solutions to improve the work of this job centre.

Thinking Outside the box, an example: Troubled families in the UK

Another example, of the value of seeking an **outsider’s perspective**, can be seen in a case from the UK. This initiative involved hiring people from a voluntary organisation to live for some weeks in the **homes of troubled families**. **These people would follow the family’s daily life** so to make observations and finally to suggest social service reforms that could be of more success in assisting these families than existing services.

What sources of evidence have you utilised in your own project?

| | |
|--|---|
| Source of information, data and learning | What type of information, data and learning you have used? What is your experience of using them? |
| City data and other statistics | |
| Evidence from past/earlier attempts | |
| Colleagues in the city | |
| Users and other stakeholders | |
| Other cities facing the same problem | |
| Science and research | |
| Experts | |
| «thinking out of the box» / «unusual suspects» | |

Moving towards evidence enhancement

Once you have filled in the table below, it is useful to consider;

1. How good is your evidence?
2. What are the gaps in the evidence?
3. What experience you can share?
4. Where you could improve your evidence and how?

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Source of evidence and learning | How do you want to use these to improve the evidence base of your theme? | Priority order (from 1 to 7) |
| City and other statistics | | |
| Evidence from past/earlier attempts | | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Colleagues in the region | | |
| Users and other stakeholders | | |
| Other cities/regions that face the same problem (in Croatia and abroad) | | |
| Science and research | | |
| Experts | | |
| «Thinking out of the box» | | |

Analysing the Evidence

Basic process of Data Analysis

- Look for patterns
- Describe the patterns
- **Look at qualitative data to determine the ‘whys’ of these patterns**

Quantitative Data

Compare quantitative data, gathered throughout the process, to data gathered at earlier and later stages of the process. If quantitative data was only gathered at the final stage of the process it can be useful to look for patterns and surprising irregularities in data gathered on related issues within your own survey. It can also be useful to compare the results of your research to other available data.

For example in the case of ‘equalities data’ which is data collected to determine the representativeness and diversity of project participants, service users and other relevant parties. Equalities data gathered at different stages of implementation can be compared to see if there was greater or lesser success in reaching out to minority groups at different points in the project. It can also be compared to available statistics for the local area to determine how representative the participants involved were of the local community as whole, such as census data.

Utilise survey results to determine if the objectives of the project have been achieved according to the quantitative measures chosen to determine this.

Qualitative Data

Results from open ended survey questions, focus groups and other sources should be read carefully and data organised into themes. Once evidence from these sources is organised into a table, it is easier to make coherent and reasonably objective statements about the data.

If there is a lot of data on one theme in particular, consider splitting it into subthemes to provide greater clarity and a more nuanced overview. Be sure to start each statement with code indicating where the evidence has been taken from.

An informal gathering with the stakeholders to discuss this table and the statements about it could clear up any potential misunderstandings and it is also a good opportunity to ask follow up questions.

Reaching conclusions and writing reports

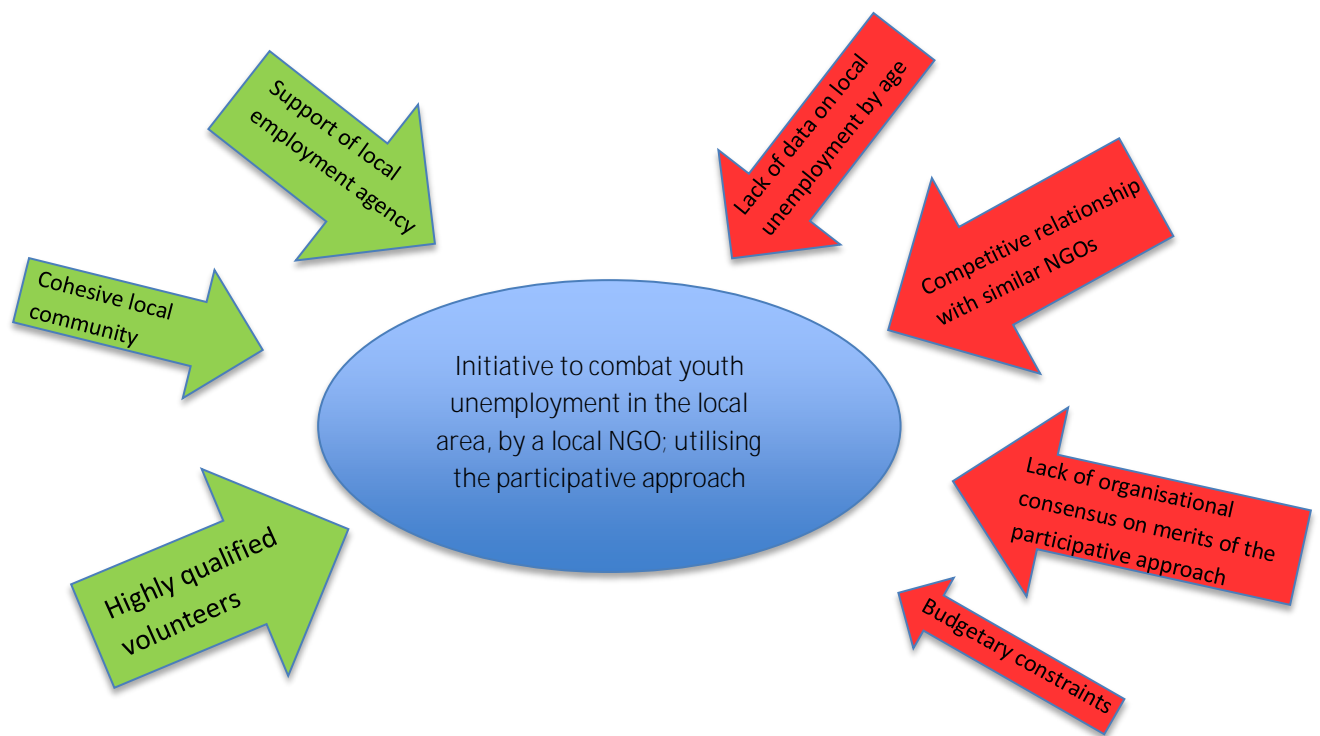
First be sure to carefully read through everything and then code and label it as described in the section above. During this process patterns and themes will begin to emerge and the data should then be organised in this way. Quantitative data should be organised into easily understood, visual graphs and the patterns that have emerged from analysing the qualitative data can be used to explain these results. Once these evidence based conclusions have been reached, quotes gathered from qualitative methods can be utilised to better illustrate these points.

Chapter 13 'Self-assessment tool: Implementation and Evaluation' has a useful section on writing a report after an evaluation and these guidelines can be utilised in other contexts also.

12. Force Field Analysis

A force field analysis is a method by which to weigh both the positive and negative influences surrounding an initiative so to evaluate whether or not it is likely to be successful in achieving its objectives. This is done by listing all of the forces you can think of and assigning a weighting (e.g. on a scale of one to five) to each force and then adding up the scores of all the positive forces and comparing it to the score of the negative forces to see which one is higher. These weightings in creating a sense of focus as the most influential forced can be prioritised so that significant negative forces are minimised and positive forces taken advantage of fully.

Image demonstrating positive and negative forces, of varying influence, on NGO project combatting youth unemployment (To be replaced by designers)



1. The first step is to try and list all relevant forces, both positive and negative. Perhaps a brainstorming session with a small well informed group of contributors would be a good way to achieve this. It is important that this list be thorough so to ensure **the 'force field' is** adequately represented. Forces can include; the stakeholders who are both for and against the initiative, costs involved, budget available, up-coming local events, political context (e.g. an upcoming election or budgetary announcement), institutional norms, regulations, organisational structure and organisational or local values; among many more.
2. Once the list has been created, these forces should be grouped into two categories; **'Positive Forces'** and **'Negative Forces'** and each individual force should be assigned a weighting based on its level of influence. This could be done through using a scale running from 1 (low influence) to 5 (high influence).
3. The scores should then be added up and compared so to determine whether the total influence of the positive forces or the total influence of negative ones dominate the force field.
4. You should consider a scenario in which all of the negative forces dominate to create the worst possible scenario and also consider the best possible scenario that the positive forces could bring about. Once these scenarios have been imagined, it is easier to evaluate the likelihood of either occurring and also to design an effective strategy to reduce the likelihood of the worst possible scenario occurring and; to ensure that the reality is closer to that envisioned in the best possible scenario.
5. Multiple scenarios can be envisioned and the analysis of the force field can be used to inspire viable solutions in this context of competing forces.

Essentially the results of this analysis can be used in two possible ways;

1. To decide whether or not to go ahead with a particular initiative (this refers to using a Force field analysis in the case of a specific project rather than simply mapping the force field within which an organisation operates more generally.)
2. To identify both positive and negative forces; so to think about how to strengthen the positive forces and weaken the negative ones (Mind Tools 2014).

13. E-participation tools and participatory information management

E-governance involves; the exchange of information and communication and service provision, by the government, for the benefit of both citizens and businesses. E-governance aims at delivering available, transparent, and efficient public services. E-governance enriches the discussion about various participatory approaches as it also enables citizen empowerment through access to information, through involvement and through better governance.

In this chapter we will analyse e-participation tools and will emphasise a need for participatory information management. A greater capacity for participatory governance can be developed through e-participation, by engaging citizens in policy and decision-making processes using ICTs.

Steps in e-participation

1) E-information

This includes; information on policies and programmes, budgets, laws and regulations and other areas of key public interest which will be made available on government websites. In this step several support tools for dissemination of information can be used, such as web forums, newsgroups etc. The aim of e-information is to ensure timely access and use of public information.

2) E-consultation

This step moves beyond the provision of information by attempting provide explanations and e-consultation mechanisms and tools such as; on-line discussions and access to recordings and videos of public meetings. The main challenge presented at this stage is that of encouraging citizens to engage with these tools and to participate in discussions.

3) E-decision making

This is a rather advanced and demanding step. At this level of e-participation the government **demonstrate that it will take citizens' input into account in decision-making** and that it will provide actual feedback on the outcome of specific issues. In e-decision making it is of crucial importance that government officials respond to citizen input and they honour their commitment to the process by moderating e-consultations. Examples of web tools that could be utilised include; e-bulletins, on-line discussion forums, online petitions and online voting, these are all examples of important e-decision making tools.

Areas of concern

The key trends in developing e-participation, which addresses both the opportunities and challenges, can be categorised into three specific areas. These categories are; open government data and transparency, social media and mobility.

Open data involves many opportunities for more informed decision-making, greater service innovation, and enhanced transparency. However, it is not without challenges including issues surrounding; the accuracy of data, data protection, and privacy. E-participation tends to be associated with the perspective that data should be open by default, but practices of sharing data can differ between countries depending on the national regulatory framework and cultural norms.

Social media is considered to be a cost-effective way for governments to engage with citizens, as many citizens already have profiles on some popular sites. Social media provides platforms that enable citizens to become content creators for public policies and services. However there are many challenges. First of all such sites do not necessarily provide an accurate measure of public opinion and sometimes can even misrepresent public views. Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that the use of social media might exclude certain marginalised groups such as; some older people, people with a lower education level or people who do not have access to the internet.

If governments do not respond to citizen feedback, whether it is attained via social media or other means; such e-participation, will not produce any real change; creating a sense of disillusionment and a lack of motivation, among citizens, to continue engaging with the government in this way.

The effective utilisation of social media, for the purposes of e-governance, requires significant investment in ensuring that this online process is truly interactive. We can conclude that, to effectively gather data through the use of social media, governments must also develop a strategy for the utilisation of citizen generated content; for purposes such as policy-making and service enhancement.

Mobility is an important means by which to overcome the geographic divide. Wireless technology can help to gather very specific data from individuals, however, not all websites are readable on mobile technologies and not all services are adaptable for use via mobile technologies. There are also privacy issues; as governments gain control through use of these technologies.

Maximising reach

It is vital to consider the differing needs of various target groups and their use of different information platforms, so to maximise reach. When developing specific projects, information tools and communication channels chosen should correspond to the needs and habits of your chosen target group.

Avoiding faux e-participation

When planning the use of e-governance tools it is important to consider several risks that might arise. As outlined above, to justify the investment of resources required, governments should commit to developing an authentic program of e-participation and avoid tools which have little or no potential to make an impact on decision-making. **In an effort to avoid so called 'faux participation', in which online tools are used simply 'for show' rather than making any real contribution to decision making, it is important that the following questions are posed and addressed:**

- How will e-participation influence policies?
- How high are the expectations?
- How will participation in defining the topics be achieved?
- Will critical mass of participation be achieved?
- How the results will be evaluated?
- Who will, and how will they, give a feedback about online proposals received/accepted/rejected?
- How the process will be followed up?

Examples

Slovenia (<http://predlagam.vladi.si>)

In 2009 Slovenian government developed a forum called “I propose to the government”. As the name of the portal indicates, it aims at increasing citizens’ participation and enhancing the connection between the government and citizens. It is constructed in such a way, so to encourage citizens to propose ideas rather than simply problems and to provoke ordinary people into active participation. The structure, architecture and openness to citizens, of the portal reflect the deliberation that went into its design. However the initiative does lack utilisation of social media and mobile applications.

Malta (www.mygov.mt)

The government of Malta launched an e-services portal that can be accessed by all those who register. It is a part of the e-government strategy to enhance citizen communication with the government and those who register receive notifications and alerts about services of interest. This **service, called ‘myAlerts’, is a one-stop-shop** for all notifications by email and SMS and provides news about ongoing and new e-government initiatives. This example shows the added value of using a myAlerts type service. First, by registering, you can access a large number of e-government services. Second, it allows you to select which services are of interest to you. Third, you can personalise the portal according to your needs.

Latvia (www.latvija.lv)

The Latvian e-services portal has two different interfaces; one designed for access by entrepreneurs and the other for private individuals. It functions as a catalogue of e-services and contains information and access to the services of national public bodies and municipalities. You can search services by using A-Z list or keyword search function. The content of each aspect of this e-service is managed by the corresponding government institution responsible for a particular service. The most **popular services are; declaration of one’s place of residence; checking whether a person is declared** at the given address and requesting information about entitlement to, and the rate of, the old age pension.

Austria (<https://schwedenplatz.wien.gv.at/ppr19/schwedenplatz>)

Before the redevelopment of the Square in Vienna, the city’s **inhabitants were asked about their** expectations for the new Square. The opinions gathered were used as guiding principles during the reconstruction process. All suggestions were also put online for further discussions and a team of moderators worked to prevent the misuse of the website. The analysis of these results was then used in further work by planners.

The Netherlands (mijn.overheid.nl)

This Dutch e-service aims at ensuring citizens' access to data; allowing them to access, to consult and to correct personal data stored by government organisations (e.g. key personal data, vehicles registered, real estate property registered, social security benefits). This service has successfully improved the quality of data and it is provided as a part of the central My Government portal.

Portugal (<http://www.portaldocidadao.pt/Portal/aminharua/situationReport.aspx>)

This Portuguese e-participation tool provides citizens with the opportunity to be actively involved in managing their street or neighbourhood. Amongst other capabilities, citizens can report problems or any issue that has arisen in their area- the location of which they can indicate on an online map. This is particularly useful in reporting problems such as the need for maintenance of equipment or a public road. Citizens can then follow the evolution of the case, as updates are posted online.

Participatory sensing

Participatory sensing is a means through which citizens form information and knowledge. It enables people to gather, analyse and share local knowledge, e.g. in urban planning, public health, environment as well as any other sensory information that collectively forms knowledge.

A role for NGOs

NGOs can be involved in three different ways:

- By active participation
- By mobilising other participants
- By networking

NGOs can be both an initiator; when building e-participation tools and cooperation with other organisations, and an intermediary; when supporting information dissemination and education activities as well as promoting engagement and participation.

Participatory information management

Participatory information management starts with facilitating of stakeholder inputs and aiming to provide timely and meaningful responses. All results that are received during the participatory approaches should be organised and analysed in a structured manner. There should be a specific person, within the organisation, with responsibility for the administration and management of participatory information. It is not about IT tools, it is about content management.

14. Self-assessment tool: Implementation and Evaluation

'Evaluation is a structured attempt to judge and evidence the value of a piece of work or process' (University of Bradford & PB Unit 2011). An evaluation can be a useful method by which to justify future funding as it can demonstrate the value of an initiative, as well as identifying strengths and weaknesses; insights which may be of assistance to the NGO in the future.

There are various different forms of evaluation and which method is chosen will depend on the resources and aims of the organisation. Each method comes with its own strengths and weaknesses, but this section will specifically focus on **'Self-evaluation'**. Self-evaluation benefits from the fact that no other party has as much knowledge of the process chosen and implemented, or of the organisational aims, as the organisation itself (University of Bradford & PB Unit 2011) .

However, to offset the risks of bias associated with self-evaluation, it is recommended that a 'Critical Friend' be sought out to act as an observer and advisor. This person should both be knowledgeable about the sector in which the organisation operates, but also completely uninvolved in the organisation itself, so to ensure their objectivity. The support organisation for Participatory Budgeting in the UK has provided some guidance to prospective 'critical friends'; 'Your role is to help the organisers consider the process from all angles, ask the questions they haven't thought of, and identify gaps in their evaluation plan.' (University of Bradford & PB Unit 2011).

Stages of Evaluation

1. Describe the local context.

Describe the local area under relevant categories; the examples below can be adapted or added to according to the context being described.

- Economic (main sectors, unemployment levels, outward/inward migration)
- Political (what political parties are strong, how supportive are local representatives of participative approaches)
- Cultural (is there a strong local cultural heritage, are communities close knit and/or diverse and do they interact with one another?, are there high levels of immigration, examine available data on gender, race, age, religion, sexuality disability so help ensure all sectors are represented and accounted for)
- Geographic (urban or rural, what existing local infrastructure exists and can it be utilised?)
- Community involvement or activism (number of local organisations, level of involvement/volunteering, identify local gatekeepers and difficult to engage groups) (University of Bradford & PB Unit 2011).

A SWOT analysis may be a useful way to analyse the influence of this local context.

2. Identify Aims and Objectives

An NGO will have been set up with a particular set of aims and objectives. It can however be useful to ensure, when embarking on a new initiative, such as the inclusion of participatory approaches, to discuss both wider organisational goals and also the goals of this particular initiative. If you wish to evaluate the success of a particular project it is essential to have decided from the beginning what exactly you wish to achieve.

Key terms

Vision

The vision is your long term aspiration for the organisation. The **best way to answer it is to say 'what do I want the area or community to look like in 10 years' time'**. A vision is usually larger than any one project or event, but there is an aspiration that these will contribute to achieving the vision. For example, a vision would be: a strong and resilient community able to manage and react to change (University of Bradford & PB Unit 2011).

Aims

What you hope the project will achieve in an overarching more general sense that may not be easily quantifiable or measurable. For example, an aim would be to empower people.

Objectives

What you hope the project will achieve in more specific terms. Objectives should be both achievable

in the life of the project, and measurable. You may have a number of objectives for each aim – which is how you identify if your aim has been achieved. If the objectives are met; then the aim can be considered to have been achieved. The objectives should be scaled to the size of the project.

Measures/target

How you identify whether or not you have achieved your objectives. Targets and measures are specific and preferably quantifiable in some way. Again these should be scaled according to the size of the project (University of Bradford & PB Unit 2011).

This is an example of the responses of two stakeholders involved in an initiative in which participative budgeting is being used to allocate funding to projects designed to combat youth unemployment. This example has been developed to illustrate how the priorities of stakeholders may differ and so indicates the need to decide upon the vision, aims, objectives and measures of projects, which involve partnership external stakeholders, at an early stage so to ensure participants are on the same page from the beginning.

| Stakeholders: | Organiser | Guidance Counsellor |
|---|---|--|
| Vision for the project | That the community will be strong, cohesive and resilient | That the majority of local young people will make a smooth transition into employment. |
| Aims for the project | Community cohesion and empowerment will increase, Youth unemployment will decrease. | A decrease in the levels of youth unemployment. The empowerment of young workers. The empowerment of local people. |
| Objectives (these should be achievable to the scale of the project) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 60% of participants believe that they have a say in what happens in their local area. 2. 25% increase in levels of volunteering, voting or other methods of civic engagement. 3. 30% of participants in youth programs go on to find employment in the following 3 months. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 50% of participant in the programs go on to find employment in the following 3 months. 2. 25% increase in civic engagement. 3. 60% of participant feels that they have a say in what happens in their local area. |
| Motivation (why are you involved?) | Because I believe that local people should be empowered to combat the challenges faced by their community, utilising the methods that they judge to be most appropriate. | Because I believe that local stakeholders can make a valuable contribution to choosing which programs can best combat the problem of youth unemployment in our community. |
| What measures or targets would you use to demonstrate whether or not you have achieved your objectives? | I would utilise surveys, distributed amongst the participants, followed up by a focus group to gather feedback form local people and stakeholders involved. Benchmarks would be set in advance against which to evaluate survey results and a focus group would be used to determine the 'whys' behind these results. | I would utilise participant surveys, distributed amongst the young people taking part in the chosen programs to determine their effectiveness in tackling youth unemployment. A survey could also be distributed amongst those involved in the participant budgeting to evaluate their experience. |
| Have your aims | N/A first cycle | N/A first cycle |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| changed from previous cycle (where relevant)? | | |
|---|--|--|

3. Identify Stakeholders

Refer to the sections on **Engaging with Stakeholders, Stakeholder analysis and the Stakeholder's Importance/Influence matrix.**

At the end of the project, and perhaps throughout it too, it is interesting to get an idea of what role(s) each stakeholder believes that they have played/are playing in the project. This can be combined with the **NGO's** view of their contribution, which may differ, to develop a more nuanced **understanding of various stakeholders' contributions and sense of their own inclusion in the process.**

4. Process Planning

The project should be planned in such a way as to accommodate evaluation. Try to include as many **statistically measurable targets as possible (examples can be found in the 'Measures and Targets' section of the table above).**

It is helpful to begin by breaking the process down into stages and to think about, in detail, what each stage of the process should involve. Plans for data collection, for the purposes of later evaluation, should be included throughout the process. This should have the benefit, not only of allowing an accurate evaluation to occur, but also keeping the various actors focussed on appropriate micro goals at every stage preventing a loss of direction.

In considering each stage of the process, it is important to identify who will be involved. You should consult your stakeholder map and consider whether some stakeholder groups are being consistently under or over represented throughout the process. Once the process has begun and the local community is getting involved, it is helpful to collect diversity statistics and to compare these to available information on local demographics. If the profiles of those involved do not reflect the diversity of the community as a whole, efforts could be made to reach out to under-represented sectors, so to ensure a greater level of social inclusion.

Consider Resources

Resources include; Time, Available research (census data etc.), Research, communication and evaluation skills, Money and Other. Other may include the resources of stakeholders which they are willing to contribute, such as; training, contacts or their own private sources of data.

5. Evaluation Design

The first step is to think about which evaluation tools you'll use. This decision will be influenced by the resources available and by what it is you wish to learn from the evaluation. You need to consider what kind of data you want to collect and what the best way of collecting that data is. Quantitative research methods have the advantage of producing quantitative results that are easily comparable with **quantitative targets set. For example, a target could be that '30% of youths who participated in programs designed to reduce youth unemployment found employment within the three months following the end of the program'. Whether or not this target has been achieved could be easily determined through surveying program participants.**

However qualitative data has the distinct advantage of explaining the 'whys' behind these figures, it is also an effective way of identifying 'softer' outcomes such as a more closely knit community or a greater likelihood amongst participants to vote or to participate in future civic activities.

Surveys and Focus Groups are valuable tools that can be utilised to evaluate participative approaches and have been referred to as examples throughout this section. These tools have been discussed in some detail in Chapter 10: 'Evidence Based Analysis' and further details on these, and other methods can be found in the 'Participatory Budgeting Self-Evaluation toolkit' produced by the University of Bradford and the UK PB Unit.

6. After Implementation

You should utilise the data extraction and data analysis techniques described in the chapter; 'Evidence Based Analysis' and then reflect on the evidence extracted.

Reflection

- Consider what happened at each stage of the project. Do an overview of written records and have informal discussions with those involved. Map out/list each activity regardless of whether these activities were planned or improvised.
- **Think about what worked and what didn't work**, focusing on the small micro tasks that made up each stage of implementation.
- Compare implementation to planning. Compare plans for implementation to records detailing the reality.
- Determine at what points changes began to occur. How this is determined will depend on what research methods are utilised in the evaluation. Which method(s) are chosen will of course depend on the resources available. One suggestion of how to go about this would be to utilise focus groups to determine what changes have occurred and then code those changes in such a way that they can be utilised as multiple choice categories in a questionnaire designed to quantify to what extent changes occurred.

Report Writing

Considering audience

Who will be reading this evaluation? - E.g. potential donors. Which stakeholders are also audiences? Are the audiences coming from a perspective that is sceptical or supportive? The nature of the audience(s) should be taken into account when writing up your evaluation. An emphasis on the aspects of the evaluation design that were designed so to help ensure some objectivity, is wise when audiences are sceptical. **Detailing the input and neutrality of the 'Critical Friend' (if the assistance of such a person was utilised)** is an example of how to go about this.

Guidelines

- Read through everything
- Come up with themes and sections
- Present quantitative data visually
- Use quotes to illustrate important points from qualitative data

A few good practices from Europe

15. The people have the power! Sustainable models of CSOs and citizen participation in local and regional decision-making processes

The objective of the project People Have the Power was to develop sustainable participatory democracy mechanisms and enhance sustainable models of CSOs and citizen participation in local and regional decision-making processes. It promoted the sense of involvement and community ownership by increasing citizens' and CSOs' participation within local and regional community. The project was implemented in Krapina-Zagorje County, in North West Croatia during 16 months. The partner organizations on the project were CESI – Centre for Education, Counselling and Research, Network of Associations Zagor, Krapina-Zagorje County, City of Klanjec and Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini which enabled multispectral approach and sustainability of the project.

A stronger development of CSOs in Krapina-Zagorje County has occurred during the past 13 years. Altogether, there are more than a thousand CSOs and Krapina-Zagorje County financially supports CSOs through direct financing or through calls for proposals. The reason behind the project was the fact that only a limited number of CSOs in the County participate in decision-making process due to the lack of knowledge and skills, but also because of the lack of structures and procedures which would allow them to be more actively involved. There was a strong need to create those structures and procedures on regional and local level. There was also insufficient cross-sector and inter-sector coordination and cooperation among public bodies for protection of vulnerable groups. Local and regional authorities rarely used public consultations and participatory approach as a method in decision-making process. Citizens are only rarely perceived as having the right to participate in decision-making and as partners contributing to the quality of laws, decisions and regulations.

The project was innovative because it introduced good practice, innovative models and greater protection of human rights and involvement of citizens in the County. Project implementation was highly participatory with a direct involvement of more than 70 CSOs and institutions, as well as individuals through public discussions, working groups, workshops and conference. Additionally, we established an extensive cooperation with local media and organised public actions in order to inform the general public about the project activities.

The project resulted with the establishment of Regional Council for Civil Society Development. The Regional Council is the advisory body for the County Council and provides structure for CSOs' development. The Regional Code of Practice on Consultation with the Interested Public in Procedures of Adopting and Implementing Regulations and Acts was developed. In order to enhance cross-sector cooperation between public bodies at local and regional level, a written agreement on cooperation was signed between Committee on Gender Equality, Youth Council and Committee for People with Disabilities.

The decision on Council and Code was developed in participatory process. The County established a working group consisting of County and CSO representatives. Working group had three meetings, organised public discussion via internet and in the form of the panel. The County assembly adopted both decisions unanimously on its regular session.

The Code of Practice on Consultation with the Interested Public in Procedures of Adopting and Implementing Regulations and Acts

The Code establishes general principles, standards and measures for conducting consultations with the interested public, in the procedures of adopting regulations and acts of state bodies which regulate matters and take positions of interest for public benefit (protection and promotion of human rights, public services, justice system, environmental protection, etc.). The Code does not question the implementation of more advanced and already precisely regulated standards and measures for the protection of the right to public access and the interested public in connection with the right to participate in procedures for the adoption of other regulations and acts.

The overall goal of the Code is to contribute to civil society development and enhancement of democracy in Krapina-Zagorje County.

The ultimate goal of the Code is to facilitate interaction with citizens and representatives of the interested public in the democratic process, and encourage more active participation by citizens in public life.

The Interested public, according to the Code, includes: citizens, civil society organizations (informal civic groups or initiatives, associations, foundations, funds, private institutions, trade unions, associations of employers), representatives of the academic community, chambers, public institutions and other legal entities performing a public service or who might be affected by the regulation or act which is being adopted, or who are to be included in its implementation.

The consultation, according to the Code, comes within a broader concept of participation by the interested public in the decision-making processes.

Participation of the interested public, according to the Code, includes four levels:

Informing, the first level of participation by the interested public, which assumes a one-way process, whereby county bodies inform citizens on their own discretion or citizens obtain information on their own initiative. Access to public acts, official gazette and the web site of Krapina-Zagorje County.

Consultation, according to the Code, is a two-way process during which county bodies solicit and receive feedback information from citizens and the interested public in the procedure for adoption of regulations and acts.

Involvement assumes a higher level in the two-way process through which representatives of the interested public are actively involved in the creation of public policies, for example through membership in working groups for drafting regulations or acts.

Partnership implies the highest level of cooperation and mutual responsibility of the County and representatives of the interested public in the process of adoption and implementation of programs, regulations and acts.

STANDARDS AND MEASURES IN THE CONSULTATION PROCEDURES

While drafting a proposal of a law, other regulation or act, the minimum standards and measures for conducting consultations with the interested public are the following:

1. Timely information about the plan for enactment of laws and adoption of other regulations and act

The interested public should be informed in good time about the plan to adopt regulations and acts through the publication of a single list of laws and other regulations which are being drafted and

proposed for enactment and adoption in the calendar year, with a statement of the authorities competent for the drafting and the tentative time limit for the drafting and adoption of regulation or act.

2. Access to and clarity of the content of the consultation process

Bodies responsible for drafting regulations and acts make a public announcement of drafts on web site of Krapina-Zagorje county and inform public through media and in another appropriate manner. Notifications of and invitations to consultations about publicized drafts must be clear and concise and contain all information necessary to facilitate collection of observations from the interested public. The unique form is used in order to collect observations from the interested public.

3. The time limit for the implementation of Internet and other forms of consultations

Public announcements of invitations to conduct consultations about draft regulations and acts must contain a clearly designated time limit for observations from the interested public. It is desirable for this time limit to be 30 days from the public announcement of the draft on the web site of Krapina-Zagorje County.

4. Feedback information about the effects of the consultations conducted

The observations by the interested public, as well as a summarized, unified explanation of the rejection of comments on certain provisions of the draft, shall be announced publicly on the web site of Krapina-Zagorje county, or in another appropriate manner, so that the effect of conducting consultations in the procedure for the adoption of policies, programs, regulations and acts is visible. In order to collect observations from the interested public the unique form have to be developed.

5. Harmonization of the application of standards and measures of conducting consultations in state bodies

In order to ensure the harmonized application of the above mentioned standards and measures by county bodies, a coordinator for conducting consultations shall be appointed in order to consistently monitor and coordinate the procedures for conducting consultations with the interested public.

Challenges in the project implementation

The CSOs in the County lack knowledge and experience in participatory approaches, so we had problems motivating them to participate in all project activities. CSOs should work more on education and training for effective participation in the decision making processes and the governmental structures should actively support it.

Although during and after the project implementation the County had four public consultations, there was not much interest in participating in those discussions. Eventually, the biggest efforts in the future should be continual motivation of individual citizens to participate in consultations, but also CSOs. The experience from the national level and implementation of the national Code, shows that it takes time to fully involve CSOs and citizens in public consultations. Through further promotion of the Code and open consultations, we believe that involvement of citizens will improve and the Council for Civil Society Development play an important role in it.

The development of civil society in Krapina-Zagorje County got a certain momentum through the project, but a great deal remains to the Council for Development of Civil Society, which has the task to set up a quality foundation for further development. One of the first activities to be undertaken is the production of the Strategy for creating an enabling environment for civil society development in Krapina-Zagorje County, as a key document for further development of participatory approach on the regional level.

16. Citizens' panels

Citizens' Consultations or Citizens' Panels are based on the model and method developed by America Speaks, the 21st Century Town Hall Meeting. They are structured, dialogue driven events which involve facilitation both in plenary amongst all participants, and at table level where participants sit in small working groups. Citizens work at tables and in plenary to deliberate and develop answers to a question. They are supported in this; by both professional facilitation and through the use of modern technology, such as electronic voting, to help the group arrive at a consensus. As deliberations are professionally facilitated and take place in small working groups – typically 8-12 people – it is possible for every citizen to become involved in the discussion and to **make their voice heard. A central editorial team collates the citizens' inputs from their tables and these are voted on in the plenary.** The results are then discussed in the next dialogue step. Creative elements or shared activities can also be integrated into the method, ensuring that the event is both fun and productive. Experts and other stakeholders can also be involved in the process. The format also lends itself to the integration of online elements, thus enabling it to reach a far greater number of people than those attending the conference.

European Citizens' Consultations are able to generate high-quality, detailed and very concrete results – often in the form of recommendations for action. They energise participants by giving them a feeling that their voice has been heard and they have made a contribution to the results being **developed. Citizens' Consultations are particularly well suited for situations where a large number of people should be involved in preparing a political decision.**

Additional benefits of this format also include:

- a visually attractive event, good for attracting media attention;
- complex issues can be dealt with;
- a variety of views can be accommodated
- a number of **trade-offs in deliberation are done away with as everyone's voice is heard and part of the shared solution.**

Indeed, a win-win situation can be achieved as:

Citizens are the first to benefit because they actively engage in the democratic process. Few turn down the invitation to participate in such a debate, and would never have expected such an **invitation to do so from this particular source. As the participants of the European Citizens' Panels themselves formulated it, they are often initially sceptical, but become more enthusiastic as discussions get under way: "Feelings included hope and surprise, feeling positive about the process, curious as well as [...] anxious [...]"²** For some citizens, these are quite literally life-changing experiences. They lift them out of the traditional attitude that they, the citizens, cannot change anything. More importantly, these effects are felt beyond the small circle of those directly involved in participatory projects. They talk to family and friends about their experiences, colleagues and the media, and therefore, indirectly, reach a far wider circle.

² **Conclusions of the citizens' panels discussed at the ECAS final European event on 26 February 2010 in Brussels**

Officials and politicians gain new insights from the process. At the very least, the qualitative and, more active approach of citizen deliberation will teach them more than opinion polls ever can. These passive, static snap-shots of opinions, and choices amongst pre-determined options at a given point in time, often leave many questions unanswered and the finer points and trade-offs unexplored. These are often important and emotive issues for citizens, especially if they are able to see the link between the policy under discussion and their own situation, that of their family or immediate neighbourhood, making their inclusion in the policy making process increasingly central for its success. Participatory democracy techniques have shown that citizens are often able to open the eyes of experts and politicians to new ways of looking at familiar problems, and changing the perspective, so that solutions are found.

17. Participatory approach in planning of public spaces

“Public spaces in foreground”: A participative project in the area of Borgo Zind, Muggia (Trieste).

This is an example of a structured and collaborative community planning event at which all stakeholders, including the local community, were given the opportunity to work closely with specialists on planning the enrichment of public spaces in Borgo Zind, a neighbourhood in Muggia (Trieste).

The participatory planning process was developed over the course of four meetings. In addition to those responsible for the management of Trieste public good and services; Technicians, ASS1 Triestina representatives and local social workers, all took part in the events and were available; to provide advice and clarifications to all interested parties.

What is participatory urban planning?

Participatory planning is an urban planning model that emphasises involving the entire community in the strategic and management processes of urban planning or in community-level planning processes. It is often used as a method of community development due to its effectiveness in endowing local people with both a sense of ownership and of control of their local area; case-studies demonstrate its success in ensuring that communities become safer, stronger and wealthier.

Participatory planning is an inclusive process through which marginalised groups have an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and it aims to harmonise the opposing views of participants through compromise and so to prevent conflict between opposing parties.

Why does stakeholder participation work? Trust is one of the most important mechanisms at play. **Research on public participation highlights this point. “After participation in quality project meetings, participants were significantly more likely to believe the agency was responsive to public concerns.”** The participation of stakeholders, in an urban development project, builds their trust in the public agency, increases their investment in the achievement of program objectives and since it allows for the incorporation of different viewpoints, it improves the chances of long-term sustainability.

Activity implementation phases

Public spaces in the foreground; is a participatory urban planning project concerned with the improvement of local spaces and socio-sanitary services development. It has been implemented within the framework of the project, S.HO.W. (Social Housing Watch); which is funded by the EU Programme for the cross border cooperation (Italy-Slovenia 2007-2013 – 2/2009).

The project S.HO.W is focused on social housing policies, interpreted not just as a tool with which to respond to housing demand, but also an important mean for social inclusion, urban safety, urban and environmental upgrading and community cultural development.

S.HO.W has utilised a participatory approach to upgrade the public spaces of Borgo Zindis, which is a social housing neighbourhood in Muggia. The agencies directly involved in the activity have been; Ater Trieste, a public agency in charge of the management of the social housing neighbourhoods in Trieste province, Ass1 Triestina, the public socio-sanitary agency (which has an office in Borgo Zindis, named Micro-area) and Muggia Municipality (Halversen 2003:535-543).

The association Kallipolis was in charge of the facilitation of the participatory process.

The preliminary phase consisted of a problem analysis of the present situation and preparing a provisional strategy for the improvement of public spaces. Through the use of questionnaires, informal walks and informal talks; Micro-area sought community input on their needs and existing problems, in addition to gathering suggestions regarding how best to improve and utilise the **neighbourhood's public spaces**.

Once these contributions had been gathered, Ater technicians prepared the provisional plan for Borgo Zindis; merging both the needs of the community and the municipal planning, technical requirements.

The implementation phase of the participatory process began with a communication campaign designed to inform the community of what was going to happen and of how they could get involved in the process. The most successful activities were invariably those in which sufficient time and effort had been invested into organising a means of engaging with all interested parties. The communication methods used were leaflets, posters in the buildings, direct communication to the leaders of the community and phone calls to all the potentially interested inhabitants.

2. Topic group: accessibility and car park

Borgo Zindis inhabitants, using specific thematic maps, worked in coordination with Ater technicians in the organisation of the parking distribution in their neighbourhood. The method used for this activity was an interactive display which allowed people to engage in the issues and debate, on their own and in an enjoyable way, by making additions or alterations to pre-prepared exhibits. Through the method of brainstorming the community agreed with the technicians where to place the ramps to access some buildings and how to improve neighbourhood accessibility.

Map of the parking areas proposed by the participants of the topic group. Make the participatory planning process itself visible the use of flipcharts, post it notes, coloured notes and banners is recommended.

3. Topic group: gathering areas and street furniture

As for the previous topic group, the starting point was the provisional project presented by Ater. Using maps, which depicted the informal paths in the green areas in need of upgrading and park benches etc., the community, through the method of interactive display and the brainstorming elaborated a shared plan with Ater. They decided which path to pave and where to put benches and tables to best accommodate community life. As part of the topic group meeting, there was a special focus, on the design of the central square in Borgo Zindis, using the methodology of the design workshop. Design workshops are hands-on sessions allowing small groups of professionals and non-professionals to work creatively together, developing plans and design ideas. The participants were encouraged to develop their ideas by drawing on a prepared map of the area and through the process of explaining their ideas to the group. Finally a summary of the shared vision of the design was developed by the facilitator. This plan was lately used by Ater technicians in the preparation of the final version of the central square project.



Figure 8: Map, completed by the participants of the project group, of the proposed paved paths and urban furniture

4. Presentation of the final shared project.

The final version of the project, for the upgrading of the public spaces in Borgo Zindis, was presented to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. This project represented the shared vision of the intervention among Ater Trieste, ASS1 Triestina and the inhabitants of Borgo Zindis.



Figure 9: The new central square of Borgo Zindis including paved paths through the green areas, in ATER drawings.

The participatory process was held during the months of November and December 2012, and In January 2014 the construction and rehabilitation works in Borgo Zindis were completed.



Figure 11: Completed, new square in Borgo Zindis



Figure 10: The paved paths through green areas

Kallipolis Sustainable Urban Planning Non-profit Organization www.kallipolis.net info@kallipoli.net

18. Citizens' participation in urban regeneration projects

Community inclusion in urban regeneration projects is a key factor in the successful realisation of a well-shaped project and its' guaranteed sustainability. Local people are invariably the best source of knowledge and wisdom regarding their surroundings. Better decision-making is achieved as a result of effectively harnessing this resource. Moreover people feel more attached to an environment they have helped to create. They will therefore manage and maintain it better, reducing the likelihood of vandalism, neglect and the subsequent need for costly replacement.

Framework of the project

Atelier Panzano is a project funded by Ecomuseo Territori, Municipality of Monfalcone and Consorzio Culturale del Monfalconese and it's a first step of a process of revitalisation of the Panzano neighborhood, a working class village which, in the last few decades, has experienced a **progressive phenomenon of marginalisation and a loss of identity**. The project 'Atelier Panzano' used a participatory process to retrace the story of Panzano neighborhood in Monfalcone (Gorizia) through the collection of the memories of its inhabitants, leading to the rediscovery of the unique cultural value and historical culture of the place. Panzano is a neighbourhood in Monfalcone, founded in 1907 by **Cosulich's brothers**. They bought a large area of land in the **Gulf of Panzano** in Monfalcone, to build a new boatyard. In the '20s the construction of a workers' village started. The neighbourhood of Panzano was built in the surrounding areas of the boatyard according to a most advanced, functional and harmonious plan. At the time of its completion it gave accommodation to about 5000 people and it was an urban settlement completely independent from the town of Monfalcone. Throughout the ages, this neighbourhood has been home to the workers of the nearby boat yard.

Atelier Panzano

Panzano's citizens were invited to share their family's stories that were connected in some way to the neighbourhood itself. The collected stories are based on individual personal episodes related with the spaces in the neighbourhood, in order to create a collective story. The inventory of past and present relationships between urban space and everyday life has permitted the creation of a community map of the neighbourhood, a starting point for a future valorisation of the area.

Step 1: communication campaign

A friendly graphic designer, close to the people the project wants to involve, was chosen to prepare leaflets and posters which publicise the project and its schedule. Local newspapers published articles about the project. Moreover phone calls to community leaders and association representatives were made so to involve as many people as possible.

Step 2 Stakeholder mapping and analysis

This step is crucial to the identification of neighbourhood organisations, community leaders and people involved in the topic to so ensure the success of the participatory process. Their contributions can then facilitate the achievement of the project goals and objectives.

Step 3 Outreach

Recorded interviews were used to collect information for a first neighbourhood analysis. Community leaders, associations, representatives and inhabitants were involved and interviewed, using the same questions schedule. This instrument is more flexible and interactive than a questionnaire.



Figure 13: Example of an Interview in action



Figure 12: Postcard produced to raise awareness of the project

Step 4 Charrette for Community planning

Charrette is an intensive, multi-disciplinary design workshop designed to facilitate an open discussion between stakeholders of a local development project. A team of community planning experts (facilitators, urban designers and an illustrator) met the citizens over a period of 3 days, gathering information on the history of the neighbourhood and the problems it's facing. Drawings are an essential tool in the methodology of Charrette, as they are easily understandable to all workshop participants and they clearly describe issues, needs and suggestions made; during the meetings between the team of community planning experts and citizens. During the three days of the Charrette workshop each individual story became a memory snapshot thanks to a professional illustrator.



Figure 14: Some attendants at the Charette workshop

Step 5 The public event to present the community map

The community map is a tool with which the inhabitants of a particular place have the opportunity to represent the places where they live. It highlights the way in which the local community sees and gives value to its own territory, its memories and its transformation to its current situation and how they would like it to be in the future. In Atelier Panzano project the community map resulted in the development of an animated short film where all memory snapshots contribute to create the **collective memory of Panzano's neighbourhood**. **This animated short film "Panzano: la storia ritrovata" had a public presentation, a moment in which** local administration, organisations and citizens met each other to share their vision of the neighbourhood built by their stories.

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