



Activity 2.2: Choosing Your Research Method

Tools Needed:

Copies of Tool 2.2: Guiding Questions for Choosing a Research Method

Copies of Tool 2.3: PAR Menu of Methods

Materials Needed:

Butcher paper

Markers

Pens

Post-it notes

Key Terms:

Quantitative Data

Qualitative Data

Survey

Interview

Focus Groups

Community Mapping

Community Visioning

Secondary Data

Media Review

Literature Review

Intended Audience:

Community Members or Organizers

Time Needed:

1.5 hours

Purpose of Activity:

This activity is designed to help organizers and members understand the various options for how they can conduct research and choose the research method(s) they will use.

By the End of Activity Participants Will:

- Finalize research goals and questions
- Understand relevant research methods
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods
- Decide the research method appropriate for your group

Before this Activity Participants Will Need to:

Develop research goals and research questions

Part I: Nailing Down your Research Goals and Questions (15 minutes)

1. Frame the activity in the context of your campaign: now that we've decided to do participatory research we need to dig into how to do it. There are a bunch of different ways we can conduct research so we need to explore these different research methods.
2. Put up the butcher paper with "Research Goals" and "Research Questions" from Section 2, Activity 1.
3. Ask the group, is anything missing?
4. Wrap it up: Summarize what has been said and explain that these goals and questions will help to determine which methods you will use to conduct your research.

Part II: Brainstorm as a Big Group (25 minutes)

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Explain that now that we have determined some of our goals and research questions, we need to dig into how to do the research.
2. Next, facilitate a discussion that answers the questions: how do we do the research, when do we do it and where? Record responses on butcher paper, and keep butcher paper for Part 3 (This can also be done in break-out groups).

How?

...can you document or better understand the issue? Do you need “hard” numbers (quantitative data) and/or stories of personal experience (qualitative data) or both?
...are you going to give legs to your research?

What action strategies could you employ to make the research and report as impactful as possible?

Who?

...are the stakeholders in the issue? Who has interest? Who is affected?
...needs to have their voice be heard?
...are you trying to influence? Who has power over the issue?
...is your target audience (community members, elected officials, media)?
...will collect your data?

Where?

...can you find the people you need to talk to get your data?
...can you find existing information that is relevant to your research?
...can you go for support and assistance (non-profits, universities, government agencies)?

Part II: Understanding the Research Methods (35 minutes)

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Choose 3-4 methods that you think are the most relevant to your project (from Tool T2.1 PAR Menu of Methods).
2. Break the participants into 3-4 groups and assign one method that you’ve chosen to each group.
3. Pass out Tool T2.1 “PAR Menu of Methods” to each group.
4. Tell each group to read over the description for the method they have been assigned and give them 5-7 minutes to make up a skit for that method. Encourage them to be creative.

5. Have each small group perform their skit.
6. After each skit, facilitate a discussion with the full group. Ask the group: what did you see in the skit? What do you think are the pros and cons of that method for our work? Record the pros and cons list on butcher paper.

Part III: Decide Your Research Method (20 Minutes)

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Place the butcher papers from each A2.2 activity next to each other at the focal point of the room.
2. First, ask a volunteer to read your responses to the “How” “Who” and “Where” questions from the first activity to remind everyone of your initial conversations.
3. Facilitate a discussion: now that we know more about each of the possible research methods, which methods align with the groups responses to the “How”, “Who” and “Where” questions?
4. Make a decision about which method(s) make the most sense for your project. Record the methods you choose to put into your research workplan (see Tool 2.3).