Research for Organizing Webinar Series

Module 1: Unpacking the Toolkit
Presenters

Alexa Kasdan
*Director of Research and Policy*

Zarin Ahmed
*Research and Policy Associate*
Agenda

• Logistics
• Who we are
• Upcoming Webinar Modules
• Unpacking the Toolkit
• What is Participatory Action Research (PAR)?
• Is PAR right for you?
• Q&A
Webinar Logistics

• **Audio Options:**
  – **Listen by phone:**
    • Select “telephone” in the audio option on the control panel.
    • Call the number sent to you in registration confirmation
    • Enter your access code
    • Enter your audio pin (press # [code numbers]#) so we can identify you.
    – Pin will be shown on your screen when you log in online.
  – *Or, listen through your computer’s audio.*

Everyone but the presenters will be muted to reduce background noise.
Webinar Logistics

Questions

• As we go through the webinar, if you have any questions, you can type them into the chat box

• We will answer questions after the webinar during the Q&A session

Your questions here!
INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (CDP)
Who is CDP?

• Strengthen impact of grassroots organizations, through...
  – Participatory Action Research Reports
  – Grassroots Policymaking
  – Popular-Education Curriculum Design and Research Training
  – Strategic Campaign Research

**Find out more information about CDP here:** http://cdp.urbanjustice.org/
CDP Partnership Model

• Work with groups that...
  – Are based in low-income communities of color in New York City
  – Conduct community organizing campaigns with a goal of achieving systemic change
  – Are membership-based, member-led
  – Engage in leadership development and base-building
Research For Organizing Webinar Series

• Module 1: Unpacking the Toolkit

Moving Forward:

• Module 2: Designing your Research Project
• Module 3: Getting Your Data
• Module 4: Creating, designing, and implementing Surveys – Quantitative Data

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Research For Organizing Webinar Series

• Module 5: Focus Groups & Interviews – Qualitative Data
• Module 6: Mystery shopping/observations
• Module 7: Creating research findings and Policy Recommendations
• Module 8: Presenting & Releasing your Research

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MODULE 1: UNPACKING THE TOOLKIT
Objectives for this Module

• *Participants will be able to...*
  – Navigate the toolkit and utilize various activities and tools
  – Understand principles of Participatory Action Research and how it strengthens organizing work
  – Understand basic components and timeline for conducting a PAR project
INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)
What comes to mind when you think of a researcher?
Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- Community-driven
- Power-building
- Action oriented
Tool 1.3: Participatory Action Research Timeline

• Each PAR step designed in conjunction with organizing efforts
• You may have extra steps, or less steps depending on project
Develop research instruments

1. Determine Organizing Goal
2. Develop Research Question
3. Determine Research Sample
4. Determine Methods to be used for research
5. Develop research instruments
6. Train Community members in conducting primary research
7. Administer Research
8. Data Entry
9. Data Analysis
10. Develop Outline
11. Develop Policy Recommendations
12. Write-up Report
13. Media Strategy
14. Report Release

Prepared by the Community Development Project
RESEARCH FOR ORGANIZING (RFO) TOOLKIT
Research for Organizing Toolkit

• Designed for organizations and individuals using PAR in social justice work
• Compiled from years of working with grassroots organizations
• Trainings, tools and tips created for organizers & community members to become more actively involved in research process

Prepared by the Community Development Project
Research for Organizing Toolkit

Welcome!

This toolkit is designed for organizations and individuals that want to use participatory action research (PAR) to support their work towards social justice. PAR helps us to analyze and document the problems that we see in our communities; allows us to generate data and evidence that strengthens our social justice work; and ensures that we are the experts about the issues that face our communities. In this toolkit you will find case studies, workshops, worksheets and templates that you can download and tailor to meet your needs.

Step-by-step Timeline of a Participatory Action Research Project

www.researchfororganizing.org

Prepared by the Community Development Project
How the Toolkit Should be Used

• Intended audiences
  – Community organizers
  – Community members or
  – Students studying PAR
  – Grassroots organizations

• Supporting and strengthening organizing efforts
Community Participation is Essential!

• Communities are at the center of PAR!
• Crucial to develop research with a community, not for it
RFO TOOLKIT STRUCTURE
RFO Toolkit Structure

• Broken down into seven sections, each addressing a component of PAR

• Each section contains activities, tools, and case studies
RFO Table of Contents

1. An Overview of Participatory Action Research
2. Designing Your Research Project
   - I. Surveys
   - II. Interviews
   - III. Focus Groups
   - IV. Community Mapping
   - V. Community Visioning
   - VI. Mystery Shopping
3. Getting Your Data
4. Entering Your Data Into a Database
5. Analyzing Your Data
6. Presenting and Packaging the Report
7. Releasing the Report
8. Glossary of Terms
9. Tips for Facilitators

Prepared by the Community Development Project
Activities

• Designed to be completed with community members
• Led by a facilitator with step-by-step instructions
• “Train the Trainer” method
Activities

Activity: 1.1 Breaking Down Stereotypes of Researchers

Purpose of Activity:
This activity is designed to challenge the stereotypes that are commonly held about research and researchers in order to reframe research as a process in which everyone can and should participate. Participants will be introduced to the basic philosophy behind Participatory Action Research: that those most impacted by an issue should be able to design and conduct research about their community.

By the End of Activity Participants Will:
- Be able to break down stereotypes about research and expertise
- Learn that various types of knowledge exist within the group
- Learn that community knowledge and research is critical to changing policy and building power

Materials Needed:
- Paper
- Writing utensils
- Poker chips (or pennies, paper clips, or jelly beans)
- Butcher paper with definitions of types of knowledge

Key Terms:
- Community knowledge
- Knowledge from experience
- Academic knowledge
Components of Activities

Activity 1.1: Breaking Down Stereotypes of Researchers

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Key Terms
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- Knowledge from experience
- Academic knowledge

Intended Participants
- Members and staff of your organization

Time Needed
- 45 minutes

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Part I: “What does a researcher look like?”
(20 minutes)

Facilitator Instructions
1. Make sure everyone has a sheet of paper and a pen.
2. Ask each person to take a few minutes to draw a picture responding to the question: “What does a researcher look like?”
3. After everyone has drawn something, ask for a few volunteers to show what they’ve drawn (if the group is big you can have each person share their drawing with their neighbor).
4. Popcorn questions: Who did they draw? Where is the researcher located? How are they doing their research? Is the researcher from the community? How does this drawing compare to what other people drew?

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Components of Activities

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Time Needed
- 45 minutes

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Tools

• Variety of functions
  – Some correspond to specific activity
    • Handouts, lists of terms, or scenarios
  – Some stand on their own
    • Templates or sample materials

• Most tools and glossary available in Spanish!
Tools

Tool: 3.2 Sample Rap for Surveying

From Domestic Workers United Study:

Hi, my name is ____________ and I’m with Domestic Workers United. We are a group of domestic workers including nannies, housekeepers and elderly caregivers fighting for more rights and better working conditions. Are you a domestic worker (or nanny, housekeeper or elderly caregiver?)

If No... probe a little to find out what they do and if they are not a domestic worker (hand them literature about DWU and thank them for their time)

If they are a domestic worker SAY...

You may have heard about the recent law that just passed that gives more protections to domestic workers like a day of rest and the right to overtime pay. Have you heard about it? (Briefly explain)

We are doing a brief survey today because we think there is more that can be done to make sure that we have more rights and better working conditions. We are going to write a report based on this survey to educate people about domestic workers and our industry. Do you have some time to answer a few questions about your work as a domestic worker? It should just take a few minutes.

Go into survey...

Tool: 3.3 Tips for Conducting Surveys

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Tools

Tool 2.2: Guiding Questions for Choosing a Research Method

**HOW...**
... can you document or better understand the issue? Do you need “hard” numbers (quantitative data) or stories of personal experience (qualitative data)?

Quantitative | Qualitative | Both

... are you going to give legs to your research? What action strategies could you employ to make the research and report as effective as possible?

**WHO...**
... are the stakeholders in the issue? Who has interest, who is affected?

... needs their voice to 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?
Tools

Herramienta 2.2: Preguntas Guías para Escoger el Método de Investigación

¿Cómo puedes documentar o entender mejor un asunto? ¿Necesitas números (data cuantitativa) o historias sobre experiencias personales (data cualitativa)?

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<th>Cuantitativa</th>
<th>Cualitativa</th>
<th>Ambas</th>
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¿Cómo le vas a dar riendas a tu investigación? ¿Qué acciones estratégicas puedes usar para que tu investigación y reporte sean los más efectivos posibles?

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¿Quiénes son las partes interesadas en este asunto? ¿Quién es afectado?

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¿Quiénes necesitan ser escuchados?

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¿A quienes estás tratando de influenciar? ¿Quién tiene poder sobre este asunto?

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¿Qué público va dirigido (miembros de la comunidad, oficiales electos, media)?

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Prepared by the Community Development Project
Case Studies

• Demonstrate how PAR has been used by other organizations
• Ground activities and tools in concrete examples
Case Studies

On RFO website, have option to download pdf of case study and the CDP report!

Case Study: 3.2 VOCAL-NY and CDP Report: Stuck in the System

Voices of Community Activists and Leaders (VOCAL-New York), formerly New York City AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN), is a statewide grassroots membership organization building power among low-income people who are living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, drug use and incarceration, to create healthy and just communities. VOCAL accomplishes this through community organizing, leadership development, participatory research, public education and direct action.

New York has led the nation in reducing HIV transmission among injection drug users (IDUs) through various syringe access efforts, including syringe exchange programs (SEPs) and the Expanded Syringe Access Program (ESAP) initiative. These lawful programs, which allow properly documented participants to possess sterile or
Case Studies

Explores the way the partner group used PAR for organizing goals

http://www.researchfororganizing.org/uploads/pdfs/C-3-2.pdf
Case Study: Burden of Fees
Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA)

- Mission to protect and maintain affordable and safe housing
- Organize campaigns to protect affordable housing & prevent displacement.
- Develop leaders and build power
The Issue

• Tenants in Bronx being charged non-rent fees: confusing, often unwarranted fees in addition to their rent.
• Used by landlords to push rent stabilized tenants out of their homes.
• Organizing effort to expose this issue, base-build, advance policy changes to end this practice.
## Non-Rent Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Previous Balance</th>
<th>Current Charges</th>
<th>Amount Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAM</td>
<td>DAMAGES</td>
<td>260.10</td>
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<td>260.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEG</td>
<td>LEGAL FEES</td>
<td>900.00</td>
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<td>900.00</td>
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<td>RNT</td>
<td>RENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>WM</td>
<td>WASHING MACHINE</td>
<td>244.84</td>
<td>13.62</td>
<td>258.46</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Organizing Goals

• Preserve and maintain affordable and safe housing and prevent displacement.
• Build a strong base of tenants who are affected by this issue, and develop tenant leadership roles.
• Win policy change to protect tenants against the imposition of non-rent fees.
Research Goals

• Collect data on the impact of non-rent fees on rent stabilized tenants.

• Identify patterns in how fees are being charged to develop a clearer picture of the landscape and inform organizing strategy.
Research Questions

• What are the experiences of rent-stabilized tenants with non-rent fees?
• What fees are tenants being charged? Have they paid these fees? Do they experience confusion about fees?
• What is the financial impact of the fees?
• What are tenant stories about their experiences?
Research Methods

- **Short survey** to collect information from rent stabilized tenants
- **Analysis of rent bills** to generate additional data about fees being charged
- **Tenant interviews** to create short profiles of tenants who have been charged non-rent fees
Staff and members trained on survey collection and research best practices

Survey collection at legal clinics, tenant associations, meetings and organizational events
Burden of Fees Report

THE BURDEN OF FEES
How Affordable Housing is Made Unaffordable

Prepared by the Community Development Project
Nonrent Fees for Bronx Tenants Are Focus of Advocates’ Report

Report says new fees harass tenants

Mt. Eden residents claim landlords adding extra fees

Making Affordable Housing Unaffordable

Inquilinos en El Bronx denuncian cargos en renta
PAR Supporting Organizing Efforts

• Release of the report “The Burden of Rent Fees: How Affordable Housing is Made Unaffordable”
• Form the Fees are Fraud coalition, focused on the citywide impact of fees.
• Coalition expanded CASA’s initial research and released an addendum to the original non-rent fee study
• Cultivated tenant-leaders and mobilized their memberships
NYC TENANTS CALL FOR THE PROHIBITION OF ALL NON-RENT FEES

A report addendum to

The Burden of Fees: How Affordable Housing is Made Unaffordable

April 2015

Prepared by the Community Development Project
• Introduction of state-level legislation.
• Coordinated filing of overcharge complaints.
• Push for HCR to eliminate non-rent fees.
Policy Impact

• State’s Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) released a factsheet regarding the legality of fees that can be charged to tenants.
• “Fees are Fraud” report cited in the memo that accompanies package of state-level legislation to curtail and increase tenant awareness of illegal non-rent fees
Case Study: Burden of Fees

Case Study 1.1: Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) and Fees are Fraud Coalition - NYC Tenants Call for the Prohibition of all Non-Rent Fees

Background on Organization and Issue

Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) is New Settlement Apartments' housing organizing initiative. CASA is a community-led organization that works to improve housing conditions with neighborhood-wide campaigns focused on tenants' rights to a safe, healthy, and stable home. CASA began to work out of the community's need to improve the poor housing conditions that persist for many
DECIDING IF PAR WORKS FOR YOUR ORGANIZING EFFORTS
Tool 1.5: Is PAR Right for You?

Campaign strategy:

• Is your organization or community actively organizing to change a policy or win a campaign OR are you developing an organizing campaign?

• Do you need more information to convince people that your campaign or issue is important?

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Tool 1.5: Is PAR Right for You?

Community needs & participation:

• Are you trying to learn more about the needs and issues in your community?
• Is there a group of community members that will participate in designing the research?
• Is there a group of community members that will be involved in collecting data?
Tool 1.5: Is PAR Right for You?

Capacity and resources:

• Do you have enough people in your organization (staff, volunteers or members) to carry out a research project?
• Do you have enough resources (money, time, equipment) to carry out a research project?
• Can you think of existing funders/pots of money that you could tap into?

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Tool 1.5: Is PAR Right for You?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool: 1.5 Is PAR Right for Your Organization or Community?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
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If you answered “yes” to most of the questions, then Participatory Action Research is right for your organization or community! If you answered “no” to most of the questions, then you may want to focus on other types of work to achieve your organization or community’s goals.

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MOVING FORWARD:
FUTURE WEBINAR MODULES
Research For Organizing Webinar Series

• Module 1: Unpacking the Toolkit

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Sign up for RFO updates:
https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/RFOsignup