Tool 1.4: Principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Debunks stereotypes of the research expert
• Challenges the myth that the “experts” are always from formal institutions;
• Views individuals and affected communities as experts;
• Promotes popular knowledge and experience as legitimate and significant;
• Involves affected communities and individuals at all levels of the research process and strategy development.

People-centered
• The process of research, inquiry, and analysis is informed by and responds to the experiences and needs of oppressed people;
• Research is an organizing and community-building tool and brings people together around common problems and needs

Research to build power
• Develops collective knowledge, analysis and voice of community members on a given issue;
• Promotes growth of leadership from within a community;
• Transforms unequal and unjust power dynamics at the individual, collective, and systemic levels;
• Builds base of people that are engaged in a given social or political issue.

Action Oriented
• The research process and results promote informed and strategic action for positive social change.
• Research is publicly disseminated and used as a tool to influence policy makers and government officials.