Activity 2.2: Choosing Your Research Method

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).
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.

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).