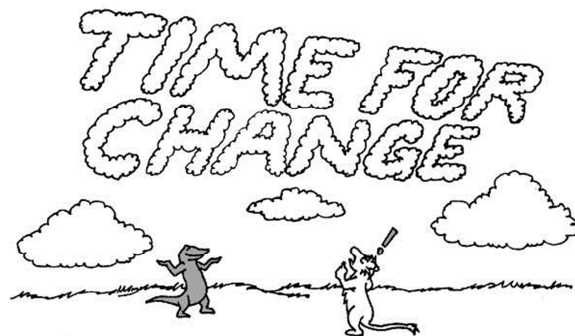




**Young People
Friendly Neighbourhoods**

Community Activism

A journey from Act by Right



A resource for children, young people and adults to
use locally to help strengthen community action to
help make where we live a better place



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Based on Act by Right: www.actbyright.org.uk NYA 2004

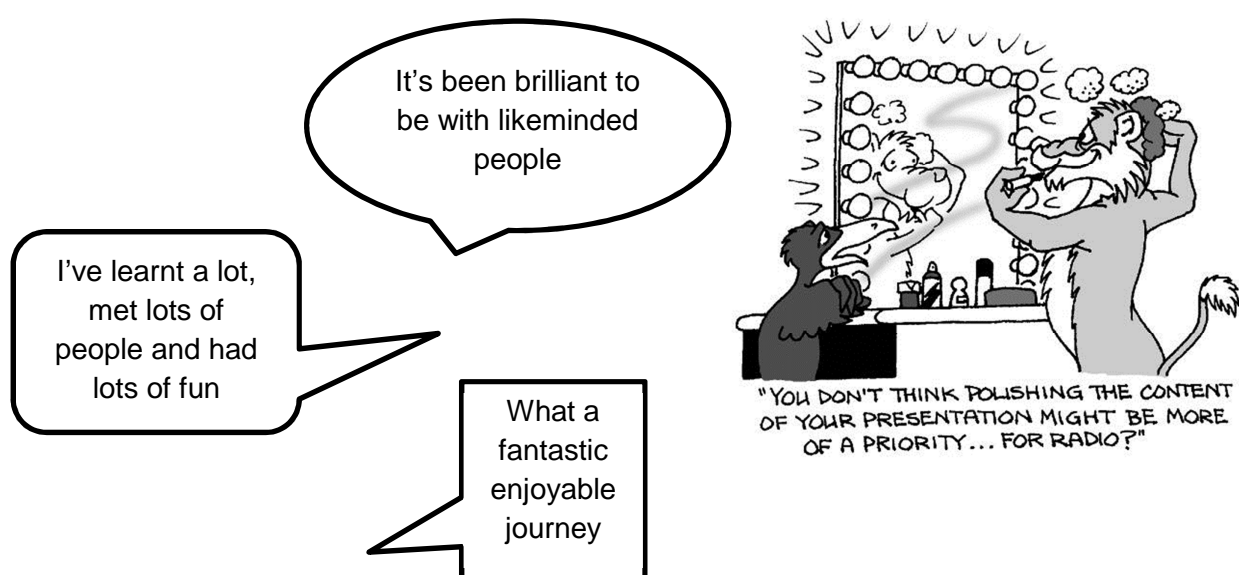
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Getting started

Young People Friendly Neighbourhoods (YPFN) is a partnership programme across England between residents, Groundwork, Sanctuary and other social housing providers.

YPFN looks to build local partnerships to support sustainable youth provision run with the ownership and involvement of the community and with the active participation of young people in decision making.

Community Activism helps those of us involved in our neighbourhoods to think about the part we play and the values, knowledge and skills to help us work well together and make change happen where we live.

The journey has five suggested places to visit, but lots of opportunity to change the itinerary, do more in some areas and less in others or go to other places not mentioned in this short resource guide.

The journey

1. We start by **getting to know each other and representing others**.
2. Venturing out, we look around and **get to know our community**.
3. Landing in new territory, we **get ready for action**.
4. We then branch out a bit further, discovering new knowledge and skills as we explore how to help make change happen and **campaign for change**.
5. And all good journeys need a chance to look back, share our experiences, **find out what's changed** and what we plan to do next.

Travel tips

Many of the activities in *Community Activism* are based on *Act by Right*, free on-line at <http://www.actbyright.org.uk/>. *Community Activism* has enough in it for a day or two day event, but is designed so you can use small bits when you need. The activities are designed planned groups of about 15 across a wide age range; always check language and adapt for the age and experience of the group.

Here are some more travel tips we developed with Woodcraft Folk, which you can find at <http://wcf.practicalparticipation.co.uk/>.

What's needed to get started?

The most important resource you have is yourselves as a group. Here are some other important resources to think about as you start off.

- **Support:** is there someone helping and encouraging you on this journey? It could be really important to have this support or at least know who to turn to at particular times for ideas and advice.
- **Time:** obvious, but you need an agreed meeting time that most or all can make, regular enough to keep the momentum up.
- **Venue:** a good venue will be comfortable for you to work in, accessible, either free or not too expensive and welcoming but also give you space

and privacy and ideally have some storage space you can use between meetings. Access to an outside space as well will be ideal.

- **Refreshments:** make sure you have some light refreshments to perhaps start and / or finish your meetings. Energy levels can dip during a session, so fuelling up during a break can help as well.
- **Money:** nothing in programme costs much, but the group may want to have a small budget to be able to pay for some of the things above and to feel you are taking responsibility for these practical matters as well.

What do we need to run the sessions?

You might not need all of these things at once, but it is probably a good idea to create a toolkit at the start so that you have everything you might want from the beginning. Here is what you may need:

Paper and activity sheets, flipchart and pens, felt tips, Blu-Tack, sticky tape, post-its, glue, roll of paper, such as wallpaper lining, string or wool, soft ball, local map, local newsletters and newspapers, a big piece of light ripstop nylon, sprayed on one side with spray-mount glue (If you tape this to the wall, you can display work done on the sticky side.)

It would also be useful for some activities to have access to a photocopier, Polaroid or digital camera, tape recorder, a computer and the Internet.

What do facilitators need to do?

Good preparation is important, including knowing group members and planning each session. Make sure you have enough copies of any worksheets for everyone, flipcharts are prepared and you have all materials needed. Adding your own touch will bring sessions alive. You can take it in turns to prepare and lead on particular activities. This will add to the group's confidence and skills. You will need flexibility in your approach, supporting individuals and the whole group, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning and running things. Make sure you build in breaks and give people loads of encouragement.

How should we document our work?

It is a good idea for everyone to have a folder to keep all your work in so that you can reflect on everything that's been done at the end of each part. You will want to decide how you want to gather and record the results of your activities. Do you want a folder ready, or do you have a logbook or scrapbook? Might there be a group record as well as an individual one?

Thanks to residents and workers in the YPFN partnership Torbay for steering the development of this resource. You can see what they did in pictures and video at <http://ypfn.posterous.com/tag/Community%20activism>. Thanks too to the young people from Woodcraft Folk and from Bethlehem in Palestine whose community activism inspired many of the ideas. You can see them in action at: <http://tinyurl.com/bumhz3w>. All comments to bill@practicalparticipation.co.uk.

Bill Badham

Practical Participation

In partnership with [FPM](#), [Sanctuary Housing](#) and [Groundwork](#)

September 2012

1: Getting to know each other and representing others

Purpose

To be good at making change happen, you need to have a good understanding and appreciation of yourself as a group and of those around you. We may know each other well socially, or have strong assumptions about each other. But how well do we know each other when in a tight spot, defending something that is important to us, having awkward questions fired at us? Our first stage of the journey helps us to understand each other better and to appreciate, respect and represent other people.

1.1. Take a stand

Aim

To get a quick sense of the group and where we stand.

You need

Some space and some paper and about 30 minutes.

What to do

a) Making an imaginary line from one end to another, the group without speaking gets in order based, for example, on the first letter of their first name, age, how long they have been in the neighbourhood and so on. Now let's move on and take a stand on some important stuff.

b) Make and place 4 faces round the room (or outside):

- Very happy means totally agree
- Fairly happy means quite agree
- A bit unhappy means don't really agree
- Very grumpy means totally disagree

c) Everyone moves into the middle. For each statement made, everyone moves to one of the faces which best sums up what you think. We'll then ask people why they are standing where they are. If others are convinced by them, then move to where they are. Here are 4 suggested statements, but make up others as you wish. These are all phrased positively so you can see movement, but change these as you wish.

- Children and young people have rights just the same as everyone else.
- Things are brilliant here and couldn't be better.
- We have lots of power and influence to make things better round here.
- Without us things won't change for the better.

What do you think?

What's the overall impression the group has about children and young people's rights and about your say and influence as members of this community? Hopefully *Community Activism* will support you in your journey in being the best group possible, enjoying time together and getting the things you want done.

1.2. My passport

Aim

To get to know each other and explore the challenges of working together as a group.

You need

Large sheets of paper (A3), pens and about 30 minutes.

What to do

a) To get you started - a quick game of true or false, to check out how well we really know each other and for a bit of fun. With the group in a circle, each person thinks of three things you want to say to the whole group about yourself, two being true and one being false. Now take it in turns to make your statements about yourself. The rest of the group then call out or vote for which you think are true and which is false. Of course, the game works better if you can think of funny or surprising things and this will make it harder for the group to guess right. Even when we think we know people well, there can be a few surprises lurking in our past!

b) Now for something a bit more serious. You are going to create a passport for each other. Before you break into pairs, agree as a whole group what information you want on the passport. Make a list and then stick it up for everyone to refer to. Make sure everyone is comfortable with the list, or there is space to adjust the list to suit the individual.

The list of things for the passport might include those in the draft below. It's up to you.

My passport		
My name	My age	Where I live
How long I have lived in the area	The groups I belong to in the area	My interest and hobbies
Things I've done in the community	My special skills	My emblem or symbol (a picture that says something about me)

c) Work in pairs with someone you don't know that well. Each takes a large sheet of paper and write "passport" at the top. Draw a picture of your partner if you wish. Take it in turns to interview each other for ten minutes to create a passport for the other person, using the agreed list of areas to cover. Add the information to your partner's passport. Then come back as a whole group. Everyone now introduces his or her partner to the whole group. (If you prefer, you can of course do it on your own rather than in pairs.) Put up all the passports on a sticky wall or display area.

What do you think?

Knowing each other and listening and learning from other people inside and outside the group is crucial in helping bring about changes in things that are important to you. What have you learnt from each other and about the group? How did you feel about interviewing each other? What was it like being asked questions about yourself?

(Adapted from YouthBank UK Toolkit, 2003)

1.3. Our passport

Aim

To strengthen the group's identity.

You need

The individual passports, large sheets of paper, pens and about 20 minutes.

What to do

You may be an established group that has been working together for ages. Or you may have just come together. This activity may help you by drawing out some of your main strengths and what you want other people to know about you.

a) First, start by reminding yourselves about each other's individual passports. Are there any questions you wanted to ask each other about things you are curious or not clear about? Make sure of course that you respect people's right to privacy if they choose not to share personal information with you.

b) The task now is to create a group identity with key information you want other people to know about you. The main aim of the activity is to help you build up a picture of what you are about, not produce a glossy leaflet – though you might end up doing that later. Create a group passport and add things like a flag, a logo and a motto or slogan. After agreeing the broad ideas, you could break into smaller groups, with each taking on a different task, so more people get a chance to get involved. Some of the things you might want to depict are:

- Our name
- The age range of young people who are part of our group
- Where we are from
- What we are about
- What we do
- What we plan to do
- What we are good at.

Remember, it's the ideas that are important, rather than artistic skill.

What next?

Before you move on, look at the group passport and logo. Do you feel this represents you properly? Does anyone feel your views or ideas haven't been included? How similar or different do you think you are to other young people in the area? The group passport and logo may be something you want to come back to later, so keep the work safe. At some stage, you may want to use it to make a leaflet about the group, or come back to it and change it as new members join or the group takes a new direction.

1.4. Our best team

Aim

To help the group look at the range of skills needed to make change happen and to value the importance of everyone's contribution.

You need

Flipchart paper, pens a large version of the diagram below and about 30 minutes.

What to do

Achieving your best as a group often means using a range of skills. It means recognising and valuing the people who take a lead and those behind the scenes. This activity helps you to draw out the range of skills in your group. Some groups invest in team building by doing some crazy activity. You might want to do the same at some point as well!

a) For an entertaining warm up, get into small groups and think of the perfect team – a team based on anything you wish. Talk through and then share with each other how you would destroy it in three months! Though light-hearted, you will be able to draw out the things you need to do to look after the group's health to stop things going wrong. Things going wrong can be as much about what isn't done as well as the things that are done.

(Adapted from Leading for the Future, 2011, <http://wcf.practicalparticipation.co.uk>)

b) Either in the same groups as above, or in different groups, now form teams around real and relevant things for you as a group and choose a task for the team.

c) Now you need to make sure it is the best and strongest possible to get the task you have chosen done. List all the things you will need and all the resources and skills you will need in the team to make it the best possible. To help group these ideas, draw a body map and add to it things around the Heart, Head and Hands:

- Heart: the values and principles needed
- Head: the knowledge needed
- Hands: the skills needed

What do you think?

Looking at the list of people in the team, are some roles more important than others? Why? What are the skills they need to have? How do these skills compare to those in your group or committee? Are there any gaps you have? If so, how might you fill them?

What to do next

Are there any actions your group wants to take to strengthen itself either in who comes, your numbers or skills? If so, jot these down using the grid below, which you can draw or just use Activity sheet 1. Put what needs doing in the boxes, with specific names and dates if you can. It's worth using this to review what's happened at a later stage.

Strengthening the group				
Who	When	Now	Soon	Later
By us				
With others				
By others				

(Adapted from YouthBank UK Toolkit, 2003)

1.5 Putting the case

Aim

To strengthen the group's ability to represent other people's points of view.

You need

A list of issues identified by members of the group and about 30 minutes.

What to do

a) You are going to speak about things group members feel strongly about. Decide first whether you want this to be light-hearted, serious, or either. (We think light hearted might be best at this stage.) Each write down on a piece of card an issue or topic you are passionate about. This could be serious or light hearted, but make sure it won't cause offence to someone else. Put them face down in the middle of the group. Each now chooses a card you didn't write or draw yourself.

b) Take up to two minutes to prepare a one-minute speech supporting the issues. In planning, you might want to note three key points you want to make. Then put your case as if it was incredibly important to you, with the rest of the group being the audience.

To make the activity even more challenging, you can:

- Deliberately choose an issue you really disagree with – unless it causes you offence;
- Have the audience ask you questions at the end, or even during your talk.

What do you think?

Talk together about how it felt speaking out about something that may be important to someone else but isn't that important to you. What was it like listening to someone else putting your case?

What next?

What learning does the group want to hold onto that will help you in the future best respect and represent other people's points of view? Take a few moments to start your own list. Here are some things to get you going.

Things to remember when representing others

- 1 Show respect for the person even if I do not agree with their point of view
- 2 Prepare even harder because arguing the case won't come naturally
- 3....
- 4....
- 5...
- 6...

1.6 Remotesville - different angles

Aim

To appreciate different perspectives and responses to a particular problem.

You need

A large piece of paper, a large version of the grid below, about 45 minutes and a video camera if possible.

Imagine it is dark and you can't see a thing. Three of you are led to a different part of the same object, which you can smell, touch, but not see. You touch it and describe what you think it is. One person describes a thick swishing snake-like thing. Another a hairy and probably smelly swinging rope; yet another a never-ending solid wall. Each person is right from their perspective, but need each other to understand the whole picture: an elephant. You could come up with other ideas for this game to try out if you wish.

What to do

Decide first if you want to use a real issue locally or whether it works best to use the pretend example below. If you are drawing on a real local example, use the outline below to fill in your own details.

a) Remotesville has got a problem about its public transport. Because of a few isolated, but nasty, incidents of rowdy, intimidating and occasionally violent behaviour by a small group of young people, bus drivers are refusing to pick up any young people in the evening trying to get in or out of the only town for miles. Make a large version of the grid below. Fill it in to draw out different perspectives on how this problem might be seen and responded to. Make sure to complete all the boxes.

Getting to Remotesville by bus				
Different groups in the community				
Views on the problem	Bus drivers	adult bus users	young people causing the trouble	other young people
What's the problem				
Why does the problem exist				
How should it be solved?				

b) Remotesville Council decides to hold a public meeting about the problem. Divide into groups to take on the different roles and take five minutes to prepare what you want to say. Make sure to cover the what / why / how above. You will need to appoint a chair for the meeting to keep order. The chair will need to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak. If you have a camera, then video the session. At the end of the debate (about 20 minutes), the chair could call for a vote on each of the proposed solutions.

What do you think?

Make sure everyone gets out of role and feels comfortable. Talk about the debate and what you learnt. How easy was it to take on a role you might not agree with? Who won the vote? Why? If you used a video camera, look back over the role-play and discuss. How did you operate as a group? What are the various ways of putting your point across? Who held most power? What won the day? Was it the power of the argument or the power of the people concerned? Were those with most clout the adults in formal positions of authority? Or did others hold sway? Perhaps it was someone with a quite but authoritative personality. Some of these themes are picked up in the next unit, when you look at the wide community you are a part of.

2. Getting to know our community

Purpose

The first part of the journey helped you get to know each other better and to think about and represent other people and their needs. Now stronger as a group, it is time to draw together what you know about the local community, its strengths, needs and networks and how your group links with others. This is important to help plan how best to develop alliances and take forward your priorities for action to make change happen.

2.1. Mapping our community connections

Aim

To build up a picture of the places, people and power which make up our community.

You need

Some open space and a ball of wool or string. A big sheet of paper or sticky canvas, pens, Post-its, tape and about an hour.

What to do

a) To get started hold onto the end of the ball of string or wool and throw it to someone else with whom you have a link, saying what it is. Keep going until there is a fair old tangle. You can now work your way back, untangling the web of connections. At the end, you could go round the group, with each person mentioning something they have learnt about another person – an unexpected link for example.

b) Create a map together of as many bits of your community as you know about. Find out about aspects you may not know about through a bit of research by using the Internet or contacting other people. Add in groups, organisations and other connections you may have.

c) Start by marking the map with the Places and title of the group, activity or structure and what they do.

d) Then add People who are part of these.

e) And what Power or responsibility do they have? You could add to each group, for example, sticky dots the colours of traffic lights, marking if you think they have no say (red), some say (orange) or a lot of say (green). In thinking about power and influence, it may be helpful to think about some different things:

- Who holds the purse strings?
- Who makes the decisions?
- Who has status and influence?

What do you think?

Hopefully, your community plan is looking just a bit chaotic. Loads of information, with links across, contact details, issues. You probably have more information about the local community than is held anywhere else. Seriously. Keep it. Photograph it. Add to it. Come back to it when considering concerns you are planning to take action on. Reflect on what you have done. What have you enjoyed about the process? What has been tiresome? How have people responded to you? How have you worked together?

2.2. Community connections

Aim

To strengthen the group's connections and alliances.

You need

Your community map, a larger version of the diagram below and about 30 minutes.

What to do

Looking at your community map, how well do you know these people and organisations and what they do? What do you need from them? Who are your supporters? Who might get in your way? And who has influence either to help or hinder you? How can you make connections and strengthen alliances?

a) Choose a few of the people from your community map (or all if you have time) and write their names again on new Post-its. Take these and place each of them in one of the four sections of a copy of the grid below. Work in pairs or small groups to help the discussion.

The four positions are:

A: Lacking influence and supportive

B: Powerful and supportive

C: Lacking influence and resistant

D: Powerful and resistant

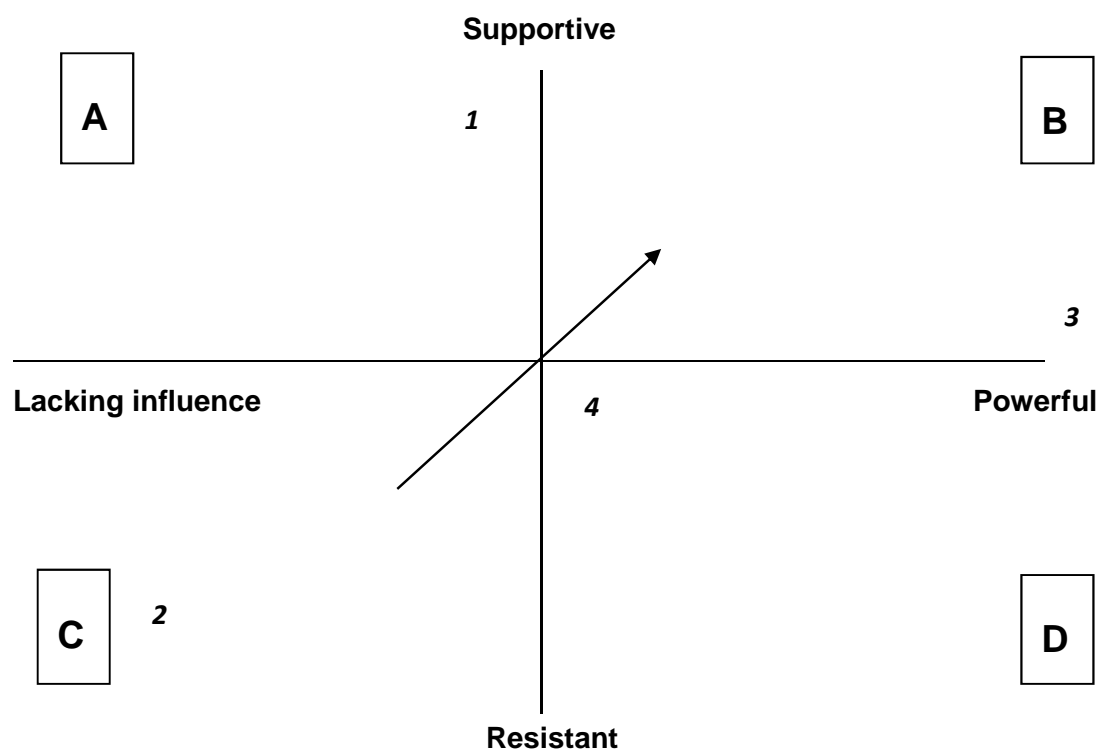
The further along one of the lines they are, the stronger their position. The four examples illustrate this:

1: Quite influential and very supportive

2: Very influential and very resistant

3: Very powerful and a bit supportive

4: A bit powerful and a bit supportive



b) Having plotted the range of organisations and groups on your chart, talk over these questions and issues.

- What does the chart look like?
- Are there enough people and groups who back you or is there a lot of resistance?
- If the likely resistance is from very powerful people, what can you do to change the balance of power? Find out why they are resistant. Is there anything they should know or you could tell them that might make them think differently?
- How can you get more to shift in the direction of the arrow, from corner C to corner B?
- Ask your powerful supporters to approach those who are powerful and resistant to influence them to become more supportive.
- Help those who support you but are weak to become stronger. Perhaps various groups in the area could join together to be a more powerful voice. What else could you do for each other?

c) And finally, agree who is going to do what to increase your group's community connections and wider influence. It could be a letter or email. It could be to arrange to meet them. It could be to invite them to take part in something you are doing in the community.

It might help in planning who is going to do what to use a version of the grid below that you have used before. Adjust it to suit your needs.

Strengthening the group's community connections				
Who	When	Now	Soon	Later
By us				
With others				
By others				

What do you think?

Were there any surprises for you? Did some of you place the same people in different parts of the grid? What might this say about how we see power and influence but also who might be best placed to contact them and gain their support?

3. Getting ready for action

Purpose

You have taken time to get to know who you are as a group, how to represent others and find out more about the community you are part of. We now look at decision making in the group and agree priorities for action.

3.1. Agreeing community priorities

Aim

To agree on the main issues in the community needing action and change.

You need

25 bits of card and about 30 minutes. Create a large triangle bordered with masking tape on the floor.

What to do

a) Put five of the bits of paper, card aside and write down on the rest an issue or concern you feel exists in the community; then put these face up on the floor.

b) Look at these as a group. Are there any issues or concerns that are missing? If so, add these on the spare five cards you kept aside.

d) Each person now takes a card and places it in the priority pyramid, created with masking tape on the floor. One at the top; two on the next layer; three on the next and so on. Talk, share and agree to move them around to get the maximum agreement possible in the group.

What do you think?

Record the priorities on a flip chart by writing them down or taking a photo. This could be a very useful list to come back to. How easy was it to agree? Does anyone feel something really important has been left out? What can you do about that? How hard is it to have to put things in a strict order? How might the priorities look if the group had different people in it? Does anyone feel your voice was not heard? Make sure everyone is OK before moving on.

3.2 Agreeing the group's priority for action

Aim

To make a realistic assessment and agree about the group's priority for action

You need

The top ten or so cards from the pyramid, some green, orange and red pens or sticky dots, a large piece of paper and about 30 minutes.

What to do

a) You have agreed the main concerns and issues in the community as a whole. But this may not be the same as what your group agrees it should take action on. First, talk about and agree on four main things (or so) you need to consider when agreeing your priority for action. A group of young people in Palestine for example, came up with these:

- Can we really change it?
- How long will it take?
- Do we have the resources we need? – time, people, money
- How many people will benefit?

b) Make a grid like the one below and place the top ten issues along the top and the four things to consider down the left side. Use the idea of traffic lights to mark each concern against the things to consider: green for yes; orange for ok; red for risky or no.

c) Take a look all together at the completed grid. Which has most greens? This is probably the one the group is beginning to decide upon as its priority for action. But take a further moment to think it through. Do you need more information before deciding? Are there other members of the group to consult?

Things to consider	The community's top ten concerns in order of priority form left to right								

What do you think?

Did you find that your list of community priorities is not the same as your list of priorities for action as a group? Why is this? It may be because there are some things that the group can take on realistically and help make change happen, while there may be other community priorities which feel beyond the reach of the group to tackle – at least at this stage. But as the group grows in confidence and skill – well, who know!

3.3 Planning the action

Aim

To develop an action plan to explore the issues and develop an effective campaign to help make change happen.

You need

Some big versions of the diagrams below, some pens and about an hour.

What next

If your group or committee wants to spend some more time looking at it priorities for action and developing fuller plans, then there are loads of other resources you can find in Unit 3 of Act by Right, which is on line at <http://www.actbyright.org.uk/>. Look out especially for the onion, forcefield, action planning matrix and resourcing the plan tools.

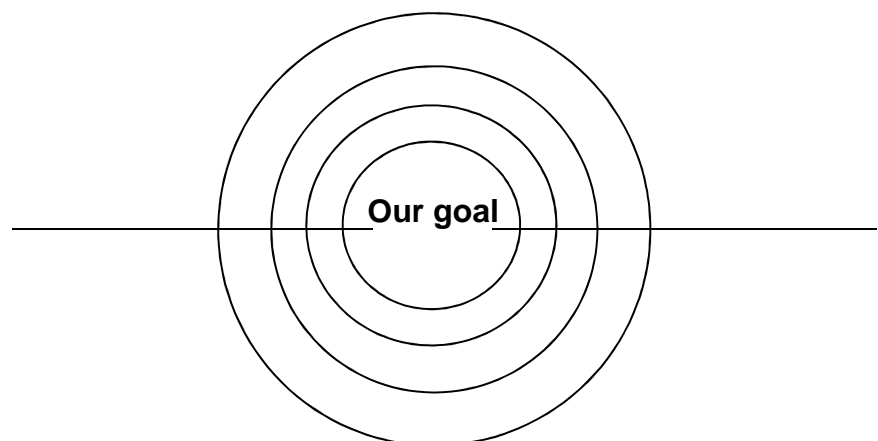
a) The onion helps you peel back layers of a problem to increase the group's understanding of why it exists so as to improve the quality of planning. Make a huge picture of an onion with loads of rings or layers. Label your onion on the outside with the key concern you want to do something about as a group from the last activity. Now ask why does this problem exist and write your thoughts on the outer layer of the onion. Then ask why again and so on. Gradually you will be peeling back the layers of the problem. And onions make your eyes water when you peel them. It might sting a bit. But it's worth it to get to the heart of the problem.

b) The Forcefield helps you anticipate forces which may help and hinder the group in reaching its goal. Draw the outline below on a large piece of paper. Put the name of the priority for action in the centre of the Forcefield. Above the line, add in the forces that may help you toward achieving it. Below the line add in the forces that may get in your way. The closer to the centre the stronger the force is. The further out the less powerful its impact is likely to be on your plans. How can you make the most of those above and reduce the impact of those below the line? Keep the chart to come back to so you can review progress.

Forcefield

+ Forces that help

- Forces that hinder



c) The matrix action planning sheet helps develop a detailed action plan for your priority for change. Create a large version of the grid below. Add your agreed priority for action at the top and complete the grid, being as specific as you can. You may want to do this as a whole group, or in smaller groups which then come back and share ideas.

Priority for action:			
Actions:	Now	Soon	Later
By members of the group on our own			
With others people from outside the group			
By other people not in the group			

d) Finally, **Resourcing the plan** helps to work out what resources are needed and where to get them to put the plan into action. Start by a quick word storm of the sorts of support and resources that might be needed and then make a large version of the grid below and use it to identify and agree the resources of time, money, people and so on you need to put your plan into action. Don't forget to draw on your earlier thinking in activity 2.3 to make the most of your community connections.

Resources	What / who have we got?	What / who do we need?	How are we going to get it / them?	What are the risks?
People				
Equipment				
Money				

What do you think?

Was doing all that thinking and planning really boring and feel like a waste of time? Or did it feel sensible to devote a bit of time early on to work through together what your concerns are, why they exist, who might help or hinder you, what steps to take next and what resources you may need to help progress? Significant change for the better in our neighbourhoods and communities rarely happens overnight and a group taking on a campaign wise to some of the struggles ahead may be better equipped to deal with difficulties and be more likely to stick together to overcome them and be successful.

What next

Ideas and plans change and evolve. Things happen and, like the tree, the strength of the team is in its flexibility and willingness to bend and adapt. So keep your planning fresh, reviewing and revisiting and revitalising it as things emerge and develop.

4: Campaigning for change

Purpose

You already know each other well and can speak up for each other. You know your strengths and how to be the best team possible. You know how you link with other groups and organisations in and around the community. You know your priorities for action and have a plan. What are the approaches you can use to get your message across effectively to have the best chance possible of getting what you want done? Your methods will depend on what you want to achieve, who you need to influence and the resources you have available. But here are some basic building blocks, which can be adapted or arranged in different ways depending on your needs and circumstance. The focus here is on creating a clear message, getting the message across and keeping the campaign alive. It's based around one big activity, leading to an event or presentation.

4.1. Getting our message across

Aim

To explore and practise using a wide range of approaches to help make change happen.

You need

Loads of paper and pens and possibly other kit such as laptops depending on the approaches you use in your campaign. You'll need about an hour and 30 minutes.

What to do

a) First start by listing as big a range of approaches or techniques to help make change happen. Be as far out as you like. Here are some of the more obvious ones.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poster• Leaflet• Press release• Petition• Banners for a street protest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Street protest• Performance• Speech, perhaps using pictures as well• Social media, like Twitter, Blogs, Facebook
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b) Form small groups, based on who is interested in using what method. Now, based on your agreed call for action, develop the relevant materials.

c) Come back together and set the space up as if it were for a big community meeting. Perhaps invite others. Agree a running order. You probably want to start with the things that get across the main message most simply, like the poster and banners and then build your presentation using the other techniques.

d) To really put you to the test, ask for questions and debate either at the end or even after each section. Practise summarising your main points in 15 seconds – seriously, that's often as much time as you'll get in a meeting or with the media.

What next

That was hopefully high energy and entertaining. Stop for a few moments and reflect on learning and how to apply it for real in what you are looking to achieve. What did you like? What was more of a struggle? What did you learn? This might also be a good moment to go back to your planning tools and review them in the light of what you have just done. There's loads more resources and ideas to draw on in the hard copy or on-line version of Act by Right in Unit 4.

5: Finding out what's changed

Purpose

If you are serious about achieving change on things that matter to you, you need to check out what difference you have actually made. What's changed and what's your evidence for this? This is what evaluation is. It sounds like a big word. But we all evaluate most of the time; we just don't think of it in that way. "That was nice." "Don't go, there, they are really horrible." "I'd buy that one if I were you." These are all evaluations – of a sort. But sometimes, you need to dig deeper than just friendly advice based on your own experience. The aim here is to understanding a bit more about evaluation and how to do it well so you can add weight behind your campaigns to make change happen.

5.1. Take a stand – again!

Aim

To explore different opinions and reach some agreement on what the group means by evaluation.

You need

The same 4 faces used at the beginning, some space and about 30 minutes.

What to do

a) To start thinking about evaluation, get into pairs and spend 3 minutes each asking the other person about something they have seen, read, done or bought recently. What happened? What did you like? What didn't you like? A simple evaluation completed!

b) Place the 4 faces round the space you are using: very happy, a bit happy, not happy and very unhappy. Create some statements about evaluation yourselves, or use the ones below – or a bit of both of course. (The statements need to help discussion, not cause conflict.) Reads some of the statements out. After each statement, each person moves to the face that best reflects what they feel about it. If someone totally agrees with a statement, move next to the very smiley face. If you slightly agree, then move next to the slightly happy face. And so on. Take soundings from people about why they are standing where they are. Encourage people to change positions if they've been won over.

4 faces statements to read out. Add your own if you wish.

- The purpose of evaluation is to uncover the truth
- Evaluation is a waste of time and money
- Evaluation tells us how to do something better
- Evaluation is boring, irrelevant and makes no difference to our lives
- Everyone's views are equally valid in an evaluation
- People should change what they do in line with evaluation findings.

What do you think?

Flip chart some key thoughts about evaluation that come out of the exercise. What's its purpose? How is it relevant to you as a group or committee? How do you know whether what you do makes any difference to group members and to others not in the group?

5.2. Chicken nuggets: thinking about how we evaluate

Aim

To draw out the skills needed to do evaluation and gain evidence – and to have a laugh!

You need

The script (at the back), at least two willing volunteers, a clipboard and perhaps some dressing up gear such as silly glasses or a funny hat and about 30 minutes.

What to do

a) The two volunteers agree roles and look over the script. I = interviewer; R = Respondent. Make sure all the words make sense to you. If they don't, check them out and change them before you start. There is nothing worse than getting stuck half way through. You can have some fun adding your own words in as well and you can always add in other characters. Perhaps keep it simple the first time though! Now act it out. Put some energy into it!

Chicken nuggets

I: May I ask you a few questions?

R: What about?

I: We are trying to evaluate our promotion of a certain product in the supermarket; it is just some questions about the promotion.

R: OK

I: Have you noticed the recent fantastic advertising campaign for chicken nuggets?

R: I can't say that I have.

I: How many times a month do you buy chicken nuggets? Three times, five times, ten times or more?

R: Never.

I: What influences you to buy chicken nuggets? Is it A - cost, B - adverting, C - where they are placed in the freezer cabinet?

R: None of these things. Look all my family are vegetarians and we never eat chicken so all this is irrelevant.

R: I don't have a box to put that information in. And if I don't finish the questionnaire, I don't get paid, so would you mind finishing please?

b) Now turn the role-play into a game show. Someone needs to act as the host and keep the score – not that that matters desperately! Divide the whole group into two teams, each choosing a, preferably ridiculous, team noise. Every time one team thinks the evaluator has made a mistake (there are loads right from the start), interrupt with the team noise, say what it is and suggest improvements. A box of chocolates for the winning team goes down well (always shared amongst everybody of course).

What do you think?

The role-play above was developed by Jennie Fleming, who is herself an evaluator, after a real encounter with a market researcher. What do you think of the way the evaluator behaved? What do you think of the questions? How do you think the shopper felt when being questioned? How do you think the interviewer felt? What could help make this evaluation work better for both people? Record some of the main points from the group discussion on flipchart as this will help draw out some serious points about how you choose to ask questions, find out stuff and evaluate the impact of what you do.

5.3. Some approaches to find out what's changed

Aim

To look at a wide range of ways to collect information and decide the most suitable for the group when evaluating what it does and what it has achieved.

You need

Flipchart paper and pens, lots of copies of the blank methods cards at the back (preferably photocopied onto light card) and about 45 minutes.

What to do

a) Getting back to the chicken nuggets, if you were in charge of finding out from a range of people what they thought of chicken nuggets, what creative ways might you come up with? List every possible way of collecting information you can think of. These might include the Internet, people's personal stories, diaries, video, photos, art, or drama.

b) Break into small groups. Divide the list of methods equally. Create and fill in the cards from Activity sheet 5 for each method. Or your small group might prefer to first work on flipchart, making it easier to see and contribute, before adding the information to the cards. Here is an example of one of the completed cards.

Information collection method: telephone interview	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• confidence not having to see the person face to face• quick• can be very focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• unable to see the person• person not expecting our call and may not be sure who we are• hard to get detail and feelings
When might it be particularly good to use?	To get to lots of people. Get specific information without travelling.

(Adapted from Nottingham Social Action Research Project, Fleming and Boeck, 2001)

What do you think?

Share what you have done as a whole group. You now have a pack of methods, their strengths and weaknesses and when you think they might be most useful. Gathering proof is usually visual, verbal or written. Have you got a good spread of methods covering these? If not, have a think and fill the gaps.

What next?

Make sure to keep the cards. Before finishing this last stage of the journey, there are a couple of final things to do. First, thinking about evaluation, look at your plan of action again. Anything to add? Update the plan as you need, being clear about who is going to do what by when and for what purpose.

5.4. So how was the journey? Looking back and planning ahead

Draw the last Activity sheet 6 on a large piece of paper and stick it up for everyone to complete. Each person makes 4 dots, one in each section, showing their response to the 4 questions: 1. How enjoyable and interesting was *Community Activism*? 2. How well did everyone work together? 3. How useful was it for you personally? 4. How useful was it for the group? The nearer the centre the better it was for you. But before you go – what next for the group? What are your thoughts and plans about moving forward, applying the skills you have gained, building a community campaign? Make sure to put that community activism into action! **Thank you.**

Activity 5.2 Evaluating chicken nuggets

Chicken nuggets: an evaluation of customer satisfaction

I: May I ask you a few questions?

R: What about?

I: We are trying to evaluate our promotion of a certain product in the supermarket; it is just some questions about the promotion.

R: OK

I: Have you noticed the recent fantastic advertising campaign for chicken nuggets?

R: I can't say that I have.

I: How many times a month do you buy chicken nuggets? Three times, five times, ten times or more?

R: Never.

I: What influences you to buy chicken nuggets? Is it A - cost, B - adverting, C - where they are placed in the freezer cabinet?

R: None of these things. Look all my family are vegetarians and we never eat chicken so all this is irrelevant.

I: I don't have a box to put that information in. And if I don't finish the questionnaire, I don't get paid, so would you mind finishing please?

Activity 5.3 Evaluation methods

Methods card

Information collection method:	
Advantages	Disadvantages
When might it be particularly good to use?	

Information collection method:	
Advantages	Disadvantages
When might it be particularly good to use?	

Activity 5.4. Bullseye:
Evaluating *Community Activism*

How enjoyable and
interesting was
Community Activism?

How well did we work
together as a group?

