Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an approach for creating a vision and planning to achieve it. AI does this through understanding and appreciating the past, as a basis for imagining the future.

**Description:** AI builds a vision for the future using questions to focus people’s attention on success. Questions often revolve around what people enjoy about an area, their aspirations for the future, and their feelings about their communities. The questions are designed to encourage people to tell stories from their own experience of what works. By seeing what works and exploring why, it is possible to imagine and construct further success, ensuring that a vision of the future is created with a firm basis in reality.

**Origin:** Developed by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastra at Case Western University in the US. They wanted to challenge the problem-solving approach to the management of change, by showing that organisations are not machines to be fixed but organisms to be appreciated.

**Used for:** Creating energy by identifying and building on what works and involving lots of people through outreach by the core group.

**Who participates?** AI can work in various ways. In the UK it usually consists of a small core group to develop and test appreciative questions. They then put the questions to family, friends and sometimes strangers.

**Cost:** Usually between £5,000 and £20,000.

**Time requirements:** The appreciative questions are developed, tested and analysed in two to four half- or full-day workshops. The results are then presented to the wider community in a larger event. Analysing the replies to all the questions can be time-consuming. AI works best when it is run as a long term process of change.

**When should you use?**
- When you want to energise a depressed community or organisation;
- When you want to build a vision but do not want it seen as ‘pie in the sky’.

**When should you not use?**
- When it is important to involve all key stakeholders;
- If you cannot recruit a good core group;
- When there is no interest in sharing responsibility and decision-making.

**Can it be used to make decisions?** Yes

**Strengths:**
- Community involvement;
- Easy to include the people who normally don’t take part;
- It builds on what has worked in the past;
- Vision;
- Partnership working. AI facilitates the development of partnerships by helping partners to identify the values and behaviour they want the partnership to have.

**Weaknesses:**
- AI is a philosophy first and a method second, so it is fairly loose;
- Some people view the lack of direct attention to problems as a weakness;
- AI pays little attention to who should be involved.

**Can deliver:**
- Energy;
- Shared vision.

**Won’t deliver:**
- Action, unless an action planning element is added on.

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**Notes:**
- Works with any number
- Usually selected by the core group which puts together the appreciation questions.
AI Example: Ryedale Community Plan

The Local Authority in Ryedale, North Yorkshire wanted to base their decisions on a vision for the future that was shared with the community. In September 2002 a core group was set up with the help of the New Economics Foundation. A dozen local activists and council officers were trained in using appreciative questions to identify people’s important values, aspirations and hopes for the future. The questions were carefully worded so that solutions were emphasised and not just problems.

These questions were then used in conversations, meetings, classrooms and even on a specially set up phone-in line. Following this, the core group read four hundred and thirty scripts and drew out the recurring themes and issues. This process culminated in the drafting of vision statements around six identified themes. As far as possible, these propositions incorporated the exact words of the people who had taken part.

Next, the vision statements were taken back to those who had been involved in the process, giving them the opportunity to make changes before the vision became a part of the community plan. The final output was an agreed vision of Ryedale’s Community Plan.

Online resources
www.appreciativeinquiry.com
Case Western Reserve University where AI was first developed

Publications
Citizens’ Juries consist of a small panel of non-specialists, modelled to resemble a criminal jury, who carefully examine an issue of public significance and deliver a “verdict”.

**Description:** A Citizens’ Jury is an independent forum for members of the public to examine and discuss an important issue of public policy. It is deliberative in the sense that the Jury receives information about the issues in question. This information includes a full range of opinions, often in the form of worked up options, on what should be done about the issue. Much of this information is presented through witness presentations followed by question and answer sessions. Juries are not designed to create a consensus amongst the jurors, but there does tend to be a momentum towards consensus. In a four-day process, day one is largely about bringing jurors up to speed on the issue. Days two and three tend to focus on witness presentations about different ways of dealing with the issue. Most of the fourth day is spent by the Jury developing its recommendations.

**Origin:** Social Research – the model used in the UK is a mixture of the US Citizens’ Jury developed by the Jefferson Center, and the German Pannungszelle (planning cell) developed by the University of Wuppertal.

**Used for:** Live public policy issues where opinion is sharply divided and policy makers cannot decide how to proceed. This deliberative model creates an informed public opinion about what they feel policy makers should do. Although originally designed for local communities to tackle issues of local concern, Juries are now starting to be used to look at national issues. Juries are decision-making rather than decision-making tools. They are about enhancing representative democracy, not direct democracy.

**Who participates?** Most Juries include a ‘best fit’ (demographic) sample of 12 to 16 members of the public. They are brought together to examine both written and verbal evidence about different perspectives on the issue they are deliberating on.

**Cost:** A Citizens’ Jury usually costs between £20,000 and £40,000. The difference in the costing usually relates to how long the process is designed to last and the exact nature of the methodology. The original type of Jury introduced into the UK by IPPR and the Kings Fund tends to last for four days and involves much preparation time. This version would be at the higher end of the costing.

**Time requirements:** The set up time about how to proceed on an issue; Juries also request an additional witness

**When should you use?** — When you have a ‘live’ contentious issue where the way forward has not been decided;
— Juries usually work best where feasible policy options have been developed by policy makers about how to respond to a problem.

**When should you not use?** — When you have already decided how to proceed on an issue;
— When the issue is not of significant interest to the public;
— When you seek consensus.

**Can it be used to make decisions?** No

**Strengths:** — Gives an informed public opinion about how a difficult issue should be tackled;
— Enables decision-makers to understand what informed members of the public might regard as realistic solutions;
— The results can also be used to generate wider public debate about the issues.

**Weaknesses:** — Only involves a very small number of people, which means that the wider public may still hold a less informed view;
— A challenge for policy makers is how to reconcile these two different public voices to create wider public ownership of the jurors’ recommendations;
— It can also be difficult for policy makers to decide how to proceed if they reject the Jury’s recommendations.

**Can deliver:** — Decision-making that better reflects the public’s views;
— A high profile example of public engagement.

**Won’t deliver:** — Wider democratic engagement and empowerment.

**Example: DTI Citizens’ Jury 2004**

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Minister for Women, Patricia Hewitt, wanted to commission a Citizens’ Jury to help to develop policies that will support people juggling family and work commitments. The Office of Public Management worked with the Department of Trade and Industry to make it happen.

Sixteen jurors, broadly representative of the wider population, were recruited. Witnesses came from ten organisations, including the Confederation of British Industry, Boots plc and the Equal Opportunities Commission. During the four-day jury, the jurors also requested an additional witness from Sure Start to provide information on the government’s childcare agenda.

The DTI asked some jurors to keep a diary of their experience and also videotaped the process – to be able to share the process with other colleagues. The diaries also showed how the mindset of the juries shifted during the four days and provided a very personal insight into the issues being explored. For example, one juror wrote about the difficulty of juggling her own responsibilities as a mother so that she could attend the jury each day.

Juries had some scepticism about whether the jury would influence Government policy. However, its influence is already evident in elements of the Chancellor’s pre-budget speech at the end of 2004 – the proposed increase in maternity pay is in keeping with the thrust of the jurors’ recommendations. All the jurors were enthusiastic about the process and at the end said they would be willing to be contacted by the DTI in the future to help develop policy further.
A Citizens’ Panel is a large, demographically representative group of citizens’ used to assess public preferences and opinions.

**Description:** Citizens’ panels are made up of a representative sample of a local population and are used by statutory agencies, especially local authorities, to identify local issues and consult service users and non-users. Potential participants are generally recruited through random sampling of the electoral roll or door-to-door recruitment. They are then selected so that membership is made up of a representative profile of the local population in terms of age and gender.

Once they agree to participate, panel members, or sections of it, participate in surveys at intervals over the course of their membership and, where appropriate, in further in-depth research such as Focus Groups. The types of questions to ask the Panel requires careful thought to ensure that they are relevant to the participants. Panel members need to be clear about their role on the panel. Make sure you tell them what is expected of them from the start, as some people think a ‘panel’ will involve face-to-face discussions, while in fact questionnaires or telephone polling are the most common panel techniques. Members also need to be told how frequently they will be consulted, how long they will be on the panel etc.

**Origin:** Citizens’ Panels have evolved from Opinion Polls and Market Research.

**Used for:** Panels can be used to assess service needs, identify local issues and determine the appropriateness of service developments. Large panels can also be used to target specific groups for their views on issues. Citizens’ Panels measure the views of a large body of people over a period of time, thereby assessing the impact of developments.

**Who participates?** Citizens’ Panels can range in size from a few hundred to several thousand people. With more than 1,000 participants it is often possible to identify sub groups of panel members who can be surveyed about issues specific to their needs or interests. The Panel needs to be systematically renewed to make sure it is still representative of the population in general. Panel members need to be recruited in a way which ensures that they are representative of the population as a whole.

**Cost:** Running a Panel can cost anything from £5,000 a year to well over £20,000. Costs vary depending on the size of the Panel, the methods in which the members are consulted and the frequency of consultation. If all research is telephone based and if the Panel is shared with other partner organisations the costs can be cut. Be wary when sharing the Panel with other organisations through, as this limits your own use. There are considerable costs and work involved in running and maintaining the panels, requiring significant resources in terms of staff time, skills and money. In some cases incentives are given to encourage participation in a Panel; for example a prize draw. In the long run, it should work out cheaper than regular one-off surveys.

**Time requirements:** Staff time will be needed to keep the panel database up to date, recruit new participants, run and analyse the consultations. Feedback on the outcome of consultation needs to be disseminated among the participants, often through a newsletter.

**Where on the spectrum of participation the method works best**

- Direct decision making
- Giving/gathering Information
- Consultation

**When should you use?**

- To monitor public opinion on key issues;
- As a source for participants for more in-depth processes, like focus groups;
- Engaging the public with the development of new policy areas.

**When should you not use?**

- Citizens’ Panels should not be the only form of consultation.

**Can it be used to make decisions?** No

**Strengths:**

- Can be used by a partnership of agencies;
- Can target specific groups if large enough;
- Allows surveys or other research to be done at short notice (once the panel is established);
- In larger panels members are representative of the population;
- Can track changes in views over time;
- The cost of a panel, once established and used several times, is less than a large-scale one-off survey.

**Weaknesses:**

- Needs considerable staff support to establish and maintain;
- Non-English speakers could be excluded;
- Reflects your agenda rather than the community’s;
- The database of names and addresses requires constant updating;
Younger members tend to drop out, so the panel gradually gets older.

**Can deliver:**
- Picture of public opinion over time.

**Won’t deliver:**
- In-depth understanding of the public’s views;
- Empowered participants;
- Consensus/Shared Vision;
- Improved relationships.

Example: *Bristol Citizens’ Panel*

The Bristol Citizens’ Panel was established to keep the council informed about public opinion, and is promoted as ‘Bristol’s biggest think-tank’.

A random sample and interviews were used in late 1998 to recruit 2,200 panelists that mirrored the population of the city as a whole. Since then, the Citizens’ Panel has been asked more than six hundred questions, ranging from issues like recycling to whether or not Bristol should have a directly elected Mayor. Over the years new panelists have been recruited to replace inactive panel members. Each year the Panel receives up to four questionnaires, which can either be completed on paper or electronically on the council website.

The results from the Citizens’ Panel are regularly fed into decision-making, and the panel has also featured in the local and national media. Panel members are kept informed of the results of the surveys via the panel newsletter “Feedback” and results often appear in the local media and are all available on the council website.
Community Empowerment Networks are structures set up by the government to enable civil society to play an equal role with the public and private sectors in local strategic partnerships. A Community Empowerment Network is not a method per se, it is a government initiative, but we have included it here because it demonstrates a way of dealing with the issues surrounding community capacity building and similar networks could be created.

**Description:** Local Strategic Partnerships have been set up across England to co-ordinate planning and spending on mainstream services. They are made up of a mix of public, private and voluntary sector representatives. However, of the three sectors, the voluntary sector is the least organised and lacks clear structures through which to elect accountable representatives.

Community Empowerment Networks have been set up by the Government to create a structure for the community and voluntary sector to interact with the Local Strategic Partnerships. The networks bring together both large 'professional' voluntary agencies and small community or residents' groups. The responsibilities and activities of the networks include electing community and voluntary sector members to sit on Local Strategic Partnerships and organise training and information. This requires a number of staff members. Setting up Community Empowerment Networks is funded through the Community Empowerment Fund.

**Time requirements:** The Community Empowerment Networks are meant to be permanent features, creating a central institution for the voluntary sector in an area with which the authorities can interact.

When should you use it?
— Community Empowerment Networks are now being implemented in areas targeted by Neighbourhood Renewal across the country. Similar structures may be useful elsewhere, where the voluntary sector is fragmented and you want to ensure that it is able to take part effectively in decision-making or improve information flows either within the sector or externally.

When should you not use?
— This and other similar initiatives need to be long-term in order for voluntary organisations to invest time and effort in them;
— Setting up a structure without sufficient funding for the future would be demoralising.

Can it be used to make decisions?
— Yes

Strengths:
— Strengthens the voice of the local voluntary and community sector.

Weaknesses:
— Relatively new structure;
— Not yet clear if it will gain credibility among voluntary sector actors;
— The voluntary sector is not always able to handle the responsibilities that come with the network and support will be needed in the areas where this is the case.

Can deliver:
— Voice for the voluntary sector;
— Training and capacity building;
— Improved relationships;
— Potentially shared vision.

Won’t deliver:
— Community Empowerment Networks function as a catalyst for other forms of participation and regeneration, it will not deliver on its own.

**Origin:** Government initiative. Set up to make the voluntary sector a more able participant in the Local Strategic Partnerships and oversee the administration of the Community Empowerment Fund in the local area.

**Used for:** Ensuring effective communication with local people and groups about Neighbourhood Renewal issues in their areas, helping voluntary, community, and residents’ groups get involved as equal and full partners in Local Strategic Partnerships and assisting voluntary sector with advice on funding and other issues.

Who participates? Community Empowerment Networks are open to community and voluntary sector groups, and residents, in an area. Usually membership is free and the network is governed by a board elected by the members.

**Cost:** Community Empowerment Networks oversee the administration of the Community Empowerment Fund, organise elections to the Local Strategic Partnership, and organise training and information. This requires a number of staff members. Setting up Community Empowerment Networks is funded through the Community Empowerment Fund.

### Types of Outcomes
- **Participants**
  - Empowered
  - New Ideas
- **Relationships**
  - Improved
  - Shared Vision
- **Opinions**
  - Map of Informed
  - Map of Existing

### Resources: Budget
- **£10,000**
- **£20,000**
- **£30,000**
- **£40,000+**

### Building/Dialogue
- **One day event**
- **2-4 day event**
- **Series of events running over several weeks/months**
- **Series of events running over a 3 year period**

### Where on the Spectrum of Participation the Method Works Best
- **Giving/gathering**
- **Consultation**
- **Direct decision making**

### Notes
- Depending on the scale of the process, in small processes or when it is low conflict, self-selection can sometimes be acceptable. Most Dialogues are run with stakeholder representatives who report back/feed back to their relevant constituency.
- Dialogue is designed around the needs of the situation. This can include some or all of the above.
An approach that is good for conflict resolution, building and improving relationships between diverse groups and involving normally excluded groups in decision-making.

Description: Dialogue incorporates a range of approaches designed to help participants identify common ground and mutually beneficial solutions to a problem. The process involves stakeholders in defining the problem, devising the methods, creating the solutions. Dialogue is mainly conducted through workshops and similar meetings. The minimum aim is to find a mutually acceptable compromise, but ideally the process seeks to build on common ground and reach a proactive consensus. Every Dialogue process is tailor-made to suit the situation and the people involved.

Origin: Evolved from conflict resolution and mediation approaches in the US and UK. Commonly used in environmental decision-making, with growing use in other areas.

Used for: Conflict resolution or conflict avoidance in decision-making. Good in areas likely to be regarded as controversial or where the facts are contested.

Who participates? As far as possible Dialogue involves all stakeholders, defined as people who have a concern about the outcome. This includes decision-makers, those directly affected by decisions, and those who could support or obstruct the implementation of decisions. Dialogue is mainly conducted through workshops and involving diverse groups and where it remains impossible.

Can it be used to make decisions? Yes

Strengths:
— Deals well with contention and can really help with issues of low trust;
— Is an approach that hands the control of the process over to the participants themselves;
— Is highly flexible and can be applied at all levels of government.

Weaknesses:
— Extremely reliant on the skills of a facilitator or mediator, which can make it expensive;
— May be time consuming;
— The need to ensure participation by all significant stakeholders can slow progress or even render it impossible;
— Ensuring communication between the stakeholder representatives and their constituencies is challenging.

Some feel that when Dialogue is explicit in its quest for consensus it may not value organisational and individual positions. The final outputs may only highlight areas of agreement while ignoring other parts of the picture. This is particularly problematic for campaigning organisations for which positions are important.

Can deliver:
— Improved relationships between participants;
— Consensus/shared vision;
— Increased legitimacy for decisions;
— Creative new solutions.

Won’t deliver:
— Information representative of society as a whole;
— Quick results;
— Clearly identified positions.

Example: BNFL National Stakeholder Dialogue

The BNFL Dialogue (1998-2005) was Europe’s largest stakeholder engagement process around nuclear issues to date. It was funded by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd and was managed by The Environment Council. The Dialogue had as its remit “to inform BNFL’s decision-making process about the improvement of their environmental performance in the context of their overall development”. It was open to national and regional organisations as well as to specialist concerns, ensuring that a full range of views was heard.

The first stage in 1998 was spent building trust between the different stakeholder groups, many of whom had never spoken to each other. The initial meeting was attended by over 100 stakeholders who identified and prioritised a list of issues and concerns to be addressed in further meetings. The diversity and complexity of the issues made it necessary to set up a number of working groups, each to deal with a specific problem. Through the different working groups and their reports the dialogue has been able to review and make recommendations on many different aspects of the nuclear industry, from the disposal of spent plutonium to the socio-economic effects of plant closures.

While some stakeholders have dropped out, the vast majority have stayed on and reaffirmed their commitment to the process. The BNFL dialogue has succeeded in building better relationships between key stakeholders and, while the issue of nuclear energy is still very contentious, the dialogue has established where there is room for negotiation between groups and where it remains impossible.
A consensus conference consists of a panel of ordinary citizens who question expert witnesses on a particular topic. Their recommendations are then circulated.

**Description:** At a Consensus Conference a panel of citizens explores a topic through questioning expert witnesses. The panel is given time to prepare before the actual conference in order to fulfill their role as informed citizens. Panel members receive a comprehensive information pack and attend preparatory events (usually two held at weekends). A distinctive feature is that the initiative lies with the citizens. They decide the key aspects of the debate, including the choice of questions and selection of the witnesses, and formulate their own conclusions. The press and public are able to attend the main hearing. At the end of the conference, the panel produces a report outlining conclusions and recommendations that are then circulated to key decision-makers and the media. The process is usually run by an organisation with no stake in the outcome to limit accusations of bias.

**Origin:** Social Research. The Consensus Conference is based on a model of technology assessment originating in the health care sector in the USA during the 1960s and further developed by the Danish Board of Technology.

**Used for:** A Consensus Conference is a way of incorporating the perspectives of ordinary members of society into the assessment of new scientific and technological developments. In common with Citizens’ Juries, Consensus Conferences aim to both inform and consult with the citizenry. The difference is that Consensus Conferences take place in open view of the public. This form of citizen participation is particularly appropriate for involving citizens in decision making on complex and highly technical issues otherwise requiring specialist knowledge.

**Who participates?** A citizens’ panel of between 10–20 people is selected to reflect a variety of socio-demographic criteria (note however that due to its size the panel cannot be a statistically representative sample of the population). Panel members should not have any significant prior involvement with the conference topic – they are taking part in their capacity as citizens, not as professionals or specialists.

**Cost:** A trained and independent facilitator is required during the preparatory weekends and during the conference itself. A Consensus Conference is expensive, requiring large facilities to accommodate the media and public during the event. Some claim, however, that Consensus Conferences are cost effective compared to the cost of informing the public through the media. UK examples have ranged in cost from £80,000 to £100,000.

**Time requirements:** The Consensus Conference itself usually lasts for three days; the participants also attend preparatory events. Ensuring that the relevant experts can attend as witnesses usually requires contacting them well in advance of the events.

**Can it be used to make decisions?**

- No

**Strengths:**
- Good public outreach if run well;
- Open and transparent process which encourages increased trust;
- More control over subject matter and witnesses than is common in Citizens’ Juries and Deliberative Polling.

**Weaknesses:**
- Expensive: The small sample of people might exclude minorities.

**Can deliver:**
- The views of informed citizens and their key issues of concern on a policy area;
- Useful and understandable written material suitable for public use;
- Wider and better informed public debate on an issue through the media.

**Won’t deliver:**

- Decisions;
- Detailed technical recommendations;
- Results that are representative of society as a whole.

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**Notes**

- a) This number indicates those directly involved and does not include those who may be influenced by reports about it or by its results.
- b) The costs of this method usually go well beyond this scale, sometimes amounting to £100,000.
Example: UK’s second national Consensus Conference on radioactive waste management 1999

The National Consensus Conference on Radioactive Waste Management was run by the UK Centre for Economic and Environmental Development (UKCEED), an independent sustainable development foundation. From a random sample of four thousand people a panel of 15 was selected. Care was taken so that there was a balance of men and women, educational backgrounds, and geographical spread in the panel. The Citizens’ Panel was set up to “focus on the effective and publicly acceptable long-term management of nuclear waste in the UK, both civil and military, concentrating particularly on intermediate and high level waste.”

Before the Conference the Panel was provided with balanced background information. The Panel attended two preparatory weekends. Out of a group of 80 experts who expressed an interest the panel selected 26 witnesses to testify before them.

The Consensus Conference itself was held in London in May 1999. It was a four-day event, open to a wide audience. During the first two days of the Conference heard brief witness presentations, followed by further discussion and debate between the Panel and witnesses. Members of the audience were able to submit written questions throughout these two days.

On the third day, the Panel retired behind closed doors to write a report on their conclusions and recommendations. On the final day the Panel presented their findings to the Conference and answered questions from the audience and media. Key figures from government, industry and environmental groups were invited to respond to the report.

Participants should be
- Self-selected
- Stakeholder Representatives
- Demographic Representatives
- Specific Individuals
- Empowered Participants

Types of outcomes that the approach is good at producing
- Map of Existing Opinions
- Map of Informed Opinions
- Improved Relationships
- Shared Vision
- New Ideas
- Empowered Participants

Notes
1. This is an approximation due to the low number of non-research based Deliberative Mapping projects to date.
2. Public participants are selected to be demographically representative whilst the expert participants are selected for their knowledge, skills and experience rather than as a whole.
Deliberative Mapping involves both specialists and members of the public. It combines varied approaches to assess how participants rate different policy options against a set of defined criteria.

Description: The citizen and expert participants are divided into panels (often according to gender and socio-economic background to ensure that people are comfortable voicing their views). The citizens’ panels and the experts consider the issue both separately from one another and at a joint workshop. This allows both groups to learn from each other without the experts dominating. The emphasis of the process is not on an integrating expert and public voices, but understanding the different perspectives each offer to a policy process. The groups themselves determine which criteria they will use to score the options against, thereby limiting any structural bias, and arrive at a ranking of them. Deliberative Mapping incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods and participants work both individually and as a group.

Origin: Social Research. Developed from Multi-Attribute Decision Analysis (MADA) to resolve problems such as expert-dominated discussion in other participatory methods. Able to deliver both an overview and in-depth analysis of public opinion.

Used for: Fundamental to this approach is the involvement of both ‘specialists’ and members of the public. A sample of the public (around 40 people) from varied backgrounds is recruited onto citizens’ panels. The experts (around 20) are selected to reflect the full spectrum of specialist knowledge in an area.

Cost: High – exact figures hard to give due to the limited number of practical examples to date. Requires expert facilitation.

Time requirements: This approach requires several months for the numerous meetings and workshops.

When should you use? — When you want to understand public preferences; — Useful when the issue area is complicated; — When you want to give a decision-maker a good understanding of policy options.

When should you not use? — When you want the participants to make the decision; — When you want to reach consensus.

Can it be used to make decisions? No

Strengths: — The results are considered opinions rather than articles of faith or rash judgement; — Specialists contribute to the process without dominating; — Combination of different approaches creates a deep and comprehensible understanding of public priorities.

Weaknesses: — Difficult to involve large numbers and high in cost and time-commitment; — The results of the process can be contradictory views that leave decision-makers without clear guidance; — Very few people have practical experience of running this kind of process.

Can deliver: — Greater legitimacy for decisions; — Information on the different aspects of an issue and the considerations around them.

Won’t deliver: — Consensus/ shared vision; — Better relationships between groups.

Example: ‘Closing the Kidney Gap’ and Radioactive Waste

There have been two applications of the Deliberative Mapping (DM) approach to date. The first addressed the question of how to reduce the gap between the number of people who are waiting for kidney transplants and the much lower number of donor kidneys available in a project funded by the Wellcome Trust (2001-2003).

Citizens and specialists were tasked with learning more about potential options for dealing with the kidney gap and assessing their performance against a range of criteria. 34 citizens from North London of different ages, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds were recruited to participate, along with 17 specialists from a variety of relevant organisations and disciplines. The different groups registered similar preferences: technology-intense options like xenotransplantation scored badly while preventive care and improvements to existing services scored highly.

The second full-scale DM trial brought 16 citizens and 9 specialists together to consider the range of options available to manage the UK’s intermediate and high-level radioactive wastes. This project was sponsored by the Government’s independent Committee for the Management of Radioactive Wastes (CoRWM) in 2004, over half of whom attended one of the two intensive weekends as observers of the process.

Citizens and specialists reached the conclusion that the option of phased underground disposal performed best overall and CoRWM used the results of the trial to assist in developing their nationwide program of public and stakeholder engagement. In both trials, the citizens involved expressed a feeling of ownership over the results of the process. They valued the opportunity to learn, have access to information and meet specialists in order to engage with the issues. The specialists felt that they learned about the citizens’ ability to participate in scientific and technical decision-making.
A deliberative poll measures what the public would think about an issue if they had an adequate chance to reflect on the questions at hand by observing the evolution of a test group of citizens’ views, as they learn more about a topic. Deliberative polls are more statistically representative than many other approaches due to their large scale.

Description: The participating sample is first polled on the targeted issues. After this baseline poll, members of the sample are invited to gather for a few days to discuss the issues. Balanced briefing materials are sent to the participants and made publicly available. The participants engage in dialogue with competing experts based on questions that the participants themselves develop in small group discussions with trained moderators. After this deliberation, the sample is asked the original questions again. The resulting changes in opinion are thought to represent the conclusions the public would reach if people had the opportunity to become more informed about the issues. Deliberative Polling creates dramatic, statistically significant changes in views. Follow up studies, however, tend to show that some of these changes are reversed over time. Deliberative polls are usually run in collaboration with TV companies, which then broadcast parts of the process, allowing the wider public to share the learning of the participants.

Cost: It is hard to estimate what a Deliberative Poll might cost as there haven’t been any recently, but we estimate that running one will cost at least £30,000. This excludes expenses for the media and participants.

Time requirements: The poll itself is run over several days, a few months before, the participants take part in a number of events (usually over a weekend) where they are polled the first time and where they can familiarise themselves with the issues. Allow at least six months.

When should you use?
— Deliberative Polling is especially suitable for issues where the public may have little knowledge or information of the trade-offs applying to public policy.

When should you not use?
— If issue is non-controversial.
— If issue and its relevant trade-offs are already well understood by the public.

Can be used to make decisions?
No

Strengths:
— Combines the statistical representativeness of a scientific sample with interaction and deliberation;
— Better demographic representation of population than

A statistically representative view of what the public might want policy-makers to do.

Origin: Social Research – Developed by US researchers to overcome the often uninformed and fickle nature of opinion poll results.

Used for: Deliberative Polls measure informed opinion on an issue. The results of a Deliberative Poll are partly prescriptive – pointing to what an informed and reflective citizenry

Could deliver:
— A statistically representative view of how the public would think about an issue after being informed;
— Increased public understanding of the complexity of issues;
— Includes people that would not normally choose to get involved;
— Demonstrates the large difference between people’s uninformed and informed views;
— Good means of measuring the diversity of public opinion.

Weaknesses:
— Requires use of television to achieve its wider public awareness raising effects;
— Does not provide qualitative information;
— Expensive;
— Less scope for participants to identify witnesses and questions them or determine the scope of the questions than exists for some other approaches (e.g. Citizens’ Juries and Consensus Conferences).

Can deliver:
— Better demographical representativeness of a scientific sample with interaction and deliberation;
— Improved relationships between groups of participants;
— Shared views/consensus.

Won’t deliver:
— Increased public understanding of an issue through broadcasting of event.

Participants should be:
— Self-selected
— Stakeholder Representatives
— Demographic Representatives
— Specific Individuals
— Empowered Participants

Notes:
1. Using a statistically representative sample of the public is important.
Example: Channel Four Deliberative Poll – Crime In The U.K. 1994

The topic of Britain’s first Deliberative Poll was crime, an issue chosen for its emotive nature and the public’s strong views on the issue. The first stage of the Deliberative Poll involved interviewing a representative sample of the electorate about their views on crime and punishment. After the interview, each person was invited to take part in a televised weekend event in Manchester.

Around 300 people attended the event. Before arriving in Manchester they were sent briefing materials that introduced the issues at stake. Once there, they could cross-question various experts and politicians including pro- and anti-prison reformers, an ex-prisoner and politicians from all three main political parties. After the weekend they completed the questionnaire again. Finally, some ten months later, participants were again re-interviewed in order to assess the durability of any changes in their views.

The views and understanding of the participants changed significantly through the process. For example, 50% of the participants initially thought “stiffer sentences generally” would be a very effective way of reducing crime but in the ten month follow up poll only 36% thought this.
Democs is a conversation game enabling small groups to discuss public policy issues. No speakers or experts are needed, as pre-prepared cards convey the necessary facts. It works best for six people over two hours, but it is flexible.

Description: Democs helps people to absorb information and to make it meaningful. The information on the topic is provided on playing cards which are dealt out in two rounds. Each time, people reflect on their cards and choose one or two that they feel are most important. They take turns to read them out, explaining why they chose them, and then place them on the table. Next they cluster the cards, with each cluster representing a key issue relating to the topic. Once they’ve voted on a range of responses or policy positions they try to create a response that everyone in the group can live with.

Origin: Gaming/Deliberative democracy. Designed by the New Economics Foundation to provide some of the deliberation of Citizens’ Juries and Deliberative Polls but for a wider user.

Used for: Helping citizens find out what the public think about an issue, form and share their opinions with others and establish an understanding of an interest in an issue.

When should you use?
- When you want to give people the chance to participate in their own time and place;
- When you want to increase public understanding of an interest in an issue.

When should you not use?
- For a one-off session on a particular topic, as developing the information cards would be too expensive;
- Dangerous to combine citizens and experts in a single game.

Can it be used to make decisions?
No

Strengths:
- It encourages people to form an opinion on complex topics and empowers them to believe that they have a right to a say;
- It avoids the passivity that can come with experts lecturing people;
- It provides a safe place that will appeal to inexperienced participants;
- The game format helps people to enjoy themselves while they talk.

Weaknesses:
- Works better with a facilitator;
- Establishing common ground is not possible within a single game;
- Representativeness is hard to achieve;
- Can create conflict between participants.
- It is hard to feed the results of a Democs process into decision-making.

Can deliver:
- A citizenry that feels it can have a say and wants to do so;
- Some information about common ground and preferences.

Won’t deliver:
- Lengthy deliberation;
- In itself, it doesn’t deliver follow-up to people who have taken part and want more;
- Tangible outcomes.

Time requirements: Individual sessions are around two hours.

Example: Over-the-counter genetic testing kits

In 2003 a Democs exercise was conducted for the Human Genetics Commission (HGC). 47 people attended six events organised by the New Economics Foundation. 14 were members of the HGC Consultative Panel and the rest were recruited via articles and existing networks.

Each group clustered the issue cards and linked any relevant fact cards to make an argument. 21 main arguments were developed during the six events. The highest number concerned the impact of a test on the recipient and her/his family etc. This was what pushed many people towards supporting considerable regulation. A card that was frequently chosen said ‘Tests that are unreliable or misinterpreted may cause needless anxiety, especially if no counselling is available.’

The votes for the policy positions are set out below. Note that they do not add up to 47 in all cases, showing that one or two people forgot to vote.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy positions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not acceptable</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Position 3 was most heavily supported, with 41 out of 47 votes for ‘acceptable’ or ‘support’. Several people remarked that their ideal was somewhere between positions 3 and 4. This is what the HGC recommended to the government in the end.
Electronic Processes

There are a number of electronic methods currently in use in the United Kingdom, ranging from the simple use of websites for information giving to more interactive processes that allow stakeholders to ‘converse’ online or participate in processes that emulate conventional participative processes. The two participative processes most commonly used are Online Forums and Structured Templates. The characteristics scored below are common to all electronic processes.

**Description:** Electronic processes use different types of software according to the nature of the process required. Online forums, for example, use linear or threaded asynchronous communication over the Internet. These allow people to discuss online, combining some of the spontaneity of verbal communication with the clear records of written communication. The difference between linear and threaded forums is that in the former the discussion is listed chronologically, emphasising conversation and relationship building. Threaded forums display individual discussions as a string of posts starting with the first one and followed by the responses. This is useful for more topic-based discussions and for increased learning.

Structured templates, meanwhile, use software that is designed to emulate the face-to-face methods used in facilitated workshops. Different templates can be used, for example, to allow participants to brainstorm ideas, identify issues, prioritise solutions, or comment on consultation documents.

The relatively informal nature of online communication can foster both deliberation and build a sense of community. The discussions in active forums can provide decision-makers with valuable insights into how particular groups feel about an issue, while the Structured Template approach enables participants to comment in detail and those commissioning the process to collate responses and present the results back to participants quickly, comprehensively and transparently.

**Origin:** Online Forums are based on the early electronic bulletin boards of the 1980’s and 1990’s. Structured Templates were invented by Dialogue by Design in 2000.

**Used for:** Electronic processes can be used to gain input to decision-making and give/gather information without the group size or travel distance constraints that real life meetings have. Online Forums can also create communities that would not otherwise exist by putting participants in touch with people that they would not communicate with otherwise. Structured Templates allow very large volumes of feedback to be collated, analysed and presented back to participants swiftly and transparently.

**Who participates?** Electronic processes are very flexible when it comes to the number and location of participants, but do not presume that everyone has easy access to the Internet or that everyone can navigate it with ease. Organisers must ensure that the ‘digital divide’ does not prevent participation, usually by organising alternative methods of participation.

**Time requirements:** Some electronic processes are only in existence for a few months to discuss a current event or situation while others become permanent.

**When should you use?**
- When you have a clear idea of what you want to achieve;
- When you are dealing with a large and/or widely dispersed group of participants;
- When your participants are more comfortable participating online than in other ways;
- If you want to offer people the chance to ‘chat’ informally.

**When should you not use?**
- When you cannot ensure that everyone has the opportunity to join in the process or provide an acceptable alternative means of participating;
- If your primary aim is to build strong relationships.

**Can it be used to make decisions?** No

**Strengths:**
- Allows participants to discuss an issue at their convenience (regardless of location or time);
- Anonymity of online processes can encourage open discussion;
- Large numbers can participate;
- Helps those who are not comfortable with other methods (for example, people who are inhibited by meetings).

**Weaknesses:**
- The technology can shape the process rather than vice-versa;
- Digital divide - many do not have ability to use the Internet;
- Written communication can...
be a barrier for some already marginalised groups;
— Moderation – unmoderated
Online Forums are often chaotic but anonymous and unaccountable moderators can also frustrate participants;
— Any perceived complexity, such as registration, can be a barrier to participation;
— Often, the lack of decision-makers involved.

Can deliver:
— General input to decisions;
— Informal sharing of ideas between participants;
— Improved relationships between participants/Community building (in some cases).

Won’t deliver:
— Empowered participants;
— Strong relationships between participants.

Example: ‘Taking it on’ consultation on UK sustainable development strategy

Online consultation around “Taking it on – developing UK sustainable development strategy together” began in April 2004 and continued until the end of July 2004.

The online consultation took two forms. A ‘General Access’ consultation process allowed members of the public and any interested organisations to respond online to the questions in the consultation document. This process was open for 12 weeks, at the end of which the results were collated and the responses made available for scrutiny on the website. The process generated 8,149 responses from 444 participants.

In parallel to this public process, a ‘Virtual Panel’, representing a cross section of organisations and individuals with an interest in sustainable development, was set up to provide its views in two stages. During the first stage the panel was asked to respond to the questions in the document. This process produced 2,904 responses from 151 participants. Following the collation of the interim results, panel members were asked to respond to further questions based on their earlier responses.

Contact
Dialogue By Design
Ambassador House, Brigstock Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 3QG
Telephone 020 8683 6602
Fax 020 8683 6601
Email facilitators@dialoguebydesign.com
Web www.dialoguebydesign.co.uk

Publications

Online resources
www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government
Cabinet Office, E-democracy Unit
www.edemocracy.gov.uk
Local E-Democracy National Project
www.oii.ox.ac.uk
Oxford Internet Institute.
A Future Search conference is a way for a community or organisation to create a shared vision for its future. It enrols a large group of stakeholders who take part in a highly structured process lasting ideally two and a half days.

Description: A Future Search conference enrols a large group of stakeholders, selected because they have power or information on the topic at hand or are affected by the outcomes. Ideally there are 64 people, who form eight tables of eight stakeholder groups. Examples of such groups are health care users, young people or shopkeepers. They take part in a highly structured process, which ideally lasts two and a half days but sometimes only one.

Origin: Organisational development. Originated in the UK some 40 years ago, but was developed in the US by Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff.

Used for: Creating a shared vision combined with the energy to make it happen.

Who participates? Stakeholders are selected because they have power or information on the topic at hand or are affected by the outcomes.

Cost: Usually between £5,000 and £20,000

Time requirements: Ideally two and a half days but sometimes two or only one.

When should you use?
— When you want commitment from all stakeholders;
— When the most important thing is to generate energy.

When should you not use?
— When you are not prepared to put the work in to 'get the whole system in the room.' It may not work if some stakeholders are missing;
— When the task is imposed, for example by a funder, and it is not what the people in the room are most passionate about.

Can it be used to make decisions?
Yes

Strengths:
— Everyone with a stake in the issue is in the room, which produces a rich mixture of information and ideas;
— Proposals are more likely to be acted upon if all stakeholders feel committed to them;
— People are encouraged to explore what they feel about an issue as well as what they think about it;
— The event is designed to help participants understand and appreciate the agendas of others, which helps them to enlarge the common ground they share. It is hoped that if a shared vision is created it will inspire participants into the future;
— People are often energised by seeing that complex issues can be tackled when the whole system is present, when they can identify common ground with other people, develop a shared vision and agree concrete actions.

Weaknesses:
— Needs a lot of time and energy to organise;
— It can be hard to convey the energy and excitement of participants to non-participants;
— Needs careful follow-up to support action groups at a time when organisers are usually pretty exhausted.

Can deliver:
— Energy;
— Shared vision;
— Action.

Won’t deliver:
— Action without good follow-up structures in place;
— On an issue that isn’t central to the lives of participants.

Example: Hitchin future search

Hitchin is a market town in Hertfordshire. A future search conference was chosen as a way of creating a ‘Whole Settlement Strategy’ that looked at the town as a whole. The conference took place in 1995 over two days at a school in the town.

The future search led to action groups on several issues, including:
— A Transport plan with routes and facilities for cyclists
— A directory of social groups and facilities
— Land use guidelines
— Funding for facilities for the young and for ethnic minorities.

After the event people in Hitchin changed their response to the proposal to build 10,000 homes in Hertfordshire. Instead of just opposing it they started to develop a practical alternative.
## Open Space Technology

Open Space Technology is often referred to as “Open Space” for short. It is a meeting framework that allows unlimited numbers of participants to form their own discussions around a central theme. It is highly dynamic and good at generating enthusiasm, as well as commitment to action.

**Description:** Open Space events have a central theme, around which participants are invited to identify issues for which they are willing to take responsibility for running a session. At the same time, these topics are distributed among available rooms and timeslots. When no more discussion topics are suggested the participants sign up for the ones they wish to take part in. Open Space creates very fluid and dynamic conversations held together by mutual interest. A trained moderator can be useful, especially when people are used to more structured meeting methods.

The fundamental principles of Open Space are:
- Whoever comes are the right people (the best participants are those who feel passionately about the issue and have freely chosen to get involved);
- Whenever it starts is the right time (Open Space encourages creativity both during and between formal sessions);
- When it’s over it’s over (getting the work done is more important than adhering to rigid schedules);
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could happen (let go of your expectations and pay full attention to what is happening here and now).

Open Space also uses the “Law of two feet” – if participants find themselves in a situation where they are not learning or contributing they have a responsibility to go to another session, or take a break for personal reflection.

It is vital that there are good written reports from all discussions, complete with action points, available at the end of each day. Feedback and implementation structures are important to carry the suggestions forward after the event itself.

**Origin:** Organisational Development. Open Space Technology was created in the mid-1980s by organisational consultant Harrison Owen when he discovered that people attending his conferences showed more energy and creativity during the coffee breaks than the formal sessions. Open Space is structured in a way that recreates this informal and open atmosphere combined with a clear sense of purpose.

**Used for:** Good for harnessing the creativity that is stifled by more structured forms of meetings, and creating new forms of working relationships, for example cross-functional collaboration, self-managing teams, community building, conflict resolution, strategy development and implementation.

**Origin:** Organisational Development.

**Can deliver:** Can deliver:
- Improved and new relationships
- New ideas;
- Shared Vision;
- Ownership;
- Action/energy.

**Can’t deliver:** Can’t deliver:
- Predetermined, specific, and predictable outcomes.

**Notes:**
- a. This does not include time for follow-up of the actions agreed.
- b. Open Space is highly flexible when it comes to who can be involved.

---

### When should you use?

- When you want to develop better working relationships;
- When you want to build a sense of community;
- When you are unwilling to give up control over the direction of the meeting;
- If you are not prepared to follow through with the recommendations;
- If the achievement of a specific outcome is essential.

### Can it be used to make decisions?

- Yes

### Strengths:
- Extremely flexible process;
- Participant driven approach;
- Unleashes creativity.

### Weaknesses:
- Cannot be used to direct people to a specific outcome.

### Time requirements:
- Flexible, an event usually lasts between one and five days and can be run as a one off event.

### Cost:
- This varies. The approach can be very cheap but it requires a venue with space to accommodate all participants in one or several concentric circles.

### Who participates?
- Open Space is highly flexible in the number and nature of participants. It can be run with a handful of people up to 2000 participants or more.

### When should you not use?

- When you require creative thinking around an issue;
- When you want an open discussion and collective decisions;
- When you want to develop ownership over the results;
- When you are unwilling to give up control over the direction of the meeting;
- If you are not prepared to follow through with the recommendations;
- If the achievement of a specific outcome is essential.

### Requires:

- a. Suitable number of participants
- b. Budget
- c. Length of process
- d. Types of outcomes
- e. Participants can be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUITABLE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>DIRECT DECISION MAKING</th>
<th>SERIES OF EVENTS RUNNING OVER 1-2 WEEKS/ MONTHS</th>
<th>SERIES OF EVENTS RUNNING OVER 2– 4 DAY EVENT</th>
<th>INFORMATION GIVING/GATHERING</th>
<th>ONE DAY EVENT</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0+</td>
<td>1-2 per participant</td>
<td>£10,000+</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
<td>£30,000</td>
<td>£40,000+</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>25</td>
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</table>

### Used for:

- Good at generating enthusiasm;
- Participant driven approach;
- Extremely flexible process;
- Unleashes creativity.

### Participants can be:

- Self-selected
- Stakeholder Representatives
- Demographic Representatives
- Specific Individuals
- Empowered Participants

### Types of outcomes:

- Map of Existing Options
- Map of Informed Options
- Improved Relationships
- Shared Vision
- New Ideas

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### Notes:

- a. This does not include time for follow-up of the actions agreed.
- b. Open Space is highly flexible when it comes to who can be involved.
Example: Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust Event 2002

The Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust used Open Space for an event involving 120 people, including service users, carers and health staff. The goal was to establish priorities for improving health services in Nottinghamshire. By using Open Space the discussion was kept open and flexible, allowing people to come up with their own ideas.

The event facilitator started things off by familiarising participants with how Open Space works. A diverse range of topics was put forward by the participants, ranging from alternative therapies to acute admission. Throughout the rest of the day the groups met to discuss the topics they had chosen. Feedback, consisting of the key points from the discussions, what the required action was and who was responsible for taking it forward was posted in the main room for everyone to read.

At the end of the day, each participant was given three red stars to prioritise the topics that were most important to them. Among the suggested improvements were research on alternatives to acute admission, providing funding for assisted transport and a cultural review of services and service delivery. Actions that have already been implemented include assisted transport and the establishment of a users’ and carers’ resource centre.

Contact
Paul Sanguinazzi, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust
Telephone 0115 993 4500

Practitioners
Contact
Romy Shovelton, Wikima
Telephone 020 7229 7320
Web www.wikima.com

Online resources
www.openspaceuk.com
UK Portal on Open Space
Publications

Participatory Appraisal

Notes
a. Varies widely depending on the length of the process, but participation is used to external expertise. The cost is principally in training and normal staff time or support to volunteers.

b. For one-off events, it is possible to use Participatory Appraisal methods at one-off events it is designed, though it is expensive and complex. The cost is principally in training and normal staff time or support to volunteers.

c. Participatory Appraisal methods are not used simply as a research tool; the accessible nature of the methodologies have led to considerable use of it as a research tool, gathering insights. In some circumstances this may be an acceptable use of Participatory Appraisal but when applied properly it has the potential to facilitate substantial and broad-based analysis and decision making within communities.

d. It is important to check that those involved adequately represent the range of different people within a community. For example, gender, geography, race, faith, etc. For particular groups of involved or marginalised people it might be necessary to organise separate activities or meetings.

Participants should be
- Self-selected
- Stakeholder Representatives
- Demographic Representatives
- Specific Individuals
- Empowered Participants

Suitable number of participants
- 25
- 100
- 500+

Resources/budget
- £10,000
- £20,000
- £30,000
- £40,000+

Length of process
- Information
- Giving/gathering
- Consultation
- Direct decision making

Where on the spectrum of participation the method works best
- Map of Existing Options
- Improved Relationships
- Shared Vision
- New Ideas
- Empowered Participants

Types of outcomes that the approach is good at producing
- Participatory Appraisal
- Notes

Participatory Appraisal

Notes
Participatory Appraisal (PA) is a broad empowerment approach striving to build community knowledge and encouraging grassroots action. It uses a lot of visually based methods, making it especially useful for participants who find other methods of participation intimidating or complicated.

Description: The term Participatory Appraisal describes a family of approaches that enable local people to identify their own priorities and make their own decisions about the future, with the organising agency facilitating, listening and learning. It uses visual and flexible tools to ensure that everyone can participate regardless of background and can be used where people meet in their everyday lives, increasing its appeal to groups that are usually reluctant to get involved in meetings.

At the start of a process PA usually focuses on mapping. As the process develops participants start finding common ground and eventually this can lead to new plans being developed and implemented. In addition, a well facilitated process can bring people with different needs and opinions together to explore issues, so the prioritisation of actions to take forward can come from an informed or consensual position. Outsiders – technical advisors that are not normally involved in the process – can be brought in to discuss and negotiate issues.

A commonly encountered problem is that, because PA uses very accessible tools, it is frequently used as an extractive, information-gathering process rather than an in-depth and empowering process.

Origin: International Development. Participatory Appraisal was developed in Africa and Asia and is used across the globe. Unfortunately this has led to a confusing multitude of acronyms used to describe it: e.g. PA (Participatory Appraisal), PLA (Participatory Learning and Action), and PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal). We have chosen to use the term Participatory Appraisal because it is common in the UK.

Used for: Despite its name it is not merely for appraisal. Ideally it should be an ongoing cycle of research, learning and collective action. The long-term goal of this approach is to empower and enable people to analyse and tackle their problems themselves. In the shorter term Participatory Appraisal can be used to map local priorities and understandings of issues.

Who participates? Local community members in larger or smaller groups. Since everyone does not have to meet at the same place or at the same time it can involve a very large number of people without requiring a large venue. A key principle of PA is to ask ‘who is not participating?’ and ensure that the process actively involves members of the community that are not normally involved in consultations.

Cost: Can be expensive at first as it is very important that people running the process are properly trained in Participatory Appraisal approaches and values. However, if local community members learn the approaches themselves and become more confident the costs of hiring external help may be reduced.

Time requirements: To get the most out of Participatory Appraisal it should be an ongoing process.

When should you use?

— When you are willing to let the community take control;
— When you want to base your actions on local knowledge;
— When you want to reach out to very diverse members of a community.

When should you not use?

— If you want rapid results.

Can it be used to make decisions?

Yes.

Strengths:

— Can be extremely inclusive, flexible, and empowering if run well;
— The knowledge produced by local community researchers has been proven to be highly reliable and can help to identify and tackle underlying issues to problems rather than just the symptoms;
— Local community members have been trained to facilitate a process this capacity remains within the community for the future;
— PA is a creative and flexible approach that can complement and draw on other techniques throughout a process. For example, after general information gathering the process could move to focus group meetings on particular issues or large community meetings using Open Space methodologies;
— It can draw on participatory arts and drama techniques to reach particular groups, or explore particular issues.

Weaknesses:

— Do not underestimate the need for training and experience among those running the process;
— Can be expensive to set up;
— To be truly effective, PA exercises need more time than one-off events, which may be difficult to fund and organise;
— It can also be challenging and time consuming to collate material from numerous events.

Example: Walsall Participatory Appraisal Network 1998–2005

The Participatory Appraisal (PA) methodology and approach was first employed in Walsall in 1998 to work with a group of young people around sexual health. The success of that project led to the development of the Walsall Participatory Appraisal Network. The network has worked with over 40 organisations in the last seven years and employs one full time network co-ordinator. Funding comes from a number of sources including Walsall PCT Health Authority to deliver training to health-staff and service users. By 2005 the network has over 400 people trained in PA methodology, who then adapt the approach in their own field, and it has used the PA approach in over 30 consultancy projects.

The network has supported a number of organisations and initiatives in employing the PA methodology to engage with customers, members, community or staff within the Caldmore Area Housing Association including Supported Housing, Asian Care, Women’s Refuge, Young Peoples Forum, then adapt the approach in their own field, and it has used the PA approach in over 30 consultancy projects.

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The Participatory Strategic Planning process is a consensus-building approach that enables a community or work group to articulate together how they would like their community or organisation to develop over the next few years.

Description: This is a four-stage process. First, the group determines their vision for the future of the organisation or community. Then they articulate the contradictions or obstacles that are preventing them reaching their vision. In the third stage they move on to agree strategic directions that will help them get past the blocks and reach the vision. The final stage is about implementation planning: what shall we do in the first year, and finally, what shall we do in detail in the first 3 months.

Each stage uses a consensus workshop process, which involves brainstorming to generate ideas, clustering to explore the insights that emerge and naming to discern the consensus of the group in each cluster. Each workshop involves a combination of working individually, in small groups and with the whole group.

A trained and experienced facilitator is required (a team of two is preferable), who could be an outsider or an insider. In either case, planning the process should involve others in the group as well as the facilitator. The venue should comfortably accommodate the participants in such a way that they can see and hear each other and the facilitator clearly, with good lighting and acoustics. A large, flat area of wall-space is best for organising and visual preferences. The technology of the facilitation methods known collectively as the Technology of Participation (ToP) is designed to be inclusive, so a wide diversity of participants can take part. Participants with low levels of literacy might need some support.

Cost: A team of two trained and experienced facilitators for a two-day event would typically cost £2,000–£4,000 including preparation, facilitation and documentation in addition to a venue, catering, travel, board and lodging, as required.

Time requirements: A two day event with a recommended follow-up after 6 months.

When should you use?
— When you want to build a spirit of ownership and commitment in a group;
— When you want to reach consensus on a way forward.

When should you not use?
— In a hierarchical situation if there is not commitment from the top to allowing the group to make decisions and take them forward.

Can it be used to make decisions?
— Yes

Strengths:
— Flexible and multi-applicable;
Example: Participatory Strategic Planning in Ponders End, North London

Going for Green and the Ponders End Development Forum used Participatory Strategic Planning as part of the wider Ponders End Sustainable Communities Project. The aim of this project was to empower and enable the residents and communities of Ponders End to address their local economic, social and environmental concerns and to improve their quality of life. The event was held in October 2001 and was facilitated by ICA:UK (the Institute of Cultural Affairs, UK). It was attended by a total of 22 participants including residents, representatives of local groups and businesses, service providers and Enfield Council officers.

The ‘focus question’ for the strategic planning was: “What do we want to see going on in Ponders End over the next three years?”

The first session was a vision workshop, in which participants were asked to come up with the specific achievements that they would like to see in place in Ponders End in three years’ time. This process started with an individual brainstorm and continued with small group discussions. The ideas for achievements were then further discussed and clarified in the whole group, before being organised into columns and given titles to reflect the consensus of the group.

In the next workshop, using the same process as before, participants were asked to identify the obstacles or barriers standing between them and their vision. They were encouraged to think about the underlying issues, rather than the symptoms of the problem.

Following this, a strategic directions workshop was held to address the question of what practical actions the community could take to overcome the obstacles and lead them towards their vision.

The final stage was to revisit these actions and to prioritise them in an implementation plan for the actions the community wanted implemented over the next twelve months. Finally, participants assigned responsibilities for the different tasks that had been identified and interim team leaders were agreed.

For the local Community Development Trust the process has functioned as a valuable reference point for the way forward. The trust has as a result been able to find funding and deliver an ambitious programme of community events and infrastructure according to the agreed plan.

Planning for Real

SUITABLE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

RESOURCES: BUDGET

LENGTH OF PROCESS

WHERE ON THE SPECTRUM OF PARTICIPATION THE METHOD WORKS BEST

TYPES OF OUTCOMES THAT THE APPROACH IS GOOD AT PRODUCING

NOTES

c While a single Planning for Real session using a model can be run as a half-day event, this is only one part of the process. There will need to be time allocated for preparation, resident involvement, model making and publicity prior to the event, as well as time for consultation and action planning after the event. Follow-up and evaluation of the process is also important.

d In the British Isles Planning for Real® is a registered trademark of The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation. Anyone who wishes to run Planning for Real events should therefore contact them in advance. (See website: www.nif.co.uk)
Participants make a 3D model of their local area and place suggestions of the way they would like to see their community develop. They then prioritise these in groups and create an action plan for decision-makers to take away.

Description: Planning for Real events are famous for involving eye-catching three-dimensional models. The models only form part of the Planning for Real process though. Community members are usually involved from the start in deciding on a suitable venue and scope for the process. The model of a neighbourhood is usually made by local people themselves in order to create a sense of ownership over the process. A number of events are run depending on the number and nature of the participants. Sometimes separate events are run for specific groups, such as young people, who might otherwise not participate on equal terms.

The participants use their knowledge of living in the area to make suggestions by placing cards directly on the model. There are both ready-made cards with common suggestions (around 300) and blank cards for participants to fill in themselves. These suggestions are then prioritised in small groups on a scale of Now, Soon, or Later. These resulting priority lists form the basis for an Action Plan that decision-makers are charged with taking away, considering and implementing. Delivering the Action Plan is easier if the community is involved in delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

Origin: Local Planning/Community Development - A method developed in the 1970’s to include community members who are deterred by traditional planning consultation. Since then it has been used in many locations internationally.

Used for: Planning for Real allows local people to engage hands-on with issues that affect them. Planning for Real is especially useful for planning, neighbourhood regeneration and capacity building.

Who participates? Local residents are the focus of a Planning for Real process. There is no upper limit to the number of participants that can be involved, as they do not have to attend at the same time or place. Other stakeholders who have an interest in the future of the area can also be involved.

Cost: Depends largely on the number of events and the size of the venue/s required (a reasonably large venue is required to accommodate the model and the participants). A trained facilitator is also necessary. The three-dimensional models are usually created by schools or local groups and aren’t necessarily expensive.

Time requirements: Besides the meetings themselves you should plan to mobilise the interest of local participants. Following up on the Action Plan may take a few months to several years depending on what decisions come out of the process. Making the models may take a few months if local groups or schools are used.

When should you use?
— When you want decisions to reflect local priorities;
— When you want to mobilise local support;
— When you want to create enthusiasm.

When should you not use?
— When you do not have the buy in of important decision-makers;
— When you are short of time and/or staff.

Used to make decisions?
Yes

Strengths:
— An eye-catching and fun process that is enjoyed by people who would not normally get involved;
— The models lessen the need for verbal or literacy skills, making it a useful method to use when some participants don’t speak English as a first language;
— It is a non-confrontational way of expressing needs.

Weaknesses:
— May be dominated by those used to working in large groups if not properly facilitated;
— Usually focussed on a local level, can be hard to scale up;
— The process of preparing the model and analysing and feeding back results to participants can be time-consuming.

Can deliver:
— Community input into local decision-making;
— Inclusion of participants that are often left out in other circumstances;
— Buy-in and enthusiasm;
— Shared vision for the future of an area.

Won’t deliver:
— Input to regional or national level decision-making, unless part of a wider strategy.

Example: Planning for Real in Wolverhampton

Whitmore Reans in Partnership (WRiP) is a community network working jointly with Dunstall and Whitmore Reans Neighbourhood Management to promote and support community organisations in Wolverhampton. In the summer of 2003, with training and support from the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, WRiP carried out a large-scale consultation exercise using Planning for Real, in order to get a clear indication of local needs and priorities. The information that came out of this process was later used in the development of the Local Action Plan for the area. Thanks to a tremendous preparation effort on the part of volunteers and officers the Planning for Real event was a huge success. Local participants placed over 1500 suggestions on the 3D model, not including the over 2000 ideas or issues identified by local school children as part of the event. Many agencies carried out further consultation as a result.

Local people who attended the consultation were then invited to take part in prioritising the information gathered at the consultation event. Attendance was again good and there was a clear sense of ownership by the community of what needed to be done.

As a result of the way if was created, the Whitmore Reans Local Action Plan is a precise and detailed tool, focusing on real issues, priorities and actions. The plan lists actions that will be undertaken, the agency or service provider involved and time scales. The participation of local people has ensured that the information is transparent and focused on their priorities.

The Planning for Real process in Whitmore Reans has been recognised nationally as a good example of community engagement.
User Panels are regular meetings of service users about the quality of a service, or other related topics. They help to identify the concerns and priorities of service users and can lead to the early identification of problems or ideas for improvements.

**Description:** User Panels usually take the form of a workshop and it is important to establish clarity of purpose and the time required for participants’ involvement from the start. There also need to be very clear lines of feedback between the Panel members and the decision-makers.

**Origin:** Market research. The panels have evolved from tools like focus groups and the spread of policy targets, such as ‘Best Value’, has increased the appreciation of the benefits of getting users involved in the planning and delivery of the services they use.

**Used for:** Getting users’ views on their experiences and expectations of services and testing their reaction to changes and proposals. It can also be used to find and generate ideas for improvements.

**Who participates?** A User Panel should be relatively small to allow quality interaction between participants, usually between eight and twelve people is a good number. Some organisations recruit a large pool of users so that they can draw out smaller groups to be consulted on a particular issue. These groups can be targeted to reflect certain subgroups of users, such as people with disabilities, or ethnic minorities. Panel members can be recruited in different ways, adverts in the press is one way, but potential Panel members might also be suggested by people who work with service users, like nurses or teachers, or they might be members of organisations with an interest in the service. Try to include a diverse range of users in the Panel.

Panel members should not remain on the panel indefinitely, after a while participants tend to become too knowledgeable about the service delivery organisation and may come to identify with it and lose credibility with other users.

**Cost:** The Panel needs to be facilitated in a neutral way and Panel members should at least receive their expenses. Arranging free transport to and from meetings can be appropriate, especially if the service users are the elderly or health care users. It is hard to assess the costs of running a Panel, this depends on whether or not you have in-house facilitation skills, where the group meets, how large it is and how often it meets.

**Time requirements:** User Panels are usually ongoing (with participants usually ongoing (with participants being replaced as time goes on). A member of staff will need to provide support for the Panel. The accountability and credibility of the Panel can be increased if you allow time for representatives to refer back to wider user groups.

**Won’t deliver:** — User Panels should not be the only way of getting user feedback.

**Can it be used to make decisions?** No

**Strengths:** — Changes can be tracked over time; — Most people can participate with the help of interpreters; — Solution focused; — The Panel members are well informed on the issues.

**Weaknesses:** — Time consuming/long-term commitment; — The Panel is not necessarily representative; — A small number of people may dominate the group; — May not take into account relevant needs of non-users of services.

**Can deliver:** — User perspective; — Sounding board on which to test plans and ideas; — Relatively quick feedback; — Continuing dialogue with users.

**Won’t deliver:** — Statistical information; — Without commitment from management;

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Example: Fife User Panels (Age Concern Scotland)

Age Concern Scotland's Fife User Panels were launched in 1992 as a project aimed at developing Panels of frail older people and providing them with an opportunity to influence the provision of services which help them maintain an independent lifestyle.

Panel members are aged over 70, have difficulty getting out and about without assistance and are users of various community care services. Thirteen years on there are 7 Panels across Fife with up to eight older people on each. The age range of Panel members is 70 - 101. As older people’s everyday experiences are shared and discussed many issues are raised including health and social care, but also housing, transport, information, social activities etc.

The older people themselves control the agenda with one member of staff facilitating and another (or a volunteer) taking notes, to ensure that issues raised are accurately reflected. Service planners and providers from Fife Council and NHS Fife are invited by Panel members on a regular basis to discuss issues they are concerned about. The Panels are a recognised part of the consultation process of these agencies and they also work with researchers UK wide.

Panel meetings are informal and have enabled users to influence service provision within Fife. Two examples are an enhanced cleaning service for Home Care clients and good practice for Hospital Discharge.

Contact: Jessie Watt, Age Concern Scotland
Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh, EH9 1PB
Telephone: 01312204273
Web: www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk

Publications

Youth Empowerment

Participants can be Self-selected, Stakeholder Representatives, Demographic Representatives, Specific Individuals, Empowered Participants.

Types of Outcomes that the Approach is Good at Producing
- Map of Existing Opinions
- Map of Informed Opinions
- Improved Relationships
- Shared Vision
- New Ideas
- Empowered Participants

Notes
- It is possible to engage with young people on a one-off basis, but the true benefits of empowered participants only emerge in a long process.
- Depends on the specific engagement process and its aims.
Youth participation is a rapidly growing field, but not a unified one when it comes to the methods used. There is no one good way of engaging with young people. Several of the techniques previously mentioned in section 4.4 can be used, for example, youth panels or youth citizens’ juries, and descriptions of these techniques will not be repeated here; instead we will focus on considerations that should be made when young people are involved in a process. The short-term goals of youth processes are often the same as any other process, however, youth participation often emphasises empowerment. The low interest among young people in voting and party politics (but not in issues that affect their lives).

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**Used for:** As previously mentioned, the values and goals of youth empowerment are not very different from other forms of participation, so young people can be engaged with for many different reasons. As users of services they can be consulted to improve service delivery, young people are often targeted in projects to lower crime rates and, increasingly, the explicit goal of involving young people is stated as building the skills and values that are needed in their role as citizens.

**Who participates?** The term ‘young people’ is ambiguous. An easy mistake is to assume common views and experiences among all young people but there are considerable differences when it comes to cultural and ethnic backgrounds, living conditions and abilities. Certain groups, like homeless young people, young people in care and young people with disabilities can be very difficult to engage with and will require targeted efforts to involve.

**Cost:** Varies enormously, depending on scale, goals and time frame. While you should not underestimate the initiative of young participants in your projects you should always have support in the form of resources and staff time available.

**Time requirements:** Some youth engagement, like youth citizens’ juries, are short term in length; others, like councils, take longer. Goals like youth empowerment require longer processes.

**When should you use?**
- Young people should be given the same chance to participate — as other age groups;
- Do not limit participation exercises to typical ‘youth — issues’. Young people also have a lot to say on more “mainstream” issues such as the environment, crime and housing.

**When should you not use?**
- Unfortunately the ability of young people is underestimated — by many. As a result, youth engagement projects are sometimes tokenistic and patronising. If you are not going to be serious about youth participation, it is better not to do it at all;
- Young people quickly see through any rhetoric and become disillusioned when they realise that they are being manipulated and used. This disillusionment harms not just individual projects but youth engagement overall.

**Can it be used to make decisions?** Yes

**Strengths:**
- Involving young people can be a very positive experience;
- Young people bring a lot of energy and enthusiasm into a process if they feel that they are taken seriously;
- Encouraging young people to have an equal say in issues that matter to them builds their sense of self worth and can build verbal abilities and other citizenship skills.

**Weaknesses:**
- There can be a high rate of turnover among young participants;
- Unless efforts are made to be inclusive, self-selected groups of young participants will often be biased towards certain groups.

**Can deliver:**
- Empowered participants;
- Information on values and priorities to influence decisions;
- Improved relationships;
- Enthusiasm;
- Feeling of ownership and pride over results.

**Won’t deliver:**
- Rapid Results.

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**Example:** Envision Team, London Borough of Westminster: Recycling programme and fashion show 2005

Envision is a London charity supporting 16-19 year olds in schools and colleges to develop their own social and environmental projects. Teams of young people are set up at schools and are free to pursue their own projects, with a number of adult volunteers who support them.

In 2005 a local Envision team in Westminster decided to improve the recycling system at their school. They drew up plans for a system with recycling bins in every classroom as well as organic waste recycling outside the cafeteria and in the courtyard. The young people did most of the work themselves; they researched costs and facts, circulated questionnaires to their fellow students and presented their plans to the local council.

In order to promote the idea of recycling, as well as raising money for charity, the local team also decided to hold a fashion show where the clothes on parade were made from recycled materials. This ambitious project involved making the clothes from recycled materials, organising the venue and student models for the event, promoting the event, and researching where the money raised should go. The fashion show went well and raised around £1,000 for the SOS Children Tsunami appeal.

Working in the team has given the participants new skills and confidence in their abilities.