

Centre for
Public
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Wearing Different Hats: scenario-based training for participatory projects

Workshop Facilitator's Guide

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Contents

Introduction	3
How to use this toolkit	4
Setting up and running the workshop	6
Preparing to facilitate the workshop	6
Facilitation guidance	8
Running the workshop	9
Example scenarios	12
Acknowledgements	15
References	15

Introduction

Participatory projects require challenging habitual ways of working and thinking, including assumptions about what expertise is and who holds it. These assumptions shape our interactions, language, and ways of structuring work. Collaboration often brings together people with different backgrounds, priorities, and accountabilities, so reflecting on *how* we work is essential for ethical and equitable delivery.

The **ILBR** framework aims to support such reflection. It centres the following questions:

- **Initiating**: What requests are being made, and to whom?
- **Labour**: What action/activities/labour are being undertaken?
- **Benefits**: What benefits might be wanted or received?
- **Risks**: What risks exist or are created?

This toolkit provides guidance on preparing and running a workshop to explore these questions. In groups, attendees work through fictional participatory project scenarios using the ILBR questions. Each person takes on the role of an actor involved in participatory projects (e.g. researcher, participant, community partner, funder, university infrastructure/support). Using post-it notes and flipchart paper, participants explore the perspectives, contributions, and concerns of different actors.

People involved in participatory projects can be unaware of the labour, risks, and responsibilities carried by others. Benefits within participatory processes may be experienced differently by different groups. By making these dynamics visible, the workshop aims to build shared understanding and support more ethical and equitable ways of working. The format can also be adapted to reflect on an existing research project or support partnership development.

For more about the background of the ILBR Framework see the reference section p.15.

How to use this toolkit

Before you start using this toolkit, you might want to think about:

- Your aims for using the workshop and framework
- How it might fit within your wider training or partnership development
- Whether you will host the workshop in-person or online
- Power dynamics in the group
- How to create a positive and productive experience for everyone e.g. workshop space set-up
- Who will facilitate the workshop e.g. a neutral external facilitator or a designated team leader

This guidance primarily relates to in-person delivery but there are tips throughout on how to adjust the plan for online delivery.

Why might you use the workshop	Who might participate
Training for people planning and delivering participatory engagement projects	• Professional services staff • Arts and culture sector staff • Community partners • Local councils • Researchers
Training for people delivering participatory research, and those who support its delivery	• Students • Researchers • Professional services staff • Community partners • Artists or other freelancers • Ethics boards • Funders
As part of a partnership set-up process	• Partners involved in delivery of the project
As a reflective exercise on the delivery of a project	• A group of researchers and partners reflecting on a collaborative project • An individual reflecting on their practice



Photo credit: Lorna Powell

Delivery considerations

- If you are using this workshop for your own project, each question may require more time to discuss (at least 30 minutes). Therefore, you could consider delivering this over several sessions, or a longer session with breaks.

- This workshop may bring up sensitive material, either for the facilitator or for participants. You may consider doing a relationship building activity first, such as defining collective values or mapping collaborator assets and strengths.

- Consider power dynamics carefully. How can you ensure people feel comfortable speaking? One approach would be gathering answers from people anonymously before the workshop, and then discussing a pre-populated table (see table layout on p.7). This would also reduce the time needed for the workshop.

- If you are working with people who don't have much experience in research or public engagement, you may need to expand the scenarios to give more information or do an introduction to participatory research prior to the workshop. Add at least 15 minutes to the workshop time to do this. You could also send examples or resources for people to look at in advance, but ideally any pre-tasks like this would be light touch and clearly framed as optional.

Setting up and running the workshop

Preparing to facilitate the workshop

- Prepare slides or a flipchart that might display:
  - ground rules (see Facilitation Guidance below)
  - questions and scenarios for the introduction
  - ILBR questions to guide the group exercise

- Decide which scenarios will be most relevant to your audience. We have provided examples on pp. 12-14, but you can make your own. Circulate the scenarios around the groups ahead of the session to check for questions and ask people to select which scenario and role they would like to work with in advance. Have these available in printed form at the session.

- Gather pens and post-it-notes, with a different colour for each role (e.g. green for community partners, yellow for academic researchers).

- Print off or draw grid formats with the ILBR questions as columns and roles as rows. See the template on the next page. Each group of participants and scenario should have a separate grid, or you can give one grid to each participant.

What action/activities/labour are being undertaken?	What benefits might be wanted or received?	What requests are being made, and to whom?	What risks exist or are created, and for whom?

Figure 1: example of how to structure the grid layout that participants will fill in. Note: if you are delivering this in person the grid will need to be large – ideally A1 (flipchart paper size) to give enough space for all the post-it-notes.



Facilitation guidance

- Consider how to make the space comfortable and accessible. This might include providing refreshments and chairs, or considering the lighting or noise. Request accessibility information from attendees in advance.

- Ahead of the session, provide an outline of the schedule, and whichever ground rules you plan to use to support people's interactions.

- Be mindful if anyone is less comfortable writing, you could put people in pairs. Ensure that all participants have the opportunity to contribute through gentle facilitation. (e.g. asking the opinion of people who haven't spoken).

- Current good practice for facilitating group conversations includes Brave Space Ground Rules and Accountable Space Ground Rules. But you may want to use others or adapt these for your audience and the tone of the session. It's also useful to have printed copies on the day and to discuss with participants at the start to allow them to add their own ideas.

- You should consider how you will manage the situation if a conflict or disagreement arises. Look at some best practice on conflict resolution and make a plan.

- Send a reminder to attendees a week before and on the day. If appropriate, use calendar invites.

- Prepare a feedback form. Think what you want to know, or if there will be any next steps.

- Read more about facilitation here.



Running the workshop

These timings are based on using the workshop for training purposes. You could add 5 minutes to the start for people arriving and settling. If you are using the workshop to reflect on your own project or as a step within partnership building, then you should reconsider how long each step might take.

As the facilitator your timekeeping role is very important. Use a timer, and tell participants when the time is half gone, and two minutes before they will need to move on to the next task.

Time (mins)	Activity
0-15	Introduction
15-25	Group formation and set up
25-37	Question 1: requests (column 1 of the grid – figure 1)
37-75	Questions 2-4: (columns 2-4 of the grid, figure 1)
75-100	Reflection
100-105	Thanks, feedback, and next steps

Time (mins)	Activity	Notes for facilitator
0–15	**Introduction:** • Housekeeping (e.g. toilets, fire safety, recordings/photos) • Outline workshop aims and schedule • Go over the ground rules for the session (which should have been sent out in advance), ask if anyone has comments or wants to add anything • Introduce the questions and scenarios, and explain what the steps in the process will be. State that the scenarios are imperfect examples to stimulate discussion.	• Ensure participants know what is going to happen • Set the tone for the discussions with the ground rules
15–25	**Group formation and set up:** • Groups should be made up of 5-7 participants. A group of larger than 6 or 7 requires careful facilitation for all voices to be heard. • If participants are arranged by tables, you can group them up according to tables. If not, you can either allow participants to group themselves. If there is hesitancy, the facilitator should allocate groups. • Encourage groups to introduce themselves (if they haven't already met), and to select a scenario to work with. • Each person in the group needs to choose a role to represent, and a colour of post-it-note. They should place a post-it-note with the name of that role at the start of one of the rows. • If a participant isn't familiar with their role, you could suggest that the group discusses the roles together before answering the ILBR questions.	• Ensure groups are set up to do the exercise *Note: if using an online platform you may need to give a short tutorial on how to use it and/or send out a link ahead of time for attendees to familiarise themselves with it.* *Note: random allocation of scenarios and roles is recommended for online delivery if participants have not selected in advance to ensure balanced break-out rooms.*

25-37	**Question 1: activities/actions (column 1 of the grid – figure 1)** • Participants to initially take two minutes to write in silence about what they think their specific actor would be doing and then add post it notes to their row. • Encourage people to think about everyday activities such as booking rooms or making tea as well as big project tasks. • After two minutes encourage groups to discuss and share insights. Prompt people to try to discuss from the perspective of the role they have chosen, as far as they can. • Remind participants that identifying gaps in our knowledge is valuable.	• Guide people to answer the questions in order • Keeping the groups to time • Offering support or input where people get stuck • Keep the tone playful and fun, remind people they won't get to discuss everything in depth
37-75	**Questions 2-4: (columns 2-4 of the grid, figure 1)** • The same steps as for question 1; 12 minutes for each question. • For requests, benefits and risks, you might want to think about types such as financial, relational, operational, technical, strategic, time, resource, as well as hidden vs visible, and on a short/long term scale.	
75-100	**Reflection:** These are suggested reflection questions, you could design your own • What do we think of this exercises ? Any insights or surprises? • Is there a balance in requests, benefits, action, and risks? • What are the implications of this for our practice? Are there opportunities for disruption?	• Consolidate the learning • Share insights across the group • Think about how to put what has been learned into practice *Note: depending on your aims, consider if you need more time here.*
100-105	**Thanks, feedback, and next steps:** • Thank all contributors • Distribute a digital or physical feedback/evaluation form • Any other information/next steps you want participants to know	• Ensure everyone feels appreciated • Give the chance for anonymous feedback

Example scenarios

You could use these scenarios or design your own. Please note, it's important that you tell your participants that these scenarios are deliberately imperfect to stimulate discussion.

Project Scenario 1: Creating a food systems policy

The local authority wants to create a food systems policy to take forward their objectives of increasing environmental sustainability in their local constituency. They want to involve local residents in its creation and for academics to be involved to ensure robustness. They partner with an academic to support design and facilitation of the process, and to write up the policy recommendations.

The researcher contacts several local food projects that work in low income neighbourhoods (e.g. a community growing project, a food bank, a community kitchen) and partners with them to run three events to engage local residents in consultation. Residents on low income are eligible for vouchers to compensate their time. Some funding for the events is provided, the project is to be delivered in three months and the researcher must produce policy recommendations which are informed by this community input.

Stakeholders involved

- Local authority officers
- Local food project organisers
- Local residents
- University researcher
- University (institution and support staff)
- *Anyone else?*

Project Scenario 2: Documenting lived experiences of obesity

A university researcher has investigated lived experiences of obesity through a series of interviews with people who attend a weekly healthy eating support group. Attendees of the sessions have varied circumstances so attendance at the group is variable.

The researcher and support group were introduced through a contact at a local health charity, but the support group relies heavily on volunteers to function, and recently lost their core funding. The researcher wants to work with an artist to create textile art to represent the lived experiences of obesity, which will be put into an exhibition at the university.

The researcher successfully applies for public engagement funding through a grant run by the philanthropic foundation of a major fast food retailer. They put out a tender for an artist and are excited when they are able to engage a brilliant artist who has recently graduated from a prestigious art school. The project will last six months. The academic also wants to write the results of the public engagement project into an academic paper, and must produce a report for the funder that evidences impact.

Stakeholders involved

- University researcher (academic)
- University (institution and support staff)
- Health charity broker
- Support group volunteer
- Lived experience participants
- Artist
- *Anyone else?*

Project Scenario 3: Exploring food heritage in a Bangladeshi neighbourhood

A museum wants to diversify its collections and be responsive to the local community. They partner with a university and apply for funding to employ a postdoctoral researcher who specialises in food heritage and sovereignty.

The museum's Engagement Officer reaches out to a representative of a women's group in the local neighbourhood, predominantly Bangladeshi, who they hope will collaborate on the project with them.

The researcher will conduct workshops at the museum with members of the women's group, looking at food-related artefacts from Bangladesh. The museum would like the group to contribute to new labels for these artefacts, as well as creating or contributing new objects that will be acquired for their collection.

At the end of the one-year project, the museum plans to do an event where project participants will showcase aspects of food heritage. The researcher would also like the university to archive the elements of the project as a research output.

Stakeholders involved

- The museum (institution and staff)
- Postdoctoral researcher
- University (institution and support staff)
- Director of women's group
- Participants of women's group
- *Anyone else?*

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References

Background on ILBR

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