
COMMUNITY ACTION GUIDE

on Community-Led Research



INTERNATIONAL
ACCOUNTABILITYPROJECT

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The power of

COMMUNITY-LED RESEARCH



*“What is your community’s vision for the future?
Is there anything your community wishes to have that is
not there now?”*

When we asked these questions to workshop participants in rural Myanmar, one person responded, “We don’t have the power to decide that.”

Too often, we feel that the power to make decisions about the future of our communities has been taken away. But **we do not have to feel powerless**. There are steps we can take to reclaim control and identify our own priorities for development in our communities. Community-led ideas and expertise can lead the way to a development that respects people and protects the environment.

Conducting community-led research is one effective way for communities to respond to development challenges, and to voice their development priorities.

Community-led research is a process through which a community relies on its own local knowledge to identify an issue, think deeply about it, and propose an answer.

Communities can conduct their own research with or without support from allies such as civil society groups, academics, or the government. While these allies can help in facilitating the process, providing tips, or assisting in analyzing results, it is the **community that leads the research** and is in charge of making decisions. Community-led research is both the means and ends to the model of development that communities want - a process where powers are shared and everyone’s voice is heard.

In fact, when community members do their own research, they may uncover findings that outsiders would not. Communities possess knowledge about their surroundings and environment that decision-makers and planners may not know. Often, the research process itself helps communities better understand the problems they face, build confidence in their knowledge and ideas, **strengthen solidarity** and accountability amongst community members, and learn necessary skills for community organizing. Together, the

skills and findings gained from the research process can be useful for mounting community-led campaigns.

The results of community-led research show that **alternatives are possible**, and that the entire development process can be transformed so that communities claim their power. When communities put themselves and their visions at the center of the development process, community-led research can become a powerful tool!

In this Guide, you will find activities and tools to plan and conduct community-led research. You will also learn tips and strategies from the stories of community organizers who have facilitated this research all around the world. With this booklet, you will find a *Checklist to Support Community-led Research* to use as a reminder of the different lessons in this Guide, and a *Survey Template for Community-led Research* that you can use and adapt to your own community.



Guide



Checklist



Survey

Let's get started!

WHAT IS RESEARCH?

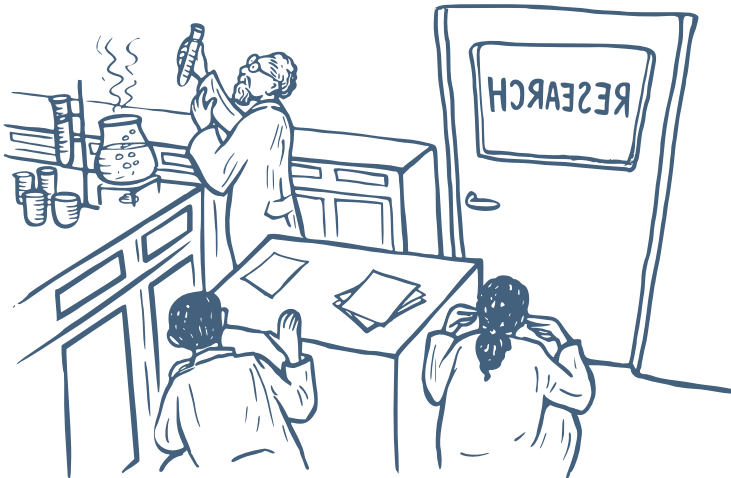
Heads up: Safety and security
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What do you think when you hear the word “research”? Do you think research is something done far away by others? Is it something out of reach, only conducted by professors in universities?



Research doesn't have to be any of those things. We believe that research should be a **collective effort**, a process where communities are empowered to define, lead, and carry out research on a topic of their choosing, and where everyone who participates is free to contribute, exchange, and reproduce the knowledge collected.



The Mekong Community Institute defines community-led research as “the search for knowledge based on local expertise, by community members, for the benefit of the community.” Other types of research tend to start with questions asked by people outside communities. With community-led research, community members define their own topics, questions, and process, allowing them to create, analyze, and describe their own experiences and expertise. With community-led research, the **community builds on its local knowledge**, customs, and traditions, and owns the knowledge that is being produced. Communities should no longer be just the location or object of research. It's not only researchers or academics - communities are experts too!



SAFETY AND SECURITY IN COMMUNITY-LED RESEARCH

Community-led research can be a powerful and effective process, but there are also risks that must be considered.



Sometimes, people receive threats or are harmed for discussing or asking for more information about a development project, a company, or their government. These threats and harm could come from different types of people including the authorities, companies, powerful groups, or sections of the community itself. Here are some examples of the kinds of risks faced by human rights defenders around the world. Unfortunately, these could happen to anyone working on sensitive projects.

- Accusations of being “anti-state”, “anti-religious”, “agents of Western powers”, “members of armed opposition groups”, “sex workers”, “traffickers”, “corrupt”
- Interference with travel, writing, or associating with others
- Threats - “if you don’t stop your activities, your son will be arrested”

- Complicated administrative hurdles - requirements to provide extensive financial information, or difficulties in registering or re-registering organizations
- Attacks on livelihood - losing job or education opportunities
- Attacks on property - vandalism or destruction of vehicle, house, or office
- Detention, arrest, or imprisonment - perhaps based on false accusations, civil or criminal legal cases, or defamation
- Ill-treatment or torture
- Abduction, kidnapping, or murder



***This list is based on Frontline Defenders' Work Book on Security. For more information and exercises (including risk and threat analyses) see <http://bit.ly/HRDWorkbook>*

Based on these risks, everyone interested in joining the community-led research should be able to make fully informed decisions about if and how they wish to participate. Read through the *Checklist to Support Community-Led Research* included in the Action Materials, to understand what the overall research process might look like for your community. Think about the current situation in your community, and assess the likelihood of serious harms that might happen if you start the research, and at each step of the process.

If the risks are high, and participating in the research activities can put people in great danger, you may want to explore alternative methods. Security situations can change quickly, so you will want to assess the situation continuously throughout the research process.

Evaluating your security situation is scary, but there are ways to minimize the risks. For example, holding irregular gatherings of community members can bring unnecessary attention from authorities. When holding meetings, consider the following options:

- Start by first holding a small meeting of less than 5 people at a local restaurant, tea shop, or cafe
- Host gatherings during a “picnic” or another activity often done by people in popular tourist spots like a nearby waterfall, park, or lake

- Adjust religious or non-religious traditional ceremonies to also be a space where community members can meet and discuss sensitive matters without suspicion



You will find more suggestions on how to minimize risk in the *Heads Up* boxes located throughout the Guide.

DEFINE YOUR RESEARCH TOPIC

The first step to any community-led research process is to decide the research topic with your community. To get as many people involved as possible, organize a meeting or several group conversations to awaken the interest of the community. Tell them what community-led research is, and explain that **it is up to the community to decide** what to research, how to approach it, and what to do with the findings.

Once you have introduced the process, try to identify the most important questions to research, based on the comments and dialogue within your community. Make sure to include women, young people, people with disabilities, and other members of the community who may be underrepresented and excluded from similar conversations. You may need to take extra measures to **ensure that everyone can participate** in the conversation, such as having separate women-only or youth-only meetings.





ACTIVITY

WHAT BIRDS SEE IN MY VILLAGE



Objectives:

To explore the issues your community thinks are important to study, and to develop community-led development priorities



Time: 1 to 2 hours



Materials:

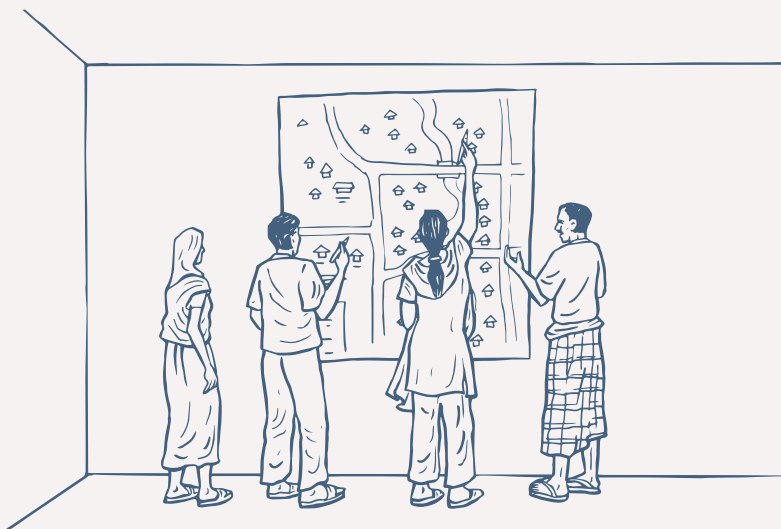
Flipchart paper, sticky notes or colored papers with tape, pens, markers, or other writing instruments



INSTRUCTIONS

PART 1: A BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF MY COMMUNITY

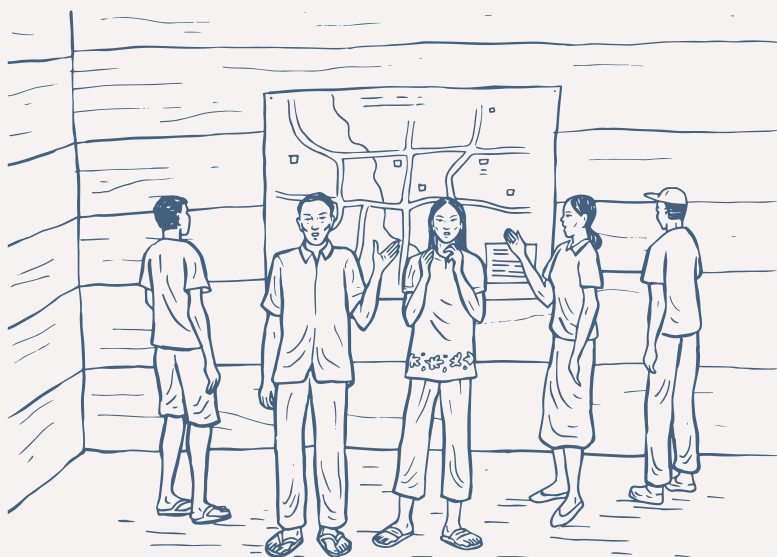
- 1** Gather people in a common place where everyone in the community can come and participate.
- 2** Explain that the purpose of the exercise is to identify the most important issues that the community is facing and wants to learn more about.
- 3** Ask participants to pretend that they are birds flying in the sky, and using their birds-eye perspective, can see the outline, shape, and key features of the community. On the ground, or on flipchart paper, ask participants to locate and mark the directions (North, South, East, West) or key village landmarks, such as a big tree, mountain, or community center. It is usually easier to first draw this map on the ground using available materials, and then copy this onto paper.



- 4 Using either the directions or key village landmarks as markers, draw the boundaries of the village. Draw the roads and any streams or rivers that run through the village.
(Steps 3 and 4 should take around 10-15 minutes. Remind participants that a rough drawing is fine, and that you don't need a beautiful map!)
- 5 Ask participants to identify other important and communal structures such as schools, drinking water sources, hospitals, religious places, bridges, or weather shelters.
- 6 Ask participants if there are different ethnic and religious groups present in or near the village. Are there any other groups? Write these points directly on the map. Or, write these points on pieces of paper or sticky notes and place them on the map.

PART 2: IDENTIFYING OUR RESEARCH TOPIC

- 7 Now that you have a bird's eye view of the community, break into small groups of about 5 people. Ask participants in each group to discuss and identify if they are facing any problems or challenges such as loss of access to land, water shortage, domestic violence, or lack of schools. Depending on whether you are interested in responding to an existing development project, or are interested in creating your own, consider asking variations of the following questions:
 - a. *What concerns you about our community?*
 - b. *What are some problems that, if solved, will help improve life in our community?*
 - c. *What challenges can we overcome to make different groups of people in our community happier or healthier?*
- 8 After discussing in small groups, ask participants to draw a picture of their ideas, or write their ideas on a piece of paper or sticky note. Put these in the community map.
- 9 Ask participants to choose 1 to 3 key common issues. Ask them to think about what happens as a result of these issues, and what would happen if these problems were solved. Invite them to share their ideas with the whole group.



Have someone write these points on a piece of paper and put them next to the map. Then, for each key issue identified, ask:

- a. **What are the effects of this problem in our community?**
Effects are often the things people see, hear, and feel as part of the problem.
- b. **What are the direct causes of this problem?**
Causes are often the things that you cannot see, or are hidden, that contribute to the problem. In other words, what situations directly support the problem?
- c. **What is the root cause that we need to change?**
Root causes are the fundamental reasons for the situations directly causing the problem. You can identify more than one root cause for a situation - which is the most important one for your community to change, in order to solve the problem?
- d. **What information do we need to solve this problem?**

Here is an example for the problem of food shortage in a community:

Effects

- Children in our community are malnourished
- Income for our community members has decreased

Direct Causes

- Less fish are being caught in the river

Root Causes

- Neighbouring community comes into our area to catch fish
- A dam has been built beside the neighbouring community
- The impacts of the dam on our community were not measured when it was being proposed and built

- 10** On a separate piece of flipchart paper, write down your key issues and the answers to the questions above. Discuss which points you would like to study and investigate in your community-led research. Narrow down the topic by breaking down the different parts of the issue, effect, and root cause you want to tackle.

*** This activity has been adapted from the Social Map by Action Aid's Networked Tools and the "Exploring the Problem" exercise in MobLab's Campaign Accelerator Toolkit. You can access these resources here:*

<http://bit.ly/ActionAidNetworkedToolboxMap>

<http://bit.ly/MobLabCampaignAcceleratorDefine>

Remember, the topic you identify may be viewed differently by development banks, project developers, or the government! Their claims about your community can be informed and challenged if they are incorrect or incomplete. For example, if you are researching existing and potential human and environmental impacts of a project, you can share information from your research that is missing, excluded, or incorrect in "official project documents" produced by development banks, project developers, or the government.

Experiences with community-led research:

MELA'S STORY

Hi, my name is Mela! I am a community organizer from Zimbabwe. For the past eight years, I have worked with communities across Africa to promote transparency in extractive industries. I train and support communities to conduct their own research and define the development challenges they are facing. I believe community-led research is a powerful tool that allows communities to share their stories and realize the kind of change that they would like to see.

I first conducted community-led research within my own community in Marange in Eastern Zimbabwe. In 2006, diamond deposits were discovered in Marange leading to a mining boom that resulted in many human rights violations. Through the process of community-led research, we wanted to try to collectively understand the roots of our problems. One of the most important steps in this process was to identify and agree upon a research topic. In Marange, we discussed how we had lost our land,



Melania Chiponda is from the Marange community in Zimbabwe, and is the Regional Campaign Coordinator at WoMin, an African gender and extractives alliance that works to advance an African post-extractivist, eco-just, women-centered alternative to dominant destructive models of development. Previously, Mela was the founder and Projects Coordinator of Chiadzwa Community Trust.

Mela is a part of IAP's Global Advocacy Team, an initiative which brings together community organizers who experience development projects first-hand to conduct community-led research and mobilize

resources, and livelihoods to the companies that operated the mines. As we talked, we realized that if we could stop private companies from forcibly taking our lands, we would also be able to protect our resources and livelihoods. We identified land grabbing as the root cause of our problems.

Sometimes, it might not be easy to identify the primary problem right away. You need to be flexible and adjust the focus of the research based on how people answer questions. For example, in another community, we initially believed that land-grabbing was the main issue, but during the research process, we saw that everyone was talking about the loss of access to water. We realized then that this was the main problem the community wanted to address, and we made sure our research report reflected that.

In Marange, our research team was made up of seven local youth, but in other cases, community leaders and organizers came together to lead the research. We surveyed people in small groups and encouraged women to speak up. If there were no women present, or the women were silent, we organized a second discussion with only women participants. We started the discussions by explaining the reasoning behind the research, and letting partici-

their communities to change how development is conceived and implemented.

Read more at:
bit.ly/IAP_GAT

The survey used in Mela's research is the *Survey Template* created by the Global Advocacy Team and is included in the Action Materials.



Zimbabwe

“ Sometimes, it might not be easy to identify the primary problem right away.

“ Today, people in Marange are making sure their voice is heard.

pants know that they had the right to withdraw if they felt uncomfortable or unsafe during the process. During some of the focus group meetings in Marange, armed soldiers from the military base in the area came to meetings and listened to what was being discussed. Community members refused to be intimidated. As one participant said, *“As long as what we are saying is the truth, we are not going to relent in our struggle for our lands and livelihoods.”*



The *Survey Template* we used was not designed to be rigid and allowed the community to tell their stories, even if specific questions were not asked in the survey. The smaller discussions gave us a lot of rich data which we analyzed along with the responses to the survey. We also conducted one-on-one interviews with people who did not feel comfortable taking the survey in a group. It was really important to include the perspectives of everyone in the community, and we made a point of reaching out to all those affected by the diamond mining operations and evictions.

The community-led research we carried out in Marange strengthened the struggle of our community in a remarkable way and was a powerful mobilizing tool in enabling communities to organize and rally behind a common agenda. Today, people in Marange are no longer afraid to openly talk about their problems with diamond mining, or to ask the government questions. Because the community owned the process and this research, they are making sure their voice is heard.



Questions for Discussion:

1. *How did the Marange community determine the most important issues to research?*
2. *What challenges did the research team face while conducting the research, and how did they respond?*
3. *What security measures did the community put in place to limit safety concerns?*

WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN YOUR RESEARCH?

23 Who is part of your research team?

26 **Heads up:** Create a security plan

27 Who are your allies, audiences, and influencers?

29 **Activity:** Finding allies

Great work identifying your research topic! While community-led research is a collective effort that involves the whole community, it is best to have a designated research team that will conduct the research and gather data from other community members. Together, you can decide on how to carry out the research, what roles and tools are needed, and a realistic timeframe to complete your research.

WHO IS PART OF YOUR RESEARCH TEAM?

Reach out to members of the community to form a research team. We recommend recruiting your team members early so they can be part of making key decisions. Look for people who are interested in the research topic, committed to the project objective, and who **represent the diversity of the community**. For example, you may want to consider how each team member can contribute best, including their capacity to attend meetings and activities, and their ability to speak other dialects used by members of the community.



Your research team will exchange information with the wider community, ask questions, and compile the information collected. The team should represent the many types of people in the community, especially those who may be underrepresented and excluded, and should have a proportionate balance between men and women.

The number of team members will depend on the scope of the research, but usually, at least 10 people will be needed. The team can also be a combination of civil society groups and community members - however, it is ideal when a majority of the team is composed of community members.

You can use tools such as the table below to make a shortlist of candidates for your research team. Think carefully about how their specific qualifications might fulfil your criteria:

CRITERIA	Alex	Sreymon	Umida
Mutual Interest?	Issues around fisheries	Impacts on women	Role of youth
Commitment?	Available to speak to his community	Strong commitment to entire process	Already has many responsibilities
Contribution?	Good at writing and drawing	Can lead the focus groups with women	Good with computers and technology
Represent Diversity?	Speaks local dialect	Represents women's group	Represents youth group
Trust?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Notes	Former staff member at a civil society group	-	Can support team to stay informed

Together with your team, understand why the research is happening, what your community wishes to achieve with the research, and what each team member's role will be. Find out if there are any barriers that might prevent full participation. What kind of training and support does your team need?

Team members should be comfortable communicating and interviewing participants one-on-one, in small groups, and in larger community-wide meetings.

Remember, the research is actually **an exchange of information**, each team member should understand any community-led development plans and any development projects which are part of the research.

Community members may learn about the research topic for the first time from the research team, so be prepared to explain and share what you know after the interview. This will help you accurately record the participant's level of knowledge before the interview begins.



CREATE A SECURITY PLAN



Your research team should assess all potential risks and have a plan to minimize them before beginning the research. When recruiting your team, first explain that there are potential risks they might face. As a team, do a risk and threat analysis together, and then ask if they still wish to participate.

Make sure you also analyze the risks that might be faced by participants, and identify how to mitigate these. Decide how to share this information with research participants, so that everyone involved is aware of the risks and mitigation measures in place.

***For help in creating your security plan, check out the Workbook on Security produced by Front Line Defenders:
<http://bit.ly/SecurityPlanFrontLineDefenders>*

WHO ARE YOUR ALLIES, AUDIENCES, AND INFLUENCERS?

Now that you have decided the research topic with your community and gathered a research team, you need to identify allies, influencers, and audiences.

An **ally** is someone that can help in different ways with your research. Members of your community may be busy with work or may not have the time to contribute to all stages of the research process. In such cases, reaching out to allies, such as university students and local civil society groups, can be very helpful.



For instance, a university student can offer technical support to design the research tool, or create a system to organize information. You may also con-

sider **seeking the advice and support of communities** who have already carried out a community-led research process, or other communities threatened by a similar project, company, or bank. If you feel it is safe to contact them, academics and members of the government could help analyze the research results and identify key findings and trends. Depending on your objectives, other allies like civil society organizations and artist collectives could also help organize the research results into a graph, a written report, or a video.

An **influencer** is someone who can affect or has control over part of the topic you are researching. Influencers could include project developers, financiers, media organizations, local officials, or other members of the government. If the aim of your community-led research is to achieve an advocacy objective, these influencers could also be the **target** of your research.

It is useful to think about how you want to engage with your target audience so that your research can have the most impact. If it is safe for the community and does not jeopardize the research or campaign, consider contacting decision-makers and key officials who may have information about your research topic. Explore what influences them and decide in advance if and how you would like to engage with them. Again, if it is safe, schedule a meeting or phone call to inform them about the research. If you have a good relationship with them, find out what questions they would like answered by the community-led research. Local, national, and international civil society organizations can provide additional research information and, when the research is complete, **amplify the message** to reach target audiences and decision-makers.

When reaching out to allies, influencers, and target audiences, collectively decide on a clear, simple message. Carefully document and organize these communications and maintain written records of meetings and conversations.



FINDING ALLIES



Objectives:

To identify and visually map possible allies, influencers, and audiences for your community-led research



Time: 60 to 90 minutes



Materials:

Flipchart paper, sticky notes or colored papers with tape, pens, markers, or other writing instruments

INSTRUCTIONS

Before conducting this activity, prepare a flipchart paper with the following table:

Who is affected by the topic we identified?	Who is already involved in this topic?
Who can influence the situation?	Who has experience with research and lives near us?

- 1 In a group, carefully consider each question, one at a time. Write down the names of each person or organization on pieces of colored paper or sticky notes, as they are identified. These can be government, civil society, companies, banks, or investors. On the question of “influence”, think about whether or not this person or organization has the power or resources to change the situation, perhaps by enforcing existing laws, or negotiating on your behalf. In other words, if they act and things immediately change, they are an influencer.
- 2 Place the sticky notes or papers in each box on the flipchart. See example below:

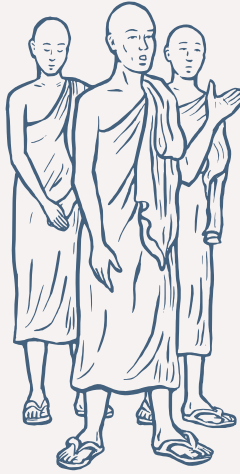
<p>Who is affected by the topic we identified?</p> <p>Villagers from downstream</p> <p>Monks</p>	<p>Who is already working on our case?</p> <p>Lawyer</p>
<p>Who can influence the situation?</p> <p>Provincial Government</p> <p>Minister of Energy</p>	<p>Who has experience doing research and lives nearby?</p> <p>University Students</p> <p>School Teachers</p>

- 3 Add a circle to the table with the question, “Who can we work with?” in the center. Ask the team which groups seem most important to work with, based on the people identified earlier. Move them from each box into the circle.



- 4 Look closely at the actors you have placed in the circle. Discuss why they would want to be your allies, what their interests and motivations might be, what they can help you with, and how you want to work with them.

For example:



Monks can help share the research project with the wider community, and can host meetings in the temple



School teachers in our village can help analyze the data



University students can help take notes during interviews and meetings

5 Pay attention to those inside the circle of “Who can influence the situation?” These are your target audiences. Think about possible ways to approach them. Try to find out what newspaper they read, what radio or TV programs they listen to, and perhaps even their online social media accounts! Maybe you need a middle person who can introduce you to them, or set up a meeting for you.

→ The people you have left outside the circle can also be important to work with, but you may not know enough about them, or trust them yet. Keep them on your radar as you may want to approach them in the future.

6 We recommend copying your map onto a separate paper you can save. You will be able to use this same map for your security analysis, and to identify target audiences for your research findings.

Debrief: It is helpful to have as much information as possible about who can or cannot be your ally. Building allies starts with building trust. Allies should not lead or dominate what your community wants. Keep in mind that relationships with your allies can also change over time. It may be good to revisit your chart periodically.

HOW WILL YOU CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH?

- 35 Designing your research tool
- 39 **Activity:** Know your neighbours
- 42 Experiences with community-led research: Sukhgerel's story
- 46 Train your team
- 49 **Heads up:** Safety and security in communication
- 50 Collect your data
- 54 **Heads up:** Safety and security in data collection

At this point, you know what your research is about and who will be involved. Now, how do you actually conduct community-led research? Before you can begin gathering your data, it is important that you first design your research tool and set up your data collection system.

DESIGNING YOUR RESEARCH TOOL

Community-led research can be conducted using a combination of different methods which may include surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. The example we will discuss is the *Community-led Survey Template*. For more information about other research tools see the following resources:

- Focus Group Discussions:
<http://bit.ly/NetworkedToolboxFocusGroup>
- Interviews:
<http://bit.ly/CommunityToolboxInterviews>
- Community Mapping:
<http://bit.ly/ResearchForOrganizingCommunityMapping>
- Community Priorities:
<http://bit.ly/NaturalJusticeCommunityProtocolsToolkit>

A **survey** is a method of gathering the opinions or experiences of a group of people by asking questions.

A *Community-led Survey*, unlike a conventional survey, is not only about collecting information - it also allows for information and insights to be exchanged between the community and the research team. Some advantages and disadvantages of using this research tool are:

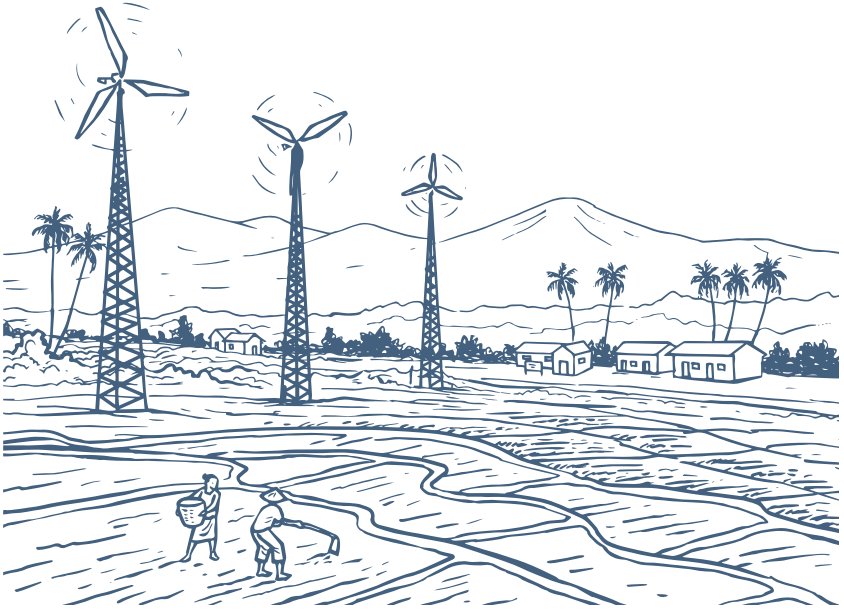


Advantages of Using a Survey	Disadvantages of Using a Survey
Because there is a standard set of questions, trends and relationships can be easily identified	Social and legal realities may make it difficult to have a representative sample of the entire community
Can be done on a large scale, and include responses from a great number of people	Must consider language and literacy of participants
Seen as a scientific or objective research method	Need to ensure questions are understood by participants
Produces numerical results and generalized data that policy makers and media tend to prefer	Answers are often simplistic or limited by the choices presented, and require a combination of methods such as individual interviews or focus group discussion to get detailed and complex answers
Allows participants to remain anonymous so people can be more candid about their experiences and opinions	Realities and attitudes change which may affect the accuracy of the responses over time
Often inexpensive to collect, facilitate, and consolidate data	Skills and guidance materials are needed to conduct the research

***This chart was inspired by p. 24 of Rutgers WPF's "Manual for Training Young People as Researchers". You can access this resource at <http://bit.ly/ManualforYoungResearchers>*

If your team decides to carry out a *Community-led Survey*, make sure the questions are **focused, easy to understand, and designed in a collaborative manner**. Survey questions can cover a wide variety of topics, depending on the objectives of the community-led research. For example, you can decide some questions have a "Yes" or "No" response, a choice of possible answers, or a space for open comments. Responses can be based on personal experiences, or be aspirational about what development the community wants, if any.

Imagine community members may lose their homes to make way for the construction of wind turbines.



If you want to know what the community thinks about this project, what kinds of questions would you ask?

Write your ideas here:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Consider questions like:

1. *If you must move, how will your children be affected?*
2. *If you must move, how will your job or livelihood be affected?*
3. *If you must move, what common resources or sites (such as schools, temples, or rivers) will you lose?*

Go through the draft survey together with your research team to ensure questions are **clear, organized, and easy to understand**. Encourage your team to build confidence by practicing interviewing one another. Estimate the time it would take to complete the research and plan the community meeting or outreach visits accordingly.

To complement this Guide, we have included in the Action Materials our *Survey Template for Community-Led Research* created by community activists that has been tested worldwide. There is also guidance explaining the reasoning behind the questions, and suggestions on ways to ask the various types of questions. Use or adapt this *Survey Template*, or create a new one for your community!



KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS



Objectives:

To become familiar with the *Survey Template* questions and practice interviewing community members



Time: 1 hour



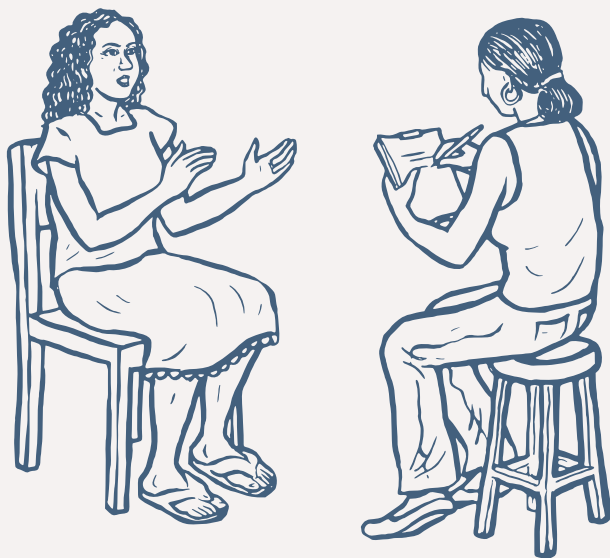
Materials:

Pen, copies of *Survey Template for Community-led Research* (included in the Action Materials)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Ask participants to find a partner and give each pair a hard copy of the *Survey Template*. Pretend you are going to interview your neighbors using the example survey. Emphasize that participants should try to answer based on their experiences.
- 2 Ask each pair to find a comfortable spot to sit down and start the exercise. Explain that each participant will interview their partner for 20 minutes by asking questions from the *Survey Template*, listening to their responses, and writing them down.
- 3 After 10 minutes, ask everyone to pause and take a look at the responses. Ask the person being interviewed to check if the inter-

viewer has written down their explanation or comments accurately. You may want to share an example with the group, and emphasize the importance of taking detailed notes when conducting the survey.



- 4** After another 10 minutes, switch roles - the person who was asking questions before will now answer them. Continue with the same process, repeating Steps 2 and 3 .
- 5** After all pairs have had the opportunity to interview each other, come back to the big group, and ask each pair to reflect on how the interview went. Ask questions such as:
 - *Did you feel comfortable answering questions?*
 - *Were there any difficulties asking questions?*
 - *How did it feel conducting an interview?*
 - *What did you do to make your partner feel comfortable during the interview?*
 - *How did it feel being interviewed?*
 - *Are there any questions that were unclear?*

- 6 Invite participants to give feedback on each other's interviewing techniques and make recommendations on how to help adjust and improve the *Survey Template* questions to best fit your community's context.
- 7 Take 5 to 10 minutes to discuss specific questions that need to be changed or clarified, and add any important questions that might be missing from the *Survey Template* .

Debrief: Researchers must be good listeners. Listen to what the respondents say. Read each question out loud, clearly and slowly. Give your respondent as much time as they need to express themselves. Don't interrupt or judge their responses. Observe their body language and take a break if they become overwhelmed. It can sometimes be stressful to be interviewed!

Facilitator's Note: This exercise will help your team practice their interviewing skills and become familiar with the *Survey Template* style and questions. It is important that participants have enough time to go through every question. However, if you have a limited amount of time, you can adjust the exercise so that participants do not feel that they need to complete the entire *Survey Template* at once.

Experiences with community-led research:

SUKHGEREL'S STORY

Hello, my name is Sukhgerel! I work for an organization that supports nomadic communities in Mongolia, and ensures development institutions respect human and environmental rights.

Over the last few years, I have been working with nomadic herding communities that have been displaced by the Oyu Tolgoi and Tayan Nuur mines in Mongolia. Together with a local organization, we conducted community-led research to understand what people thought about the mines, and shared this information with the development institutions funding the projects.

The communities identified the research topic themselves. We sat down with the community of affected herders and identified the issues that were the most important to them. Resettlement and compensation were at the top of the list as communities had already lost their land to the mines. Everyone agreed that they wanted adequate compensation, and this became the objective of our advo-



Sukhgerel Dugersuren is the Executive Director of OT Watch, a Mongolian organization that monitors the Oyu Tolgoi copper mine in the Gobi Desert, which has taken the grazing lands and water of nomadic herders. See Sukhgerel's story depicted in a graphic novel by Front Line Defenders:

bit.ly/FrontLineSukhgerel

Sukhgerel is a part of IAP's Global Advocacy Team, an initiative which brings together community organizers who experience development projects firsthand to conduct community-led research and mobilize their communities to change how development is

cacy. However, agreeing on what “adequate” meant needed some discussion!

Our first step was to hold trainings for the entire community on human rights and relevant international standards. After this, our research team came together naturally and included 5 herders from the affected communities. We supported the team by guiding them through the research process and providing them with more information about the impacts of mines and the policies of the development banks that were involved. We explained the purpose of the survey and the rationale behind each question. Because we were using a general *Survey Template*, there were questions that needed further explanation or adaptation to fit the Mongolian context.

Since we were working with nomadic communities, it was difficult to gather the entire community together in one place. Instead, our researchers went door-to-door and spoke with different families. The distances we had to travel were very large - in the Gobi region, a herder family’s closest neighbours can be 5 km away! We also asked the governor of the region to set up a meeting where we were able to survey 20 households. We decided to also interview local administration employees to see how different

conceived and implemented. Read more at: bit.ly/IAP_GAT

The survey used in Sukhgerel’s research is the *Survey Template* created by the Global Advocacy Team and is included in the Action Materials.



Mongolia

“ We conducted community-led research to understand what people thought about the mines.

“ Our first step was to hold trainings for the entire community on human rights and relevant international standards.

their answers were, compared to those given by the communities. In total, we interviewed 100 people.

When conducting the research, we read each question out loud, explained what it meant, and waited as families filled out their answers. Bringing people together in one room was an easy way to reach more community members, but we found that in this setting, participants tended to listen and agree with a group opinion. The responses we received from the door-to-door survey had the benefit of better showcasing individual opinions.



We had help in translating and analyzing the data from volunteer groups of students who spoke English. During the translation process, we were able to identify some key recommendations. We received funding to deliver the

results of the research back to the community, however because of the large distances involved, it was difficult to reach everyone who had participated in the survey.

The community-led research process helped inform the community about the project and their rights, and reach a consensus about their priorities. Today, members from these affected communities share their knowledge with others who are facing similar problems. Sharing the *Survey Template* with communities that are yet to be affected by projects has also been very useful in making sure they know what issues and questions are important to raise when speaking with project planners. The *Survey Template* has become an important tool in helping people think about these issues, and about what development means to them.



Questions for Discussion:

1. *Who joined the research team and how was the team formed?*
2. *What methods did Sukhgerel and the team use to collect the data?*
3. *When conducting their research, Sukhgerel and her team had to overcome the challenge of traveling long distances in order to reach community members. What logistical challenges might you face in conducting your research, and how will you address them?*

TRAIN YOUR TEAM

Now that your team has had some practice interviewing and using the *Survey Template*, brainstorm some “ground rules” or guidelines for how team members should conduct themselves with community members participating in the research, and with allies outside of the community. Consider starting this brainstorming session with the following:

- Ask team members to think about and share the best interview experience they have had, and reflect on what made that discussion satisfying
- Ask team members to think about and share the worst interview experience they have had, and reflect on what made that discussion unsatisfying
- Invite each team member to suggest one thing they could do to make sure the best interview experience can happen each time
- Invite each team member to suggest one thing they could do to prevent or address difficult situations during the interview, such as if a participant begins to become very emotional, or if the interview is interrupted by authorities

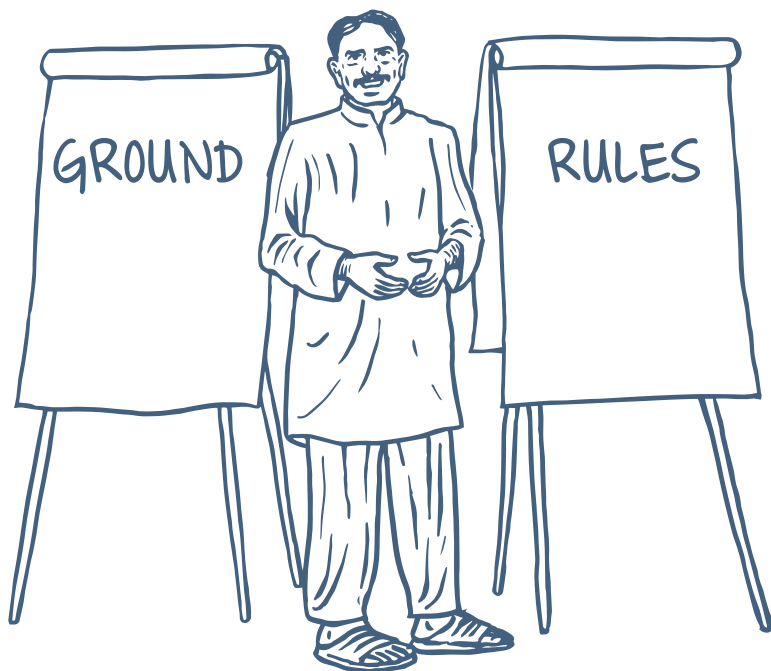
Think about how your project might affect those involved. Write down the responses to the questions above, and ask everyone if they agree or disagree with each suggestion.

These are the beginnings of your guidelines. Here are some examples you can consider including:

- Introduce yourself properly, and explain the purpose of the research clearly and honestly
- Ask for consent from community members before involving them in the research, and inform them that information shared will be kept confidential
- Explain that the participant has the right to withdraw from the research at any time
- Listen actively and attentively
- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses - they can be as disrespectful as words

- Respect people's privacy
- If you are not sure you understand the participant's response, ask for clarification
- If someone asks for your help or advice and you cannot give it yourself, refer to a colleague or specialist
- Commit that the research team will protect the identity of all participants, and that no one outside the research team will be able to identify their individual responses
- Keep the *Survey Template* and data safe and confidential

Remember, the goal is not to agree with participants, but to gain a deeper understanding of their thoughts and ideas about the research topic.



It is important to remain neutral during the survey process. To discuss this potential challenge, read the following example to your research team and discuss in a group.

“You are a research team conducting a survey with members of your community. During an interview, a participant refers to a recent conflict involving a close family member of yours. You are doing your best to remain neutral, but as the conversation becomes very emotional, the participant makes a comment that you believe does not fairly represent the conflict. What do you do?”



Questions for Discussion:

1. *What would you do to respond to the situation?*
2. *Has the research team encountered this issue before?*
3. *What can the team do to acknowledge the participant, but also remain neutral?*

***This exercise is adapted from Ethical Dilemmas in Community-Based Research Activity in Community-Based Research Toolkit by Access Alliance. For more, see p.132-136 at http://bit.ly/CBR_Toolkit.*

SAFETY AND SECURITY IN COMMUNICATION



Before starting your data collection, make sure your security plan addresses potential safety issues in communication and keeps all data confidential.

Take measures to secure the identities of your research team and your respondents. The research team and those participating might be targeted for their role in the community-led research. In these situations, it is important to keep identities confidential. For example, in one community, authorities came to ask, “*Who is the leader of the community’s research and campaign?*” The community members did not give any specific name, and started calling every single member in the village “leader” after this incident, to avoid identification.

One safety measure you can take is to secure communication amongst your team members. You can do this by avoiding sharing sensitive information over email and using encrypted messaging services when communicating by phone.

For more useful information and tips about digital security, see Security in a Box: <http://bit.ly/SecurityInABox>

COLLECT YOUR DATA

At this point, your team is trained and your research tool is designed. It's time to collect your data and conduct your research!

To help identify participants, **consult people** who are active in community organizations and know many people in the community. Determine how the research team will integrate people regularly underrepresented or neglected in community conversations. Within your team, answer the following questions:

- *Who are we going to ask? How will we make sure we collect data from a group that will be representative of the community?*
- *What are the reasons for selecting them specifically?*
- *How many people are we going to speak with?*
- *What are the potential challenges we might face in reaching or accessing our participants? How will we address these?*

Involving the entire community in the research process may not be possible. To collect a **representative sample of viewpoints**, set a goal to conduct the research process with at least 100 people. The sample should cover different groups within the targeted communities.

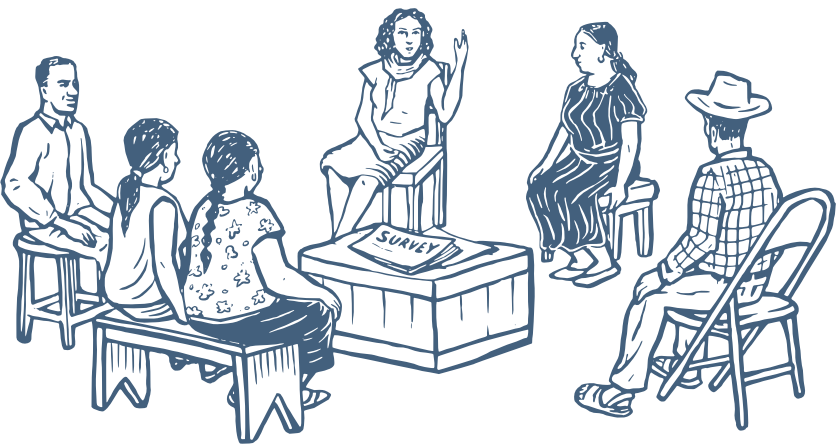


For example, if you are going to collect 100 surveys in five villages, the research team should speak to people from each of the villages, not just one or two. If some people decide not to participate in the community-led research, make sure the research team knows who they are.

Once you have decided who you will speak with, organize and plan your research process. Consider the following:

- Set out a timeline for how long it will take to speak with participants
- Make copies of the *Survey Template* and number them to help you keep track
- Give prior notice when requesting an interview with participants
- Carry out your research at a time and place that will be safe and convenient for most participants
- Make sure to consider the livelihoods, seasonal cycles, and culture of the community. For example, if most community members work in the fields during the day in the summer, you might want to conduct your research in the evenings

When beginning your conversation with a research participant, remember your guidelines and be prepared to share information so that they are fully informed about the research topic. Your introduction might look something like this:



- Tell the participant who you are, which community you are from, or which organization you are with
- Explain the purpose of the research - what the research is about and why it is being conducted
- Explain how you are going to use the information given by them
- Explain that they have the right to anonymity and confidentiality, and that they can withdraw their participation at any point during the research process
- Ask if the participant has any questions before you start
- Ask if they want to participate in the research - this is called asking for "informed consent"

Not everyone in a community may be able to read or write, so consider multiple ways to gather information.



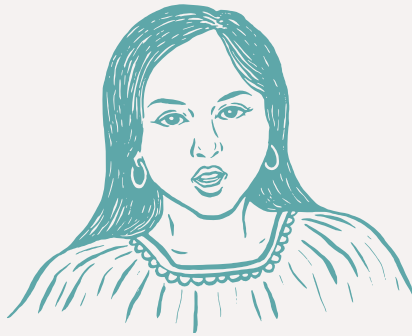
Your research team may discuss questions one-on-one and record an individual's answers and comments. Or, you can gather participants in small groups of less than 10 people and have the research team ask questions for the group to discuss and record collectively.

When recording responses, it is important to record both the answer chosen by participants, and any quotes that provide more detail on their response. This will help in understanding trends when analyzing the data.

When conducting surveys, research team members should ask one question at a time. Remember, the survey process is an exchange of information, so listen carefully, don't interrupt or comment on anyone's responses, and give participants enough time to respond to each question. Sometimes people may become emotional when remembering traumatic experiences. **Be supportive and patient.** These tips will encourage people to open up and tell their story.



SAFETY AND SECURITY IN DATA COLLECTION



To help protect your research team and participants, set rules on how photos, videos, and quotes may be used, and ask permission before using this data. Other safety considerations include:

- Conduct your research with caution
 - In highly sensitive areas, if you don't live in that village, plan to stay in a different place every night. Wear clothes that blend in with other community members
 - Carrying hard copies of the Survey Template can raise suspicion from authorities. Consider using every day electronic devices, like mobile phones, to conduct your research. For example, you could take a picture of the Survey Template on your phone, read questions from it, then record answers in writing and online
- Secure the data you collect
 - Keep all hard copies of data under lock and key
 - If a participant wants to stay in touch with the research team, store information about their identity separately from the survey answers
 - Ensure any digital data can only be accessed with secure passwords

UNDERSTANDING AND SHARING YOUR FINDINGS

Organize your findings 56

Activity: Who needs computers to count? 57

Heads up: Engage the community throughout 60

Analyze your findings 61

Share your findings 65

Activity: Getting into their shoes 66

Together, take action! 70

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So, you've gathered and trained your research team, spoken to community members, and collected your data. **Congratulations!** You now have the results from the community-led research.

What's next?

Understanding the opinions and ideas of the community and then sharing them with your target audience can sometimes feel like a big task. Based on our experiences, we've put together a few ideas and suggestions to help guide you through this process.

ORGANIZE YOUR FINDINGS

Organizing your research will help your research team, allies, and community members analyze the results. Ensure that the system you set up for organizing the research carefully protects the identity of community members.



Programs such as SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, or the KoBo Toolbox analyze survey data automatically, but require an internet connection and may not be available in the local language of the community. Some may also

charge a fee. If you are unable to access this software, the research team can still calculate and validate the data manually.

After all the data has been organized, you will want to examine and analyze the results together with your research team. Look for key trends and patterns, and seek to understand common thoughts on the research question. An ally with data analysis experience can be helpful here!



WHO NEEDS COMPUTERS TO COUNT?



Objectives:

To train the research team to analyze data collected by hand, without using software



Time: 1 to 2 hours



Materials:

Copies of completed surveys, flipchart paper, marker, sticky notes, or pieces of coloured paper



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Make a copy of each survey and number them, if you did not already do so during data collection. To protect participants, ensure the originals are stored in a safe and secure place.
- 2 Gather all copies of completed surveys and organize them in order. Depending on the number of people you have helping you analyze the results, divide into groups and share these copies within the groups. To help validate the data collection, make sure team members are not reviewing the same surveys they conducted.



- 3 Put flipchart paper on the wall to help you record the results while counting responses to each question. For each question, write down the question number and any available answer options. Or, if you have the resources, consider printing out each *Survey Template* question on a separate sheet of paper to record the answers.

- 4 For each question in the *Survey Template*, ask each group to count the number of responses for each answer option available. Note these numbers on the flipchart paper, beside the corresponding answer. For example:

How would you describe yourself? Please check all that apply to you.

- I belong to an indigenous community $20+10+20=50$
- I am a member of a religious or ethnic minority
 $0+10+5=15$
- I am a migrant from another province, state or city
- I am a member of a discriminated group
or class $3+10+5 = 38$

Comments:

- 5 For questions that do not have answer options and ask for a comment instead, write down the different themes or types of responses as a separate answer.
- 6 After recording the number of responses for each option, ask your team to look carefully at any comments written in the comment box. Underline the comments that give specific details. This could include information about what, who, how, and when things happened, and requests, recommendations, pleas, or opinions directly related to the problem. Note these comments on the flipchart paper.
- 7 Repeat Steps 3 and 4 for every question in the *Survey Template*.
- 8 Copy the results onto a separate sheet of paper. You will use this later in your analysis.



ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT



It is very important for the research team to update and involve the broader community regularly and throughout the research process, so that it remains a collective effort. Set up a process to communicate the activities and times when the community should gather for review and input.

1. At the very beginning of the process, share and confirm information about the research team's plans and goals with the wider community.
2. When the research process is ready to begin, share information about how the research will be carried out.
3. Review the initial findings with the wider community before finalizing or sharing the results publicly.
4. Ask the community to verify and analyze the findings, and to prioritize the research that is most important for their objectives or campaign.

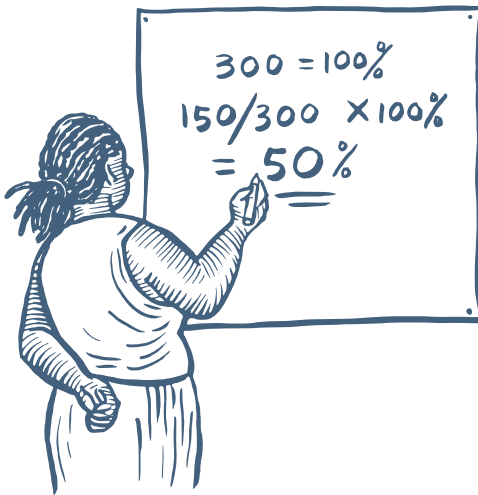
ANALYZE YOUR FINDINGS

There are different ways that you can understand what the data is saying - what the community is saying. The easiest way to begin is to review each question, calculate the percentage of people who selected each answer, and note down any similar ideas or comments.

How do you calculate percentages?

A **percentage** is a way to express a number as a part of a whole. Percentages make it easy to understand how much of the community responded in the same way to a research question. For example, instead of saying 240 out of 300 people said that they did not know who is financing the project, you can say 80% of the people did not know who is financing the project. Converting these numbers into percentages will also help you identify trends more easily in your analysis.

To calculate a percentage, we look at the whole as equal to 100%.



For example, if your research included 300 people, 100% of those interviewed would refer to all 300 people. In this scenario, if 150 people answered “yes” to the question, then you have 150 out of 300 people. To convert this into a percentage, divide 150 by 300. If you calculate this, you will find out that 0.5 of the whole, or 50% said yes, and 50% responded with another answer.

There may be questions that apply only to specific participants, and not the whole group. In these situations, divide the answer by the total number of people who answered the questions. Using this method, your answer would be representative of those who answered.

You can practice with the following scenario:

You have collected a total of 200 surveys. Below are the responses you have gathered for the question, **“Has your quality of life changed as a result of the project?”** Please calculate and fill in the percentage of participants that selected each answer.

Response	# of People Who Selected This Answer	Percentage (%)?
1) My quality of life improved.	40 people	
2) My quality of life was made worse.	135 people	
3) There has been no change to my quality of life.	25 people	

Answers:



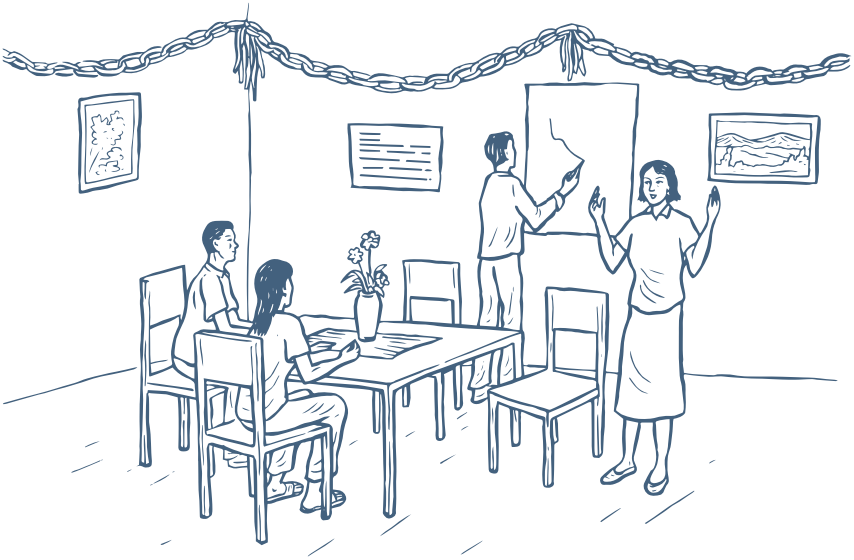
- 1) 20%
- 2) 67.5%
- 3) 12.5%

Now that you know how to calculate percentages, here are a few ways to use them to understand your data:

- *How did community members respond to each question?*

You can start by looking at the different responses given by community members to each question. Calculate the percentage of people who responded in the same way. What do their answers tell you? What do they think about the question? Based on their responses, how does this question fit into the community's overall opinion about the project or research topic?

- *Looking at all the responses, are there any larger trends you see?*



Do you see any common themes in the responses? Try to write these out as sentences. For example:

- 49% of respondents agreed with the project as it was planned, while other participants wanted to propose changes to the project, or have it stopped altogether. Those who disagreed

felt they had no other option but to move from their land, as no alternatives were provided.

- Most of the community members who responded did not know the resettlement process and were not informed of their rights.

Do you think the sentences you have written out reflect what the community has been saying?

- *What are some findings which strike you as important for your research objectives?*

With your research team, identify your key findings. For example, out of the total respondents:

- 90% were not consulted by any government about their community's development priorities.
- 62.35% think that the investors involved in this project will benefit.
- 6.87% believe they will benefit from the project.

Beyond percentages and other numerical data, **pay attention to people's stories** and comments. For example, maybe you find that in a community where people were forcibly evicted, many have shared stories of physical violence. Telling individual stories through quotes reveals the people behind the numbers, and can make the research more compelling and personal. While you must always protect information about those who participated, some may wish their stories to be made public. Remember to obtain their consent before using the story publicly.

After analyzing your findings, **go back to the community** and share the results your research team has identified. Create a first draft (and maybe a second and third draft) of the research findings and share it with the community. Seek their feedback and ask what to prioritize in the research findings. Ask them, *"Is this what you think? This is your research. Does this analysis express the truth of your ideas, opinions, and priorities?"* Different formats of the results may be needed. For example, if the final product is a report and not everyone in the community reads, perhaps create a photo presentation to share the key ideas from the report.



If safe, consider asking the allies, influencers, and decision-makers you may have contacted at the beginning of the research process for feedback. If helpful, set a date for a meeting beforehand, and ask them to **review the research** and initial recommendations before making them public. However, their feedback should not change the priorities recommended by the communities.

Once the community has verified the results and all inputs have been received, finalize the research and recommendations. Now, it's time to share your findings!

SHARE YOUR FINDINGS

Once the community has decided that their research findings accurately represent what they think, it is time to share this message with your target audience! Think again about who your key audiences are. Ask yourself, who needs to **hear the community's voice** in order to make a difference? What is the best way for them to receive and act upon the research and recommendations?



GETTING INTO THEIR SHOES



Objectives:

To identify key audiences for your research and understand their position and interests



Time: 45 minutes to 1 hour



Materials:

Small cards, markers, tape

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Bring together all the members of your research team. Revisit the allies and influencers map you drew earlier and saved from the previous activity.
- 2 Write the name of each of the influencers you had previously identified on a card or a small piece of paper. Ask your team to stand in a circle. Put the cards in the middle and ask each member to pick one card and return to the circle.
- 3 Ask everyone to look at their card and pretend to be that person. Ask everyone to slowly start walking clockwise around the circle. While walking, ask everyone to think about a few questions, pretending to be that person:
 - a. What time do you wake up in the morning?
 - b. What do you usually do at 10 o'clock in the morning?
 - c. What do you have for lunch?
 - d. What kinds of people do you meet each day?

Then, ask your team to imagine how the person might walk and start walking like them. Continue asking questions to get your team members to explore what that person's interests are, and what aspects of your research topic they would care about.



- 4 Tell everyone to stop walking and ask, *why would this person support our goal?* Then ask each team member to say the imagined response out loud. *"I will support this community because..."*
- 5 Invite your team to guess who each person is pretending to be, and once revealed, tape the card with the name of the influencer on the wall.

Debrief: The team may not have enough information to understand each of the influencers. It's good to know what the gaps are. Your team can review your allies together to see who may be able to help you understand the various interests, positions, and abilities of the influencers to support your goal.

There are many different ways to share your research. You might decide that your community wants to give an interview on TV, so that the whole country can hear about your experiences and ideas. Or, you might want to talk privately with government officials to share your recommendations. Or, you might want to do both! If your target audience is outside your community or country, allies with existing relationships may provide advice and help you get access.

Consider how your research team and community will share the research and recommendations. Is a written report the best way? If so, how long would the report be, and what will convince the audience to read it? Should you do an in-person presentation, or create protest signs, a video, infographic, or website? Allies can help you – whether it's a volunteer video editor, a graphic designer, or an artist. **Be strategic and creative!**

Here are a few examples of different ways you could share your research:

WRITE A REPORT



For examples of community reports see:

- <http://bit.ly/LilongweWaterProjectCommunityOutreachReport>
- http://bit.ly/IAP_GAT

CREATE A DATA VISUALIZATION



This can be drawn by hand or done online. For free digital infographic templates see:

- www.canva.com

For examples of infographics based on community-led research see:

- <http://bit.ly/8StepstoCommunityLedDevelopment>
- <http://bit.ly/MalawiCommunityInfographic>
- <http://bit.ly/PanamaCommunityInfographic>

MAKE SOME ART



This could be through theatre, dance, graffiti, photography, painting, sculpture, or any other form of expression!

ORGANIZE A COLLECTIVE ACTION



This could include people inside and outside your community, and could be a protest, march, or other form of action taken together as a group.

SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR WITH MEDIA OUTLETS



Use the hashtag (#) or the at (@) to target specific accounts. For more information on doing activism through social media see:

- <http://bit.ly/SocialMediaStrategiesforAdvocacy>
-

HOLD EVENTS



You could hold events to share your findings, and promote any of the other creative actions discussed above.

Whichever medium you choose to share the community's findings, it is important that the community is involved throughout the process. If the research process is one part of a larger community-led campaign, **sharing the results with the right people** in the right way can make a big difference.

After the advocacy has started, take a moment to invite your research team to reflect on how they feel about the overall process, measure where you are in reaching your objectives, discuss any challenges, and consider adjustments to the campaign in its next steps. This can be **a learning and**

celebratory process for both individuals and the wider community. Reflections may happen at each step of the research process as well.

TOGETHER, TAKE ACTION!

Sharing the research and recommendations can be an important step in demanding change, as well as in mobilizing and informing others about the community's development plans and ideas. Follow the timeline set out at the beginning of the community-led research process, review each step regularly, and adjust the approach to take advantage of victories and new opportunities.

Other communities, social movements or civil society groups may benefit from your research and recommendations and may want to understand how the community-led research was conducted. Consider sharing your work with them!

Experiences with community-led research:

ELIAS' STORY

Hi, I am Elias! I support communities in Malawi to voice their ideas so that they are part of the development processes that affect them.

In 2016, we found out that the government of Malawi wanted to build a dam on the Diamphwe River. The project would have directly affected the homes, livelihoods, and environment of over 6,000 people! At the time, there was not much information on what people knew about the project and its impacts. To understand this, my organization partnered with IAP to conduct community-led research. Over a period of 3 weeks, we surveyed 129 people, held focus group discussions, and convened meetings to share information with over 700 people who would be affected. We wanted to use the findings of this research to support communities in their efforts to raise concerns with project planners and funders.

To begin our research, we first formed research teams with each of the affected communities. Each team was made



Elias Jika worked with Citizens for Justice (CFJ) to conduct community-led research with communities that would be affected by the Diamphwe Dam in Malawi.

You can read the results of the community-led research in the community's report at bit.ly/LWPREport and see their infographic in English at bit.ly/MalawiInfographic_EN, and in Chichewa at bit.ly/MalawiInfographic_CH

The survey used in Elias' research was adapted from and created by IAP's Global Advocacy Team. The Global Advocacy Team initiative brings together community organizers who experience develop-

up of 5 to 7 people, including people from my organization and community members. We tried to make sure each team had at least one woman from the community itself, so that women in the community would feel comfortable sharing their opinions.

After adapting the *Survey Template* to fit the local context, we organized meetings to interview a sample of those affected. We made sure community leaders were involved in the entire process, and they helped us understand the community's schedule. For example, they told us that during the growing season, people were very busy and would not have much time to talk. Meetings were usually held at soccer fields, schools, or churches. We would speak with the community as a whole and then break into smaller discussions and one-on-one interviews.

We actively encouraged the participation of women, the elders, and other underrepresented groups. In meetings, men often outnumbered women, but we used the one-on-one surveys to ensure an equal number of men and women were interviewed.

We gathered and analyzed everyone's answers and shared our findings in a report. With help from IAP, we were able to share our research with the three de-

ment projects first-hand, to conduct community-led research and mobilize their communities to change how development is conceived and implemented. Read more at: bit.ly/IAP_GAT You can find the *Survey Template* in the Action Materials.

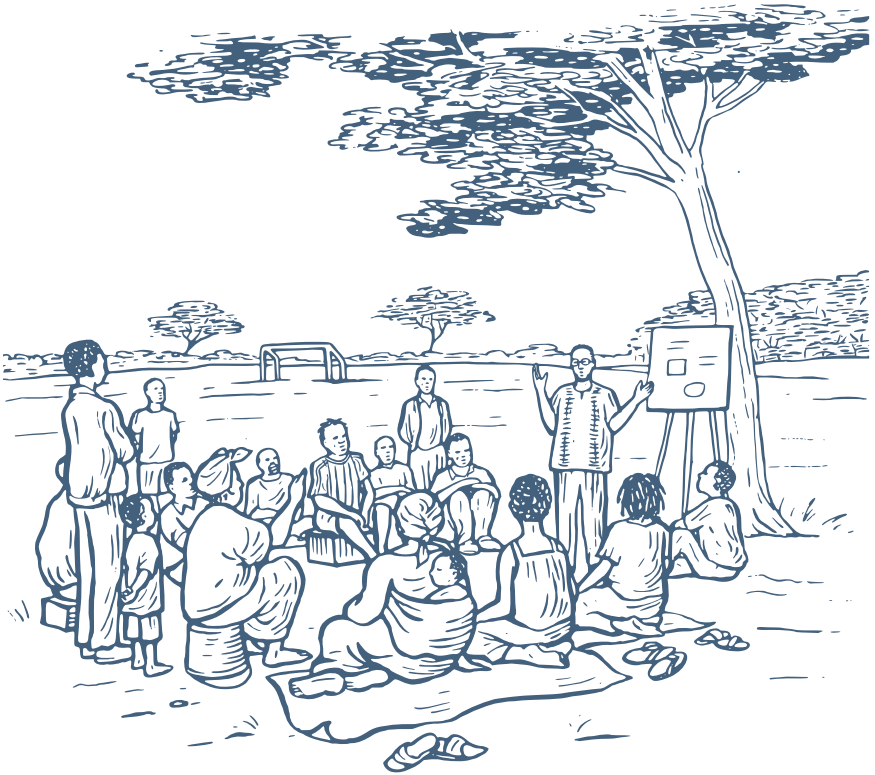


Malawi

“ We used the one-on-one surveys to ensure an equal number of men and women were interviewed

“ I was amazed to see how communities took matters into their own hands

velopment banks that were considering funding the dam. The government of Malawi was also contacted and made aware of the research findings. In order to protect community members from any backlash, we did not include information about the names of the people who had participated in the research, or the exact communities they had come from.



After reading the community's recommendations on compensation, resettlement, and livelihood restoration, the three development banks realized that a dam on the Diamphwe River would cause too much harm. So, one by one, each of the three banks decided they would not give money to the project. While other banks and companies could still fund the dam in the future, for now, the communities' voices were heard and respected.

Throughout this research process, I was amazed to see how communities took matters into their own hands, and were empowered to act for themselves. They sat down together and collectively made decisions about what their next steps should be. Because of the success of their campaign, they are claiming their power to shape their own development!



Questions for Discussion:

1. *How did Elias and his team ensure that the research included all perspectives in the community?*
2. *Who were the target audiences of this community-led research, and what were their roles in the project?*
3. *How did the research influence the project?*



ACTION MATERIALS

Congratulations - you've finished IAP's *Community Action Guide on Community-Led Research*! We hope you feel ready to start conducting community-led research on your own. To help you get started we have included a few resources:

1. A Checklist to Support Community-led Research

This resource outlines all of the steps we walked you through in this Guide. You can detach this *Checklist*, make copies, and use it as a reminder of all the steps involved when conducting your community-led research.

2. A Survey Template for Community-led Research

Use this *Survey Template* to help inform your community-led research. Feel free to adapt to your community's context, or use as inspiration to create your own!



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