3. THE DIFFERENT STAGES

A gendered participatory appraisal has nine stages, shown in the table below. These need to be taken in order, though some will take much longer than others. Stages 1 – 4 are preparation and consultation, Stage 5 and 6 are the bulk of the work – interviewing and analysis, Stage 7 is checking these stages, Stage 8 is planning the action resulting from the appraisal, and Stage 9 is evaluation of and reflection on the whole process.

Following the table is an explanation, with case study examples, of each stage.

Each of the tools in Section 4 of this report can be used for different stages, and there is a table at the top of each tool to show which is most appropriate for which stage.

The stages of a gendered participatory process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage in process</th>
<th>Questions to keep asking throughout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Why are we doing this? Who has the power to define the aims? Are there any gender dimensions to these aims? Who is defining them? Who has been involved in defining them, and who hasn’t? Does everyone in the implementing team understand what gender is and what participation means? Check for gender bias within the team – do you have an equal number of men and women?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining the aims and understanding the issues</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Which decision-makers? Who should be involved? Community members/ local authority officials/voluntary sector representatives? How to ensure that community organisations are central to the process? How aware are the different stakeholders of the need for a gendered approach?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising awareness</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage with decision-makers and stakeholders</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Do activists need training in PA or in gender issues? Have you set realistic targets? Balanced short, medium and long term aims? How will you reach marginalised women and men, young and old, equally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning what you want to do and training to do it</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Allow days for reflection and review. Allow time for thinking about gender issues – both in terms of who is involved and the issues raised. Allow time for analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a timeline</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What men and women want

**A practical guide to gender and participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Engaging with men and women. Including all sections of the community. Ensure there is a review period to check which groups and people aren’t involved in the process. Are the right issues being covered? Are gender issues being raised? Who isn’t speaking and why? Create space for, and encourage discussion of, issues which draw different responses from men and women.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 6</strong></td>
<td>Analyse findings according to gender, age and other diversities if necessary. Are men and women equally involved in this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 7</strong></td>
<td>Are there tensions between different needs and issues? Will these be managed through the way the verification process is planned? Prioritise between suggested ways forward. Are men and women, old and young, involved in this process? Challenge assumptions about prioritisation – who might be influencing this, why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 8</strong></td>
<td>Who is involved in planning? Men and women equally? Ensure the appraisal process is not a one-off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 9</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate the implementing team’s overall assessment of the experience and the impact of the work. Were the objectives met? How gendered and how participatory was the whole process? What are the lessons to learn for next time?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1 Stage 1: Defining the aims

At the beginning, think through what you want to achieve from the participatory appraisal. As a minimum, it could be expected that by the end of the process the community will have a better understanding of itself and its issues, and that community participation and engagement in decision-making in the area is strengthened. In order to achieve this, you will need to decide the key questions that you need to ask and the key information that you need to gather. When thinking this through, ensure that gender issues are raised.

For example:

- Why is it difficult for women to enter the labour market or get better skills? Why is it difficult for men? What's the difference?
- Why is it difficult for men to see themselves as responsible for child care or elder care? Why is it easy for women? What's the difference?
- What are the crime issues for men, women, youth and children in the area? How are these issues different for the different groups?
- Who is affected by the built environment? In what way? How are men and women affected differently?
- What are women's health issues? What are men's? Children's? (and who is responsible for these?)

You will also need to do background research first – in Gellideg this meant going through the Objective 1 criteria on equality of opportunity (gender). The team will need to check that the aims of the process are clearly communicated to the community – this is the opportunity to change and refine them as necessary.

Who does what?

One of the first things that needs to be done is to establish the boundaries of the gendered appraisal, whether geographical or communities of interest. An understanding of the numbers of people affected by the gendered PA makes it easier to assess the time the appraisal will take, and the numbers of people who need to be involved in delivering it. In Gellideg, on a geographically compact estate of 500 households, two people were employed part-time for the whole period of the assessment. Back up support was provided by trainers and the Gellideg Foundation Group Coordinator. It is important to be transparent about who is doing what from the beginning because this will also clarify how decisions are made and where the power lies.

Ideally, it would be better to carry out a gendered PA in an area where a community group already exists. The desire to carry out the PA should be generated from the community group on behalf of the needs of the community. A good gendered PA has the potential to strengthen the capacity and membership of a community group.
If there is no existing group, then one of the priorities of the appraisal must be to empower local people to form such a group.

The implementing team

There are various roles when undertaking a gendered PA. These roles make up the implementing team. This will be different for different PAs, but is likely to include participatory assessors, manager(s), trainer(s) and a facilitator. Ideally as many of the members of the implementing team as possible are drawn from the community or community group.

The participatory assessors

You will need a gender balance here of at least one man and one woman who gather information from the community, using the tools in individual interviews or small group sessions. The selection of these assessors is absolutely vital for the success of the appraisal, and choices have to be made whether to choose local people or outsiders. As a rule it is more empowering for the community if skills and training can be kept as closely connected to the community as possible. If the assessors are local people then checks must be put in place to prevent personal assumptions and preferences from colouring the interviews. Some communities are too divided for local people to trust each other and there may be a case for outsiders to be used. The assessors in Gellideg were local employees of the Gellideg Foundation Group, the two youth workers.

If outside consultants are used as participatory assessors, there are important issues to consider. People may be suspicious of outsiders coming in to their area and may be reluctant to talk to them – or even deliberately mislead them. Often outsiders are given very neutral information about traffic calming and environmental improvements, but may find that people do not want to talk to them about issues around domestic violence, debt, welfare or literacy problems.

Whoever is carrying out the assessment, the community will need assurances that the information gathered is confidential.

The manager(s)

The manager is whoever is employing the participatory assessors. In Gellideg this was the Group Coordinator of the Gellideg Foundation Group. If staff from a local voluntary or statutory agency are tasked with carrying out the PA, there needs to be absolute clarity about how they are directed and how they report back to the community group.

Trainers in gender and participatory techniques

It is important that everyone is trained from the beginning in a gendered participatory approach. This training needs to involve participatory ways of working and an understanding of why a gendered perspective is important and how to carry it out. The implementing team can then facilitate the use of the tools.
The facilitator of the implementing team

The facilitator's job is as a catalyst to oversee the process. They may or may not be involved in the actual gathering and analysis of information. The facilitator of the implementing team works in partnership with the wider community, community organisations and the implementing team to ensure that all parties work inclusively. They can also offer guidance at each of the different stages of the process.

Attitudes to, and respect for, all people involved in the process are as important as knowing appropriate methods. The facilitator should ensure that everyone who wants to be involved knows why the PA is happening, what will happen to the views they express, and what the possible outcomes might be. This transparency enables power to be shared between the facilitator, implementing team, community organisations and the wider community.

Sometimes outsiders are employed as facilitators of the process. As with the other roles, this approach has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are:

- An outsider brings in other experience and knowledge, which can be essential in solving problems.
- An outsider can be neutral.

The disadvantages are:

- It can lead to expertise being perceived as being outside the community.
- It shifts power relations to outsiders.

Take a step back and assess the make up of all the roles. On balance are a majority of the roles being performed by community members or by outsiders?

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THE GELLIDEG GENDER NEEDS ASSESSMENT TEAM

The team consisted of three people from Oxfam, and three from the Gellideg Foundation Group (GFG). This meant an equal balance of people with practical day-to-day experience of the community and how it ticked, and advisers with experience of the nature of disadvantage in the UK and of the kind of tools used to tackle poverty internationally.

They worked together at each stage of the gender needs assessment – carrying out the pre-training, designing the data-gathering process, pulling the data together, analysing the results, and evaluating how it had worked out.

The relationship of trust between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ relied on:

- Oxfam’s conviction that local knowledge had to design and shape the process, and adapting it to fit the reality of life for women and men in the community as communicated by the GFG workers.
- The GFG’s openness to new ideas and tools from elsewhere, and their belief that a gendered needs assessment would mean a more participatory process and a high quality bid for Objective 1 funding.
3.2 Stage 2: Raising awareness

Some decision-makers and stakeholders may not be directly involved in the participatory appraisal. However, they need to understand what is going to happen and why because they can make a difference once the findings of the appraisal are available. Community organisations need to work with local authorities because they cannot change structural barriers like the job market, the benefits system, council and voluntary sector services. It takes national bodies to move the structural barriers and work towards the solutions community members have identified (see Tool 16 Personal, social, structural for more detail on these barriers).

Engaging decision-makers also means that a gendered PA can support dialogue between them and the community in the area concerned. It is important that decision-makers both understand what a PA is and what gender is about and why it is important; some awareness raising on this might be necessary.

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**ESTABLISHING GOALS IN GELLIDEG**

Before gathering information from the wider community in Gellideg, local decision-makers and the community organisation attended a workshop. This identified what was to be achieved, how it fitted in to an Objective 1 application for funding to the European Union, and checked the intended outcome was not in conflict with the wider objectives of the community organisation. Participants included community organisation staff, the local councillor, members of the youth group, people from a locally active non-governmental organisation and the local voluntary sector umbrella organisation, and Oxfam staff. At this first workshop we explored why a participatory approach was needed and what a gendered analysis meant.
3.3 Stage 3: Planning what you want to do – and training to do it

The planning tools can be used for planning any course of action or timetable – they do not have to be used just when undertaking a gendered PA.

Some of the tools are best for planning and others for training, so look at the checklists and facilitation tips carefully.

TRAINING IN GELLIDEG
The PA team needed training in using the tools and in gender awareness. The training took three days and focused on interviewing skills, and checklists for inclusiveness by gender and age (see Tool 14, Interview recording, where there is an example of such a checklist), planning skills, working out how to engage people, documenting and recording information, and clarifying roles within the team. Training to analyse information was held later in the process.

3.4 Stage 4: Creating a timeline

A timeline needs to take account of the objectives of the work, the resources and time available, and the requirements and skills of the local context. It should follow on from a planning process. All timetables, whether for 45 minutes or four months, need a flow and logical progression to move from one point to the next.

The case study below is an example from Gellideg. Alongside it are details of how they adapted Stages 1-9 to suit their needs. Note that there are several days for reflection and review and also time built in for analysis.
A PLANNING TIMELINE FOR THE GELLIDEG FOUNDATION
GROUP PROCESS

In the event some of the time estimates changed, and some events happened differently – as usual!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated time</th>
<th>Planned activities</th>
<th>Stage of process outline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Initial workshop to discuss the funding opportunity, what it might mean for GFG and Gellideg and how to proceed. To be held with community members, GFG and local decision makers. Do some gender and participation awareness-raising.</td>
<td>1 and 2: Defining the aims and raising awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>One-day workshop with implementing team to explore gender issues, outline the aims of the survey, and pull together what information they already have and what they might need, as well as identify training needs.</td>
<td>2 and 3: Raising awareness, planning and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Three-day training event, focus on PA tools, gender, and planning the consultation.</td>
<td>3 and 4: Planning, training and creating timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Informing; newsletter to residents publicising the work.</td>
<td>1 and 2: defining aims and raising awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Research begins; the two youth workers start to interview groups in the community. Ongoing work.</td>
<td>5 Finding out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Review day with trainers to review progress to date. How do the implementing team feel the interviews are going? Do they want help with specific tools to aid reflection on how the direction of the process is going?</td>
<td>5 Finding out 9 Reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 11 | Review day with trainers to review progress to date. | 5 Finding out  
9 Reflection |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Review day with trainers to begin collation and analysis of information. Check to see if any gaps need to be explored further.</td>
<td>5 and 6: finding out and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Carry on gathering information to fill gaps.</td>
<td>5 and 6: Finding out and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
<td>Analysis and collation of information; planning the verification process.</td>
<td>6 and 7: Analysis and verification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 18</td>
<td>Verification day, community event</td>
<td>7 and 8: Verification and action planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 19</td>
<td>Preparation of the bid document.</td>
<td>8 Reporting and moving forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 24</td>
<td>Bid submitted.</td>
<td>8 Reporting and moving forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 29</td>
<td>Review day – How did the whole process go, what did we learn? Plan report writing.</td>
<td>9. Reflection and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 35</td>
<td>Report finalised</td>
<td>8 Reporting and moving forward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Stage 5: Finding out

Carrying out a participatory appraisal is a process that develops its own momentum as it unfolds. The team implementing the process needs to be reviewing and checking the process as it happens.

It is helpful to develop a checklist of questions and issues for content and process.

It is also necessary to review the checklists themselves. A really essential tool to achieve this is the Interview recording sheet (see Tool 14). The team needs to develop the discipline of using these sheets to review both content and process.

A good process will be inclusive and move through information gathering, analysis, prioritisation and action planning, through to decision-making. It is therefore important to be reflecting on and challenging how inclusive the process is at all these stages.

There are two principle aspects to this – how you reach people and draw them into the process and how you then get them involved.

Making contact with people

There are many different ways of contacting people and raising awareness. These are likely to be different for men and women, older and younger people etc. Some people will be happy to talk, others will not, and you need to adapt your method accordingly.
**Snowballing** – This involves interviewing people who are already known to the PA team, and asking them to suggest other people who might be willing to be interviewed.

**Door canvassing** – This is an outreach tool, consisting of knocking on doors, explaining about the work and asking if the resident will participate in an interview.

**Informal meeting places** – An informal meeting place is an area where people gather such as a café, post office or shop. Any use of informal meeting places requires consideration of safety precautions for interviewers and passers-by. Street interviews can be successful but are not appropriate for exploring personal issues.

**Going to existing groups, meetings** – Ask if you can talk to people at existing activities; play groups, lunch clubs, etc.

**Focus groups** – Bring interested groups of people together, aiming for equal numbers of women and men, to discuss particular issues. Use this approach to work with particular groups of people to provide a ‘safe’ environment for the discussion. Think about when and where the meeting is held.

**Public meetings** – Good for verification and awareness but not for interviews.

**Public consultation road shows** – A bus can be hired and driven around an area taking the consultation to informal meeting places, eg shopping centres, cafes, outside sporting venues on match days etc.

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**ENGAGING PEOPLE**

Three main techniques were used in Gellideg to engage with disadvantaged people from targeted groups including single parents, people with disabilities, unemployed people, ethnic minorities, and drug users. **Snowballing** developed the youth workers’ own confidence in using the tools. The youth workers received varying reactions when **door canvassing**. The male youth worker found he had the same reaction from men and women. The female youth worker found that male residents, especially if over 50, would suggest that she speak to their wife.

Halfway through the appraisal, the monitoring mechanisms showed that not many young or middle-aged men were coming forward to be involved. To address this, whilst continuing with door canvassing, the workers stood outside the shops and canvassed men as they passed by. Sometimes they agreed to a **street interview**, or they arranged an interview in their home at another time. Using a male and female youth worker was very effective in reaching both sexes and all ages.

Ninety per cent of the interviews were with individuals. People had a lot to say because they rarely got the opportunity to talk about the issues they faced. Often individual interviews progressed to group interviews because informal groups would gather in the household as the interview progressed.
Getting together

Meetings are only one way of getting people together; individual interviews are also important – see above.

The subject of some meetings will sometimes attract one sex more than the other. For example, childcare discussions are likely to attract women more than men, but both sexes need to be involved in decision-making processes around childcare issues. Children and young people may also want to be involved; they are often excluded from debates around childcare and play provision as it is assumed to be a parent’s concern.

Often service delivery and planning occurs with no gender awareness. By not taking into account the different needs and situations of women and men, the service or plan will be accessible to one gender more than the other. Incorporating a gender analysis into service planning and delivery enables organisations to ensure that it includes men’s and women’s needs in organisational goals and methods of achieving those goals. For example, renaming a childcare project a ‘Parent and toddler’ rather than ‘Mother and toddler group’ will make it more accessible to fathers. Sometimes service providers feel they have complied with equality of opportunities policy because they are operating an open-door policy for both men and women of any age that want to access the service. Through the gendered PA it will be possible to demonstrate the barriers that often make an open door policy unusable for many men and women.
The main issues to consider when planning a participatory meeting or workshop are:

- Levels of confidence in speaking. Small groups encourage confidence.
- The timing of the meeting is important – for example, not at children’s meal times, during religious holidays (eg Eid), giro day, or football matches.
- Transport. Is the meeting accessible? Women use public transport more than men, younger and older people more than people of working age, people with disabilities may have their own support or transport requirements.
- Safety of venue. Men, women, older and younger people feel threatened by different things
- Culture. Who will speak out? Who is likely to feel constrained to speak? How many men or women are there? Who is likely to not be heard?
- Diversity. Who is likely to be excluded? Take steps to ensure the inclusion of young and old people, black and minority ethnic groups, benefits status, people with disabilities, different faith groups, people who speak a different language.
- Who is unlikely to come to a meeting? Use different additional techniques to give everyone the opportunity to be involved. Take into account who is likely to feel most comfortable at such a meeting and look for ways of attracting other people, using a range of methods.
- There will be common assumptions about the content of any meeting. Identify such preconceptions to ensure the meeting progresses beyond them and discusses what people actually need
- Using posters with provocative messages (eg ‘everything is Hunky Dory’) has proved successful in grabbing people’s attention and persuading them to attend meetings.

Always ask yourselves how these ways of contacting and involving people affect their ability to participate. Different stakeholders will feel comfortable sharing information in different situations. For example, men or women might feel more comfortable being interviewed individually at home, or in a single sex group. Or on sensitive issues, by being asked general questions like: ‘What do people in the community think/do?’ as opposed to: ‘What do you think/do?’ Different age groups might prefer to work in different spaces, and at different times. Think about timing and location – what is a good time for different people to participate? Is the location accessible to the group you have invited? and so on.
MEETINGS IN GELLIDEG
Regardless of planning and methods, it was unsuccessful inviting people to attend large meetings in Gellideg. A meeting was held and the community had an open invitation to attend and be involved in the survey, but only one or two people turned up. There were a number of reasons for this, including lack of transport, lack of childcare and also lack of confidence – people were afraid of ‘being laughed at’ or ‘showing themselves up’.

A lack of enthusiasm for attending large meetings is a real barrier to getting a debate going about the issues that face a community. This barrier is often overlooked in participatory work and can be solved by working with people on an individual basis or asking already established groups if they would give a part of their meeting time for a facilitator to gather opinions.

Using the tools
Exploring different issues will require different facilitation approaches. Gendered issues about sharing household resources and responsibilities are more likely to come out in individual interviews where others are not listening in. Generally individual interviews use three or four diagrammatic tools, sometimes with semi-structured interviews (making notes after, rather than during, the interview). Individual interviews explore sensitive issues in an environment and at a pace that is comfortable and safe for participants. As information is gathered, check that the tools being used are appropriate, are yielding the information that is needed, and that the most marginalised people in the community are being reached.

It is important to plan beforehand which tools will bring out the issues in the interviews, and to ‘sequence’ the tools so that they allow you to explore issues in a logical and easy way.

Some tools are good to start a discussion going – for example, a mapping tool that asks quite general and open questions is always useful to start an interview. The next tool could be one that would take some of the issues raised in the first exercise and explore them a little further, or start to prioritise them or think through solutions; a spider diagram, ranking tool or managing wheel. The sequence moves from general reflection, through to analysis, and then prioritising or ranking and thinking through solutions. This can be done in one session (see box below), or at consecutive sessions.
A SHORT GENDERED PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMME
This was a short gendered action planning day in Cae Mawr. The session started with an exercise that generated an overall sense of the community. It then progressed to look at problems that people faced in the community, and finally worked with the group to identify practical solutions.

The solutions and barriers were analysed before they were timetabled and reviewed. The analysis ensured there were short, medium and long term goals identified and that planned activities were pitched at right level (personal, social or structural). The tools used to reach this sequence of action planning were:

- **OK not OK** – giving a picture of community relations (45 minutes).
- **Problem wall** – building on the ‘not OK’ part of the previous tool, and adding other barriers (45 minutes).
- **Solution tree** – building on the OK part of the first tool, and adding other potential solutions (45 minutes).
- **Personal, social, structural** – analysing identified barriers and solutions (1 hour+).
- **Timeline** – to plan and prioritise the solutions the group wanted to implement (1.5 hours).

Checking who has been involved and how they feel about it

It is important to keep a check on who has been involved in the process. There are a number of ways to do this; the key one used at Gellideg was the interview recording sheet (see Tool 14). For each interview it was recorded who was involved – men, women, what age group etc. As the participatory assessors went along they kept an eye on the total numbers of men and women from the three different age groups they were working with, summarising the data in a small table (see box below). In this way they were able to identify which group was poorly represented and where they needed to increase efforts to meet certain people and bring them into the process.

It is important to keep a check on how representative your participants are of the community – are different groups adequately represented? The interview recording sheet and a table like the one in the box below are useful for collecting information on gender, age, ethnicity, status, etc.

To collect information on where people come from, you could keep the record on a map. A street map of the community is useful for this – either a published one or one drawn within the community. You can ask participants to indicate on the map where they live – either with a pen mark or with a sticky dot. If you colour code the dots according to gender, age, or whatever, this will help develop a picture of the geographic reach of your work. Are there gaps in the map where you are not meeting people? What can you do to remedy that?
What men and women want
A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO GENDER AND PARTICIPATION

MONITORING MEN AND WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION
In Gellideg, after a large number of interviews had been carried out, the team went through all the interview recording sheets and totalled the numbers of men and women that had been involved in the interviews. The results were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This helped them realise that they needed to speak to more men, especially those between 16 and 25 and both men and women over 50.

Useful summary checklist for this stage:

1. **Collecting information** Are you using a mixture of methods and tools? Are you interviewing different groups? eg young women, young men, older men, older women, men and women who can't get out and about.

2. **Reaching people who seem invisible** How easy or difficult is it to reach certain groups, individuals, and different places in the area? How could you solve these problems?

3. **Bringing out the different barriers experienced by different people** How do issues differ for different people? How would solutions differ?

4. **Showing the difference** How can you present the information so you can show the differences between people? And how can you check it?
3.6 Stage 6: Analysis of all information

This is where all the information gathered is brought together. By this point, you are happy with the extent of the information gathered; you have adequately answered your initial questions and are confident that you have reached a good cross-section of the community. Again, the interview recording sheets become an essential tool to guide you through the wealth of information gathered. This is a big task.

Collating and analysing information

This is a two-stage process. The first stage is to collate by age and gender (see Tool 15 Gender and age matrix).

The second stage is to look at each of the clusters of issues raised by age and gender and to analyse these issues using the personal, social and structural matrix (Tool 16). This matrix will enable you to explore the barriers and opportunities facing each issue by age and gender.

For example, in Gellideg it became clear that service provision was an important issue for women between 16 and 25. When this was analysed by personal, social and structural, it emerged that the barriers included: lack of confidence in accessing advice and information, lack of services locally and lack of transport to remote services. See diagram in Tool 16.
ORGANISING INFORMATION
In Gellideg it took us a day to get to grips with how to organise the information, and many more days to actually go through all the interview data. The whole team was involved, which was really important. The matrix outlined in Tool 15 (Gender and age matrix) facilitated this process considerably, and as a tool can be used with a small or large group. Depending on the purpose and manner in which a PA is carried out, the tool can be used as we did in Gellideg for collating months’ worth of information, or it could be used by participant groups to collate their own findings and discussions in a focus group.

Triangulation – cross-checking
An important principle of PA is ‘triangulation’. This involves a process of cross checking with different sources of information – did different people in different interviews raise the same issues? Were the same issues raised even when different tools were used to explore them? What does this have to do with gender, age, anything else?

As you go through this collation and analysis stage, you need to look for common threads and differences. You need to review these, and you might identify further questions to answer or gaps within the information/analysis. It is important that you allow extra time to carry out some more research if needed to fill those gaps and answer those questions.

It is also important to stress that the focus of the process is on action planning and decision-making, not just understanding the issues within the community. However, any solutions need to be checked against the range of issues within the community.
3.7 Stage 7: Verification and action planning

Verification and action planning can be done at the same time, or could be two separate processes. It depends on the situation – the relationship you have with the community, the way the community is involved in the process, the nature of the issues to be addressed.

The basic principle of verification is that if a few people in the community have been involved in the analysis, (which is often the case), it is important to check the conclusions with the wider community. This is because:

- It allows for the wider community to comment and check for accuracy.
- It enables a large number of people in the community to comment, making the conclusions more valid.
- It enhances inclusion, ensuring that a number of people are involved in prioritising issues, identifying what needs to be done, and developing action plans.
- It aids transparency. People not interviewed can see how the information has been used and those interviewed can see how their input has been included.

It makes sense to verify conclusions before moving into action planning, but the process of verification can seem a little pointless if it does not include the question: 'If this is right, what do we need to do about it?'. So the process by its nature leads into action planning.

Alternatively the action planning might happen before the wider verification – what you want the wider community to review are the plans for change.

Verification and action planning methods will depend on context, time and resources. It is usual to use a combination of methods so that maximum numbers of people are reached. Examples include:

1. **Holding large community meetings** Summarise PA outcomes and plans for the next steps in a visual form (eg spider diagrams) and use tools to hear and gather people’s comments. Advertise the meeting in different parts of the community and inform all interviewees of the meeting by letter. This form of verification works best as a community day, and should be fun and fluid.

2. **Conducting smaller focus group meetings** These can be useful if there are community tensions, or if some groups in the community do not agree with the conclusions. They enable in-depth discussion and exploration.

3. **Producing and circulating information and requesting feedback** Generally, only 20 per cent of people respond to questionnaires. So it is necessary to undertake face-to-face verification with local groups. Circulating information is not necessarily just to get a response. It is important in itself. You could do this in many ways, for example through local radio as well as by newsletter, etc.
4. **Presenting collated information and asking for feedback in public spaces.**
   Ensure that the public space you use is frequented by different sections of the community. Examples of public spaces include schools, shops, libraries etc.

5. **Creating a mobile ‘exhibition’** Present your findings as an exhibition and take it to different groups and public spaces. This can be used at a community event, such as a sports day at school, or a football match.

   ![Diagram of community centre with people engaging in various activities]

   It is important to think through what you want at the end of the verification process, to ensure that you make the best use of the time involved. You need to ensure that you have reached a point where you feel that you are not getting any new or different information and feel happy with the level of knowledge/information that you have.