Participatory community assessment tools

Introduction

When working with local communities it is very important to gather local knowledge, opinions and experiences from women, men and children in the community. There are many useful tools that can help you to do this. Participatory community assessment tools are used in the following Tearfund resources:

CEDRA – 'Climate change and Environmental Degradation Risk and adaptation Assessment' – a strategic-level environmental risk assessment for agencies working in developing countries to make their existing projects stronger against climate and environmental change.	www.tearfund.org/CEDRA
PADR – 'Participatory Assessment of Disaster Risk' – a community-level method of assessing hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities and developing a community-owned risk management plan.	PADR can be found within Roots 9: Reducing risk of disaster in our communities - http://tilz.tearfund.org/Publications/ROOTS/Reducing+risk+of+disaster+in+our+communities.htm
UMOJA – a process that helps church leaders and their congregations work together with the local community to bring about positive change for the whole community.	www.tearfund.org/umoja

We have not included individual community assessment tools in *Reveal*, but in the table on the following page, we list a number of tools, give a short description of them, and point to where they can be found.

Introductory tools

Tool or guidance	Description	Resource
Keys to successful community consultation	Advice for how to prepare for and carry out community consultations.	CEDRA p33-34
Focus groups	Discussing issues with groups within the community.	CEDRA p35; UMOJA p85; PADR p38
Community mapping	Drawing maps to show the main features, buildings, landuse and people groups within a community.	CEDRA p36; Umoja p70; PADR p37;
Community history picture / historical maps	Similar to community mapping but drawing the community as it was at some point in the past.	CEDRA p37; Umoja p72;
The history of our community	Discussing the major events that have contributed to making the community what it is today.	Umoja p71
Historical timelines	Recording events that have happened over time	CEDRA p37-38; PADR p36
Seasonal calendars	Recording the different weather patterns and agricultural seasons over a year.	CEDRA p37; Umoja p73-74; PADR p37
Transect walks	Observing the visible features of a community.	CEDRA p38; PADR p36
Ranking matrices	Identifying which climate or environmental impacts have the greatest effect on communities (could be adapted for other issues)	CEDRA p38-39
Ranking	A process of prioritising the most important community needs or identifying which factors are the most important in causing particular needs.	Umoja p78; PADR p36
Who does what in our community? Or 'stakeholder analysis tool'	Identifying what is already happening within a community and who is doing what.	Umoja p75-76; CEDRA p23
Venn diagram	Showing the social groups and organisations in a community, their relative size and influence and the relationships between them.	PADR p37
Drama	Using drama to portray events and explore aspects of a community	Umoja p77; PADR p37

Introductory tools