

## Scottish Community Diet Project

Our over-riding aim is to improve Scotland's food and health. We do this by supporting work within and with low-income communities that improves access to and take-up of a healthy diet.

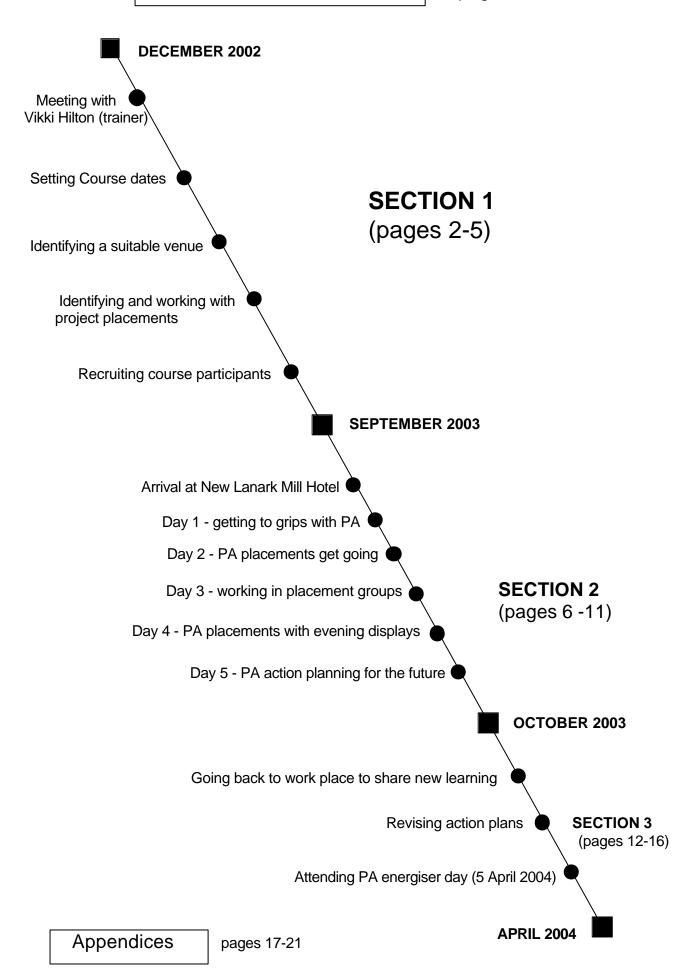
Major obstacles being addressed by community-based initiatives are:

AVAILABILITY - increasing access to fruit and vegetables of an acceptable quality and cost AFFORDABILITY - tackling not only the cost of shopping, but also getting to shops
SKILLS - improving confidence and skills in cooking and shopping CULTURE - overcoming ingrained habits

We help support low-income communities to

- identify barriers to a healthy balanced diet
- develop local responses to addressing these barriers and
- highlight where actions at other levels, or in other sectors, are required

We value the experience, understanding, skills and knowledge within Scotland's communities and their unique contribution to developing and delivering policy and practice at all levels.



## Participatory Appraisal – what is it?

Participatory Appraisal (PA) describes a growing family of approaches and methods that enable local people to explore issues of importance to them within their own communities in non-threatening ways. By taking part in this process, communities can begin to identify their own priorities for action and develop appropriate approaches to problem solving. Through the PA process information generated comes from local people, is shared between them and is owned by them. The process aims to include as many members of a community of place or of interest as possible, particularly those who are most often excluded from decision-making opportunities. Although this collection of methods originated in the developing world, it is increasingly being used with great results in all settings and in all countries. PA is already being used in Scotland by a whole range of groups and agencies, including community food and health projects. A list of some examples of published PA work from elsewhere is contained at the end of this report.

Building on the growing popularity and success of PA approaches as a tool for community initiatives and other agencies working on food issues, the Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) was keen to organise a PA training course that was designed to meet the specific needs of people working with and within community food projects in Scotland.

Utilising the experience and expertise of Vikki Hilton, an independent practitioner and trainer in PA based in Edinburgh University<sup>1</sup>, the SCDP was able to deliver such a course in autumn 2003. This report describes the planning, delivery and lessons learned from the five day residential training course for the thirteen individuals, the SCDP, and the two community food projects that took part.



New Lanark Village in Clyde Valley - location of PA training course

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Vikki Hilton has over 15 year's experience in PA and over 10 years involvement in training. She has used PA processes in numerous settings, both internationally and within the UK. Vikki has led training in PA with government and non-government organisations and with community projects, most notably the Dumfries and Galloway Building Healthy Communities Project since October 2001.

## **Section 1**

## Planning to make it happen

#### Overall aims

The planning phase of this training course proved to be as crucial as the quality of its delivery. Planning dates back to December 2002 when Lizanne Hume, SCDP Practice Development Officer, began to meet with Vikki Hilton, PA trainer, to define and refine the SCDP's anticipated objectives of the course (see box 1).

### Box 1: Overall objectives of PA and food course

By the end of the five days, participants should have:

- ??? Developed knowledge of, and have had the opportunity to use a range of PA approaches within a community food project setting.
- ??? Examined the theory and evidence base of PA.
- ??? Reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of PA, and explored the principles of PA process design in relation to community food activity.
- ??? Participated in the planning, implementation, and reporting of a PA consultation exercise with a local community food project over two days of field work.
- ??? Have had the opportunity to analyse and reflect upon the use of PA within a community food context for use back within his/her own area or setting.

## Making it real

The training was to comprise a mixture of theory and practical experience so that a range of participatory approaches could be explored and put into practice. The programme therefore also required the full participation of two local community food projects that would act as placement hosts during the latter half of the training.

The New Lanark Mill Hotel in the grounds of the New Lanark World Heritage Site<sup>2</sup> was selected as being both a suitable and appropriate venue for the residential aspect of the training to take place. Two local food projects within easy reach of this base and also willing to participate in the training then needed to be identified. This process was found to be more challenging than expected, again largely because of the time commitment and effort projects would have to commit to the host role.

The SCDP was delighted to finally secure the involvement of Kirkshaws Neighbourhood Centre within South Coatbridge Social Inclusion Partnership (North Lanarkshire) and Cambuslang and Rutherglen Community Food and Health Projects (South Lanarkshire). Objectives also had to be set with projects to inform the nature and direction of work to be undertaken during the practical PA placements. Listening to the needs and ideas of both initiatives, similar objectives were set for each. These are described in box 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> New Lanark World Heritage Site: www.newlanark.org. New Lanark Village was founded in 1785 and rose to fame as the birthplace of Robert Owen's far reaching and imaginative approach to community life. Now restored, it still captures many of the progressive ideas of this social reformer, including the large kitchens and eating rooms which he designed for the economical provision of nutritious meals for the families living in this working community.

## **Box 2: Objectives for practical PA placements**

## **Cambuslang and Rutherglen Placement**

- ? To engage with a representative cross section of the communities of Cambuslang and Rutherglen in terms of age, gender and income, and create opportunities for them to share, record and prioritise their ideas and opinions about food access and related issues using PA methods.
- ? To enable a range of people living in Cambuslang and Rutherglen to share their ideas and opinions about the barriers to, and ways of improving access to a healthy and varied diet locally.
- ? To engage with key players in food access, such as local staff (e.g. NHS, Local Authority etc), food retailers, and local services (e.g. transport) to record their ideas and opinions about how food access could be improved within Cambuslang and Rutherglen.
- ? To remain neutral and not to raise unrealistic expectations within the local community.
- ? To feed back to the local community all the ideas shared during the process.
- ? To ensure that all team members use a range of participatory approaches in a variety of situations and settings over the course of two days.

### **Kirkshaws Neighbourhood Placement**

- ? To engage with a representative cross section of the community of South Coatbridge SIP in terms of age, gender and income, and create opportunities for them to share, record and prioritise their ideas and opinions about food access and related issues using PA methods.
- ? To enable a range of people living in South Coatbridge SIP to share their ideas and opinions about the barriers to, and ways of improving access to a healthy and varied diet locally.
- ? To engage with key players in food access, such as local staff (e.g. NHS, Local Authority etc), food retailers, and local services (e.g. transport) to record their ideas and opinions about how food access could be improved within South Coatbridge SIP.
- ? To remain neutral and not to raise unrealistic expectations within the local community.
- ? To feed back to the local community all the ideas shared during the process.
- ? To ensure that all team members use a range of participatory approaches in a variety of situations and settings over the course of two days.
- ? To ensure that the experience for all involved is as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.

In addition to setting these agreed objectives, it was essential that both hosts felt confident about what was being asked of them.

While one project was already familiar with PA training approaches, the other was not. It was therefore essential that all instructions were clear, uncomplicated and carried out before the placement was scheduled to take place. Support and enthusiasm from other local agencies, including NHS and local authority staff, was also useful at this stage, and would be a key ingredient if the placement activities were to be taken forward beyond the life of the PA residential.

To commit to being part of the training, host projects had to believe that it was worthwhile for them to get involved. They had to be sure that the placements would provide them with an opportunity to have some useful work undertaken that would remain with them to work on and take forward after the training was completed. Ownership of the placement was therefore with the host project, as was objective setting and the management of the training group. These responsibilities, however, were at times not only an opportunity, but also a daunting prospect for already busy staff. As a further incentive to get involved, two PA training places per host project were offered by the SCDP. Sadly, neither project was able to send staff or volunteers for the five days due to other commitments and time constraints.

To ensure that worthwhile PA work could be conducted during the two day placement period, each project was encouraged to set up a list of visits to different groups, agencies and individuals who might be key to local food access issues. Timing and availability of participants would be crucial to the success of the work, so this important ground work had to be undertaken as early as possible.

Placement projects were also asked to promote the work locally so that people would be supportive and interested in taking part in the PA exercises and display sessions on the final evening. Copies of a flier to help with local promotion are contained in appendix 3.

"Hosting a PA placement is a considerable undertaking, but when planned in advance can provide a project with very useful local information that might otherwise not have been collected because of lack of staff, time and energy."

## **Participation**

### Encouraging the right mix of people to take part in the training

To ensure as few barriers to participation as possible, this course was fully funded by the SCDP, free to all participating, and was open to any interested person working with or within a community food project across Scotland. Initially advertised in the Spring 2003 edition of Fare Choice, application forms were afterwards sent to all those who had expressed interest. Box 3 describes the conditions for applicants to consider before applying to take part in this five day course.

## Box 3: Conditions for participation in PA and food course.

Before applying, please firstly read the following conditions.

To get maximum benefit from the course:

- ?? Participants must be currently working with or within a community food setting either as a paid member of staff, lay worker or volunteer.
- Participants must be able to spend the full five days at the training, which may mean you have to travel on the Sunday night to New Lanark, as the training will begin promptly on Monday morning.
- ?? Accommodation, training and meal costs will be covered by the SCDP. However, individual participants are responsible for financing and making their own travel arrangements to and from New Lanark at the beginning and at the end of the training.
- Course participants must be committed to attempting to apply the PA techniques within
   a local setting after the course and share their experiences of applying PA with the SCDP
   at a later date.
- This is an intensive five-day course, which involves a fun, but busy schedule. Course participants should be aware of this and be prepared to participate in morning, afternoon and evening sessions over the five days.
- If offered a place, acceptance would involve course participants committing to attending the full course with the support of their employer. Due to the high costs involved in organising this scale of training, last minute non-attendance (within the week prior to the course) may result in the participant's employer having to fully cover the cost of both the course tuition and accommodation. This would be in the region of £1000 per person.

While interest in the course was high and very positive, applications to participate were unfortunately fewer than expected despite the course being free of charge. Feedback suggested that this was because it involved five full days and four nights away from work and home, and for many, including the local placement projects, this was unfeasible. However, a total of twelve individuals from a diverse number of backgrounds did apply and all were selected by the SCDP to participate in the course. A full participants list is in Appendix 2.

## **Section 2**

## **Delivery of Training**

Vikki facilitated a busy, but energising training schedule with the group throughout the five days. Days one and two were based within the hotel and involved the group exploring in more depth what PA means and its potential role for them. While most activities were group based, all required active participation and always used a creative array of PA techniques that involved everyone no matter their background, training or prior experience.

From the use of **timelines**<sup>3</sup> to plan each day, to smiley faces to record the group's energy levels over the course of each day, all participants were gently shifted out of their comfort zones and challenged to think differently, interact differently and listen rather than simply hear each other. The quotes and images that follow illustrate a range of the PA techniques explored.

"Participatory appraisal is an approach which enables people to share their ideas and knowledge about life and local conditions.

It is a process which involves a wide cross section of local people, members of specific interest groups or a range of people within an organisation."

"Participatory appraisal is applicable in an extensive range of contexts, examining a wide range of general or topical issues – examples include community development, health, poverty, local planning, and food access."

#### Exploring a range of PA techniques

"Participatory appraisal incorporates an expanding collection of visual methods which are adapted as appropriate to the context and objectives of the process."

In the preparatory PA work, the group used a lot of visual methods and diagrams to explore their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. One key aspect of PA is that its use of visual exercises ensures that communication is open and inclusive. All information discussed is shared between participants and is captured in the images so that words are not always required. **Body mapping** was one very useful illustration of the visual appeal of PA, as the pictures illustrate.

Body maps can be done by either drawing the shape of a body or tracing the shape of someone's body by getting them to lie down on a big piece of paper. Groups can then use the template to map a wide range of issues. For example, this group explored the way food makes them feel about their bodies to the positive and negative affects of food within the body.

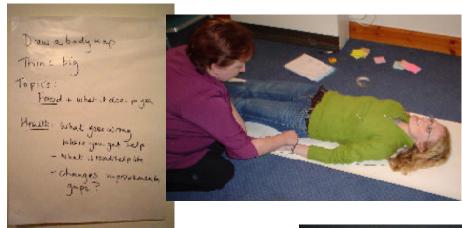
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> A timeline is a simple chronological depiction of events used commonly in PA. It can be used as a planning tool or can be used to look back retrospectively on a chain of events.

Other examples of mapping included the use of drawing **locality maps** of the places where they stay or work. These depict what is locally significant, often emphasising what is available in terms of local services, resources, and amenities in an area. These later proved to be a useful tool to map local food access during the practical placements.

**Venn diagrams** were also explored to visually compare the importance of different items such as the importance of different services for food access within a particular community. Circles are drawn or cut out representing to each item, with size related to importance. These are then distanced from the centre of the paper according to the amount of contact, influence, importance etc.

**H diagrams** were also used as a potential evaluation or monitoring tool. The group explored the use of this method to record how they felt after each session, as well as compare their overall impression or ideas. Again this proved to be a popular method during both placements.

Generally PA works with groups of people as this increases the potential for discussion, sharing of ideas and the cross checking of ideas between participants. Group size can be limited by the setting, scale of the diagram and the amount of materials to record information available. The group was encouraged to think about each method and ways it could be adapted for working with different types of groups within a community – adults, children, people with literacy problems or other special learning needs, people with mobility problems, minority ethnic groups etc. Vikki also encouraged the group to think about ways of ensuring the appropriate use of methods in different contexts to ensure best results.



Body mapping instructions and at work!





Using Venn diagrams to illustrate information from PA maps

#### Putting learning into practice

Having now explored a multitude of PA techniques and approaches, the group began to prepare for the two community based placements in the afternoon of day two. This was an unsettling time for the group as it involved further steps into what still felt like unknown and unfamiliar territory. Already the group had bonded as a single unit, and soon this unit would be divided into two smaller ones. Tensions were mounting and anxieties were running pretty high.

In an effort to alleviate some of these uncertainties and to help set the context for the placements, the group were joined by key members of project staff from each placement during the Tuesday afternoon.

Lynn Brennan, Project Co-ordinator from Cambuslang and Rutherglen Community Food and Health Project spoke about some of the food access issues already being addressed by her project team. A strong advocate for PA approaches, Lynn was able to describe what PA related activities were already commonly used by the project and where the gaps remained. Using the placement objectives (see box 2); Lynn described some of the meetings that had been set up for this placement group and some of the work she hoped the group would become involved in.

Tommy Murphy, Support Worker for the North Lanarkshire Federation of Food Co-ops, is employed by North Lanarkshire Council. Tommy had been involved for many months leading up to the training in setting up of the placement at Kirkshaws Neighbourhood Centre. While Tommy, like most of the training group, was new to PA, his passionate commitment to community development approaches to food and health was a perfect starting point for wanting to know more about what the method could offer the communities he works with. Tommy described to the group the range of activities that take place in the busy neighbourhood centre; from a food co-op to community café and credit union. Like Lynn, he encouraged the group to enjoy the visits and welcomed the opportunity that they would bring to all involved.

#### **Placement Activity**

By Wednesday lunchtime the two placement groups had formed, become acquainted with the task ahead of them and had begun to draw up action time lines that corresponded with the visits that had been organised for them in advance of the training. Each group had also begun to think about possible PA approaches to use when working with each scheduled appointment. Gordon McAlonan, from Ferguslie Park's Community Transport Scheme in Paisley, drove both groups by minibus from New Lanark to each destination and back again over the course of the next two busy and exhausting days.

The following pages give a snapshot of the range of work undertaken during both placements and the process of enquiry that each participant took part in. Both placements concluded on the Thursday evening with a visual display of all the PA work that the groups had undertaken. This remained in both settings for the local communities to visit afterwards and hopefully for the respective projects to take forwards at a later date.





Learning about good and bad approaches to group facilitation using role play





Learning to develop active listening skills



Making a giant floor matrix to record information using bottle tops



Designing pie charts for planning and analysing



Using pair-wise ranking to compare ideas/items or solutions



Working as a team to map and record information graphically



Setting off in minibus from New Lanark to placements



Some members of the 'star team' setting up their PA display within Kirkshaws Neighbourhood Centre



Lynn Brennan, Project Co-ordinator for Cambuslang and Rutherglen Community Food and Health Project at the PA display evening in Cambuslang



Using PA methods to record ideas and opinions while chatting with customers in the Kirkshaws Food Co-op



Using PA methods to enable local shoppers in the street in the Kirkshaws area to record their views



The 'green' team at the end of a busy session at Cambuslang and Rutherglen Community Food and Health Project at dispaly evening. Body maps from a session with a local youth club are in the background

## Section 3

## Appraising the experience

Friday concluded the training with presentations by both groups about the highs, lows and lessons learned during the practical placements. Again, all feedback was given using PA diagrams, as the following images highlight.

From the overall air of excitement and real sense of celebration that now filled the training room, it was clear that both groups had experienced more magic moments than black ones. With real honesty and openness, the group members described to each other their personal and shared trials and tribulations throughout the week, again using PA methods. It had not been an easy week, but it had been a good one and most certainly a challenging one. A newfound confidence in everyone was palpable and it was hard to believe that only five days had passed since the group had gathered together from most corners of Scotland. Monday's PA sceptics had now evolved into Friday's strongest advocates, and hopes were high as to how each group member planned to take back and train others in the methods.

Vikki encouraged the group to prepare and share personal PA action plans with each other, as well as evaluate the five days.

While the course on immediate reflection had achieved what it had set out to do, its longer term impact could only be anticipated at this stage.

Before leaving, all group members expressed an interest in regrouping in six months time for an 'energiser day' with Vikki to carry out a delayed evaluation of the training as well as brush up on PA methods. This would also be a good time to explore with the two placements what impact the PA work had had on project activities.

For the SCDP, the immediate impact of the training was undisputedly positive. Lizanne co-ordinated the course and placement organisation, but had also taken part as a trainee. This, at times, was a difficult combination of roles to juggle. However, the overall impact of the course for the SCDP has been successful and if appropriate and demand exists, similar ventures may be an option for the future. The project waits the outcomes of the Energiser Day on April 5, 2004 with interest.





Group feedback using PA methods to describe the placement process



Mood meter to chart the week's highs and lows

## **Key points about the issues from the community (Cambuslang)**

Better transport to shops

'Buggy hill'

'Cardiac hill'

'Kamikaze crossing'

Better advertising of affordable healthy foods

More affordable healthy choices

More education around healthy choices

Food growing opportunities locally

Consistent availability of healthy food locally

## **Key points about issues from the community (Kirkshaws)**

Stigma about food co-op

Lack of awareness about food co-op

People positive about local shops

Local chemist needed

Lack of awareness of food co-op concept

Wider range of fruit and veg locally

Pride in work of centre

Home delivery needed

#### Recommendations to client

Shop needs name not label Evaluate effectiveness of food co-op on

diets/lifestyle

Marketing and PR campaign

Healther options in community cafe

Consult with local shops

Revisit basics

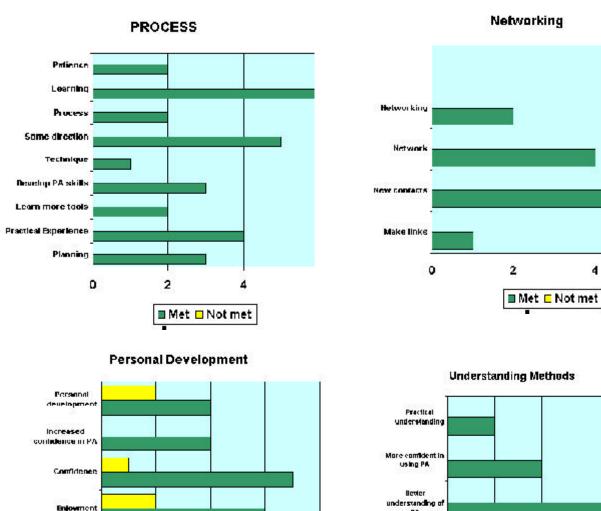
Opening hours

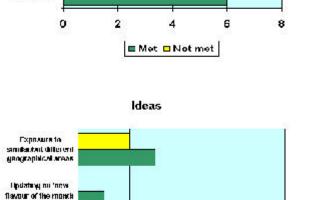
Priority? Health v price

Greater variety of fruit and veg

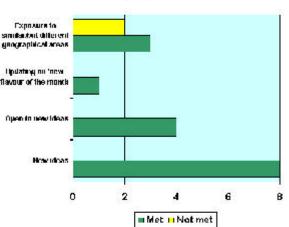
### Were the group's needs met?

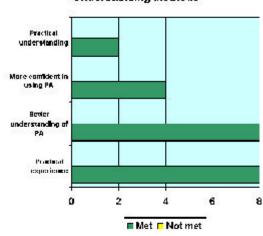
The following 6 bar charts describe the met and unmet needs of the group after completing the five day training. Green denotes met needs and yellow unmet needs.



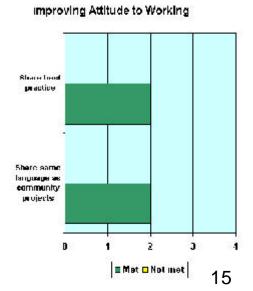


Incressed sell





4



## **Key learning points**

- \* Trust in the process
- \* Plan and word questions carefully
- \* Good information about area/project, etc
- \* Careful planning linked to outcome
- \* Test and try tools
- \* Flexible
- \* Recognise limitations of tools
- \* People reluctant to write
- \* Good fun
- \* Quick
- \* Consistency
- \* Easy way to access large amounts of qualitative information
- \* Take breaks and re-energise
- \* Need good communication skills
- \* Visually attractive and effective
- \* Have someone at the base collating information as it comes in
- \* Need good co-ordination and team working
- \* Hard to remain neutral
- \* Importance of colour-coding and tracking
- \* To remember we all have our own starting points, limitations and baggage take stock of own stuff before being critical of others
- \* Ideas for future work
- \* Using an angry face as well as a smiley face is good
- \* No-one or no activity is perfect all of the time it is ok to let go and not be in control 100% of the time
- \* Networking
- \* Teamwork can be challenging, but working together and producing good results provides a team with a real sense of achievement
- \* Don't underestimate the time it takes for teams to become effective working units
- \* Importance of keeping other team members informed through regular meetings
- \* Be aware of personal biases such as ways of doing, organising, planning, etc
- \* Importance of keeping together as a team as much as possible
- \* Confidence is something that grows when small steps into the unknown are taken
- \* Going out into community and being able to adapt to preparing and presenting work in a short time frame
- \* Good to put theory into practice
- \* Practice of techniques leads to improved confidence
- \* Now understand how to use the Body Mapping
- \* How possible it can be to truly involve people
- \* Aware of limitations of PA

## **Appendix 1: Useful information about PA**

#### Have you been PA'd?

Using Participatory Appraisal to shape local services

www.oxfamgb.org/ukpp/resources/downloads/Oxfam\_Glasgow\_report\_final.pdf

Using specific examples of two community health projects in Glasgow that used PA to look at health issues, the report demonstrates how PA can be used in community and agency decision-making. It provides those who might be interested in using PA with a practical guide that takes them through the process from beginning to end. It also has an extensive list of organisations and people to contact and a checklist for organisations, communities and decision-makers. East End Health Action, Greater Easterhouse Community Health Project, Greater Glasgow NHS Board and Oxfam GB, June 2003

### IDS Policy Briefing. Issue 7

The Power of Participation: Participatory Rural Appraisal and Policy www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/briefs/brief7.html

A six page summary of PRA and its usage around the world in influencing change and policy. Written by Robert Chalmers and James Blackburn for the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton 1996

ISSN 1360-4724

#### We Are What We Eat

A Rapid Appraisal of Beliefs & Attitudes to Healthy Eating in Camden & Islington Camden and Islington Primary Care Trust, June 2002

## Hunger from the Inside: The experience of food poverty in the UK

This report demonstrates the benefits of putting communities at the heart of developing actions to tackle food access issues using food mapping.

Written by Anna Watson for Sustain, the Alliance for Better Food and Farming

ISBN: 1903060249 Price £20

www.sustainweb.org

## Reaching the Parts...

Community Mapping: Working together to tackle social exclusion & food poverty

Sustains Food Poverty Project and Oxfam UK

Sustain, the Alliance for Better Food and Farming

ISBN: 1903060125 Price £20

www.sustainweb.org

#### Take Part. Food in Hindpool: Participatory Appraisal in Barrow

Community Consultation Directing Local Action

A very colourful illustration of how PA approaches can be used to explore local food issues.

Produced by Barrow Borough Council and Barrow Food Forum, 2001

Tel: 01229 833004

### Participatory workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities

Robert Chambers, 2002

Earthscan Publications £8.95 www.earthscan.co.uk

## Methods for Community Participation: a complete guide for practitioners

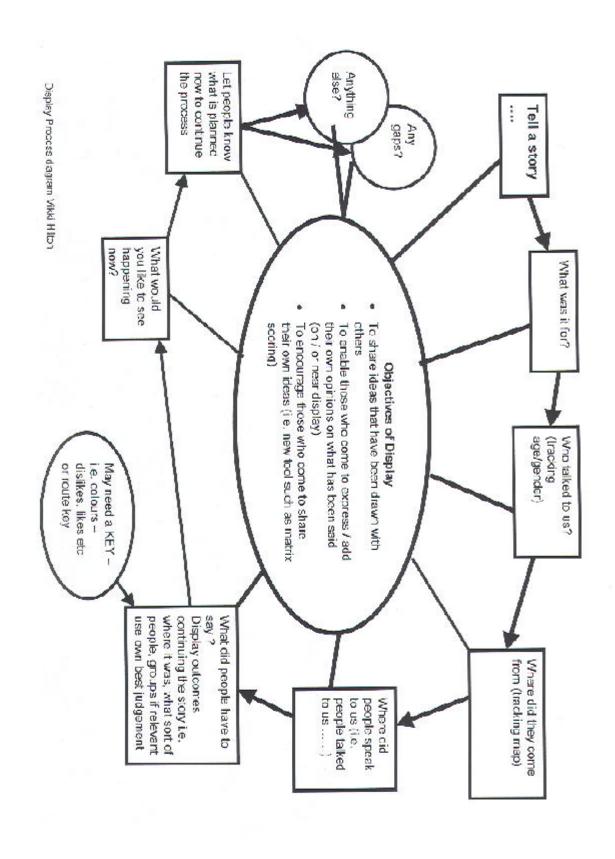
Kumar, Somesh 2002 ITDG publishing 103-105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HL www.itdg.publishing.org.uk

## From input to influence

Participatory approaches to research and inquiry into poverty Fran Bennett with Moraene Roberts
Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004

www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/details.asp?pubID=589

## Appendix 2: display process diagram



## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

## **About**

# GETTING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS LOCALLY

Share your ideas with
Cambuslang Food & Health Project
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 1
3.00PM – 7.30PM

THURSDAY OCTOBER 2 10.30AM – 5.00PM

A DISPLAY OF PEOPLE'S IDEAS WILL BE HELD INTHE BONUS BALL ON THURSDAY OCTOBER 2 6.00PM – 7.30PM

In addition people will be out and about in the area over these two days asking **YOU** what you think and would like to see happening

WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT AS PART OF A COLLABORATION BETWEEN C.H.A.F & THE SCOTTISH COMMUNITY DIET PROJECT For further information contact Lynn Brennan 0141 641 6777



## **Appendix 4: Participants List**

Name Organisation

Glasgow Area

Lizanne Hume Practice Development Officer

Scottish Community Diet Project

Marilyn Croser Development Worker

Possil and Milton Forum on Disability

Maureen O'Brien Community Nurse and Volunteer

Skypoint Community Cafe, Faifley

AnneGebbie-Diben Health Promotion Officer

**NHS Glasgow** 

**Borders** 

Nichola Sewell Project Worker

Healthy Living Network, NHS Borders

Yvonne Murray Project Worker - Eyemouth

Healthy Living Network, NHS Borders

Lorna Hall Community Dietitian in Health Promotion

**NHS Borders** 

Lanarkshire

Ashley Goodfellow Health Promotion Officer – Social Inclusion

NHS Lanarkshire

**West Lothian** 

Kay Johnson Community Nutritionist

Freelance

**Ayrshire** 

Laura Howell Health Promotion Officer (Communities)

NHS Ayrshire and Arran

Fife

Linda Boodhna Community Dietitian

NHS Fife

Highlands

Margaret Colyer Food for Thought Project Manager

Voluntary Action Lochaber, Fort William

**Western Isles** 

Mary MacLean Project Manager

Fas Fallain Project, Western Isles



