A little guide to help
evaluate your project
by Mita Pujara

Creative
Evaluation

WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

JUST FOOD
& CLIMATE
TRANSITION.

Contents

1. Introduction

3) PRINCIPLES OF GOOD EVALUATION

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2) WHAT CAN GOOD EVALUATION HELP WITH?

1) WHAT IS CREATIVE EVALUATION?

What is creative evaluation?

Evaluation is a daily human activity. It is how we understand our world, learn and make new discoveries and it is often an unconscious process. But evaluating projects can feel daunting, confusing and complex. This might be due to the jargon, elaborate language and emphasis on funders.

This guide hopes to dispel this myth.

Evaluation is a process. It is about **documenting** what happens, and **reflecting** on it with your group for you to **improve** it and **understand** its **value.**

Creative Evaluation offers participants to share their feelings, learning, or experiences in a reflective manner through **visual, spoken or physical methods**. These methods are expanded on pages 14 - 30.
(Creative Tools and Methods)

'I learnt not to be scared of evaluation but to build it into projects. It's been really enjoyable. It's made us not feel bad about things and made me feel confident to do my job and learn a lot. Main thing I've gained, is the shift that it's about the journey and the learnings, not just about the results' - **Maud, Sunny Jar Eco Hub**

Participants' visual response to: *What does evaluation look and feel like to you? Choreographing Evaluation (Project Oracle, 2014)*

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What can good evaluation help with?

OWNERSHIP **Participants feel more involved**

LEARNING **Capture what you are learning.**

EVIDENCE **Show how far the project meets its aims.**

ARCHIVE **Documenting the process can be an archive for a person, project or organisation.**
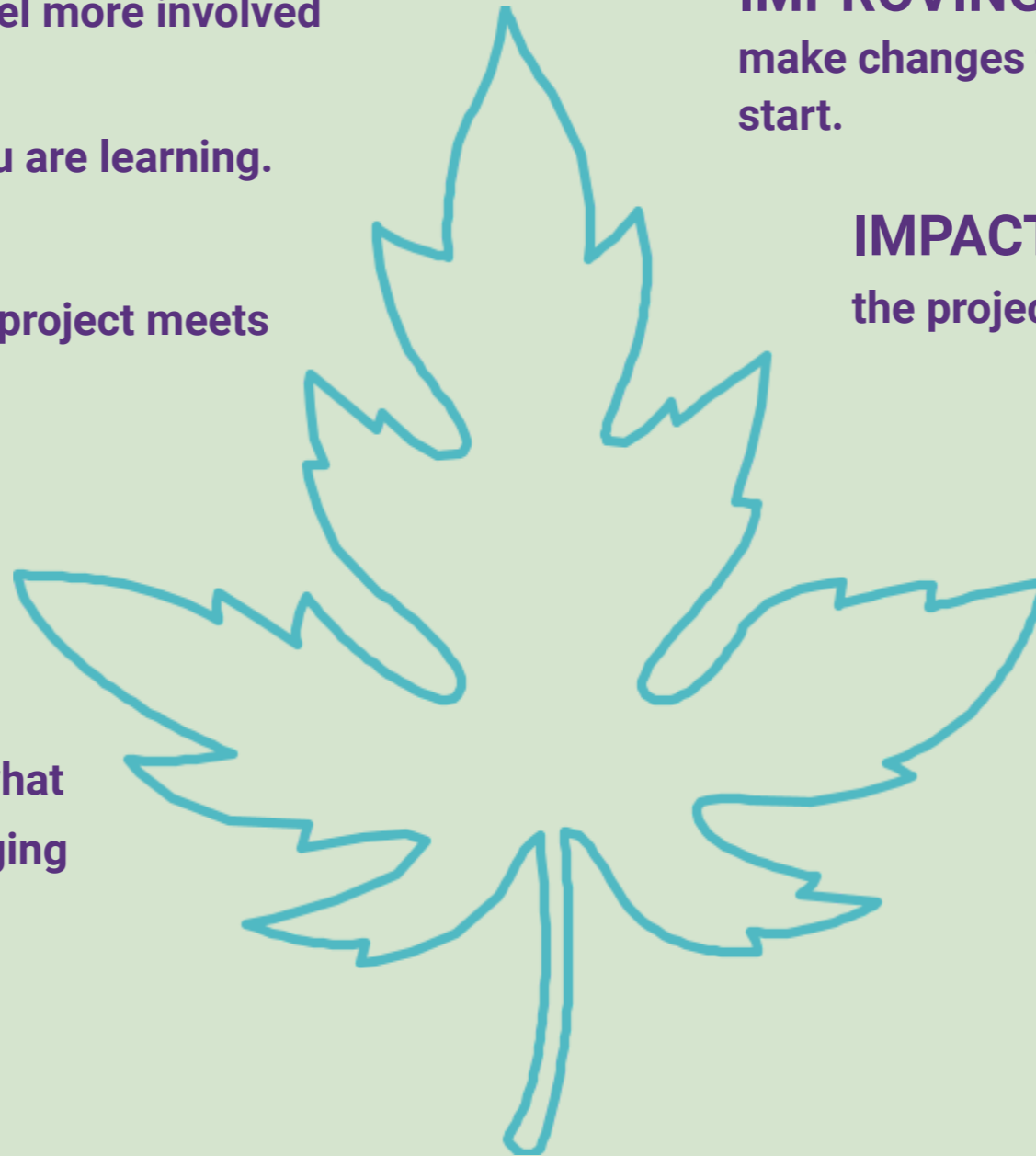
DYNAMICS **Understanding what is working well, what is challenging and what is unexpected.**

IMPROVING **It encourages people to make changes to improve things from the start.**

IMPACT **Understanding the difference the project makes, if any.**

SHARING **Helps share lessons and tell the wider community about great work.**

NEXT STEPS **Helps inform future action!**

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Word up!

Start collecting data as early as possible, even if it's just counting participation numbers initially, to build up a strong evidence base over time. Also, some of the most insightful data comes from in-person observation and collecting feedback through conversations.

Yolande, St Hilda's Food Coop, JUST FACT grantee

Principles for good evaluation

TAILOR TO DIFFERENT NEEDS

TRACK AS YOU GO

HEAR DIRECTLY FROM PEOPLE

EXCHANGE DON'T EXTRACT

EMBED REFLECTION & DOCUMENTATION FROM THE START

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

FAIL FORWARDS CAPTURE WHAT DOESN'T WORK

MAKE IT FUN

GIVE PEOPLE AUTHORSHIP OVER THEIR STORIES

Every project is different and there is no 'one size fits all'.

However, there are some principles or touch points which everyone can build their evaluation on.

You can come back to these at any point in the project.
You do not need to do them all but choosing a couple can help guide your approach.

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The 7 steps of a creative evaluation

1. Write a list of the changes you want to see

1. DECREASING WASTE
2. MORE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
3. BUILDING A COMMUNITY

2. Write questions for each point on your list

DECREASING WASTE

What is the average amount of food waste in each household at the start, middle and end of the project?

COLLAGE?

VOX POPS

FILM OR PHOTO?

CHAT OVER A CUPPA

3. Choose a *method* that works for your group (pg.14 - 30)

4. Plan and prepare the creative evaluation

5. Run the activities or the session

6. Analyse and summarise

7. Decide how to tell the "story"

Now SHARE!

What could a bad or limiting evaluation look like?

Evaluation can sometimes feel laborious. There can be pressure to collect data in extractive ways where there is no real exchange with participants, such as long forms, where questions can feel unrelated to the project, and the language used can also feel dense and exclusive.

Evaluation is often tagged on to the end of the project, which can make it feel rushed and less meaningful because it is too late to change anything.

How to avoid this?

- Make time for evaluation by planning it into your workshop/project delivery from the beginning
- Think of fun and creative ways of engaging your participants
- Co-design with your participants so it's collaborative

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2. Creative tools and methods

3 PHYSICAL

4. SOCIAL

1. VISUAL

2. AUDIO
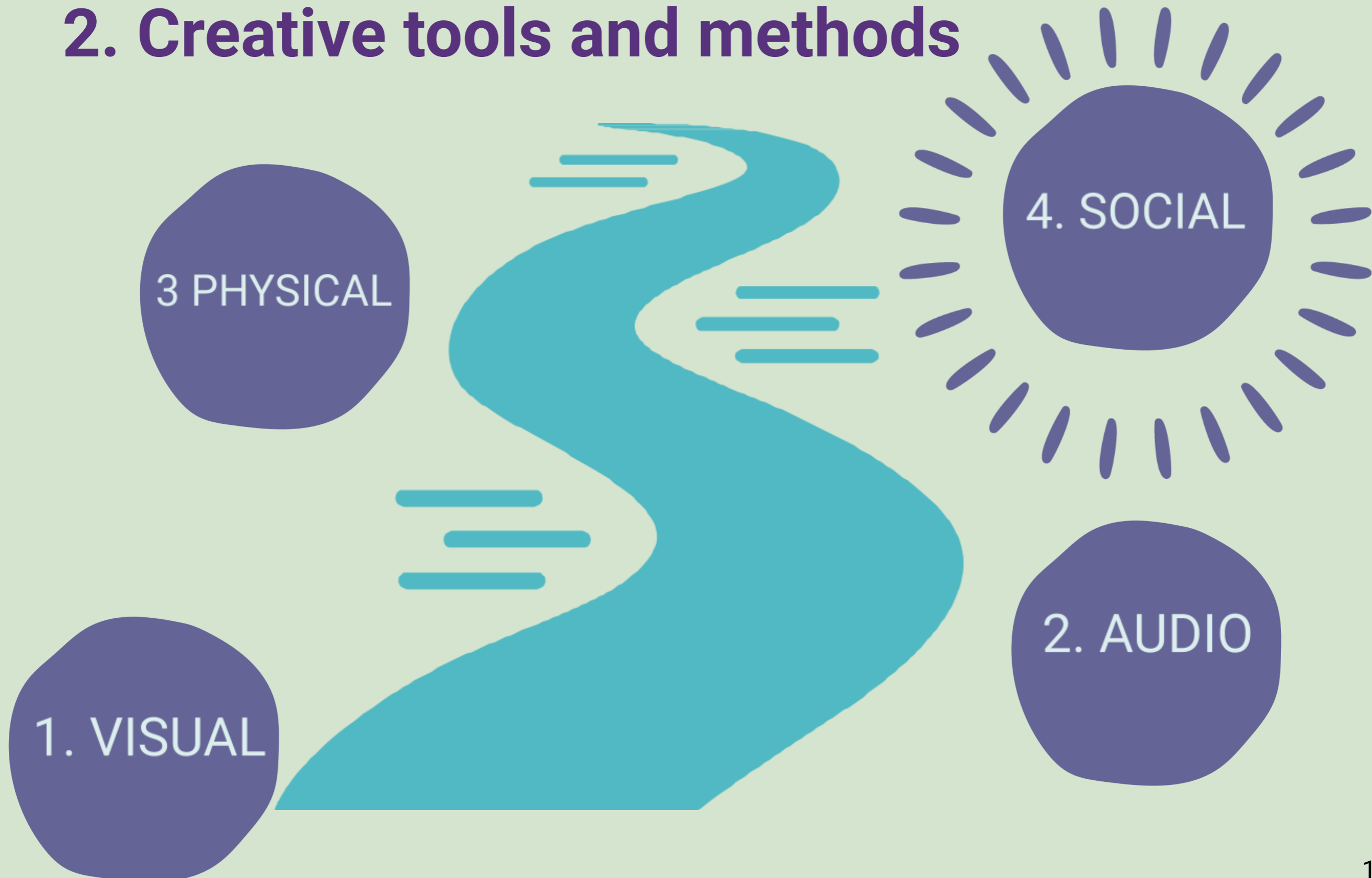
Creative methods/tools

The following 16 tools are **not set in stone** but have all been tested in real projects. You can use them as they are, **adapt** them or be **inspired** to create something which really works with your project. There are additional links at the end to other methods and further information on them if needed.

Graffiti walls

GREAT FOR: Gathering ideas from the group and capturing participants' experiences.

HOW TO: Stick a large sheet or roll of paper to the wall. In the middle of the paper invite people to describe their experiences or jot down their comments on post-it notes and stick these directly onto the wall. You can ask people to write down three words to sum up the session.
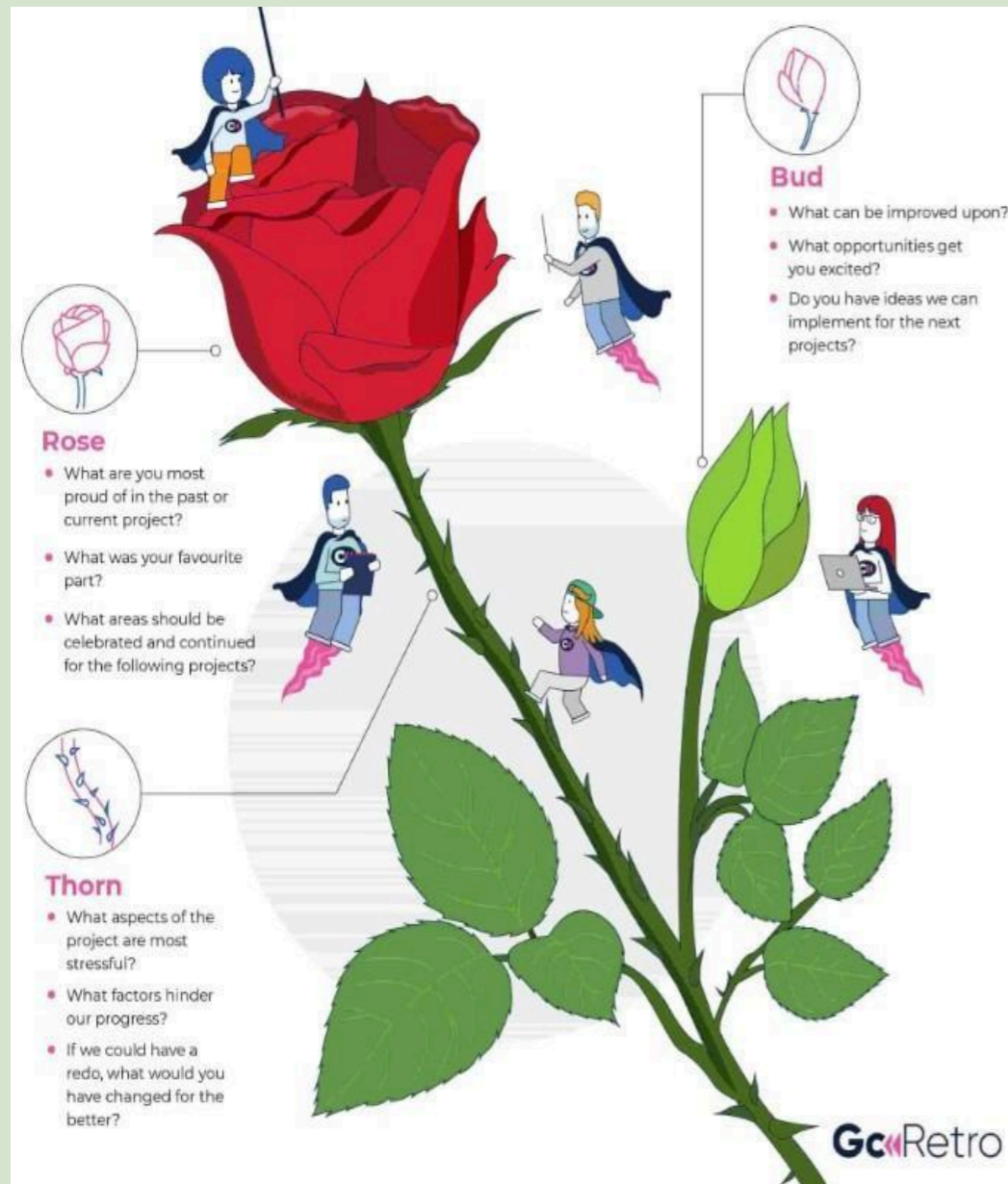
YOU NEED: A wall, post-its, a large roll of paper and pens

TOP TIP: You will get more responses if you have someone standing next to it, encouraging people to give their feedback.

TYPE OF DATA: Qualitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Word clouds and themes.

Rose, Bud, Thorn

GREAT FOR: Gathering quick reflections after a session. You can do this as a checkout or as a visual activity. A checkout works well individually but the visual version can work both a solo or a group exercise. It is useful to help guide the next steps and also to see what works or how something feels.

YOU NEED: For the visual version: A4 paper and pens (individual), or a roll of paper and Post-its (as a group). You can also create a template and print it off. For the spoken version, it can be useful to have someone scribe the words or record them as a voice note.

HOW TO: Ask people to draw a rose. It doesn't have to be perfect, just have petals, thorns and a bud (see next page). Invite them to note down their positive experiences in the petals, challenging moments in the thorns and what they are curious about in the bud. If you do it as a checkout, simply ask people to think of something they found positive/enjoyable, something which was challenging and what they are curious about doing next.

TOP TIP: You could have a chat about it as a group afterwards and record what people say.

TYPE OF DATA: Qualitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Word clouds, Top 10 moments, learnings.

What it could look like…

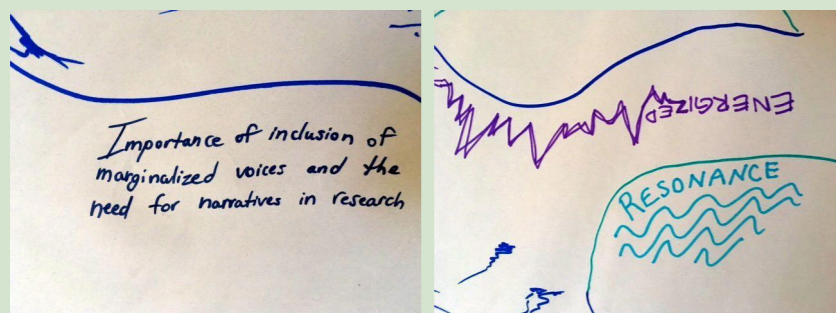For individual reflections

For group reflections

Critical River Journey

A whole group river journey

Individual pivotal moments

GREAT FOR: Understanding key moments on your project's journey and thinking about how to tell its story.

YOU NEED: A4 paper and coloured pens, OR a long roll of paper and Post-its or a template.

HOW TO: Draw a river across some paper. It must include several bends (three as a minimum). Imagine that one end is the start of your project and the end is where you are at present. Think about the most pivotal/critical moments so far and write them down on the bends of the river. Then think about why they were important. What did they help you realise? Change? Stop doing or enable?

TOP TIP: Once you note these down, you can discuss them as a group. You may find you have different critical moments.

TYPE OF DATA: Qualitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Useful to document key moments as a group. Understand perspectives and share learnings.

The Reflection Tree
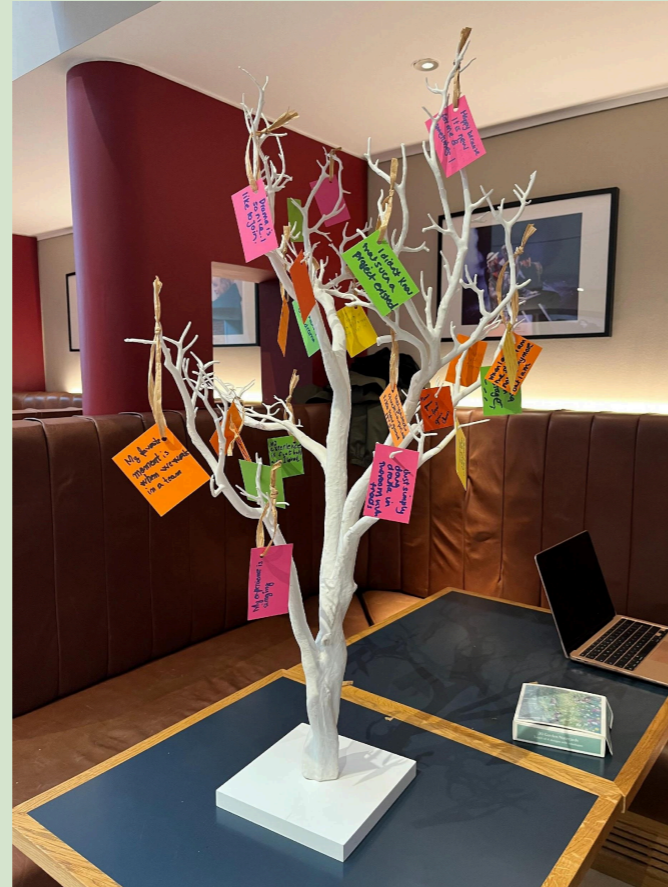
GREAT FOR: Comments from large events with audience

YOU NEED: A collection of branches or a potted tree, you can also buy table decoration trees. See *Curious to know more*

HOW TO: Set it up somewhere visible with lots of cards and pens so people can leave their comments

TOP TIP: Have someone there to encourage people to leave their thoughts and also write a few questions down which you'd like people to think about.

TYPE OF DATA: Qualitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Word Clouds, themes.

Cartooning
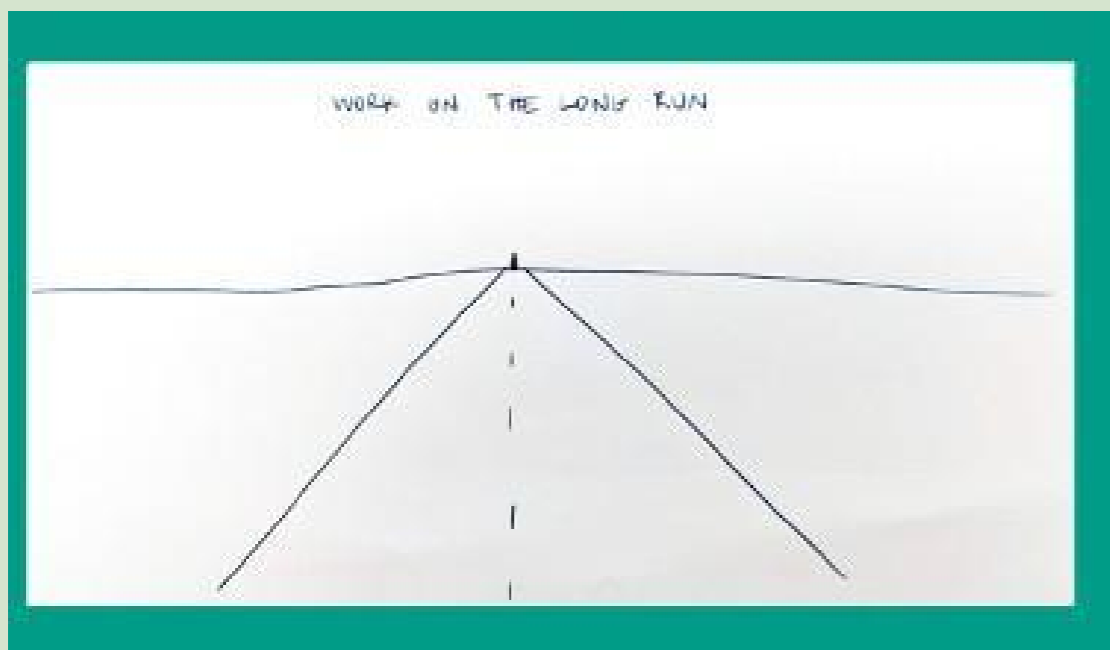
GREAT FOR: Capturing moments and gathering people's takeaways from each session.

YOU NEED: Postcard size paper or cards and pens.

HOW TO: Invite people to think about one image from the day that sticks with them or one idea they want to take away. Draw it out and add a line or some key words.

TOP TIP: Keep it simple.

TYPE OF DATA: Qualitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Make a memory wall and watch these grow over the project, make a zine, could be a good talking point over a cuppa at the start or end of a session.

Photos and film

GREAT FOR: A flexible and brilliant documentation tool. It is also a great way of getting everyone involved and taking turns. Playing a slideshow helps jog our memories and remember details which otherwise may be forgotten - it works well before group discussions or if you are doing an interview with one person.

YOU NEED A camera - the phone is fine.

HOW TO: Make sure everyone is aware that photos/filming is taking place. Explain why you are doing this and where these will be stored and shared. Do give the option not to be photographed. Check out PhotoVoice (link in *Curious to know more)* t*o see how photography can empower communities to tell their own story.

TOP TIP: There is a list of tips to photograph sensitively in the Verbatim Formula Handbook (link in *Curious to know more).*

TYPE OF DATA: Visual

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Create memory photo books for participants, make an exhibition, and use them on social media, websites and reports, blogs or a *Pechakucha* event (link in *Curious to know more).*

Audio and vox pops

CASE STUDIES / EXAMPLES

"With kids I have so many responsibilities that I often don't get the chance to go out and do grocery shopping. We have takeaways regularly but with the Food Co-op near I can now pop by before collecting them from school"

Leaders In Community food co-op customer

"I cancelled a veg box from another company as I like the flexibility of choosing just what I need which helps avoid waste."

"To access good food whilst supporting a good cause that works with local businesses and suppliers."

Feedback from co-op customers

GREAT FOR: Group and individual feedback. It's quick and easy. Useful for anyone who may be shy and/or reluctant to go on camera. It's also brilliant for getting quotes/soundbites when you have very little time or while people are on the move, ie: market spaces, or outdoors.

YOU NEED A phone with a recording function, ie: voice memos or a dictaphone.

HOW TO: Explain why you are doing this and where this will be shared and stored. Make sure everyone is aware that audio is being recorded, and get audio consent. Press record! The file can be saved on your device or transferred onto another drive later.

TOP TIP: Ask open questions to avoid yes/no answers, ie: what & how? Record in a quiet space, be aware of echoing if you plan to share the recordings publicly.

TYPE OF DATA: Qualitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Create podcasts, audio installations, websites and reports or blogs.

3-2-1 Checkouts

GREAT FOR: Gathering quick responses from a group about what they have learned/ what is challenging/ inspiring etc

YOU NEED: Some questions and a phone to record responses. The Notes App will automatically transcribe responses although they are not always 100% accurate. Sometimes it's good to write these up on a Flipchart or wall as they are being said.

HOW TO: This works well at the end of a workshop and you can use it as a check out. The topics are endless but you follow a 3,2,1 format. For example : three things they enjoyed, two things they learned and one thing they want to do more of.
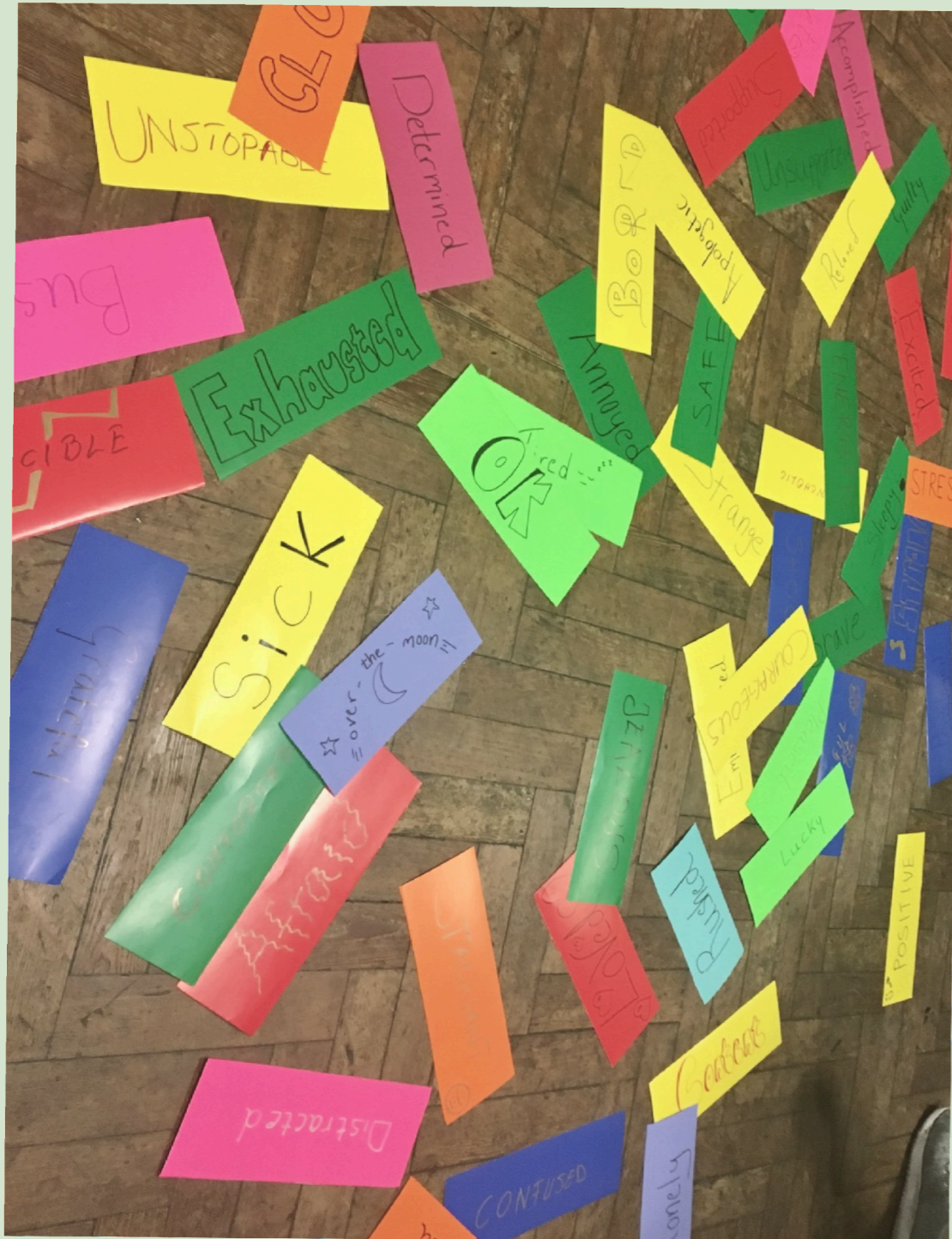
TOP TIP: It's great to sit in a talking circle if possible and have the questions displayed on the wall/ floor/ table so people can read them as they think about the answers.

TYPE OF DATA: Qualitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Word Clouds, highlights, tips, learnings.

Card carpet

GREAT FOR: Encouraging the shy members of the group to give feedback.

YOU NEED Colourful cards cut out with words / or emoji responses on them. Choose words which respond to your question
e.g. enjoyable, difficult, challenged, inspired, community etc.

HOW TO: Simply lay the cards out on the floor or table, and invite participants to choose 1-3 cards in response to a question (*e.g "How was the session of you?"*) Then you go around the circle, people show their cards and elaborate on why they chose it.

TOP TIP: If someone is particularly shy they can simply show the card. You don't need a lot to start but people can add words to it as the weeks go on.

TYPE OF DATA: Qualitative and Quantitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Word clouds or analyse it quantitatively i.e. how many times was a certain card picked?

Hand up hands down

GREAT FOR: Gauging how people feel about things without too many words.

YOU NEED Some questions and a space. Photographing people (with permission) is a good record for you.

HOW TO: Invite people to stand in a space or sit on a chair and respond to your question by either raising their hand high (high level) sitting down on the chair (medium level) or touching the floor/ pointing to it (low level).

TOP TIP: Good questions might be - *how many* questions for instance; how much did you learn? How strong do you think the community feels now?

TYPE OF DATA: Visual and quantitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: It is like a questionnaire in some ways so you can enter the data in Excel, giving each level a numerical value.

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Where do you stand?

GREAT FOR: Finding out opinions and gauging knowledge about a subject before your project (baseline). If you repeat the same questions after the project you can measure the difference.

YOU NEED: Two chairs each with a sign marked 'Agree' or 'Disagree'. A phone to take pictures.

HOW TO: Set the two chairs as far away from each other as possible with the signs. Read out a strong statement and ask everybody to stand in a place between the chairs which represents their view. The question could be anything related to your project e.g. if it was pickling - I don't pickle anything because it's cheaper to buy it in the shops. The nearer they stand to a chair, the stronger the opinion they are expressing. Once people are happy with their spot you can ask some to say a bit more about this. Have someone volunteer to film or photograph it.

TOP TIP: Start off with some warm-up questions e.g I love marmite, Cats are better than dogs

TYPE OF DATA: Visual, Qualitative and Quantitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: It is like a questionnaire - so you can enter the data in Excel, especially if you give numbers to the space between chairs.

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Voting jars

GREAT FOR: Asking open questions at events or after a workshop.

YOU NEED: A table, some containers (they could be old jam jars, plastic tubs, glasses etc) and then something to vote with. In one photo sugar cubes were used, but you could use marbles, stones, lego pieces etc.

HOW TO: Have a question on the table and label each jar with a response. Invite people to vote for three favourite responses.

TOP TIP: Try to have someone at the table who can encourage feedback and answer questions.

TYPE OF DATA: Quantitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Create stats for assessing value and progress and share in reports/ blogs and with participants.

WhatsApp polls and comments
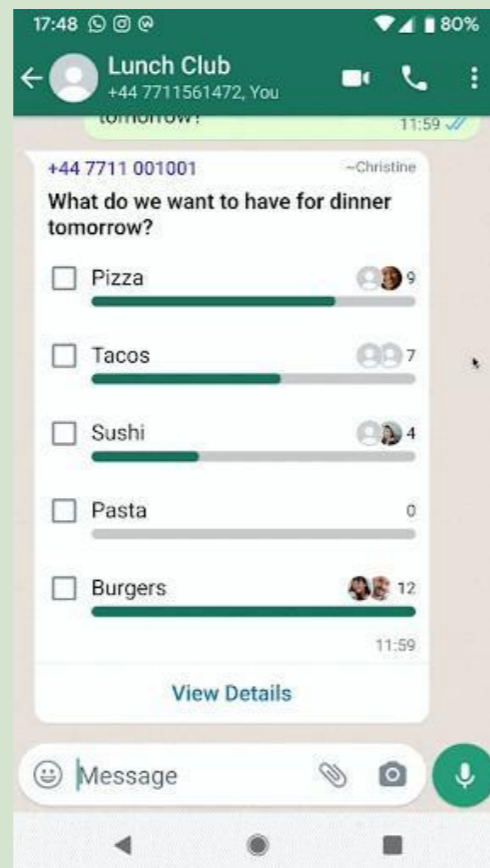
GREAT FOR: Quick responses about a workshop or event. Very easy to insert into reports and help track progress in certain areas,

YOU NEED: Everyone needs to be in the WhatsApp group

HOW TO: Open a chat then tap Poll > Create Poll. Under Question, enter your question. Under Options, enter your poll options. Tap and hold to change the order of your poll options by sliding up or down. Tap to create your poll. You can also use it to ask quick questions e.g. what's your one word to describe the session today?
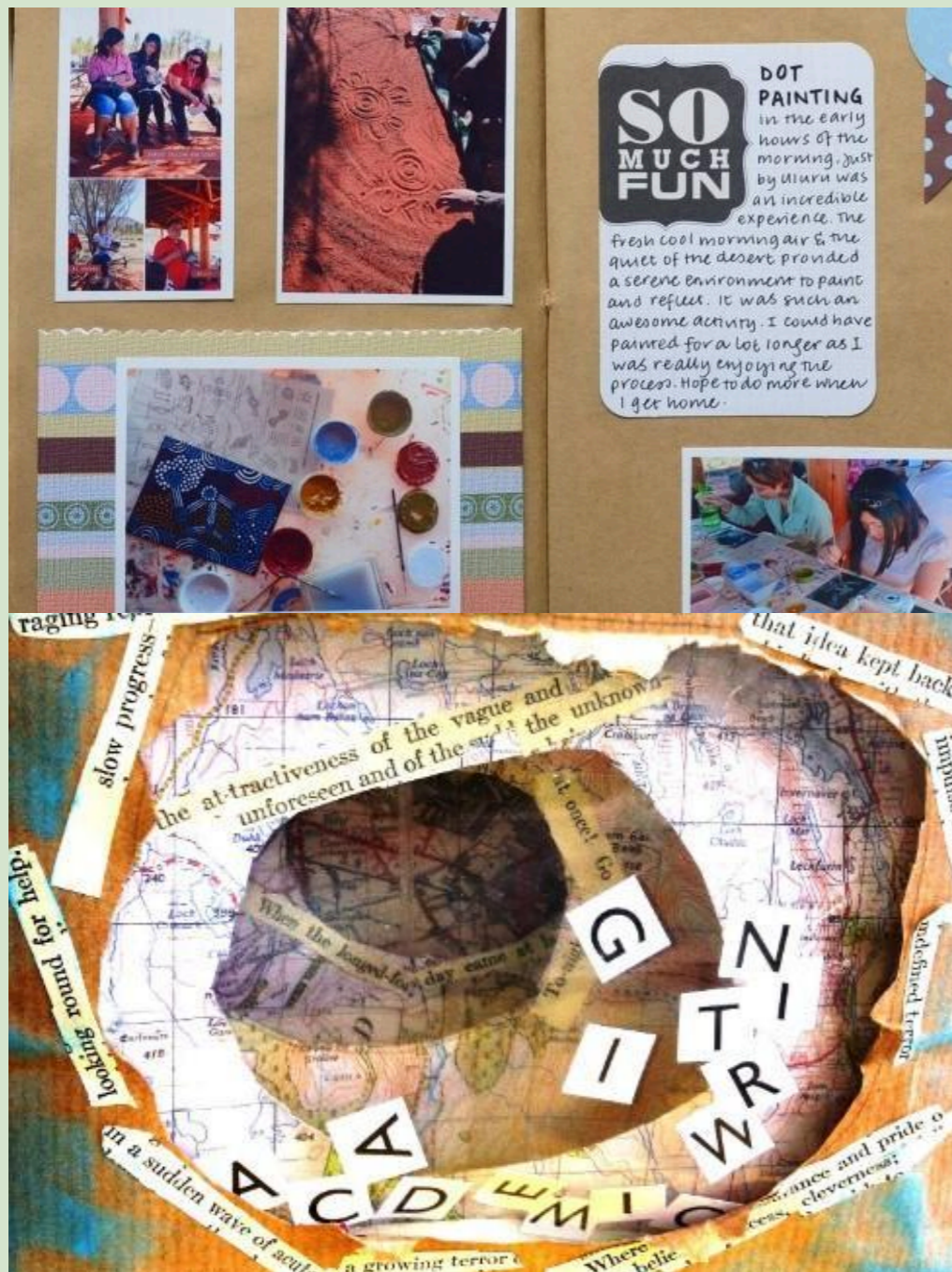
TOP TIP: Obviously it is not anonymous so questions should not include sensitive issues/ topics.

TYPE OF DATA: Quantitative

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Great to assess progress but also to include in reporting to funders and on social media.

Scrapbooking/collaging

GREAT FOR: Social, creative documentation - creating a visual story of the project through everybody's eyes.

YOU NEED: Photographs, working drawings, leaflets, images from magazines, newspaper cuttings, coloured pens, glue, scissors.

HOW TO: Introduce the group to the scrapbook early in the project, explaining that it is something that can be used to show other people what they are doing so they can look back and reflect on what they've done.

TOP TIP: Try to embed this as a regular part of the session, like every three weeks or so. Do it over a cup of tea and snacks and have some music in the background.

TYPE OF DATA: Visual

ANALYSIS / SHARING: Use it as an archival and storytelling tool, and upload bits to your website / social media.

3. Analysing and sharing

3. LIVE SHARING

4. CHECKLIST

2. SHARING VISUALLY

1. REVIEWING AND ANALYSIS

Reviewing and analysis

This is one of the most important parts of the process but is often left to one person just before writing a report. Try to **embed several moments throughout your project when you can sit with the data and look through it.**

If there are ways in which you think your **participants can join in this part of the process** - that is brilliant. Having more eyes on the data can help you see new things and reduce bias.
Also, it's a great way for people to feel more **ownership** and lighten the load for the delivery team.

Participants (below) held a reflection session about their programme, then grouped responses under themes. **Facilitators were not involved.**
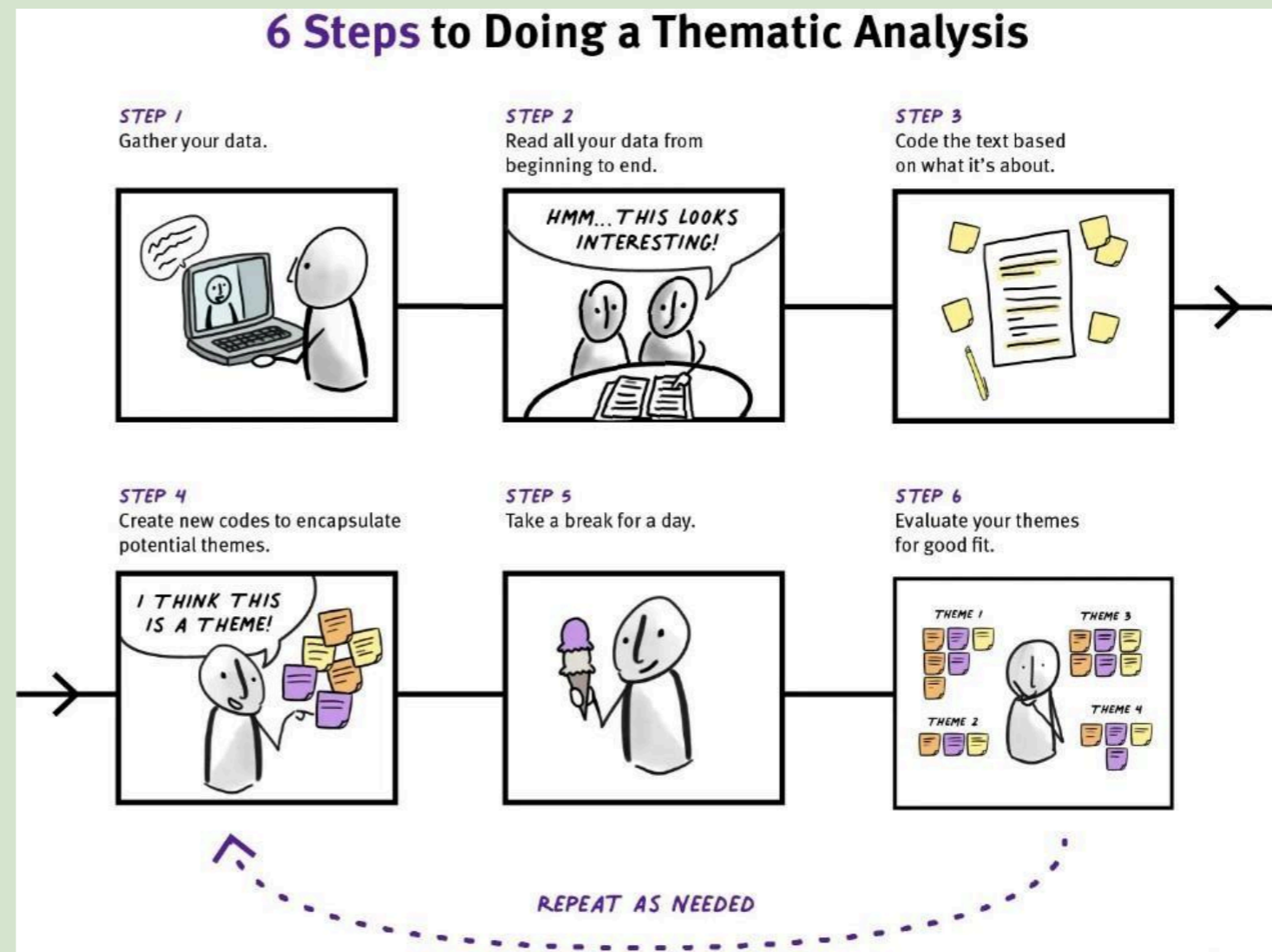
Reviewing and analysis

TRANSCRIPTION

One of the first stages after gathering your audio data (interviews, vox pops, checkouts etc) is to get them transcribed. This can be a little bit time-consuming but gives you really rich quotes and insights. **Best to do it as you go along and keep them on a Word doc**. You can use **Word to transcribe audio recordings** as well.
https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/office/transcribe-your-recordings-7fc2efec-245e-45f0-b053-2a97531ecf57

LOOKING FOR KEY THEMES

6 Steps to Doing a Thematic Analysis

STEP 1
Gather your data.

STEP 2
Read all your data from beginning to end.

HMM... THIS LOOKS INTERESTING!

STEP 3
Code the text based on what it's about.

STEP 4
Create new codes to encapsulate potential themes.

I THINK THIS IS A THEME!

STEP 5
Take a break for a day.

STEP 6
Evaluate your themes for good fit.

THEME 1 THEME 3
THEME 2 THEME 4

REPEAT AS NEEDED

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NUMBERS

You don't have to be a maths expert to find some useful statistics which can help tell the story of your project. If you have gathered numerical data you can put it into apps like Excel which automatically creates pie charts, bar charts, graphs etc. There are lots of videos to help you do this here's one to start you off
www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHtZrIb0oWY

INFOGRAPHICS
There are lots of apps which can help you create infographics this was created on Canva and helps visualise your findings for other people see here for more details
www.canva.com/free
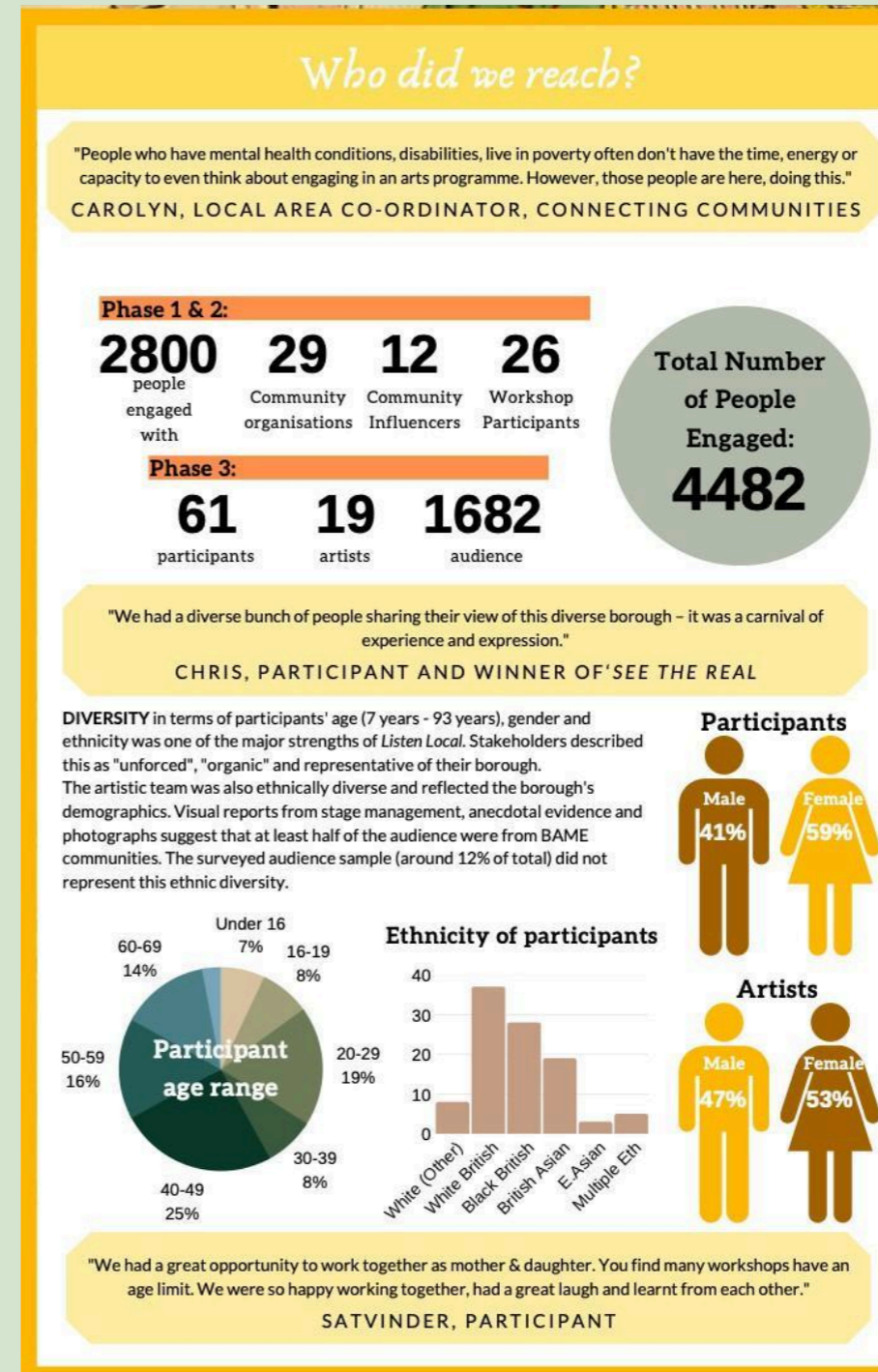
Sharing Visually

ILLUSTRATIONS

A picture speaks a thousand words and is a great way to share what you have discovered in your project. This is the work of artist Ellis Lewis-Dragstra (Instagram @ellis_l.d) who has done all the illustrations on the JustFACT website.

VISUAL MINUTES

A great way to encapsulate key ideas in a group discussion and communicate it to others.
Work by artist Julia Miranda www.juliamiranda.uk/ visualminutes

WORD CLOUDS

There are free word cloud generators from which you can type in the keywords from your 3,2,1s, rosebud and thorn exercises etc and create a visual from. The words mentioned most often are made larger so you can see the ideas or feelings which are most popular easily. Here is a free one www.worditout.com/word-cloud/create

FILMS

You can gather video clips as you go as in-house evidence and documentation. Towards the end of your project you might want to bring some of the learning or impact together in a film.

Just FACT film
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjytIcvrQJc

Stepping into Nature
www.youtube.com/watch?v=gX0jL-sJ3X8

Live sharing

PECHAKUCHA

The PechaKucha format is a slide show of 20 images, each auto-advancing after 20 seconds. It's non-stop so you've got 400 seconds to tell the story of your project with visuals guiding the way. Here's a video to show you how to make yours!
https://www.pechakucha.com/presentations/brian-scotts-presentation-260

FESTIVALS / CONFERENCES

You could have a stall at a local festival or hold a more strategic event calling potential local funders, councils and relevant organisations and present the project to them in a creative way. There is also the festival of social science which is well worth checking out and sharing learning at.
www.festivalofsocialscience.com

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Checklist

QUESTIONS Do the questions relate to the outcomes?

MATERIALS Have I got everything I need?
Stationary, phones, chargers, flip charts, pens etc?

ETHICS Do I have permission for people to be photographed, filmed or audio recorded? Is there the time to share why we are doing this, where it is stored and what it will be used for?

ACCESS Are all the language and access needs covered?

WHO? Are we clear on who is leading it? Who is setting it up? Is anyone going to be a note taker?

FLEXIBILITY Am I ready to adapt the planned activities if I need to?

SHARING BACK Am I clear who will analyse this and when we will share findings with the group?

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Curious to know more?

Rose, Thorn and Bud
www.goretro.ai/post/rose-bud-thorn-exercise
www.facilitator.school/template/rose-thorn-bud

Critical River Journey
www.qmul.ac.uk/centre-creative-collaboration/
media/arts-and-culture/
Verbatim_A4_Brochure_online_3.pdf. (page 43)

Reflection Tree
www.hobbycraft.co.uk/decorative-white-twig-
tree-76cm/5787971000.html

Tips for photographing sensitively
www.qmul.ac.uk/centre-creative-collaboration/media/art
s-and-culture/Verbatim_A4_Brochure_online_3.pdf (page
55)

Photovoice Method
www.photovoice.org/tag/monitoringevaluation/

Pechakucha
www.pechakucha.com

Curiosity Carnival Little Book of Evaluation

https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/media_wysiwyg/
Curiosity Carnival- Little book of evaluation tools- to
share.pdf

Breakfast Plates
https://www.qmul.ac.uk/centre-creative-collaboration/me
dia/arts-and-culture/Verbatim_A4_Brochure_online_3.pdf
(page 27)

Visual or Dixit Cards
www.trainers-toolbox.com/dixit-creativity-
meets-storytelling

Centre for Cultural Value
www.culturalvalue.org.uk