

Knowing your community



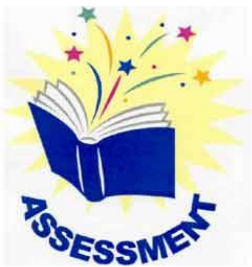
PAR, Needs Assessments, Libraries

Participatory Action Research(PAR)

- Community members are active in all phases of the research process.
- Participating in discovery and action based on that discovery is liberating.



PAR utilization



- Assessment level: engaging in research to better understand conditions and identifying issues for possible action.
- Action level: focusing on the selected issue or condition to be changed, engaging in research to better understand the issue, guiding action, and testing chosen approaches.



PAR Action Steps



1. Determine the focus of the effort.
2. Determine what is known and what is unknown about the focus of the effort.
3. Select a goal – what specific change or outcome do you want to achieve?
4. Construct your hypothesis: if we do x then y will happen.
5. Identify your resources – what you will use.
6. Determine how you will implement your strategy – list of resources to perform the action.
7. Develop a plan to test the effectiveness of your strategy .
8. Implement your strategy and collect data.
9. Analyze the results to see what happened.
10. Share the results with key constituencies.
11. Use what you have learned to guide future action.

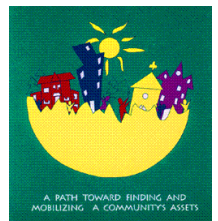
Community Needs Assessment

- What happens when we define the community according to its unmet needs or problems?
- Common approach used by social service agencies.
- Can this produce long term changes in the community itself?



Resource or Assets Assessments

- No matter how poor or frightened or lacking in immediate power, each community has resources it can use to make significant improvements, including the most important resource, people.
- Build on actual and potential capabilities that exist in your community. This, not concern over limitations, will be the foundation of your work.
- An overemphasis on liabilities is a serious error that colors problem solving in shades of inadequacy and dependence, undermining any attempt at empowerment.



Needs and Assets Assessment

- A needs assessment can give you an issue focus.
- A resource or assets assessment gives you the energy.
- Instead of asking what blockage do we need to get rid of – you can ask “What can we do or create with all the things we have?”



5 Stages of community Life

1. Waiting Place – people in the community hold a deep sense that things are not working right.
2. Impasse stage – community hits rock bottom – enough is enough!
3. Catalytic stage – small group of people and organizations emerge to take risks and challenge existing norms of the community works.
4. Growth stage – groups of catalysts expand, network grow a sense of common purpose.
5. Sustain and Renew stage ways to bring along new leaders and take on deeply rooted issues.

