

Local Headlines Activity

This activity can be used as a visioning/planning activity assisting groups to clarify their goals through dialogue and recording ideas

This is an imaginative exercise where the group/organisation envision themselves taking over a future issue of the local newspaper. This could be next week/next year/in three years, whatever.

They can then build the story in parts: creating the big headlines, the sidebar stories, any quotes, images etc. as well as the cover. This exercise gets the group dreaming about what they really want and what success means to them. In a way it brings out the essence of what they want to become, where they want to be in the future. This can form the basis of developing an action plan.

This can be done as a whole group activity or split into smaller groups and then feedback and agree on one main sheet (smaller groups can use a blank sheet and just write under the headings and then feedback can be recorded on the graphic copy)

An important part of this activity is encouraging the group to begin to think to the future and what they would like to achieve, being realistic about their aspirations and then using the broad objectives to begin to develop a step by step action plan of how they may achieve their main goals.

Process

Give each small group a flipchart sheet folded in half (like a newspaper). On the front ask them to put the big headline "cover story" - the one that grabs the attention of the reader. When this is done ask the group to open their "newspaper" and on the inside front cover put a number of smaller articles reporting the successes and news about their project (these are the sidebar on inside/ leader articles).

They should use the next page to include some human interest stories e.g. an individual from the community who has won something, an article about the committee and how to get involved, an interview with the local councillor including quotes, a few comments from local people about how they are helping to change the community etc.

The final page should have information about activities in the local centre or local groups that people can join that will make a difference to them and the community they live in. It could have projects, maybe an article about becoming involved in a national campaign, or an advert for a local production involving community member.

Participants will know the hopes and aspirations they and other community members have and they should include in the newspaper any changes or additions they might want to see in the future.