

# Discovery

## Toolkit 3: Gathering Information

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# **Discovery**

**By Bill Crooks and Jackie Mouradian**

Introduction

Toolkit 1

Toolkit 2

**Toolkit 3 - Gathering Specific Information  
On Community Needs**

Toolkit 4

Toolkit 5

Toolkit 6



## **Included in this toolkit:**

- 05      Introductory notes
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## Introduction

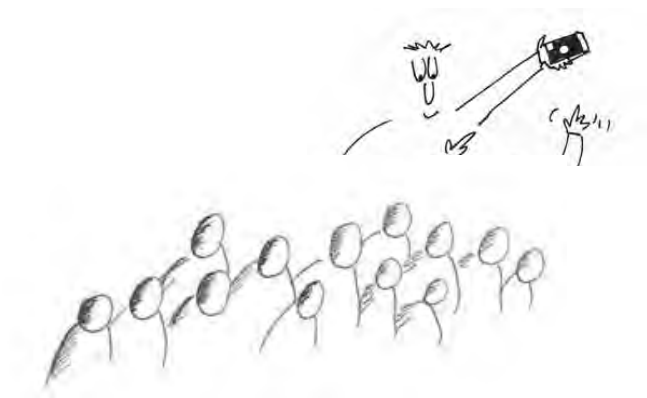
### The Objectives of This Toolkit

1. To gather specific information on the priorities identified in toolkit 2.
2. To help participants be aware of the principles of information gathering from members of the community and tips on how to do this successfully and sensitively.
3. To give participants a range of simple tools for gathering information which is easy to use and effective.

### About The Packs

There are five key sections in this toolkit:

1. Exploring wants and needs
2. Attitudes for gathering information
3. How to design simple questionnaires and surveys
4. How to run a focus group discussion
5. Review of information gathered



**6** Toolkit 3: Gathering Information

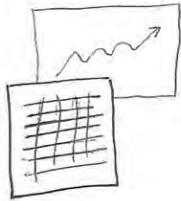
## **Exploring Wants and Needs**

### **Purpose:**

When working with communities it is important to find ways of discovering the real needs of the community and not just go with what the community says it wants. In order to discover the real needs of the community it is sometimes important to use a range of tools to gain a true picture of the situation from a number of varying sources, which can be cross referenced.

Sometimes it's good to begin with the immediate surface needs and work on those in order to build a relationship with the community, so that at a later stage you can explore the deeper needs once you have won trust and respect

## Gathering information on wants and needs



### Information from statistics

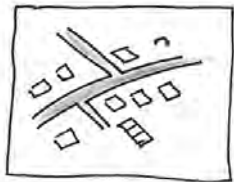
- Drug and alcohol statistics
- Crime figures
- Teenage pregnancies
- Demographics
- Number of school leavers
- Homelessness



### Information from key workers in the community

- Clergy
- Social workers
- Community Wardens
- Community Leaders





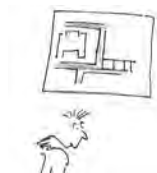
### Information from local people

- Community groups
- Young people
- Single mums
- Elderly

In order to get a good picture of the needs in the community, you need to gather information from all 3 sources listed above.

When you have established a clear picture of the situation it is important to share this with the community for them to comment on and add to. This helps them own the information.

## Ways of Gathering Information

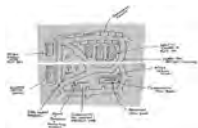


### **Questionnaires**

There's a fuller description of how to do these further on in the pack. However, they are really useful ways of gathering information over a short space of time. Careful consideration needs to be given as to how they are put together so that they ask the right questions.

### **Making posters of statistical information**

Putting key statistics up on a flipchart or on posters is a really good way of communicating this information to the group working on Discovery and also to the wider community. Make sure the writing and figures are made large enough for people to see so that it can be discussed.



### **Note Books**

Everybody involved in collecting information should have a notebook for jotting down information from the focus groups and meetings with key workers in the community.

## **Tools for Gathering Information**

Some of the tools that we have used in packs 1 and 2 for celebrating and understanding the needs of your community can also be used for gathering information. These tools are listed below, and all involve a group of people sharing their experiences and ideas. When gathering information you could use these tools with specific peer groups to get a better overall picture of the situation.

### **Mapping**

This is where the community draws a map of their community and describes some of the key issues and challenges.

### **Time Line**

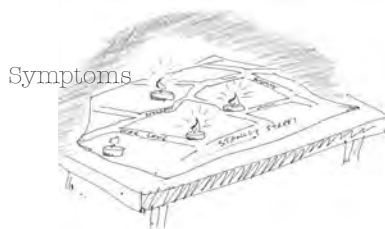
This is a good tool for getting the community to describe the history and key events which have taken place in the community and will give some key insights into how the community has changed over time.

### **Photo parade**

This involves the community taking pictures of issues that are of most concern and need addressing. The pictures can then be grouped or ranked according to importance.

## The Problem Tree

Having gathered information you can revisit the problem tree to look into the deeper needs that you have identified. For example, having looked at the problem of youth crime you could then do a problem tree on one of the causes of youth crime, which is absent fathers. See the following worked example. There is a larger version on the disk.



Problem

Root causes

Youth institutions  
or prison

street crime

Looking for sense of  
belonging in gangs

Lack of self  
worth

Affairs at work

Selfishness and lack  
of responsibility

Seeing themselves  
purely as bread  
winners

Uncertainty of  
the role of father

Lack of respect  
for women

Kids take issues  
out on mothers

Kids with no  
respect for father



### Absent Fathers

Mothers not  
letting them  
see children

Girls getting pregnant  
too soon and with  
wrong motives

unbalanced  
female input

Boys growing  
up with no  
male role  
model

Own father was  
bad role model

Boys with  
little respect  
for women

promiscuity



## **Activity 1: Attitudes For Gathering Information**

### **Purpose:**

To look at what sort of attitudes we need in order to gather information effectively, and in a way that helps the community feel involved in planning their future.

### **Contents:**

- Introduction to using the cards
- List of attitude definitions
- Attitude cards for discussion

## Introduction to using attitude cards

When gathering information from people, it is really helpful for them to understand what it's for and how it can benefit them.

The picture cards, which should be printed from the disk, try to reflect a range of positive and negative attitudes and the purpose of this activity is to try to help participants identify what should be the good attitudes that are needed for gathering information with the community.

Lay the cards out on the floor and get the participants to categorise the attitudes they think would help information gathering and those that won't.

With the attitudes they have selected that are positive discuss in pairs or in a large group how these can be demonstrated.

Do a role play showing negative attitudes while gathering information followed by a role play which shows how it should be done.



## List of Attitudes

**Humility** – recognising that local people often have more knowledge and experience of issues than we do ourselves

**Listening** – good use of open questions, no interruptions, give people time to say what they really want to say, affirming what they say and checking you've heard what they said

**Inclusiveness** – open to hear and understand all regardless of ethnicity, disability, age, gender

**Confidentiality** – respecting personal issues

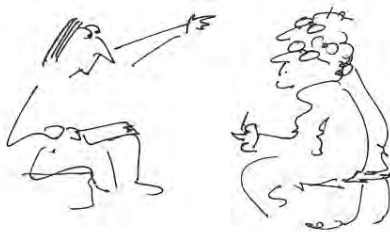
Wanting the best for the community – no hidden agendas or desire to manipulate information to suit alternative interests

**Excellence** – recording accurately and in a way that everyone can understand

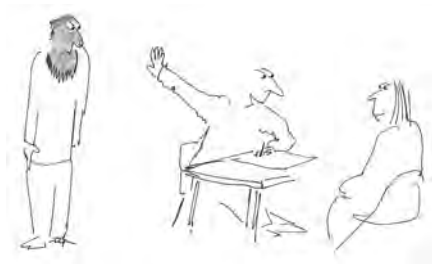
**Creativity** – collecting information in a way that is enjoyable and not at all boring or threatening



Develop listening skills



Don't bore people to death



Don't exclude people



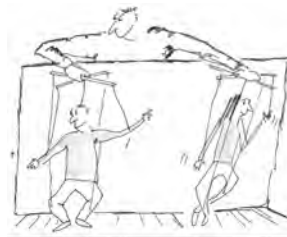
Don't interrogate people



Don't squeeze people for information



Take time to listen to people



Don't manipulate people



**Activity 2:**  
**Designing a Questionnaire for**  
**Gathering Information**

**Purpose:**

To help participants understand the value and role of questionnaires in gathering information. This pack also includes some simple templates and guidelines in how to design one.

**Contents:**

- Tips for using questionnaires
- Sample questionnaire
- Different ways of using a questionnaire

## Tips for using questionnaires

1. Decide who the questionnaire is for and who will be answering it.
2. Make sure you ask open questions such as “what do you think of...? What do you feel about...? What do you consider...? What do you value most about...?”
3. Try not to make it longer than 2 sides of A4.
4. Before giving the questionnaire to someone, explain its purpose and the value of them filling it in, or write this at the top of the questionnaire.
5. In some cases it's quite good to give an opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to provide space for drawing a picture of how they would like to see the future of their community or some particular aspect of it (this is particularly good when working with school age children).
6. In some cases a list of guided questions asked in a focus group to provoke discussion will be more appropriate than a formal questionnaire.

## Example of a questionnaire

### **Theme: After school clubs**

1. What after school clubs are you aware of in this area?
2. What do you think people value most about them?
3. In what ways could they be improved?
4. Do you think there's scope for a new after school club, meeting on a different day with a different focus?
5. What do you think makes a good after school club?
6. Draw a picture of what you think the ideal after school club should look like



## Different ways of using questionnaires



Single sheet – keep it simple

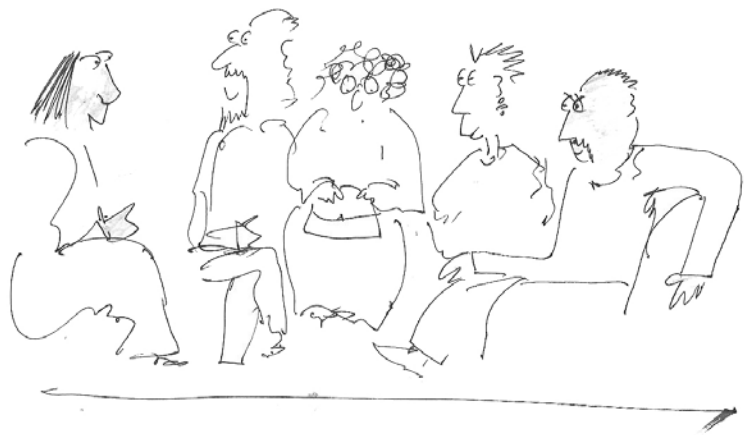
Questionnaires can be picture based, in which participants draw their ideas for a future initiative or project. They can then be analysed to see the common themes

Questions can be stuck on paper around the walls, and the participants answer by writing on post-its. These are then gathered and reviewed.

Use in a focus group discussion - as a set of guided questions







### **Activity 3: Using Focus Groups for Gathering Information**

**Purpose:**

To help participants understand the value of gathering information in small groups and simple techniques for doing this

**Contents:**

- Step by step guide
- List of useful questions for small groups
- Worked example

## Step by step Guide

Step 1: Agree in advance the key questions you want to ask in order to gather the information around a particular issue, eg graffiti, after school clubs, housing and the elderly.



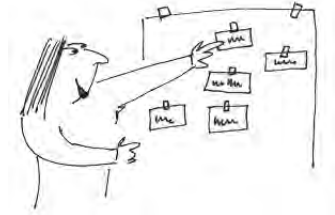
Step 2: At the beginning of the meeting explain the purpose and value of this meeting.



Step 3: Use a question to get the group brainstorming in pairs so that everybody is involved at the beginning.

Step 4: The feedback from the brainstorm can be managed in a number of different ways; either written on to a flipchart or individual ideas written on separate pieces of paper or card (one thought or idea per card)

Step 5: Get the group to prioritise the things they've brainstormed, either by ranking the list on the flipchart or grouping the individual cards into common themes.



Step 6: Once the ideas/issues have been prioritised, you can deepen the discussion by asking more open questions and in particular, asking why certain things are the way they are and looking for the causes and effects.

## List of useful questions

The following questions are good for starting a brainstorm

- What are the main challenges in this community?
- What are the barriers to developing this community?
- What are the opportunities for improving this community?
- What would you most like to do to help this community?
- What gives you most energy for improving the community?

The following questions are good for prioritising or ranking people's answers from the brainstorm:

- What should be the top 3 priorities?
- Which challenges or problems have we the capacity to address?
- Which top three areas do we have most energy and interest for?
- Which of these challenges can be grouped according to theme?
- Which of these challenges are specific to young people, the elderly and parents or guardians?



## Brainstorm on cards

Then group into themes







## **Activity 4: Review of Information Gathered**

### **Purpose:**

To review all the material in these toolkits with a view to understanding the needs in our community and our capacity to meet them

### **Contents:**

- Step by step guide
- Tips for running the session
- Coloured fruit cards
- Worked examples

## Step by step Guide

Step 1: Print off all the different fruits from the disk.  
Brainstorm by writing on the blueberries, what are the skills and gifts in the church that could be used for helping our community



Step 2: Using the green apples brainstorm what are the experiences we have in the church that could be used to help our community

Step 3: Using the red strawberries, brainstorm what are our motivations for working in the community



Step 4: Looking back over the activities in toolkit 2 and 3, identify what are the top needs

Step 5: Discuss and prioritise those things which can be done with the existing skills and experience



## Tips for running this exercise

### **Time required:**

1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes

### **Materials:**

Coloured circles, pens, flipchart



Prior to this activity it's really important to have done some work on who we are and what our gifts and talents are (toolkit 1) as well as identifying and understanding the needs of our community (toolkit 2). At the start of this session it is important to recap on some of the findings from box 1 and 2.

After each step it is quite important to check with the group that this is what they really think and is true to their experience and understanding before moving on to the next step. Because this is quite a long session it might be worth having a snack or food break between each step to make it more interesting and fun. The findings of this activity could be presented to the wider church or local community groups as a way of exploring how the church or community groups could support this new initiative.



### Our Motivation

- Relevant church
- Passion for youth
- Reduced crime

## **What is our capacity to act?**



### Our Skills and Gifts

- Organising events
- DIY skills
- Music and drama



### Our Experience

- Running a toddler group for 5 years
- Lived in area for 25 years
- Campaigned against new development



Isolated lonely elderly



Trashed parks

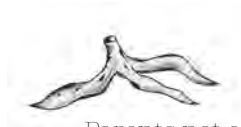
**What needs have  
we identified?**



No youth activities



Graffiti and rubbish



Parents not coping  
with children



**What needs can we address?**

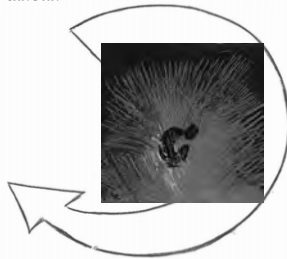


## **Spiritual Reflection**

### **Breaking Destructive Cycles**

Absent fathers - men leave their families who then have to cope alone

Single mothers left with too much to do find themselves unable to cope



The child looks for a sense of identity in gangs and gets involved in street crime. Communities become fractured and dehumanised

Children who are neglected and sometimes abused grow up with no feelings of self worth



## Questions

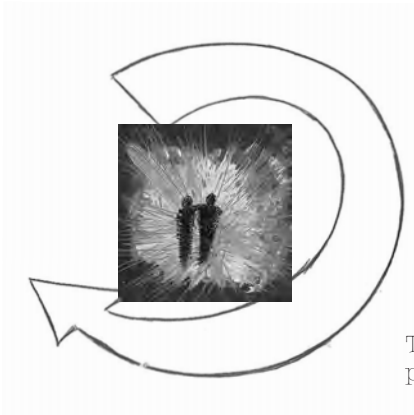
What can the Church do with the community to strengthen the role of husbands and male partners in making a family a safe place to be?

How can the Church and community work together to help single mothers feel less isolated and vulnerable?

How does the church identify with the community?  
How can we use our own wounds to reach out to others in pain?



The church can offer hope where  
there seems to be none



The Church can come  
alongside to support and  
befriend

To change the life of one  
person is significant

God's love embodied in the church  
can rebuild broken communities  
and restore hope



If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry  
And satisfy the needs of the oppressed  
Then your light will rise in the darkness  
And your night will become like the noonday.....  
Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
And will raise up the age-old foundations  
You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings

Isaiah 58 vs10 & 12

Prayer

O God, I cannot undo the past, or make it never have happened - neither can you. There are some things that are not possible even for you - but not many! I ask you, humbly, from the bottom of my heart: Please, God, would you write straight with my crooked lines? Out of the serious mistakes of my life will you make something beautiful for you. Amen



Diocese of Liverpool



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**FAITH**INCOMMUNITY**SCOTLAND**