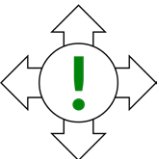






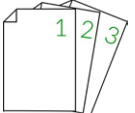


#21

Evaluation & Impact Assessment EMPOWERMENT APPRAISAL

<p>MAA Scenario</p> 	 <p>ENGAGING & INCENTIVISING INTERROGATING CREATING ADDRESSING APPLYING</p>
<p>When to Implement</p> 	<p>Periodically throughout the interactive innovation process.</p>
<p>Group Size</p> 	<p>Evaluator self-assessment (one person) & discussion groups of 3 actors.</p>
<p>Level of Technical Difficulty</p> 	<p>No technical expertise required.</p>
<p>Time Needed</p> 	<p>Implemented periodically.</p>
<p>Resources Required</p> 	<p>No resources required, apart from basic materials.</p>
<p>Clustering with Other Tools</p> 	<p>Tool #20.</p>



PURPOSE, BACKGROUND & LOGIC



Image source: Teagasc, inspired by Arnstein, 1969.

Purpose

This tool is used to:

- Self-assess for how empowered an actor is in a process of interactive innovation
- Take actions to improve empowered participation.

Background and Logic

'The best people to assess empowerment are the people who may or may not be empowered' Robert Chambers, 2002.

Empowerment is a term that has been associated with participatory processes, like interactive innovation, for decades. That actors participate in an empowered (open, confident) way is critical for the interactive innovation process to be a success. If actors are disempowered (undermined, unconfident) they cannot effectively contribute their valuable knowledge and they don't come to co-own the innovation process, necessary for the process to be energetically driven and fertilised by different knowledges.

This tool complements other tools in this handbook, such as Tool#16 (appraisal of group dynamics) and facilitates to assess how empowered each individual actor feels, acts and contributes to the interactive innovation process. This process of reflection will allow actors involved to become more aware of the conditions for empowerment.

As described in some academic (sociological) studies, empowerment can be a vague term that can escape measurement:

'Empowerment seems to be everybody's aim, although its precise meaning and its attainment elude us. In part, it acquires a legitimating function in many development projects, particularly in the Third World...It is often used without any precise definition, but uncritical use of the concept renders it meaningless. Thus, empowerment may signal concern with people's participation, compassion with the 'powerless,' and a commitment to bottom-up development, while in fact it may be no more than a fig leaf of political correctness, behind which all can carry on as before.' – **Petterson & Solbakken, 1998, p. 319**

To avoid the elusiveness described above, we present for the purposes of this tool a definition of empowerment that has resonated with actors in the field. The definition was originally used in a study of farm women:

There are three conditions for empowerment:

1. Participation – taking action to pursue one's interests.
2. Conscientisation – having awareness of the constraints (such as lack of resources or being subject to biases) that can limit one's potential & interests
3. Solidarity – accessing social connections and supports, 'one cannot be empowered alone'.

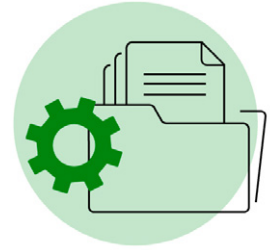
(Adapted from Solbakken, 1996).

The last condition for empowerment is notable. While the first two conditions are focused on the individual, the third identifies engaging with others as a condition for empowerment. This aspect of the above definition draws attention to the connection between empowerment and resilience: having, accessing and using resources (social as well as economic) is necessary for resilience.

This tool is inspired by [SIDA \(2010\)](#).

Materials

- Template with three images showing conditions for empowerment
- Discussion facilitation guide from SIDA (2010)



METHOD/HOW-TO GUIDE

1. Topic Guide

The images below relate to the three conditions for empowerment, which we have identified with actors in the field as particularly relevant to the multi-actor approach and interactive innovation.

Explain the definition of empowerment to members, explaining each of the criteria in turn with reference to the images (shown on a screen or printed).

There are three conditions for empowerment:

Participation

Taking action to pursue one's interests (citizen power)

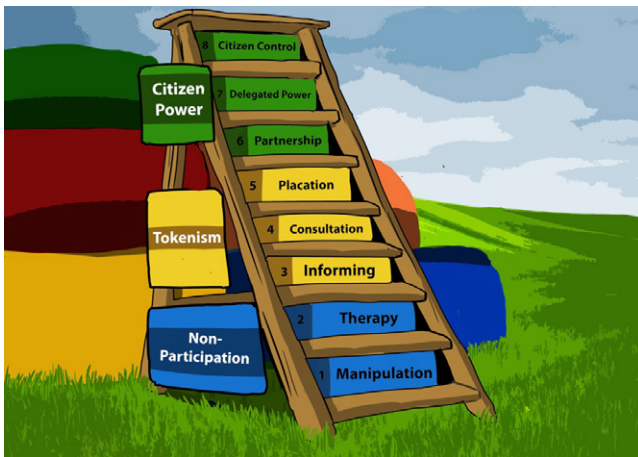


Image source: Teagasc (2019), inspired by Arnstein (1969).

Conscientisation

Having awareness of the constraints (such as lack of resources or being subject to biases) that can limit one's potential & interests.



Image source: Teagasc (2019).

Solidarity

Accessing social connections and supports, 'one cannot be empowered alone'.



Image source: Teagasc (2019).

2. Discussion Facilitation Guide

Use the following approach from [SIDA \(2010, 52\)](#) to facilitate a discussion.

How This Monitoring Tool Works



"As far as they are concerned the process is one that they drive and own and is purely for their purposes. For them the analysis stops here." (SIDA, 2010)

Image: A Women's group involved in a reflection session (SIDA, 2010).

At the group level: The groups meet to review the statements once every year. In this movement the men and women meet separately. They sit at times which are convenient for them, the men preferring the evening and the women the afternoon. They organise some snacks and make an occasion of the session. The review process takes about three hours.

A facilitator helps the process. He/she is a Movement member from another group and has been mentored to manage the process and ensure that the group engages in the evaluation properly.

The facilitator reads out each statement and the group discusses whether it applies to them or not. They are encouraged by the facilitator to explore what the statement means and must use examples to help them to assess their own achievement. For instance, in discussing whether they have achieved the indicator, *'the position of women and girls in all group members' families is valued'* (an 'awareness' level indicator), examples are provided by each member. Such examples as *'we all eat together'*, *'both girls and boys have time set aside to do school home-work'*, *'mothers don't only eat the fish head as they had to before'*, etc. lead to extensive discussion before finally, the group members assign a 'happy face' or an 'unhappy face' to the statement. Any reluctance to score a 'happy face' is automatically scored as an 'unhappy face'. The fact that all the group members have to put forward their opinion and provide evidence to support this encourages joint analysis and mutual support.

As far as the group is concerned, their main motivation is to eventually be able to insert 'happy faces' in all the boxes. They take the exercise very seriously and where there are 'unhappy faces', take stock and reflect on what the group must do in the following year to improve on this.

'We talked with a men's group that had been in existence for more than 20 years about their experience of using the reflection tool. 'It took about 3 hours to complete, but it will take less next time. We thought it was time well spent. The facilitator is a member of the Movement and this is good because he uses language we can understand. He also has more time for us. We get a feeling that we are doing this ourselves, not top-down. We still have not got 'full marks' – we will try to get this next year and then we can help other groups. The process is very important – it is like looking in a mirror. When we find out what we have not been able to achieve we make a plan to take action. We have been a group for nearly 23 years and if we had done this before it would have made a big difference. We would have been able to pick up on our shortcomings earlier.' **SIDA (2010)**

They develop an action plan for the following year based on their analyses and scores. They regard this reflection process as an important milestone each year and look forward to it. It is not used to compare themselves with another group or as a means to access resources, but purely as a self-assessment tool that encourages reflection and defines future action.

Note: *The above exercise is part of a wider evaluation approach, which can be accessed [here](#).*

