

NORTH KERRY & WEST LIMERICK

*Smart Villages, Stronger
Communities*

Community Workshop 2: Social Research Techniques

April 2022

Welcome and Introduction





Community Capacity Building Workshops

Workshop 1:
Introduction to the
'Smart Villages'
Concept and
Understanding the
Project Context

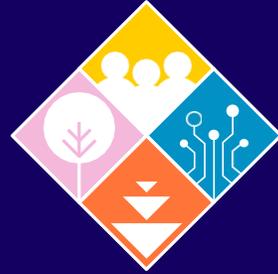
Workshop 2:
Social Research
Techniques

Workshop 3:
Addressing the
Impacts of Climate
Change

Workshop 4:
Becoming a 'Smart
Village' – The Role of
ICT and New
Technologies

Agenda

Social Research Techniques Workshop	
19:00 – 19:10	Introduction to Social Research Techniques (SRT) <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ What is SRT?➤ When and how is it used?➤ What are the benefits of conducting SR?
19:10 – 19:20	SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ How can SRT be applied to a Community Planning and Development setting?➤ How can SRT be used to identify trends?➤ How can SRT be used to complement existing data?
19:20 – 19:30	Relevant Example
19:30 – 19:35	Conclusion
19:30 – 19:35	Break
19:35 – 20:25	Group Breakout Session – “Survey Design”
20:25 – 20:30	Closing Address and Next Steps



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Introduction to Social Research Techniques

Social Research Techniques





Introduction

What is Social Research?



Social science is, in its broadest sense, **the study of society and the manner in which people behave and influence the world around us.**

It tells us about the world beyond our immediate experience, and can help explain how our **own society works** - from the causes of unemployment or what helps economic growth, to how and why people vote, or what makes people happy.

It provides **vital information** for governments and policymakers, local authorities, non-governmental organisations and others.





Introduction

What is data?

- Researchers use **data** (facts/statistics/items of information) to help explain, calculate, analyse or plan.
- Data can be subdivided into two broad categories:
 - Quantitative** - Data in the form of numbers or measurements
 - Qualitative** - Data which is not in the form of numbers

	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Objective/Purpose	Gain an understanding of underlying reasons or motivations Uncover trends in thought and opinion of individuals	Quantify data and generalise results to the population of interest Often followed by qualitative research to explore findings further
Sample	Usually a small number of samples	Usually a large number of samples
Example	Focus Groups, Interviews, Group Discussions	Surveys, Profiling, Simulations



Introduction

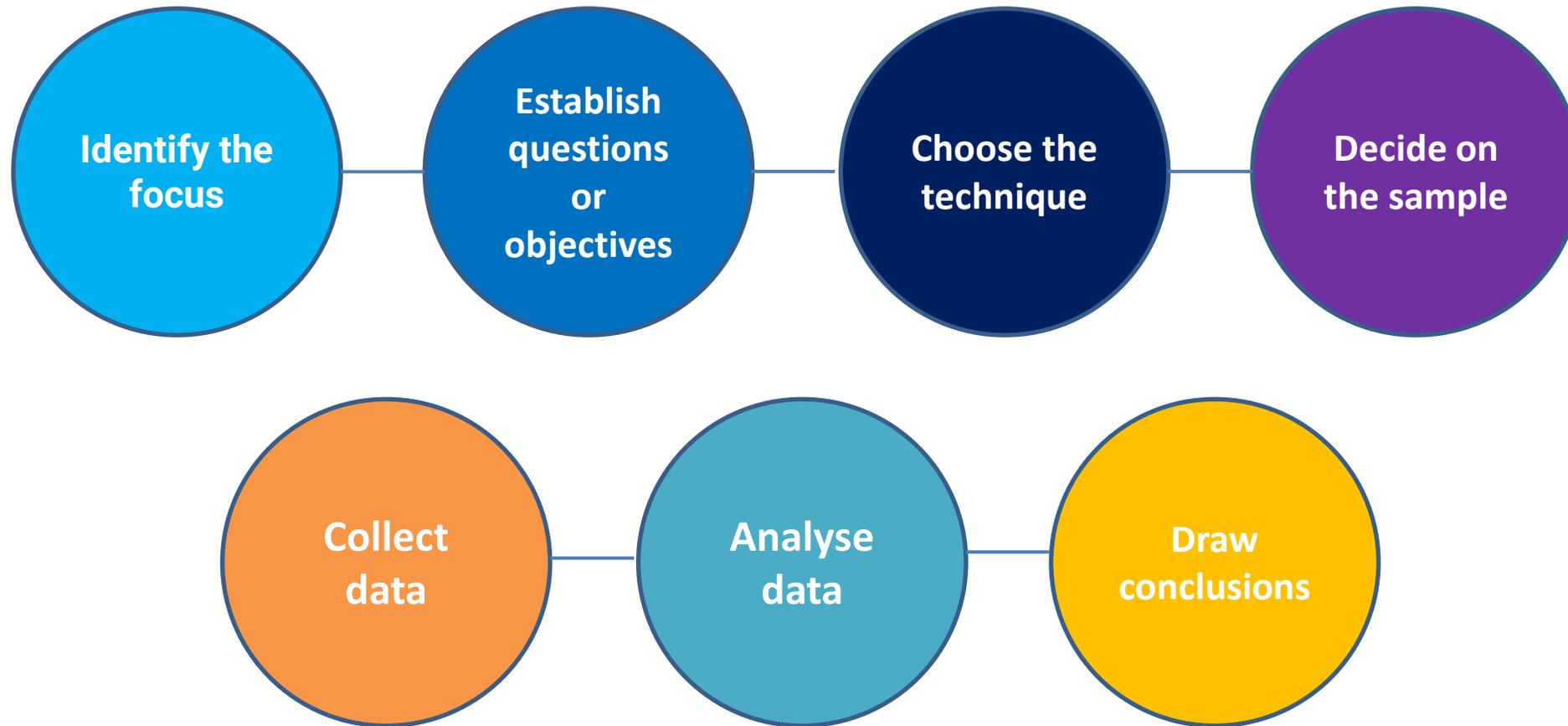
How Social Research conducted?

Research Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Interview	A meeting where people talk face to face to discuss matters and situations	Gather a lot of information very easily	Time-consuming
Questionnaire	Set of questions that people answer	Very easy and quick	People might write anything to get it over and done with
Focus Group	A group of people that participate/contribute in a discussion	Very easy, gathers a lot of information	Time-consuming
Survey	Data collection tool used to gather information about individuals	Easy, quick, don't need to interview a large amount of people at once	Not all people like doing surveys



Introduction

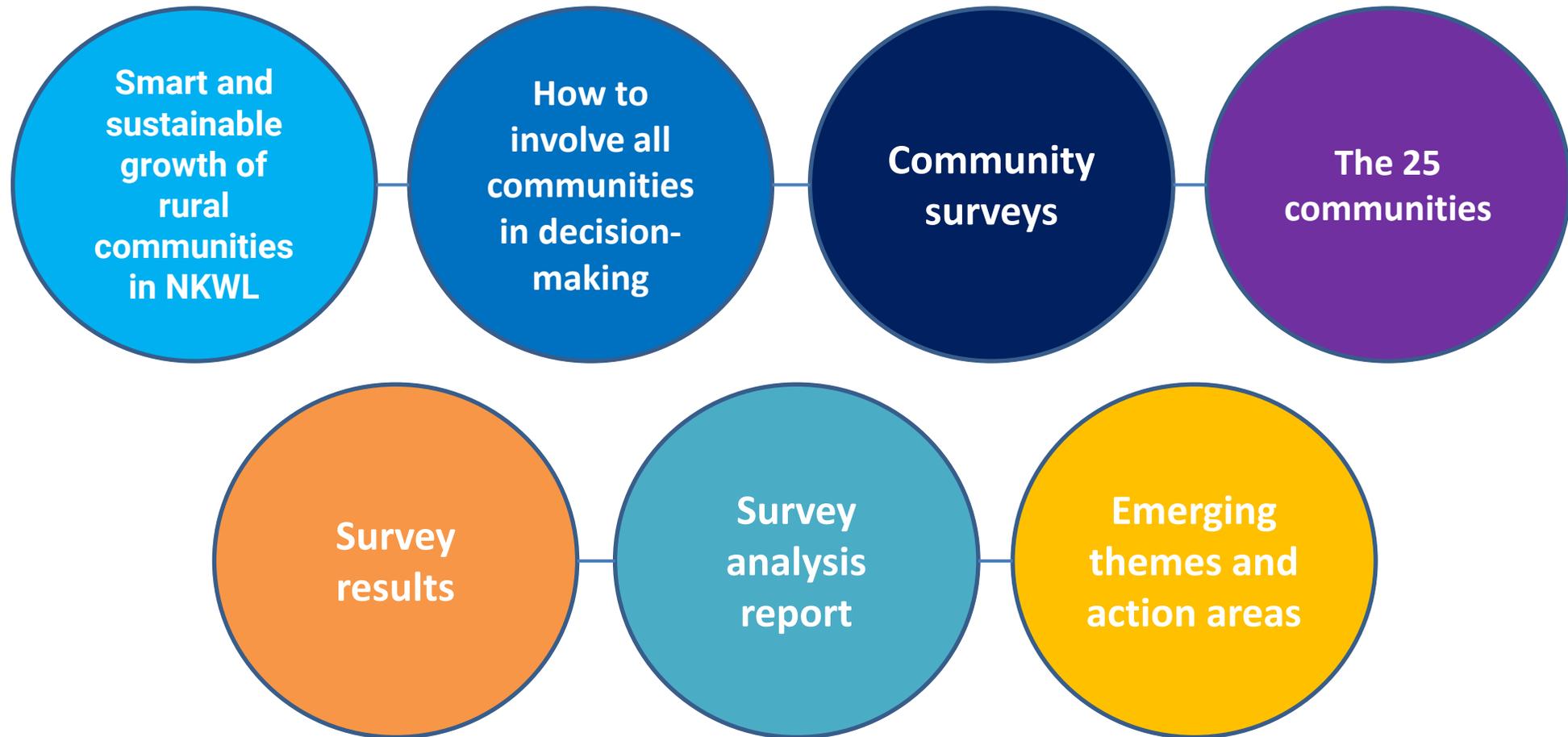
What is the process of Social Research?

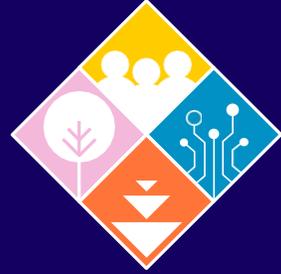




Introduction

The process of Social Research – NKWL example





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SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

Social Research Techniques





SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

Benefits of community participation in SRT

Community participation makes it more likely that you'll come up with a plan that's **effective**.

Community participation helps **keep community building** going over the long run.

Community participation leads to **community ownership and support** of initiatives which come out of a planning and development effort

Community participation can **create relationships and partnerships** among diverse groups who can then work **together**.

Community participation **energises the community** to continue to change in **positive directions**.



SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

What might this look like?

Time Line

A method whereby people in the local community recall the chronology of past events, that are regarded as important to their community. It is a useful tool to use at the beginning of information gathering and can be a good way to start developing a relationship with the community. A time line can help gather information on the following:

- Learn what past events are **important to communities**
- Understand the community's historical **perspective** on current issues
- Gather year-wise **information**
- **Create conversation** about issues happening in the community (e.g., health, food security, gender issues, education, technology, economic situation)



SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

What might this look like?

Brain Storming

A method for people to share a wide range of ideas before a decision is made. Participants are encouraged to share ideas **without fear** of being corrected or challenged, even though the ideas may not follow traditional thinking.

An end-result of the process is an extensive list of **creative ideas** from which to draw upon in developing a solution. Brainstorming frees people to **think creatively** and energises them to **take action**.

Because the process is **participatory**, everyone feels part of the decision-making process.



SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

What might this look like?

Focus Group

This method is used to collect information from a specific group of people about their **experiences and opinions** on a particular subject.

When planning a focus group interview, the following should be decided: the **purpose** of the group, **information needed** from the group, and **how** the information is to be used.

As the moderator often determines the success of the focus group discussion, the individual should be **approachable, engaging** and able to gain the group's **trust**.



SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

What might this look like?

Interview

A method of data collection that involves two or more people exchanging information through a series of **questions and answers**.

The questions are designed by a researcher to gain information from interview participant(s) on a specific topic or set of topics.

Typically, interviews involve an **in-person** meeting between two people, an interviewer and an interviewee.

Structured: Predefined questions

Semi Structured: Predefined topics and themes, open-ended questions

Unstructured: Predefined topic, open-ended themes, open-ended questions



SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

What might this look like?

Survey

A method whereby a researcher poses some set of predetermined questions to an entire group, or sample, of individuals. Survey research is an especially useful approach when a researcher aims to describe or explain features of a very large group or groups.

This method may also be used as a way of **quickly gaining** some general details about one's population of interest to **help prepare** for a more focused, in-depth study using time-intensive methods such as in-depth interviews or field research.

In this case, a survey may help a researcher **identify specific individuals or locations** from which to collect additional data.



SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

What might this look like?

Survey

Toolkit for carrying out a survey:

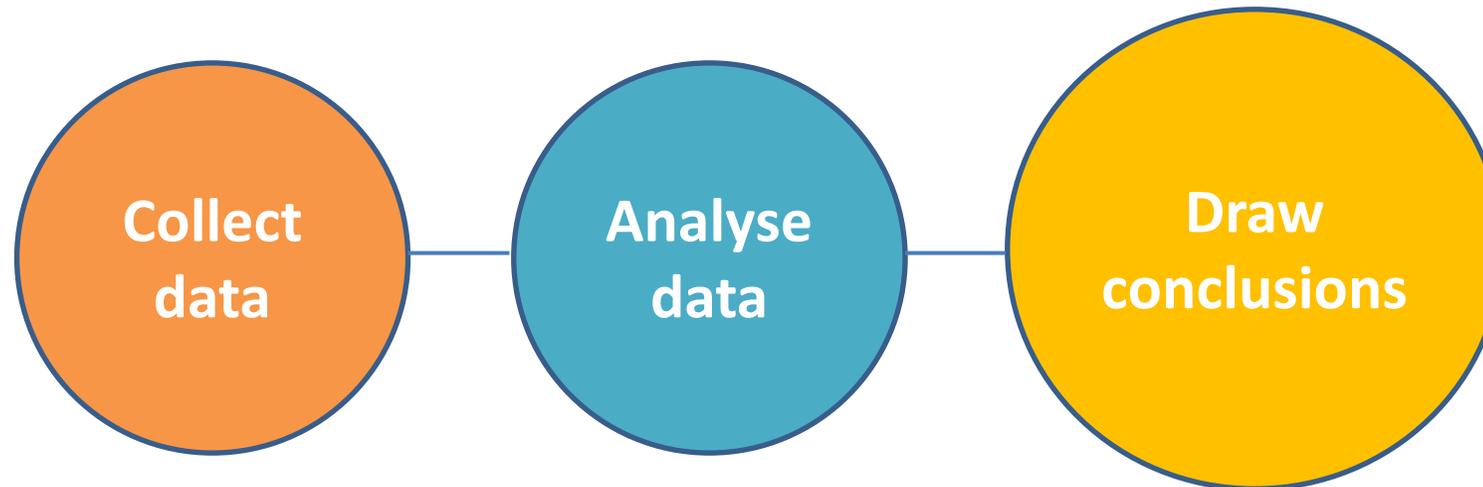
[Social-survey-toolkit.pdf \(neighbourhoodplanning.org\)](https://www.neighbourhoodplanning.org/social-survey-toolkit.pdf)



SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

How can SRT be used to complement existing data?

Quantitative data, such as Census data, can help provide a foundation for **identifying** social and economic trends – this data helps **inform the development** of future **objectives and actions** which aim to benefit the region and its communities.



Qualitative data can be used to **inform and produce** better quantitative data results – addresses the **shortcomings** of Census data and reflects **local nuance** and **deeper societal shifts**



SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

How can SRT be used to complement existing data?

While towns and villages may show **similarities** in statistics such as population and employment levels, **differences** within other statistics can **not always be understood** through data analysis alone.

In these instances, the use of social research techniques, such as **surveys, interviews** and **focus groups** can provide **localised context** behind certain data.

From these social research techniques, a **deeper understanding** of quantitative data can be developed – helping to create more **informed objectives and actions** for the region and its communities.





SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

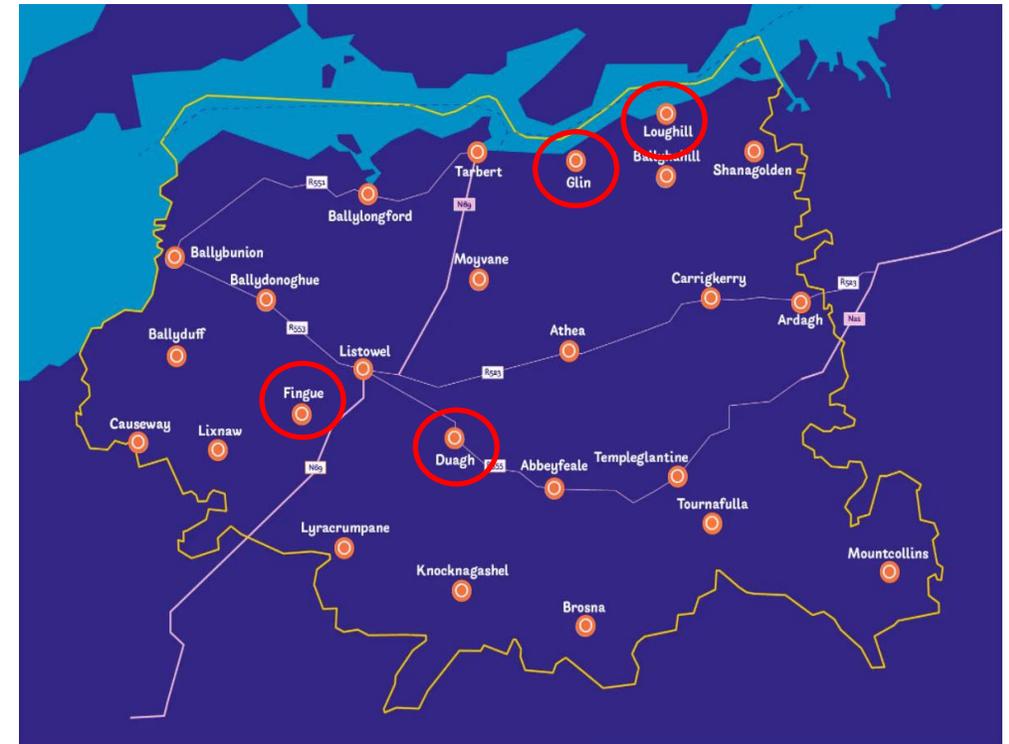
How can SRT be used to complement existing data?

Duagh and Finuge

- 13km apart or a 15-minute drive
- Both have a population of roughly **200 people**
- Both have similar unemployment levels **below 10%**
- **Average age** of Duagh (34.1 years) is very different to Finuge (42.6 years)

Glin and Loughill

- 7km apart or a 5-minute drive
- Both have similar population sizes (between **450-600 people**)
- Both have similar educational attainment levels
- **Employment in agricultural sectors** in Glin is **5%**, with Loughill seeing **16%** in agricultural sectors





SRT in a Community Planning and Development Setting

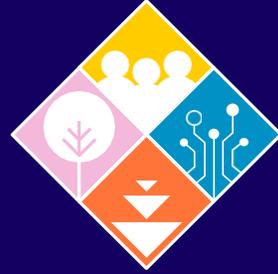
How can SRT be used to complement existing data

Despite similarities shared between the towns and villages of North Kerry-West Limerick, a **complex array** of strengths, constraints, opportunities and threats are **unique to each community** within the region

Due to this blend of unique circumstances, data analysis alone is **not sufficient** to address and understand these circumstances

The **combined use** of quantitative data and qualitative data gathering techniques produces the most **accurate and representative** picture of a region, its towns, villages, communities and individuals

- Quantitative data provides a **base framework** for analysis
- Qualitative data provides **local, nuanced and innovative insights** which can drive **real change for the better**



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Relevant Examples

Social Research Techniques





Relevant Examples

Overview of Relevant Examples

A case study of rural water supply project in Jeppes Reefs, South Africa

- Investigate the challenges that **hinder participation** of communities in the delivery of a clean water supply.
- The study looks at the definition of **participation**, the involvement of the community in **decision-making**, and the **role of the planner** in the delivery of clean water with a specific focus on the Jeppes Reefs community as case study.



Relevant Examples

Overview of Relevant Examples

Approach

- **Formally structured interviews and informal interviews** proved to be a feasible strategy to get information from the community respondents. Questioning was done primarily in a **structured and semi-structured manner** and was **highly open-ended**. The interviews with the community leaders were **highly structured** and used **guided questionnaires**. **Note taking and recording** was allowed by the leaders.
- There were **two formats adopted in interviewing** the community: **focus group interviews** and **individual interviews**. This **group consisted of** community members who were involved in the actual project committees.
- **The use of both field observation and interview process** was suitable for the gathering of comprehensible information on the project. The field observation was used to ascertain the project location and what really happened at project level. **To supplement the field observation** information, interviews were conducted to get more information on how the project was planned, organized, implemented and people were involved.



Relevant Examples

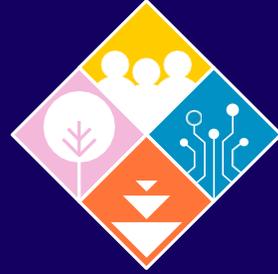
Overview of Relevant Examples

Results

- Community organisation: **90% of people** interviewed clearly stated that the supply of community tap water has improved their lives. One of the respondents said that

"I used to wake up at 5 am, carrying my 25 L drum, to the spring and if I get there late there is no water. But even if there is water it's often muddy and undrinkable. After school my daughters heave a wheelbarrow up a steep, rocky path carrying two full 25 L drums. I used to spend six hours a day collecting low-quality water".

- Most of the people who are affected by the project were women both working and unemployed.
- **40% of the respondents** claimed they had never been involved in water projects before. There was no proper consultation in the first water project and a top-down approach was therefore used.
- About **60% of the respondents** highlighted that due to the spread of cholera in the area in the 1980s, the government initiate standpipe water projects in order to solve the problem.



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Conclusion

Social Research Techniques





Conclusion

Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously. Thus, there is a dual commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system in changing it in what is together regarded as a desirable direction (O'Brien, 2001).

Community participation generally is more successful when the community takes over much of the responsibility than when higher level public agencies attempt to assess consumer preferences through surveys or meetings (Thwala, 2001).

Action research should promote

- **Empowerment**
- **Respect**
- **Enjoyment**
- **Localisation**
- **Inclusiveness**



Exercise after Break

40 minutes per Breakout Room

15 minutes for Summary of Sessions

Feel free to **ask questions** to moderators or organisers



Survey Analysis – Emerging Themes



Use of high-level survey results to pull out **main themes for discussion**



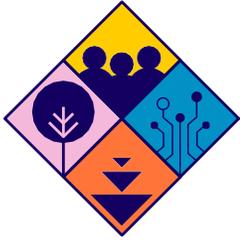
These themes can be both **positive or negative, mutually-informed or novel**



Themes can be interpreted through a **SCOT lens** – is *theme X* a strength, weakness, opportunity or threat?



A good prompt for discussion could be **mechanisms and solutions** to opportunities/threats and the possible use of a **SCOT Matrix**



SCOT Matrix Example

	CONSTRAINTS	STRENGTHS
THREATS	CT Strategies that <u>minimise</u> constraints and <u>avoid</u> threats	ST Strategies that <u>use</u> strengths to <u>minimise</u> threats
OPPORTUNITIES	CO Strategies that <u>minimise</u> constraints by <u>taking advantage</u> of opportunities	SO Strategies that <u>use</u> strengths to <u>maximise</u> opportunities