**Participatory Action Research Tools**

Participatory Action Research or Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a technique used to analyse local situations, involve local people in planning, and strengthening their capacity for decision making for improving their own situation. It is an approach where local people’s wisdom and experience is acknowledged. You want to use multiple tools, to prevent biased data.

**KEY TOOLS:**

* **Social Mapping**- Represent relative location of the households and the distribution of different social structures and institutions found in an area. It explores the spatial dimension of people’s realities. Ideally how a social mapping is done is left to the village participants themselves and they themselves draw the prominent physical features of the locality. [More information and steps](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/socialmapping)
* **Resource Mapping**- Represent natural resources in the locality and depicts hills, rivers, fields and   vegetation. A resource map reflects how people view their locality. Ideally,  resource mapping is done by the village participants themselves who in turn draw the major resources. If that is not possible, focus group discussions and key informant interviews can help as well. [More information and steps](https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/17401IIED.pdf)
* **Timeline mapping-** Mapping important events, activities and other milestones thus enabling insight into one another and to key contextual factors like social, political, demographic, economic and cultural events and trends. [More information and steps](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/timelines)
* **Seasonal calendar**- To map out the sowing and harvesting seasons, period of migration – agri and non-agri labour opportunity, social functions/events, water scarcity, irrigation period, health hazards, credit loan requirements period, holidays vacations. [More information and steps](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/seasonalcalendars)
* **Pair Wise Ranking**- Issues can be prioritised. It leads to developing insights into people’s decision making process and the criteria used by them to arrive at the preferences. Ideally, Pair wise ranking is done with relative homogenous groups so it is easier to agree on issues. [More information and steps](https://www.uua.org/files/pdf/1/1506_310_pairwise_ranking.pdf)
* **Key Informant Interview**: These are semi-structured interviews organise with some identified people in the community, who is expected to possess critical information, either due to their position, profession, age or relevant role in the village eco-system. Typically they are done with leaders, head masters of schools, public health staff, local priests and community leaders. These interviews are relatively informal, relaxed discussions based on pre-determined topics. [More information and steps](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/key_informant_interviews)
* **Focus Group Discussion:** this is method where villagers from similar backgrounds are gathered together to discuss a specific topic of interest. The discussion is guided by a moderator who introduce a topic and helps the group to participate lively. Focus group discussions help to explore the insights of the findings coming from other methods such as surveys that cannot be explained statistically. [More information and steps](https://www.odi.org/publications/5695-research-tools-focus-group-discussion)