



## Documentation and Evaluation Seminar Worksheet

This worksheet accompanies PARCEO’s ongoing Seminar Series which are spaces for collaborating community groups to share resources, skills, information, soundboard ideas, and get to know each other. Each PARCEO seminar prompts and produces resources, suggestions and explorations that could be helpful not just for those who attended, but also for anyone who is interested in modeling PAR methodologies in their work.

PARCEO’s collaborating groups asked for a workshop to explore documentation and evaluation through a PAR framework. In this worksheet we are sharing some of the themes and explorations based on conversations from the Documentation and Evaluation Seminar. We invite you to think about these questions, alone or with your group, through your own experiences.

*This worksheet provides a space for:*

1. *Sharing processes, concrete examples and resources*
2. *Reflection*

**Why PAR?** PAR is about making change. We understand our collective research as part of an ongoing process to build community, develop individual and collective leadership, and empower ourselves and our communities to make change. It is about generating and building knowledge together in order to define the change we seek to make together. This process begins with people’s own wisdom, knowledge, and stories, and prioritizes our own experience. PAR is a process that recognizes the need for communities to identify and name their issues. Too often, outside “experts” come in to identify and address a community’s problems. In PAR all participants are simultaneously teachers and learners. As we work, we always think carefully about whose voices are being heard, who is making decisions, and how we move forward. We consider our roles, position and privilege in relation to changing conditions of injustice.<sup>1</sup>

PAR is a particularly meaningful framework for thinking about documentation and evaluation because it is rooted in a community’s experiences, challenges and solutions. We think about who is part of the conversation and how a PAR perspective can frame an inclusive evaluation and documentation process. One of the groups at the seminar told us that the evaluation surveys they use don’t elicit the information they need. This example allows us to ask and reflect on the following questions:

- *Who determined what information was needed?*
- *Who was a part of that process?*
- *How did you decide that surveys were the best method for documenting and evaluating your work?*
- *What other methods of documentation might be more useful?*

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<sup>1</sup> Drawn from Orlando Fals-Borda & Rahman, Action and Knowledge & Participatory Action Research, Incite-national.org. From our website: PARCEO.org

### **Ice Breaker**

We opened the session with questions to frame our experience and help us understand how we evaluate success and what documentation methodologies resonate with us personally. These questions allow us to locate our connection to the subject and method.

*Share a time you did something successful, what made it successful? What is a favorite memory you have, and did you have a way of capturing that memory so you can refer back to it?*

### **Planning**

During the seminar, participants shared personal stories, their experience of success and obstacles with setting goals, and how they see results and needs naturally connecting to the act of documenting and evaluating. Our stories help situate ourselves, our group, and our organization's needs and dynamics.

*Think about the needs of your group. Write down any thoughts, or key ideas to consider while planning your documentation or evaluation process.*

### **The Purpose of Documentation**

We considered the purposes and methodologies of documentation. We developed a list of documentation methods that we use, including: interview, conversation, survey, group discussion, multiple choice, recording, video, photograph, questionnaire, notes, creative arts expression, role-playing, cooking, product, street theater, cartoon, self-reflection, mixed forms, open-ended questions.

*Thinking about these different methodologies, how are your goals and needs reflected by your documentation process? How do you determine this? How is this process participatory and reflective of the group? How does/can it fit with external (funders) needs?*

### **Conducting Evaluation**

During the session, we thought about different purposes and methodologies for conducting an evaluation. This is a process that recognizes who is part of the discussion and decision making, what the goals and purpose are, and how this is reflected when you conduct your evaluation.

*How do we determine what is actually happening? What our needs are? How are we replicating outside structures? How do we bring the voices of all participants into this process?*

### **Closing - Reflections**

This is a part of all of our trainings and seminars. We end with reflections because they help us to think about and evaluate what we are doing, what we want to do, how to stay relevant, how we can learn from and build on our work. You can reflect by yourself or with your group.

*What are some reflections or questions that you have about your process and your experience?*

**These questions and responses are a beginning to ongoing conversation and practice. As we think through and model different scenarios together (or in groups of support), we build a stronger understanding of how to create spaces that are participatory, inclusive, and representative of our intentions and goals.**