



Introduction to Basic Principles of PAR

Framing: Participants will develop an understanding of the basic principles of PAR through a facilitator-led group discussion based on the “Overview of PAR” handout. The conversation can expand to consider how these principles connect to various aspects of the group’s work including facilitation, campaign building, strategic planning, evaluation, etc. For additional resources on an overview of PAR check out the readings listed at the end of the activity.

Time: 25 minutes

Materials:

- Copies of “Overview of PAR” handout
- Sheet of large chart paper with guiding questions
- Markers
- Tape

Group Size: 3 or more

Activity

Opening:

Action: (5 min) **Facilitator B** give brief overview of the handout and share the framing questions below before breaking up participants into small groups.

Framing: *The following questions are useful to think about as we go through the handout (questions will be put up on chart paper):*

- How are we experts in our own lives?
- Who is part of the community?
- What or who should determine what information is gathered and why is this important?
- What is “leadership” and who determines what this looks like?

Main Activity: (20-25 min Total)

Small Group Discussion (15 min)

Action: Participants will break into small groups. Each group will read over the handout and choose one or two PAR principles that stand out to them. Each group should discuss the 4 questions on the butcher paper, using the principles they chose from the handout as the foundation of their discussion. Facilitators will participate in their groups, being mindful of the time.

Large Group Discussion: (5-10 min)

Action: Participants will come back together as a large group and **Facilitator A** will guide the discussion. Each group will pick one question they discussed and share it with the overall group. This could be a reflection or question they have.

Closing: (5 min)

Framing: *The purpose of participants sharing their reflections is to highlight the group's collective knowledge and gauge their level of understanding and areas for further exploration.*

Talking Points: **Facilitator A** ask participants to share one thing that moved or challenged them and one thing they would like to consider more.

Actions: Participants take turns sharing their reflections with the whole group. **Facilitator B** take notes on chart paper.

Additional Readings:

- Fals-Borda, Orlando & Rahman, Mohammad Anisur. (1991). *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research*, New York, NY: Apex Press.
- Freire, Paulo. (1970). *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York, NY: Continuum
- Merrifield, Juliet. (1997, February). Knowing, Learning, Doing, Participatory Action Research, *NCSALL, 1 (A)*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=479.html>





parceo.org

info@parceo.org



What is PAR?

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a framework for engaging in research and organizing for social justice that is rooted in a community's own knowledge, wisdom, and experience. PAR recognizes that those most impacted by systemic injustice are in the best position to understand and analyze their needs and challenges and to organize for social change.

In a PAR-generated process:

The outcomes can **take many shapes** and forms depending on what the group determines together, but it is the group's own agenda and not someone else's.

We engage in **collective research and organizing** to build community and make change.

The work is about **generating and building knowledge together** in order to define the change we seek to make. This begins with telling our own stories, which centers our own experiences.

Community members are recognized as experts, and all participants are considered both teachers and learners. Too often, outside "experts" come in to identify and address a community's problems, and PAR challenges this notion of who has the expertise.

We work intentionally and always think carefully about **whose voices are being heard, who is making decisions, and how we are moving forward**. We consider our roles, position, and privilege in relation to changing conditions of injustice.

Like popular education, it is a broad framework that is **participatory, collective, critical, and reflective**, building from the work of Orlando Fals-Borda, Paulo Freire, and many others. It is not a neutral process and actively builds community strength and leadership to change unjust conditions.