

Identifying information gaps

Building on previous analysis from within the Reflect group to identify priority areas for action.

WHY?

An identification of information gaps - building on analysis of local information needs, and the different obstacles to effective communication - is an important step for groups to identify action plans. Furthermore, for the Reflect ICTs project, the identification of particular information gaps will inform research into appropriate technologies for overcoming local communication needs. This will feed directly into a proposal for equipment and management of local communication resource centres.

WHEN?

In the Reflect ICT project, this is an important stage between the group's analysis of the value of information and their current information resources, and a more detailed look at the types of technology available for information and communication.

HOW?

Looking back... Graphics and documentation from previous sessions in the Reflect group will point to major information gaps. Using priorities and action points that have previously been identified, the group can think through what further information is needed, where it might be available from and how they might access it.

Looking forward... The group should also think through current issues of concern, those not yet covered within Reflect activities, or those which might be emerging, either in the community or in people's personal lives. Again, the facilitator can help the group to identify where information could be of benefit, what types of information and how it could be accessed.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

This exercise will be useful in itself for groups to clearly identify action points in relation to information needs. It may be that just through the process of identifying a gap or explicit need the potential solution may become clear. However, in many cases the information that participants identify may not be easily accessible and it is important to recognise that this is the beginning of a process of planning for action.

Analysis of information needs and existing resources provides the foundations for planning a local information and communication strategy. This might identify what new resources and skills would be most usefully and where, on in whom, they could be most usefully located.

For these types of choices to be made, groups will probably need more information on the types of technologies and tools available for information and communication, their potential uses, infrastructure needs and costs. This will be the subject of the next set of facilitator resources being produced by the International Coordination in the UK.

