

# REFLECTING ON PARTICIPATORY PROJECTS

## POWER

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How did your guiding principles inform the decision-making processes? How did you hold yourself accountable to your guiding principles?

## IMPACT

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What was the impact of your work? Changing or disrupting behaviours, minds, structures?

## METHODS

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What were your methods? How did they serve your goals?

## OUTPUT

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What is the output that will served your target audience? What outputs did your partners want? Did you have the skills/finances or did you create partnerships?

## OUTREACH

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Where did this project go and how did you promote it?



## INSTIGATOR

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How did you see yourself within your own project? Insider? Outsider? Artist? Curator?

## PARTICIPANTS

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Who did you involve? Were they considered "subjects"? Participants? Collaborators? Storymakers? Talent? Interviewees?

## PARTNERS

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Who did you need to help you make this happen? Were they accountable to others?

## INFLUENCERS

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Who else had an impact on the project? How did you manage this?

## AUTHORSHIP

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Who owns the work? How was this decided? How did your guiding principles inform the decision making processes for the project?

## AUDIENCE

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What is the targeted audience for this project? Did your targeted audience confront issues around access?



# REFLECTING BACK ON PARTICIPATORY PROJECTS

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## OVERVIEW

Too often, when we try to recount what happened throughout a research, community or creative project, we tell a one-dimensional, or at least a linear, story. We forget to include the complexities, the informal encounters, the conflicts, the breakthroughs. We often flatten the richness and complexity of a process. So much of the research and the learning takes place in the margins, in the unexpected, in informal encounters, in failed iterations, in the discarded, and in the messiness of the endeavor. This guide will help to reflect on key decisions, conflicts, turning points and ideally help tell a more robust story of the process. This tool is geared towards participatory media work but can be adapted to other projects or processes.

# FIVE EVENTS

Choose five key events that stand out to you from your process. List them and write up some details about why they stand out to you (marked a key decision, a turning point, a point of conflict, a new revelation, etc).

## CATEGORIES:

INSTIGATOR

PARTICIPANTS

PARTNERS

INFLUENCERS

AUTHORSHIP

DECISIONS

CONSULTATION

AUDIENCE

ETHICS

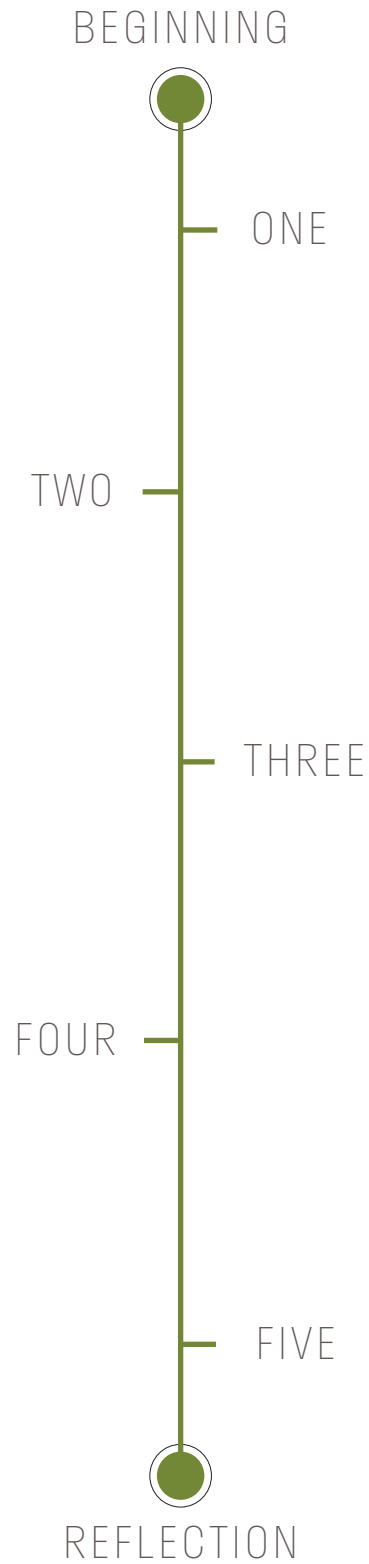
POWER

IMPACT

METHODS

OUTPUT

OUTREACH





# YOUR PEOPLE

with whom did you work?

INSTIGATOR	5
PARTICIPANTS	6
PARTNERS	7
INFLUENCERS	9
AUTHORSHIP	10
DECISIONS	11
CONSULTATION	12
AUDIENCE	13
ETHICS	14

Did your role in the project change over time? In what ways?

NOTES

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What new skills did you gain?

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What new insights do you have about yourself as an instigator?

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What assumptions did you have going in? How have they changed?

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Did your initial questions, or goals, change over time?

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# PARTICIPANTS

# YOUR PEOPLE

Were there moments when you invited new members to your project or when someone dropped out?

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Were there moments when your positioning within the project changed (from researcher to...? From outsider to insider? From instigator to learner)?

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Were there moments when a participant or contributor got more involved in the leadership of the project or when the leadership of the team shifted?

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NOTES

# PARTNERS (IF APPLICABLE)

# YOUR PEOPLE

Who did you need to help you make this happen?

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Peers/Colleagues

Volunteers

Technical Support

Outreach Partners

Advisory Board

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What sort of technical support did you need?

How did your guiding principles help determine who you hire?

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What incentives motivated people to get involved with your project?

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Was the project stronger based on your partner's involvement? How or how not? How did your partners benefit from your project?

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# PARTNERS (IF APPLICABLE)

# YOUR PEOPLE

Were your partners accountable to others (ex. board of directors, local authorities, elders)? If so, how?

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Did you account for the additional time necessary to build and sustain meaningful partnerships? How did this affect your project?

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# INFLUENCERS (IF APPLICABLE) YOUR PEOPLE

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Who had influence on the project?

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- Academic Advisors
- Ethics Board
- Community Elders/advisors
- Funding Bodies
- Advisory Board
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

How did you manage the relationship between these influencers and your project?

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Partners & influencers can be let down if they perceive that their feedback was not taken into account. How did you clearly explain (or not) the purpose of a feedback session and how their feedback may or may not have been integrated in the final project?

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When and how did you define the authorship of the project with your participants?

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Was there an event where you felt the need to discuss or reconsider authorship?

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Did participants assume ownership over the project?

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Did your notion of authorship change over time?

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What did participants expect in the way of decision making – such as editorial control or input – at each stage of the project?

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How did you manage the diverse and sometimes unspoken expectations of participants?

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When did you seek consultation about your process or products?

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Were you seeking “fresh eyes” or wanting to validate a project?

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Did your consultation practice change over time?

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How might you do it differently in a future context?

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# AUDIENCE

# YOUR PROCESS

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Who benefitted from learning about the results of this project?

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Who were you “in conversation” with (literally or through your readings and research)?

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Is there anyone else with whom you *should* have been in conversation?

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Did your notion of audience change over time?

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What ethical issues emerged in your process?

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What did you find helpful in negotiating these issues?

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# YOUR PROCESS

how will you work?

POWER 16

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IMPACT 17

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METHODS 18

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OUTPUT 19

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OUTREACH 20

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Were there any unspoken power dynamics in the project?

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What were the different levels of experience with the methods in use?

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Were there moments or events when you or someone inadvertently created or reinforced imbalances of power, visibility and access?

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Were there moments of tension or conflicts that came out of power imbalances?

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Were there moments when participants were offered more power or agency?

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# IMPACT

# YOUR PROCESS

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What did you hope to contribute with your research contribution?  
Did you hope to shift behavior? Instigate learning?

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How has your sense of what your project might do in the world shifted over time?

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# METHODS

# YOUR PROCESS

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What was the method with which you began?

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Were there moments when you shifted your methodology and why?

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What methods did you integrate? What the method offered the most insight to you? To your partners?

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What did you learn about how your method changed over time?

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# OUTPUT

# YOUR PROCESS

What were the different outputs of the project ? ( A podcast, a lesson plan, a theatre performance, a thesis etc.)

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Which output was most important to you project? Why?

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What were the moments that helped you define the key outputs of your process?

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What did you share with others about this project and why?

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What did your participants need or want to share?

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If you have already held outreach events, how did they impact members of your team? How did they impact the diverse publics? How did they impact you?

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# REFLECTING BACK ON PARTICIPATORY MEDIA PROJECTS

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## EXERCISE

Using the prompts outlined in this reflection, go back to your five key events (page 3) and map each event to one of the categories.

Then, analyze each event in relationship to its given category.

INSTIGATOR	AUDIENCE
PARTICIPANTS	ETHICS
PARTNERS*	POWER
INFLUENCERS*	IMPACT
AUTHORSHIP	METHODS
DECISIONS	OUTPUT
CONSULTATION	OUTREACH

\* (IF APPLICABLE)

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