

Ayrshire 21

growing rural communities together





Do-it-yourself Research – an introduction to ARC

ARC stands for **A**ction **R**esearch by, in and for **C**ommunities

- Research that is conducted **by, with** and **for** people, rather than research **on** people
- Starting point is with communities
- Communities are fully involved in the research process
- The research is focused on making a difference to the problems or issues that affect people's lives – this means that direct actions will happen as a result of (and during) the research



The purpose of Community-Led Action Research

It is research that wants to make change ...

- To a situation e.g. a community meeting space, to a service, to an area, etc.
- To practice e.g. how we can be more effective, how we can respond better to the needs of communities
- To a policy – e.g. to influence policy on the service needs of carers, or the communication needs of people with a learning disability, etc.



Community-led Action Research – examples

- Creetown Initiative – development and successful funding (£190k raised so far) of community facility [*change to a situation*]
- Clackmannanshire Disability Awareness Group (DAG) – various pieces of research to demonstrate the needs of disabled people in Alloa – leading to successful bids for £100k for a variety of local projects [*change to a situation*]
- Homelessness issue in Stirling – production of DVD about poor service provision, led to funding for further work to impact on service delivery [*change to practice*]
- Enable – joint research project between Castle Douglas and North Ayrshire focusing on issues of support and resources for carers over 50. Use of the findings to influence policy and planning at local and national level [*change to policy*]



Community-led Action Research – process

Research process stages

- *Thinking about your research question*
- *What will you gain from your research*
- *What skills/resources do you have or need?*
- *Thinking about your research methods*
- *Engaging with your community*

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- *Mapping and assessment*
- *Community engagement and visioning*



Community-led Action Research – process

Research process stages

- *Making sense of your findings*
- *Using your findings*
- *Moving from research to action*

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- *Action planning*
- *Planning for sustainability and influence*



Research Methods

- *Questionnaires/surveys (various methods)*
- *Social media*
- *Story dialogue*
- *Walking along with people*
- *VOX box/video box*
- *Drawings and photographs*
- *Focus groups*
- *Semi-structured interviews*

- *Some useful websites*
 - www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk
 - www.arvac.org.uk/gettingstarted
 - www.evaluationtrust.org/tools/profile



Community-led Action Research – discussion

Discussion Questions

- *How would you/could you use community-led action research approaches in the areas that you are working in?*
- *What would be the benefits of doing so?*
- *What would be the challenges involved?*