

## Resources for 'hosting' conversations about Empowered Communities

### Thanks for your interest in the Empowered Communities 2020 project!

We're interested in hearing from anyone that works with communities. Whether you're a community group with half an hour at a coffee morning, a youth group with a passion for making a difference, an organisation delivering health checks in a community centre, a social enterprise with an AGM coming up – or an individual with some friends happy to get together and talk about community. Whoever you are, or whatever group or organisation you are part of, your ideas and experience, discussions and visions about community are very welcome!

### What you'll find in this resource pack...

Here you'll find some things to help shape your conversations, and to help feed back to us what you've been talking about:

- Three different ideas for activities to get the conversation started... and keep it going!
- A set of questions to help with discussions
- Some advice on photo consent – in case you want to send us pictures or post some on social media
- A print-able 'conversation catcher' sheet for capturing what people are saying (we've provided it in colour and in black and white)
- A 'Key Points' template for you to fill in online and email back to us – or print out and stick in the post.

### A little bit about the research...

Empowered Communities in the 2020s aims to gather a wide range of views about the future of communities. Through this research project we're asking, 'How can communities become more empowered and vibrant in the next ten years?'

We will be facilitating a series of conversations to explore the past, present and future of support to communities. These conversations will overlap but will be loosely organised around 'Issues', 'Nations', 'Places'. Our research is concerned with disadvantaged communities and we will be working in depth with four local communities as part of the 'Places' dialogue, as well as talking with people in communities across the UK.

You can find more information at: <http://localtrust.org.uk/empowered2020s>

## Activity 1: Graffiti time!

**When to use:** A coffee morning, or drop-in, or at a stall at a village fete, or in a Doctor's surgery... anywhere where people pop in, walk past or hang out.

### How to do it:

1. Take some large sheets of paper – flip-chart paper, or a strip of wallpaper lining, or the back of a poster - or use paper tablecloths at that coffee morning.
2. Take some pens – the more colourful the better! Write up a BIG question in BIG letters in the middle of the paper. Add a picture if you're feeling creative! Such as:
  - What makes your community tick? (put a pic of a clock – or a bomb!)
  - What makes you think 'Yes, I'll get involved with that!' (thought bubble with Yes, this is for me!)
  - How can you make a difference to the future of your community?
  - Who or what helps people get connected? And what gets in the way?
3. Write questions that mean something to you – and encourage others to write their own.
4. Put the sheets on a wall or in the middle of a table where people can see it and reach it and most importantly write on it.
5. Then it's just a question of getting people to write on the walls or the tables. Put lots of coloured pens within reach, and put a few doodles or words of your own to get the ball rolling. Don't be shy, and tell everyone correct spelling is overrated so don't worry about your writing, it's the ideas that count!

**Remember:** To send us a picture (please make sure you seek peoples' permission and see the guidelines below about this) and put any points you think onto the Key Ideas template – telling us who you are, how you collected the views, and the most important points.

**Adaptations:** Do this in any way you want! If you're in a school or young people's group, you might want to gather a group of keen people to look at all the ideas and decide which are most important. You could use stickers to 'vote' for the most important ideas. You might want to make a poster showing others in your community what people think.

## Activity 2: Vision of community

**When to use:** If you have some time at an event or meeting – for example at a workshop, conference, a lesson in a school, a prayer meeting or book group - when you have a captive audience

**What you need:** A few bits of art stuff for example magazines or postcards, paper, scissors, glue and pens.

### How to do it:

1. Get your group or family collecting magazines or postcards before the session. Provide some paper, and scissors and glue. Ask the question: What does a vibrant community look and feel like to you?
2. Make a collage together of images of vibrant community. Spend some time discussing the images and the key words that describe community. Get people talking about examples of where they have felt part of a community, able to shape it and make a difference.
3. Talk about this vibrant community and discuss what things contribute to making it like that? And what might get in the way?  
Think about spaces for people to meet

**Remember:** To capture what people say on our ‘conversation capturer’. When you’ve had enough, and everyone who wants to has had their say, decide amongst you what the key points are. Write them into the Key Points Template. And remember to send us a pic of your collage of community!

**Adaptation:** You could go a lot deeper into some of the sticky questions about community. Here are some questions (without answers!) that you might want to tackle...

- Does a community that is empowered and vibrant help people get out of poverty?
- Should communities be doing things that Councils used to pay for?  
Does this make for a more empowered community?

### Activity 3: A little more conversation...

**When to use:** This would be useful if you have some time at an event or meeting – for example at a workshop, conference, a lesson in a school, a prayer meeting or book group - when you have a captive audience

**You will need:** pens, labels and questions.

**How to do it:**

1. Ask people to each think of someone in their community. This could be a specific person - the hairdresser, a teacher, the Imam, a café worker - or a generic person. They may also be a young person, someone living in sheltered housing, a mum at the school gates. Give people a minute to think about what that person does, where they are based or travel or work, who they meet. Each person writes themselves a label saying who they are (in role, not their own name!)
2. Ask people to get into pairs. One will play the role of a community researcher, and one will be the interviewee. Researchers are given a sheet of questions (you can base them on our sheet of suggestions below – we suggest you use 4-6 questions) to ask the community member. The researcher can record the discussion ‘conversation capturer’ attached below.
3. Start off in the pairs, decide who is going to start off as researcher. The researcher sparks off a conversation with the community member, After 5 mins, pause and capture key points.
4. Then, either swap roles; or the ‘researcher’ moves on to another community member. Make sure everyone gets a go at being both researcher and interviewee.
5. When you’ve all had enough, stop and sit round in a circle. Get some feedback about the kinds of things that were discussed.

**Remember:** To capture what people say on our ‘conversation capturer’. When you’ve had enough, and everyone who wants to has had their say, decide amongst you what the key points are. Write them into the Key Points Template and send it to us.

**Adaptation:** Forget about the researchers, and just mingle, all armed with some questions to spark conversations with each other. The hairdresser talking to the Imam, the swimming pool attendant to the school teacher. This could be as organised or as organic and chaotic as you like! Just remember at the end to ‘debrief’ and feedback any points that are important.

## Questions to ask

1. What do you think motivates people to get involved in their communities?
2. Where do the communities you know exist? Around a place or issue or online?
3. What is it that helps people get involved in their communities? What do people need to get involved in communities? For example, a sense of identity, confidence, resilience, values, skills?
4. How do you make empowerment stick so that the changes it brings about in the community last?
5. What could people working with communities do differently in the future to ensure community development leaves a legacy?
6. How can communities be partners in decisions that affect them? How can/could/ or indeed should communities engage with decision makers?
7. Can community empowerment help alleviate poverty? Does it ever exacerbate it? What are you basing your opinion on?
8. What do you see as the two most immediate issues facing communities over the next ten years? And what opportunities might there be for people to be part of positive change in their communities?
9. Do we need money for work with communities to happen? Who is going to pay for it?
10. What other questions should we be asking?

## Photo consent advice

We would love it if you sent us photos from your events, or shared them on social media using the hashtag #Empowered2020s. Your pictures could be of people or the notes and resources you create. If you are taking photos of participants at your event, please make sure you get participants' permission. There are a couple of options for this:

### **Informal small sessions / workshops**

At the start of the session, tell participants you are filming/taking photos today, that this may be used on IVAR's/Local Trust's website/social media/YouTube and ask if they are okay with that. Tell them that if they do not wish to be featured, they can raise their hand now or make themselves known before the end of the session to the person taking photographs/filming. The person taking photographs/filming takes responsibility for not sharing pictures of anyone who has asked not to be featured.

### **Large events**

If you are running a large event with a registration desk, you can inform participants about the filming/photography as they come in, and see if they are happy with that or not. Mark their response in a dedicated column on the sign in sheet. If they do not wish to be featured, place a sticker on their name badge so it is easy to tell who not to feature.

## Conversation catcher

We've provided a template conversation catcher at the end of this pack, in colour and in black and white. It's also available as a separate Powerpoint template suitable for printing A4 or A3, this format also includes a function where you can type quotes directly into the speech bubble spaces. To access the conversation catcher in this format, go to:

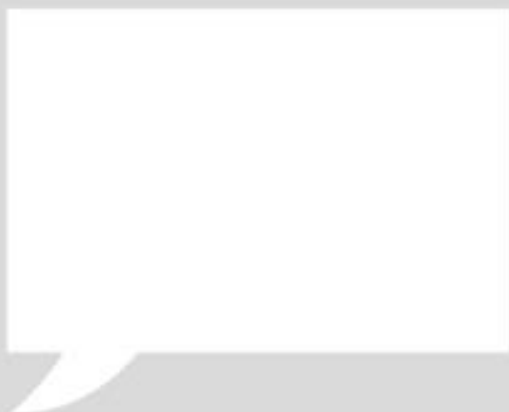
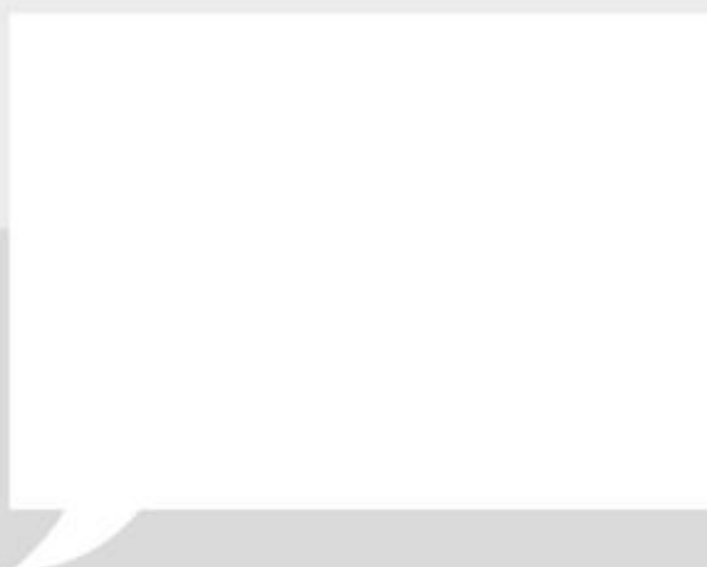
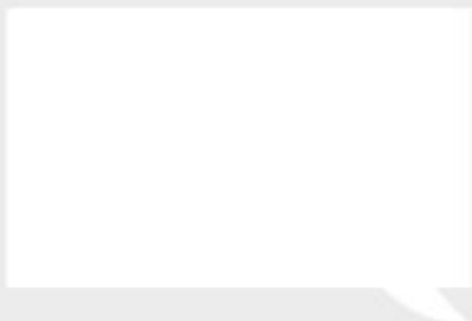
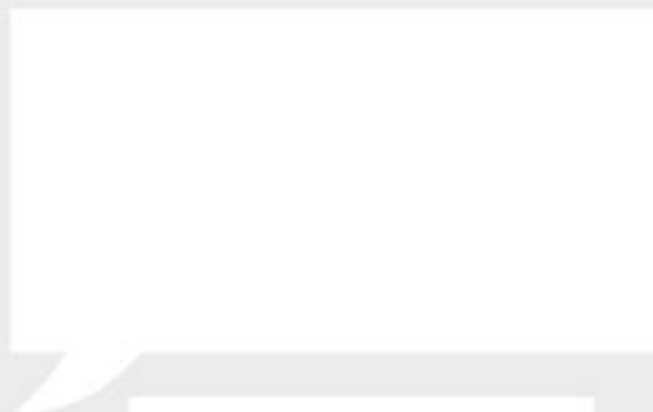
<http://localtrust.org.uk/our-work/empowered-communities/resources/>

## Key points template

Please remember to capture the key points from your conversations in the template below – this will form part of our data set – and return it to the research team by emailing [enquiries@ivar.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ivar.org.uk) using the subject title ‘Empowered Communities Hosted Conversation’. Or, pop it in the post to IVAR, The Old School House, Exton Street, SE1 8UE.

<b>Event</b>
<b>Date</b>
<b>Location</b>
<p><b>Who was there</b> You don't need to include names but please give a sense of who was in the room</p>
<p><b>What was the conversation about?</b> e.g. event description, why were people coming together?</p>
<p><b>Key points</b> 5-10 key points that emerged from conversations, e.g. what was important to people? was there any disagreement in the room? (continue on another sheet if needed)</p>

#Empowered2020s



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