



Participatory Research Activity Guide

TALKING TABLES OR TALKING CIRCLES

This activity enables participants to contribute their ideas on social issues in a safe way (in single-gender groups) that retains their anonymity. It is a modification of the World Café process (<http://www.theworldcafe.com/>), based on creating environments for dialogue.

Decide on the four research questions that the group will explore together— for example, in the area of money management: ‘What do women spend money on?’, ‘What do men spend money on?’, ‘What are the positives and negatives of extended family (wantok) giving?’, ‘Why don’t people use banks?’

TIME NEEDED 15 minutes on each question, plus 30 minutes large group discussion

RUNNING THE ACTIVITY

- Divide the group into four by age and gender —young women, young men, older women, older men. Each group should ideally be between six and eight people
- Write up the four questions on a poster and explain that each group will have an opportunity to discuss each question. Get four big pieces of paper and write one research question on each.
- Ask each group to sit together at a table or in a circle. Provide coloured markers for each person. Use a different colour for females and males so that you can later analyse by gender. Each table should have a scribe with both coloured pens so that they can add people’s ideas as needed. Ask each group to introduce themselves if they do not already know each other.
- Explain the first round to the groups
 - Each group should discuss the question on the paper and write their ideas on the paper as they go
 - They can add extra ideas to someone else’s comment or can add a disagreement.
 - Everyone does not have to agree as the aim is to get as many ideas as possible on the big paper
 - The scribe can write what s/he is hearing if people aren’t comfortable writing or are busy talking. They should always use the exact words people are using.
 - Tell the group how long they have and that you will give them a warning when there are 3 minutes to go
- When the first round is finished, take the big papers from each group and give each group another group’s paper. Then explain the second round
 - The scribe will explain the new question and show people what has already been written. S/he will then ask them to respond to what is on that paper—ticking where agreeing, writing extra ideas, questions or disagreement.
 - The group will then be invited to add any new ideas or comments
- When the second group round is finished, repeat the process with a third round

- Explain the final round where each group has a paper that the other groups have written on. Take a photo of each paper before the last round.
 - Explain to the group that they can read all comments and respond with ticks, extra comments and ideas. However once that is done, this round begins the analysis where people start to mark comments that are similar - e.g using a C to note that this is due to culture. The scribe can also ask questions, e.g. for generic responses ‘is this the same for women and men?’. The scribe can also ask ‘why’ for certain comments. Sticky notes can also be added. It is important that the scribe takes notes of the discussion.
- Large group discussion
 - Explain to the group that this is the chance to hear the full results of the small group discussions and to add their further analysis
 - Discuss each research question one at a time by having the scribe summarise their paper then ask for further comments. Record these on a separate paper beside the original paper so that everyone can see. Use the same colour for women and men’s comments.
 - Conclude by asking if there are any other comments overall that have not been recorded.

SPECIAL TIPS

It is important to walk around the groups and encourage everyone to write, not just discuss and to emphasise that it does not matter if the paper is messy.

Remind people that they don’t have to agree on the comments too.

Encourage people to draw arrows if ideas are related. Make sure the scribe is well-briefed to encourage discussion, acknowledge all contributions, ask probe questions and write quick notes between each round

