

# **‘Giving Voices’ Methods Report**

A report on the methods used in community engagement  
as part of the ‘Giving Voices’ SG9A4 project

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Story Booth Resources: Provided as a separate appendix



# 1. About the ‘Giving Voices’ Project

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The ‘Giving Voices’ project was designed to engage with selected underrepresented community groups/populations in order to support them to have their say about their future and SmartGrowth.</p> <p>The research also aimed to deepen and broaden SmartGrowth’s understanding of and potential to engage with specific population groups whose input and voices has been limited.</p> <p>The Giving Voices project was developed in association with representatives from SmartGrowth and SmartGrowth partners (referred to as the ‘SG9A4 team’).</p>
<b>Target Populations</b>	<p>Engagement opportunities targeted underrepresented groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arataki, identified as an opportunity to engage with urban Mataawaka (Māori residents who are not Mana Whenua)</li> <li>• Te Puke East, identified as an opportunity to engage with urban Mataawaka</li> <li>• Young people 7 – 13 years</li> <li>• Tauranga Multicultural Festival, identified as an opportunity to engage with people from a range of ethnicities</li> <li>• RSE Seasonal Workers</li> <li>• Infants and young children aged 0-6 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Approach</b>	<p>A series of community engagements and focus group discussions were held, using Participatory Appraisal techniques and structured discussion tools to foster conversations. A small-scale desk-top research exercise was used to explore the built environment needs for infants and young children aged 0-6 years.</p>
<b>This Report</b>	<p>This report provides an overview of the methods used in the Giving Voices project, their effectiveness, and recommendations for future consultation.</p>

## 2. Methods

The Giving Voices approach drew on the Participatory Appraisal toolbox, and used techniques that are useful for capturing the ideas and opinions of communities.

The resulting approach is:

- Transparent and flexible
- Simple and visual
- Inclusive, offering every individual an equal opportunity to contribute to the process
- Able to be used wherever people can be found during their daily lives, supporting engagement with underrepresented groups.

Methods Used	Arataki	Te Puke East	Young People (7 – 13 yr)	Tauranga Multi-Cultural Festival	RSE Seasonal Workers	Infants and Young Children (0 – 6 yr)
Story Booth		x		x		
Mapping			x		x	
Post-It Discussion	x		x		x	
H-Forms			x		x	
Quick Comments to Targeted Questions		x				
Mapping who has participated		x				
Desk-top Research						x

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## Story Booth

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### Method Description

A Story Booth is set up with a table and display space, and people are invited to share a brief story relevant to the engagement topic:

- ‘Story starter’ questions/phrases are displayed as prompts. For example story starters used for these engagements included:
  - Something I love about living here...
  - Something special about my community...
  - Something I’d like to be different about living here...
  - I wish living here was...
- The story is recorded on an A5 sized story card<sup>1</sup>. The length of stories typically ranges from a few sentences to a few paragraphs
- A mini instamatic photo of the story teller is taken and attached to the story, which is then displayed as part of the Story Booth
- Stories are usually written by the story teller, but can also be shared orally and recorded word for word by a Story Booth staffer
- Story booth signage including story starters can be presented in any language
- The story can be recorded in the story teller’s own language and later translated.



### What works well

**Flexibility:** Story Booth lends itself to either stories with a broad focus (for example, capturing the story teller’s experience) or a targeted topic or issue (for example a story about getting to work, school or getting around town to capture information on transport). It also enables all people to participate, from young children to elderly, and people from all cultures.

**Engaging:** When Story Booth was used in this project, it was notable that:

- People really enjoyed sharing their stories
- People took their time in writing a story – took it seriously
- Many were interested enough to come back and look at their story later.

**Invitation:** An essential part of the process is ‘offering an invitation’ by asking people if they’d like to share a story. This is done through being proactive by seeking participation in a friendly and welcoming manner.

**Photos:** Although adding mini-instamatic photos to the stories is not essential, it is powerful! At the Tauranga Multicultural Festival:

- The ‘selfie’ seemed to be a positive driver – especially for young people
- People waited around for their photo to develop, and were very interested in how they looked
- A number of people took a photo of their completed story to show family members.

### Translations:

- Displaying ‘story starters’ in a range of languages worked well
- The offer for people to write their story in their own language was also effective. One couple’s positive response was:

*‘We can write it in our own language?’*



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<sup>1</sup> See Story Booth resources attached as a separate appendix to this report.

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<b>Considerations</b>	<p><b>Staffing Levels:</b> To successfully gather stories a connection needs to be made with the story teller, which can take a little time. This means that at any time there may be only one story being recorded for each Story Booth staffer, so having several people working on the booth can make a significant difference to the volume of stories gathered.</p> <p><b>Visibility:</b> The Story Booth needs to be visible and visually engaging.</p> <p><b>Set-up:</b> The ability to have an adaptable display and set-up is important.</p> <p><b>Following up with discussion:</b> With adequate staffing, it would be possible to explore a topic raised in the story in more depth, for example using H-Forms.</p>
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## Mapping Exercise

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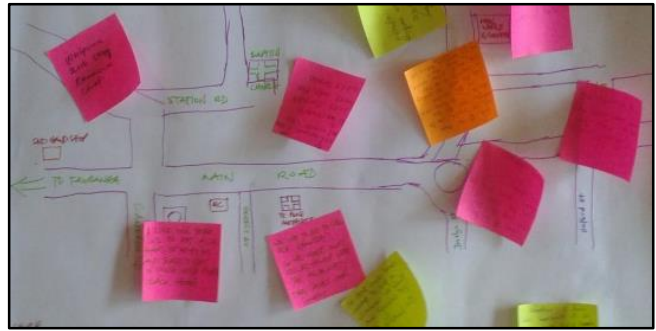
<b>Method Description</b>	<p>This is a useful introductory exercise where people are working in small groups. In the Giving Voices project, it was used in focus groups (where all participants were in one discussion group) and in larger engagements (where there were several small groups each drawing their own map).</p> <p><b>Set up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group seated around a table. Ideal group size is 4 – 6.</li> <li>• Large blank paper on the table (e.g. newsprint or large chart paper).</li> <li>• Marker/felt pen available for each member, placed so they are accessible to all.</li> </ul> <p><b>Task:</b> The group is invited to work together to draw a map of their community that includes all the places that are significant for them. It will include both community places and spaces, and places that are personal to them (for example home). Each group member is encouraged to contribute to the map, rather than one person taking control.</p>
<b>Strengths</b>	<p><b>Focusing exercise:</b> Mapping helps to focus the group on their local community in preparation for discussion.</p> <p><b>Perspectives:</b> Maps reflect participants’ perspectives and reveal information about local knowledge, how facilities and infrastructure are used, and what people value. For example, mapping was used with both young people and RSE seasonal workers: although several maps centred on Te Puke, the features highlighted and the values revealed were very different for these groups.</p> <p><b>Added meaning:</b> When the maps are later used for gathering post it comments (see ‘Post-It Discussion’ below), the placement of comments in relation to the map can add meaning by revealing context.</p>
<b>Considerations</b>	<p><b>Timeframes:</b> Mapping can be time consuming: a minimum 10-15 minutes should be allowed, although making more time available can be valuable. Informative conversation can also be captured as people discuss the why and where of the places and spaces that are being drawn onto the map.</p> <p><b>Shared Community:</b> Mapping works well where the participants have a physical location in common (such as town, neighbourhood, school, or community facility).</p> <p><b>Mapping Process:</b> To make the most of mapping, it is important that all group members contribute to drawing the map, and that the group is encouraged to focus on including the places and spaces that are important to them, rather than on making a geographically ‘accurate’ map.</p>

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## Post-It Discussion

### Method Description

Post-it discussion is an effective way to gather a lot of information quickly. It is an adaptable tool that can be used with one group (as in the focus groups held with young people) or with multiple small groups in a larger scale engagement (as in the RSE Seasonal Worker engagements).



#### Set up:

- Small group seated around a table. Ideal group size is 4 – 6.
- A pen and a set number of post-its are given to each group member.

#### Task:

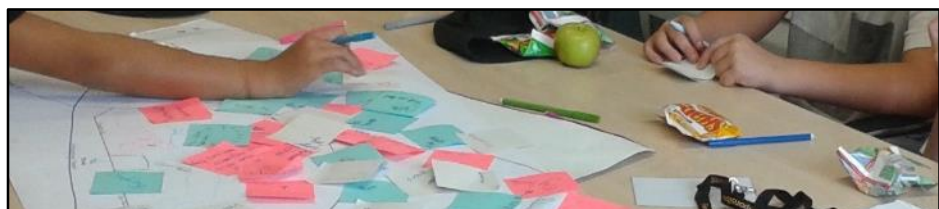
- A series of questions are identified - typically these focus on both positive and negative aspects of a topic, and on aspirational or future focussed ideas for moving forward. For example; What's great about living here? What's not so great about living here? How could things be better?
- A different colour post-it is associated with each question (for example, pink for 'What's great'; blue for 'What's not so great?'; orange for 'How could things be better?')
- Each group member is invited to write or draw a comment on each post it they are given (for example if they have 3 pink post its, they write/draw 3 'positive' comments).
- Guidelines are: One comment per post-it; More than one person can share the same comment; It's okay for differing opinions to be shared
- The group members stick their comments to the wall / chart paper / map, under the relevant question, or at a relevant location on the map.
- Time can be made for the group to review and discuss what's emerging.

### Strengths

- Structured small group discussion processes keep a focus on issues, minimise interpersonal conflict, and allow each participant to contribute equally
- A large amount of information can be gathered very quickly, with a broad range of both topics and perspectives
- Using post-its keeps comments brief and to the point
- Post-it discussion can quickly identify a range of topics or issues that are significant, that can then be prioritised and explored in more depth.

### Considerations

- Literacy and language barriers can sometimes be a challenge, so ensuring people know they can ask another person or the facilitator to write their ideas is important. It's very important too that if the group is reviewing all the information, comments and ideas are read aloud.
- A key role for the facilitator is ensuring that each group member participates and that their post-it comments reflect their own thoughts rather than those of other group members. This can be achieved by following the post-it process precisely, as it is structured to ensure each participant has a voice.



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## H-Forms

### Method Description

An H-form considers both the positives and negatives of an issue, before focusing on aspirational or future focussed ideas. The format allows for group discussion and for further detail to be brought out.

#### Set up:

A large 'H' is drawn, laid out as shown below.

2. Thinking about ( <i>the topic</i> ), what's really good, or positive about it now?	<b>Write the topic here</b>		3. Thinking about ( <i>the topic</i> ) what's <u>not</u> so good about it now?
	1. How would you rank this now? (add an 'x' between 0 – 10)		
	0	10	
	4. What could improve it?		

#### Tasks:

- Participants are invited to rank on a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high) their current perspective on a particular matter (e.g. On a scale of 0 - 10 what's your ranking of 'How Te Puke's infrastructure (like ..... ) serves the local population?') Each participant places a cross where they choose.
  - There is no right or wrong; these are opinions in a moment of time and enable shared focus for thought and discussion.
  - The range of rankings is reviewed in conversation, noting clusters of similarity or widely varying responses. There is no judgement or attempt to come to agreement.
- Participants are asked a question to identify positive aspects relating to the topic (e.g. 'In terms of the infrastructure here, what's really good, or positive?'). Participants write each comment on a post-it, sticking them on the left of the H.
- A second question gathers thoughts about 'what's not so good?' and post-its are placed on the right of the H.
- Lastly, participants are asked to write post-its addressing the question 'What could be done to improve local infrastructure...?' and post-its are placed below the cross bar.
- Conversation about the way forward can then be facilitated and drawn out.

### Strengths

- In effect this process quickly gathers opinions/perceptions, information and ideas, and can be used to help clarify differences and similarities in perceptions, and as the basis of a forward plan.
- A useful tool for exploring a topic or issue in more depth.

### Considerations

As noted in the previous section, literacy and language differences can be an issue and must be planned for.

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## Quick Comments to Targeted Questions

### Method Description

This method uses questions that target a particular topic or issue, as a way of gathering many brief comments quickly.

For example, when an engagement was held at the Te Puke Community Market, housing had already been identified as a significant local issue, and a targeted question was used to gather comments on this:

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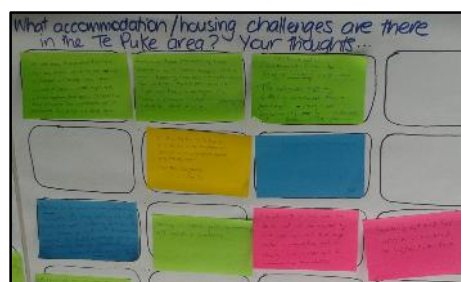
'What accommodation/housing challenges are there in the Te Puke area?'

Comments can be gathered using post-its, or by participants writing directly onto a large sheet of paper headed with the question.

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**Strengths**

- Useful in a public engagement such as the Te Puke Community Market, where comments can be gathered from a wide range of people, and where some people may only want to pass by briefly.
- Targeted questions enable information to be gathered on a topic that has already emerged as significant.



**Considerations**

- The information gathered can be deepened by using this method in conjunction with another tool, such as Story Booth or H-Forms.
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## Mapping who has participated

**Method Description**

This method can be used when gathering information at a public event, such as the Te Puke Community Market, to identify where participants live.

A photocopied or laminated map of the local area is available at the engagement. Those who participate in the engagement are asked to place a dot with a marker pen roughly where they live.

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**Strengths**

Given SmartGrowth's desire to engage with particular populations, keeping a record about who engaged or participated is important, to provide a sense of the numbers involved in the sample who engaged.

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**Considerations**

To use this method effectively, it needs to be embedded consistently in the engagement process. At the Te Puke Community Market we found this challenging, because there were often multiple people at the stall, and some people stopped by very briefly to make a comment but did not complete the mapping.

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## Desk-top Research

**Method Description**

A succinct internet search was undertaken on grey literature, academic scholarly articles and local government websites to identify sources that report on the needs from the built environment for infants and young children aged 0-6 years.

The search words used included; 'built environment', 'planning involvement of infants and young people' and 'needs of infants and young children from their environments'.

A content analysis was carried out across all the identified sources and emerging patterns and themes were identified under the key topic areas:

- Impacts of the built environment on infants and young children
- Needs of infants and young children from the built environment
- Appropriate environments in the development of infants and young people.

A total of 29 sources were reviewed against the topic areas.

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**Strengths**

- Identifying previous research can help to shape and inform the direction of projects, ensuring that the 'right' questions are asked to capture needed information.
  - Supports the information found including the gaps and what needs to be researched further.
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<b>Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This approach is useful in not only re-emphasising the themes we discovered in the research but also in providing future directions about research with children and their environments.</li> <li>• Adequate time and resources should be made available to ensure a comprehensive investigation into a topic.</li> </ul>
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### 3. Community Engagement Approach

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Some key aspects of the Giving Voices approach were:

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<b>Exploring ways to connect</b>	<p>The Giving Voices team invested time in finding people who had existing relationships with the target populations. This was a very helpful starting point both to accelerate connections with the specified population, and to learn about local needs and issues.</p> <p>Frequently a trail of connection resulted, in which talking to one person who had existing relationships in the community led us to make a connection with someone else. In some cases these were people who did not have existing relationships with SmartGrowth or partners, and some effort was required to connect with them.</p> <p>Rather than creating engagement events and seeking to invite people into them, Giving Voices focused on finding the target populations where they already existed in the community and linking with events already set-up in communities.</p>
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<b>Leveraging off existing connections</b>	<p>Our efforts to find people who had existing relationships with the target population led to opportunities to create engagement opportunities, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Promoting Schools have existing relationships with schools and brokered relationships between the Giving Voices team and schools</li> <li>• Western Bay of Plenty supported Giving Voices by inviting us to share their space at the Tauranga Multicultural Festival</li> <li>• Fruition Horticulture has strong links with the seasonal migrant population, and supported Giving Voices to engage with workers who take part in the Vakameasina programme</li> <li>• Arataki Community Centre Co-ordinator has a strong relationship with the co-ordinator of the Arataki Community Dinner and provided an initial contact.</li> </ul>
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<b>Aligning with community events</b>	<p>In some cases, engagements were also aligned with existing community events, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tauranga Multicultural Festival</li> <li>• Te Puke Community Market</li> <li>• Arataki Community Dinner.</li> </ul> <p>In some cases, these created engagement opportunities where it had been challenging to find ways to connect with the target population – for example Te Puke Community Market to reach Mataawaka.</p>
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### 4. Reflection

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<b>What worked</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on the existing relationships of SG9A4 members and consultancy team members helped to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create engagement opportunities</li> <li>- Learn about the target population</li> <li>- Learn about the local community, including needs and issues.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Aligning with existing community events minimised the need for resources and organisation, and the risk that target populations wouldn't participate: effectively</li> </ul>
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we went to where the people were

- The tools used were useful, adaptable, fit for purpose and could be applied across a wide range of populations, for example with people of different ages and cultures
- The new connections formed have the potential to provide future avenues for SmartGrowth and partners to engage again with those who are usually under-represented, for example through the Arataki Community Dinner, RSE workers and young people in schools.

Key aspects of the approach used: taking time to actively seek new connections, leveraging off existing connections, and aligning with existing community events, can be applied by SmartGrowth and partners to engage with other currently under-represented people.

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**What didn't work**

- Because the Giving Voices project was not related to a specific issue or plan, in some engagements the comments gathered were of a fairly general nature.
- It was difficult to engage with Mataawaka as a discrete grouping, and this may have been exacerbated by the lack of an issue-related purpose for the engagement. It is noted that as a population group Māori are often over researched without direct benefit for those researched, and as a result there may be resistance to participating in what is seen as 'government' business.

## 5. Recommendations

<b>Build on new connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SmartGrowth and partners have an opportunity to follow up on the new connections formed through this project, and it may be possible for further engagement with these communities. For example, through the Arataki Community Dinner, RSE workers and young people in schools.</li><li>• There is also value in building the relationship with Multicultural Festival by making Story Booth an annual part of the festival, with a focused line of questioning followed each year.</li></ul>
<b>Engage with other under-represented communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is potential for SmartGrowth and partners to engage with other currently under-represented communities, using aspects of the Giving Voices approach such as: taking time to actively seek new connections, leveraging off existing connections, and aligning with existing community events.</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities to use methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The methods outlined in this report can be used by SmartGrowth and partners in future community engagements:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ For example, Story Booth could be used regularly at local events, with engagement opportunities incorporated into the annual events calendar.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Reciprocity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider the give and take of exchanges so populations feel acknowledged and valued for their participation. This could include seeing how their whakaaro and korero are used and in what ways; essentially that what they are giving/sharing is making a positive difference. Additionally, it is noted that the research team preplanned a koha of some sort towards each engagement. This is important. Contact people are sharing their networks, and contributors are sharing their time and thoughts.</li></ul>
<b>Whakawhanaungatanga</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spend time establishing connections and building relationships that are not dependent on the need for immediate information or participation in projects.</li></ul>