



Leapfrog



Stories of Impact

Leapfrog Short Project Report

leapfrog.tools



**INNOVATION
SCHOOL
THE GLASGOW
SCHOOL OF ART**



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



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Summary: Stories of Impact

Social enterprises rely heavily on volunteers to provide the necessary resources to maintain valuable community-based services. High turn over of volunteers, a scarcity of resource to offer targeted pathways into volunteering, and methods to capture the sometimes subtle but incredibly valuable differences volunteer services make are issues for many community-based initiatives.

Volunteers are absolutely crucial for these types of services. In the Stories of Impact project there was a great opportunity to bring some of those experienced people together to share their expertise, learn from each other and collectively develop creative new tools to support their work.

Over two months, the Stories of Impact project worked with volunteers and volunteer organisations to co-design creative ways to support volunteers working with community services and organisations – especially those befriending and supporting older people in their community – to capture the value of volunteering. Stories of Impact aimed to develop tools to support volunteer organisations to engage better with their volunteers throughout their volunteer journey, and to capture the subtle but significant impact volunteering can have for service users.

Following some initial meetings with volunteer organisations from across the Highlands of Scotland, the Leapfrog team ran an initial group scoping workshop. This workshop explored the current practices, processes and procedures of different volunteer organisations, and collectively uncovered the values of each organisation that drive their work. By doing this, the co-design group were able to find shared opportunities, and reflect on their current approaches where new tools could

potentially make a difference. This scoping led to two co-design workshops that worked with volunteer organisations from the Moray area. Over the course of these two workshops, the participants co-designed two new tools to support initial engagement between volunteer organisations and new volunteers, and to capture the subtle impact volunteering has on people's lives. Following on from these workshops, the Leapfrog team and the co-design partners user tested the tools before making them available through the Leapfrog website. The user testing uncovered some valuable insights about the tools that led to some final improvements before the tools were published.

The two tools from this project, named 'Unwrap Your Potential' and 'Bunch of Impact', plus tools from other Leapfrog projects are free to download from leapfrog.tools

The Stories of Impact project is a short research project contributing to a larger co-design research project called Leapfrog. Leapfrog is a three year AHRC funded research project working with the public and third sector to co-design simple and effective engagement tools. We are a collaborative project between Imagination at Lancaster University and the Innovation School at The Glasgow School of Art. The over-arching aim of our project is to co-design simple tools that give as many people as possible a say in the decisions that matter to them. We do this by working with communities and enterprises to co-design tools that make positive changes to citizen engagement.

Introduction

The project presented in this report aimed to collaborate with volunteers and volunteer organisations based in Scotland to develop tools to better capture the impact volunteering has for the user of services and the volunteers themselves. The project brought together the experiences and perspectives of volunteers and volunteer organisations who are working in their communities to improve the lives of the people who live there. The partners were instrumental in the creative thinking behind the co-design of some simple tools that capture the value of volunteering and engage with volunteers along their volunteer journey. Our objectives for this project were to define some points in a volunteer journey where impact is not currently being captured; consider the who, the why, and the what in terms of capturing stories; and develop resources to support this.

This report details the activities and outcomes of the project at each stage and presents the final tools that were co-designed with our partners.

Challenge 1

Person-centred forms of recruitment

There is a challenge in matching up volunteers to roles.

Currently we recruit for specific roles, we ask, do they have the skills for the job? But looking at the person and the skills they bring and then matching the opportunity to what we want to be doing is well.

From time to time someone may want to give their own experience and skills to help someone else. It makes it more for them to be more of the service.

The process needs to be more person-centred to make that idea of being matched, volunteers might not see the idea of their being background checked, consistency and good order. The order engagement needs to be better.

It is really important that I get to know the person, what they can do and what they want to achieve. Then they go to a volunteering opportunity and then they go through the process again of signing up to the volunteer opportunity and sometimes they realise the impact of the volunteering. They don't see roles of other volunteers and so they can get through the whole process of signing up and never actually see what a volunteering opportunity actually looks like.

I think it's important to work with people and see people what they want, not just give them what we think they might like.

It's about time to get to know someone. You get them on board for a particular opportunity and only see them the first or two see the skills they have. It's about taking that time to get to know them, understanding the resources that you have. They are people, not roles.

Key Question:

How can we capture a new volunteer's interests, assets and skills?

Scoping

The Leapfrog team began the Stories of Impact project in Moray at the Elgin Youth Cafe for the initial scoping workshop. The focus of the afternoon session was to explore how currently stories of impact, with volunteers and volunteer coordinators local to the region, were captured. The aims were to understand what impact looks and feels like for the participants in their roles, the journey that impact takes in their organisation, and to gather insights around the values of volunteering.

The workshop began with a presentation by the team about the Leapfrog project and with an ice-breaker activity where each participant introduced themselves and their motivations for working in the volunteer sector. At this point the participants shared their insights around how volunteering has helped them to build confidence and learn new skills; how it helps to break down power hierarchies as everyone is on a level playing field (particularly in regards to wage and responsibilities); that many clubs and services depend on volunteers to run; how volunteering brings people together; and that it is highly rewarding.

Following the first activity, the participants then visually described what the impact of volunteering feels like from their own perspective. The participants chose from an array of materials – including modelling clay and Lego – and constructed metaphorical and abstract sculptures that represented their feelings about impact. This was followed by the team asking the participants to then visualise, using the same materials, what impact actually looked like in their current day-to-day practice. Once this task was completed each participant presented their two models back to the

rest of the group. It was interesting to see, in some cases, the stark contrast between the models. It seemed that how impact feels is not always easy to articulate (or may not even be permitted) with regards to how impact is currently required to be documented and communicated in practice.

As well as thinking about how impact is captured at the point where a service is being delivered, the Leapfrog team wanted the participants to also think about opportunities for capturing the value of volunteering for the volunteers themselves. This was highlighted early, as part of the scoping work, as a missed opportunity. Over lunch the participants were asked to note down on large sheets of paper any resources they had been given when they had begun working in the voluntary sector, how they had been engaged throughout their journey, and any advice they would give to new volunteers. The participants shared a wide range of insights that included making sure you enjoy it and that volunteering doesn't feel like a chore; taking care of yourself as much as you do for others; knowing that there is no right way to help others; being open to change; and that the role of volunteers is to support people to cope and be independent.

The next steps in the workshop was to encourage the participants to think about how the outcomes from the first activities could shape ideas and opportunities for new tools. For this second part, the group returned to the idea of impact and focused on mapping out the journey impact takes in their particular organisation, how it is communicated, and to who. Using A3 sheets, the participants mapped out the channels and direction of this communication and were encouraged to think about the key challenges, moments and sites of tension, the people involved, and the materials used (i.e. reports).



Once completed, each participant again presented back their map to the other participants, which led to a group discussion around the value of showing the impact of volunteering. A consensus was reached around the difficulty for volunteer coordinators to sustain the engagement of a new volunteer due to the lengthy recruitment process. Within the recruitment process, issues surrounding matching volunteers up to available roles was raised. Here it was suggested that a much more person-centred approach was needed so as to create roles for volunteers based on their skills, assets and interests. A need was also identified in formalising practices in the organisation that are currently informally done, such as sending out thank you cards to volunteers leaving the organisation. Formal feedback loops were also discussed, where concerns of shoe-horning stories of impact to fit with the expectation of funders were raised.

The workshop finished by introducing a take-away task, which asked the participants for their 'tricks of the trade'. For this task, we asked the participants to think about their role and consider what key pieces of advice they would pass on someone new who's thinking about becoming a volunteer, and write these onto cards provided to bring with them to next workshop.



Initial insights

From the first workshop the Leapfrog team gained many insights into how volunteer organisations feel about the impact of volunteering and the difference it makes to people's lives. The insights from the co-design group could be summarised as: impact is like breaking through barriers and breaking off shackles; it is about step by step change; it's about travel and the distance travelled by someone based on where they start their journey; sometimes there are barriers to even getting onto the first step of a journey, and moving beyond that can often be the biggest impact; for volunteers and service users the impact is personal, starting with 'me' and then the impact ripples out; impact is not just the individual it is about the effect on the family, on the community, and further still on society; it is about dignity, respect and happiness; it's about people helping people, and making valuable connections; impact is about starting on the road to change and that can be for the individual using volunteer services and the volunteers themselves.

There were also many interesting shared insights from the group about the techniques and approaches used for engaging with people and how they relate to impact. Much of this was based on the discussion following the mapping of their impact landscape. Participants listed methods of engagement, ranging from forms, to informal chats, to email and blogs. Overwhelmingly the shared feeling from the group was that evaluation and reporting is all about numbers which can overlook the really important aspects of what they do. Reporting qualitative impact along 'the chain' has no real formal structure and so experiences will vary depending on the person who is doing the reporting.



From recruiting new volunteers through to the experiences of service users, several points of transition and tension were raised, where challenges exist in how to effectively capture data at these points of passage. It is at these points where tools could be introduced to support volunteers and coordinators to record stories of change, both for the volunteers and service users. A final insight was that it is often the little things that make the big difference. Anecdotal evidence of change and impact is hard to catch and illustrate but is a vital part of the process.

The insights we garnered from this workshop helped us shape the next steps in the project, where the co-design group met a second time to start thinking about developing tools and approaches that could support our participants and their organisations.

Co-design workshop one

For the second co-design workshop, the Leapfrog team returned to the Elgin Youth Café to meet with the same group of volunteers and volunteer co-ordinators. In the first scoping workshop the team dug down into the current processes involved in recruiting volunteers, the current modes of evaluation the group use, and the value of volunteering as seen from the perspective of the participants. The group came back together to reflect on this previous work and start thinking about the design of new tools to support their work. Since the last workshop, the Leapfrog team had collated and analysed the information gathered and turned it into three potential design challenges for the group to tackle:

Challenge One – was focussed on the recruitment of volunteers and how we can move towards a more person-centred approach that takes account of people's skills and motivations at the start rather than only looking for the skills required by a particular role.

Challenge Two - looked at how to ways of creatively capturing and telling the stories of impact that volunteering generates.

Challenge Three - was aimed at finding ways for volunteer coordinators to keep new volunteers engaged through long periods where the new recruits aren't volunteering or the volunteer opportunity for them is in the future.

With the three challenges written up on boards and displayed on easels, the group split into two teams. Each team, with a little encouragement from the Leapfrog team, were asked to vote for the challenge they would most like to address. One of the teams picked Challenge One (volunteer recruitment) and the other team chose Challenge Two (capturing and telling stories of impact). Each team took their challenge board back to their team table to discuss and refine the challenge before beginning a process of rapid ideation for ways to address the challenge. This first half of the workshop generated lots of great and creative ideas. Next, both teams had a chance to pause and reflected on the mornings work collectively. As one group, both teams discussed their ideas, gathering feedback and comments from each other.

After lunch the teams reformed for an afternoon rapid prototyping session. Here, they whittled down their ideas into one favourite idea that they took forward and developed. After some difficult decision making, the teams each chose one idea and pushed their concepts forward into a more rounded tool idea. At the end of the session, and using their 'Pitch Boards' as a guide, each team presented their ideas back to the entire group. Both teams were asked to come up with a tool name, think about the expected and potential users, the function of the tool, and how it might look.

It was a really great second workshop with some impressive ideas for tools generated in rapid time. The next steps for the Leapfrog team was to take the participants' tool concepts to a prototype stage where user testing could begin.





Tool ideas

Over the course of the two co-design workshops, the participants developed a range of really creative ideas for two new tools.

The team that took on Challenge One came up with the 'Unwrap Your Potential' tool. This tool idea helped get to the core of a new volunteer's skills and motivations quickly and efficiently and was in response to the challenge of supporting an approach to recruiting volunteers that takes account of people's skills and motivations at the start, rather than only looking for the skills required by a particular role. The tool was intended to support potential volunteers to create their own profile prior to their initial recruitment interview. It captured detailed information about their motivations for volunteering, their hobbies and interests, the type of activities that don't interest them as much, their time commitments and availability for volunteering, and provides a more detailed depiction of the volunteer's personality. A key issue raised by the participants was that a lot of time is spent during this initial recruitment interview breaking the ice and trying to get to know a new volunteer to gauge their commitment. One of the aims of this tool was to save time as well as provide a new volunteer with a fun way of communicating aspects about themselves that are difficult to articulate so coordinators can get the right volunteer for the right role. The participants were also keen for this tool to subsequently be used during reviews with the volunteer throughout their volunteering journey, which can evolve as the volunteer gains more experience. The tool took the form of a downloadable template, which a new volunteer would be directed to by the coordinator to print out and fill in prior to attending the first interview.

Tool Pitch

Give your tool a name:

BUNCH OF IMPACT.
SEEDS OF CHANGE

What does your tool intend to do?

DATA
Your tool
is HERE
CREATIVE
THINGS
REPERTING
OF DATA CHANGE
*CELEBRATING!!

How does your tool work?

ANY DATA COLLECTION
(SEEDS)
TIMING OF DATA
PUT THAT ON LEAVES
MAKE THE FLOWER
GIVE IT DISPLAY IT
BUNCH LOTS TOGETHER!
*LEAF TEMPLATE

Who will use this tool?

PROJECT
ADMINISTRATOR
INDIVIDUAL
VOLUNTEER
GROUP

SEEDS OF CHANGE



The second tool idea, in response to the challenge of creatively reporting stories of impact was the 'Bunch of Impact' tool. This tool would be used by volunteers to communicate impactful stories to project administrators and managers in their organisation through the intervention of sending them a bunch of flowers. This would take the form of a downloadable template containing flower petals. On each petal, a volunteer can then record a story of impact. Once a number of petals are collected over time, flowers would be made from the petals, and bunch of flowers can then be made. This bunch of story-flowers would then be sent to management and other stakeholders as an alternative way of disseminating impact. The key aim of this tool was to provide volunteers with a way to communicate important and meaningful moments that occur in their volunteering practice and to celebrate this. This visual tool provided another means of reporting impact, which would be supplementary to the formal processes already in place.

After developing up these two ideas, a final workshop took place where the tools were finalised by the participants.

Tool testing

After the two tool ideas had been prototyped into tangible artefacts, the Leapfrog team and the co-design group came back together for a final tool testing workshop at the Elgin Youth Cafe. Here they worked together on some final tool development activity. Unfortunately not all of the co-design group could attend this event, however a small group joined the team for a focused session. The workshop provided a great deal of valuable knowledge, insight, and creative input that helped to really move the design of the tools forward and made some great improvements. The two tools tested out and adaptations were suggested for both.

Firstly, the group looked at the 'Unwrap Your Potential' tool. The original aim of this tool was to provide potential volunteers with a fun way of communicating aspects about themselves and their commitment and motivations for volunteering in a paper-based template that they filled in and brought with them to an initial interview with a volunteer coordinator. All sitting together around one table, the group discussed the purpose, function and design of the tool, and several key insights were raised. The first of which focused on the type of questions the tool was asking and the language used. Here suggestions were made as to how to make it more user friendly, where also the responses could be made applicable to more organisations. In particular, a concern was also raised about users who can't read or write or where English may not be their first language. More use of graphics was suggested as well as offering the user choices in how they responded – through writing or drawing. The use of drawing could also make the tool become more of a talking point during the interview.

Further to this, and picking up on the need to find out about the volunteer's interests and hobbies, as well as what they are not interested in, the participants suggested the use of a bullseye graphic where a volunteer can rate what they like and dislike but frame it in a more positive and asset-based light through asking them to consider what they are comfortable and confident doing and what they see as challenging. This was framed as the 'comfort zone' part of the tool – something that could pick up on a volunteer's strengths and fears and be used to review how volunteers develop throughout their time in an organisation. Another interesting point raised by the participants was how this tool also has the potential to be used for promotion and advertising. One participant for example described how she could have these on display in her organisation's public-facing office. The group experimented with ways of folding the A4 tool to make it look more inviting for someone to pick up.

Next the team asked the co-design group to look at the 'Bunch of Impact' tool. The original aim of this tool was a simple and fun way of reporting stories of impact that could supplement the typical report-base format. The prototype tool was an origami geometric flower template with instructions. Anecdotal evidence could be captured on the flower petals and made into a origami flower. Over time flowers would be collated into one big bunch that reflects the many little differences volunteer organisations make. Again the group were asked to try out the tool themselves, and participants went through the process of producing the tool from the template. This was followed by a group discussion where aspects of the tool's functionality and design were discussed. Based on the testing and the discussion, which focussed mostly on the aesthetics of the tool, the

team changed the shape and size of the flower to make it easier to produce. They also reverted back to the use of individual petals, instead of starting out by making a whole flower. Again, it was noted how these flowers could also be used for advertising and promotion in public-facing areas in their organisations.

This final co-design session provided the Leapfrog team with a clear direction to go in terms of completing and launching these tools. The next steps for the Leapfrog team were to make the suggested final changes before publishing the tools on the Leapfrog website.



Final Designs

The co-design group who took part in this Leapfrog short project conceived, designed and developed two great new tools to support their work and the work of volunteers. Over the course of three workshops they engaged on the topic of the impact of volunteering, and worked together to improve their engagement with volunteers throughout their volunteer journey. As the project came to an end the Leapfrog team took all the feedback and suggestions made throughout the final testing of the tools and made a few last changes to their design. Before the tools were published, the team drew on the insights and advice given by the co-design group throughout the process to develop the instructions to accompany the tools. The two tools are now available to download from the Leapfrog project website at **leapfrog.tools**.

Unwrap Your Potential

Unwrap Your Potential is a tool to help volunteer coordinators during the early stages of recruiting a new volunteer. One of the key challenges for volunteer coordinators is having to, in a very short space of time, not only gain a lot of factual information about a perspective volunteer, but also try to get to know them. The aim of this tool is to support this early interaction. Once a date for an interview is agreed upon, the coordinator can direct a new volunteer to the tool and ask them to take the time to answer the questions and bring it with them to the interview. It supports a new volunteer by giving them time to think about their responses, which could help prepare them for the interview. During the interview, the volunteer coordinator can use the tool as a guide or prompt, where they can then ask follow up questions and dig deeper into the volunteer's responses.

There are two versions of this tool available to download from the Leapfrog website. One comes as a double-sided PDF, which, once printed, can be folded up so to have it on display for potential new volunteers to pick up as a flyer (folding instructions are included in the PDF). The second version allows you to edit the layout and content of the tool in a PowerPoint template. Here a volunteer coordinator can change the questions, add images as well as their own branding. Once complete, the PowerPoint template can either be printed out or saved as PDF. This PDF could then be made available to download from a volunteer organisation's website or sent out as a paper copy to be filled in by hand.

UNWRAP YOUR POTENTIAL

We really want to get to know you and why you are interested in becoming a volunteer. Use this form to tell us a bit more about yourself. You can fill this in however you like: writing, drawing or attaching images.

Name _____

Contact Tel. No/ Email _____

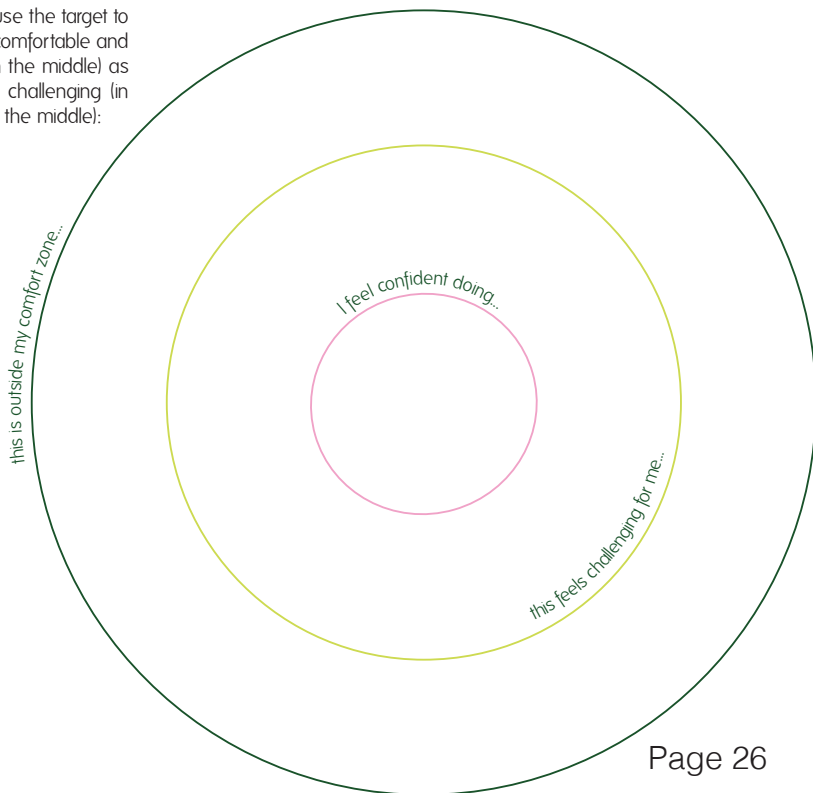
Why do you want to become a volunteer?

What would you like to get out of your volunteer experience?

What are your favourite things to do?

In 5 words, how would your friends or family describe you?

Comfort and Challenges: use the target to note down what you are comfortable and confident doing (starting in the middle) as well as anything you find challenging (in the spaces going out from the middle):



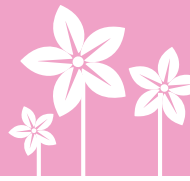
Bunch of Impact

The Bunch of Impact tool is a fun and simple way for volunteers and coordinators to capture their stories of impact. Presenting these stories as brightly coloured flowers, the aim of this tool is to provide a creative and visual alternative to how impact is traditionally disseminated, and be used to supplement the typical report-base format.

The tool comes as a PDF that can be downloaded from the Leapfrog website and printed out. There are two sizes of the flowers; the smaller 'who' flower to write about the people or person the story is about and the larger flower to write about the 'when, where, how, what' and of course about the 'impact' that took place on each petal. Once completed, the smaller flower is placed on top of the bigger flower and, using a paper fashioner split pin, the two flowers are attached to a straw. There are instructions provided as well as a range of flower colours to choose from. A blank flower is also provided so coloured paper can be used in the printer. Once several flowers have been created, these can be gathered up into a bunch and sent a manager in the organisation or put on display in vase.

BUNCH OF IMPACT

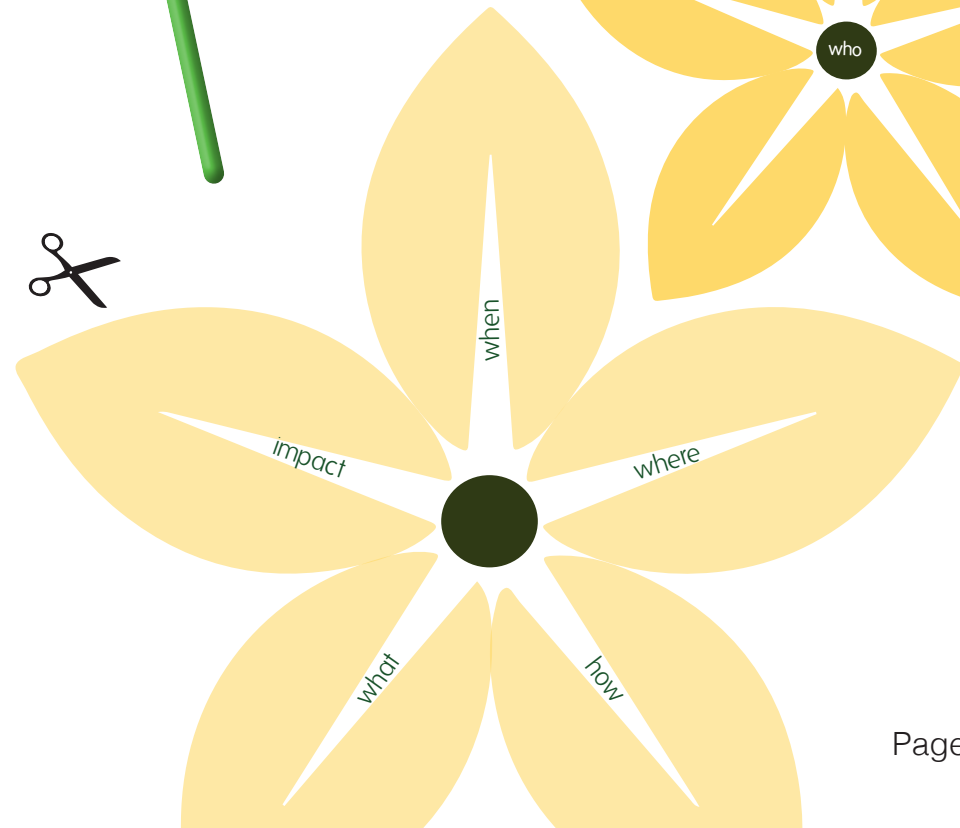
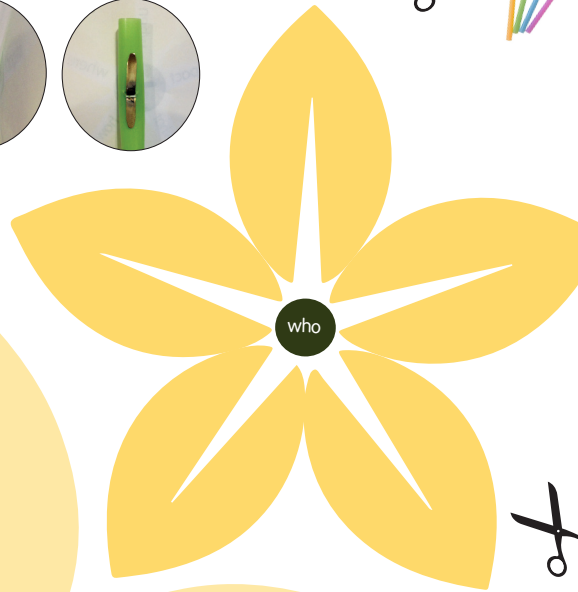
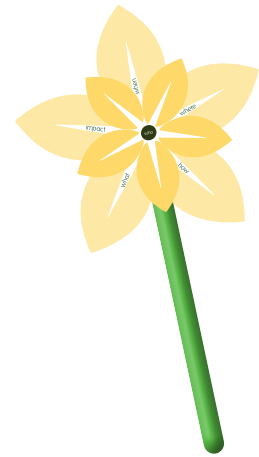
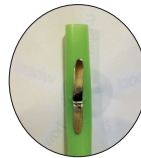
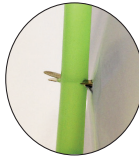
A SIMPLE AND FUN TOOL TO RECORD AND REPORT YOUR STORIES OF IMPACT



Instructions: print out this page and cut out the flowers. On the smaller flower write about the people who this story of impact is about. On the bigger flower, go round each petal, and use the key words when, where, how, what & impact to help you structure your story. Next, take the smaller flower and place on top of the bigger one and pierce through the centre with a split pin. Make 2 small holes near the top of a straw and push the slit pin through, opening them out at the back to secure. Adjust the positioning of the smaller flower so the petals off-set the petals on the bigger flower. Gather up several of these to make your bunch of impact!

You will need:

- pen
- scissors or something with a sharp point
- paper fastener split pins
- straws





We would like to thank everyone who contributed their valuable time to this project and made it such a success. Everyone we met made such valuable contributions, gave great insights and contributed some really great ideas.

We would also like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding the research.

Leapfrog – transforming public sector consultation by design is a £1.2 million 3 year Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project. The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: ancient history, modern dance, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, English literature, design, the creative and performing arts, and much more. This financial year the AHRC will spend approximately £98m to fund research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK. For further information on the AHRC, please go to: www.ahrc.ac.uk