



EXPLORATION

<p>Deliverables</p>	<p>Outside elements brought in to fuel reflection, and enrich participants' knowledge and understanding of the theme (problem situation); identification of what aspects of the problem situation will be considered. → develop paths and hypotheses for action (“understanding as a basis for action”)</p>
<p>Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach outside the group to find enlightening ideas and paths for reflection; explore expertise from the field and from study • Build (and implement) an enquiry-based approach • Take a step back from one's own preconceived ideas on the subject; deconstruct representations ; develop knowledge • Contextualise the action¹ (realise that some questions are in fact social issues).
<p>Step-by-step, with some tools</p>	<p>We propose to work through this step as two steps:</p> <p>1) Visualise and identify key elements and stakeholders in the “problem situation” SUGGESTED TOOLS : [mapping the territory link to the sheet] or [mapping resources depending on the theme link to the sheet]</p> <p>2) Based on the results of the first step (maps of resources & stakeholders in the “problem situation”), go on to:</p> <p>A) identify what seems to pose the greatest problems in the situation, as well as factors that could have a positive or negative impact on the situation;</p> <p>B) collect information to improve the group's knowledge of the subject and of the relationships between factors: select methodological tools + set up a strategy for obtaining information (who? how? what? when?) + build tools for the enquiry + collect information.</p> <p>Exploration can take many forms and go through various channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise from the field: meeting with professionals, reading reports on projects carried out by similar structures or by organisations that have encountered the same type of problem situation, etc. • Studies and publications: reading research reports or articles from scientific journals or popular magazines, meeting a researcher who specialises in the topic, etc. • “Data” on the subject: any existing statistics, etc. <p>SUGGESTED TOOLS : enquête conscientisante + stratégie de rencontre inspirante + lectures + toute méthodologie de collecte d'informations jugée opportune → [Guidelines link to the sheet]</p>



¹ Illustration from a week's seminar in Savoie, where a group of young people were working on the theme of transitioning into adulthood (with the initial question “how can we (best) orient and inform young people in their transition to adulthood? “). Before the exploration, some members of the group shared a representation that social workers were not properly trained to accompany young people in the applications they need to make. The exploration step revealed that the social workers' training met expectations but that their own working conditions were the main problem (not enough time to properly accompany each user).



Reminders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In gathering information, it is useful to explore both expertise from the field (for instance by meeting with professionals²) and scientific expertise (for instance by meeting researchers working on the subject being explored)• In choosing resources for this step, remember to question the status and origin of sources: who is the author, what is his/her status, and why is he/she an expert on the subject? What are the goals of the publication (information, learning, activism, etc.)? What is the report or article based on (empirical study, review of the literature, experience from the field, subjective opinion, etc.)? When was it published? Does it cite its sources and if so, what are they?
Pitfalls & obstacles	<p>One pitfall here is rushing into the second step (gathering information) without enough preparation. Before heading out to gather information, it is vital to clarify:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) what questions you're asking about the subject, avoiding questions that are normatively biased, or coloured by opinions or values³ ;2) the strategy that will be followed to gather information: choosing appropriate methodologies and identifying pertinent resources. <p>Another pitfall consists in choosing a methodology according to one's personal preferences, or prejudices about certain methods ("statistical studies are too complicated" vs "qualitative methodologies like interviews aren't objective, you need numbers to be scientific"). The questions the group has identified should determine the methodology you follow. But material considerations are also important, and action-research must have enough expertise or the ability to access outside resources to carry out some methodologies. If it doesn't, the questions may have to be reviewed so that information can be collected to meet the research's needs. To help you select and implement appropriate methodologies, we have provided a chart of major methodologies.</p> <p>→ [Guidelines link to the sheet]</p> <p>Please note that it is often a good idea to use different methodologies, which will open the door to different points of view or angles on a question.</p>



² Illustration à partir d'un exemple vécu lors de la semaine de formation en Savoie, où un groupe de jeunes travaillait sur la thématique des représentations des jeunes de quartier. Lors de cette phase d'exploration, parmi d'autres méthodologies, ce qui a été mis en place c'est la réalisation d'un sondage auprès des autres jeunes sur l'image de leur quartier (celle qu'ils en ont, et celle qui est véhiculée). Les jeunes étant ainsi, dans cet exemple, experts de leur propre vécu.

³ Cela ne veut pas dire que les questions ne peuvent pas porter sur des opinions ou valeurs, qu'il s'agira alors d'aller interroger (si l'on reprend l'exemple ci-dessus : « les assistants sociaux trouvent-ils qu'ils sont correctement formés pour accompagner les jeunes dans leurs démarches administratives ? »). Mais qu'elles doivent être exemptes des conceptions ou valeurs des membres du groupe, ce que pense le groupe à propos du sujet (par exemple : « pourquoi les assistants sociaux sont-ils mal formés ? »). Le problème avec les questions orientées normativement, c'est qu'elles comportent le risque de ne pas adopter la posture d'ouverture et de distanciation qui est essentielle à endosser dans la démarche de recherche-action: accepter de se laisser surprendre par les résultats, être ouvert à l'information qui vient bousculer ses représentations de départ.



<p>Tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To highlight the work being done on representations in this step, here's a suggestion: when identifying the questions you want to explore, write down 5 representations you already have, and put them in an envelope. At the end of the exploration step, when all the information gathered is being shared (see STEP 3 "the problem"), open the envelope to see what has changed in those representations. The exploration (or information gathering) step also includes an exploration of projects done and solutions implemented in response to a similar problem elsewhere > take advantage of what has already been done. For a reading methodology, we recommend reading by surveying (arpage in French), where several people discover a text together in order to encourage them to take ownership of it critically and collectively, so that it supports their learning, thought process, or practice.
<p>What's expected of you: your role, posture, and skills</p>	<p>In the first step:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start by steering the discussion, suggesting formulations, seeking explanations, and finding words Help with visualising and with "spatial" representations Facilitate and mediate expression in the group: make sure everyone participates <p>In the second step:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help to identify and express the questions to be explored + appropriate methodologies to answer them Help to build and use information gathering tools Support reflection on representations (adopting an objective posture) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → In this step in particular it may be useful to reach out to researchers, as experts on the topic, and/or for methodological support in data collection..
<p>Example</p>	<p>One way of exploring paths for improvement is to contact structures that have already encountered a similar problem. Local administrations or police can also be good contacts to discuss possibilities.</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popular science channels/podcasts In philosophy: Philoxime https://www.youtube.com/c/Philoxime In the human and social sciences: avides de recherche https://www.youtube.com/c/Avidesderecherche On-line lectures: : https://www.canal-u.tv/ Arpage surveying technique for reading skills: https://www.ciep.be/images/BoiteAOutils/FichePedagEspelurette/108FPedEsper.pdf Electronic portal for resources in human and social sciences, with a specific platform for journals. A lot of the research on that portal is freely accessible: https://journals.openedition.org/ <p>→ [Guidelines link to the sheet]</p>

