

The Power of Inclusion

Alternative tool name: Active or passive inclusion exercise

Tool Profile

Approximate time needed:

70'

Adaptable to online? (y/n):

y (peer and group discussions in round 1 and 2 in breakout rooms)

Context and Purpose

Background literature:

Arias-Arévalo, P., E. Lazos-Chavero, A.S. Monroy-Sais, S.H. Nelson, A. Pawlowska-Mainville, A. Vatn, M. Cantú-Fernández, R. Murali, B. Muraca, & U. Pascual. 2023. The Role of Power in Leveraging the Diverse Values of Nature for Transformative Change. Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability 64. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2023.101352>

Fraser, N. 2007. Re-framing justice in a globalizing world. In (Mis) recognition, social inequality and social justice (pp. 29-47). Routledge. Pdf available at:

<https://revistaseug.ugr.es/index.php/acfs/article/download/1028/1211/0>

Muraca, B. & U. Pascual. 2023. The Role of Power in Leveraging the Diverse Values of Nature for Transformative Change. Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability 64.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2023.101352>

Forms of power addressed:

Operational power

Tool aim:

The aim of this tool is to raise awareness about active vs. passive inclusion.

Our conceptual understanding:

- **active inclusion:** deliberate and proactive efforts to ensure that all individuals, particularly marginalized or underrepresented groups, have equal opportunities to participate fully in society, institutions, and decision-making processes.
- **passive inclusion:** refers to a more superficial or minimal approach to inclusion, where marginalized or underrepresented groups are formally acknowledged or allowed to participate but without meaningful efforts to address systemic barriers, power imbalances, or structural inequalities.

Materials and Setup

Materials needed:

pens and paper, cards with statements (see below)

Instructions for facilitators

- **Round 1 (20').** Individual ("think"), pairing, and sharing about inclusion

Have participants reflect on the following questions and discuss them with reference to a research context. Follow the detailed instructions below:

- **Step 1.1.** Reflect: When do I feel included? When do I not feel included?
 - 2' individual reflection
 - 2' pair discussing
 - 4' plenary (share)
 - **Step 1.2.** Reflect: How do I react when I don't feel included?
 - 5' plenary (share)
 - **Step 1.3.** Reflect: If people are reacting to not feeling included in the ways that we just discussed, what impacts might this have on the project and its outcome(s)?
 - 1' individual reflection
 - 2' pair discussing
 - 4' plenary (share)
- **Round 2 (35').** Identifying active or passive inclusion through examples.
 - **Step 2.1.** Form groups of 4 and distribute a set of 'inclusion' statement cards to each group (see cards below). These are statements of people giving examples of how they ensure that their team members feel welcome to contribute to the decision-making process.
 - **Step 2.2.** Discuss the statements in groups. Lay out the statements in a range from active to passive (depends on statements), based on the following conceptualizations:
 - **active inclusion:** deliberate and proactive efforts to ensure that all individuals, particularly marginalized or underrepresented groups, have equal opportunities to participate fully in society, institutions, and decision-making processes.
 - **passive inclusion:** refers to a more superficial or minimal approach to inclusion, where marginalized or underrepresented groups are formally acknowledged or allowed to participate but without meaningful efforts to address systemic barriers, power imbalances, or structural inequalities.
 - **Step 2.3.** Propose active alternatives to the passive inclusion statements: How would you make it active?



Instructions for participants:

- **Round 1 (20').** Follow facilitator instructions.
- **Round 2 (35').** Identifying active or passive inclusion through examples.
 - **Step 2.1.** Form groups of 4. Your group receives a set of 'inclusion' statement cards. These are statements of people giving examples of how they ensure that their team members feel welcome to contribute to the decision-making process.
 - **Step 2.2.** Discuss the statements in groups. Lay out the statements in a range from active to passive (depends on statements) based on the following conceptualizations:
 - **active inclusion:** deliberate and proactive efforts to ensure that all individuals, particularly marginalized or underrepresented groups, have equal opportunities to participate fully in society, institutions, and decision-making processes.
 - **passive inclusion:** refers to a more superficial or minimal approach to inclusion, where marginalized or underrepresented groups are formally acknowledged or allowed to participate but without meaningful efforts to address systemic barriers, power imbalances, or structural inequalities.
 - **Step 2.3.** Propose active alternatives to the passive inclusion statements: How would you make it active?

Cards for reflection tasks (Round 1) (optional)

Step 1:

When do I feel included? When do I not feel included?

Step 2:

How do I react when I don't feel included?

Step 3:

If people are reacting to not feeling included in the ways that we just discussed, what impacts might this have on the project and its outcome(s)?

1.

Giving a slot to underrepresented groups or early-career members to collect and balance opinions.

2.

Giving a lot of 'background information' on the topic to allow participation.

3.

Organizing brainstorming sessions, and pooling to vote on different possibilities.

4.

Reaching out to team members, asking their opinions and reconsidering the initial decision if arguments are convincing.

5.

Making sure everyone has speaking time.

6.

Actively asking about the decisions that are being made and allowing people to speak up if someone disagrees. This can be done privately, rather than in a group as some people might feel uncomfortable. Even if they do not answer, keep the people "in the loop", and inform them so that they know how/where the project is going.

7.

Getting to know all team members and welcoming them actively in the group. For example, asking them questions about how they are feeling in the group.

8.

Making others feel comfortable to speak up by speaking up myself.
Speaking with the leader of the group, if I feel that people's voices are not heard.

Additional Resources

Tool origin story:

This tool emerged from the challenges of inclusion in transdisciplinary process. It often happens that different participants are included in TD research, but not meaningfully engaged in project tasks and decision-making. Based on this understanding, we first conceptualized active and passive inclusion during a team workshop where we explored how different forms of inclusion relate to power, particularly in inter- and transdisciplinary research processes. Our questionnaire and interview data formed another source of motivation to innovate such tools to raise awareness about enabling quality inclusion.

Recognizing the importance of specifically addressing operational power (Arias-Arévalo et al., 2023) and clarifying the conceptualization of different forms of inclusion (later insights from Fraser, 2007), our team of four started developing this tool. The tool offers an understanding of inclusion from participants' own experiences and insights. This also enables them to distinguish between active and passive forms of inclusion, and contemplate how to shift passive forms to more active ones. In doing so, the tool aims to raise awareness by offering self-reflexive, peer, and plenary dialogues among researchers to advocate for quality inclusion in different events, research, and practice in ITD. The original idea of the tool is currently being further developed and tested in workshop settings.