



Good Participatory Practice Tools

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## **Circles Diagram**

February 2014

## Background

The Microbicides Development Programme (MDP) phase III trial (MDP301) of the candidate vaginal microbicide PRO2000<sup>1-2</sup> used innovative participatory community engagement<sup>3-6</sup> strategies to ensure this study was conducted in partnership with local communities.

All six MDP301 trial sites had dedicated resources for community liaison, with site-level community liaison officers, in-country training and annual workshops for researchers and community representatives, and international scientific and technical oversight through a central MDP-based coordinating mechanism.

At the MDP301 trial site in Mwanza, Tanzania, tools adapted from participatory learning and action techniques (PLA) such as listing, scoring, ranking, community mapping and circles diagrams, were used to foster effective and open dialogue, shared understanding and partnership working between researchers and communities. Examples of these tools are presented in this toolkit, and can readily be adapted to a variety of other settings to facilitate the translation of GPP guidelines to practice.

## Acknowledgements

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## References & Further Reading

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## INTRODUCTION: CIRCLES Diagram

This tool **helps participants prioritize issues of concern and explore the relationships between priority issues**

**This tool can be used to:**

- » Identify key issues, concerns, and perceptions about proposed HIV prevention research
- » Facilitate community participation in the design of HIV prevention studies
- » Survey and monitor community perceptions and experiences of ongoing research

**This tool is designed to help research teams put several elements of GPP into practice, particularly from the following sections of the guidelines:**

- » Formative research
- » Stakeholder advisory mechanisms & Stakeholder engagement plan
- » Protocol development
- » Informed consent
- » Standards of prevention and care
- » Study accrual and follow-up)
- » Dissemination of trial results



## MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Flip-chart paper
- Pens
- Scissors
- Alternately: Use a sheet of cardboard, a chalkboard and chalk, or a stick (to draw on the ground).

## TIPS

**Encourage debate and reassessment.** After each group has presented its diagram, allow participants to resize or reposition their circles to reflect any changes in their perception. This process will help prepare the group for further in-depth discussion using tools such as pair-wise matrices.

**Explore relationships.** Some groups may wish to explore the relationships between different priority issues and to represent these on their Circles Diagram (e.g., using lines, arrows, pictures). Circles Diagrams are often used in this way to explore relationships and linkages between different people, organizations, and services in a community.

**Compare and contrast.** Feedback from each of the small groups can highlight valuable differences in perceptions between men and women, older people and youth, and other groups.



1

### Step 1

Explain that this tool will help the group further explore key issues and priorities identified in the Listing, Scoring, Ranking tool or in the Community Perspectives tool.

2

### Step 2

Have participants break into groups of around 6 to 8 people. Provide each group with paper, scissors, and pens.

3

### Step 3

Have participants draw or cut out and label a circle to represent each of the key issues identified during an earlier exercise. The size and position of each circle should reflect how important the group perceives each issue to be relative to the others. If the circles are cut out, they should be arranged on a separate piece of paper or the floor to form a diagram.

4

### Step 4

Ask each small group to present their final Circles Diagram to the whole group by holding up their drawing or having people gather around their arranged circles on the ground and explaining the decisions they made.

5

### Step 5

After each group has presented its diagram, return to the final list generated in the Listing, Scoring, Ranking exercise and discuss any new insights and suggestions for modification.