

# Methods@Manchester Methods Fair Ketso Workshops

10<sup>th</sup> October 2012



Summary of Ketso Workshop Outcomes



## 1 Introduction

Over two hundred participants from the Universities of Manchester, Liverpool, Lancaster and further afield attended this Methods Fair throughout the day. Participants included PhD researchers at each stage of their research, academics and practitioners.

Ketso, a hands-on toolkit for creative engagement, was used to engage the participants in dialogue and gather their ideas. Ketso was initially developed to engage people in community planning in Southern Africa. Launched in 2009 as a University of Manchester social business, the toolkit is the product of over sixteen years' practical development, including eleven years' cutting-edge research at the University of Manchester<sup>1</sup>.

This was a two stage process. In the opening plenary session, participants were asked to discuss in small groups what they wanted to discover from their research and what they were looking for from research methods training. Throughout the day and especially towards the end, participants were then asked to give feedback on the fair using Ketso.





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> If you have any questions about the Ketso toolkit, please check our website, www.ketso.com or contact us at info@ketso.com or call + 44 844 879 4483.



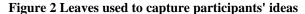
A Ketso kit provides a set of tabletop tools that can be used to capture and display people's ideas. Participants write their ideas on colour-coded shapes, and place them on a central felt workspace. 'Branches' are used to provide themes and help organise the ideas. Participants see the group's thoughts taking shape, encouraging cooperation and dialogue. Icons are used to highlight key points, and ideas can be organised into an action plan.

Ketso has been used on every continent except Antarctica in a wide range of contexts, from stakeholder engagement to teaching and learning to project planning. See <a href="www.ketso.com">www.ketso.com</a> for more information.

This report summarises the ideas developed by participants. It has been collated by a team of PhD researchers from the School of Environment and Development at the University of Manchester from ideas on the Ketsos developed by participants.

## 2 Workshop Process

The workshop progressed in stages, with Janice Astbury acting as a facilitator, guiding participants through a series of questions. Participants wrote or drew their ideas on colour-coded 'leaves'.







In the morning session, which was a networking session for students to consider their own research and expectations from research training, mini Ketsos were used in a tiered lecture hall. Each time a new stage of the workshop was introduced, participants had the opportunity to develop ideas on their own, before sharing them with the group.

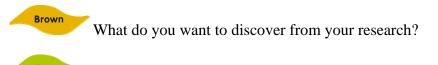
The PhD researchers assisting with the exercise then collated these ideas onto several Ketso workspaces, identifying key themes that emerged from their analysis.

Figure 3 PhD researchers collating ideas and finding themes



### Feedback on 'Your Research' and Research Training

Participants were asked to work with people they did not know. In this first exercise in the morning, the colour-coded leaves were used to ask the following questions:



What are you looking for from research methods training?

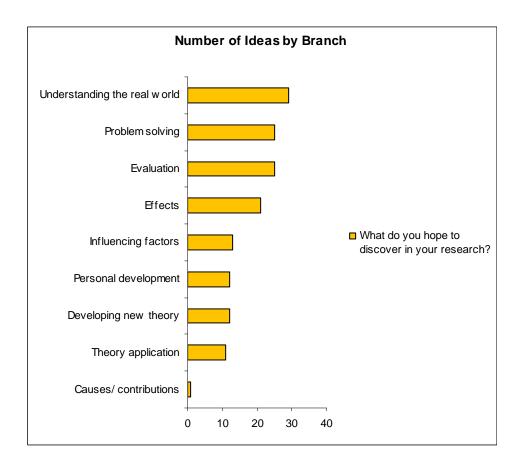
This was a twenty minute exercise, with participants working in teams of three. A total of 318 ideas were developed around these questions.



The following graph shows the proportions of ideas clustered around the emergent themes from analysis of the ideas, in response to the question about hopes for discoveries from research.



#### What do you want to discover from your research?



The full set of ideas can be seen in the accompanying spreadsheet. A summary is provided below (by category in descending order):

- **Understanding the real world:** helping people facing a range of current challenges; organisational change; technological innovation; policy development
- **Problem solving:** new approaches to intractable social problems; overcoming barriers to innovation or flow of information and ideas; facilitating constructive collaborative work
- **Evaluation:** effectiveness of Information Technologies, health and education interventions, design practices; assessing influences on behaviour; assessing evidence base for current claims; testing application of models
- **Effects:** effect of particular factors on specific health and social service interventions; effects of changes on specific populations; effects of specific policies; effect of different forms of governance; political and economic effects of discourses and events; physiological effects
- **Influencing factors:** influences on social problems, choices or change processes; role of certain actors, institutions, or drivers in a variety of contexts
- **Personal development:** exploring whether I enjoy research and if I should pursue a research/academic career



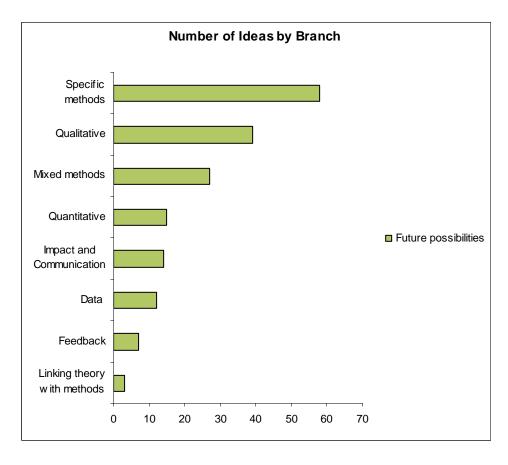
- **Developing new theory:** new models, new approaches and new measurement tools in urban planning, health, education, psychology, sociology, economics and political science
- **Theory application:** Applying theories of management, communications, decision-making, social change, policy development
- Causes/contributions: motivations for engagement

We noted the dominance of social science research that addresses current challenges and has practical application. It is also clear that many people are using the PhD experience to explore future career options.

The following graph shows the clustering of ideas around emergent themes from the second question asked in the morning session.



#### What are you looking for from research methods training?



Again the full set of ideas can be seen in the accompanying spreadsheet, and a sample of the range, organised by cross-cutting themes, is provided below:

- Know and critically assess the range of methods available: choose the best for context
- Research design: case studies, ethnography, action research, experimental design
- **Data collection:** interviews, focus groups, surveys, observation, film-making
- Working with different data sources: historical documents, archives, photographs, film



- Analysis: narrative analysis, contextual analysis, discourse analysis, visual analysis, social network analysis, structural evaluation modelling, factor analysis, statistics, econometrics
- **Software and other tools:** NVIVO, GIS, Bayesian research software, brain imaging, Ketso
- **Integration of methods:** mixed methods triangulation; integrating data from different sources; constructing a narrative through combining data from different methods
- **Theory and practice:** To be able to relate a method to a theoretical position and understand why!!!!!!!
- **Reflexivity** in collecting, analysing and reporting evidence
- Learning from others: opportunity to see how others have used methods creatively
- Ethical methods: methods that give back to the participants

#### Feedback on the Methods Fair

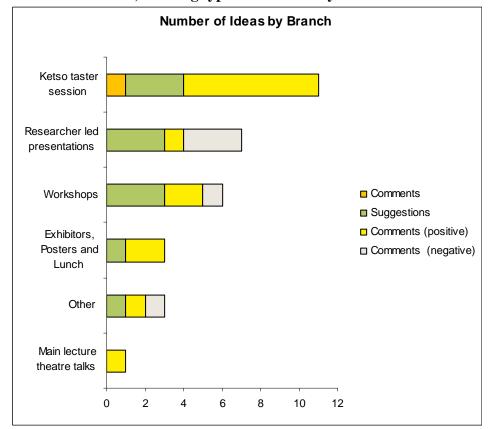
Participants were asked throughout the day to leave feedback on the Methods Fair, again using Ketso leaves. They were asked for:



Comments about different activities at the Methods Fair

Suggestions for improving activities at the Methods Fair

#### Feedback on event, showing types of answers by the different sessions

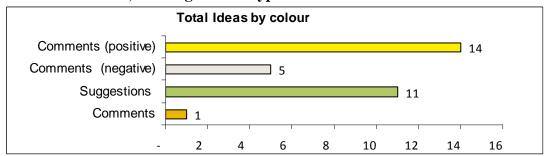


(Note that the comments from participants were categories as positive or negative by the researchers during analysis after the event)



There were more comments about the Ketso session than any other, with the highest number and proportion of comments with a positive tone. Suggestions for the future were fairly evenly split between the Ketso session, Researcher-led Presentations and Workshops.

#### Feedback on event, showing relative types of answers



As can be seen, there were many fewer comments that were negative in tone than positive. One comment was left as neutral, as it was neither positive nor negative in tone.

The full set of comments and suggestions is available in the spreadsheet, and a sample is provided here:

#### Comments about different activities at the Methods Fair



- I had fun :)
- Save the Children presentation was excellent
- Good, variety of presentation. Great poster display arrangement
- Very interesting to see such a broad range of research going on!
- Really great workshops....
- Ketso very appealing method and participative approach

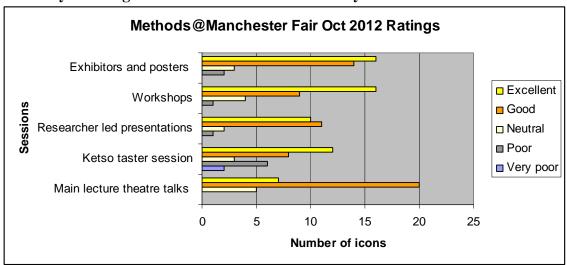
Grey Negative in tone

- Standardise requirements for presenters. Some are poor!
- Too sociology orientated
- Last year there was more choice and greater depth of sessions

Participants were asked to rate the different elements of the workshop, using icons on a Likert scale from 'very poor' to 'excellent'.



#### Summary of rating different elements of the event by icons





#### Suggestions for improving activities at the Methods Fair

- Have a longer 'Ketso' session
- Would be good if workshops were more participatory
- Workshops could have done with longer time slots
- I would have like more info on why the researchers selected the specific methods
- Better to be more focused on 'methods' rather than 'research'
- Have more emphasis on methods that would be useful to 1st year PhDs
- Greater thematic coordination
- More food variety wouldn't hurt

One participant noted on a leaf that they were "Interested in analysis of Ketso discussion". In the feedback for the Methods Fair in the previous year, there were many more negative comments about the logistics and the food, which were taken on board by the organising team. Hopefully this report has provided food for thought, as well as useful input for Methods@Manchester to tailor their research training to meet the needs of current PhD students. The positive comments are as useful as the negative ones, as they give an indication of what needs to be kept in place.

As one participant noted on a leaf: "Let's all use Ketso at all conferences - allows participants to focus aims and objectives of the day". Part of the thinking behind the morning workshop was to encourage participants to think through their own research and what they want to learn, then to think about how they want to tackle their own training. It is hoped that this exercise helped participants to focus their energies and make the most of the Methods Fair.