

Reframing Impact: Co-Creating Research Priorities with Local Communities in Seacroft

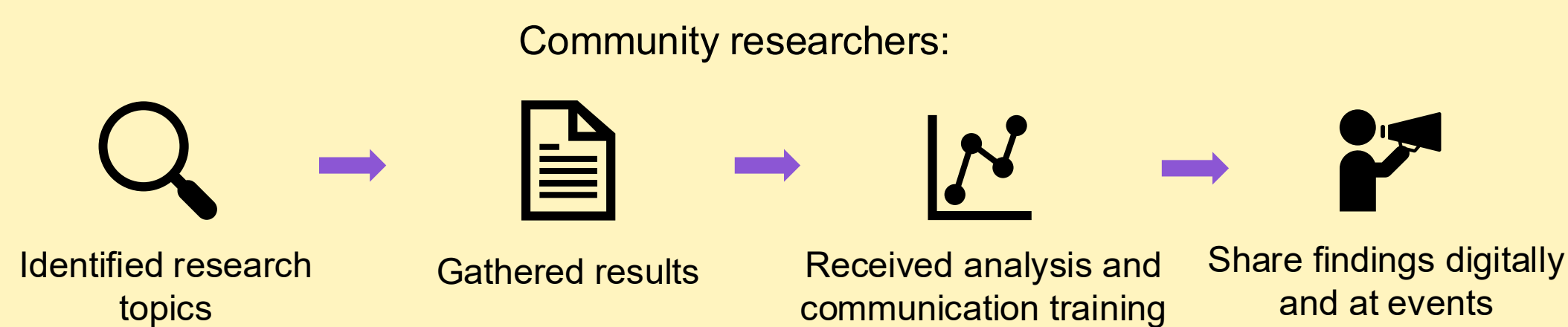
Background



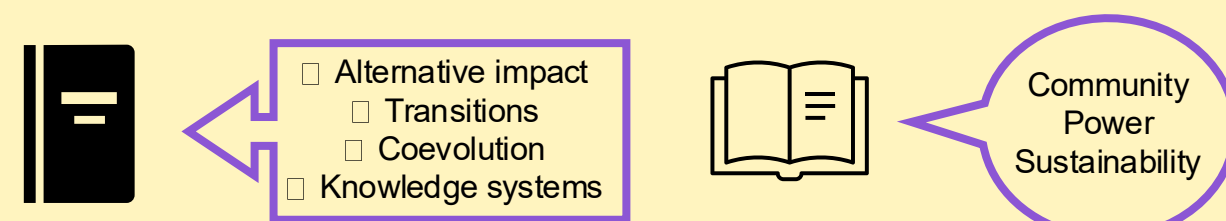
- With only **60% of adults** proud to live in their local area (gov.uk, 2025), civic involvement and participation across the country. Negative perceptions and beliefs about their communities leaves individuals **unwilling to engage** with them, exacerbating feelings of disenfranchisement and disconnection.
- This project looks to tackle these problems by giving community members the capability and resources to better understand their area, people and services **through an academic lens**. By empowering community members this way, their voices and perspectives are amplified: from topic identification to result presentation, it is **those affected by decisions** who shape the process.
- **Seacroft**, a suburb of Leeds developed to meet social housing demands from the 1950s, is indicative of many communities across the UK. More recent funding in the area has led to numerous community spaces and services emerging, making Seacroft a champion and leader in community-led projects and engagement.

Methodology

- 8 **community champions** enrolled and **funded**
- Given training on conducting **academic** research by academics and project leads



- **Literature review** on transformative spaces framework and surrounding themes



- Organised **listening rooms**: anonymised reflective conversations between researchers
- **Thematic analysis** of conversations
- **Publication of website** highlighting individual research topics specific to Seacroft as well as framework and process potentially applicable to **other communities**
- **Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership** event - bringing community researchers and policymakers together in dialogue
- **Survey** with responses from **policymakers** about their interpretation and perception of community-led research

Conclusions + Future

- Community members have more access, appreciation and knowledge than **third-party** researchers.
- Citizens **cannot afford to prioritise research**: employment, duties of care or other matters demand time. Community-led researchers must be **fully reimbursed** or potentially employed **solely** as researchers.
- Participants will be **already active** in their community. Participants who do not practice civic engagement will not sign up as researchers; participants inevitably **arrive with existing concerns** they wish to address and a desire to do so.
- Alongside the **LS14 Trust**, we will establish a **Seacroft Community Research** website – guidance and recommendations for the process and individual research topics for policymakers to address.
- **Creative solutions to presentation** – researchers will showcase findings interactively to counterbalance **existing knowledge systems** and **status quos**.



LS14 TRUST



Findings

LISTENING ROOMS: Themes

1. Trust

- Familiarity removes or reduces the need to justify
- Participants are more willing to talk to people they already have relationships with
- Participants may be more honest and more open
- Participants more likely to **reciprocate** – helping researchers they already know
- Reoccurring themes of distrust between institutions and governments, and members of public. **Insider research helps bridge this separation**

2. Disconnect and disparity

- 'Local authority **doesn't listen**' – representative of wider sentiment: Seacroft is repeatedly being misheard and misled by institutions
- Community researchers **specifically target** issues they encounter and are familiar with
- Understanding realities of an area allows for more efficient, specified work versus an **unfamiliar research group** or body.
- Inevitable **significant 'biases'**: researchers begin with fully formed preconceptions

WORKSHOPS: What's next for Seacroft

Open discussion about how to **communicate** process and findings. Outputs will now focus on:

1. **Credibility** – Evidence-based arguments, substantiated claims. Make research **hard to ignore** by institutions
2. **Accessibility** – Prioritise community members' access. Easily understood and interpreted, whilst remaining an impactful message
3. **Personality** – Anecdotal, emphasising the researchers' and participants' **humanity**. Project motivated by a desire to make positive change, and by a **care for their community**