

Living Lab Case Study: Team Reflection Methods

Quarterly reflection meetings have formed an important part of our project. They have given us a chance to step back and take stock, protect time for constructive conversation and evaluation, and ensure that we are not losing learnings.

These meetings differ from our usual team meetings because they provide structured ways of reflecting on longer-term progress and can be used as an opportunity for team input on important decisions such as further funding applications. To make them equitable, all team members are expected to attend and given the opportunity to input through participatory methods.

Ripple effect mapping

One of the most useful methods we used as part of our reflection process was ripple effect mapping. The activity is an effective way of working together to track intended and unintended impacts arising from a team project.

It works by the team agreeing on an aim; what impacts do you want to find out from the map? And establishing a timeline from which to map out the impact arising from specific activities. Guiding questions can help keep things on track: Who has been impacted upon (i.e., people, organisations, leadership)? How many? Have you noted any financial impacts? Are there any wider contextual factors that contributed to what you have observed?

Ripple effect mapping is messy and hand's on - it's best done with flip chart paper and pens - and it requires a commitment to be open to running with the waves of impact that can arise from a single event. What comes from the activity is up to you, because while experienced facilitators might tell you that it focuses on the *what* more than the *how*, the picture it builds over time can be useful in defining both. Ultimately, it can demonstrate what pathways to impact have been most effective and so where future energies might be spent.

