Understanding the mysteries in your project

This worksheet will help you investigate different aspects of your project to help you get at the underlying questions you can use to structure a deeper learning process. The point of this worksheet is not to have all of the answers but to dig until you get to a meaningful place of 'not-knowing'.

Does your project involve people's behaviour?

Try framing your question as a phenomenon (how people experience life) that is, instead of "what toys do kids want?" ask "what is the role of play in kids lives? How is it changing?"

Problem   **Phenomenon**

Who are the people behaving in the most unexpected ways?

1. Who are bright spots that are already outstanding, especially if you wouldn't expect them to be?

2. Who might you expect to be doing well (they have everything going for them) or following your preferred behaviour but aren't?

Groups and values

1. Who are the different groups of people with whom you are working?

2. What are their driving values and goals in life? How does the aspect of their lives that you're relating to fit with their larger picture of their lives?

What's changing in the context around people's lives?

1. What important **changes** are taking place (or are going to take place) in individual lives? List a few.

2. What will the **impacts** of these changes be? Are there some where it's more or less clear? What are the most uncertain ones?

Changes   **Impacts**

Is there a journey that people go on?

This might be a literal journey, a metaphorical one, or a change journey. It might be over a long time (like a career) or a short one (a doctor's visit). It might have ups and downs, branch off, or loop back on itself.

1. Map out what you currently know about the different steps.
2. Are there parts you understand better than others? Are there particular places in the journey where things don't work as you would like or would expect?

Are there lots of different parts to your problem or system?

1. What are they? List them on a sheet of paper or individual post-its.
2. Now think: how are they related? What are the dynamics between them? Try drawing their relationships or arranging the post-its. You might think about power, feedback loops, or information flows.

Parts   **Relationships**

What's changing in the context around your project area?

1. What are the most influential **changes** that are taking place (or are going to take place) at the organisational or societal level that will impact your project area? You may want to refer back to your PESTLE diagram.
2. What will the **impacts** of these changes be? For whom? Are there some where it's more or less clear? What are the most uncertain ones?

Changes   **Impacts**

Are there competing views or tensions that need to be resolved?

1. Who has what views? How are the in tension?

2. Try re-framing each side of the views as a phenomenon or life experience that needs to be understood.

Do you have early ideas you think might work or other projects you've been inspired by?

1. What are they?
2. What **hunch** do you have about **why** they might work?
3. Write that hunch as a question. Are there small ways you could test that out or learn more about it?