

Three-pile sorting

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage participants to discuss common hygiene practices and explore their attitudes to them. It will assist the facilitator's understanding of community hygiene practices and local knowledge about hygiene and can act as a catalyst for motivating people to take action.

By the end of the session participants should be able to identify good and bad hygiene practices and suggest ways in which some of the unhygienic practices could be improved.

- This exercise can be done with small groups of about 6/7 people to enable everyone to participate.
- Divide the participants into small groups and provide each group with a set of picture cards describing a variety of hygiene practices. If there are people who are not used to looking at pictures, it is important that each group clarifies how the image is being interpreted (this usually comes out in the discussion but those who are not used to looking at pictures may struggle initially).
- Ask them to sort the pictures into three piles according to whether they think the activities depicted are good, bad or both good and bad in their impact on health.
- Encourage as much discussion as possible. The facilitator can help to clarify the relationship between local knowledge and practice. For example if people say that boiling water is good, it is important to explore how realistic this option is in terms of the availability of fuel.
- Ask each group to suggest one or two “bad” cards and to describe what would need to happen and who would be responsible for improving the situation. How can they be involved in making improvements?
- Ensure that each group explains the content of the ‘third’ pile of ambiguous pictures and that the issues identified are clarified where necessary.
- Take note of the discussion points using the local terms. The findings should be included in the project records and can be used as baseline data. Subsequently the same activity can be used for monitoring or evaluating progress.

