Ketso
Guide

ketso®

a hands-on kit for
creative groupwork

Project

Ketso – Working together. Better.

▲ Architecture lectures in Bangladesh.

"Ketso allowed you to focus your thinking, often traditional group mind mapping can lack structure. The way this gave different stages to types of thinking meant you were not attempting to tackle everything at once, but instead you had a very logical path to follow." Michael Soppitt, Masters Student in Human Centered Computer Systems at the University of Sussex

"I like the idea of 'putting the pens in the hands of the residents,' because normally the landscape architects make the plan, and we take it back to the residents. With this, the residents sat around the table discussing amongst themselves. I think it made a big difference in the final plan. I could see people looking at it and saying "That is what I suggested, and I thought it should go there". I thought that was really, really exciting." Feedback from participant in Irk Valley planning from GroundWork Manchester

▲ Stakeholder engagement in health and wellbeing

▲ Ethical supply chain jute bags.

▲ Teaching community planning.
◄ Consulting on policy options.

▲ Assembly in Sheltered workshop.

"Using Ketso is an activity where everyone can contribute. This is the sort of tool that Tesco employees really like to use – hands on, visual and it lets everyone shape the outcomes." Richard Sullivan, Head of Pay and Rewards, Tesco

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Contents...

Further case studies and information are provided on our website – **www.ketso.com** We are developing
user forums on the website, so that people can post their comments and suggestions for new ways to use
Ketso. If you have any comments or questions about this guide, please email them to: **info@ketso.com**

1. Welcome to Ketso

What is Ketso?

Ketso is a hands-on kit that enables people to think and work together better. It can be used in any situation when people come together to share information, learn from each other, make decisions and plan actions. For example: it can be used to plan a project, neighbourhood, landscape, or business; gain feedback on a policy or strategy; review a study topic; develop a presentation or paper; or inform decision-making. Ketso gives a voice to everybody, not just those who speak the loudest.

The components have been specially designed to help manage workshops and meetings. Participants write their ideas and comments on re-usable shapes, including colour-coded leaves, which are then placed on a central mat, or 'workspace'. These shapes make it easy for people of all ages and abilities to follow the process and make sure key points or topics are covered. Everyone can participate at the same time. People's ideas are built up and stored on the workspace, making it easy to see all of the ideas at a glance, and for everyone in the group to follow the conversation.

The shapes can be moved around on the workspace to create new connections. A selection of different icons can be used to highlight key points, allowing popular topics or 'hot spots' to be easily identified, prioritised and acted upon. The workspace can be pinned up on the wall for display and discussion. Once completed, it folds quickly and easily into its carrying bag. The colour-coded shapes can be rinsed clean in water, ready for use again.

About this guide

Whilst Ketso can be used for individual work, the focus of this guide is on using it when working with groups. This is not meant to be a comprehensive 'to do' list for everything you need to know about running a workshop. Instead, it aims to help you get the most out of your kit by providing a simple process to follow, examples of ways to use the kit in different situations and useful hints and tips. Many of these ideas, especially those on encouraging different ways of thinking, can be adapted to individual work.

Who is it for?

This guide is for people who want to run workshops, active learning sessions, or other groupwork using Ketso. For experienced workshop facilitators, teachers and trainers, it provides a quick introduction to Ketso. By reading Section 3, experienced facilitators can quickly get an idea of how to integrate Ketso into their way of working and see what is different from tools they have used before. For people new to running active groupwork, the guide offers a step-by-step introduction to using Ketso, providing lots of helpful information and tips for planning and running fun and effective workshops.

**"I started out really sceptical, but once the group I was working with got going, I was convinced. This produced great results and the group dynamics were excellent. People were really thinking things through and developing sophisticated ideas in a very short period of time."** Prof. Max Robinson, Enterprise Education Director at the North East Centre for Scientific Enterprise, Founder of Kromek

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2. What's in a Ketso?

Ketso comes in different set-ups for many different uses. A Ketso**8** has everything you need for running a workshop with up to 8 people. A Ketso**24** has everything you need for running a workshop with up to 24 people (3 groups of 8).

Each Ketso comes with a packing list to show the contents.

Visit **www.ketso.com** for downloadable resources and extra components to customise your kit.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BRING ALONG YOURSELF...

• **A bell, gong or other device for capturing people's attention (i.e. something other than shouting!)**

• **Blue tac** • **Sticky tape**
• **Push pins** • **String**

3. Using Ketso
Introduction

• The components of Ketso are introduced, showing you how they have been designed to guide you through running a great workshop. Once you have practiced the basics, you can experiment with variations.

TIPS: It is important to think ahead and plan carefully. The more you have thought things through, the more you are able to focus on the participants, rather than the practical details.

There are two main ways to use Ketso: for creative thinking and discussion; and for developing timelines and matrices. These are reflected in two forms – you can use it as a tree-like structure, with branches radiating from the centre; and in a grid form. Both are introduced here.

Planning & preparation... Deciding the focus

- Decide the aims and main focus of the workshop (e.g. name of a project or place, or what needs to be done).

- Write the focus on the centrepiece with a water soluble pen, using large, clear letters. The centrepiece can be seen as the trunk of the tree.

TIPS: It is important to make the focus and aims of the workshop clear to participants from the outset, or to have a stage at the beginning where these are clarified with participants.

You can use the legend to note the date of the workshop, the project and possibly the participants, or team number or name. This helps you remember where the ideas on the workspace came from. This can be placed snugly in the bottom left corner of the felt.
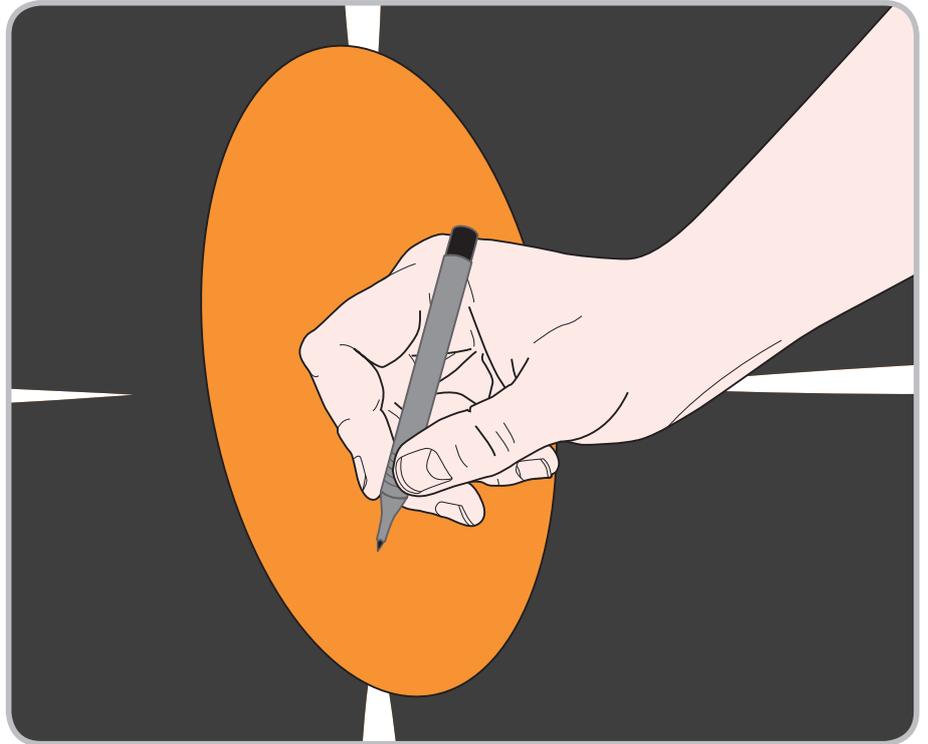
Deciding the themes

- Decide the main themes and write each on a separate oval, to add to the felt 'branch'. Write big and clearly. These themes help structure the discussion.

TIPS: The branches should be attached so they radiate out from (and touch) the centrepiece. Don't put branches over the cut-out seams in the felt; these are there to make it easy to fold.

If you don't have time to write the branches in advance, you can ask participants to write the themes. You can show the themes on a flip chart or PowerPoint slide for them to copy.

It is always useful to have at least one blank branch to allow for a new theme to emerge, or to capture ideas that don't fit elsewhere. You could also leave all the branches blank, for participants to fill in during the workshop (discussed in Section 6).

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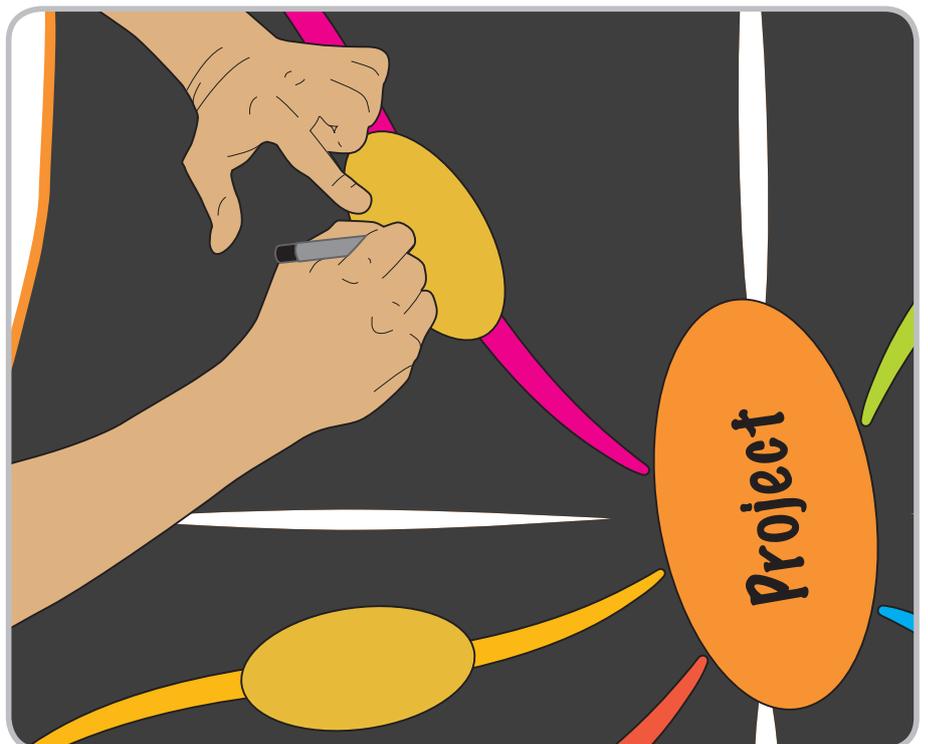
Deciding the questions

- Decide the main questions for the workshop. The different coloured leaves encourage participants to think about the subject from different perspectives. They can be used to represent different kinds of thinking, e.g. green for 'new ideas'.

- For each question, decide on the colour-codes and write what each colour represents on the legend provided on each felt.

- You can also write the colour-code on a leaf and slide it into the front pocket of the relevant leaf bag.
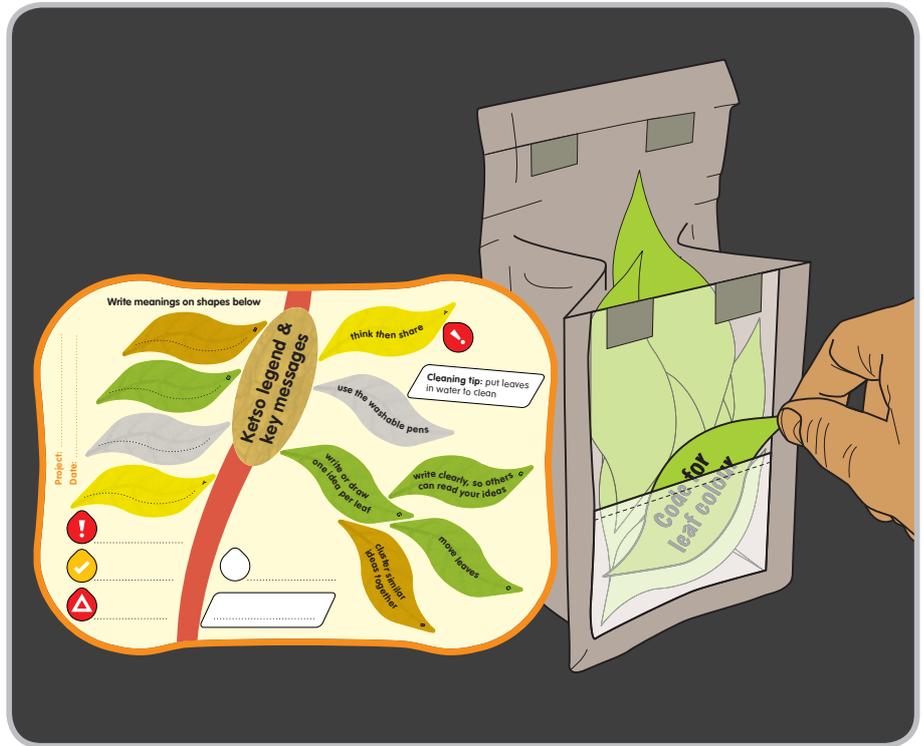
TIP: Letters are printed on the leaves help people with colour vision deficiency. **www.ketso.com** has more information on colour-codes.

Deciding order and timing

- Think carefully about the order of the questions asked, as this has an impact on the feel and flow of the workshop.

TIPS: It might seem logical to start with the 'problems' and then look for 'solutions', but doing this can lead people to focus too much on 'problems'. It is often helpful to start with 'existing assets' (brown leaves – for the soil in which new ideas grow) or 'new ideas' (green leaves – shoots of new plants growing in the soil), leaving the 'problems' (grey leaves – that have gone mouldy) until later.

Think through roughly how long you need for each step. We suggest 10-20 minute per step, with a comfort break every hour or so. Once started, you can adapt the plan in response to how the workshop develops.

Use the Ketso planner supplied in the full kit to plan your workshop.

> "People like me are not good at speaking if there are more than two or three people around, but they have things to say. Like in a classroom at school, you get a few people who say things, but that doesn't mean that everyone else doesn't want to say things. They don't, because they know that they are not the cleverest and they might get laughed at, so they don't really participate. This is magnificent at getting people to participate." Peter Milner, Manchester Resident.

Running the workshop... Setting the table(s)

- Fold the workspace so the branches are not visible and there is space around the felt to write on the leaves. People can then develop their ideas before seeing pre-prepared themes on the branches.

- Set out the water soluble pens and the first leaf bag (or pile of leaves if you need to share leaf bags amongst tables). It is helpful to introduce the different coloured leaves one at a time, to help people focus on the question.

TIP: Arrive early to allow for unforeseen problems and to give yourself plenty of time to prepare.

You may wish to do a simple warm up exercise that people can start whilst others are arriving, you can use the back of a Ketso Planner for this.

Participants' input

- After any introductions, ask each participant to pick up a water soluble pen and a pile of leaves, (using the first colour that you have decided upon). Ask participants to write one idea on each leaf (easier to read and can be moved independently). In this stage, people work individually.

TIPS: This is the stage to introduce the aims of the workshop; and to ask participants to introduce themselves to each other. As the branches are not visible yet, you will need to introduce the overall focus, or a particular area to focus on at first.

This phase can be quite short. Make sure everyone is writing down ideas. Encourage participants to write or draw clearly, with short phrases.

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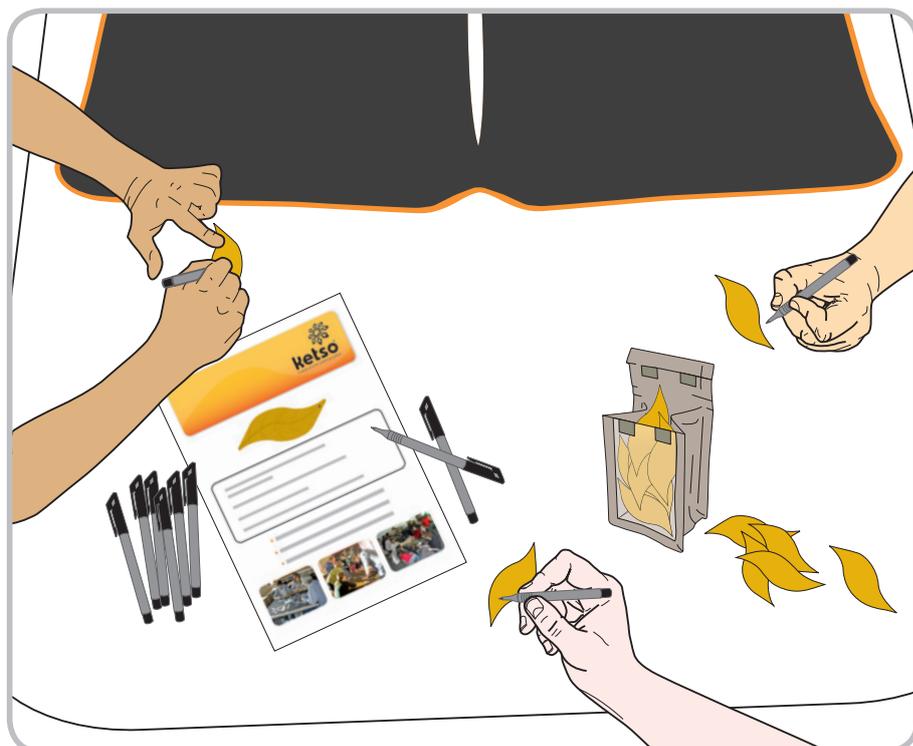
Clustering ideas on the workspace

- Unfold the felt workspace. Participants now place their leaves on the workspace, pointing at the relevant branches. Leaves can be clustered together to show linked ideas and moved around to explore connections.

TIPS: Participants can either place leaves on the felt without discussing them at first, or read them out. To keep ideas flowing, each person can introduce one or two ideas at a time, instead of all them at once.

Encourage participants not to get stuck in explaining or criticising the ideas – this can come later. If an idea comes up that fits on a different coloured leaf, you can provide the appropriate colour to capture that idea. If an idea is too long for one leaf, more than one can be used.
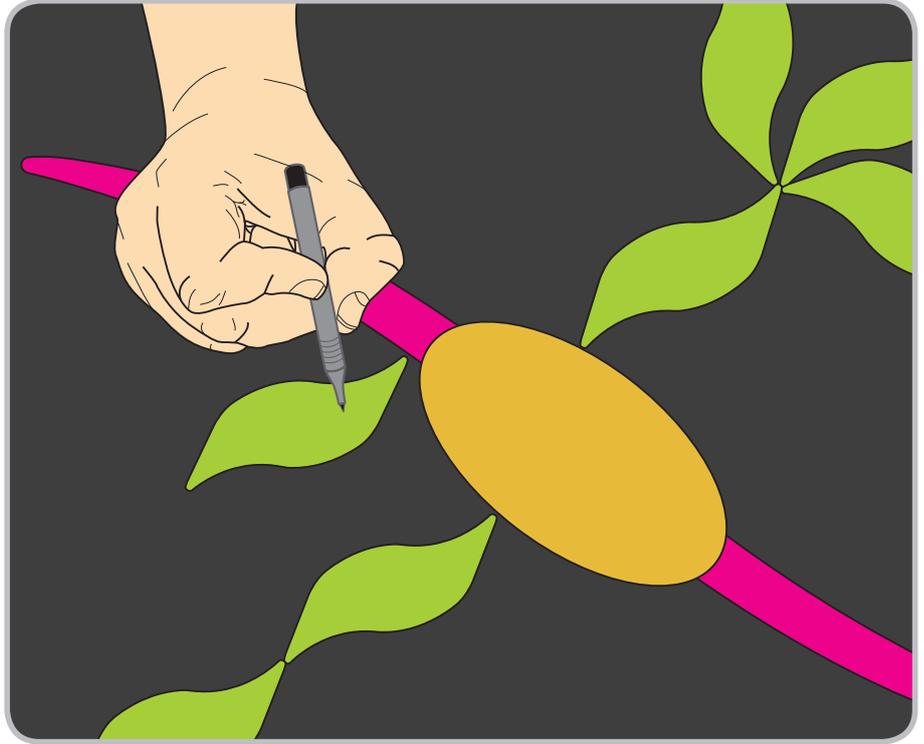
Using the branches

- Encourage participants to use the branches as inspiration for new ideas. Some ideas may not belong to any of the given branches and can go on a blank branch. Once a theme has become apparent from the leaves clustered around it, the branch can be filled in.

TIPS: Remind people that the branches are there to spark new ideas and as a guide, not a rigid structure. They can also be moved, changed and more can be added. It can be helpful to explain why the themes were chosen (maybe with a handout about them).

Ketso encourages 'parallel working', so that people can all contribute and work at the same time. Encourage participants to continue writing on leaves and adding them to the felts throughout the process.

Connecting ideas

- It is a good idea to encourage participants to move the leaves around to explore different relationships and links between ideas. Often the same idea may fit on more than one branch. If this is the case, it may be worth putting it in both places and adding further leaves to describe the differences. The act of moving the leaves and discussing where they belong encourages dialogue and improves understanding.

- The blank icons can be used to show relationships between ideas.

TIP: Comments tags can be used to describe the type of relationship (you can put these in a 'legend').
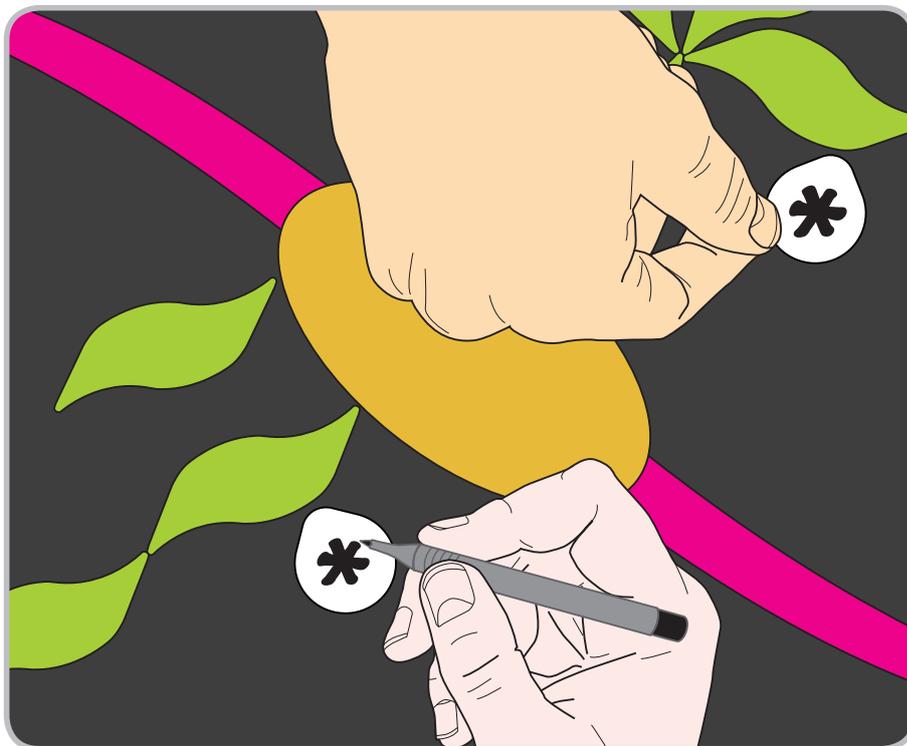
Commenting on ideas

- The white 'comment tags' can be used to add comments – or pose questions – alongside ideas. These are a good way of helping to clarify people's thoughts and opinions, making sure everyone understands what is being proposed or discussed.

- You can give these tags different meanings, such as 'key words', or using them to identify people with a task in an action planning stage.

TIP: Comment tags are useful when two or more groups of people are using the same Ketso. They allow people in one group to comment on the work of another group. If workspaces are left in an accessible place, comments can be added anonymously.

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Prioritising ideas

- Ketso contains different icons that can be used to highlight and prioritise ideas. Icons are placed on the felt workspace so that they point towards the idea to be highlighted.

TIPS: A useful way to promote discussion is to ask people to agree upon their 'top ideas' (e.g. a top three or five), using icons to highlight these. This encourages people to talk about what matters to them.

You can ask groups to swap tables and use icons to highlight what they see as important (or interesting) on another group's table. This helps a group to engage with another group's ideas. You may wish to use different icons for commenting on other people's work (e.g. exclamation mark), than for deciding the priorities on a group's own workspace (e.g. tick mark).

Finding the patterns

- Ketso enables participants to build up a visual picture of their discussion – they can 'see' their ideas taking shape.

- Popular or important issues and topics can be easily identified by looking for clusters of ideas and concentrations of icons.

- Areas with few ideas are also worth noting, as they provide information by highlighting gaps.

TIP: It can be a good idea to ask groups to give a quick verbal feedback to the whole room, asking questions such as – What was the most interesting point that came up? What surprised you? What are the top three ideas you identified? (These may have been highlighted using icons).

Using the Ketso Grid

- Sometimes it is appropriate to introduce a further stage, using the Ketso Grid to encourage a different kind of thinking, such as: developing a timetable or action plan; assigning budgets and people to tasks; creating a matrix; or organising and commenting on connections between ideas.

TIP: Headings for the rows and columns can be placed on the Ketso grid (e.g. a timeline along the top and goals in the left hand column). Tasks to achieve the goals, or connections between the columns and rows, can be placed in the relevant square and moved around to encourage discussion.
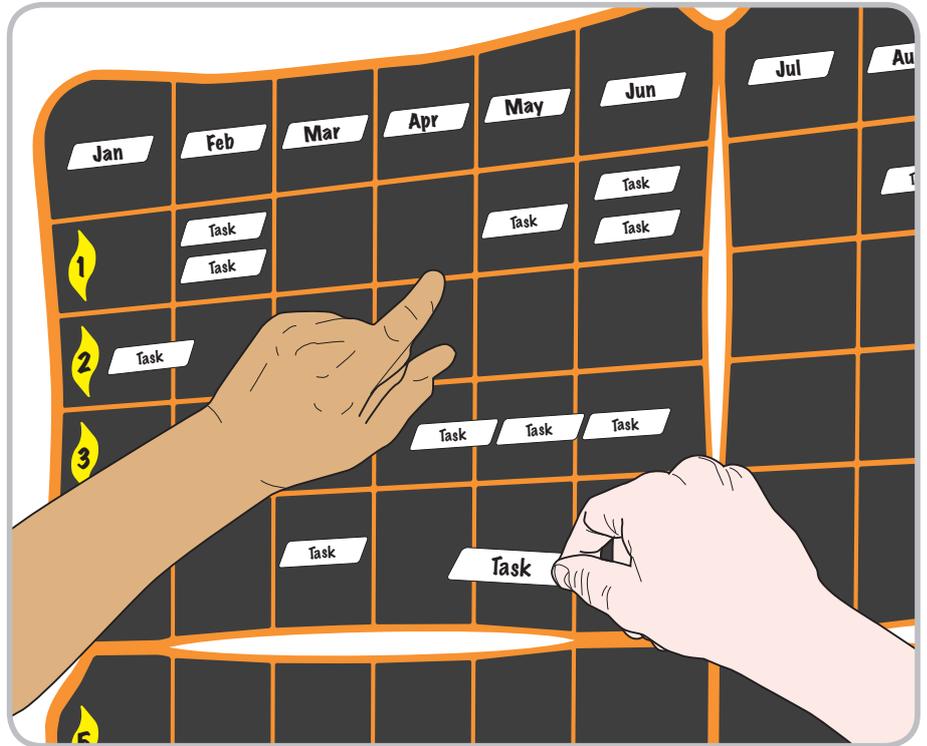
Capturing the outcomes... Taking it home

- Ketso is quick and easy to set up and pack away. You can do this with the leaves and branches in place.

1] Remove the centrepiece and place to the side of the felt.
2] Fold the felt workspace along the cut-out seams.
3] Gently fold again.
4] Place the felts in the carry-bag on the side without Velcro.
5] Secure the felts with the divider pocket.
6] Secure the leaf bags on the Velcro.

TIP: You may need to move a few leaves away from the cut-out seams before folding. It is a good idea to make sure that all of the leaves and icons are stuck firmly on the felt before folding, as sometimes they end up on top of each other or on a branch.

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Processing the results

- A completed Ketso can be photographed to provide a visual record of the workshop. With a high resolution camera and photographing in quarters, you should be able to read individual comments on the leaves – this is a quick and easy way to store results.

- A completed kit can be easily processed by writing up the comments on the individual leaves, using the branch headings and colour-coding to organise the results.

TIP: If you are photographing the felts, check the photos to make sure the writing on the leaves has come out clearly enough to be read.

A template for writing up results in a spreadsheet (allowing more detailed analysis of results) can be downloaded from our website.

Rinsing the kit

- The coloured shapes of a Ketso rinse clean in water. We recommend soaking large quantities of materials in a sink or bucket – a dash of washing-up liquid can help, but isn't essential. Lay the leaves out to dry before re-packing. They can also be wiped clean with a damp cloth.

TIP: It is important to make sure that participants know to use only the water soluble pens provided. Suitable pens can be bought from Ketso (some brands don't wash off as easily). If any of the shapes get written on with permanent pen, or if there is a residue of ink, they can be cleaned with surgical spirits, rubbing alcohol or meths, using a rag and some elbow grease.
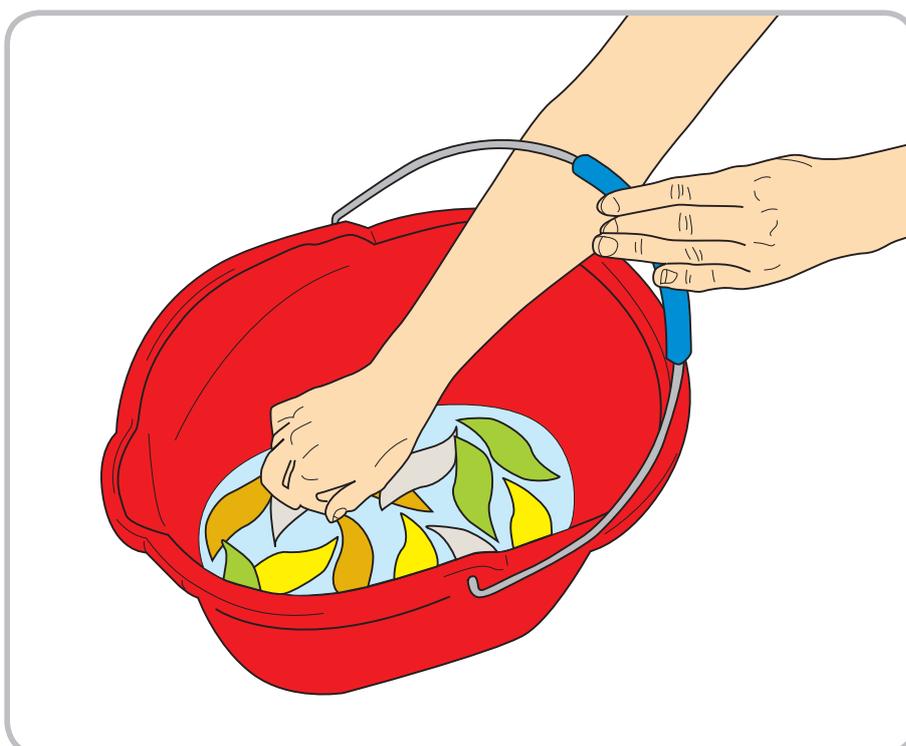
4. Effective Groupwork – Key Questions

To run a successful groupwork, it is important to think through some key issues before you start...

Why are you doing this? What is the background?

What is the focus?

- What are the issues involved, what questions are you asking? It is important to have a clear idea of what you want to achieve and to communicate these aims to participants.

- It is worth asking 'what would success look like?' for different participants. This helps you design sessions that are likely to offer something of value to more people.

- It is not always appropriate to have a session to develop new options, for instance when the key decisions have already been made. In such cases, you could plan sessions to discuss the implications of these decisions and/or ways to implement them to gain maximum benefit.

What is the scope?

- What other questions or ideas might you need to consider, beyond the boundaries of what's being discussed?

What is the context?

- What has been done in the area previously? Has the group in question been consulted before? If so, consider how you will use or refer to that work, to show that people are being listened to.

How can you make the most of the groupwork?

Careful planning

- Consider the budget you have and the overall time available. Do you have people to help you on the day of the workshop, e.g. someone to help with practical details and people to demonstrate using Ketso at the tables? Make sure you have clarified the purpose and that you refer back to it as you manage the workshop. It is important to be aware of the time and to manage the flow of the workshop based on keeping to the purpose, whilst also allowing fruitful discussions to develop. The aim is to make effective use of participants' time.

Using the results

- Who is going to be using the results and how? What needs to happen to turn ideas into action? Have you thought of ways to give feedback to participants on how you have used the information and ideas they gave you? How will the final results be made available to participants and other parties?

The bigger picture

- Is there anything you can do to link this project into other programmes – to make the most of the work and people's input? Can you link opportunities for short-term wins to ways of meeting long-term objectives?

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Who is involved?

Including people

- It is important to consider who should be involved in the groupwork and to think about appropriate ways to ensure their input. Have you considered issues that may stop people who are traditionally marginalised and 'hard to reach' from contributing? How can you make people feel more comfortable? – e.g. explaining the steps, making sure that people know they can work with each other to fill in the leaves (this is especially useful for the blind, illiterate and people with different languages and learning styles).

Identifying stakeholders

- Getting a wide range of viewpoints early in the process pays dividends in terms of the quality of outcomes and likelihood of implementation. When appropriate, have you made sure to involve people who will be affected by the decisions, along with the people who will make and implement decisions?

Making the links

- Have you made the most of existing networks and the people you know? Have you got people from outside the usual networks? It is not always possible to include everyone. At regular intervals, ask who is missing and are there ways to include input from these groups?

When and Where is this happening?

- Are you holding events early enough to make a real impact on decision-making?

- What other events are happening, can you link your event to these, e.g. for promotion or developing ideas further?

- Is there going to be more than one session – if so, how do they relate to each other? For example, covering the same questions with different groups, or feeding the results from one group to the next?

- How long do you have for the groupwork? Have you planned time for breaks and refreshments?

- Can you plan it at a time that is convenient for the participants?

- Do you have a suitable venue, with sufficient space for tables and chairs? You need a table for every 6 to 8 people, with chairs for all. Set these out so that people sit around the tables, are able look at each other and if possible also see the front or screen (if it is used).

- Is there access for disabled people?

- Do you need a projector/screen and computer for any presentations?

- Is there anywhere to hang posters or Ketsos once they are finished? (it is great to hang finished Ketsos for display or feedback where everyone can see them – e.g. during breaks – if possible).

# 5. Examples – Ketso Workshop Plans

5.1   Project planning – e.g. for a neighbourhood or park

Possible aims

- To develop a plan for the future of a neighbourhood or park.

- To gain input from all sections of the community.

- To build on a community's strengths and enhance the character or 'sense of place' of their local area.

- To develop ideas for long-term sustainability.
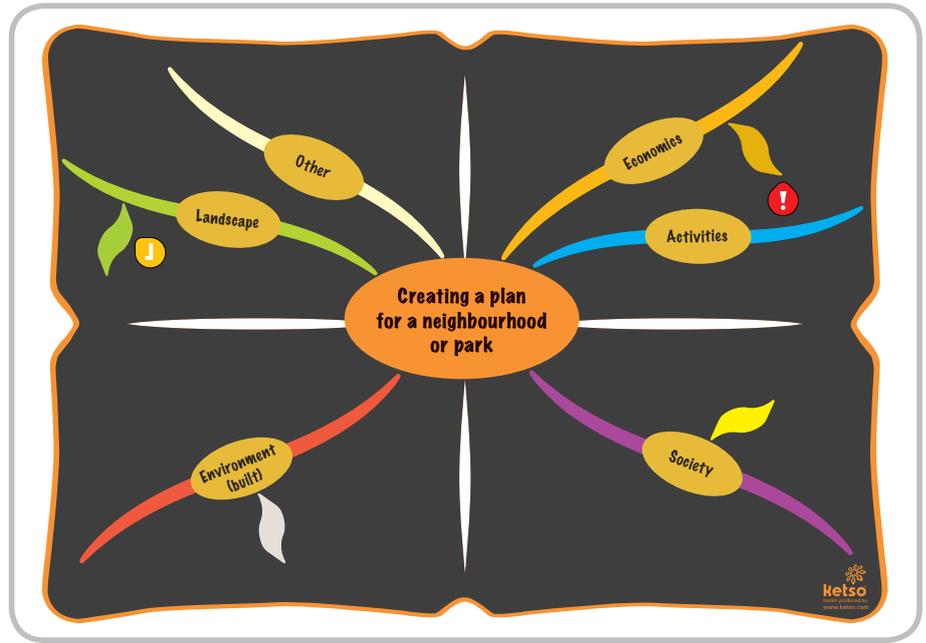
Suggestions for steps and order

	Materials	Steps
	Brown leaf = existing asset	Starting with what people like helps develop a plan that makes the most of an area's assets. It sets a positive tone.
	Green leaf = future possibility	What could be done differently in the area – it can be helpful to consider ways to make the project more sustainable.
	Exclamation mark icon = important ideas	If there is more than one group and sufficient time, have groups swap tables to compare ideas. Icons can be used to highlight what they think is important on each other's workspace.
	Yellow leaf = goals	Back at their own tables, groups develop goals, then think of ways to achieve the goals (adding more green and brown leaves). Leaves can be moved to cluster around the goals.
	Grey leaf = problem/ limiting factor	To encourage positive dialogue, leave brainstorming about problems until later. Think of critical limiting factors and brainstorm solutions to them (green and brown leaves). If problems come up earlier, participants can be given grey leaves to capture them.
	Yellow tick mark icon = ideas to achieve goals	Encourage participants to think which of the ideas advance their goals, to identify key ideas to be taken forward for an action plan.

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5.2   Developing ideas and planning for enterprises

Possible aims

- To think creatively about new ideas and opportunities.
- To plan the development of a new or existing business, product or service.
- To develop an understanding of (or audit) existing assets and resources.
- To help structure and review project management.
- To form the basis for an action plan.

	Materials	Steps
	Green leaf = new idea	Participants may start with a very open brainstorm about new possibilities.
	Brown leaf = existing asset	Identify existing assets that could help realise the business idea – e.g. existing contacts, intellectual property. This creates a solid basis for future development. You can also start with goals, but existing assets can get the thinking flowing to start with.
	Yellow leaf = goals	What is the business trying to achieve? Consider the business model – e.g. to sell a product or service, or license an idea, etc? Is the goal rapid growth and exit, or a long-term venture?
	Green leaf = future possibility/ new idea	What needs to be done to achieve the goals that have been set? Most leaves should contain a verb describing the action identified. Aim to be creative – think what could be done differently.
	Grey leaf = problem/ limiting factor	Participants review their plan and think about what might act as barriers to achieving the goals. Encourage them to develop solutions to these problems (e.g. using green and brown leaves).
	**Exclamation mark icon = ** important ideas **Warning triangle icon = ** problem areas/ unsustainable ideas	Icons help in decision-making. This can involve swapping tables if there is more than one group. Comment tags can be used to ask questions. Warning triangles highlight areas of concern or point out ideas which are unsustainable (this can lead to creative thinking about how to solve the problems). Yellow ticks can be used to decide which ideas to take forward for an action plan.

5.3 Creating an action plan

The Ketso Grid can be used to create an action plan or timeline. Once you have used Ketso to develop new ideas and an idea of existing assets, you can use the Ketso Grid to develop a plan for turning ideas into action – e.g. deciding who will do what and when. Suggestions for developing an action plan are shown below. You can add a timeline across the top of the Ketso Grid.
Agree the total timeline stages e.g. months, weeks, years.
Key activities or goals can go in the left-hand column.

Option	£ Budget	👥 People	Month 1	Month 2
New playing structure	£ 50,000	Sure Start Group / Learning with Landscapes	Hold workshops with stakeholders	Engage designers
Plant trees along road	£ 1,000	Lanes Wildlife Trust	Do habitat survey	Plan Friends of Day for Planting
A new bike path	£ 15,000			

	Materials	Steps
Yellow leaf	**Yellow leaf =** goal that needs action	The goals for the plan (which may have come from an earlier brainstorming session) can be written on yellow leaves and placed in the left-hand column of the Ketso Grid. For labelling the rows, you could use the headings of the branches from an earlier session.
Comment tag	**Comment tags =** steps for the action plan	Write the steps needed to achieve the goals on white comment tags. The steps to achieve the goals are arranged in the squares, following along the timeline to create an action plan. Encourage participants to move the tasks and discuss what the relationships between them are and how long each will take. You can also use the comment tags to assign budgets, people or groups to particular tasks (see illustration above). For example, you can discuss how to spend a limited budget by marking tags with set amounts up to the total budget and discussing how to divide it among the options. Having people write their name/organisation on a tag and place it alongside a task encourages implementation.
! icon / ✓ icon / ⚠ icon	**Exclamation mark icon = priorities** **Tick mark icon =** task achieved **Warning triangle icon =** area of concern	Exclamation mark icons can be used to note priorities. If the action plan is pinned up for project management, you can use tick mark icons to show what has been achieved and warning triangles to show areas of concern. You can use Ketso (in its tree-form) to review progress as you go along. What has gone well (brown)? What are the problems (grey)? What new ideas could improve the project (green)? Are the goals still valid (yellow)? This helps you to learn from experience during implementation.

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5.4 Consulting on a plan, project or strategy

You can use Ketso to obtain feedback on a plan, project or strategy. It can be used to gather information from stakeholders about possible resources for implementation, helping you incorporate local knowledge. In addition to providing an opportunity for you to learn from the stakeholders, you create space for stakeholders to learn from each other, helping to develop partnerships. For the branches, you can use the objectives of a strategy, or the components of a plan, or key questions for a project. Different ways to gather feedback are outlined below.

	Materials	Steps
	Yellow leaves = measures of success	Ask participants to think through what success would look like for them. Comments can be arranged around the branches, using the headings of the plan or strategy as a stimulus for further ideas.
	Brown leaves = existing assets	Participants can then think about the resources that already exist and could be used to achieve the measures of success. Encourage participants to make connections between existing projects and assets to avoid 're-inventing the wheel'.
	Green leaves = future possibilities	Once the existing assets have been reviewed, ask participants to brainstorm other ways of achieving the goals or targets – 'What could be done differently'? Encourage creative thinking.
	Grey leaves = problems and limits	Ask participants to think about the barriers to achieving the goals, as a starting point for brainstorming ways to overcome these. In a mixed group of stakeholders it is a good idea to keep this until later in the process, to build a positive attitude of cooperation.
Alternatively:		
	Yellow leaves	**P**LUS - Positive comments about the proposed plan, project or strategy, or alternative options under consideration.
	Grey leaves	**M**INUS - Negative comments or barriers to implementation.
	Brown leaves	**I**NTERESTING - Comments that are neither negative nor positive.
	Green leaves	Suggestions for implementation, or alternative ideas.
For Both:		
	Comment tags **Exclamation mark icon =** priorities	Use the comment tags to ask questions and make comments about the ideas developed above. They can be labelled with either a stick figure or currency sign (£/$/€) and used to assign commitments and responsibilities, or available budgets/funds to achieve the ideas (point the comment tags directly at the relevant leaf). Use icons to show priorities.
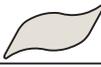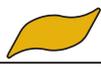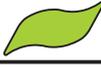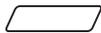
5.5 Teaching and learning

Ketso can be used for educational groupwork – e.g. reviewing a topic or course, creating a plan for a project or presentation, or discussing dissertations – research questions, ways to answer them and available resources. It is ideal for group projects.

Ketso can also be used in individual work – e.g. using the branches to develop the main headings of an essay, with the leaves showing key points and icons showing connections between the sections. Gaps that need to be filled are readily visible.
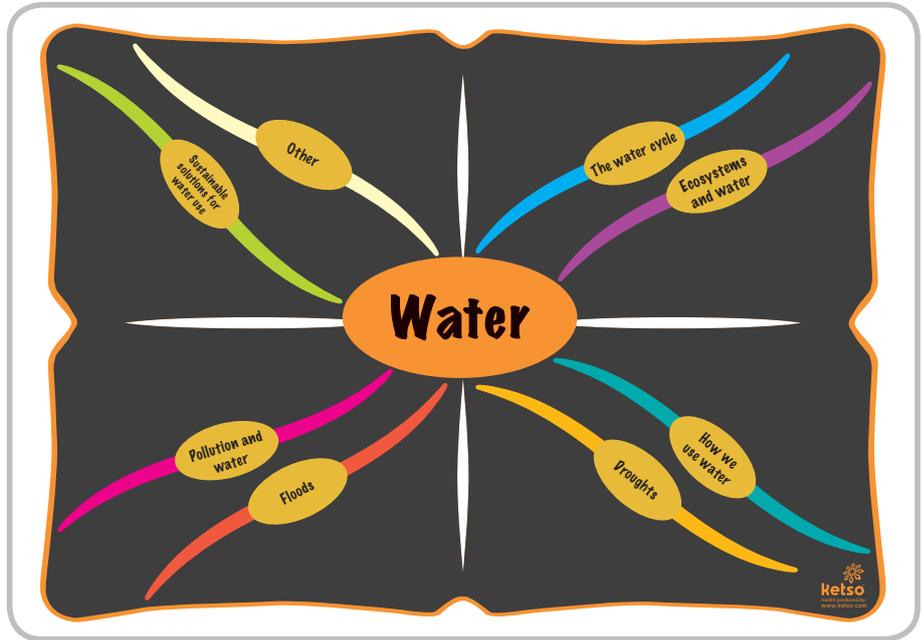
Materials	Steps (Sample headings for a lesson shown above, possible steps below. Alternative steps – **P**lus **M**inus **I**nteresting – as in Section 5.4)
At the beginning of a course:	
Brown leaves	What do you already know about the topic?
Green leaves	What do you think you will learn?
Yellow leaves	What are your goals for the course?
Grey leaves	What are the problem areas you think you will encounter?
At the end of a course:	
Brown leaves	What have you learned? (You can use green leaves to ask – What are the things you learned that were different to what you thought?)
Grey leaves	What are the areas you found difficult?
Comment tags	What questions have yet to be answered?
Yellow leaves	What are your goals for future development of this learning?
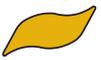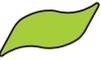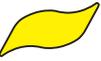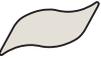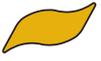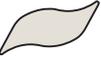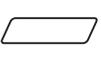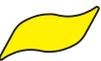
5.6   Training and development

Ketso can be used in training and development. The centrepiece can be written with the topic of the training. If there are key points you wish to get across, or elements of the course that need to be covered, you can add these to the branches. If you have a bit more time, you may wish to leave the branches blank and have participants start by brainstorming what they already know about the topic, then see if any clusters emerge. These can then be used to fill in the branches. It is a good idea to start with some way of connecting to what the participants already know, so that they are able to link new ideas to their existing knowledge. If the topic is completely new to the participants, you may just start with – 'What do you hope to get from this training?' (e.g. yellow leaves for goals).

	Materials	Notes
	Comment tags = key words	You could start asking 'What does this topic / word / phrase mean to you?'. Participants brainstorm key words, and cluster them on the felt. This highlights similarities and differences in understanding.
	Brown leaves = existing resources	Ask participants what resources they know about that would help achieve the topic of the training. This may be quite quick if the topic is new to participants.
	Green leaves = new ideas	To prompt new ways of thinking, ask all participants to come up with ideas of what could be done differently to the current approaches. Even with participants new to the idea, a quick round of creative thinking can develop new possibilities and make people more open to new ways of thinking.
You can start with a few steps using Ketso, then do a presentation/offer specific training, then go back to the Ketsos, to prompt discussion about what has been learned (and what has changed from what participants already knew).		
	Yellow leaves = measures of success	Ask – How would we know if this worked well, what would it look like? Then brainstorm ways to achieve the measures of success (more green and brown leaves).
	Exclamation mark icon = important ideas **Comment tags =** comments or questions	Icons can be used to highlight what participants think is important. If there is more than one group, they can swap tables to compare ideas. Icons and comment tags can stimulate discussion, e.g. used to ask – 'How has your understanding of the topic changed?'
	Grey leaves = problems and limits	Ask participants what problems they have experienced, or that they might encounter in implementing the new ideas? These could be developed further, asking – what are the causes of the problems? Ways to overcome these causes can then be brainstormed.
	Tick mark icon = key ideas	Encourage participants to identify key ideas to be taken forward following the training, these may be used for verbal feedback to the group.

6. More Hints & Tips

Don't forget to look at our website for brief training videos on planning and running a workshop!

• **Encourage everyone to be involved.** Make sure all participants have a water soluble pen for writing down their ideas. You might need to encourage this by demonstrating writing ideas on leaves and attaching them to the felt workspace. You may encourage participants to read out their ideas as they add them to the workspace – this is particularly important if there is someone who has difficulty seeing or reading. If there are people with different literacy levels or languages, it might be useful to encourage them to draw pictures, or write the same idea in more than one language. The leaves have a small letter printed in the corner to assist people with colour vision deficiency (i.e. 'G' for green; 'B' for brown; 'Y' for yellow).

• **Demonstrate how to use the toolkit.** It can be helpful to demonstrate moving the leaves around, as sometimes participants get stuck with ideas in one place. Questions may arise as to where an idea should be placed on the workspace – i.e. which branch or branches does it belong to? This gives an opportunity to discuss the fact that an idea may have different meanings or implications, depending on where it is placed. Maybe the same idea, or a variation of it, needs to be added to more than one branch?

You may also demonstrate clustering the leaves together to show connections between ideas. If an idea doesn't fit on one leaf, several leaves can be clustered together to cover that idea.

• **It's often best to use one colour of leaf at a time.** This helps people focus on different ways of thinking in sequence and minimises confusion, especially important for people with learning disabilities. If people start to come up with ideas that should go on a different type of leaf, you can give them a leaf in the appropriate colour to record the idea, and say that this step will come later, but you don't want to lose the idea. At the beginning, it is especially helpful to start with just one colour and to have only the one leaf bag out on the table. You may need to share leaf bags, depending on how many tables you have. You can divide the leaves up on the tables.

The colours of the Ketso leaves suggest a useful pattern for workshops, which we have found works well in many circumstances – the brown leaves can represent the soil, what you already have and what is working well, with green being the shoots of new ideas, then grey the clouds, bringing problems – but this leads to more growth (more green leafs to develop solutions) and the yellow leaves being like the sun, or goals that drive the process.

• **You can either fill in the branches with key themes or questions in advance, or leave the branches blank and let participants decide the main themes.** Either way has advantages and disadvantages, and it is a good idea to leave at least one blank branch. With blank branches, people feel more 'ownership' of the themes and creative thinking may be encouraged. However, the process takes longer and the discussion may lack focus. It is more difficult for groups to quickly compare ideas and to synthesise key points.

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With blank branches, you can ask participants to start by brainstorming ideas on leaves, then cluster them around the branches, to see what themes emerge. The themes can then be written on the branches. If you are leaving the branches blank, you may wish to develop a checklist to make sure key themes are covered – if a theme is missing, you can suggest that it be added.

• **You may wish to consider an ice-breaker.**
You could ask participants to spend a few minutes writing down ideas on leaves individually, then to share their ideas with a neighbour. They could read out their partner's ideas and place them on the workspace, reducing pressure on the person who came up with the ideas. This is especially helpful in groups with mixed abilities and levels of experience, to build confidence. Ask people to introduce themselves to each other. If you have name tags, remember to write the names big for visibility. You may wish to split groups up so that people are sitting with people they don't know, and to encourage a mix of people from different backgrounds. In a longer workshop, you may ask the groups to split up and mix part-way through. This encourages more people to talk to each other.

• **Have a mix of times when individuals write their own ideas on the leaves and times when the whole group is working together.** It is very helpful to allow time for people to write their ideas on the leaves as an individual exercise at the beginning of each new stage in the workshop (e.g. each new leaf colour). This helps everyone to have a say, including quiet or shy people. We call this 'think then share'. It allows people to develop their ideas before they are influenced by the direction of the group's thinking. Important ideas may be ignored if people don't have a chance to capture their early thoughts. Participants can start discussing the ideas as they attach them to the felt, ideally going around the circle to share one idea each at a time.

• **Keep ideas flowing.** It's important to make sure that participants continue adding ideas to the workspace and don't become sidetracked or 'stuck' on a particular topic (this sometimes happens when a group is dominated by an individual with strong views). In such cases, encourage participants not to evaluate ideas as they come up, but to write them down and ensure they are added to the workspace for later discussion. It might also be useful to explain to participants that as a facilitator, you are not privy to each and every discussion and that only ideas written on leaves (and added to the workspace) will be recorded – this can be a good way of encouraging dominant individuals to stop talking and start writing. Remind participants that they can keep writing ideas down and adding them to the workspace whilst others are talking. In the early stages it is important to encourage people just to write their ideas down and get them on the workspace, to stimulate creative thinking. Encourage people to write anything down, there is no such thing as a wrong idea – they can be evaluated and discussed later. This is where the icons come in; they can be used to evaluate and filter ideas after the initial, open brainstorming.

• **Timing is crucial.** Make sure you allow enough time for participants to complete each exercise, but not too much, to avoid your workshop 'stagnating'. You can let groups move at different paces by providing them with the next step (e.g. introducing the next colour leaf) at different rates.

- **You may want to plan 'graceful exit points'** – so that if discussion takes longer on one particular section, you can stop at an earlier point and still have the workshop feel coherent. You may consider steps part way through that can be taken out if you are over-running. You don't necessarily need to use every component in each session. You may also think of additional steps in case a group races through the exercise, to get them thinking more deeply. For example, you might ask people to discuss the key problems and challenges facing their ideas and how to overcome them. You may want to add a challenge or a provocative statement to get groups to think differently about the topic (you can use a leaf).

- **Provide handouts to help guide participants through the process.** You might want to provide a handout explaining the questions and ways of thinking introduced by the colour-coded leaves. A sample set of such worksheets can be downloaded from the resources section of our website. If you have filled in the branches in advance, you might provide a handout with explanations/definitions of the themes. You can also use PowerPoint slides to introduce each step and branch themes (especially helpful with large groups). Slideshows that can be adapted to your workshop can be downloaded from **www.ketso.com**

- **Starting with the positive** is especially important in community development, otherwise workshops tend to reinforce a community's sense of being deprived, rather than their ability to change things. As shown in the examples, there are many different ways to plan the order – think of what you are trying to achieve and experiment.

- **Turn problems into solutions.** Sometimes a participant will get stuck on a negative comment. It works well to acknowledge this concern and to give that person a grey leaf (for problems) no matter what stage of the process, so that they can write it down. Allowing people to write their concerns and place them on the workspace helps them to move on to the rest of the discussion, as their ideas have been given due concern.

If people have spent time focusing on positive ideas first, they're more likely to respond to 'problems' constructively. You can then use a stage of focusing on 'problems' to make sure you are thinking of the critical barriers to success, aiming to consider all of the angles and to make the final plan more robust. Encourage participants to brainstorm solutions to problems – if there is a grey leaf, it can be 're-greened', used as a stimulus for creative thinking, with green and brown leaves clustered around it.

- **Digging deeper into ideas.** If an idea comes up that is seen as impractical, encourage participants to think – what are you trying to achieve with this new idea? This can be seen as looking for the roots of the idea. Then ask if there are different ways to achieve that underlying idea. The roots can thus be used as a stimulus for more creative thinking (more green leaves). You can encourage a similar process with thinking about problems and limits, asking participants to consider the root causes of problems. Often what is written on grey leaves are symptoms of deeper, underlying problems and finding solutions may require digging deeper to look at causes.

- **Use a bell, gong, whistle or other device to capture people's attention.** There are times during any workshop when you need the participants to stop what they're doing and listen to you for instructions, or to ask people to move on to the next stage.

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Ketso is a great tool for encouraging lively discussion, so you may sometimes have problems making yourself heard. Rather than raising your voice, you might find it easier to use a bell, gong or whistle to signal the need for quiet. This can add an element of fun.

• **Deal with disruption quickly and calmly.** Occasionally, one or more participants will try to disrupt a workshop – wanting to make themselves heard above others. Ketso is a good tool for 'disarming' such disruptive participants. Simply provide them with a handful of leaves and encourage them to write out their comments for others to see and to be taken forward.

• **Adding ideas/comments from other sources.** Consider whether you have any issues that you need to include in the discussion (e.g. legal constraints or ideas from earlier workshops). You may want to write these down on leaves in advance, to add to the felts. Waiting to introduce these until participants have had a chance to develop their own ideas allows for more creative and productive dialogue.

• **Encourage different groups to review and comment on each others' ideas.** This helps participants see issues from different points of view. You can ask groups to swap places (e.g. move to a different table) and spend some time working with a different group's Ketso. You can ask one person from each group to stay at their table to explain the ideas to the new group, or ask the whole group to move around. If time is short, it tends to be quicker to ask the groups to move as a whole. The icons and comment tags encourage interaction and discussion. For instance, you can ask groups to use exclamation mark icons to note which are the most interesting, or important, ideas that the other group has come up with. They can use white comment tags to make comments, or ask questions. The groups can then go back to their original Ketsos to review and respond to the comments made. Swapping between Ketsos often results in useful new ideas and builds a sense of group ownership of the results.

• **Encourage feedback from small groups to the whole group.** Participants learn from each other and feel that their ideas are being listened to. You can ask the groups to use icons to identity their most important ideas, which can then be shared with the whole group. A quick way to gain feedback is to ask someone from each group to say what surprised them in the session.

• **Ketso can be used almost anywhere,** on a table, in a lecture theatre, on a wall, wrapped around a column, outside (if it's not raining!) as part of displays, etc. If you pin a Ketso to a wall, make sure everyone can reach or see it.

• **Make sure the leaves, branches and icons are stuck firmly to the felt workspace… before packing it away.** Ask participants to tidy their workspace at the end of the workshop, and to check the sticky backs of the leaves, icons, etc. are stuck to the felt.

• **Take extra care around water and other 'spillable' liquids.** The ink is water-soluble, allowing the leaves and branches to be readily cleaned and re-used. This also means that a spilled drink can erase many ideas!

• **Ketso can also be used for individual work,** to brainstorm ideas; develop projects; create an outline for a paper or presentation; or to set out a timetable for getting projects done, etc. It aids creative thinking and helps structure ideas.

Play with Ketso, experiment, have fun and tell us how it goes!

7.   The Thinking Behind Ketso

Ketso means 'action' in Lesotho (Southern Africa), where the kit originated in 1995. Faced with environmental degradation and widespread poverty, Dr. Joanne Tippett realised the need for a better way to engage people in thinking about what really mattered to them. Ketso was invented to help people plan for a better future.

"There was none of that big felt tip and a flip chart stuff that drives you demented and drives everybody else demented; writing big lists of things that you then talk about one by one and people fall asleep, and then you throw the piece of paper away. There was none of that – this was much better." Hilary Wood, Environmental Education Warden at Mersey Valley

Following our initial success in Africa, we took Ketso to California (USA) in 1997. Here it was used as an aid for teaching undergraduate students at Berkeley and Dominican Universities, as well as in business planning workshops with Hewlett Packard and Mondavi Vineyards.

In 2000 Ketso arrived in Manchester (UK), where the company is now based. Since then, Ketso has been tested in research at the University of Manchester. While focused on planning for sustainability, this research has allowed Ketso to be tested in a variety of settings. The research has been sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council, Mersey Basin Campaign, Irk Valley Project and the Environment Agency.

Ketso is the product of over twelve years' practical development and experience in the field. Its effectiveness in practice has been shown in the UK, Northern Europe, USA, Southern Africa and the Middle East. During this time, it has evolved in response to feedback from many different people, to become the tried and tested product that we are proud of today. Uses have included: community-led planning and regeneration; workshops and training with companies, including Tesco, Milliken Industrials and Calpine Corporation; engaging stakeholders on behalf of local authorities (e.g. Manchester City Council and High Peak Borough Council), government agencies (e.g. The Environment Agency and Natural England); developing new businesses; team building; student-led learning; providing tools for teachers; and more.

▲ ▼ Tlholego Development Project, South Africa, 1995 & 1996.

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▼ Moston Vale, Manchester, UK, 2003.

▼ Regional stakeholder input to EU Water Framework Directive, UK, 2004.

Ketso was designed to unleash people's creativity, incorporating ideas from Tony Buzan on Mind Mapping®, Edward de Bono on creative thinking, David Kolb on experiential learning and Howard Gardner on multiple intelligences. Suggestions for how to run workshops are influenced by recent thinking in community development, based on the community's assets instead of starting with problems.

Ketso aims to encourage productive dialogue: if people can see their ideas taking shape, with all thoughts on the table and able to be moved around, they are encouraged to see different points of view and to make new connections.

Ketso won a commendation in the Research Council UK's 2008 Business Plan Competition. The Deputy Head of Knowledge Transfer at the ESRC said the plan was "the best business plan from the social sciences, arts and humanities". Ketso is re-usable and design for sustainability is at the centre of our product development. Ketso's social mission is:

- **Product:** to enhance creativity and communication worldwide;
- **Manufacture:** to provide job opportunities for disadvantaged people;
- **Profit Share:** to promote sustainability skills via projects in deprived areas.

We are continually seeking to improve Ketso and expand the ways in which it can be used. Many people have contributed to the development of Ketso and further comments or suggestions are gratefully received. More information, discussion forums and downloadable resources are available on the website: **www.ketso.com**

For further info:

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