

Building Bridges

From Community Consultation to Community Engagement¹

Community Engagement requires three critical levers: **Inclusiveness, Deliberation and Influence**²

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

- The incensed and the articulate are heard³
- Squeaky wheels & powerful elites bargain, negotiate, lobby and campaign
- Aligned to interest groups
- Identified as stakeholders
- Silent majority's opinions are sought superficially

From Advocacy

Asserting our own point of view:

- Explaining
"Here's how the world works and why I can see it that way"
- Asserting
"Here's what I say and here's why I say it"
- Dictating
"Here's what I say and never mind why"
- Testing
"Here's what I say and what do you think of it"

Inform	Consult	Involve
Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions	Obtain public feedback on analysis, and/or decisions	Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues are consistently understood and considered

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TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION⁸

"Fixes that Fail" (Vicious Cycle)



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Diversity through random selection
- Formerly voiceless are given a voice
- Silent majority are heard
- Involving 'the voiced' as local experts—changing role of activists⁴

Inclusiveness within Community Engagement ensures participation that is:

- representative of the population,
- inclusive of diverse viewpoints and values,
- based on equal opportunity to participate

To Skilful Discussion⁵

Balancing:

- Advocacy
 - explaining and asserting our own point of view
 - making our own thinking and reasoning visible to others
- Reflection
 - slowing down our thinking so we become more aware of our own thinking and reasoning, and how we form our ideas about the world
- Inquiry
 - inquiring into others thinking and reasoning
 - openly sharing views and developing knowledge about each others' assumptions

Deliberation in Community Engagement involves⁶:

- speaking honestly and openly;
- seriously considering differing viewpoints and values;
- thoroughly understanding the issues and their implications;
- reframing issues;
- seeking a range of solutions;
- searching for common ground

Collaborate	Empower
Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	Place final decision making in the hands of the public

Influence in Community Engagement provides

- capacity to influence policy and decision-making

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT⁸

DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Building a Cooperative Environment (Virtuous Cycle)



¹ 21st Century Dialogue – "Engaging Diverse People in dialogue that builds bridges towards the common good" www.21stcenturydialogue.com

² Carson, L. and Hartz-Karp, J. (forthcoming). "Adapting and Combining Deliberative Designs: Juries, Polls, and Forums", in Gastil, G. & Levine, P. The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the Twenty-First Century, Jossey Bass, USA.

³ Carson, L & Martin, B (1999) Random selection in politics, Praeger, Westport, CT

⁴ Carson, L (2001) "Innovative consultation processes and the changing role of activism", Third Sector Review, Volume 7, No. 1, 2001, pp. 7-22

⁵ Senge, Peter M. The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization, New York: Doubleday/Currency, 1994, c1990.

⁶ Hartz-Karp, J. "Deliberation as a Key to Community Engagement", International Conference on Engaging Communities, (forthcoming, 14 – 17 August 2005)

⁷ International Association for Public Participation 2000, <http://www.iap2.org>

⁸ Hartz-Karp, J. "Harmonising Divergent Voices: Sharing the Challenge of Decision Making" Public Administration Today, Issue 2, Dec – Feb 2004, pp14 – 19.