

TRAINING MATERIAL ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT INTO CH MANAGEMENT AND VALORISATION

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1. Purpose of this document

Partner cities of the Interreg **NewPilgrimAge** project are located along the Central European part of the Via Sancti Martini, European Cultural Route, now they join forces to revive the cultural heritage and promote the common values of solidarity, hospitality and sharing linked to **St Martin**. Cities and cultural organisations from five countries will mobilise their citizens, most of all young people and small enterprises, to propose and jointly develop new creative initiatives valorising the untapped heritage potentials.

Better decisions are made, and projects have greater positive impact on their communities when they increase the frequency, diversity, and level of engagement of community residents.

The purpose of this document is to describe the principles, basic concepts, explanations as well as some methods and tools related to the theme of community and engagement.

But before some theoretical concepts are highlighted, the crucial question is what a community is and how it should be understood in the context of civil society, cultural activities and cultural heritage.

Many scientists have problems how to define such a nebulous term. Considering the concept of cultural heritage and its ways of safeguarding and transmitting to young people, the communities should be seen as having an open character, not necessarily linked to specific territories; their diversity is recognized in terms of geography, gender, occupation, age, faith, and other forms of affiliation. The general characteristic of a community is that it encompasses groups of people who have shared history, experience, practice, knowledge, values, and aesthetics.

It could be composed of village residents who renovate old physical remains or practice traditions, or of members of local associations (NGO) who gather together to implement certain cultural activity or task. Moreover, community could be a group of women, men, young people, old people etc. from different regions or even states, who work on specific heritage preservation, safeguarding or utilization of traditional elements (e.g. weaving, cooking a specific dish etc.).

2. Principles of community and participation

The sense of belonging is a very foundation of human existence. For human nature community is the optimal operational field. By community development citizens can better connect the local community and in general to the society. The social risk of avoiding communities is the growing number of oppressed marginalized individuals. There is an overall aim that everyone should belong to somewhere or to somebody, as this provides chance and possibility to improve quality of life and the ability to participate in joint activities that can bring positive energy, changes and improvements.

Belonging involves participation, meaning that I participate in the life of the community to where I belong. The high number of participation is an indicator of a healthy and well-functioning community.

Participation and belonging can happen organically, without intervention. So, when and on what degree a community requires the involvement of a community developer shows the maturity, education, organization and culture of a community.



Community engagement could be used when the individuals or community is less willing to participate in the local interactions.

3. What is community engagement and why to pursue it?

The members of a **community are engaged when they play an effective role** in decision-making processes. That means they are actively involved in defining issues, identifying solutions, and developing priorities for actions and resources.

UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural heritage (ICH) in 2003, which now focuses on viability, meaning that **ICH is constantly recreated by local communities** in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. Basically, with this Convention local people were recognised as the basic practitioners and bearers of ICH.

Therefore, an **engaged community is a key factor in the process of identification, inventorying, safeguarding, maintenance, promotion and transmission of ICH**. According to their attitude towards the ICH and the meanings and importance they give to ICH, they preserve, maintain and utilize ICH for different purposes (social, cultural, educational, developmental, economic, etc.)

In addition to the above-mentioned factors about the importance of community engagement, it is also worth to acknowledge that a comprehensive consultation process allows community members with ideas and concerns to be heard, and even if community members don't ultimately agree with the decisions that are made, they have the benefit of understanding the process of getting there.

Due to the communities are not static and unchanging but rather fluid entities, and it is not always clear what is the relationship between communities and between members of a specific community, who practice certain ritual or hold certain knowledge, the Declaration of ICH defines the necessity of participatory development approaches, where experts and government officials have to support informed community participation by providing information, using specific approaches and handing over decision-making to local people. People must have an opportunity to participate in public debates on matters which concern ICH safeguarding and sustainable use. New concepts of participatory approaches enable the involvement of the multiplicity of stakeholders - experts and local decision-making bodies, communities and business entities - from the very beginning.

A process which engages citizens:

- Increase the likelihood that projects or solutions will be widely understood and accepted.
- Create more effective solutions as it is drawing on local knowledge from a diverse group creates solutions that are practical and effective.
- Improve citizens' knowledge and skills in problem solving, listening and working in a team. They receive an in-depth knowledge which allows them to see multiple sides of an issue. Citizens can practice communication and decision-making skills.



- Empower and integrate people from different backgrounds. When people from different areas of the community work together, they often find that they have much in common.
- Create local networks of community members. The more people who know what is going on and who are willing to work toward a goal, the more likely a community is to be successful in reaching its goals.
- Create several opportunities for discussing concerns. Regular, on-going discussions allow people to express concerns before problems become too big or out of control.
- Increase trust in community organizations and local governance. Working together improves communication, understanding and empathy.
- Leads to a more inclusive, healthier, better functioning community and society.

4. Principles of community engagement

Inclusivity: Lack of knowledge or trust can limit involvement by some groups. You need to reach out into sections of the community that have not participated in the past and which might not at first seem to be fertile ground for recruitment.

Diversity: All members of the community need to participate to represent different viewpoints and interests. Viewpoints that at first seem unconventional sometimes turn out to hold the seed of a solution.

Equality: Everyone participates on an equal basis. It should be clear that decisions are not controlled by a small group. Leaders need to ensure that open discussion occurs, and all ideas are treated with respect.

Transparency: The work of the community group needs to be open. Important roles cannot all be reserved for those in charge. Public communication about the project needs to be clear and consistent.

Legitimacy: Decisions made by the group need to be justified to all. Describe how all participants had input into the final decision.

Deliberation: Create an environment that encourages people to share but also allows the group to prioritize some ideas. The process should lead to consensus.

Substance: Create opportunities for learning and using that knowledge in group discussions.

Influence: Ensure that your projects responds to local needs and the outcome of the process influences the local community decisions, policy-making and life.

On-going: The process should consist of more than one meeting and allow participants time to think about the issue before making decisions.

Accommodating: Provide opportunities for people to gather in multiple places and at multiple times that are convenient for them. Remember that not everyone who wants to contribute can make meetings at night, during the daytime, or in only one part of the community.



5. Why do citizens become involved in community projects?

There could be many reasons why citizens get engaged in community projects. Discovering what motivates people to be more active member in a community can help the engagement process. Here are few reasons for participating:

- A project is personally interesting or important to them and will have a direct impact on their lives or on the life of someone close to them.
- Feeling that what they have done is useful and important for the community.
- Feeling of belonging to somewhere or to something with a good cause.
- Recognition and respect by their neighbours, friends etc. for their contribution to improving the community and their environment.
- New relationships that they can build while working with other community members.
- Opportunities to gain new experiences and learn new skills.
- The reward of seeing the long-term results of the projects that they have worked on.

6. How can organizations attract citizens?

Creating a well-functioning community requires continuous work and presence. It takes time and commitment to develop the skills and experience of your community. There are different levels of involvement. These levels of involvement are referred to as ‘the ladder of participation’ and it is illustrated below.

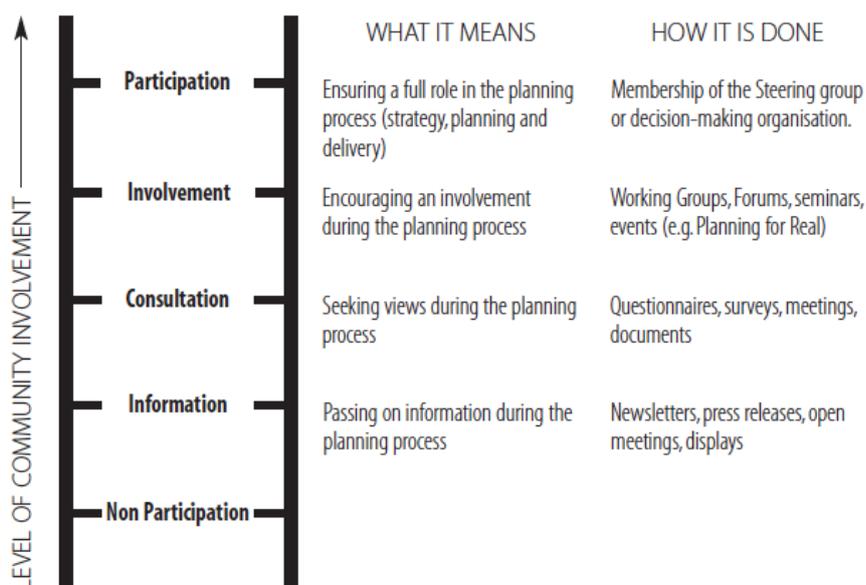


Figure 1: Ladder of participation

Your process might begin only with a smaller number of participating members. But if the goals are clear and comprehensible, the process of participation is enjoyable, and the results are meaningful in some way (either the output or the process creates good atmosphere and



connections locally) it will widen, and more and more people can get related. The number of active members might change periodically, depending on many other factors. So, results shall be measured on a longer term and regarding initial difficulties you should keep in mind that the community can overcome issues with the right approach and by giving adequate amount of time.

Other than attracting citizens you should make sure also to keep the ones who are already of your partners. Get to know what motivates them, appreciate and always integrate their opinion, give feedback, be clear and honest about the processes and results.

7. Participatory methods and techniques

To encourage regular participation, you must continue offering worthwhile experiences and opportunities. Facilitation can play an important role in ensuring a well-run engagement process. Useful facilitation skills include **planning, creating the appropriate group environment, encouraging participation, and leading the group to reach its objectives.**

7.1. Planning

Community decisions can rarely be made without meetings and personal discussions. Meetings that are structured and conducted efficiently will provide the best opportunity for useful public participation. Poorly organized and evaluated meetings make participants feel as if they wasted their time, and they are not likely to return.

So, the most important question to consider is whether you really have a valid reason to call participants for a personal meeting (or it could be solved by phone, e-mail). Before you hold a meeting make sure you as an organizer understand the goals, objectives, prepare an agenda, and assign the individual responsibilities. At the beginning of the meeting clarify these with the participants as well. Also make sure you are being available for the community during the whole process.

Before you organise a meeting you can have semi-structured interviews with some relevant members of community. Interview is a good opportunity to hear the problems, challenges, thoughts of some people before the meeting to better organise the meeting and to better understand the logic of communities, their historical background, good or less good experiences. Like that the organiser of the meeting can avoid some problems or unfavourable situations that can happen if the organiser of the meeting is not familiar with the community. The organiser as an interviewer can get more in-depth view on problems, wishes, and experiences of community as well as with residents' ideas of how to resolve same challenges. Interviews also allow the interviewer to inform and raise awareness among interviewees about the issues addressed by the project. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind the participant's experiences.



7.2. Encouraging participation

To avoid limitations, keep it in mind that just about everyone could be a potential member of your community actions as anyone could contribute with unique knowledge, skills, unexpected ideas or constructing critics toward your project. However, to keep your community work manageable, you can start with identifying the different sectors of a community:

- because if you can bring those different types of members into your group, it will be more representative of the full community; your project will gain broader community support
- because with a multi-sector membership, more different opinions will probably be expressed and discussed; that means better decisions may get made
- because the contacts and connections made in a diverse, multi-sector group lead to new community relationships. And these relationships can spark new community initiatives that might never have otherwise existed.

You can start by mapping the different sectors of the local community and identifying and listing key potential members within each sector. See some brief ideas below, on targeting and reaching out to different sectors:

- Schools, especially public schools, local colleges and universities:
send invitation letter to directors, contact them by e-mail, phone to call their attention on your project, inform personally the director, teachers and go to classes to explain the project, agree with schools to place posters, give flyers, badges, bags, organize fun events, games or competitions for youth, where they can informally get to know your project, place creative installations which grab their attention and raise questions in them, reach out to the youth by creative photos, short videos and very short descriptions on the social media
- Churches, which may also include organizations and groups within the churches:
inform the director, priest, leaders formally and personally, agree with them to circulate information among the church member, co-create events and voluntary days etc., place posters, flyers at agreed spots, emphasise the relevance of the project to religion and sharing
- Businesses, particularly large employers, profitable businesses, small private companies
inform the managers and Human Relations departments, place posters, flyers at agreed spots, invite them for meetings preferably at the end, or right after the end of their office hours, co-create events which are fun, informative and allow people to think out of their regular tasks and work, emphasise the new skills and knowledge that they can gain
- Media, including local newspapers, local radio and TV stations, local cable television, and other community-wide print publications
create a press list, especially include those journalists, tv or radio host who are relevant to the cultural, social field, regularly update them about your project, especially public events, invite the media representatives to your events, offer them press kits: including informative materials on the project, notepads, pen, logoed gifts. Emphasise what the continuity and the complexity of the project.
- Government - town or city
find the appropriate contacts working in cultural field, write official, informative letters, introduce short and long-term effects and importance of the project in the local community life.
- Non-Governmental Organizations



find first the ones with similar profile (community engagement, culture, art) and inform them, ask to circulate information through their network, invite them to co-create sessions, events, include their knowledge, agree with them to promote your events among their contacts

- Individual citizens

find local communities that you can inform: like elder's home, hobby groups, public gardeners, sport or music communities etc, place information at popular public places of the town (library, cafés, cinema, theatre, concert venues etc). Have personal contacts, find influencers in the town, speak to your community and emphasise the chance to do something important and good for their own community.

On the road of community engagement there are moments when you have to deal with difficulties or even rejection and you have to accept the fact that it can be time consuming and requires flexibility and adaptability to finally have the community on your side. But don't be discouraged. Gaining even a few good new members can easily justify your time spent. Winning those new members to your cause usually doesn't happen all at once.

It is important to continuously “plant the seed” and share thoughts on the importance of the revival of IHC together with the local community. Also, a few, well organized get togethers at the beginning, that had a proper environment and were enjoyable and valuable for the participants will spread the word and kick in a desired community engaging progress.

7.3. Creating appropriate environment

Another important part is making sure that the participants feel welcomed and comfortable to share their ideas, opinions and feelings during meetings. A professional, but friendly and encouraging environment works the best for it. A help of a good facilitator (or Change Driver in case of NPA project) can be crucial in the management and harmonization of giving guidance and allowing space for individuals to express and evolve at the same time. These two are equally important.

The facilitator should remain neutral and be aware of his or her potential to dominate the group. Therefore, the facilitator should avoid talking a lot, not argue with group members, and recognize each member's comments. In order to create a professional environment facilitator should:

- be prepared and speak clearly
- establish an effective and well-understood set of ground rules
- encourage input from everyone
- be an active listener
- clarify communication by summarizing lengthy contributions, relating one participant's ideas to another, requesting clarification on incomplete ideas, or allowing a group member to complete a statement if they are cut off
- keep everyone focused
- not criticize ideas, nor individuals
- accept feelings as valid data while seeing that ground rules are followed if the discussion gets heated or emotional. Summarize feelings as well as content
- restate problems or disagreements so that group members can work on a solution



- support the group decision once it has been made
- suggest a procedure or problem-solving approach
- summarize and clarify direction of the continuation
- close on a positive note

Other than creating a professional environment for community work, you should pay attention to those details that can create a comfortable and friendly atmosphere as well. Such as:

- proper lighting and sound
- access to fresh air and good temperature
- colours and materials (neutral colours and natural, clean materials are always a good choice)
- decoration (e.g. plants as green colour boosts creativity and calming affect)
- provide with some - preferably - healthy and tasty refreshments (e.g. you can try to include local food, as it links people and adds to a friendlier and more domestic atmosphere.)
- enjoy what you are doing and spread that spirit
- allow members to get to know each other informally as well (e.g. longer coffee breaks, “after party”)
- share good quality photos, videos of the fun and important moments of your meetings on social media, as it might encourage further participants to join

7.4. Leading the group to reach objectives

Various techniques are developed to catalyse common thinking, creating visions or action plans, and these can be combined, repeated or amended depending on what the participative process requires. The following methods could be used when you want to brainstorm, generate, gather, and prioritize ideas.

NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS. This works best when a larger group of people is first brought together to discuss a community issue. Participants break into small groups of about 6 to 10 people. Each small group is given a question and the group members spend a few minutes writing down their ideas. After everyone has a chance to think about the question, they share their ideas with each other, each taking a turn, until all ideas are listed. A facilitator or note-taker keeps track of all the ideas mentioned. A facilitator enhances this process by: seeking input from all members of the group; making sure no one dominates the discussion; keeping the group focused on the subject at hand; and staying within established timeframes. The note-taker from each small group then reports back to the larger group. This larger group then prioritizes the ideas. There are a few different techniques that can be used to prioritize, but most often participants vote to pick the ideas that have the highest priority and possibility for action. This prioritized list could be presented to receive sponsoring. Because the nominal group process uses small group discussions, it encourages the participation of those who may not feel comfortable talking in larger groups. It can be used multiple times, to gather ideas from different groups within the community.

For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief7.pdf>



DELPHI TECHNIQUE. Unlike the nominal group process, does not require face-to-face meetings, so it is particularly useful to gather ideas from a large group or from people who cannot travel to a central location (such as elders, or people without transportation or who are spread out geographically etc.) or do not feel comfortable at first sharing ideas in public. Instead, participants are given a series of surveys they can complete in their own time. The basic idea of the Delphi technique is to give participants a chance to first give their ideas then react to the ideas of all the other participants in the process. First, select a group of people to participate. Depending on the issue you want to learn about, these could be key contacts (people with knowledge of and experience in the community), members of a specific set of organizations, or a diverse set of community residents. All these people are given a survey that asks them to list ideas about community problems, causes, and potential solutions. Then a report is written that summarizes all the ideas gathered from the survey. This report is sent to the same set of people as the first survey, along with another survey. This second survey asks participants to react to the ideas outlined in the report and to prioritize the action steps. Based on the information from both surveys, another report is written and shared with all participants as well as the sponsoring organization or group.

For more information, visit: <https://www.projectsmart.co.uk/delphi-technique-a-step-by-step-guide.php>

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS (FOCUS GROUPS). Focus groups are facilitated discussions with a small group of people (5-10). Focus groups are a powerful way to collect ideas, opinions, experiences, or beliefs about community issues. Focus groups allow for in-depth discussion of an issue, and the opportunity to clarify ideas and statements. Often, discussions between participants can yield new insights, beyond individual perspectives. Focus group participants are selected because they have some knowledge and experience with the issue. It is also important to make sure that the mix of people within a focus group will lead to good discussion, and that people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. People within each focus group should have experience with the issue. Generally, it's a good rule of thumb to conduct two to three focus groups for each different type of group. It's best to have more than one to ensure that the focus groups cover the range of themes and discussions within the population. The more focus groups you can afford, the greater the chances of capturing discussions that accurately reflect the most common views. Facilitators in focus groups use a discussion guide. This guide is a script that covers the introduction of all the participants, the purpose of the focus group, the ground rules for discussion, the focus group questions, and the closing statements. The discussion guide should be the same across all the focus groups. The main goal of facilitators is to make sure that the environment allows everyone to feel comfortable sharing their experiences and thoughts. This means that a good facilitator will enforce the ground rules, which often include: giving everyone the chance to speak, not making judgments about others' experiences, and listening to each other. The facilitators' responsibilities also include asking questions, clarifying any statements that might be unclear, intervening if discussions become heated, and keeping the group on time and on task. In addition to the facilitator, each focus group has a note-taker. (Audio-recording is also an option.)

For more information, visit: gap2.eu/methodological-toolbox/focus-groups/



WORLD CAFÉ. It fosters the interaction and dialogue with large and small groups. It is an ideal way to find out what a community is thinking and feeling about a topic. It got its name because it imitates a café setting where small groups (4 or 5 people) are all conversing together around tables (with paper-covered tables supplied with refreshments and pencils). In this case, a cluster of small groups – anywhere from 10 to 1000 – are in conversation about an issue that matters to them or should be resolved. Each table gets a certain issue as question written or stuck (index card or post-it) at the paper cover. The participants sit to a table and hold a series of conversational rounds lasting from 20 to 45 minutes about the questions assigned to the table. Participants are encouraged to write, doodle, and draw notes, insights or key ideas of the conversion on their tablecloths. At the end of each round, one person remains at each table as "host", while the other travels to separate tables. The table hosts welcome newcomers to their tables and share the essence of that table's conversation so far. The table host encourages the newcomers to link and connect ideas coming from their previous table conversations to the table's results and to listen carefully and to build on each other's contributions. In this way, the threads of the various conversations are woven together and all participants get a sense of what is being discovered and developed between them.

For more information, visit: <http://www.plays-in-business.com/world-cafe/>

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY (OST). is a highly scalable and adaptable facilitation to enable all kinds of people, in any kind of organisation, to create inspired meetings and events. OST relies strongly on self-organisation of the group of participants. It is a purpose-driven approach, focused on a specific and important purpose or task – but beginning without any formal agenda, beyond the overall purpose or theme. In OST the participants plan and run self-organised timeboxed sessions (30min, 45min, or 60min) to topics they are interested in. The participants organise it themselves in the so-called “marketplace”. All participants sit in a circle. In the middle are post-its, index cards and pencils placed. The facilitator after providing an overview of the process invites people with issues of concern to come into the circle, write the issue on a post-it or index cards and announce it to the group. These people are “session hosts” or “conveners.” The session host places their paper on the wall and chooses a time and a place to meet. This process continues until there are no more agenda items. The participants cluster and prioritise the agenda items on the wall. After the marketplace, the group then breaks up and heads to the agenda wall, by now covered with a variety of sessions. Participants take note of the time and place for sessions they want to be involved in. During the sessions, the host or a recorder takes notes and capture the important points of the session. At the end of each session, the notes are published on a shared news wall. The participants then finish the open space meeting with a closing circle where people are invited to share comments, insights, and commitments arising from the process.

For more information, visit: <http://www.plays-in-business.com/open-space-technology/>

PROACTION CAFÉ. It is a facilitation for action-oriented, creative, and inspirational conversations. The participants are invited to bring in their “call for help” – projects, ideas, questions – or whatever they feel called by and need help to manifest in the world, and they get input from others. ProAction Café combines both the concepts of World Café and Open



Space Technology. After building the agenda, the issues to be dealt are stuck to the tables. Count the number of participants, divide by four or five – this gives you the numbers of tables and the number of issues to be dealt with in the evening (e.g. 40 participants, you can have 10 issues/tables maximum). Then the conversation runs in 3 rounds (20-30min). For all rounds, the one who brought the issue remains at the table. All others on the table move to new, different tables. The host first briefs the new participants joining the table briefly (focus on essence not to take up too much time). Each round is guided by a few generic questions to help deepen and focus the conversations.

- Round 1: "What is the quest behind the question/project?" – The first version of the question that someone asks might not be the final question).
- Round 2: "What is missing?" – E.g what is not asked yet, what are perspectives or options not considered yet?
- Round 3: "What am I learning about myself?" – "What am I learning about my project?" – "What next steps will I take?" – "What help do I still need?" – Consolidate your learnings into action: What next steps will I take?

The outcome of this round is that the host, but also the participants takes an action away from that round for themselves.

For more information, visit: <http://www.plays-in-business.com/proaction-cafe/>

FISHBOWL conversation is a form of dialog that can be used when discussing topics within large groups. The general idea is that rather than a large group having an open discussion about something, which can be difficult to handle and often only benefits a few active participants, a smaller group (ideally 3 - 6 people) is isolated to discuss while the rest of the participants (maximum of 50 people) sit around the outside and observe without interrupting. Facilitation is focused on the core group discussion. Less people = easier to facilitate.

The name refers to the set up. Four to five chairs are arranged in an inner circle. This is the fishbowl. The remaining chairs are arranged in concentric circles outside the fishbowl. A few participants are selected to fill the fishbowl, while the rest of the group sit on the chairs outside. In an open fishbowl, one chair is left empty. In a closed fishbowl, all chairs are filled. The moderator introduces the topic and the participants start discussing. The audience outside the fishbowl listen in on the discussion. In an open fishbowl, any member of the audience can, at any time, occupy the empty chair and join the fishbowl. When this happens, an existing member of the fishbowl must voluntarily leave the fishbowl and free a chair. In a closed fishbowl, the initial participants speak for some time. When time runs out, they leave the fishbowl and a new group from the audience enters the fishbowl.

The facilitator is in charge to help the conversation (ask questions), summarize the results.

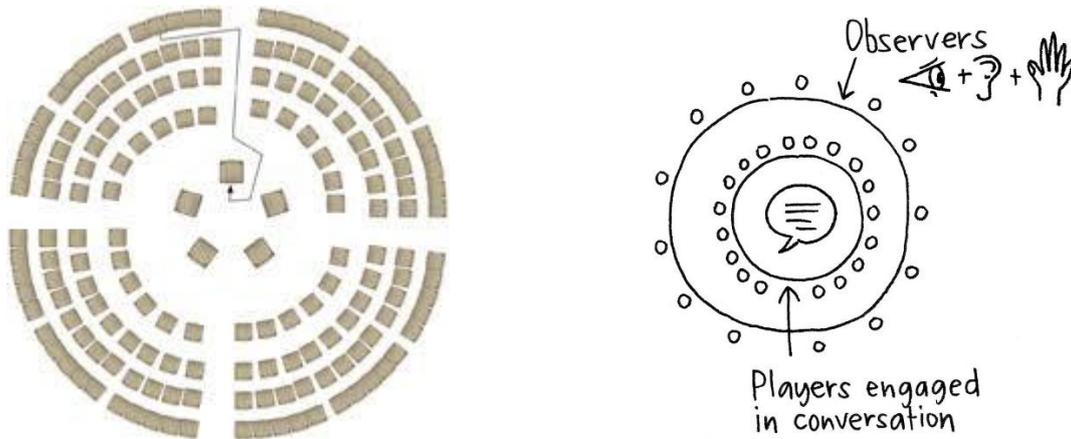


Figure 2, 3: Seating arrangement

An advantage of a fishbowl conversation is that it is suitable for large groups. It also lessens distinctions between the speakers and the audience. This has made fishbowls popular in participatory group meetings and conferences.

For more information, visit: <http://www.kstoolkit.org/Fish+Bowl>

8. Conclusions

Engagement processes can lead to better and more widely accepted decisions and enhanced quality of life for community residents. Getting all the pieces in place to get the local community involved in your project and make their experiences positive can be challenging. Take considerable time and choose the right approach. The suggestions and ideas included in this methodology provide a base and starting point for your organization in enhancing your citizen engagement efforts, but we encourage you to adjust your activities to the needs of the local community.



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Figure 1: Ladder of participation: Alan Caldwell Associates: re: sourcebook
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Figure 2:

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Figure 3:

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