

Developing Innovative Approaches to Community Engagement

In the Grand Falls- Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton Region



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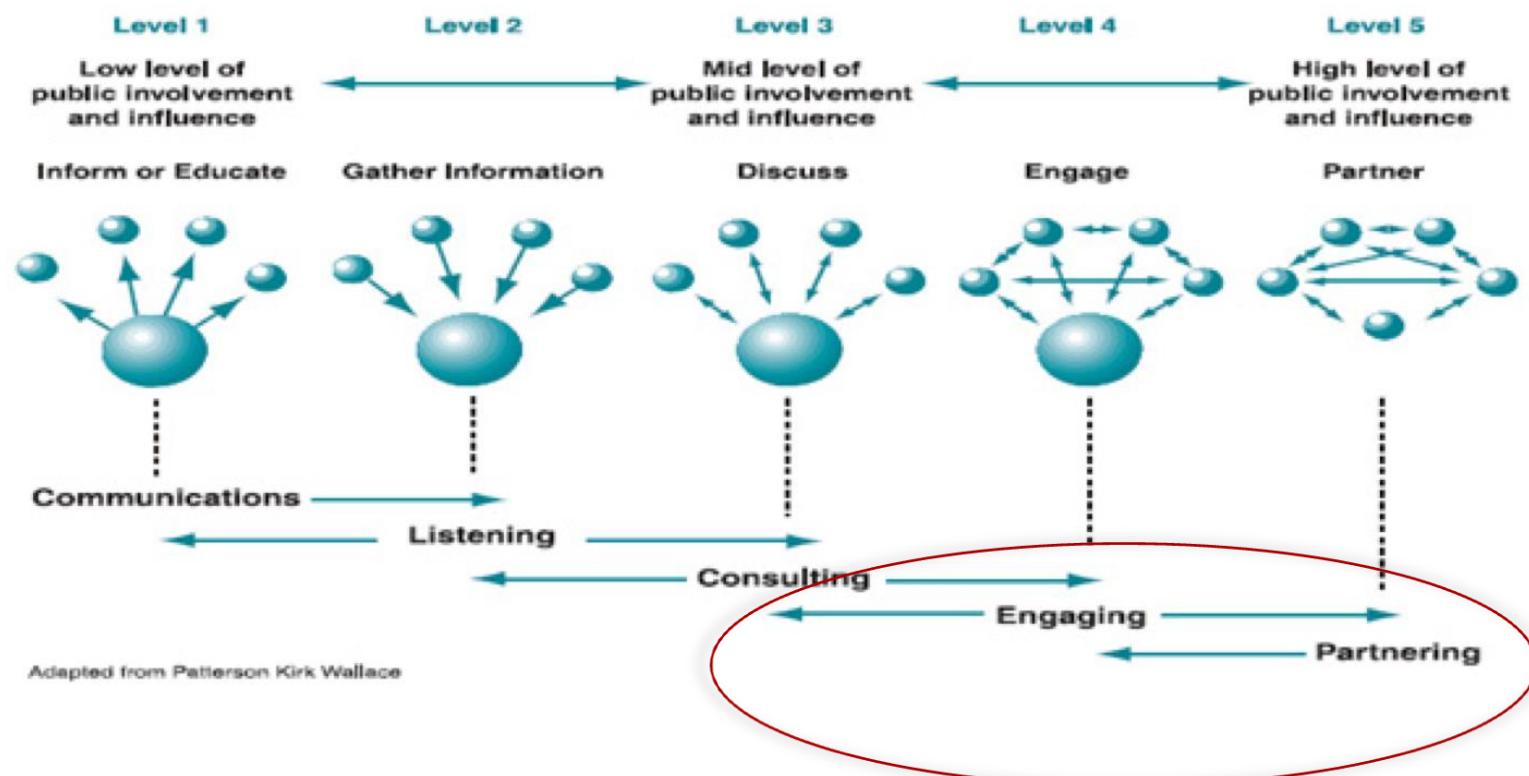
Community or Public Engagement

- ◆ Creating policy has become an increasingly complex task that cannot be solved by government acting alone.
- ◆ Complex issues such don't have simple solutions. Solutions must involve the community as a whole in identifying the causes at work in their communities and then identifying solutions that are appropriate to each community.
- ◆ Finding and implementing complex solutions requires collaboration, not competition. Real solutions require genuine collaboration between governments and the public.

Rescuing Policy: The Case for Public Engagement (Lenihan, 2012)

Spectrums of Engagement

Health Canada Spectrum of Public Involvement, 2005



“The Golden Rule”

- “If governments really want citizens and stakeholders to take ownership of issues, they must engage the public in a real dialogue where all parties work through the issues and arrive at the action plan together” (Lenihan, 2012)

Better Public Engagement

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dialogue re. how issues affect those involved and who is best positioned to act• Stakeholders weigh competing priorities, make trade-offs and identify respective roles in achieving common goals• More informed, rational, responsible public opinion• Participants as partners• Can be cost effective, provide legitimacy and ensure real needs are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not all issues require public engagement but ...<ul style="list-style-type: none">• if government unable to frame the issue or deliver solutions without the public's help, engagement is needed• Requires resources• Longer time commitment

Local Advantages

- ◆ Can build confidence and accountability in the minds of individuals who will be willing to contribute their time and energy to communal causes.
- ◆ A “capacity-building” process - effective and long-term investment in community engagement processes can be crucial to the survival and flourishing of communities and citizens.
- ◆ Communities with higher levels of social capital are more effective at addressing internal and external social challenges.

What is Rural Secretariat?

- ◆ A unique/innovative entity that strives to advance the sustainability of rural NL communities/regions
- ◆ A small secretariat that exists ‘in the space’ (interface) between government and regions (i.e., a type of broker or intermediary)

RS lines-of-business

- Assist partners to collaborate effectively for sustainability
- Work with partners to conduct research that informs policy/decision-making
- Work with partners to engage the public in dialogue re: sustainability
- Support 10 advisory Councils who develop policy-advice for GNL

Our Regions



- 10 Regional Planners and 6 Provincial Office Staff
- Offices across the province in all regions

Regional Councils Membership

- ◆ 12 members
 - ◆ Members have demonstrated abilities to address issues within a region: community leaders.
- ◆ Each Council is a cross-section of people balanced by:
 - ◆ Gender
 - ◆ Age
 - ◆ Larger and smaller communities
 - ◆ Business
 - ◆ Labour
 - ◆ Social
 - ◆ Cultural
 - ◆ Environmental interests

Central West Regional Council

Selecting Priorities

- ◆ Potential to positively impact regional sustainability
- ◆ Broadly impact many residents
- ◆ Strongly impact a select group
- ◆ Major consequences if this is not investigated
- ◆ Within Provincial government's jurisdiction
- ◆ Appropriate time to pursue this issue
- ◆ Other organizations dealing with the issue

Central West Regional Council Priorities

- ◆ First layer of priorities
 - ◆ Education
 - ◆ Aquaculture
 - ◆ Health

Central West Regional Council

Meeting - June 2011

- ◆ Most communities have a small population that depend on aging 'burnt out' volunteers
- ◆ Survival of rural communities depends on involvement; transient workers are not involved
- ◆ Council needs a process to validate its ideas and recommendations
- ◆ Provincial government does a poor job in consulting communities
- ◆ Newer ways to engage are needed

Methods

- ◆ Semi-Structured interviews with key stakeholders in the region
- ◆ Literature Review & Case Studies
- ◆ Consultation with the Council
- ◆ Engagement pilot projects with College of the North Atlantic and Family Resource Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor

Research Questions

A. Insights from past experiences

What approaches and techniques for community engagement have been used in the region in the past?

- ◆ What techniques or aspects of these techniques have worked well? What have been the limitations of these techniques?
- ◆ What factors other than the techniques themselves have affected the success of engagement processes (e.g. context, type of issue, available information etc.)?
- ◆ Have they engaged a broad base of regional citizens or are there groups (including but not limited to specific age groups) whose voice is not being heard?

Better Public Engagement:

Findings from Past Experience in the Region

Timing

- ‘Outsiders’ or consultants should spend time in the town and introduce themselves in different contexts.
- Doing engagement processes at different times of the day and more than once to be able to reach different population groups.
- Timing when an activity is undertaken is crucial – requires an awareness of what is going on in the area/region
- Understanding when a particular issue might be more sensitive than another
- Engaging with people earlier rather than later in the process.

Better Public Engagement:

Findings from Past Experience in the Region

Methods

- ◆ Partnerships key: with organisations, community leaders, use popular facilities and well-attended events
- ◆ Informal structures and methods work best
- ◆ Use personal connections
- ◆ Realistic goals and a plan of who to engage and how
- ◆ Provide an accurate understanding of how input will affect policy or decisions
- ◆ Allowances for transportation and accommodations
- ◆ Appropriate and neutral facilitation methods and processes

Better Public Engagement:

Findings from Past Experience in the Region

Capacity-Building

- ◆ People engage if there is a vested interest. May mean first working with communities discussing how policies will affect them.
- ◆ Contacting people personally shows them that their opinions are valued and increases their own *confidence* in their own ideas.
- ◆ Engagement allows for participant growth in *skills, experiences and attachment* to the region.
- ◆ Succession planning and *capacity development* for community leaders must be a priority.

Better Public Engagement:

Findings from Past Experience in the Region

Control and Follow-up

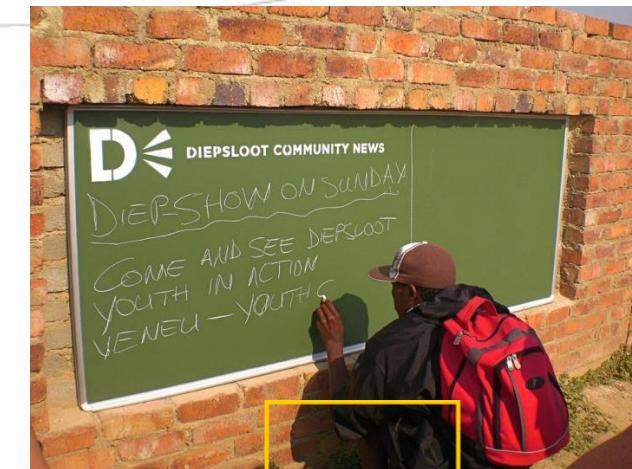
- ◆ Feedback and opportunities for dialogue - allow unpopular decisions to be understood and respected; follow-up to allow feedback or explain how a policy decision was made, to discuss opportunities for involvement at the local level.

Research Questions (cont.)

B. Piloting innovative techniques and approaches

- What innovative techniques of community engagement have been used elsewhere that could be used in the Central West Region to encourage/facilitate greater participation from different age groups, particularly those whose voice has not been heard in the past, in planning and development of provincial policies that affect the region?
- How do the benefits and challenges associated with the new techniques piloted differ from those that have been used in the past and how are they similar?
 - Do they address some of the limitations of the techniques used in the past? Particularly, are they able to engage groups that have not been engaged in the past?
 - What new skills, knowledge or perspectives do participants gain through the use of these techniques?
- How do they perform against Rowe and Frewer's criteria for citizen participation?

External Case Studies



Community engagement skills for middle managers in the Queensland public sector

National Standards for Community Engagement

Inbean Nàiseanta airson a bhith deasbad le Coimhearsnachdan

নিমিষ সময়ে সামাজিক কাজ করার ব্যাপারে কথা দেওয়া ব্যাপারে জাতীয় মান

سردہر میں کاموٹی کی مژو شمولیت کیلئے قومی میدار

社區協議國家標準

المستويات الوطنية لإشراك الناشر

 Communities Scotland

Grand Falls- Windsor Pilot Project

CommunityWalk

Grand Falls- Windsor Cultural Assets

created by [raisamirza](#)

Advertisements



Categorized Markers

Important Now...

[CONA](#)
CONA has many events for the community.

[Walking trail](#)
This walking trail is a great asset to our town. I support further development.

I Wish...

[Canadian Tire](#)
Sucks!!

[Hang Out](#)
I'd like to hang out somewhere cool.

[Mall Needs to be Fixed](#)
The mall needs to be more of a Mall--

[Spa/Drinks](#)
Somewhere to hang out, to grab a few

[Sports Facility](#)
I wish this was transformed into a sports

[Stadium Parking](#)
I wish there was more parking for the

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CommunityWalk Demonstration

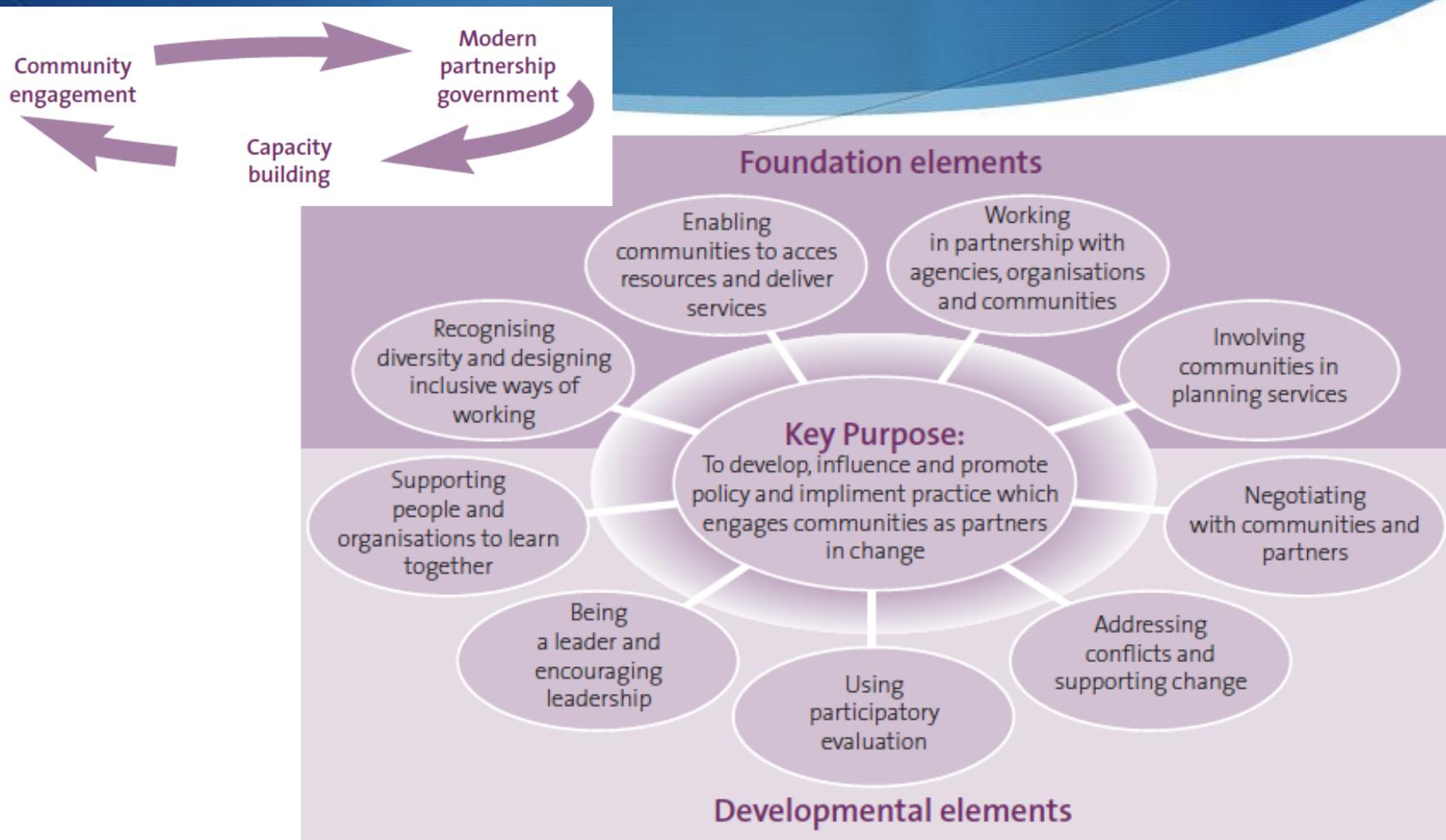
- ◆ Go online to see a demonstration of the CommunityWalk software which can be used as a community mapping tool:
- ◆ http://www.communitywalk.com/cu_expo_demonstration_map/map/1606393

Recommendations

1. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should consider adopting a provincial standard for community engagement that incorporates a series of guiding principles. These principles and standards should be adopted through an inclusive process. The government should consider naming a minister responsible for community/public engagement and a secretariat to support the minister's work.

Note: And in doing so recognize the critical role of engagement in good governance.

Case Study #1: Scotland Implements Country-Wide Standards



Recommendations (cont.)

2. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, municipalities and community organizations must invest adequate time and resources into community engagement methods and practices, and work to engage the groups that are currently unengaged or disengaged in decision-making processes that affect these citizens and their interests.

Case Study #2: Queensland, Australia Community Engagement Improvement Strategy (2002)

- ◆ Coordinate a province-wide approach to community engagement;
- ◆ Ensure that rural communities and regions have skills necessary to tackle community engagement;
- ◆ Reach out to unengaged and disengaged groups through partnerships;
- ◆ Use different approaches and allowing enough time and resources for engagement activities.

Targeting Specific Groups – Young Families

- ◆ Make their time worth it - show how their contribution is being used and why it is useful for them to attend. Tailoring sessions to how the issue will affect them directly.
- ◆ Make babysitting services and children's activities available.
- ◆ Consider ways to overcome transportation barriers, including "living room meetings"
- ◆ Network with already existing services and places where young families frequently attend.
- ◆ Partnerships for more effective service and program delivery.
- ◆ Use different techniques and focus groups for evaluation of programs. Ensure a wide variety of ideas are taken into account at various times and places (inc. weekday mornings).

3. Community engagement events should focus on using multiple engagement strategies to achieve desired goals.



*Miawpukek
First Nation*



Recommendations (cont.)

4. Explore the use of technology, arts and media in new and different ways can be a way to decrease costs of engaging larger audiences while providing innovation and inclusivity.
5. Partnerships with local organizations are essential to reduce time, and resources spent on engagement processes. Processes should be designed in collaboration with local organizations that understand the contexts and the citizens that are to be reached.

Using social media & online engagement tools

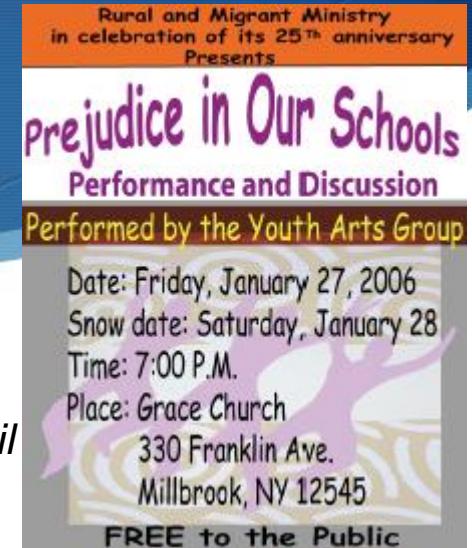
Related recommendations

- Use technology – appropriately - to reduce time and resource use and allow opportunities for engagement without travel being necessary for citizens of rural and remote communities.
- Make facilitators available to show and explain the technology.
- Provide clear and specific instructions without too many steps involved with citizen engagement.
- Use community radio and telecentres to connect remote rural areas that otherwise might feel isolated from each other.
- Websites can be a useful tool but design is crucial.
- Re-organize online information to fit the need of citizens - will not necessarily reflect existing government departments.

Arts and Creativity

- Digital storytelling, music, theatre
- Use multimedia, photography and video to develop the capacity of community through the sharing of cultural resources can build the cultural capacity and pride of communities.
- Use local artists to partner with schools can create sense of community pride and spirit within youth.

Dutchess
Country
Arts Council



"This house gives Maywood a bad reputation, if they tear this down and build a new one it would make Maywood a better place."

-Roosevelt, 15

*Photo Voice - Loyola
Community-University
Partnerships*

Strategic Design

- ◆ Design public areas to increase engagement.
- ◆ Employ creative and innovative ways of design through stickers, posters, pamphlets, etc. to distribute information and gather views of citizens.



Market Creek, San Diego
<http://www.grassrootsgrantmakers.org/>



New Orleans post Katerina
<http://candychang.com/i-wish-this-was/>

Annenberg Institute “Tackling the Challenges of Rural Community Engagement”



- ❖ Develop long-term relations with local organisations;
- ❖ Value all citizens, their experiences and their value in decision-making processes. Acknowledge that they are valued.
- ❖ Frame issues in ways so that citizens understand why they are important and they should care.

<http://annenberginstitute.org/project/nellie-mae-district-level-systems-change-initiative/webinar-tackling-challenges-rural-commun>

Recommendations (cont.)

6. Increase the resources available to support leaders in their work and build the capacity of communities to engage a greater number of volunteers. Youth engagement is especially essential for succession planning in rural communities.
7. Engagement activities must take place in both formal and informal settings for wider feedback and input into processes.

Targeting Specific Groups - Youth

- ◆ Use participatory research methods
- ◆ Explore photography and other arts-based techniques, also games created by and for youth
- ◆ Use technology, social media and gaming to encourage interaction between youth from different parts of the province
- ◆ Understand factors that encourage/are barriers for youth
- ◆ Value the opinions of youth; work with them to understand their needs and realities
- ◆ Recognize “youth” is a broad category. Invest time and resources needed, use different methods

Targeting Specific Groups - Youth

- ◆ Create school curriculum/modules at different levels to utilize local knowledge and make policy dev't more real for youth
- ◆ Allow youth to create and moderate their own spaces for interaction
- ◆ Design activities with youth - shared responsibility
- ◆ Partner with organisations such as school, colleges and youth centres - go where youth are
- ◆ Do not engage in non-engagement practices

Recommendations (cont.)

8. Follow-up and feedback is crucial. Community engagement should be looked upon as a series of iterative processes and not a “one time deal”. “Reporting back” should be part of all engagement processes.
9. Ensure transparency in the process involved. Transparency in engagement efforts is essential for citizens to feel valued and to understand how their input and feedback is being used to make decisions.

Thank you!

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