

Public participation

- **Who is the public?**
- **What is public participation?**
- **Why is public participation important?**
- **What are the basic Principles of Participation- the Rules**
- **What are the conditions for Effective Participation**
- **Strategies for Participation and Choice**

Meaning of public participation

- Public = People/citizens in general or affected communities and entities with specific interest
- Public participation encompasses a group of procedures designed to:
 - Inform, consult and involve the public likely to be affected by a decision; facilitate them to have ***input*** into that decision.

Why public participation?

- Ensure that decisions that reflect public interests
- Enhanced cooperation and sustainability
- Improved democracy and enhanced citizenship
- Empowerment to the public to plan and think
- Long-term capacity to solve and manage challenging social issues
- Conflict avoidance

Why public participation?

- Trust-building between stakeholders
- Increased awareness of ongoing/planned activities
- Increased visibility and appreciation of initiatives
- Common ground for developing solutions

Basic principles of public participation

- Early notification
- Accessible information
- Shared knowledge
- Sensitivity to community values
- Reasonable timing
- Appropriate levels of participation
- Transparent results.

Conditions for achieving effective public participation

- **Clear purpose and goals**
- **Clear structure and process**
 - well-defined rules about how public participation will be conducted and how the decision will be made
- **Actual opportunity for influence**
 - the real opportunity for public input to be considered in making the decision
- **Staff commitment to public participation process**
- **Inclusive and effective representation**
 - reaching out to representatives of the full range of relevant stakeholder interests.

Public engagement techniques

What techniques would you use if you wanted to engage and involve the public in decision-making?

A range of techniques to allow for Public Participation

- Workshops, focus groups or stakeholder meetings
- Public hearings
- Consensus conferences
- Advisory panels and committees
- Surveys and polls
- Comments/response sheets
- Posters/flyers
- Radio and TV
- Website
- Journal articles

What engagement techniques have you used and for what purpose

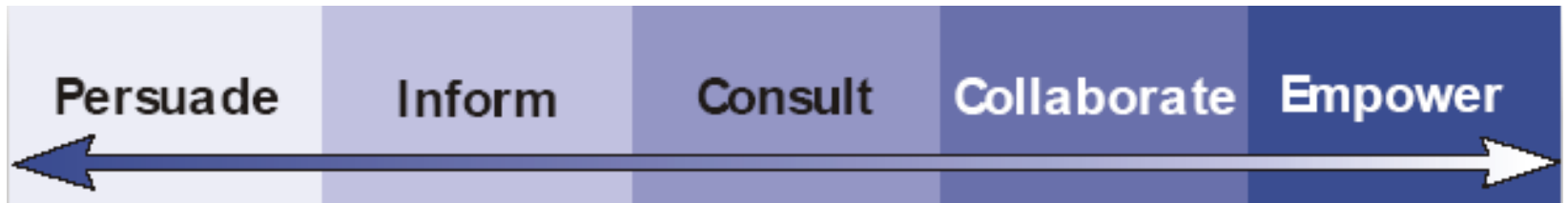
Clearly spell out any particular strengths/ weaknesses of the engagement technique

Selection of techniques

The choice of engagement techniques depends on:

- Required/desired level of engagement/participation (depending on the cases)
- The audiences to be involved
- Time available
- Resources available

Levels of engagement

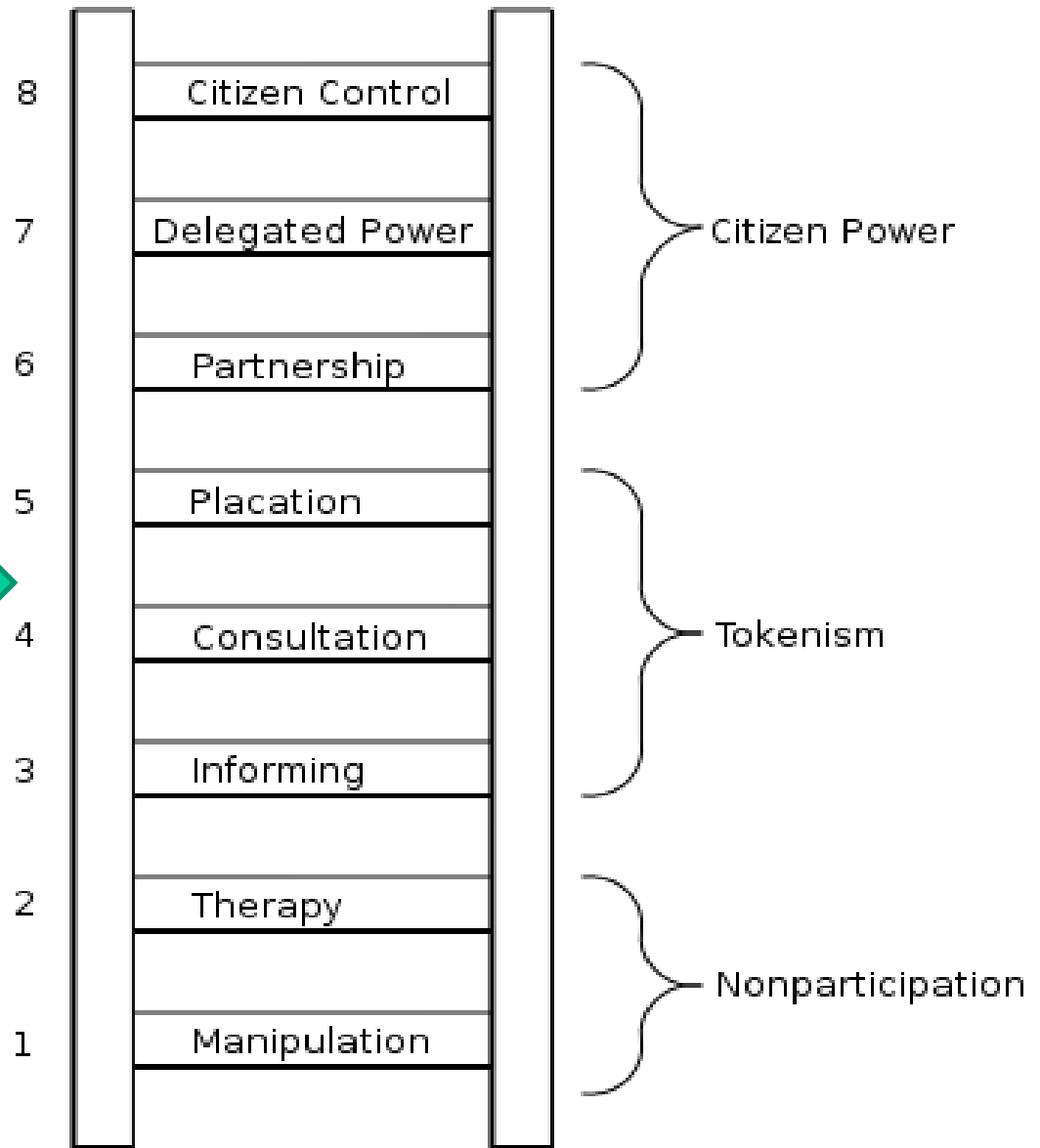
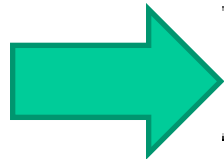


Levels of Public Participation

The Ladder of Citizen Participation by S.R. Arnstein, 1969.

Levels and Degrees of public participation

Eight rungs on the Ladder of Citizen participation



Convention on
Biological Diversity

Source: "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" by S.R. Arnstein, 1969.

Levels and Degrees of public participation

- The lower two rungs are **non-participatory** participation.
 - Methods: public / neighborhood advisory committee or boards with no authority or power in controlling projects/programs i.e. don't take part in controversial issues
- Next three rungs signify **degrees of tokenism**.
 - Methods: posters, surveys, meetings, public hearings, and placement of citizens on powerful boards.
- Final three rungs symbolize degrees of **citizen power**.
 - Methods: public authority, full citizen power and authority to prepare and implement a plan/program.

Information: examples

- Legal notices
- Advertisements
- Magazine or news articles & press releases
- Background information material
- Exhibits or displays
- Technical reports
- Websites
- Field trips
- Press conferences
- Radio or talk shows
- Expert pannels

Consultation methods: examples

- Public meetings
- Public hearings
- Open days/ open house
- Briefings
- Central information contact number of person
- Field offices or information centres
- Comments and response sheets
- Surveys, questionnaires and polls
- Interviews
- Telephone hotlines
- Electronic democracy
- Participatory rural appraisal

Collaboration: examples

- Workshops, focus groups or key stakeholder meetings
- Advisory pannels and committees
- Task force
- Citizen juries
- Townhall meetings
- Consensus conferences
- Participatory rural appraisal

Empowerment: examples

Strategies to build the public's capacity for participation

- Providing guidance documents to the public
- Training stakeholder representatives in PP and communication skills
- Providing experts to mentor community groups/leaders
- Involving the public reps in planning the PP process to create a sense of ownership
- Using deliberative forums that encourage more active forms of participation
- Providing technical assistance to the public/community groups to help them understand technical information relevant to the decision

But also consider...



- **Range:** Number of stakeholders who should get involved and their geographical distribution and availability of communication media
- **Resources:** Amount of time, resources and expertise available
- **Audience:** Level of education (literacy level)
- **Objectives:** Proposed objectives, outputs and impacts of the project/initiative

Good facilitation is crucial to ensure equal input from all participants?

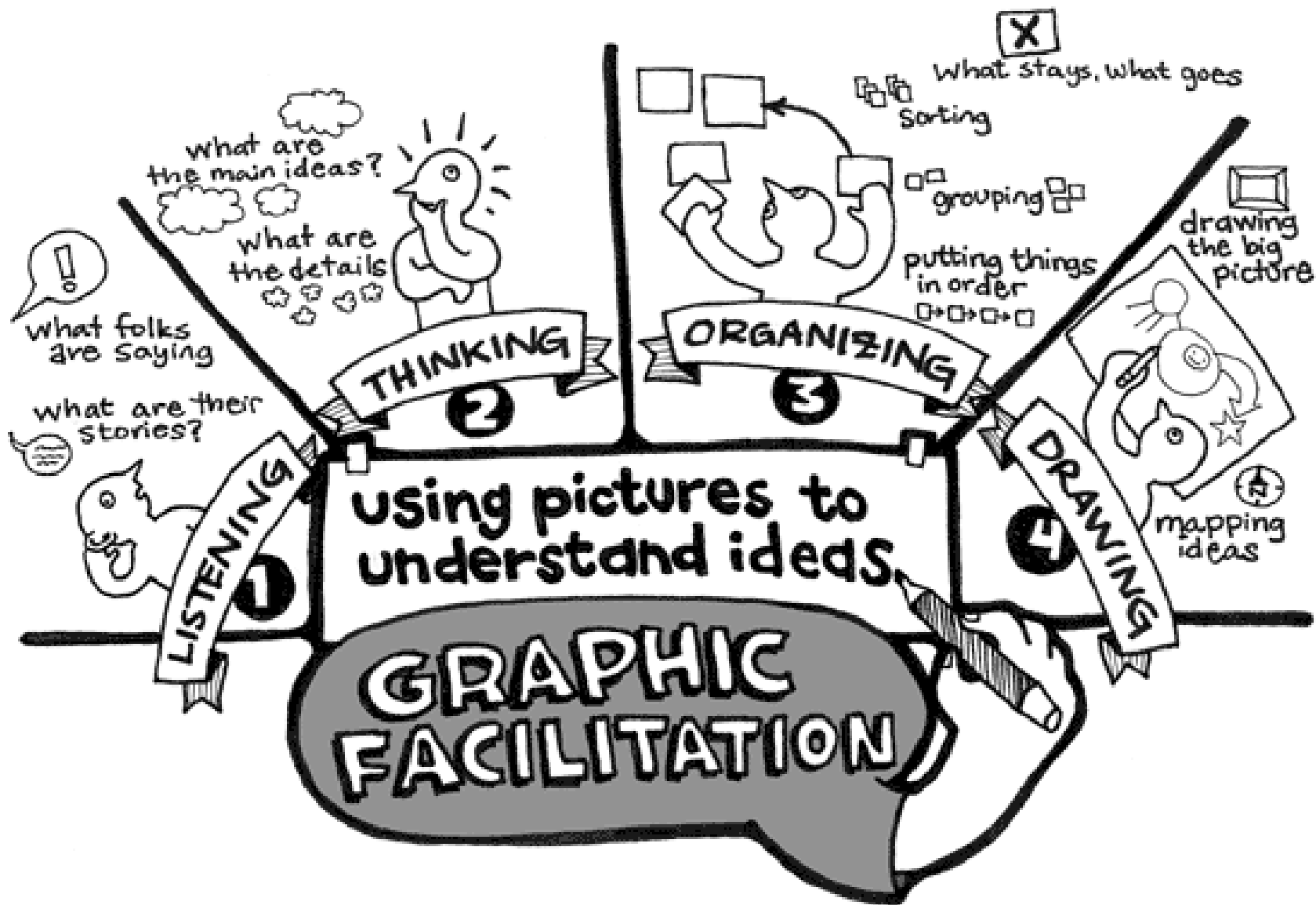
What facilitation skills have you used before to ensure equity in participation?

Allow Participants to do it themselves

Analyze, plan, learn, implement, reflect
and monitor activities

Your Role as Facilitator

- Creative Visualization
- To be an active listener



Be a good listener

- Engage in active listening
- If you hear something you disagree with, do not respond by arguing
- Engage in effective questioning
- Periodically summarise what you have heard
- Reframe where appropriate
- Acknowledge what you have heard
- Tell them what you have heard

What do you do when different views are aired or conflict situations arise?

Think of a situation when this happened and what you did to resolve the conflict.

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