AUROVILLE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

FINAL PRESENTATION

Introduction – Who are we?

Queen's University

School of Urban and Regional Planning

Canada

The Project: What We Are Doing

- Our final product is a Community Participation Framework that is to be used for planning projects
- This project involved:
  - Comprehensive research on Auroville, its context and current situation,
  - Research of international best practices,
  - Consultation with Aurovilian individuals and groups
- The developed framework was tested on a Pilot Study based on a planning related issue
- The learning outcomes of the Pilot Study refined the framework and tailored it to Aurovilian context

Presentation Outline

- What is Community Participation?
- Methodology:
  - Work Completed Prior to Coming to Auroville
  - Work Completed While in Auroville
- The Initial Framework
- Testing the Framework: The Pilot Study
- Next Steps
- The Final Product: A Community Participation Framework for Auroville

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

What is Community Participation?

Community Participation is when an organisation consults interested individuals or groups before making a decision

- Useful when a project is contentious
- The community must be able to impact the decision
- Various participation techniques available
- Often targets specific groups

Why Community Participation?

Strong Communities:

Understanding opinions / resolving tensions

Better Decisions:

Local knowledge is important for decision-making

Reduces Long-term Costs:

Reduces conflicts and barriers

Empowers People:

Communities shaping outcomes

METHODOLOGY

Work Prior to Coming to Auroville

- Literature Review:
  - Aurovilian documents
  - Planning theory
  - International best practices
  - Case studies
- 6 semi-structured interviews
- Questionnaires: 87 responses

Literature Review: Aurovilian Documents

- Auroville Vision, Charter & To be a True Aurovilian
- Auroville Universal Township Master Plan Perspective: 2025 (2011)
- Integral Sustainability Platform (ISP) Document 2010-11
- Auroville City Area- Land Suitability and Land Use Proposal April-May 2014
- Directions for Growth (Asia Urbs) Document 2003-4
- Retreat 2015 – “Elephants in the Room”
- Full Report 2015 “Auroville Retreat”

Literature Review: Aurovilian Documents

- Detailed Development Plan for Sector 1 & 2, L'Avenir d'Auroville, Luis Fedduchi
- Residential Zone Brainstorming Session 2014
- A Review of Auroville's Building Application System, Helen Eveleigh (2013)
- AVSIS: Auroville Sustainability Indicator System (2013)
- Capturing the Spirit of the Crown: Considerations for Social Spaces in Auroville (2012)

Work Prior to Coming to Auroville

- Background research on:
  - Community participation theory
  - Legal requirements for community participation
  - Case studies
  - Research practices and ethics
  - Community participation frameworks

Work Prior to Coming to Auroville

- Surveys/Interviews: Identified themes that helped guide our research:
  - Techniques,
  - Reporting feedback,
  - Transparency,
  - Respect,
  - Consensus

Although Auroville's community participation challenges are unique, strategies to overcome such challenges can be informed by the techniques employed in other communities.

Work While in Auroville

- Focus group with key individuals
- 11 semi-structured and unstructured interviews
- Site visits
- Advertisement of community engagements
- Information kiosks
- Focus group with youth
- Questionnaire re: Pilot Study
- Workshop
- Refining of the Community Participation Framework

We will discuss this in further detail during the discussion of the Pilot Study

THE INITIAL FRAMEWORK

What is a Framework?

Practical guide to creating successful community participation plans

- Helps determine:
  - Interested groups and individuals
  - Strengths and challenges of the participation
  - Participation techniques
  - Collecting and reporting feedback to the community

Who is this Framework For?

- Individuals or groups who will be undertaking a planning or development project, or helping with a community consultation plan for such a project

- Examples of planning and development projects include, but are not limited to:
  - Community Plans
  - Building Developments
  - Road Projects
  - Much more…

- Developed for use in planning and development projects, technically could be used by any individual or group who whose projects have an impact on members of the community

Guiding Principles

- Be Inclusive
- Build Capacity
- Be Proactive
- Make it Enjoyable
- Provide Structure and be Transparent
- Be Accountable
- Be Adaptive

Steps in the Initial Framework

PILOT STUDY

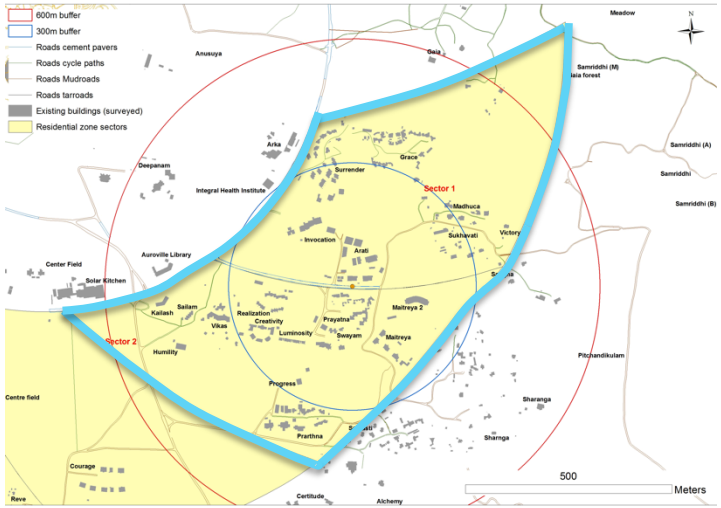
The Purpose of the Pilot Study

- In order to test the initial framework, a pilot study was conducted
- Utilised the Initial Framework to develop a Community Participation Plan, of which we implemented a small portion

The Pilot Study

Identifying Community Features desired by the community within Residential Sectors 1 & 2

- In order to develop the Community Participation Plan the for the Pilot Study the Initial Framework was used
- This led to the development of multiple techniques, and methods of advertising the community participation events



Pilot Study Methodology

In order to complete the Pilot Study we undertook many different events, and techniques:

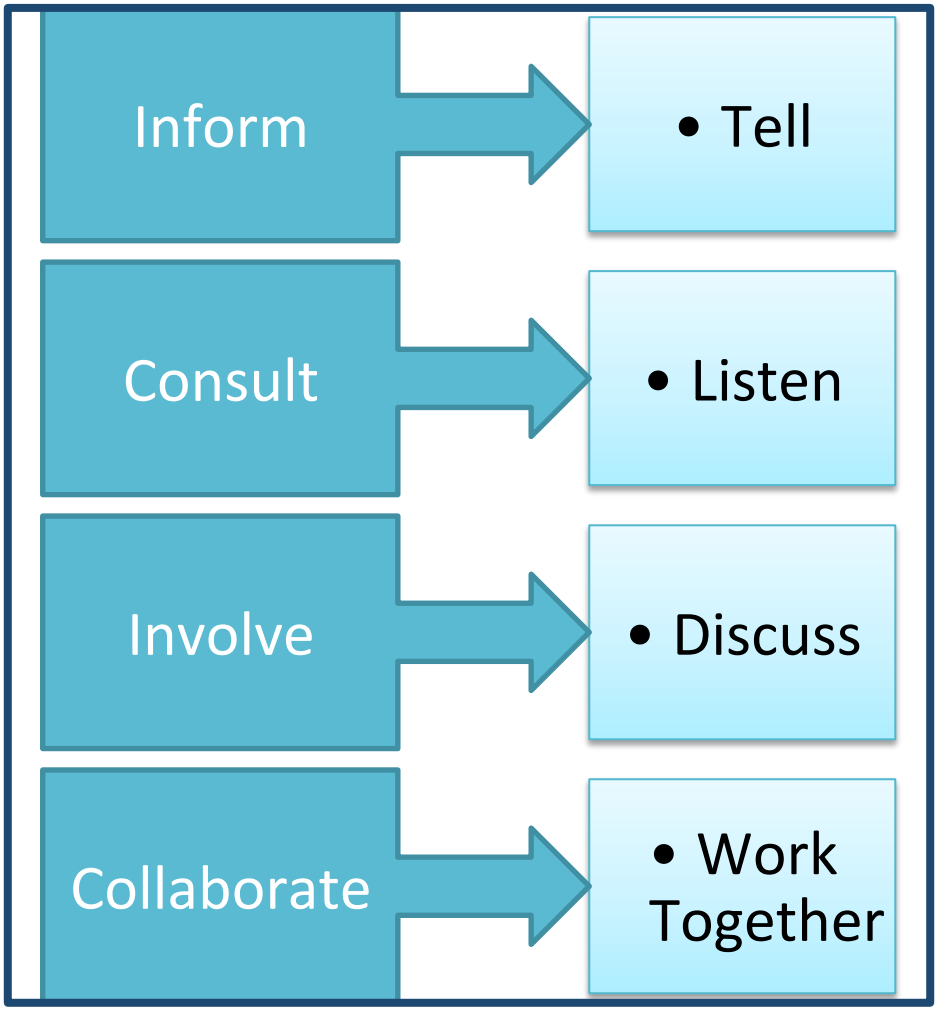
- Focus group with key individuals
- Advertisement of community engagements
- 11 interviews
- Site visits
- Information kiosks
- Focus group with youth
- Questionnaire re: Pilot Study
- Workshop

Focus Group with Key Individuals

- Focus group with key individuals
  - Presented framework and Pilot Study
  - Audience made up of many Aurovilians likely to use the framework
  - Aurovilians worked with project team through the framework to inform the Pilot Study

Focus Group with Key Individuals Outcomes

- Alter wording and descriptions for clarity
  - Edited framework to be more step-by-step
  - Added sections:
    - What is a framework?
    - Who is this framework for?
  - From theoretical language to accessible language



Interviews & Site Visits

Interviews

- 11 semi-structured/unstructured interviews conducted in Auroville
- Approx. 1 hr. in length

Site Visits

- Tours of Auroville, possible workshop sites, and services
- Gain understanding of context of Auroville and site feasibility

Interviews & Site Visits Outcomes

Interviews

- Different techniques to reach different Aurovilians
  - i.e. Youth → Informal Conversation
- Added more techniques to framework so diverse groups could be included
- Added section on effective facilitation

Site Visits

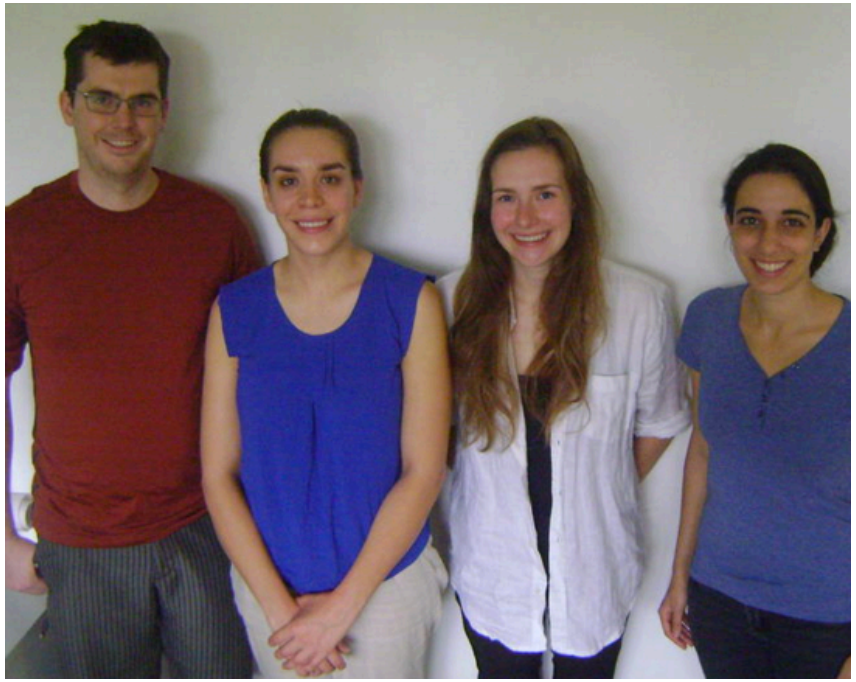
- Context of Auroville
  - i.e. Visit to Matrimandir better understanding of spiritual nature of Auroville

Advertisement of Community Engagements

- Used a variety of methods to inform individuals of the team's upcoming events, including:
  - Radio interviews,
  - Radio ads,
  - Posters and,
  - The newsletter

Advertisement of Community Engagements Outcomes

- Advertisements Outcomes
  - Influenced people to come to events
  - Lessons learned for framework:
    - Advertise full community participation plan before starting any events
    - Prevents confusion



Information Kiosks

- Project team set up booths that asked: “What Community Features do you Envision in Residential Sectors 1 & 2”
- Conducted at:
  - Solar Kitchen,
  - PTDC, and
  - Creativity

Information Kiosks Outcomes

13 Themes Found:

1. Retail**
2. Active Transportation**
3. Recreation Space**
4. Parks/Green Space
5. Multi-Use Common Space
6. Entertainment/artistic space
7. Space for youth
8. Roads
9. Community Services
10. Other Dedicated Space
11. Public Private Space
12. Infrastructure
13. Health Services

Community Feature	# of Responses
Laundry	10
Cycling Paths	8
Swimming Pool	7
Green Space	6
Community Transit	6
Café	5
Bike Parking	5
No cars/parking only at edges	5

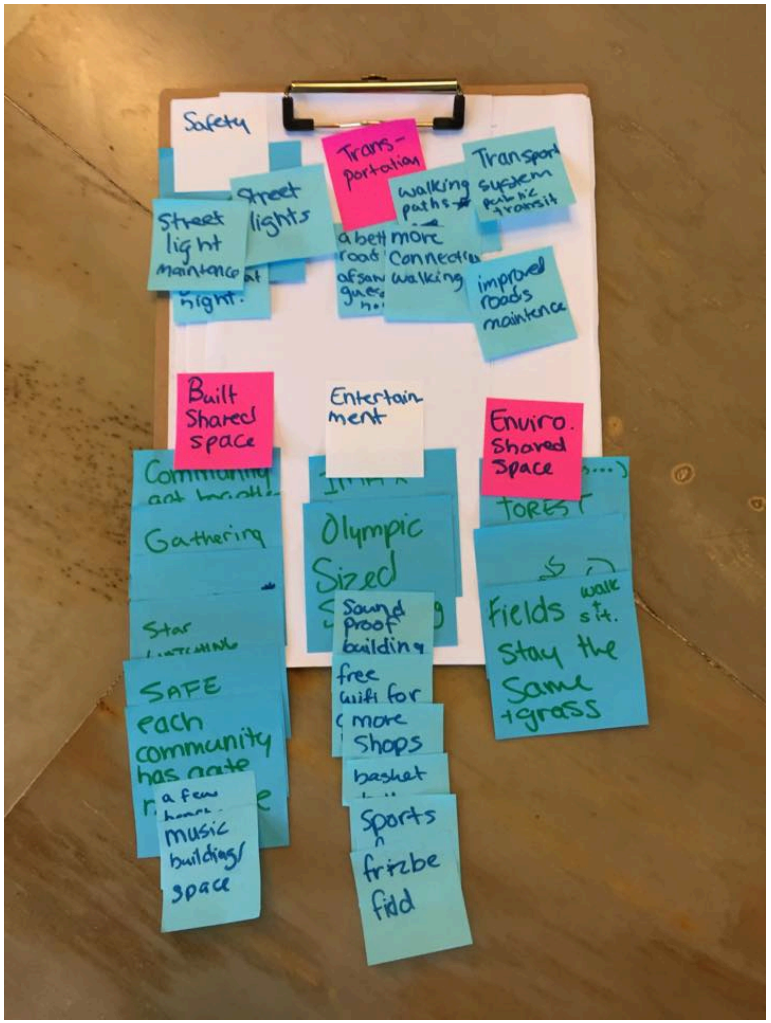
Information Kiosks Outcomes

Influence on the Framework:

- Increased understanding of practical and logistical challenges in Auroville
- Allowed for the refinement of techniques section

Focus Group with Youth

- Conducted with 10 youth in Auroville, ages 12-15
- Unstructured conversation where the youth discussed what features they envisioned within residential sectors
- The team wrote their suggestions on sticky notes that were stuck onto a table so they were visible by all



Focus Group with Youth Outcomes

Themes Identified:

Safety
- Streetlights
- Nighttime spaces

Transportation
- Create and connect walking paths

Entertainment
- Sound proof music room
- Wifi

Recreation
- Swimming pools
- Basketball court

Gathering Spaces
- Star gazing platform

Green Spaces
- Restoration of fields

Impact on Framework:

- Increased understanding of practical and logistical challenges in Auroville
- Allowed for the refinement of techniques section

Pilot Study Questionnaire

- In conjunction with the RAS, e-mailed a questionnaire to community members living in the Residential Zone
- Used to gauge community views regarding pilot project, and inform community about the workshop

Community features in Residential Zone Sectors 1 & 2

Please select the Community Features you envision in Residential Sector 1 & 2 from the following list which was suggested by community members at the Sound Board Kiosks. Please note that this list is a work in progress and by no means complete.

- ☐ Laundry
- ☐ Cycling Pathways
- ☐ Parks/Green Space
- ☐ Business Services
- ☐ Snack corner
- ☐ Café
- ☐ Restaurant
- ☐ Hangout Space for Young People
- ☐ Bakery

Pilot Study Questionnaire Outcomes

Impacts on Framework:

- Increased understanding of practical and logistical challenges in Auroville
- Allowed for the refinement of techniques section

Community Features	# of Responses
Cycling Pathways	60
Parks/Green Space	54
Pathways	38
Children playground	31

This questionnaire allowed for further confirmation that items and themes identified were representative of community opinions

Engagement Workshop

- The Workshop utilised two techniques:
  - **Open Spaces**: used to get diverse groups of people to work together to come to consensus around key themes of community features
  - **Dot Democracy:** where attendees decided what they felt like talking about by placing a dot on those themes

Engagement Workshop Outcomes

Themes Discussed:

1. **Entertainment/Artistic Space and Multi-Use Common Space**
   - **i.e. sound-proof performance space**
2. **Community Services**
   - **i.e. shared tool/handyman centre**
3. **Roads and Active Transportation**
   - **i.e. collective transportation**
4. **Spaces for Youth**
   - **i.e. multifunctional use space**

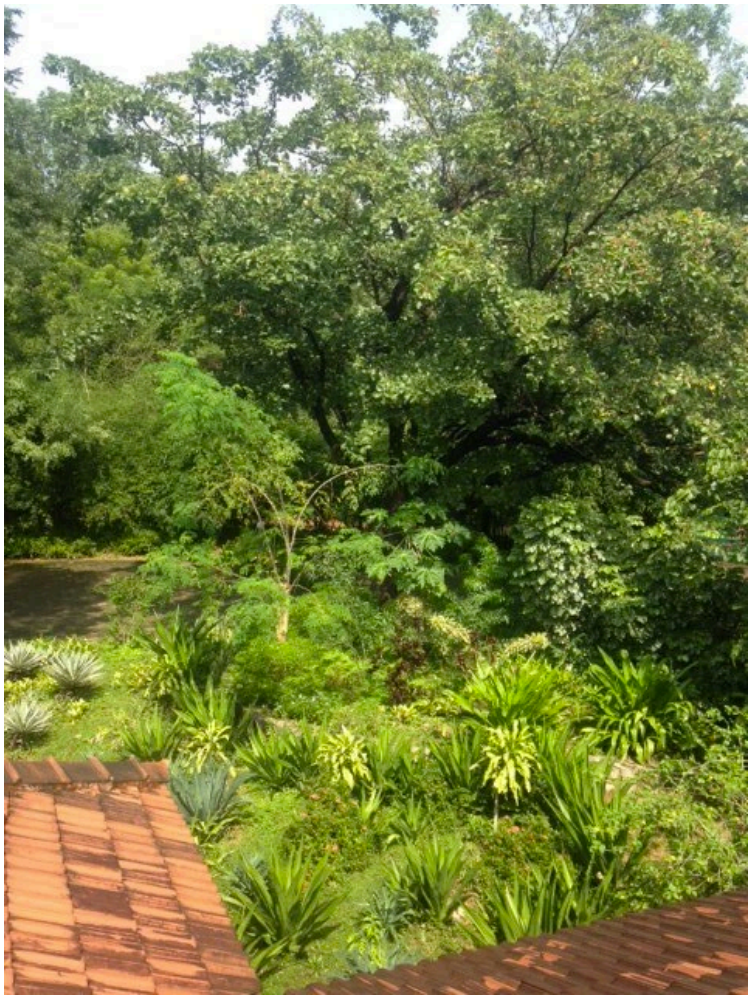
Impacts on Framework:

- Increased understanding of practical and logistical challenges in Auroville
- Allowed for the refinement of techniques section

Next Steps

What to do Next

1. Clarify and communicate intentions for how this data will be used
2. Analyse participation data and synthesise with planning knowledge
3. Create an implementation strategy
4. Create a rough draft report that includes information about how participation data was used
5. Utilise feedback to refine document into final report
6. Implement the plan



A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK FOR AUROVILLE

Guiding Principles

- Be Inclusive
- Build Capacity
- Be Proactive
- Make it Enjoyable
- Provide Structure and be Transparent
- Be Accountable
- Be Adaptive

Facilitation

Facilitators lead the event in a smooth manner to ensure productive and meaningful results

Keys to success:

- Come prepared
- Communicate the objective
- Establish ground rules
- Be flexible
- Provide closure and summarize results
- Be thankful

Steps in the Framework

Typical Timeframe: 6 months – 1 year

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC Analysis
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process; Monitor, Report, Feedback

Initial Framework

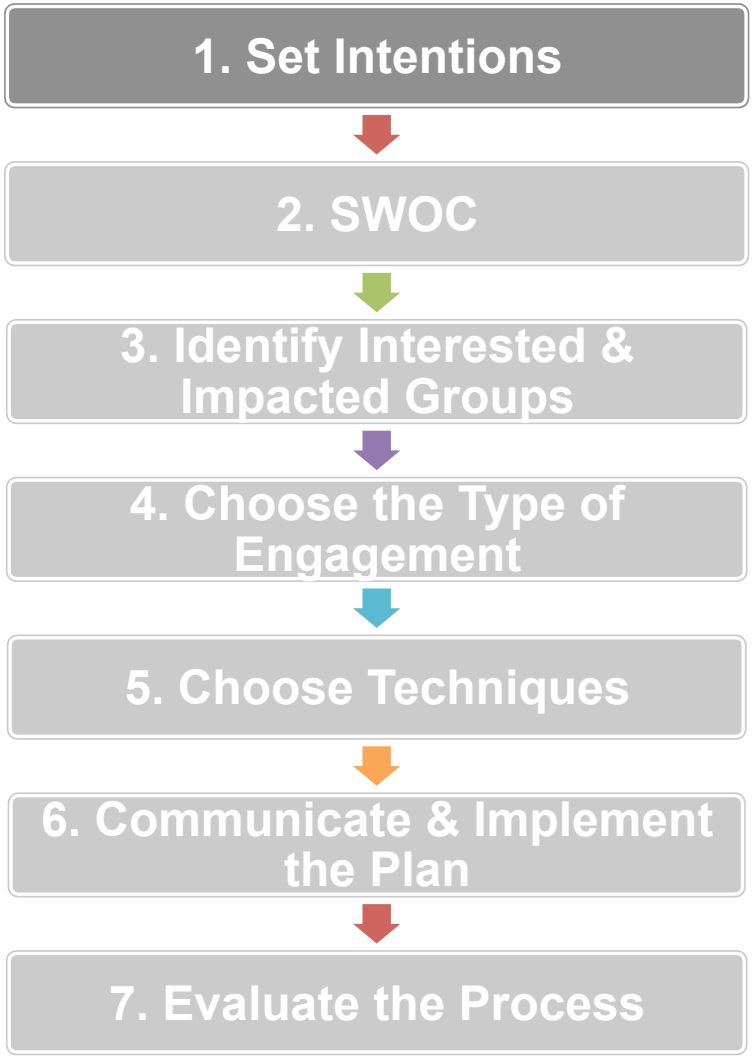
1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC Analysis
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose Participation Techniques
5. Communicate the Plan
6. Implement the Plan
7. Monitoring & Feedback

Final Framework

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC Analysis
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process; Monitor, Report, Feedback

NEW

1. Set Intentions



Purpose and Outcomes

- Why do you want to engage the community?
- What information are we looking to get?
- What are the roles?
  - Decision Makers
  - Project Team
  - Community Participants

2. SWOC Analysis

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
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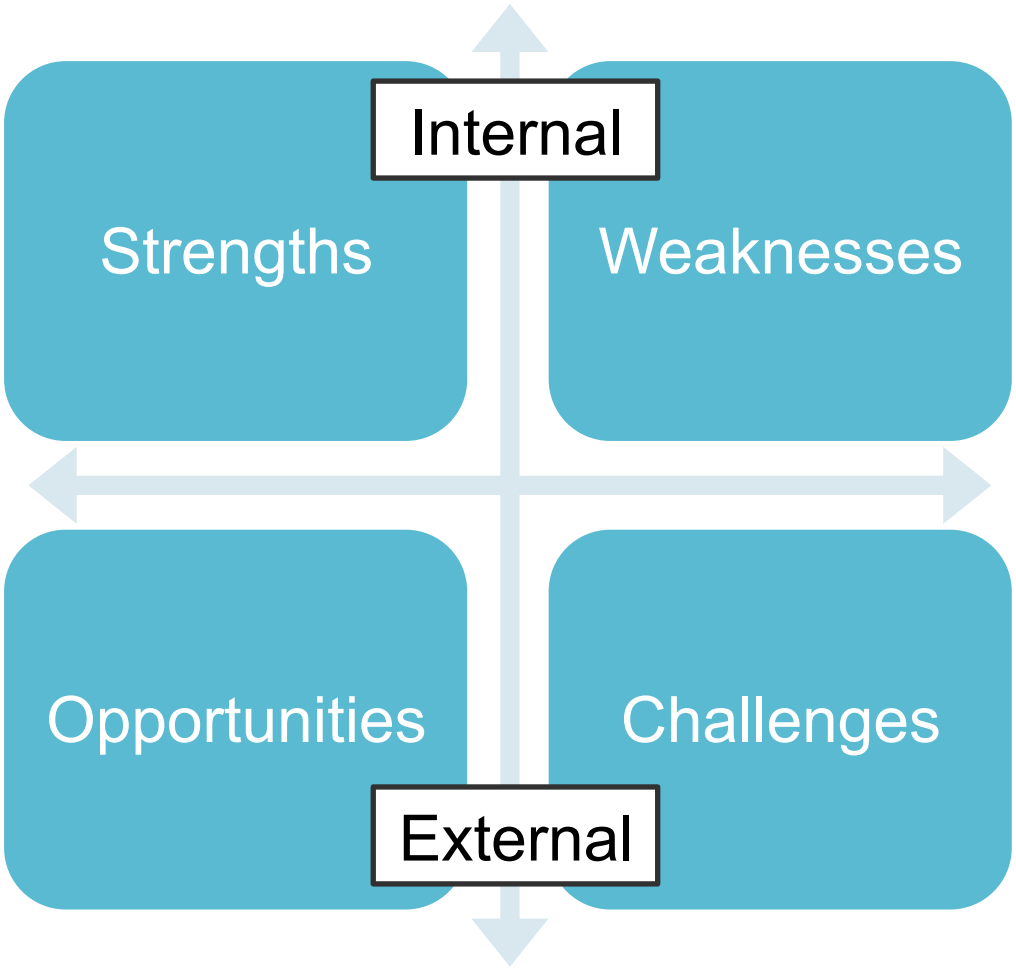


3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC
3. **Identify Interested & Impacted Groups**
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process

- Interested & impacted groups are identified using brainstorming
- In order to understand more about these groups and how they might be engaged you must identify:
  - Level of interest
  - How they are impacted
  - Geographical proximity
  - Expected level of interest in project
  - Needs/accessibility concerns
  - Resources/skills

4. Choose Type of Engagement

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process

We will…

TELL
To inform you about what is happening

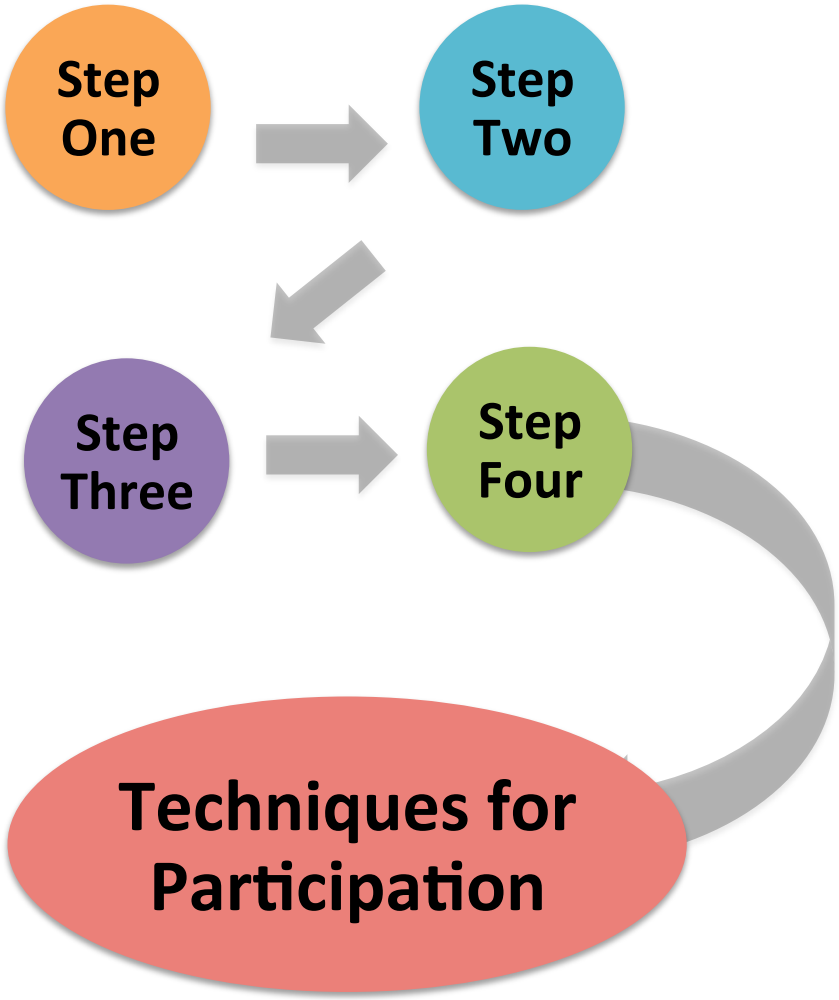
LISTEN
To include your thoughts and feelings

DISCUSS
To create and share ideas

WORK TOGETHER
To find a solution and make decisions

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & POWER

5. Choose Participation Techniques



5. Choose Participation Techniques

Choose Techniques: Step One

- Create a comprehensive list of all techniques that could be utilised for your project
- Considerations when selecting techniques:
  - What is the level of the community impact?
  - What output do you require?
  - Should there be specific techniques for select groups?
  - Does the technique utilised need to be used to assist in making the decision?

5. Choose Participation Techniques

Choose Techniques: Step Two

Refine the list of techniques from Step One, using the following criteria:

- What are the requirements and capacity of the group(s) involved? Will they be able to fully engage in the selected technique?
- Where will meetings be held? What are your space limitations?
- What resources and capacity does the technique require? Do you have those readily available?

5. Choose Participation Techniques

Choose Techniques: Step Two

TOWN HALL or PUBLIC MEETING

Discuss

- An organized large group meeting, usually used to make a presentation and give the public an opportunity to ask questions and give comments.

- People who attend the Town Hall learn by hearing other' questions and comments.

Capacity Requirements:

- Costs are usually minimal.
- Need to consider what type of visual aids you will be using and prepare those.
- Staff resources are usually minimal, need to prepare, attend and analyze the feedback.

Tips:

- Facilitators need to create an open and neutral environment for all views to be shared.
- Emotions can be high and one perspective can dominate a discussion if facilitators are unprepared.

5. Choose Participation Techniques

Choose Techniques: Step Three

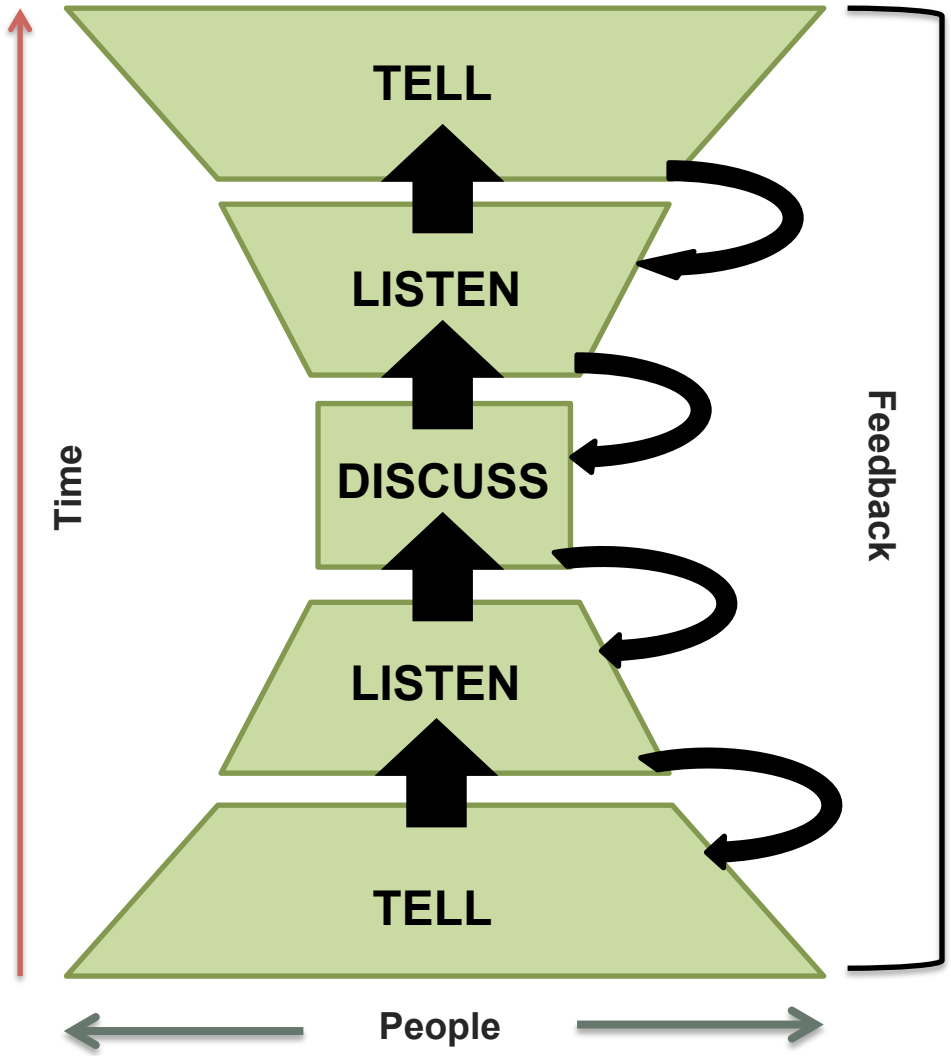
- Review the selected techniques for accessibility considerations. Think about your community and their needs. How can you ensure that, regardless of the activity, everyone is able to fully participate?

- Things to consider:
  - Document production
  - Venue
  - Childcare
  - Timing
  - Sense of Belonging

5. Choose Participation Techniques

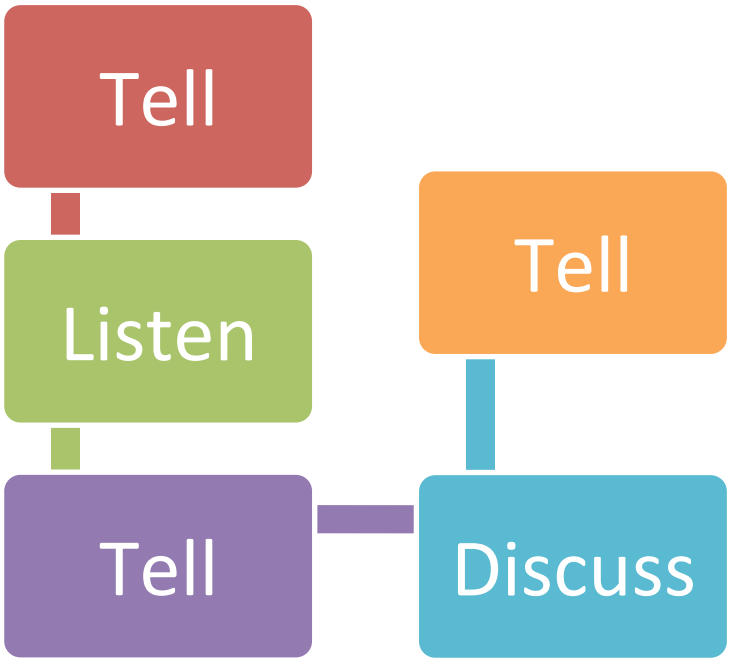
Choose Techniques: Step Four

- Ensure that the technique(s) are representative of your larger objective, work towards your intentions and accurately incorporate the required number of participants.



6. Communicate and Implement the Plan

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process



Tell the community what you're going to do, and be sure to do it!

7. Evaluate the Process

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process

It is necessary to monitor, evaluate, and report on both events, and the entire community consultation plan.

Criteria is given to:

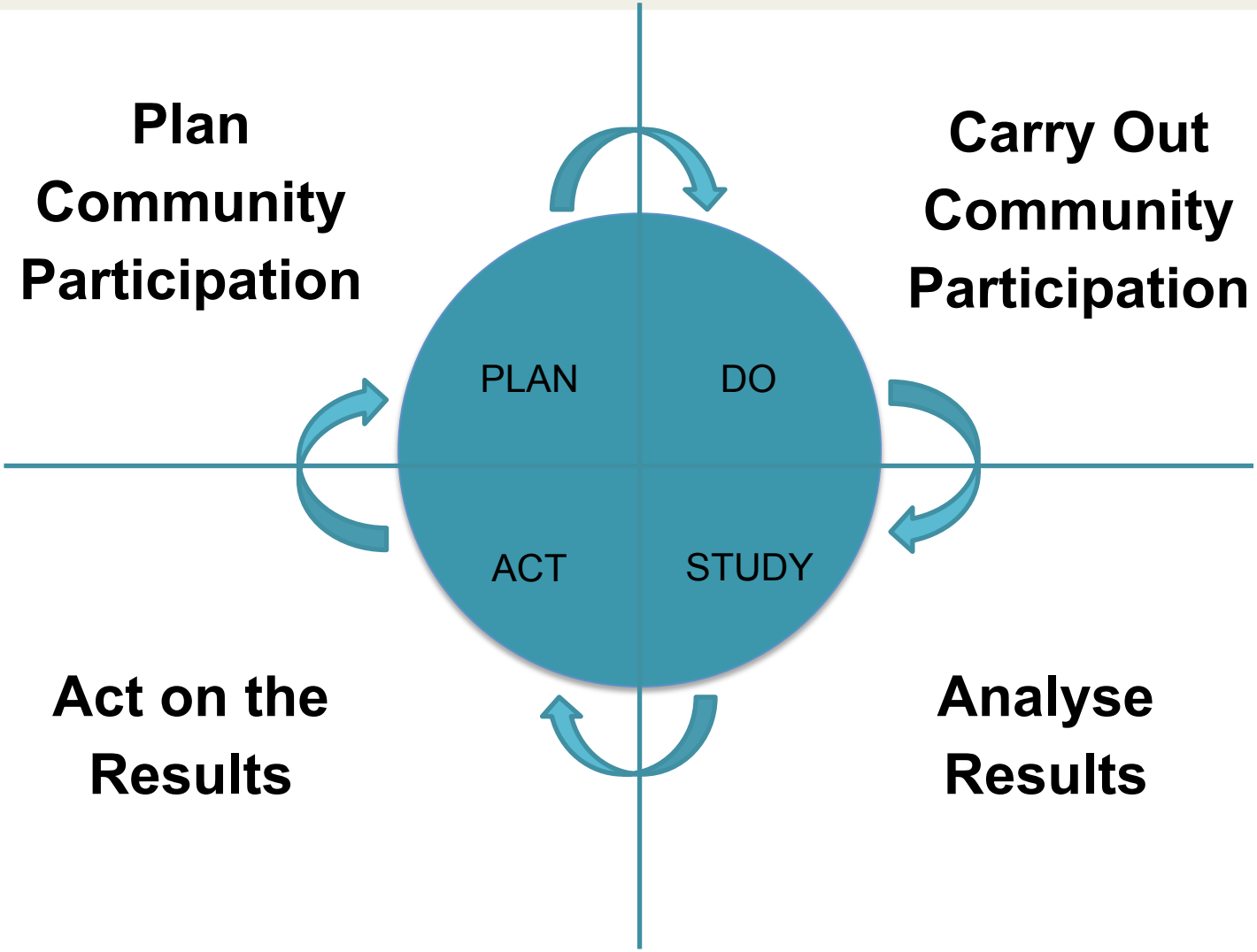
- Evaluate individual events,
- Evaluate the overall process

Thank you so much for attending our community engagement event!
We would appreciate if you would take a moment to provide us with feedback:

	No	Partially	Mostly	Completely
Did you feel this workshop allowed you to express your comments and concerns?				
Do you feel you learned anything at this workshop?				
Did you enjoy this workshop?				

Please use the space below and on the back of this sheet to provide any additional comments:

The Framework Process



DISCUSSION

Thank you!