Equity in Engagement Exercise

**Purpose**

This activity will have the Core Team use scenarios to put yourselves in the shoes of different people in your community that you might want to engage, acknowledge and understand the obstacles people face to participation in planning meetings, and innovate solutions for overcoming obstacles to engagement and incentivizing participation.

**What You’ll Need**

**Who:** Core Team

**Where:**

**How long will it take:** 1 hour

**How to do this**

1. Read the scenarios below
2. Break into small groups (2-3 people per group) and each group choose a scenario to work on.
3. Assign a note taker for each group.
4. Take 20-30 minutes to work through selected scenario in your small group and answer the questions. Have the note taker record the highlights of your discussion.
5. Bring small groups together and discuss the activity as a Core Team (est. 30 minutes). Respond to the provided discussion questions.

**Scenarios**

**Scenario 1:**

Lola is a single mother with an eight-year-old son and another child on the way. She works two jobs to provide enough money to support her growing family. But she doesn’t own a car and relies on public transportation to get to work and run errands. She’s very busy, overworked, and has little to no expendable income. Her son’s teacher has called her in for a parent teacher meeting this evening. She wants to go because her son’s education is important to her, but she’s supposed to work a late shift at her second job.

* What challenges does Lola face in getting to the parent teacher meeting?
* How can Lola make it to the parent teacher meeting? What could the teacher do to make it easier for her to attend the meeting?
* What incentives could the school provide to encourage more parents to attend in-person meetings.

**Scenario 2:**

Robert is an immigrant from Haiti. His native language is Haitian Creole, and he speaks limited English. He rents an apartment with his family, but unfortunately the landlord has not been keeping up with routine maintenance. The smoke detectors in the apartment need to be replaced, but his landlord is refusing to pay for them. Robert wants to file a complaint against his landlord to the city housing office, but he must go to town hall in person to do so. He’s hesitant to go because he doesn’t really trust government offices and he’s afraid of repercussions against his family if he makes the complaint.

* What challenges does Robert face in getting to town hall and filing a complaint?
* How could the city housing office make it easier for Robert to navigate their bureaucratic system?
* What could the city housing office do to gain Robert’s trust?

**Scenario 3**

Greta is 85 years old and needs a wheelchair to get around. She lives alone, 25 miles outside of town. She lives on social security, which barely provides enough to cover her monthly bills. Unfortunately, Greta has a toothache and must get to the dentist soon. She’s worried that her insurance won’t cover the costs and the dentist bill will be too expensive. It's also hard for her to leave her home with her disability. The dentist office is now requiring all patients to register in their online health portal prior to scheduling new appointments, but Greta isn’t very tech savvy and doesn’t know how to navigate this step.

* What barriers does Greta face in getting her toothache addressed?
* What could the dentist do to make it easier for her to get treatment?
* How could the dentist encourage Greta to come in for routine check-ups in the future?

**Group Discussion**

* What emotions came up for you during this discussion?
* Are there other challenges/issues that you can think of that didn’t come up in this activity that you think are important to consider?
* As you were going through these scenarios, how did the overlapping identities of each person force you to adapt your solution strategies to help them achieve their goals?
* How can the solutions you came up with for the scenarios be translated to improving participation in Core Team activities and community workshops?
* How can the solutions your team came up with inform real-world solutions to encouraging participation on the core team and in planning workshops?

**What to do Next**

Use the lessons learned in this activity to help inform how the Core Team can encourage participation in future Core Team activities and community workshops. Refer to these notes when completing later community engagement activities, including designing your community engagement plan.