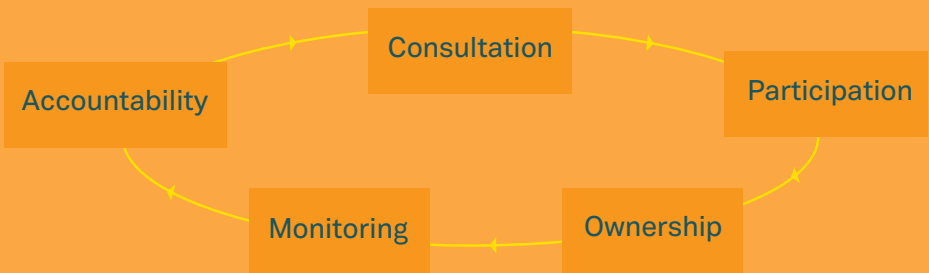


FACILITATING ACTIVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CONSULTATION



THEORY OF CHANGE ‘What we believe’



PRINCIPLES ‘How we behave’ and ‘What we value’



Emerging principles for CBOs and intermediary organisations wishing to support meaningful consultation include:

1. If we cultivate **integrity within our organisational culture**, then how we behave (internally amongst staff and externally with communities) is consistent, and matches what we say we believe and value. We learn from communities and each other, and are able to adapt.
2. If we facilitate meaningful **links between communities and other civil society organisations**, then public participation is made more effective, legitimate and authentic.
3. If we keep people connected to their own process through **routine feedback and follow-up after consultation**, communities sustain and expand their sense of ownership and investment in the issue, and take more confident decisions for action.
4. If we **make the subject matter personal** – allow communities to think about and feel their own reality instead of promoting our organisational agenda or educating with facts – then people are better able to access the topic, and feel motivated to actively participate.
5. If consultation is facilitated through a responsible approach, it becomes more than an isolated event: it is a **springboard for greater levels of public participation**, ownership, accountability and citizen action.
6. If we, **as organisations, participate appropriately alongside communities**, then their natural leadership and strength has space to emerge, without inappropriate dependence on organisations.
7. If consultation is **designed and facilitated by local people**, the process is accessible and relatable to many more people in the community, who feel empowered to integrate their own experiences into the process. The quality and effectiveness of consultation improves dramatically.
8. If we **link consultation in the private space of the home, with the public space of the community**, then everyone becomes involved. Intimacy, responsibility and solidarity come together through one process.
9. If we design our consultation process to **engage the emotional before the rational** (feelings before facts), people in communities are more likely to engage, participate and respond.
10. If we **stimulate communities with good questions**, instead of providing information only, people become engaged in discussion, participation increases, and organisations gain insight into how to adapt their consultation process.
11. If we have **established relationship and trust** with communities, they participate more freely in discussion and dialogue without suspicion or a sense of interrogation. Consultation is not an event; it is part of an ongoing conversation in the community.
12. If we make provision in our activities to accommodate the needs of people during public consultation (e.g. childcare), then they feel included; **inclusion** leads to greater participation.



STEPS ‘What we do’



Intermediary organisations’ action in support of community consultation processes:



PRACTICES ‘What we do’



In designing, developing and implementing their consultation activities, CBOs should:

1. Have some **prior knowledge** of the subject matter prior to facilitating public consultation around that topic.
2. Have a strong, long-standing, **quality relationship with the community** being stimulated to participate in the process.
3. Have some **existing experience** in health programming, service-delivery, social development and social justice.
4. **Support leadership by the local community**; enable facilitation of the consultation process by team members from the local community.
5. **Build the capacity of the facilitation team** throughout the consultation process: to reflect, to learn, to think, to be more conversant in the topic. Allow the team to take initiative and responsibility for its own learning and development.
6. Make after-activity **reflection and debriefing a routine behaviour** so that the facilitation team learns with and from the community, and can adapt their approach dynamically.
7. Stimulate consultation through a **combination of approaches**. Mix consultation through large public gatherings with consultation through small focus-group discussions, and with home visits.
8. Facilitate consultation so that the **private environment** (small group; home) links to the **public environment** (neighbourhood gathering).
9. Stimulate depth of consultation through **door-to-door visits in the private homes** of community members, before focus groups or community gatherings.
10. Facilitate **dialogue between community members – with each other**, not primarily directed towards the CBO.
11. Start the consultation process from a **personal, affective point of reference** instead of cold facts. Let households and communities feel what the issues would mean for them.