Building Bridges

From Community Consultation to Community Engagement

Community Engagement requires three critical levers: **Inclusiveness**, **Deliberation** and **Influence**

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

- The incensed and the articulate are heard
- Squeaky wheels & powerful elites bargain, negotiate, lobby and campaign
- Aligned to interest groups
- Identified as stakeholders
- Silent majority’s opinions are sought superficially

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- Diversity through random selection
- Formerly voiceless are given a voice
- Silent majority are heard
- Invoking ‘the voice’ as local experts—changing role of activists

From Advocacy

**Asserting our own point of view:**
- **Explaining**
  "Here’s how the world works and why I can see it that way"
- **Asserting**
  “Here’s what I say and here’s why I say it”
- **Dictating**
  “Here’s what I say and never mind why”
- **Testing**
  “Here’s what I say and what do you think of it”

To Skilful Discussion

**Balancing:**
- Advocacy
  - explaining and asserting our own point of view
  - making our own thinking and reasoning visible to others
- Reflection
  - slowing down our thinking so we become more aware of our own thinking and reasoning, and how we form our ideas about the world
- Inquiry
  - inquiring into others thinking and reasoning
  - openly sharing views and developing knowledge about each others’ assumptions

**Traditional Community Consultation**
- Experts speak, explain solutions
- Community consumers
- Feedback
- Decision makes feel frustrated

**Deliberative Democracy**
- Community is engaged
- Inclusive
- Deliberative
- Resulting in:
  - Increased understanding of solution
  - Increased trust in decision makers and community

**Inclusiveness within Community Engagement ensures participation that is:**
- representative of the population,
- inclusive of diverse viewpoints and values,
- based on equal opportunity to participate

Useful Websites:
- www.active democracy.net
- www.21stcenturydialogue.com

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2 21st Century Dialogue – “Engaging Diverse People in dialogue that builds bridges towards the common good” www.21stcenturydialogue.com
8 International Association for Public Participation 2000, http://www.iap2.org