

Communication Training Manual for Positive Engagement

Public engagement is necessary to improve effectiveness of a project or policy on science and technology or regional development. It is important for significant public engagement to address the following issues including spatial design, process, facilitation and management.

1. Engage with local place and community

Grasp the context of local place and community where people are engaged, understand those who work and live there, and ask for their cooperation or collaboration in different ways.

2. Design space and movement in harmony with the environment

Design space and movement in harmony with place, time, weather and event by which people spontaneously visit and get together.

3. Appeal to amenity and beauty

Arrange relaxing atmosphere, fine food and drink, beautiful landscape and artwork, and entertainment to open up to strangers.

4. Prepare for interaction, discussion and collaboration

Prepare tools for contemplation, interaction and structuration of the contemplation and interaction process and output.

5. Don't press a particular fact or value

Be careful to convey information unilaterally or press a particular value even with the aim of explaining the fact.

6. Provide comprehensive and balanced knowledge and views

Provide transdisciplinary knowledge and multilateral perspectives in a comprehensive and balanced way whilst appreciating expertise and understanding ambiguous and contrasting views on uncertain and complex issues.

7. Treat all the engaged persons as an equal

Treat different people as equal for wider engagement, whether organizers or participants, experts or citizens, loud talkers or silent observers, and regardless of race, age, gender, status or experience.

8. Suppress negative emotions and explore our senses

Create a place where unknown issues and novel expressions generate our emerging senses by imagining other's anger, jealousy and sorrow derived by touching their stakes, experiences and ideologies and considering negative emotions would not dominate.

9. Stimulate creativity

Produce a positive outcome from new values created by participants' own imagination and creativity, their interaction, discussion and collaboration.

10. Respect subjective words and actions

Respect participants' own narratives and behaviours whilst acknowledging participants not as quantifiable objects but as independent subjects.

11. Face undesirable futures and head for desirable futures

Put negative aspects for the present and the future on the agenda, open up desirable future possibilities in which people positively and continuously engage, and commit to feasible actions in a responsible manner.

12. Explain the rationale of public engagement and disseminate its outcome

Explain why public engagement is needed and develop a variety of tools to disseminate its outcome to the participants and others.

1. Engage with local place and community

Grasp the context of local place and community where people are engaged, understand those who work and live there, and ask for their cooperation or collaboration in different ways.

- Not everyone can think and talk about difficult, cutting-edge science and technology issues at the drop of a hat. In order to engage in a dialogue with the people you want to engage, you first need to know them.
- However, it is not always possible to talk to people well in advance and build up enough trust, as you may want to ask for their opinion even if you have never met them before.
- So the next best thing is to visit the area where the people you want to involve, to gather information about the area and to imagine what their daily lives are like.
- Activities that take the people you want to engage out of their living space and into another place are also welcome. Because it is an unusual space for them, they will feel the same way about the place as the practitioner. Conversations about the place or space can help to create a friendly atmosphere.
- The people you want to involve are not always the people you actually want to talk to and get their views out. Sometimes the coordinators who help to create the space for dialogue are local people. In this case, it is equally important to get to know the community in which they work and live, and to have a good dialogue and collaboration with them before the dialogue takes place.

Checklist

- The regions and places to be involved have been selected according to the theme.
- You have obtained information about the area or place to be involved and have imagined the connections with the participants.
- We have enlisted the help of a coordinator who works and lives in the area or place we are involved with.
- We talk and work with the coordinator well in advance.

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2. Design space and movement in harmony with the environment

Design space and movement in harmony with place, time, weather and event by which people spontaneously visit and get together.

- The environment is important for people. No person thinks logically all the time and draws logical conclusions and decisions, but their thoughts and attitudes change depending on their environment. The most important thing is to create an atmosphere in which people naturally want to talk about something, to collaborate with people.
- It is advisable to choose a location that is familiar to the participants for dialogue and collaboration, but if this is not possible, it is better to provide a historically or culturally sophisticated facility, a place open to the outside environment, or a space surrounded by natural materials.
- The duration of the event should be considered in accordance with the human activity cycle. The most common styles are: in the morning for short, concentrated work; in the afternoon for calm and lots of new ideas; in the evening for conclusion and closure; and in the night for distraction, relaxed conversation and socialising.
- We will consider the direction of the event, either outdoors or indoors, taking into account that on sunny days we are more open-minded and on cloudy or rainy days we are somewhat more conservative.
- It is not always desirable to organise a stand-alone public engagement event. Going to the trouble of preparing for and travelling to such an event may increase the commitment to the event, but it may also make it too serious and less likely to generate ideas that go beyond the preconceived views and beliefs of the participants. Explore the benefits of public engagement in conjunction with other events, and consider how public engagement can take place in science museums and other high-traffic areas such as supermarkets, department stores, train stations, festivals, and other places where people gather for specific purposes such as schools and hospitals.

Checklist

- Have you visited the location of the public dialogue or collaboration in advance and considered what emotions and attitudes might be generated by the participants there?
- The time of the event has been considered in relation to its purpose and the participants' activity cycle.
- In the case of outdoor events, the flexibility of the process is ensured according to the weather conditions.
- In the case of an indoor event, the interaction with the outside environment, such as the view, lighting and ventilation, or the setting of the indoor artifacts, is considered.
- The event is linked to other events to create an atmosphere and flow of traffic that encourages citizens to participate.

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3. Appeal to amenity and beauty

Arrange relaxing atmosphere, fine food and drink, beautiful landscape and artwork, and entertainment to open up to strangers.

- Basically, it is advisable to place objects that are familiar to the participants' living space, but it is also advisable to select a place or space that is different from the norm, but is as inspiring as a trip to a resort.
- Be careful not to make the place too sophisticated, paying attention to the arrangement of plants, artwork, water and light. Hotel lobbies are generally pleasant places, but too many expensive furnishings can make some people feel deflated and uncomfortable.
- Even if it is difficult to find such a place and you decide to hold your public engagement in a room in an inorganic building, you can still create a peaceful atmosphere by arranging tables and chairs, and by using cloths and decorations on the walls and tables.
- It is a good idea to have nice food and interesting objects in the centre of the place. This will naturally draw people together and encourage them to talk over the food and objects. It's also a good idea to control sound and light so that conversations don't break down and become unnatural.

Checklist

- Decide whether to design the space as an extension of the participants' daily lives or to create a different space.
- To prevent the dialogue space from becoming inorganic, the layout of desks, chairs and exhibits should be designed to create a space where people can gather naturally through food, drink and objects.
- We try to bring in as many natural elements as possible, such as greenery, water, light, wind and sound.
- We put ourselves in the place just before the event to see how it feels.

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4. Prepare for interaction, discussion and collaboration

Prepare tools for contemplation, interaction and structuration of the contemplation and interaction process and output.

- In public engagement, there is often an over-emphasis on dialogue. However, many people are uncomfortable talking to people they have never met before. Forcing a conversation to continue can lead to superficiality, or to sharp disagreements.
- Of course, it is important for the practitioner to act as a facilitator, moderating and encouraging dialogue between the participants.
- However, if we only try to elicit opinions, we lose the opportunity for participants to think carefully about the issues and challenges. Therefore, the event needs to be deliberate in separating discussion time from thinking time.
- It is not enough to collect a wide range of opinions in a haphazard way. Various methods of visualising and organising opinions, such as using sticky notes and mock-up paper, are becoming more common, but it is also effective to mix in quantitative methods, such as ranking, scoring and statistically processing opinions.
- In order to promote collaboration in civic engagement, it is important to be 'hands on' with a particular subject. This can be done in a World Café, where people write their opinions on the same piece of paper, or in a prototyping exercise, where a group of people create a mock-up.

Checklist

- The process of public engagement is explicitly divided into two phases: one in which participants interact with each other, and the other in which they reflect on the process.
- Assigning experts with sufficient knowledge and experience as facilitators of the dialogue
- Several tools for collecting, visualising and analysing diverse opinions are available and the purpose of using them is clearly shared with the participants.
- an effective combination of qualitative and quantitative methods
- A 'hands on' approach is considered to promote collaboration.

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5. Don't press a particular fact or value

Be careful to convey information unilaterally or press a particular value even with the aim of explaining the fact.

- In order to get participants to think and speak about unfamiliar topics, it is often assumed that they have a certain level of knowledge. However, simply giving a list of facts, as is the case with communications from public authorities, does not help to deepen participants' interest and understanding.
- And simply giving facts, even if they are sufficiently objective and valid to be accepted by all participants, is not always the way to go. Depending on the relationship of trust between the practitioner and the participants, it is necessary to make sure that the background to the facts is carefully understood.
- If trust in the practitioner is not sufficiently built up, the practitioner's explanation of the facts may be taken as imposing a particular value. Even if the knowledge is scientifically established, it is always important to be aware of how the participants will accept it, rather than proclaiming its infallibility.

Checklist

- Be aware of the need to explain how the facts were formed and accepted by society, rather than just telling the facts.
- Be aware of the extent to which you have earned the trust of participants in your public engagement and strive to build that trust through full and careful explanation and dialogue.
- Provide appropriate opportunities for participants to express their different views.

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6. Provide comprehensive and balanced knowledge and views

Provide transdisciplinary knowledge and multilateral perspectives in a comprehensive and balanced way whilst appreciating expertise and understanding ambiguous and contrasting views on uncertain and complex issues.

- Communicating expert knowledge to participants in an accessible way, through the words of the experts themselves, is important to avoid errors in translation and ambiguity of content by practitioners. It also contributes to the legitimacy of the process of public engagement.
- However, it is necessary to factor in the possibility that expert explanations may represent only one way of looking at things. Experts can also be far from the truth by providing explanations without uncertainty or ambiguity because of their emphasis on clarity.
- It is important that people understand that the knowledge and views of experts are part of science in action, and therefore public input is meaningful and has potential.
- Where possible, refer to the views of experts in different fields and stakeholders from different sectors to give participants the opportunity to demonstrate interdisciplinary knowledge and multiple perspectives.

Checklist

- The knowledge and views of the experts and stakeholders whose explanations and opinions are sought have been carefully researched beforehand to ensure their ability to communicate with the public and their integrity in dialogue.
- Professional explanations are not only intended to improve the understanding of the participants, but are also evaluated on the basis of whether the participants are convinced by the explanations.
- Differences of opinion among experts and others are presented in a balanced and diverse way so that participants can consider them in a fair manner.

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7. Treat all the engaged persons as an equal

Treat different people as equal for wider engagement, whether organizers or participants, experts or citizens, loud talkers or silent observers, and regardless of race, age, gender, status or experience.

- Equal relationships between experts and citizens have been devised in consensus conferences, but there is a risk that the distinction between expert and citizen is used to promote dialogue. There is also the problem of the invisibility of the power of the organisers to design and run the event.
- Diversity and inclusion are emblematic terms in contemporary public engagement, and the public members must be carefully selected to include the diversity of gender, ethnicity, age, nationality, occupation and position of participants, and designed to ensure that each participant's views are treated equally.
- We also need to be equally aware of diversity and inclusion on the part of the organisers, the practitioners, and to ensure that practitioners and participants are on equal footing in their different roles in the dialogue and collaboration.
- This is closely linked to points 2, 3 and 4 above, and it is important to use spaces, atmospheres and tools that allow practitioners and participants to share a sense of belonging to the same community in the context of public engagement.

Checklist

- The practitioner, as the organiser, does not try to control all the events that take place in the field of civic engagement, but is ready to accept and enjoy the incidental interaction and emergence of the participants.
- The practitioner is not a behind-the-scenes supporter of civic engagement, but a visible presence like the participants, casually hosting them in a natural, everyday manner.
- The practitioners are careful not to create an authority gradient between the experts and the public participants by using a judgmental tone or enlightening content in the provision of their expertise.
- Practitioners ensure that they have full confidence in the words and actions of the participants and that they are equally trusted by them

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8. Suppress negative emotions and explore our senses

Create a place where unknown issues and novel expressions generate our emerging senses by imagining other's anger, jealousy and sorrow derived by touching their stakes, experiences and ideologies and considering negative emotions would not dominate.

- Making the space for civic engagement fun and cheerful is also linked to point 3 and is effective in eliciting natural and active speech from participants.
- However, if participants simply enjoy the dialogue and discussion, they may only remember that it was fun, and lose the opportunity to reflect on the deepening of their thinking and the results of their interaction with other participants, and to consolidate this in the form of personal learning.
- The issues at the intersection of science, technology and society, and the potential future social impact of science and technology, are not always positive, and there are many cases of potential ethical, legal and social problems. Rather than avoiding discussion of such issues, we need to set up mechanisms to deal with them seriously.
- Potentially negative issues can lead to conflicts of interest between participants, and differences in experience and ideology can lead to confrontational and pointed discussions. In order to avoid this, the approach outlined in points 1-7 should prepare the participants for a calm dialogue with each other and with the practitioners.
- Let us create a space that respects the temporary sense of community of sharing the same place and the permanent tribal sense of having to think together about the challenges of the future of humanity, as well as the feeling that arises from contact with unknown themes and new impressions.

Checklist

- The atmosphere is always congenial and pleasant, while at the same time providing an opportunity to discuss or prepare for the discussion of negative themes, which may generate anger, envy, sadness etc.
- Facilitating the discussion in such a way that it does not lead to emotional conflicts between participants, but directs the discussion towards society rather than the individual, and towards future prospects rather than current issues.
- Even if the participants cannot resolve their differences of opinion or view, they are able to agree on the differences and share the challenges that need to be addressed in the future.
- Respect for the senses rather than the emotions generated by the participants, and the practitioner makes an effort to understand the feelings of the participants, even if it is not possible to respond logically to their words and actions.

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9. Stimulate creativity

Produce a positive outcome from new values created by participants' own imagination and creativity, their interaction, discussion and collaboration.

- One of the key implications of public engagement is that it allows citizen participants to think freely, based on their lived knowledge, to construct agendas, devise solutions and generate other new ideas that experts and stakeholders cannot come up with alone.
- In addition to the design of the place and space, it is important that dialogue, discussion and collaboration with other participants and practitioners are encouraged.
- It is effective to make the participants aware that they can draw inspiration from all kinds of objects, words and behaviours, so that they can get away from their usual thinking as much as possible and see and think in a new way.

Checklist

- Consideration is given to the colour, shape and function of the objects in the place of public engagement so that participants can receive intellectual and sensory stimulation.
- There are a number of engagement tools that allow participants to think flexibly and to use them according to the audience and the occasion.
- All participants value the ideas that come out of the session and are able to connect them positively to other ideas.
- The practitioner is able to detect subtle knowledge that cannot be verbalised, such as the participant's little insights and sensations, and to share them in the moment or record them in words.

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10. Respect subjective words and actions

Respect participants' own narratives and behaviours whilst acknowledging participants not as quantifiable objects but as independent subjects.

- The views of the participants heard in public engagement must be respected. Practitioners need to elicit or carefully infer why and from what experiences and feelings participants have expressed their opinions, and to understand the weight of each statement.
- Even if the opinions are aggregated and statistically processed by quantitative methods, it is important to organize them qualitatively. It is not just an opinion, but a narrative that includes the personal context of the participants' way of life.
- Through dialogue and collaboration, practitioners and other participants should also carefully observe the behaviour as well as the language of the participants. It is important to try to understand their unspoken thoughts and feelings.

Checklist

- The individuality and identity of each participant is understood and spontaneous comments are elicited in public engagement.
- The practitioner tries to understand why the participant has made such a statement, even if it is off the mark, inaccurate or lacking in substance, and tries to satisfy the participant by providing an appropriate opportunity to speak.
- With permission, the practitioner records the participant's comments by listening, recording or transcribing them, and also takes notes on their behaviour, or asks the participant to submit a record of his or her thoughts.
- When creating a record of the event, we do not only extract individual statements, but also record our impressions of the event as a whole, or scenes that were particularly interesting to us when we observed individual participants.

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11. Face undesirable futures and head for desirable futures

Put negative aspects for the present and the future on the agenda, open up desirable future possibilities in which people positively and continuously engage, and commit to feasible actions in a responsible manner.

- An effective theme for public engagement is that of the future. Imagining only a happy and bright future may be necessary in certain contexts, but the future of current technology and social development is not always positive.
- Also, as mentioned in point 8, an event that is only fun will not make much of an impression on the citizens who attend it, and they will not remember what it was about within a month. In order to put down roots in the daily lives of the participants, it is necessary to create a good sense of tension.
- In public engagement, we talk about the present and the future, which is not always desirable, but it should not be too serious. We should have fun discussing and pondering with science fiction fancifulness how we as individuals and as a society can take it in a desirable direction and see if we can get new ideas from it.
- In addition, we encourage participants to realistically imagine how they would live and work in such a future world, so that they feel a sense of ownership, responsibility and commitment to their vision of the future.

Checklist

- Through civic engagement, there is time for participants to consider the negative aspects of the present and the foreseeable future.
- The facilitation is designed to prevent serious discussions in which participants link negative future issues to their own real-life challenges.
- Respecting participants' visions of future technologies and societies, even if they are far-fetched, and trying to give them a sense of ownership, responsibility and commitment by letting them imagine themselves living in that world.

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12. Explain the rationale of public engagement and disseminate its outcome

Explain why public engagement is needed and develop a variety of tools to disseminate its outcome to the participants and others.

- Conducting public engagement may be obvious to practitioners, but it is not always obvious to participants, coordinators and other involved parties.
- The why, when and who of the involvement needs to be carefully explained to those involved beforehand and, through them, the content and the organiser's intentions need to be communicated to the other involved parties.
- It is not enough to simply visit the site of the public engagement beforehand and make contact with the coordinator and potential participants. Practitioners must be aware that they are outside their community and must be as close as possible to the living space of the people they want to involve.
- It is important for practitioners to explain logically the significance of public engagement and to express their enthusiasm for it. It may be helpful to ask a coordinator with whom you have a personal relationship to act as a spokesperson for the others involved.

Checklist

- During or before the public engagement exercise, you have given a good explanation to the people involved about why you are doing it, and you have gained their understanding and acceptance.
- I am able to give not only a rational explanation of public engagement, but also my own enthusiasm, which is intrinsically motivated.
- I have shared with the coordinator in advance the significance of public engagement and the goals to be achieved, and have asked him/her to inform me so that I can involve a wider and more diverse group of people.

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