Our Growing Understanding of Community Engagement
Our Growing Understanding of Community Engagement

Based on our research, we understand community engagement to be “people working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future.” We want to focus on process(es) that bring people together; the broad engagement of organizations and people. We believe these processes can enable collective change (changing attitudes, building social capital, etc.) and create movement in communities. Good community engagement will build agreement around issues and create momentum for communities to address local issues. It includes achieving outcomes and creating solutions to community needs.

Community engagement also includes following a process that ensures communities determine local priorities, and all stakeholder groups are represented. Citizens need to be at the center of the community engagement process. This process ensures communities are empowered and have control over their resources and the decision-making process.

We also believe that valuable community engagement processes and outcomes can be ongoing or episodic. They are not limited by time. Both short-term and long-term community engagement projects can have dramatic impacts on communities.

We think that community engagement involves a diverse number of stakeholders and can include a number of sectors. Different people, groups and sectors can collaborate and work together to discuss ideas, create plans and implement solutions to community problems. Multisectoral collaboration can create dynamic and creative communities and foster networks and new relationships.

Through multisectoral collaboration all participants work together as equals to create solutions for their community. Therefore any player, including citizens, organizations, and government, can initiate community engagement, as long as the process works collaboratively with communities.

We find that our understanding of community engagement is best reflected in seven key criteria. These criteria show, at this time, our approach to community engagement.

Key criteria:
- A broad range of people are participating and are engaged
- People are trying to solve complex issues
- The engagement process creates vision, achieves results, creates movement and/or change
- Different sectors are included in the process
- There is a focus on collaboration and social inclusion
- The community determines local priorities
- There is a balance between community engagement processes and creating action
Background

Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement’s mission is to engage citizens in inspired action as they work together on behalf of their communities to create and realize bold visions for the future. We have a lot of experience helping people to collaboratively build communities that are caring, prosperous and healthy. For example, we formed Vibrant Communities in 2002 as a community-driven effort to reduce poverty in Canada by creating partnerships between people, organizations, businesses and governments. Vibrant Communities links up to 15 communities, from British Columbia to Newfoundland, in a collective effort to test the most effective ways to reduce poverty.

Tamarack is deliberate about building social capital at a national and local level. We invest directly in the social process and in local leadership. This helps to build relationships among people, foster trust and establish norms. We also frame and identify community issues and articulate the social process in a way that engages people from different sectors in the issue. Using a process that builds trust relationships and networks, we encourage citizens that are committed to improving their communities to work together to build communities that are caring, prosperous and healthy.

In the summer of 2002 we formed a learning circle to deepen our understanding of community engagement. We wanted to know who has written about community engagement and the different techniques for applying it. More importantly, we wanted to find great examples of community engagement and determine who we could partner with to advance our work. Over the course of the summer we researched these topics and held meetings with staff and external sources. Our research became a journey to understand community engagement.

Our work focused on three phases of research. The first Phase included a detailed literature review that uncovered literature on community engagement and documented key sources in an annotated bibliography. Phase two of the research documented examples of community engagement, while Phase three reviewed community engagement models, processes and tools.

We did this research for ourselves but thought it would be interesting and helpful to others. We recognize that this is a first step – we do not have all the answers and we expect this work to grow and change over time as our understanding of community engagement deepens. We will continue to search for and uncover new ideas and approaches on community engagement to further our work on the subject. We also encourage others to offer their input so that we can continue to grow and learn.

A Few Discoveries of Note

In the course of our research we found that community engagement is often cited as a method to improve communities by identifying and addressing local ideas, concerns and opportunities. It includes things like the involvement of the public in processes that affect them and their community.

Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement
www.tamarackcommunity.ca
We discovered that approaches to community engagement vary depending on the level of engagement one is trying to achieve. As the levels of engagement extend from consultation to empowerment, different community engagement strategies will be used. As a result, community engagement can be applied in a variety of ways.

Passive approaches inform people about decisions or consult with them by asking them questions. This approach however, does not bring the public into the decision-making process.

Proactive approaches on the other hand give more control over decision-making to the public. They encourage the public to participate in the development of action plans that meet their needs and interests. Communities are empowered to take on initiatives independently from external organizations. Both passive and proactive approaches are valuable for achieving community engagement. Each involves the public in some level of engagement.

Benefits of Community Engagement

We also found sources that listed different benefits of community engagement. From their perspective, the overall benefits of community engagement can include creating higher quality solutions, increasing conflict management and resolutions, strengthening a sense of community and creating communities that take a greater responsibility for what is happening in their area (Queensland Government, Department of Emergency Services (2002) The New South Wales Department of Planning (2003) and the Kirklees Metropolitan Council (2002)).

The Effective Interventions Unit was a particularly good source for community engagement benefits. They suggest that community engagement benefits organizations and communities. Community engagement benefits organizations in that it informs policy-making at the local level, improves the targeting and effectiveness of services, helps to measure how agencies and partnerships are performing, helps to build community ownership. They also suggest that community engagement benefits communities by involving those who might not be normally included, building community spirit and cooperative working and empowering individuals.

The Community Engagement Continuum

We found a continuum in a report written by the Effective Interventions Unit (2002) that illustrates the different levels of engagement. It shows how engagement can move through passive approaches such as community consultation to proactive approaches such as community development.
We found this engagement continuum helpful because it showed us how our approach to community engagement fits in context with other types of approaches. Using this continuum we are able to understand that our approach to community engagement is proactive. This helped us to realize our niche in community engagement work. Understanding this enables us to focus our research on finding examples and tools for fostering community empowerment.

**We Invite You On Our Journey**

This work represents a starting point, the “what we’ve learned so far” about community engagement. It provides a brief explanation of our approach to community engagement and the resources we’ve found that illustrate ways of creating empowered communities.

This research has helped us inform our current definition of community engagement and realize our place in the broad context of community development work. Our work on community engagement however, has only just begun. We will continue to collect information and our understanding and use of community engagement will evolve.

We hope that it provides others with new insight and ways of thinking about community engagement. Perhaps it will even inspire some to conduct their own community engagement strategies. We encourage people to contact us if they have any sources, examples, and ideas that they think we’ve missed so that we can learn and grow together.
Literature Review on Community Engagement
**Literature Review: Research Methodology**

Resources were reviewed from books, journals, websites, and presentations for the purpose of the research. The University of Waterloo library was used to access many of the current sources of literature. This was completed by accessing the University of Waterloo Trellis information system. This system enables the user to access library resources from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Guelph. Key word searches were used to search for books. Key words used in the system include “community” AND “engagement”, and “community development”.

“Community development periodicals” were also searched for, linking the researcher with the Community Development Journal and all electronic journals within the Trellis system. From this search over 240 sources were available on the subject of community engagement.

Other key words used include: “community engagement periodicals”, “community development Canada”, “community engagement”, “civic participation”, and “civic engagement”. They only accessed three useful documents for the research.

A search was also completed on the University of Waterloo E-Journals list. Key words were used to find journals relevant to community engagement research. The key words used include “journal of community” and “community psychology”. They uncovered the American Journal of Community Psychology, Journal of Community Psychology, Journal of Community Health, and the Journal of Housing and Community Development. Key word searches were completed within each journal for “community engagement”, “engagement”, “community development”, “civil society”, and “social capital”. No sources were found to be relevant to the purpose of Phase 1 of the research.

An Internet search was also completed to access web based resources on community engagement. Yahoo and Google were the two search engines used. Within each search engine the phrases “community engagement”, “definitions of community engagement”, “community engagement pdf’s” were searched for.
Introduction

Community engagement is cited as a method to improve communities by identifying and addressing local ideas, concerns and opportunities. It is used in a variety of different ways and is difficult to define. Community engagement can be passive (e.g. informing, consultation, and participation) and/or proactive (e.g. collaboration, empowerment and development).

We define community engagement as “people working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future.” However, we wanted to know how other people defined it and how our vision of community engagement fits within the current literature.

We set out to research existing bodies of work for definitions and examples of community engagement, in order to gain a better understanding of what it is, how it is being defined and in what ways it is being used. Through this process we hoped to achieve a deeper understanding of our own definition of community engagement and how our work can meet the needs of communities. Our research focused on a literature review on community engagement. Sources of information were considered relevant for the annotated bibliography if they included any of the following:

- Definitions of community engagement
- Models of community engagement
- Benefits of community engagement
- Examples of using the term community engagement
- Descriptions of community engagement principles and strategies
- Examples of the deliberate use of community engagement
- Ideas of local action and collaboration

Resources were reviewed from published information on community engagement. This included literature on community engagement and general concepts of community engagement. We found key publications and websites that met our research criteria and presented them in an annotated bibliography (that can be found later in this paper). We also included other useful sources in a reference list after the annotated bibliography entries. A list of key words and definitions related to community engagement were compiled and are available in Appendix 1.

The literature review is the first phase of our research on community engagement. We also completed research on community engagement examples, models, processes and tools.
Top 6 Most Valuable Documents

Numerous sources were uncovered during the literature review. However, six sources were considered the most relevant for meeting the purpose of the research. They include:

1. “Learning to Engage: Experiences with Civic Engagement in Canada”, Ottawa, Ontario


3. “Principles of Community Engagement”, Atlanta, Georgia.


Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography was developed from the most relevant literature sources uncovered during the literature review. The entries are organized geographically into three categories: Canadian, United States, and international sources. Within each category the most relevant document is provided first, followed by the next relevant, and so on. Each annotated bibliography entry explains the value of the document and a summary of its contents.
Sources from Canada:

―Learning to Engage: Experiences with Civic Engagement in Canada‖,
Ottawa, Ontario

Source:

Value/Summary: This paper describes ways in which the Canadian government and its citizens engage with each other. It documents Canada’s contribution to the Commonwealth Foundation’s Citizen and Governance Programme, which “identifies ways to strengthen, promote, encourage and catalyze the wide variety of initiatives by citizens to address issues and problems in their everyday lives.” The Canadian Policy and Research Network (CPRN) coordinated the Canadian contribution to this study and wrote their findings in this report.

A detailed description is given on the Canadian system of government. It describes The Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) and how the government is increasing its commitment for ensuring that the public is able to give input into the policy making process.

Six case studies are used to highlight different ways in which citizens and the government engage with each other in Canada. These case studies are excellent examples of civic engagement in Canada. The case studies show three different types of citizen-government engagement including 1) government initiated engagement, 2) citizen initiated engagement and 3) serious partnerships between governments and citizens. Each case study description includes background information on the problem, how citizens became engaged in the process, how the government fostered civic engagement, and what the final results were.

The document also suggests a model for engagement called the policy dialogue process. The CPRN used this model of engagement to discuss policy issues with approximately 3000 Canadians. The project was called ‘The Society We Want’. This paper discusses the project, its outcomes and lessons that were learned in the process. This is a potentially useful tool for governments to use when trying to engage the public in their work.

Lastly, the paper describes steps that could be taken to improve the relationship between citizens and the government. It discusses building capacity, setting ground rules, and ways of reporting and evaluating results.

Source:

Value: This paper is based on a meeting held in Pickering, Ontario in 1999 with service workers, people with disabilities and their family members concerned with building strong communities in Ontario. It is an example of using community engagement to foster local action. Community members are encouraged to work together towards a common goal while gaining help from associations and other people. A model of community engagement is used to explain this process.

Summary: This document argues that mobilizing political action and investing in engagement can build lives for people with disabilities and their families that offer security, dignity and involvement. Trends are outlined that highlight the importance of these actions.

Steps are described that outline what is necessary to form a foundation on which people with disabilities and their families can work towards a better life. They include: providing personal support, person-centered planning, responsive and flexible individual assistance, individual funding, transition of existing services, and community development.

Change is thought to occur by gathering people who are committed to working together, which will lead to a community engagement strategy that puts pressure on different levels of government. In this process cultural change occurs, resulting in reduced prejudice and changing service for the disabled. In addition, pressure is placed on local, provincial and federal politicians and civil servants to provide funding for further community engagement.

Community engagement emerges as people commit to taking action. This results in direct involvement of more people and associations in the lives of people with disabilities and their families. People are then encouraged to influence politicians and civil servants to acquire the resources they need to further engage the community and support people with disabilities. A community engagement model is used to illustrate this process. Possibilities for action are provided. They outline opportunities to encourage people to work together and work through the model of community engagement.
“Guide for Creating a Smart Community: Smart Communities Program – 2002”, Ottawa, Ontario.

Source:

Value: This guide provides a definition of community engagement, ideas for fostering community engagement in Canada, a list of five best practices of community engagement, and examples of community engagement in Canada.

Community engagement: “ongoing interactive process characterized by commitment to ever changing community needs and interests.”

It is believed that community engagement will result in the creation of new community relationships as people learn how to work together. The community engagement process is developed through the use of Steering Committees and Community Based Networks. This method may be a useful process for the reader to follow to help communities develop community engagement strategies.

Their five best practices of community engagement are useful for evaluating the community engagement process. The reader may want to use these as indicators of an effective community engagement process. Real life examples of each principle are provided.

Summary: This document is part of a guide for practical approaches to building ‘smart communities.’ Smart communities are “where leaders and stakeholders have formed alliances and partnerships to develop innovative ways to extract new economic and social value from electronic networks and the public Internet”. The goal of smart communities is to make the local community more attractive and competitive. This encourages people to live, invest and carry out business in the area. Networks and the Internet are tools considered to help build a better community. Smart community projects are established based on community goals, vision, and objectives. They have been useful for business, economic and tourism development, delivering services to the public, municipal government administration, and preserving cultural heritage.

Community engagement is considered as a key step to launching a smart community. The guide uses community engagement to engage community leaders and stakeholders. It describes how to create a Steering Committee and a Community Based Network that will gather resources and organize the public. The guide provides suggestions for recruiting good people, finding leadership within a community, developing a vision, creating consensus, and identifying the assets and needs of a community. The guide also provides a definition of community engagement, some rationale for using it, discusses best practices for community engagement and provides an example for each.
“A Snapshot on Sustainability: State of the Fraser Basin Report

Source:
Fraser Basin Council. A Snapshot on Sustainability: State of the
Fraser Basin Report January 2003. Vancouver, British Columbia:
Fraser Basin Council. 2003. Web access available at
www.fraserbasin.bc.ca

Value: This source provides indicators to measure community engagement. The reader
could use these indicators to develop their own ways to monitor community engagement.

Community engagement is about members of a community participating in the
decisions and actions that help to shape their community.

The report also suggests that community engagement is an important part of pursuing
sustainability. This could be a useful argument for why organizations should research,
promote and measure community engagement.

Summary: The purpose of this document is to report on the health of the Fraser Basin in
British Columbia. The report shows the results of a set of 16 sustainability indicators
created and used by the Fraser Basin Council to monitor the health of the Basin. The
report states that the health of the Basin is good but that there are some areas that need
attention to ensure a more sustainable future is created. The report outlines areas where
progress has been made as well as what areas need attention. The Council hopes the
report will increase public awareness and understanding of sustainability issues and
actions citizens can take to create a more sustainable way of life. The 16 sustainability
indicators will be used to track trends and create future reports on the Basin.

The report describes the Basin, its demographic and geographic characteristics, cities
within its boundaries, economic activity and wildlife content. These characteristics are
described to show the importance of the Basin and to illustrate the need for ensuring it
remains healthy.

Part of the report focuses on the results of the sustainability indicators on community
engagement. This section outlines the importance of studying community engagement,
illustrates the results of the indicators, provides suggestions for how people can get
engaged and contribute to decisions and actions in their community and lists the future
needs for the Council to address community engagement.

The sustainability indicators used for community engagement include: volunteer rates,
average number of hours volunteered, B.C voter turnout to federal and provincial
elections, donation rates, average annual donations and trends in giving in B.C.
“Georgia Basin Futures Project”, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Source:

Value: This source provides the reader with a Canadian example of community engagement. This will help the reader understand current definitions of community engagement, and how community engagement can be used. This source looks at how organizations can involve the public in sustainability research.

The purpose of community engagement “is to involve the public in decisions that will ultimately affect their lives”.

While this source promotes a public consultation approach, it should be noted that they promote local action, learning and grass roots change though action tools. These action tools provide citizens with sources of information to help them act upon ideas learned from the Georgia Basin Futures Project (GBFP). For example, one tool called Sustainability Tools and Resources (STAR) provides online tools and resources to help citizens increase the sustainability of their communities.

Summary: The Georgia Basin Futures Project (GBFP) is a 5-year research project that sees researchers, experts and community members working together to explore pathways to sustainability. It uses a computer model called QUEST to simulate sustainability scenarios for the Georgia Basin in Western Canada to the year 2040. The model is based on a ‘backcasting’ approach that explores the trade-offs and consequences of trying to reach a desirable future.

The key project goals are to increase public participation in the discussion of sustainable development policy issues and to create a database of public opinions, values etc. to understand how people feel about sustainability. From this, the project hopes to identify sustainable policy interventions, gain a better understanding of the connections between ecological, economic and social systems, and to evaluate the function of simulation tools towards increasing environmental education in society.

Community engagement is being used throughout the 5-year study to incorporate public views into the research process. In the first 2 years of the project, community engagement is used to identify issues that are of concern to the public. These issues are then incorporated into the design for the QUEST model. In the remaining 3 years
community engagement is used to generate public input on the scenarios that are developed from the model.

**Sources from the United States:**

“Principles of Community Engagement”, Atlanta, Georgia

**Source:**
Available at: [www.cdc.gov/phppo/pce/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/phppo/pce/index.htm)

**Value/Summary:** This document provides a guide for understanding the development of nine key principles of community engagement. The principles were created to guide community leaders and health professionals who are interested in involving communities in health issues.

The nine principles of community engagement will be valuable tools for readers interested in developing their own community engagement strategy. The key concepts used to create the principles were well argued and will be useful to anyone researching why community engagement is important, and how it should be applied.

This document also presents a list of success factors for community engagement. The factors include environmental, membership, process/structure, communication, purpose and resources.

Parts of this document promote a bottom up approach to community engagement. The document states “those working to engage the community can provide important tools and resources so that community members can act to gain mastery over their lives.” This theme carries over to one of the principles of engagement that explains that “no external entity should assume it can bestow on a community the power to act in it own self-interest.” This principle supports communities defining their own goals because by allowing them to ‘own’ their issues, a more successful community engagement strategy can be developed. This is useful for anyone interested in bottom up approaches to community engagement.

This source also provides a definition of community engagement, developed from the work of Fawcett et al 1995.

“Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.”
The last part of the document outlines eight examples of community engagement. Each case study describes their efforts to foster community engagement and how their example links to the nine principles of community engagement listed earlier in the document.


**Source:**


**Value:** This article is a main source for community engagement research. It is often found as a key source in community engagement definitions, guidebooks, and articles. For example, this research helped the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Townshend document develop their definitions for community engagement.

The context of this article presents a method for enhancing community capacity for influencing change. It therefore promotes a method to improve the community engagement process because it encourages an increase in local partnership’s ability to make change.

This article is also useful because it believes that community action and change are important outcomes of local partnerships. It incorporates community action and change within its empowerment framework.

This article promotes collaborative empowerment versus community betterment which is supportive for readers whose research focuses on community control and local action. “Collaborative empowerment begins with issues on the community’s agenda and emphasizes community control of the purpose and process” rather than partnerships for community betterment which “begin outside the community and operate under the control of researchers, grant makers, or larger institutions within the community.” (Himmelman, 1992 in Fawcett et al., 1995 p. 692).

**Summary:** The purpose of this article was to illustrate that collaborative partnerships allow us the chance to study and enhance community empowerment (gaining influence over things that matter to local partnerships). It demonstrates these points by presenting a model of community empowerment, describing a framework of the empowerment process for local partnerships, and outlining useful activities to foster empowerment.

The article argues that using community organizations and support groups to aid local partnerships can enhance the ability of those partnerships to foster community empowerment and cultivate community change. It illustrates this point by describing the experience of creating collaborative partnerships in three counties in Kansas. From these case stories the article suggests that collaborative partnerships encourage citizens to become involved in the development and implementation of changes to things that matter.
to them. The article focuses on the use of collaborative partnerships within the context of community health and development; however, the application of its contents is valuable for any type of community empowerment initiative.


Source:
Available at: http://www.netorious.com/commission/SB555/plan.asp

Value:
The document provides measures of community engagement. They may be useful for readers who want to monitor the process of community engagement processes. The document also includes a survey that was distributed to community members to understand family friendliness, community participation in town-hall meetings, Malheur county volunteerism, and Malheur County youth volunteerism. These were used as measures of community engagement. The survey and the measurements could be useful to anyone who wants to develop their own community engagement monitoring toolbox.

Community engagement: the process of getting the community involved in local efforts and activities. This provides another alternative approach to community engagement, which enables Tamarack to decide how they fit into the mix of organizations using community engagement.

Summary:
The Malheur County Comprehensive Plan for Children & Families 2002 is an executive summary of Malheur County’s work to create a “positive environment that nurtures all families”. The plan outlines how they engaged community members and partners to help them develop priorities to guide their work. Many agencies and citizens were involved in the process, which included responding to surveys, planning, reviewing and editing the Comprehensive Plan. With community input a total of 11 priorities were determined: 8 primary priorities, 2 secondary priorities and one ongoing priority. Examples of the priorities include: reducing incidents of family violence, increasing parental care, and increasing community engagement.

Increasing community engagement is considered a secondary priority for Malheur County. They will measure it “by the percentage of individuals residing in Malheur County who feel they are part of their community”. A survey was conducted in 2001 to determine the current state of community engagement in the County. Four measures were used to monitor community engagement. They include public opinion about family friendliness, community participation in town-hall meetings, Malheur County volunteerism, and Malheur County youth volunteerism.
“Community Engagement”, Minnesota, United States.

Source:
Available at: www.health.state.mn.us/communityeng

Value: These web pages provide another definition of community engagement.

Community engagement: “a process, not a program. It is the participation of members of a community in assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating solutions to problems that affect them. As such, community engagement involves interpersonal trust, communication, and collaboration. Such engagement, or participation, should focus on, and result from, the needs, expectations, and desires of a community's members”.

Summary: The Minnesota Department of Health has created a series of web pages that broadly discuss community engagement for the improvement of community health services. It provides information on a number of topics including the benefits, principles, examples, strategies and tools of community engagement. It also provides a number of bibliography web sites, and links to other organizations.
“Community Engagement”, Maryland, United States

Source:

Value: This power point presentation provides an example of the use of community engagement.

| Engagement: in active sense: That which engages or induces to a course of action; an inducement, motive |

The definition of engagement relates to anyone interested in supporting bottom up approaches for community engagement. This presentation sources research by key engagement author such as Fawcett et al. and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which indicates they are relevant sources for community engagement research. The presentation also discusses the dangers of not using community engagement and provides a rationale for promoting community engagement. For example, without community engagement they may create services irrelevant to the community and could exacerbate the community’s sense of powerlessness.

Summary: Townshend developed a power point presentation to discuss community engagement as an approach to encouraging involvement of stakeholders in the formulation of NASA’s SEEDS (Strategic Foundation of Earth Science Enterprise Data Systems). The goal of SEEDS is to establish a strategy for the evolution of the Earth Science Enterprise network of data systems and service providers.

The presentation suggests that in order for SEEDS to be successful they need to encourage involvement from all communities supplying, analyzing, adding value and using NASA’s Earth Science Enterprise Data.

Community engagement is described using the research of Fawcett et al., United States Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Queensland Government Department of Emergency Services and the Minnesota Department of Health. The presentation uses this information to discuss the levels of participation, why more participation is needed in the SEEDS process, what community engagement is, how it is approached, principles to achieving it, benefits to using it and the dangers of not doing it.

Community engagement is described as powerful method to bring about change that will improve the ability of people to use remotely sensed data. The presentation argues that if NASA doesn’t use community engagement in this process, they run the risk of harming the effective creation of SEEDS.
International Sources:


Source:

Value/Summary: This document is a toolkit to help stakeholders create, conduct and evaluate community engagement processes. Written in context of the Murray-Darling Basin in Australia, the document’s main audience is Basin stakeholders (all those interested in the Basin’s future). Valuable elements exist throughout the entire article.

This document describes in detail what makes up good practice community engagement.

Community engagement: “a wide range of practices suited to different situations or purposes, guided by a common set of values, principles and criteria.”

Using clear diagrams to illustrate this process it outlines the steps needed to achieve good practice. The document discussed each step in detail, describing the values for the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, and what it means to apply the principles and criteria.

Within the document principles of good practice community engagement first encourage action for change and then move towards learning and vision development. This is valuable for anyone interested in local action and bottom up engagement processes.

The document discusses different community engagement tools. It provides explanations of each tool, matches them to different aims of community engagement, provides an analysis of each tool for it’s ability to foster engagement, the number of people it will involve, and how challenging it is to apply. This guide is a useful framework for deciding which community engagement tool to use to achieve a desired outcome.

The guide also provides a decision-making cycle that outlines the different stages of the engagement process, how each tool can assist each stage, and how to move the community engagement process forward through to action.
Value/Summary: This document provides guidance on how to conduct effective community engagement. It is geared towards local and State environmental planning practitioners and anyone interested in improving community engagement in the New South Wales planning and development system. The document describes community engagement as a tool to consult the public to develop better decisions and policies. It is a valuable document for governments seeking to find ways of engaging the public in their work.

The term community engagement broadly captures public processes in which the general public and other interested parties are invited to contribute to particular proposals or policy changes.

A continuum is provided to describe the different levels of public impact. Readers will find this helpful for understanding the various typologies of community engagement. It is also helpful for deciding at what level of impact the reader hopes to engage the community. The continuum shows different ways that government can engage with its citizens.

Part B of the document describes the process of engagement. It outlines nine practice principles of engagement used by the NSW Planning system.

The practice principles are used for effective public consultation but could be useful for guiding community engagement strategies for local action.

The Five-Step Engagement Planning Cycle used by NSW Planning explains how to plan, organize, implement, and evaluate any engagement process. Each step is described in detail, questions to consider under each stage are outlined, and ways to go about answering those questions are provided.

A description of community engagement techniques and tools is provided. A table is provided to clearly illustrate how each technique matches the categories of engagement. An explanation of each technique, tips for using them are provided, and a checklist of things to achieve with each is given. Some explanations also include weaknesses of the technique, similar techniques to use, and sources for further reading.

83 potential sources of information are provided at the end of the document. A quick summary table is used to organize and display the sources. Each entry has a source location and URL’s for easy access to the documents.
Value: A rationale for engagement is provided. This is useful to anyone trying to argue why engagement strategies are beneficial and worth researching and implementing. A continuum of engagement is also illustrated. It describes different levels of engagement.

Sixteen principles of community engagement are listed following three headings: Planning, Commitment and Inclusiveness. They were designed for organizations that are trying to engage communities rather than communities hoping to engage themselves. Nonetheless, the principles are adaptable for local action and community use.

A number of community engagement techniques are described. They are helpful to anyone interested in different ways of applying community engagement. Each technique is described individually. A summary table is also available that concisely presents the techniques discussed in the document.

Summary: This is a guide for examining the principles and implementation of community engagement. While document focuses on community engagement applications for drug misuse in Scotland, its contents are useful for anyone interested in developing, designing, implementing, and/or evaluating community engagement.

Chapter 2 provides the reader with a description of key concepts of community engagement including ‘community’ and ‘engagement’. It also outlines a continuum of engagement and describes some rationale for using engagement.

Chapter 3 discusses principles of effective engagement. The Effective Interventions Unit developed them from its literature review on community engagement. Sixteen principles are listed under three headings: Planning, Commitment, and Inclusiveness.

Current practices for community engagement use by Scotland’s Drug Action Teams are described in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5 methods of community engagement are described. This includes descriptions of community engagement techniques, their strengths, weaknesses, examples of them being used and the materials required to use them.

The document ends with recommendations for conducting community engagement. It suggests that a variety of approaches should be used and that the techniques be evaluated periodically to ensure intended objectives are being met. It also recommends that an assessment be completed on the community engagement process to determine how it could be improved.
Value: This document provides a definition of community engagement.

Community engagement: “activities designed to give the local community an opportunity to contribute to decision making on [drug-related issues]” (Effective Interventions Unit, June 2002, p.1).

While the definition is in context of drug use in Scotland, it offers a glimpse of whom else is defining community engagement and how they are using it to engage the public.

The document suggests tools for engagement, and breaks down the definitions of community and engagement providing a clearer understanding of the foundations of community engagement. It also provides suggestions for evaluating community engagement, which could be useful for understanding how to measure the effectiveness of the community engagement process.

Summary: This document discusses the evaluation of community engagement strategies and activities. It provides a concise discussion of community engagement; how it’s defined, approaches to achieving it, ways to evaluate its processes and techniques and the different levels of engagement.

With an intended audience of people involved with or responsible for community involvement in decision-making processes, this document suggests that evaluation is an important element of a successful community engagement strategy. It indicates that it is possible to use a structured approach to evaluate community engagement strategies, approaches and exercises. It signifies that while few models are available to guide the evaluation process, by studying existing evaluations of different approaches to community engagement and by using basic principles of evaluation, a method for community engagement evaluation can be developed.

The document is created within the context of tackling drug related issues in Scotland. It provides two examples of technique evaluations, one for a jury on drugs, the other for a youth forum.
“Community Engagement Framework: Guidance and Templates for Area Committees”, Yorkshire, United Kingdom.

Source:  
Available at: www.kirkleesmc.gov.uk/you-kmc/kmc-howcouncilworks/area-committee/ComEngGuidance.pdf

Value: This document provides an example of how government can encourage community engagement. This is useful for organizations trying to determine how their work fits into current information on this subject.

Community engagement: “the whole span of activities that support the involvement of residents, community groups, service users, carers, and businesses, in decision-making processes, shaping and informing the way services are delivered, and working with the council to improve their communities.”

The guide provides methods for developing and reporting community engagement plans. Charts are used to assist the Local Action Committee’s with the development of their community engagement plans. Examples of methods to fulfill each community engagement stage are given.

The guide also provides a form to help implement and monitor community engagement plans.

The charts and forms could be used as guides for community engagement processes for action committees at the grass roots level. They could be adopted as tools and indicators for developing and monitoring the progress of the community engagement process.

Summary: Kirklees Metropolitan Council is implementing a community engagement and cohesion plan to engage local people in their decision-making processes. The goal is to use community engagement to help the council deliver services targeted towards local needs, help people understand and accept Council projects, and create a sense of ownership among the communities for the projects. Through this plan the Council hopes to minimize community tension and increase community cohesion.

Part of their strategy for implementing the community engagement and cohesion plan is to create Local Action Committees. They want them to implement community engagement strategies in their local area. This guide is intended to help the Local Action Committees develop and review their community engagement plans and to help the Kirklees Council keep track of the Committee’s actions.
“Models of Community Engagement”, Scotland, United Kingdom.

Source:

Value/Summary: This document identifies and explains different models of community engagement in an effort to assist community planning in Scotland. Community engagement is encouraged as a way for local authorities to understand their communities and provide services that are accessible and meet community needs. The goal of the community planning process is to find mechanisms for long-term community sustainability. The document presents different approaches to community engagement as a method to foster community sustainability.

This document provides a list of things to consider when developing a community engagement strategy. They include:
- Capacity – help communities develop skills they say they need
- Inclusion – engage the excluded, recognize diversity
- Resources – build on assets and resources the community has
- Community organization – work with and build more organizations
- Listening and learning – identify community views, learn from changes
- Effective participation – consider different levels of participation

Readers could use these considerations to develop their own set of parameters for developing community engagement strategies.

While discussing the use of effective participation this paper uses a table of participation typologies to explain the different levels of participation. This table could be useful to illustrate the boundaries of organization’s community engagement strategies and how their work relates to other engagement initiatives. This paper also describes eight different community engagement models. While only a brief paragraph is given on each one, these models could be interesting to investigate as methods for applying community engagement.

The final part of the paper discusses the importance of creating community organizations that will survive over the long term. In order to achieve this, the community engagement models need to build sustainability into them. Stages for community engagement are proposed as a means to achieving sustainability. They include identifying local needs, issues and assets, setting a development agenda, building capacity, learning lessons, and having support for the engagement process.

This document is an example of community engagement at the government level. However, the theme of this paper is to engage with communities rather than use them for consultation.
“Charter of Community Engagement”, Brisbane, Australia.

Source:

Value: This document provides an example of how government can use community engagement to create relationships with communities. This document provides a definition of community engagement following the research of Fawcett and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Community engagement: “the process of working collaboratively with groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting their well-being.”

This article also outlines a rationale for using community engagement. It describes community engagement as a powerful tool to improve community’s quality of life and a catalyst for changing policies and practices. It also states that it strengthens community capacity to take action and produce positive and sustainable local change.

Benefits of using community engagement are also described. The benefits include: higher quality solution, more effective use of resources, improved learning by agencies, conflict management and resolution, strengthened sense of community and more cooperative implementation. These can be used to support community engagement research and the implementation of community engagement strategies by government.

Summary: The theme of this document is that better solutions result when communities and government are engaged in information sharing. It discusses this theme in the context of the Queensland Government’s Department of Emergency Services Community Engagement Unit. The Community Engagement Unit is using community engagement to improve the delivery of emergency services, create stronger relationships with local communities, and increase community involvement in decision-making processes. They created this document to inform emergency services management, staff and stakeholders about the unit’s responsibilities.

The document provides a definition of community engagement, explains some of the rationale for using it, and indicates the benefits of using it. It also presents the process for community consultation that is adopted by the Community Engagement Unit and it lists methods used by the unit to seek community input.

The document suggests that the level of community engagement is directly related to the quality of the results required. It describes levels of public consultation needed to assist engagement. They include information sharing, response seeking, community input and planning, and cooperative decision-making and planning.
**“Community Engagement Division Directions Statement”, Brisbane, Australia.**

**Source:**

**Value:** This document provides an example of community engagement from a government perspective. This helps us understand the types of organizations that are using community engagement. While this source does not provide a good example of local action it does provide another definition of community engagement and provides insight into another method for achieving effective engagement.

Community engagement: “refers to arrangements for citizens and communities to participate in the processes used to make good policy and to deliver on programs and services.”

**Summary:** This document explains the role and responsibilities of the Queensland Governments, Department of the Premier and Cabinet’s Community Engagement Division. It describes the division’s vision, definition of community engagement, principles of engagement, goals, role and priorities.

For the division, community engagement is used to increase public participation in government decision-making. They feel that engaging communities with government, better policies can be created and new sources of information, ideas and resources can be uncovered.

The division adopts five principles of engagement to foster community engagement. They include inclusiveness, reaching out, mutual respect, integrity and affirming diversity. All of the principles work to improve the collaboration of communities and the Queensland Government.

The Division’s role is to make the Queensland State Parliament more accessible to the public. They will work with other government agencies, communities and business organizations to improve community engagement practices. They will also provide advice to the Premier and Cabinet on community engagement issues and work with others to build its capacity to lead community engagement.
Useful Resources

The following is a list of additional sources of information discovered during the literature review. They point the reader towards potentially useful publications and resources on concepts related to community engagement. The sources are divided into different subgroups to provide direction on their contents.

Community Building


Community Engagement and Education


Community Engagement and Health


Community Engagement and Sustainability


Community Development


Citizen Participation


Empowerment


**Neighbourhood Associations**


**Neighbourhood Planning**


**Social Capital**


Appendix 1: Supportive Key Terms and Definitions

Community Engagement

- Community engagement is “people working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future.” (Tamarack, 2003)

- Community engagement is “an ongoing interactive process characterized by commitment to ever-changing community needs and interests”. (Industry Canada, 2002, Available at http://smartcommunities.ic.gc.ca/best/bp-engagement_e.asp)

- Community engagement is about members of a community participating in the decisions and actions that help to shape their community. (Fraser Basin Council, 2003)

- The purpose of community engagement is to involve the public in decisions that will ultimately affect their lives. This requires interaction and communication between citizens, scientists and policy-makers. (Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, 2003, Available at http://www.basinfutures.net/about_gbfp/project_components/community_engagement.cfm)

- Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the effectiveness (well-being) of those people. (Fawcett et al., 1995; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997)

- Community Engagement can be defined as “the process of getting the community involved in local efforts and activities (Malheur Commission on Children and Families, 2002, Available at http://www.netorious.com/commission/The_MCCF/commission_definitions.asp)

- “Community engagement is a process, not a program. It is the participation of members of a community in assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating solutions to problems that affect them. As such, community engagement involves interpersonal trust, communication, and collaboration. Such engagement, or participation, should focus on, and result from, the needs, expectations, and desires of a community's members”. (Minnesota Department of Health, 2002, Available at http://www.health.state.mn.us/communityeng/)

- Community engagement is “a wide range of practices suited to different situations or purposes, guided by a common set of values, principles and criteria.” (Aslin and Brown, 2002)

- “The term community engagement broadly captures public processes in which the general public and other interested parties are invited to contribute to particular proposals or policy changes. Community engagement has the potential to go beyond
merely making information available or gathering opinion and attitudes. It entails a more 
active exchange of information and viewpoints between the sponsoring organization and 
the public, however this public is defined.” (PlanningNSW, 2003, Available at 

- Community engagement is “activated designed to give the local 
community an opportunity to contribute to decision making on drug-related issues.” 
(Effective Interventions Unit, June 2002)

- “Community engagement is the overall term used to refer to the whole 
span of activities that support the involvement of residents, community groups, service 
users, carers, and businesses, in decision-making processes, shaping and informing the 
way services are delivered, and working with the council to improve their communities” 
(Kirklees Metropolitan Council, 2000, Available at http://www.kirkleesmc.gov.uk/you-
kmc/kmc-howcouncilworks/area-committee/ComEngGuidance.pdf)

- “Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with 
groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations 
to address issues affecting their well-being” (Queensland Government, Department of 
Emergency Services, 2001, Available at 

- “Community engagement refers to arrangements for citizens and 
communities to participate in the processes used to make good policy and to deliver on 
programs and services.” (Queensland Government, Department of the Premier and 
Cabinet, 2001, Available at 

**Collaborative Partnerships**

- “Citizens join together to enhance their power to transform the 
environment through actions that affect the behaviour of others.” (Giddens, 1979 in 
Fawcett et al., 1995, p. 694)

**Collaborative Empowerment vs. Community Betterment**

- “Collaborative empowerment begins with issues on the community’s 
agenda and emphasizes community control of the purpose and process” rather than 
partnerships for Community betterment – which “begin outside the community and
operate under the control of researchers, grant makers, or larger institutions within the community.” (Himmelman, 1992 in Fawcett et al., 1995, p. 692)

**Community**

- A community is people living in the same geographical area, people with similar characteristics (e.g. age, gender or ethnicity), groups who come together with a common interest, the wider public. (Effective Interventions Unit, June 2002, p.1, Effective Interventions Unit, Jan 2002, p.7)

- Community may mean the business field people work in or a group that people feel socially connected to (Ministry of Children and Family Development Child and Family Steering Committee on Community Governance, 2002, p.1).

- “A community is a group of people who are socially interdependent, who participate together in discussion and decision making, and who share certain practices that both define the community and are nurtured by it” (Bellah, Madesen, Sullican, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985 From Ministry of Children and Family Development Child and Family Steering Committee on Community Governance, 2002, p.6)

- “A community is a group of two or more people that have been able to accept and transcend their differences regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds (social, spiritual, educational, ethnic, economic, political etc.). This enables them to communicate effectively and openly and to work together toward goals identified as being for the common good.” (Foundation for Community Engagement, n.d From Ministry of Children and Family Development Child and Family Steering Committee on Community Governance, 2002, p.6)

- “A community is a relatively self-sufficient population, residing in a limited geographic area, bound together by feelings of unity and interdependency” (Munon, 1968 From Ministry of Children and Family Development Child and Family Steering Committee on Community Governance, 2002, p.6)

- “A community is a group of people lined by a communications structure supporting discussion and collective action.” (Farrington & Pine, 1997 From Ministry of Children and Family Development Child and Family Steering Committee on Community Governance, 2002, p.6)

- “People who live within a geographically defined area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live.” (Mattessich and Monsey, 1997 From Ministry of Children and Family Development Child and Family Steering Committee on Community Governance, 2002, p.2 – Also used by Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.56)
Community Development

- Community Development definitions share the common elements of a process of bringing people together to achieve a common goal, usually related to changing the quality of life. Some definitions involve the process of building networks and improving the capacity of individuals and organizations (Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p. 57).

- Community development is “a group of people in a locality initiating a social action process (i.e. planned intervention) to change their economic, social, cultural, and/or environmental situation.” (Christenson and Robinson, 1989 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.57)

- Community development is “a deliberate, democratic, developmental activity; focusing on an existing social and geographical grouping of people; who participate in the solution of common problems for the common good.” (Cawley, 1984, in Christenson and Robinson, 1989 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.58)

- Community development is “the process of local decision making and the development of programs designed to make [the] community a better place to live and work” (Huie, 1976 in Christenson and Robinson, 1989 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.58).

- Community development is “an educational approach which would raise levels of local awareness and increase the confidence and ability of community groups to identify and tackle their own problems” (Darby and Morris, 1975, in Christenson and Robinson, 1989 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.57).

- Community development is “the active involvement of people at the level of the local community in resisting or supporting some cause or issue or program that interests them.” (Ravitz, 1982, in Christenson and Robinson, 1989 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.59).

- Community development is “acts by people that open and maintain channels of communication and cooperation among local groups.” (Wilkinson, 1979, in Christenson and Robinson, 1989 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.59)

- Community development is “an orchestrated attempt to influence a person or a system in relation to some goal which an actor desires.” (Tropman and Erlich, in Cox et al., 1979 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p. 59)

- Community development is “the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. This complex of processes is, therefore, made up to two essential elements: the
participation by the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help and make these more effective. It is expressed in programs designed to achieve a wide variety of specific improvements.” (The United Nations, 1963, in Christenson and Robinson, 1989 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.59)

**Community Organizing**

- “Community organizing refers to the process of bringing community members together and providing them with the tools to help themselves. Community organizing is a strategy for building communities and for community development.” (Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.60)

- “We conceive of community organizing as a long-term, relationship-building and capacity-building process that attempts to identify, include, and build upon a range of key resources, both internal and external to the community…The process includes: the identification of key local resources, the gathering of information about the community context, the development and training of local leaders to prepare them to serve effectively as representatives of the community and as full partners in an initiative, and the strengthening of the network of the various interests both internal and external to a community.” (Joseph and Ogletree, 1996 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.60)

**Community Building**

- “Community building generally refers to building the social networks within the community, and developing group and individual problem-solving and leadership skills.” (Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.60)

- Community Building is “Any identifiable set of activities pursued by a community in order to increase community social capacity.” (Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.60)

- “Community building is an ongoing comprehensive effort that strengthens the norms, supports, and problem-solving resources of the community.”(Committee for Economic Development, 1995, in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.60)

- Community building is “the practice of building connections among residents, and establishing positive patterns of individual and community behaviour based on mutual responsibility and ownership.” (Gardner in Leiterman, 1993, p.6 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997,p. 60).
“Community building concerns strengthening the capacity of neighbourhood residents, associations, and organizations to work, individually and collectively to foster and sustain positive neighbourhood change.” (Kubisch et al., 1995 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.60)

- For individuals, community building focuses on both the capacity and ‘empowerment’ of neighbourhood residents to identify and access opportunities and effect change, as well as on the development of individual leadership.” (Kubisch et al., 1995 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.60)

**Capacity**

- “The definitions of capacity can include any one or all of the following elements: the commitment and motivation a community has, the ability to organize and utilize resources, the ability to understand and analyze problems, and the skills to solve problems together.” (Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.61)

- “Capacity is being able to successfully cope with problems of increasing variety and complexity.” (Rubin and Rubin, 1986, in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.62)

**Social Capacity**

- Social capacity is “the extent to which members of a community can work together effectively.” (Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p. 61)

**Capacity Building**

- Capacity building is “the ability of residents to organize and mobilize their resources for the accomplishment of consensual defined goals.” (Christenson and Robinson, 1989, in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.61)

- “Capacity building…describes activity to enhance leadership skills, group problem solving, collaborative methods, and substantive understanding of community assets, problems and opportunities among organized, participating community residents.” (McNeely, 1996, p.87 in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.62)

**Social Capital**

- Social capital “refers to the collective value of all "social networks" [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other ["norms of reciprocity"]”. (Putnam, 2000 Available at http://www.bowlingalone.com/socialcapital.php3)
- “Social capital refers to the resources such as skills, knowledge, reciprocity, and norms and values that make it easier for people to work together.” (Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p. 62)

- “To Putnam, social capital signifies the measurable number and density of a society’s human connections and memberships that connect us with civil society.” (McLean, Schultz and Steger, 2002, p.1)

- Social capital is the shared knowledge, understandings, and patterns of interaction that a group of people bring to any productive activity (Coleman, 1988; Putnam et al. 1993, in Pierce and Dale, 1999, p.193)

- Social capital “is the ability of a people to work together for common purposes in groups, organizations, and communities and is a harmonious commingling [sp] of trust, viable channels of communications, and norms and sanctions (Coleman, 1989; Putnam, 1993 in Neace, 1999, p.150)

**Community Competence**

- “Community competence is a way to define how a well-functioning community behaves” (Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.63)

- “A competent community is one in which its various parts are able to:
  - Collaborate effectively in identifying the problems and needs of a community
  - Achieve a workable consensus on goals and priorities
  - Agree on ways and means to implement the agreed-upon goal
  - Collaborate effectively in the required activity”
  (Cottrell, 1976, in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.63)

**Empowerment**

- Empowerment is “to give official authority or legal power to…To promote the self-actualization of influence of.” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1993, in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.63)

- “Empowerment is obtained by building individual capacity through mobilizing resources.” (Rubin and Rubin, 1986, in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.63)

- “Empowerment is the intentional ongoing process, centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation through which people lacking in a proportional share of the resources gain greater access to and control over those resources.” (Cornell Empowerment Project, 1989, in Mattessich and Roy, 1997, p.63)
- “Empowerment refers to the process of gaining influence over events and outcomes of importance.” (Fawcett and White et al., 1994; Rappaport, 1981 in Fawcett et al., 1995, p.678)

- “Empowerment signifies the gaining of community competence – the skills to make decisions that people can agree on and enact together” (Rothman, 1968 in Rothman, Erlich and Tropman, 1995, p. 42)

- “Empowerment means to acquire objective, material power – for residents to be an equal party in decision-making bodies such as agency boards or municipal commissions, or to have the political clout to directly affect decisions made by these bodies.” (Rothman, 1968 in Rothman, Erlich and Tropman, 1995, p. 42)

**Community Empowerment**

- Community empowerment is “the process of gaining influence over conditions that matter to people who share neighborhoods, workplaces, experiences, or concerns.” (Fawcett et al., 1995, p.679)

**Community Action**

- “Community action consists of actions taken by leadership and membership to make changes related to the mission of the initiative.” (Fawcett et al., 1995, p.682)

**Community Change**

- “Community change consists of new or transformed programs, policies, or practices related to the mission of the initiative.” (Fawcett et al., 1995, p.682)

**Neighbourhood Associations**

- Neighbourhood associations are “place-based collective organizations formed to address local interests that residents share” (Rabrenovic, 1996, p.2)

**Neighbourhood Planning**

- Neighbourhood planning is when “community residents develop plans and programs for themselves.” (Checkoway, 1984, in Rothman, Erlich and Tropman, 1995, p.314)

- Neighbourhood planning can also be viewed as a process of community development. It may involve steps to identify neighbourhood problems and issues; formulate goals and objectives; collect and analyze data; and develop and implement plans. But it may also involve efforts to sweep the streets, knock on doors, pack a public
hearing, and confront the powerholders.” (Checkoway, 1984, in Rothman, Erlich and Tropman, 1995, p.322)

**Deliberative Dialogue/Public Deliberations**


**Civil Society**

- Civil Society “refers to the kind of character and life of a society that occur in the social space between the individual family and the state.” (Rau, 1991; Shils, 1997; Walzer, 1991 in Neace, 1999, p.150)

**Civic Participation**

– Civic participation can be defined as “people working together to discuss community needs and bring about changes within their community.” (Kang and Kwak, 2003, p.89)

**Civic Engagement**

- "Civic engagement means an institutional commitment to public purposes and responsibilities intended to strengthen a democratic way of life in the rapidly changing Information Age of the 21st century." (University of Minnesota Task Force on Civic Engagement in Campus Cares, Viewed May 20,2003 Available at http://www.campuscares.org/serve/definitions3.html)

- Civic engagement can be defined as “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern”. (Michael Delli Carpini, Director, Public Policy, The Pew Charitable Trusts in in Campus Cares, Viewed May 20,2003 Available at http://www.campuscares.org/serve/definitions3.html)

- "Civic engagement may be defined as the means by which an individual, through collective action, influences the larger society.” Elizabeth Van Benschoten, 2001 in Campus Cares, Viewed May 20,2003 Available at http://www.campuscares.org/serve/definitions3.html)

- "Participation in voluntary associations along with activities such as voting and reading a newspapers." (Putnam in Campus Cares, Viewed May 20,2003 Available at http://www.campuscares.org/serve/definitions3.html)
Community Engagement Examples
For the purpose of this research, resources from books, journals, and websites were reviewed. Sources were first used from our literature review on community engagement. Those sources were found using the University of Waterloo library Trellis information system. This system enables the user to access library resources from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Guelph. Additional sources were located from web-based resources generated by Yahoo and Google. Key words used within the search engines included “community engagement examples”, “community engagement stories” and “community engagement pdf’s”.

Brainstorming sessions with Tamarack partners also identified potential sources. These discussions led the researcher to the following sources which contained helpful examples: Sustainable Communities Network, The National Civic League, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, The Aspen Institute, UN-Habitat Human Settlements Programme, Vibrant Communities on the Tamarack website, Vision 2020, and the North End Renewal Corporation.
Introduction

We wanted to find out what people are doing to improve their communities so we looked far and wide for examples of community engagement. Through a search of previously completed research, the web, and through talking to people, we found a number of inspiring stories of community action.

We used our definition of community engagement in combination with characteristics of community engagement that resonate with us, as criteria to determine good examples of community engagement. We started by using our current definition of community engagement: “people working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future.”

Then we tried to find examples related to other key features of community engagement that resonate with us. The key features of community engagement are:

- A broad range of people are participating and are engaged
- People are trying to solve complex issues
- The engagement process creates vision, achieves results, creates movement and/or change
- Different sectors are included in the process
- There is a focus on collaboration and social inclusion
- The community determines local priorities
- There is a balance between community engagement processes and creating action.

We looked for stories that included local, collective action where people learn as they work towards common goals. We wanted to find examples of communities and people working separately from established organizations and governments that might control their decisions and resources. Our hope is that the examples show people the power of community engagement and inspire them to take action in their own communities. We realize that additional examples of community engagement exist and that this list is not exhaustive. Nonetheless, these are the examples that we found that relate to our definition and criteria of community engagement. If you have any ideas about other examples we should look into we’d love to hear from you.

Great Examples of Community Engagement

Five examples were chosen from the numerous case studies found on community engagement. They highlight some of the excellent work being completed on the subject.

1. “Vibrant Communities”, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
   Available at: http://www.vibrantcommunities.ca/

Vibrant Communities encourages communities to work together to develop community visions and create plans for collective action. This meets our criteria for creating a vision and having people working collaboratively and as a collective. It also encourages people and groups to connect that might not otherwise come together, which meets the criteria to
have a high degree of social inclusion. The criterion for involving different sectors is also met through the multi-sector collaboration of different people, groups and sectors as they begin talking to each other and become open to new ideas. This creates dynamic and creative communities and fosters networks and new relationships.

Vibrant Communities was started in 2002 as a community-driven effort to reduce poverty in Canada by creating partnerships between people, organizations, businesses and governments. Vibrant Communities links up to 15 communities, from British Columbia to Newfoundland, in a collective effort to test the most effective ways to reduce poverty.

Together, these communities make up the Pan-Canadian Learning Community. They hold regular teleconferences and use regional and national forums to discuss local efforts to reduce poverty and develop solutions by learning from each other’s experience. Within the next year, five of these communities will start comprehensive initiatives to reduce poverty in their communities. The project is sponsored by Tamarack, in partnership with the Caledon Institute of Social Policy and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

Vibrant Communities requires people to participate in an engagement process to solve the complex issue of poverty. The initiative’s community engagement process operates locally and nationally according to key principles that focus on developing trusting relationships among networks of people working together on a key issue (i.e. poverty reduction). It is a unique approach to poverty reduction that allows communities to learn from and help each other.

Each community has a lead organization that acts as the primary representative in the Learning Community. They meet regularly on the Learning Community and also work within their own communities to recruit partners, build local support for new anti-poverty strategies, and pass on what they’ve learned from other Vibrant Communities members. To find out more about Vibrant Communities go to the Vibrant Communities website: http://www.vibrantcommunities.ca/. To find out what each member is up to click on the individual community updates via http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s4.html.

2. “North End Renewal Corporation (NECRC)”, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Available at: www.edworks.com/pdf/papers/MW130120.pdf

We found this example significant because it is community driven, grassroots action that is ongoing. People from the community and different sectors helped create the NECRC. They worked collaboratively to create a plan for the community to solve the complex problems facing Winnipeg’s north end. The NECRC has produced a number of inspiring results including developing a career assistance office, redeveloping properties, reducing commercial income tax, and creating community gardens. This article details the creation of the NECRC and its plans in a clear step-by-step explanation. Other communities can learn from the NECRC’s work to create their own approaches for community engagement.
This article provides a description of Winnipeg’s North End Renewal Corporation (NECRC). NECRC was formally incorporated in 1998 after Tom Simms and Garry Loewen, residents of Winnipeg, gathered community and organizational leaders together to create a community development plan to help the area’s poor population and struggling economy. NECRC’s plan for community renewal includes promoting cultural diversity, strengthening relationships and understanding between cultural groups, stimulating economic development, and improving employment opportunities, housing, and the safety and image of the community.

3. “Quint Development Corporation” and “Core Neighbourhood Development Council”, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada
Available at: [www.caledoninst.org/PDF/894598407.pdf](http://www.caledoninst.org/PDF/894598407.pdf) and [www.tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s5_saskatoon.html](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s5_saskatoon.html)

We think Quint is a useful example of community engagement because promotes a bottom up approach to community engagement and use priorities of the local community to guide its work. Created at a grassroots level, Quint has worked hard to plan and implement community improvement projects. Their commitment for including all members of the community in the creation of a community defined strategic plan is an inspiration for any organization trying to engage their communities.

These sources profile the creation and beginning activities of the Quint Development Corporation in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It started in 1995 by concerned area residents to address poverty, and create a community economic development strategy. Quint focuses on enabling minority or low-income groups to pool their talents and resources to create ownership, opportunity, jobs, training, income, stability and self-worth for themselves and other community members. Their community economic development approach uses community interests as a guide for improving the local economy.

As of 2001, the Quint Development Corporation has helped facilitate the purchase and renovation of homes for 50 families and the creation of seven housing co-ops. In addition, Quint has also created a ‘Support for Small Business Program’ to help low-income community members in starting and owning their own business, or community and co-operative enterprises. They also initiated and led a process that brought people together around the vision of strengthening the quality of life in core neighbourhoods in Saskatoon. From this process the Saskatoon Core Neighbourhood Development Council was developed. Partners include government, community organizations, and businesses, many of who have been involved in the work for over a year.

An important part of the CDNC’s work has been community consultations. They consulted with over 300 community members and stakeholders for almost a year to develop a community defined strategic plan to improve the core neighbourhoods. A list of goals and priorities was created from this work to help focus the direction of the CDNC.
4. “Opportunities 2000”, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
   Available at: www.op2000.org/Final%20evaluation%2028-09-01%20Eric.pdf

We think Opportunities 2000 (OP2000) is a good example of community engagement because they engage collaboratively with different sectors including the public, businesses, government and voluntary sector groups on the complex problem of reducing poverty. OP2000 has also achieved results by assisting nearly 1700 families. OP2000 fosters social inclusion by including low-income leaders on its leadership roundtable and receiving feedback on their decisions and projects from groups of low-income residents. Community priorities help guide the objectives of OP2000. OP2000 process also involves creating and following a mission and vision.

OP2000 was created in 1997 by Lutherwood-CODA as a way to achieve and coordinate local action to reduce poverty in Waterloo Region. Their work involves engaging with nonprofit organizations, businesses, government, and low-income earners to create poverty reduction strategies.

OP2000 works with different sectors to solve the complex problem of poverty in the Waterloo Region. Members of OP2000 and their Leadership Roundtable work collaboratively and determine their priorities based partially on community input.

From 1997 to December 2000, 87 OP2000 partners launched a total of 47 different projects that assisted nearly 1700 people on their journey out of poverty. This was achieved by helping people obtain new or improved employment, start or expand small businesses, participate in training or education programs, expand their financial savings and/or improve their housing.

   Available at: www.sustainable.org/casestudies/SIA_PDFs/SIA_connecticut.pdf

Vision’s goal was to help the community define priorities for its future and help them implement them into the agendas of existing or new organizations. They disbanded in 1999 but while in existence they accomplished a number of tasks that engaged the community in local action. People participate in a collaborative effort, involving different sectors to set community priorities to solve complex issues. While only a short-term project, Vision helped motivate the community and create change. They also used a visioning process that included a large number of community members. Community organizations throughout the Greater New Haven area have absorbed Vision’s ideas and have been using them to create community based responses to local issues.

This article describes the Vision for a Greater New Haven, a community generated process for creating and implementing community goals. Members of the New Haven religious community and the Chamber of Commerce started Vision for a Greater New Haven in 1993. The program began by bringing together local leaders to discuss plans for the community. A Steering Committee was formed including 22 people from
different sectors of the community. They used three steps to develop and implement community priorities, generate ideas, develop objectives, and implement the plans.

The visioning process was held with approximately 2500 community members from a wide range of backgrounds, to generate ideas for the future of New Haven. From these ideas community goals and recommendations were established, priorities were voted on and action groups were created to begin the implementation process. The priorities of the program included: improving the waterfront, rehabilitating housing units, developing a regional transportation authority, creating an international arts festival in New Haven, and promoting understanding among leaders in the community.

List of Community Engagement Examples:

Here are more examples of community engagement at work (grouped thematically). A URL is provided to make it easier to find out more about each example.

Aboriginal Issues

Grandview/?Uuqinak’uuh (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada)

- Teachers and administrators of the Grandview/?Uuqinak’uuh Elementary School in Vancouver, British Columbia came together in 1996 to revitalize the school. Working with community members and students the revitalization project included the development of an integrated computer assisted program, improving literacy and mathematical skills, and rebuilding the community. In one case, consultations were held with staff, students and community residents, for over a year, to plan the creation of green space and community gardens on school grounds. As a result of their effort Grade 1 literacy rates increased from 10-60% and there has been a decline in negative student behaviours. The Grandview/?Uuqinak’uuh Elementary School revitalization provides a case study of grassroots local action that has seen inspiring results. It uses community priorities to guide its projects and ensures social inclusion throughout its planning process.

- Available at: [www.caledonist.org/Abstracts/894598881.htm](http://www.caledonist.org/Abstracts/894598881.htm)

The Whitefeather Forest Initiative (Pikangikum, Ontario, Canada)

- The Whitefeather Forest Initiative (WFI) was born in 1997 out of a local idea to develop a community forestry opportunity within some of the land of the Pikangikum First Nation people. It is “a strategy for community-lead cross-cultural collaboration and consensus-building in the development of the Whitefeather Forest Area in Pikangikum’s ancestral lands.” It is an example of proactive community engagement where a community has gathered around an idea and achieved significant outcomes as a result of their vision. The WFI promotes multisectoral collaboration between the community, government, business, and non-profit organizations. Through this initiative the Pikangikum people take the lead in managing the forests and secure the primary economic benefits of the logging and the establishment of protected areas. Local youth have
become engaged in the process by documenting the elders oral traditions into a research program, digitally mapping the Whitefeather Forest Planning Area, and creating an atlas to use for land-use planning.


**Community Economic Development**

North End Renewal Corporation (Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada)

- NECRC was formally incorporated in 1998 after Tom Simms and Garry Loewen, residents of Winnipeg, gathered community and organizational leaders together to create a community development plan to help the area’s poor population and struggling economy. NECRC work is significant to us because it is community driven, grassroots action that is ongoing. People throughout the community and different sectors helped create the NECRC. They worked collaboratively to create a plan for the community to solve the complex problems facing Winnipeg’s north end. The NECRC has produced a number of inspiring results including developing a career assistance office, redeveloping properties, reducing commercial income tax, creating community gardens, renovating buildings and repairing exteriors, and creating a community policing plan. The creation of the NECRC and its plans follow a clear, step-by-step process that engaged the community. Lessons can be learned from this explanation to develop approaches for other communities to follow.

- Available at: www.cedworks.com/pdf/papers/MW130120.pdf

Quint Development Corporation (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada)

- The Quint Development Corporation in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan was started in 1995 by concerned area residents to address poverty reduction, and create a community economic development strategy. Their community economic development approach uses community interests as a guide for improving the local economy. The Quint Development Corporation provides an example of ongoing community engagement. Created at a grassroots level, Quint has worked hard to plan and implement community improvement projects. Their work provides an example of the use of community consultation and multi-sector partnerships to guide community engagement strategies.

- Available at: www.caledoninst.org/PDF/894598407.pdf

**Community Safety**

The Alberta Teachers’ Association Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) Project (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada)

- SACS is a violence prevention and character-building project for youth. It works collaboratively with different sectors including the public, community organizations, and agencies to make decisions, develop goals and implement
strategies. Results of their work include reductions in violent behaviour and increased academic achievement. They also have developed curriculum materials, videos and workshops for schools, students, teachers, parents and other adults. It is a good example of community engagement because it is a multisectoral engagement project successfully working towards solving complex community issues.

- Available at: www.bestpractices.org/cgi-bin/bp98.cgi?cmd=detail&id=20087&key=rpybfkbfe

Community Planning

Nos Quedamos/We Say (South Bronx, U.S.A)
- Nos Quedamos is a non-profit organization that helps residents of the Melrose Commons area of South Bronx remain in their neighbourhood during urban renewal processes and play an active role in determining the process of development. They are a multisector coalition of homeowners, tenants, property owners, institutions, and business people. They encourage involvement with their work and use inclusive engagement strategies such as working groups, surveys, and meetings. As a result of their efforts over $50 million in development resources have been targeted to Melrose Commons.
- Available at: www.sustainable.org/casestudies/SIA_PDFs/SIA_New_York.pdf

The Greater St. Joseph Community Plan (St. Joseph, U.S.A)
- Community residents created the Greater St. Joseph Community Plan in 2001 after a yearlong community planning process. The process began with the creation of a 30 person Steering Committee that used focus groups and surveys to gather input and identify key issues from over 3,500 community members. Community priorities were presented to the public at which time the community could give feedback and Issue Area Teams were created. Goals were created for each Issue Area Team and implementation began. Community partners from a number of sectors including government, business and educational institutions are used to help implement the plan. This is a unique example of a community engagement process that involved a large number of participants. Direction for the community plan was provided by the priorities of the local residents.
- Available at: www.greatthingshappen.org
Vision 2020 (Hamilton, Ontario, Canada)
- Vision 2020 began in 1992 as a result of a 2 ½ year community consultation process. Residents, City workers and councilors together decided what they wanted Hamilton to look like in the year 2020. The Vision is to create a sustainable community, where economic, environmental and social issues are jointly considered as decisions are being made. Progress is being made with cleaning up the waterfront, renovating buildings, cleaning up air quality, and increasing security and safety. Vision 2020 is a good example of community engagement because of the use of previous and ongoing community consultation processes. They use community priorities to provide direction to a common vision for the city. In addition, different sectors are included in a collaborative effort to promote sustainability in Hamilton.
- Available at: www.vision2020.hamilton-went.on.ca/

Vision for a Greater New Haven (New Haven, U.S.A)
- Vision for a Greater New Haven is a community generated process for creating and implementing community goals. The program began by bringing together local leaders to discuss plans for the community. Community goals and recommendations were established, priorities were voted on and action groups were created to begin the implementation process. Vision is a good example of community engagement because it involves people in a collaborative effort, involving different sectors to set community priorities to solve complex issues. While only a short-term project, Vision helped motivate the community and create change. They also used a visioning process that included approximately 2500 community members.
- Available at: www.sustainable.org/casestudies/SIA_PDFs/SIA_connecticut.pdf

Education

Brownsville READS! (Brownsville, U.S.A)
- This program joins together community members and educators “to promote research-based reading instruction in the public and private schools of Brownsville, Texas with the overall goal of creating a more literate community.” It is an effort to address the problem of high illiteracy and school drop out rates. The basis of the program is the retraining of teachers to help them teach reading better. It has achieved significant results included mentoring over 2,000 area teachers in teaching reading, and increasing test scores in 14 school districts. It is a good example of community engagement because it brings different sectors together to work collaboratively to solve the complex problem of illiteracy. They won the All American City Award in 2001.
El Arco Iris (Holyoke, U.S.A)
- El Arco Iris is a community center with the primary aim of helping low income Latino-youth. They have worked with other community organizations, government, and area universities to create a place for youth ages 5-19 to go after school and during the summer. This is a good example of community engagement because different sectors are working collaboratively to proactively solve social problems in the local community. From 1998-2001 they helped 69 young people attended leadership and communication training, provided students with more than 1,000 hours of tutoring, and gave 1,700 art classes to over 200 students.

Environment

Alliance for Sustainable Communities (Annapolis, U.S.A)
- The Alliance was founded in 1993 by Anne Pearson, a citizen of Annapolis, to start projects guided by sustainability principles within the Greater Annapolis Area. She has established connections and interest among different community organizations, residents, businesses, and educators. Alliance holds public meetings to create visions and plans based on community needs. One of these needs was the improvement of a low-income neighbourhood in Annapolis. A community gardens project was created which helped regenerate the soil, stimulate ecological diversity, stimulate the local economy and create new skills in gardening and landscaping. Alliance’s work meets our criteria for community engagement by fostering participation in an engagement process based on community priorities. It promotes multisectoral collaboration and creates movements and change.
- Available at: www.sustainable.org/casestudies/SIA_PDFs/SIA_maryland.pdf

Evergreen (Toronto, Canada)
- Evergreen is a non-profit organization with the aim of bringing nature to cities through naturalization projects. They run three programs based on revitalizing schools, homes and the community. They bring people from different sectors together to learn about and implement naturalization projects. They also provide written materials to help people develop and implement their own projects. Evergreen is a good example of community engagement because they bring different sectors together to participate in learning about and creating naturalization projects that restore urban environments. Evergreen’s school projects help a number of schools in communities throughout Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Waterloo, Montreal, Halifax and Cuba. For example, their work at Burnaby Mountain Secondary School in B.C has helped the school initiate
streamside planting and restoration activities, and establish their first and second annual Earth Day Celebration at the school.

- Available at: www.evergreen.ca/en/lg/lg-projects2.html

The Georgia Basin Futures Project (Vancouver, Canada)

- The Georgia Basin Futures Project (GBFP) is a 5-year research project that sees researchers, experts and community members working together to explore pathways to sustainability. It uses a computer model called QUEST to simulate sustainability scenarios for the Georgia Basin in Western Canada to the year 2040. Community engagement is being used throughout the 5-year study to incorporate public views into the research process. Community engagement is used to identify issues that are of concern to the public and to generate public input on the scenarios that are developed from the QUEST model. This process encourages participation in an engagement process with the goal of solving sustainability issues. The project uses community concerns to drive the scenarios created in the QUEST model.

- Available at: www.basinfutures.net and www.basinfutures.net/pdfs/GBFP_Overview_Oct_18_01.pdf.

Sustainable Northwest (Portland, U.S.A)

- Concerned leaders in the Pacific Northwest created Sustainable Northwest in 1994. Their goal was to “build partnerships that promote environmentally-sound economic development in communities of the Pacific Northwest”. They work with a number of stakeholders including communities, government, businesses, indigenous peoples, and environmental groups to reach their goal. One of their programs is to help communities build the capacity to implement sustainable economic development and environmental restoration. They work with a number of partnering organizations to help facilitate a capacity building process within the communities. They are a good example of community engagement because they were created at a grassroots, local level. They promote multisectoral collaboration to help them achieve the complex goal of promoting environmentally sound economic development.

- Available at: www.sustainablenorthwest.org

International

Mobilization in a Cairo Neighborhood (Cairo, Egypt)

- In 1989 a group of local citizens came together with the goal of closing down the lead smelters in Ezbet Mekawy, a low-income neighbourhood in Cairo. They gathered support from local government, doctors, and the broader public of Cairo to help them with their goal. Through legal and peaceful written protests, newspaper articles, media broadcasts and reports on the hazards of lead smelters the group forged ahead and finally got the smelters closed in 1994. This is a unique example of community members working collectively with different sectors to achieve a complex goal.

- Available at: www.merip.org/mer/mer202/tewfik.htm
World Neighbors (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, United States)

- Dr. John Peters and Oklahoma City community members started World Neighbors in 1951. It was officially incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1952. Work began in India and spread to over 45 countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa. World Neighbors approach tries to improve communities’ ability to meet their basic needs and solve problems. The main priorities of World Neighbors’ work include food production, community-based health, family planning, water and sanitation, environmental conservation and small business. World Neighbors currently works with 15 countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa to strengthen their capacity to solve their own problem related to hunger, poverty and disease. Their ongoing grassroots approach to community development has produced successful results and is an inspiration to others who are trying to foster community engagement.

- Available at: www.wn.org
Other

Core Neighbourhood Development Council (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada)
- The Core Neighbourhood Development Council (CDNC) was created in 2001 to strengthen the quality of life in the core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon. Partners include government, community organizations, and businesses, many of which have been involved in their work for over a year. They consulted with over 300 community members and stakeholders for almost a year to develop a community defined strategic plan to improve the core neighbourhoods. CDNC’s work provides a useful example of the creation of a community organization and the implementation of community engagement strategies. The CDNC uses priorities of the local community to guide its work. Their ongoing work in this area will provide examples of the type(s) of work other organizations can do to improve their communities. In addition, their commitment for including all members of the community in the creation of a community defined strategic plan is an inspiration for any organization trying to engage their communities.
- Available at: www.tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s5_saskatoon.html

CRUNCH (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada)
- CRUNCH was created in 1996 by an informal group of service providers and funders in Victoria, British Columbia. The goal of the process was to create solutions to the problems facing downtown Victoria by developing community capacity to deal with complex problems, which have important human, economic and cultural components. A key part of the CRUNCH process was bringing together stakeholders from a variety of sectors to develop common understanding and goals. CRUNCH used roundtable discussions to identify issues and create a vision for their work. They had six action groups that respond to stakeholders concerns. In addition, a steering committee handled communication, fundraising and maintains project momentum. CRUNCH is an example of a community fostering community engagement. While CRUNCH no longer exists, it did follow a process that brought together a variety of stakeholders and incorporates their individual priorities into a shared community vision. Other organizations or groups could use the CRUNCH process as a guide to creating their own community engagement strategy.
- Available at: www.caledoninst.org/94159438.htm
Cultiva! (Boulder, U.S.A)
- Cultiva! is a community gardening project run by youth between the ages of 14-18. It was started in 1999 by an organization called Growing Gardens. Students plant, grow, and harvest the crops. They then sell a portion of the crops at the Boulder County Farmer’s Market and give some to local social service agencies. The project has many results including helping students gain employment, develop new skills, fight hunger and promote cultural understanding. It is a good example of community engagement because it promotes participation in an engagement process to confront local problems, such as teen unemployment.

‘Our Millennium’ Project (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada)
- The ‘Our Millennium’ project was started by the Community Foundations of Canada as a way to foster a sense of community. This was achieved by encouraging people to come together to develop and implement community enhancing projects and activities. In all, over 6,500 projects were established covering areas from youth and children to global citizenship. The project was a national way of harnessing community engagement and encouraging communities to work together. Our Millennium encourages communities to implement a variety of community engagement projects. As such, the project promotes all of the criteria we consider important to community engagement projects.
- Available at: www.community-fdn.ca/doc/OurMillennium.pdf

Possibilities: Neighbors in Action (Oklahoma City, U.S.A)
- This organization was designed to improve the capacity for individuals, families, and neighbourhood self-sufficiency. Many partners are involved with the projects including government, universities, businesses, and churches. Their community engagement effort follows a unique process of dividing neighbourhoods into clusters of 12-15,000 people, partnering with them to help them identify local priorities, do their own planning and implement projects. They also use a resource team to help the clusters work with government and community organizations. Results of the program include a cultural festival, a youth published community newspaper, and a bike safety program.
- Available at: www.sustainable.org/casestudies/SIA_PDFs/SIA_Oklahoma.pdf
Quality of Life Challenge (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada)
- The Quality of Life Challenge is a partnership that draws together people from all sectors to create goals for the community, develop targets, mobilize action, and monitor change. It gathers and provides reliable information to the public about paid work and affordable housing, as well as developing indicators, benchmarks, and effective means to measure quality of life in the community that may not be represented in typical statistical measures. The focus of their work is on three interrelated issues: homes, paid work and community connections. They are a good example of community engagement because they use multisectoral collaboration to solve complex community issues. In addition, community priorities are used to drive their activities.
- Available at: www.qolchallenge.ca

Poverty

Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI) (St. John, New Brunswick, Canada)
- BCAPI, started in 1997, brings together businesses and people living in poverty to create solutions to reduce poverty. BCAPI has engaged with people living in poverty and is acting as a catalyst to address their concerns. BCAPI has supported a number of initiatives including job preparation fairs, an information program for youth to prevent teen pregnancy and a youth resource center. It has won a number of awards for its work including Imagine’s “New Spirit of Community” 2003 Partnership Award. BCAPI is a unique effort that encourages businesses to work with their communities to create social change.
- Available at:
  www.imagine.ca/content/awards&recognition/partnership_awards_2003_BCAPI.asp?section=awards and www.tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s5_saintjohn2.html

OP2000 (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada)
- OP2000 was created in 1997 by Lutherwood CODA as a way to achieve and coordinate local action to reduce poverty in the Waterloo Region. Their work involved engaging with nonprofit organizations, businesses, government, and low-income earners to create poverty reduction strategies. OP2000 meets all of our community engagement criteria. Different sectors including the public, businesses, government and voluntary sector groups engage collaboratively on the complex problem of reducing poverty. OP2000 has also achieved results by assisting over 1700 families. OP2000 fosters social inclusion by including low-income leaders on its leadership roundtable and supporting a Community Action Team that consists of a group of 10-15 low-income residents that provided feedback on OP 2000 decisions and projects. Community priorities help guide the objectives of OP2000. OP2000 process also involves creating and following a mission and vision.
Community Engagement Models, Processes and Tools
Community Engagement Models, Processes and Tools: Research Methodology

Resources were reviewed from books, journals, and websites for the purpose of the research. Sources were first used from our literature review on community engagement. Those sources were found using the University of Waterloo library Trellis information system. This system enables the user to access library resources from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Guelph.

An Internet search was also completed to access web based resources. Yahoo and Google were the two search engines used. Within each search engine the name of each community engagement tool was searched for. The key words that were searched for include “citizen’s panel”, “focus group”, “public hearing”, “community needs analysis”, “planning focus meeting”, “precinct committee”, “advisory committee”, “charette”, “regional forum”, “citizen’s jury”, and “search conference”.

Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement
www.tamarackcommunity.ca
Introduction

We realize that understanding community engagement can be difficult because there are many ways of thinking about it and approaching it. We find that studying different processes, approaches and frameworks can help us grasp new areas of research. So, to assist us in our understanding of community engagement we looked to different frameworks to help us further realize what it is and what it looks like. We searched for them in books, journals, articles, and on the web. In total we found six models and processes helpful to our understanding of community engagement.

As you look through the models and processes please note that they are just pictorial examples and ideas. To gain a deeper understanding of them, read the entire article in which they are located. These brief summaries are meant to ‘wet your appetite’ for more reading on community engagement. Also, we recognize that there are other approaches to community engagement out there but these are the ones that helped us gain a better understanding of it. We hope these models and processes will help you gain a better understanding of community engagement and the approach the Tamarack is using for their work.
Models and Processes

   Available at: http://soeweb.syr.edu/thechp/ComEng.pdf

This model of community engagement comes from a document written by John O’Brien (1999) that argues that mobilizing political action and investing in engagement can build lives for people with disabilities and their families that offer security, dignity and involvement. This model is provided to illustrate how community engagement can occur through this process. This model shows how community engagement emerges as people commit to taking action. This results in direct involvement of more people in the lives of people with disabilities and their families. People are then encouraged to influence politicians and civil servants to acquire the resources they need to further engage the community and support people with disabilities.

This framework describes what makes up good practice community engagement. It is found in a toolkit created by Heather Aslin & Valerie Brown to help stakeholders in the Murray-Darling Basin of Australia create, conduct and evaluate community engagement processes. This framework illustrates the steps for good community engagement describing the values for the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, and what it means to apply the principles and criteria.

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VALUES
- Courage
- Inclusiveness
- Commitment
- Respect
- Flexibility
- Mutual obligation
- Practicability

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PRINCIPLES
1. Act for change
2. Develop communication networks
3. Work to achieve representativeness
4. Base processes on negotiation, cooperation and collaboration
5. Accept that mutual learning is needed
6. Role model Commission values in all engagement
7. Develop and commit to a shared vision
8. Work towards long-term goals

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CRITERIA
- Equity, equality and trust
- Openness and transparency
- Inclusiveness
- Representativeness
- Appropriate scale and scope
- Personalised
- Strategic, outcomes focus
- Supported by good information and communication
- Opportunity for involvement throughout
- Commitment from players and ownership of the process
- Sufficient time and resources for the purpose

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Within the same document by Heather Aslin & Valerie Brown a decision making cycle is provided that outlines different stages of the engagement process that combine gathering knowledge and creating action. The decision making cycle also describes which community engagement tools can be used to assist each stage, and how to move the process forward through to action. This is a useful framework because it helps people match community engagement tools with the right stage of decision-making.

![Decision Making Cycle Diagram]

**ACTION:**
- DECIDE: 11, 12
- DESCRIBE: 4, 5, 6
- DESIGN: 7, 8
- DO: 9, 10

**KNOWLEDGE:**
- PRINCIPLES
  - What should be 1, 2, 3
- PLACE
  - What is 1, 2, 3
- PRACTICE
  - What can be 1, 2, 3
- POTENTIAL
  - What could be 1, 2, 3

1. General public involvement and participation tools
2. Negotiation and conflict resolution tools
3. Information, education and extension tools
4. Rapid and Participatory Rural Appraisal tools
5. Stakeholder analysis and social profiling tools
6. Survey and interview tools
7. Planning and visioning tools
8. Team building and leadership tools
9. Participatory Action Research tools
10. Deliberative democracy tools
11. Lobbying and campaigning tools
12. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation tools

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The community engagement report written by the NSW Department of Planning also contains an engagement continuum. It describes the different levels of public impact. Readers will find this helpful for understanding the various typologies of community engagement. It is also helpful for deciding at what level of impact the reader hopes to engage the community. The continuum was adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORM</th>
<th>CONSULT</th>
<th>INVOLVE</th>
<th>COLLABORATE</th>
<th>EMPOWER</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, or solutions</td>
<td>To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, or decisions</td>
<td>To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public and private concerns are consistently understood and considered</td>
<td>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution</td>
<td>To place final decision making in the hands of the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise to the public</td>
<td>Promise to the public</td>
<td>Promise to the public</td>
<td>Promise to the public</td>
<td>Promise to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will keep you informed</td>
<td>We will keep you informed</td>
<td>We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision</td>
<td>We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible</td>
<td>To place final decision making in the hands of the public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IAP2 International Association for Public Participation.
The Effective Interventions Unit of the Scottish Executive has written a document entitled *Effective Engagement: a Guide to Principles and Practice* that lists sixteen principles of community engagement under three headings: Planning, Commitment and Inclusiveness. They were designed for organizations that use top down strategies to engage communities. Nonetheless, the principles are adaptable at a local level for community-based approaches to community issues.

**Planning**
- Set clear aims and objectives for engagement activities.
- Start small and start early to allow adequate time for planning.
- Consider how to prioritize the views of one group over another.
- Make plans for giving feedback to individuals and communities at the outset and tell people how it will be done.
- Review and evaluate engagement strategies and approaches used.

**Commitment**
- Secure commitment from all those involved.
- Community engagement should be, and should be seen to be, a core activity.
- Tackle issues of real concern - get individuals and communities to help set issues for action.
- Be clear about the limitations of the overall strategy and each consultation activity.
- Avoid the risk of ‘tokenism’ by agreeing early in the process how the contribution of individuals and communities will be used.
- Promote success.

**Inclusiveness**
- Be open, accessible and approachable.
- Maximize the opportunities for participation by the community.
- Consider the most appropriate location and time for each engagement activity.
- Develop the skills and capacity of the community.
- Give individuals or communities the opportunity to oversee the introduction of the agreed developments or changes and involve them in the process of implementation.
7. "Profile of Techniques" by PlanningNSW, 2003

A useful way of organizing different engagement tools was found in a report written by the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Planning in Sydney, Australia. It organizes the tools according to the type of community engagement they create. Some of the tools promote passive community engagement (e.g. informing, consultation, and participation) while others focus on more proactive approaches (e.g. collaboration, empowerment and development).

We recognize that there are more tools out there but we wanted to present them in an organized way. Therefore we’ve chosen the New South Wales Department of Planning’s framework to illustrate some of the potential tools of community engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highlighted Techniques</th>
<th>Some other techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Meeting</td>
<td>- Discussion paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Public notice</td>
<td>- Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Website</td>
<td>- Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Written</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| >> 2. Consult          |                       |
| 1. Citizens' panel     | - Community needs analysis |
| 2. Community information and feedback session | - Networking |
| 3. Facilitation        | - Strategic questioning |
| 4. Focus group         |                       |
| • Meeting (see 1.1)    |                       |
| 5. Public hearing      |                       |
| 6. Questionnaire       |                       |
| • Website (see 1.3)    |                       |

| >> 3. Involve           |                       |
| 1. Planning focus meeting | - Networking |
| 2. Product committee    | - Review session      |
|                       | - Strategic questioning|

| >> 4. Collaborate       |                       |
| 1. Advisory committee   | - Strategic questioning|
| 2. Charette             |                       |
| 3. Facilitation (see 2.3) |                       |
| 4. Policy round table   |                       |
| 5. Regional forum       |                       |
| 6. Search conference    |                       |

| >> 5. Empower           |                       |
| 1. Citizens' jury       | - Joint venture       |
| - Search conference (see 4.5) |                       |

Source: Adapted from NPS spectrum.
Empowerment Tools

Our work on community engagement focuses on the empowerment of communities, which enables them to work independently from established organizations and governments that might control their decisions and resources. Following this guiding principle, the citizen’s jury and search conference are the techniques used to empower communities.

Note that the tools for empowerment can be used incorrectly, without empowering people. As a result, the spirit of the technique is not always used appropriately. We try to present examples of empowering approaches as they are meant to be used: for the empowerment of citizens as they create and realize bold visions for their future.

Citizens’ Jury:

A citizens’ jury is a tool used to increase citizens’ access to decision-makers and influence the choices they make. It encourages creative and co-operative action by bringing decision-makers and citizens together to discuss local issues. During the process jury members direct the discussions, while experts (i.e. political leaders) act as clients. This method shifts the power base towards the community rather than the powerful elite.

The citizens’ jury process consists of a randomly recruited and demographically representative panel of 12 to 18 people. The jury meets for 3 to 5 days to examine an issue of public significance. Expert witnesses provide the jury with information, opinions and perspectives regarding the issue being considered. Jurors deliberate and come to a conclusion about the public issue or problem. They then deliver their conclusions and recommendations through a public forum.

Example: Citizens’ Jury on Climate Change, Baltimore, Maryland, United States

A citizen’s jury was set up in Baltimore, Maryland by the U.S EPA and the Jefferson Center to determine public opinion about climate change. The EPA hoped the citizen jury process would help governmental agencies, business interests, and environmental groups improve their communication materials.

Eighteen people from within a 35-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland were selected from a randomly identified jury pool and met from March 18 to 22, 2002. The jury was asked to consider the potential impacts of climate change that concern them, if they think climate change will have significant impacts, and what steps should be taken to address climate change.

The jury heard from a number of experts about different issues surrounding climate change. They then came up with a series of recommendations based on the questions
they had been asked to consider. They wrote them into a final report and presented them to the EPA and other interested individuals. The recommendations included suggestions on how to mitigate climate change by saving energy, promoting international cooperation, government actions, research and development, and education.

**Citizen Jury Resources:**


The Citizens Jury Process - Jefferson Center


**Search Conference:**

A search conference (also known as a ‘future search’) is a participatory planning process used to determine a vision, direction or end for an organization. The process helps different stakeholders acknowledge their interdependence and encourages them to work together to create a strategy to manage their common concerns. Through this process people are giving control over decision-making and long-term directions. Search conference participants include representatives from all stakeholder groups interesting the topic being discussed.

The process usually involves a 2-day, 2-night conference in an undistracted environment with 60 to 80 participants. During the conference participants work in small groups to review factors that affect themselves, the community and the world. In addition, they discuss what a desirable future would look like and what the challenges and constraints are to achieving it. Lastly they create a shared vision and an action plan to implement their common goal.

**Example: OP2000 Search Conference, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada**

A search conference was used by OP2000 in January 1999 to discuss the problem of poverty reduction in the Waterloo Region. 50 people participated from a variety of sectors, including people in poverty, nonprofit organizations, business and government.

During the search conference participants identified changes in the social environment that have impacted local poverty issues. They also discussed how each of the stakeholder groups had been affect by these social changes. Finally, ideas for working together to create social arrangements were determined. The conference succeeded in verifying that a multi-sectoral partnership would help reduce poverty over the long term in the Waterloo Region, which helped set the direction for OP2000 future operations. It also
created a network of people that would help OP2000 develop community based poverty reduction strategies.

Search Conference Resources:

Future Search
www.futuresearch.net

An Aboriginal Future Search Conference
www.futuresearch.net/method/applications/world/oceania/aboriginal_fs.cfm

A Future Search for the Children of Southern Sudan
www.futuresearch.net/method/applications/world/africa/dream_of_peace.cfm

The Search Conference – A Constructive Approach to the Future
www.newamericancommunities.org/resources/Search_Conference.pdf

Community Roundtable Search Conference – New American Communities
www.newamericancommunities.org/searchconf.html

Other Engagement Tools

Below is a complete list of the community engagement examples from the New South Wales Department of Planning’s framework. We have included it to illustrate the escalating scale of engagement. Hopefully it will inform others of the different tools of community engagement available. Perhaps it will also provide insight into new ways of conducting old community engagement techniques. We know that some of these tools are simple and that they don’t need further explanation. Therefore we’ve chosen to highlight those tools that are unique and might not be familiar to everyone.

Inform:

- Meeting
- Public Notice
- Website
- Written
- Discussion Paper
- Exhibition
- Promotion

Consult:

- Citizen’s Panel: a large group of about 500-2000 citizen’s who are surveyed about community issues on a regular intervals. The panel can be surveyed
using different techniques such as questionnaires, meetings or conferences. Participants in the panel are chosen to be representative of the population.

Just Food: A Citizen Panel on Genetically Engineered Food
www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/fas/justfood.html

South Tyneside Citizen Panel
www.s-tyneside-mbc.gov.uk/localdemocracy/citizens.asp

Norfolk Citizens Panel
www.norfolk.gov.uk/CitizensPanel/Content/default.asp

Rogue Valley Wisdom Councils
www.rvwc.org

- **Community Information and Feedback System**

- **Facilitation**

  - **Focus Group**: discussion groups, usually including nor more than twenty people, which are lead by a facilitator. They are brought together to discuss a pre-defined issue. Participants are people with a particular interest, or involvement in the subject being discussed.

Consultation Methods: Focus Groups/Workshops
www.vlgconsultation.org.au/groups.shtml

When to use Focus Groups
www.health.state.mn.us/communityeng/needs/focus.html

Focus Group Meeting on Aboriginal HIV Estimates
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/ahe-eva/

Canadian Library Association Focus Groups
www.cla.ca/commission/ottawa.htm

- **Meeting**

  - **Public Hearing**: open meetings conducted with concerned stakeholders in order to investigate the opinions of the people on critical issues of the life of the community.

Public Hearings Report: Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project
www.dullestransit.com/publications/reports/publichearing/index.cfm
Public Hearings: When and how to Hold them
www.mrsc.org/focuspub/hearings.aspx

- **Questionnaire**

- **Website**

- **Community needs analysis:** is a tool used to determine and measure the needs of the community.

  The Holland Centre Experience - Chapter 6: The Greater Thetford Mines Community Development Project
  www.hollandcentre.ca/pdf/DissDocLowResolution.pdf

  West Wrexham – Community Needs Analysis
  www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/urban_ii/resident_survey.pdf

- **Networking**

- **Strategic Questioning**

**Involve:**

- **Facilitation**

- **Planning focus meeting:** A planning focus meeting is used in Australia as a way to share information between proponents and the government. It is used in the Environmental Impact Assessment process. It enables government authorities to express their concerns with proponent development proposals. This allows proponents to address these concerns in the developments in the planning stage. This on-going dialogue helps speed up the assessment process.

  Planning Focus: Good Practice Guidelines

  Macquarie Generation Planning Focus Meeting

  Goulburn City Council Planning Focus Meeting

- **Precinct committee:** is a group of citizen’s who gather together to discuss issues important to them and present these concerns to city council. This process enables citizen’s to participate in council decision-making. Local councils establish the precinct committee system as a way to include residents’ opinions in their decision-making processes.

  Waverly Council - Getting Involved through Precinct Committees
Networking

Review session

Strategic Questioning

Collaborative:

- **Advisory committee:** an advisory committee consists of a group of people from multiple sectors such as individuals, community groups, non-government organizations and government who share their expertise on an on-going basis for the purposes of monitoring issues, and/or giving advice.

Consultation Methods: Advisory Committee
www.vlgaconsultation.org.au/steering.shtml

Community Consultation Matrix and Toolkit

Advisory Committees to the Canadian Secretariat - World Conference Against Racism (WCAR)
www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/wcar/advisory/index_e.shtml

Family Strengths in Childhood Disability Research Project – Advisory Committee
www.familystrengths.ca/committee.html

- **Charette:** A charette is a workshop where stakeholders and the public suggest solutions for a complex community issue. It is usually lead by a series of experts who are able to facilitate the ideas and opinions of the community stakeholders. It takes place for no less than 2 days.

Consultation Methods: Charette

The National Charette Institute
www.charretteinstitute.org/

Charette Center
www.charretteceneter.com/charretteceneter.asp?a=spf&pfrk=7
A Planning Charette for an Outdoor Education Setting at Trinity University
www.colleges.org/~enviro/workshops/charrette.html
Facilitation:

- **Policy round table**

- **Regional forum:** A regional forum is a formal meeting of people from different sectors including government, community members, business, and non-government organizations, which gather to discuss community issues and create solutions. The forum meets regularly to review the performance of their strategies.

  Youth Forum Against Racism
  

  The National Children’s Alliance Regional Forums
  

  The Regional Forum on Regulatory Systems and Networking of Water Utilities and Regulatory Bodies
  

- **Search Conference**

- **Strategic Questioning**

Empower:

- **Citizens’ jury:** The citizens’ jury process consists of a randomly recruited and demographically representative panel of 12 to 18 people. The jury meets for 3 to 5 days to examine an issue of public significance. Expert witnesses provide the jury with information, opinions and perspectives regarding the issue being considered. Jurors deliberate and come to a conclusion about the public issue or problem. They then deliver their conclusions and recommendations through a public forum.

- **Search Conference:** A search conference (also known as a ‘future search’) is a participatory planning process used to determine a vision, direction or end for an organization. The process usually involves a 2-day, 2-night conference in an undistracted environment with 25 to 60 participants. During the conference participants work in small groups to review factors that affect themselves, the community and the world. In addition, they discuss what a desirable future would look like and what the challenges and constraints are to achieving it. Lastly they create a shared vision and an action plan to implement their common goal.