



Community Engagement for Cooperative Extension: Involve from the Spectrum of Public Participation

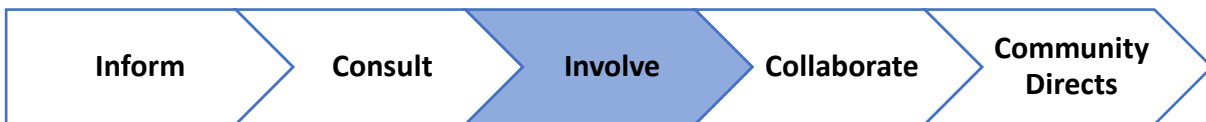
Series Publication 6 of 7

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Introduction

The International Association for Public Participation developed a spectrum of public participation with five different levels that indicate the various depths of community engagement.¹ The levels include **Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Community Directs** (Figure 1). This publication will review the **Involve** level of the spectrum.

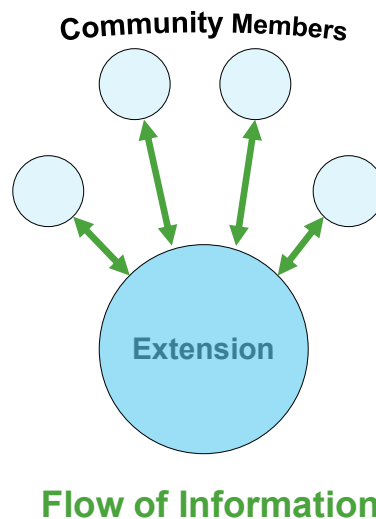
Figure 1. The Spectrum of Public Participation – Involve



Involve

The third level of engagement, **Involve**, is focused on working with community members throughout the planning and implementation phase of a project or program. The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension (Extension) can keep the community **involved** by ensuring that their concerns and aspirations are considered in the decision-making process. Extension can provide information back to the community on how their input influenced Extension's decisions or directions of projects and programs.¹ At this level of the spectrum, information flows between Extension and the community (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Flow of Information at the Involve Level of the Spectrum of Public Participation



The goal of this level is to **Involve** the community throughout multiple stages of project or program development. Engagement should be mutually beneficial for the community and Extension. Extension can help community members to develop new skills or to be compensated for their participation. Examples of community engagement activities that **Involve** the community are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of Community Engagement Activities that Involve the Community

Community Engagement Activities	Description of Community Engagement Activities
Conference or Workshop	An opportunity to involve community members in program/project planning via conferences or workshop events.
Health Impact Assessment	A needs assessment tool that can help communities, decision makers, and practitioners make choices that improve public health through community design. ²
Community Mapping	A method that involves residents in identifying assets and opportunities of their area and creating a picture of what it is like to live there; can foster a sense of community responsibility; can be physically mapped on to paper and/or a digital map. ³
Video Reporting	A summary of any situation, project, or process through the analysis of the subject in video format. ⁴
Digital Storytelling	A practice of using videos and photos to tell stories. ⁵
Photovoice	A participatory method that uses images as a tool to deconstruct problems by posing meaningful questions in a community to find actionable solutions. ⁶

Highlighting a Community Engagement Method: Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling is the practice of using videos and photos to tell stories.² As a community engagement strategy, digital storytelling is a tool to help understand a particular topic or issue of interest within the community from multiple perspectives. While similar to video reporting, digital storytelling focuses on telling community members’ stories, rather than simply replying to a question or prompt. Digital storytelling involves a longer process of facilitated work between staff and community participants.

Digital storytelling is a community engagement strategy that **involves** community members in the early planning phases of a project and elicits multiple perspectives about an issue and potential solutions. Digital storytelling is a useful technique for engaging communities with a history of oral traditions and storytelling and can include individuals across varying levels of literacy. It also provides an opportunity for community members to build new skills, not only in storytelling, but in photography and video production.

Ideally someone trained in digital storytelling should facilitate the experiential process over multiple sessions with identified community members. Community members most impacted by the issues addressed should be intentionally recruited. Digital storytelling projects involve a large time

commitment, and it is worthwhile to consider how participants may be compensated for their time. Extension can consider one-time stipends for time-intensive commitments. Partnering with other local organizations that can provide participants with other types of compensation that Extension may not be able to provide, such as gift cards, is also an option.

One example of a successful digital storytelling project was completed by the Living Streets Alliance in Tucson, Arizona and involved the community by building awareness about issues related to Tucson's transportation systems.⁷ Community members attended a four-part workshop to develop a digital story about how they experienced the transportation system and streets in Tucson. In addition to hiring trained facilitators, the Living Streets Alliance offered the training in both English and Spanish and provided participants with a stipend. Attendees were encouraged to build connections with each other throughout the process to further the advocacy work after the end of the digital storytelling project. The digital stories that were collected by community members supported the adoption of a Complete Street's Policy by Tucson Mayor and Council in February of 2019.⁸

Continuation of the Community Engagement Series

This is the sixth article of a seven part-series on community engagement, a collaboration between the [University of Arizona's School of Nutritional Sciences & Wellness - Cooperative Extension, SNAP-Ed](#) (UA SNAP-Ed) and the [Community Research, Evaluation, and Development \(CRED\) team](#) from the Norton School of Human Ecology. The publications reflect the concepts of seven [interactive, online learning modules about community engagement](#) that were developed by the UA SNAP-Ed and the CRED team. The final publication in this series focuses on understanding the collaborate and community directs levels of the Spectrum of Public Participation.

The full Community Engagement in Cooperative Extension article series includes:

1. What is Community Engagement?
2. Using Interactive Maps to Understand Communities
3. Who is and is not Participating in Community Engagement?
4. Strategies to Improve Representation
5. Spectrum of Public Participation: Inform and Consult
6. Spectrum of Public Participation: Involve
7. Spectrum of Public Participation: Collaborate and Community Directs

All articles in the series are available at the following link:

[Community Engagement in Cooperative Extension Series](#)

Citations

1. International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2's) Spectrum of Public Participation. International Association of Public Participation.

http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf.
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2. Health Impact Assessment. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm>. Published 2016. Accessed June 22, 2021.

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4. Wilson, D. How to Make a Video Report. <https://dc.wondershare.com/screen-recorder/how-to-make-a-video-report.html>. Published 2021. Accessed on June 21, 2021.

5. What is Digital Storytelling? The University of Houston College of Education. <https://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/page.cfm?id=27&cid=27>. Accessed June 16, 2021.

6. Wang, C., Burris, M.A. Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment. *Health Educ Behav.* 1997;24(3):369-387. doi:10.1177/109019819702400309

7. Digital Story Telling Training. Living Streets Alliance. <https://livingstreetsalliance.org/event/digital-storytelling-training/>. Published 2017. Accessed June 16, 2021.

8. Complete Streets Tucson. Living Streets Alliance. <https://www.livingstreetsalliance.org/complete-streets>. Published 2019. Accessed June 16, 2021.

Resources

[Community Digital Storytelling for Collective Intelligence: Towards a Storytelling Cycle of Trust](#)

[Data Walks: An Innovative Way to Share Data with Communities](#)

[Digital Stories by Arizona Classroom Teachers](#)

[The Community Mapping Toolkit](#)

[The Eden Project – Creative Community Engagement Case Studies](#)



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extension.arizona.edu/pubs/az2028-2023.pdf

Other titles from this series can be found at:

extension.arizona.edu/pubs/community-engagement-cooperative-extension-series

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Edward C. Martin, Interim Director, Extension, Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension, The University of Arizona.

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