EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 27 MAY 2015 -

Theme – "The Different ways of Understanding Socially Engaged Scholarship: What are the existing Conceptual Frameworks and Typologies? What are the Imperatives for Theory and Practice at NMMU?"
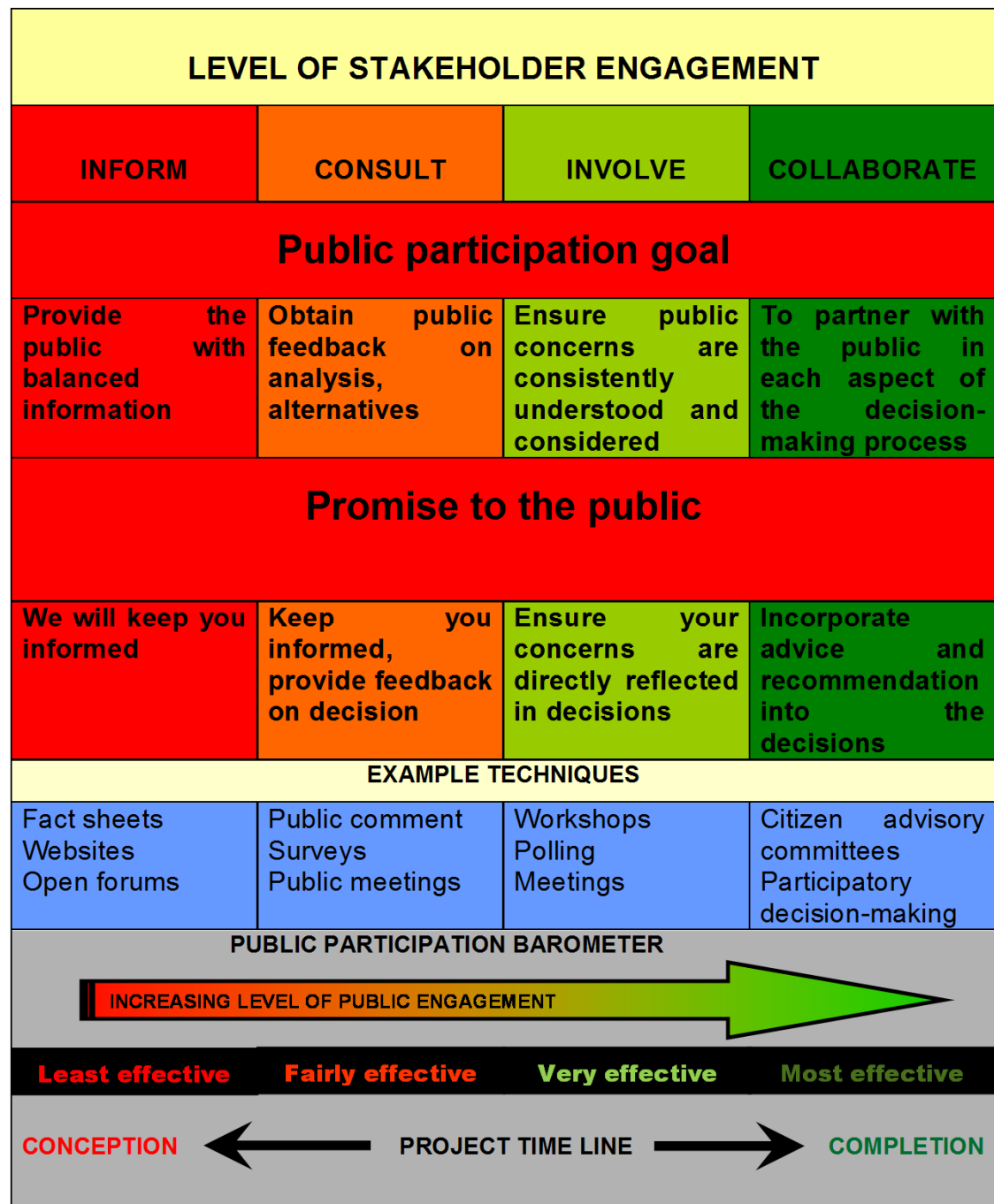
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Pracademic - someone who **contributes to academia** and an **active practitioner**

Interested in the notion of **public participation** and **community engagement**

Generally **Public participation** seeks and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision – giving them a voice in the decision-making process

For our purposes today , 'engagement' will be used as a generic, inclusive term to describe the broad range of interactions between people. It can include a variety of approaches, such as one-way communication or information delivery, consultation, involvement and collaboration in decision-making, and empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships.

LEVEL OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE

Public participation goal

Provide the public with balanced information	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives	Ensure public concerns are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making process

Promise to the public

We will keep you informed	Keep you informed, provide feedback on decision	Ensure your concerns are directly reflected in decisions	Incorporate advice and recommendation into the decisions

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES

Fact sheets Websites Open forums	Public comment Surveys Public meetings	Workshops Polling Meetings	Citizen advisory committees Participatory decision-making

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION BAROMETER

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Least effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Most effective

CONCEPTION ⟵ PROJECT TIME LINE ⟶ COMPLETION

Lesson from my research ...

- Public participation improves the effectiveness and legitimacy of a decision; **builds capacity of those involved; enhance trust among parties**

- Poor engagement and poor planning results in poor public participation and ultimately poor decision-making

- Integration of participation with scientific analysis is needed for participation to be effective.

- Contextual issues such as environmental / social factors and knowledge of stakeholders, influence principles of implementing good public participation

- There is a need for public participation research and methodologies that are scientifically grounded and includes use of new technologies

Relevance to today's discussion ... Responsiveness of the NMMU to its immediate community / inclusion / transformation .... within context of public engagement

- Traditional view of universities as places of teaching and research
- Universities therefore valuable intellectual resource
- NOT disputed that universities interact with communities in a range of ways
- ? Should community engagement be a core responsibility of higher education
- ? Does such a relationship encourage knowledge driven partnerships that yield mutual benefits

...
- ? How can teaching and research directed to critical issues, shape the future of local communities

- Communities = local residents / general public / schools / government / business / NGOs / industry ... etc.

- YES to ?

- WHY?

...

- NMMU not an exclave ... embedded/rooted within Metro community
- Opportunities for university-community partnerships to address "issues"

protests / governance (Municipality) / unemployment / schooling / youth development / health / culture (Rhodes must fall) / entrepreneurship / economics / tourism / drug abuse / violence ...

- Such partnerships expand role of higher education from passive producer of knowledge to active participant to immediate challenges of communities

HOW do we create effective UNIVERSITY - COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS?

- Paradigm shift needed
- NMMU needs to look at its Transformation Agenda
- ✓ Role and relevance of curricula
- ✓ Looking at communities as 'knowledge-rich' partners
- ✓ NMMU accessibility as resource to address community challenges
- ✓ Inter – and transdisciplinary engagements i.e. PAR or Community-based research in Science Faculty
- ✓ Creating space for 'student voice' in academic encounters …
- ✓ Enhance students' capacity to become active citizens and therefore responsive to community issues
- ✓ Prepare student for the 'world of work' and 'world of life' … **confidence, self-esteem, motivation, communication**

...

- All students active: work integrated learning / internships / inter-organisational exchange / experiential learning
- THUS .. Moving away from lecture-dominated instruction that are still very prevalent in most SA universities

Benefits to NMMU (potentials)

- Improved academic performance
- Greater resource output
- More responsive to societal issues
- Opportunities for innovation
- Abstract theories … practicalised for both students and academics
- Funding span increase through partnerships
- Increase diversity through cross-cultural engagements
- Relevance to concept of 'nation-building'

Main conclusions ...

- Studied 8 years at NMMU
- 15 years of applied experience in community engagement

- My opinion and open for discussion / debate: **there is a disjuncture between the NMMU and community it serves**

- Is NMMU maybe too much of a CONSERVATIVE UNIVERSITY?

NGIYATHOKOZA!

ro livhuwa!

ke a leboga!

ENKOSI!

dankie!

thank you!

ndo livhuwa!

inkomu!

ngiyabonga!

ke a leboha!

siyabonga!