Public engagement: Theory and practice

Working Paper

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Introduction

The central argument of this working paper is that high quality, productive public engagement is required if public institution is to be optimally effective. In light of that position, the purpose of this working paper is to discuss both the significance of public engagement and a methodology of engagement which views it central purpose as that of citizen development, social capital formation and improvement in governance capacity. In a democratic system the views of the public, particularly the voting public, are critical in the formation of public policy and citizen endorsement via the ballot box is required for many public endeavors. In mature democracies, public engagement has a far different connotation than those societies and countries where the simple right to vote is not always a given.

From the perspective of this analysis, the goal is not simply more participation but better participation. How a public agency can achieve that end and by doing so foster its own effectiveness is the task of this working paper.

In the context of a mature democracy, the term public engagement has a number of dimensions and connotations. Among these are:

- There are a variety of reasons to engage the public;
- There are a number of principles underlying public engagement;
- There are a number of outcomes associated with public engagement;
- There are a variety of publics to be engaged;
- There are a variety of strategies for public engagement;
- There are a variety of methods for public engagement;
- Public engagement, while using similar techniques and methods in many cases, is fundamentally different from customer or market preference research.
- Consumer choice as a public engagement tool

Each of these dimensions and connotations will be discussed in this working paper, along with case examples where appropriate. They will form the sub-sections of the working paper’s theory section which begins however with definitions of basic terms. Section two of the paper provides a tabular summary of the practices of citizen engagement.
Section One: The theory of public engagement

Definitions of terms

Public engagement. Public engagement encompasses the variety of efforts that a public institution makes to that what it is aspiring to achieve is consistent with the needs, aspirations and values of the citizens who fund it and the citizen whom it serves.

Community engagement. In this paper this term is synonymous with public engagement. In other forums it refers to geographical areas or communities of interest in which citizenship is not a defining criteria.

Public institution. In this case a public institution is an entity that is funded from public sources, such as taxes or fees, which is directed by elected or appointed officials who guide it on behalf of the greater community and whose purpose is some public good.

Citizen. A legal status that confers a set of rights and responsibilities.

Informed citizen. A political science concept that holds that citizens should be highly informed about the actions and policies of their public institutions.¹

Monitorial citizen. A political science concept that argues that in an information rich society, with multiple levels of government, it is unrealistic to expect the public to be reasonably, much less fully, informed about its governments. Instead, it argues that it is the role of the citizen to monitor critical events and respond to those events.²

² Schudson, op.cit.
Mindful citizenry. A political science concept that is similar to that of the monitorial citizen construct. It author argues “To be a good citizen in a world that is crowded with institutions, you need more than just joining groups that meet up after dinner; you need to be a "mindful," active critic of the institutions in which you live—­not just the state, not just the workplace, but all institutions. And conversation about that can happen inside institutions and out; it does not need to happen only in specially set­aside public spaces.” (Eliasoph, 1999³)

The reasons for public engagement

There are a number of reasons why public engagement is a significant part of any public institutions work life. Among these are:

*The effectiveness of public institutions is highly dependent upon a reasonable level of community or public trust.*

Schudson states the significance of trust clearly when he says, “our political system continues to depend on trust. At a local level, where officials are often likely to see themselves as trustees for right-minded or public-spirited common sense rather than advocates for a political program, the political system operates on little else besides social trust”⁴.

Recognizing this, how is trust in public institutions both maintained and strengthened? The life of the average citizen in Florida is touched on a regular basis by at least six different governments (city, county, school board, water management district, state government and federal government). In reality most Florida citizens are impacted by additional governmental bodies (special taxing districts for fire, children services, health care, community development, community redevelopment, drainage, etc). In reality, no citizen can be informed about the workings of all these bodies to any meaningful degree. Instead, as citizens we have to assume that they are doing their job and that there are

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⁴ Schudson, op. cit.
internal (auditors, inspectors general) and external (media, gadflies) processes and forces which will keep them honest and focused. For most citizen’s it is only when issues of performance or integrity rise to the level of public awareness that trust becomes an issue. Until that point we operate on the assumption that our institutions are working.

If and when a public institution looses the trust of its citizens, its effectiveness begins to diminish. Trust therefore is a key ingredient of effectiveness. Clearly therefore the prime trust building strategy is to do one’s work well and with integrity.

Public engagement is critical to doing one’s work well and with integrity. Citizens hold sets of aspirations, values and needs which public institutions were established and purposed to serve. Some times these aspirations, values and needs are in tension with each other and differing publics may express and prioritize them differently. As messy as it is, a public institution must engage these publics as to aspirations, values and needs and seek to develop satisficing strategies that balance and make progress on the various aspirations, values and needs. A public institution that does not seriously and substantively engage the public runs the risk of being out of touch with the dynamics and concerns of the community it is serving. The aspirations, values and needs it is seeking may be out of alignment with the aspirations, values and needs of the greater community. If mis-alignment begins to develop, issues of trust soon follow.

*The citizen as customer perspective creates the need for performance feedback.*

Regardless of the validity or appropriateness of viewing citizens as customers\(^5\), it is a reality that many citizens see themselves as customers, expect to be served as customers, and that public institutions do provide customer-type services. Every organization needs to know how those it serves view it. While for the private sector this is a relatively straightforward task, the task is no less important but more complex for the public sector. At times in the public sector, it is less than clear just who the customer is. However, once these challenges have been resolved and the customer clearly defined, it is important for public

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institutions to receive feedback about the timeliness, quality, and user-friendliness of their services.

*The public is being asked to make a decision, authorize an action.*

The public is occasionally asked to decide issues of public policy. Do they wish to authorize bonds for public uses?, do they want to annex into a city? Do they wish to change the powers, taxing authorities, or structures of their local governments? Do they wish to amend a state constitution? In each of these cases public engagement is needed so that informed decisions can be made.

*The public needs to provide input and perspective about a policy or action that could impact their life.*

Public bodies regularly make decisions which impact the lives of citizens. Land uses, school assignments, commercial or industrial permits, health care funding, etc are just some examples. Wise governments want to hear and consider the perspectives of various publics before making final decisions. In these cases the public is engaged so that all perspectives are considered in the process.

*The public needs to be aware of a policy, procedure, situation or action that could impact their life.*

Many times public institutions simply need to inform the public. What you should do in event of a hurricane. What flood zone are you in and when should you evacuate. Government offices will be closed these days. Taxes are due by this date without penalty. Public institutions provide a wide range of services and they regularly need to inform general and specific publics about those services.
Public institutions need to understand emerging issues to enable them to be more proactive.

Dynamic, complex societies spin off new issues with regularity. Technology creates choices and issues no one imagined. Forces such as globalization can bring new sets of issues to local communities. In a dynamic, changing world, public institutions must work very hard to stay in touch with the concerns, needs, aspirations and values of the people they represent and serve. The tools of public engagement are simply ways that can be used to understand what is occurring in a community, how issues are becoming defined and understood and what expectations, if any, the public holds of its institutions with respect to those emerging issues.

Public institutions need to understand citizen priorities and preferences in order to craft policies and strategies.

As we know needs are elastic and unending. In addition to understanding needs and wants, a public body must also understand the priorities of its citizens. Given the real world of resource limitations of money, time and talent, what is most significant? What level of quality, of service do we really want. This type of information can be very helpful in decision making when policymakers are being asked to balance a variety of needs.

The thinking of public institutions is enriched by a diversity of thinking.

It is the inherent nature of any institution or organization, public or private, to form a culture that over time fosters group think. The IBM way, the Navy way, are simply phrases which recognize that every organization develops a way to do its work. There is great value and benefit in this of course. But it does mean certain questions may not get asked, alternative perspectives may not get voiced, some solutions not considered. One value of public engagement is that it can provide a mechanism for these alternatives to be considered. Not all will be of value of course, but the exercise itself can force an organization to see a topic from another perspective. It can broaden the options being considered. One of the results of this is that “holy cows”, structures or policies that are considered sacrosanct, may be challenged.
Public engagement can help develop consensus on broad future direction which in turns assists public institutions in their strategic planning

There are a variety of public engagement techniques which focus on building shared visions of the future and produce community vision plans for action toward that future. The decision about the long term type of community that citizens want is truly a decision that should be made at the general level by the community. There is an extensive body of technique designed to do just that, some of which is summarized in table 1. These visions help public institutions form their strategic plans as to how they will contribute to the vision.

Public engagement can help surface differing viewpoints within a community.

Every elected body at some point has been faced with a group presenting a position on an issue that they present as the community’s perspective. Usually it is questionable as to the broad representative ness of this perspective. One value of public engagement is that it can surface the multiple perspectives or views that one would expect in a diverse community. This of course does not necessarily make the work of the policy-maker any easier, but it does clarify the various perspectives that should be considered as policy is established.

Public engagement can be used to resolve conflicts on specific issues or develop mutually acceptable strategies for controversial topics.

A variety of public engagement tools were originally developed for the purposes of conflict resolution. These tools have been adapted to settings where a significant conflict exists among the various publics and some mutually agreeable solution is sought by the relevant public institution. Acknowledging this is not always possible, most public institutions would still prefer to make an effort to find mutually acceptable solutions rather than impose a solution.
Finally, public engagement builds the skills and competencies of mindful citizenship.

While public engagement is most often entered into for a specific goal or objective, it always has the possibility of being done in a way which adds value beyond the objective at hand. It can be done in ways which foster and enhance the skills of citizenship:

- The ability to understand multiple sides of an issue. Most public issues have multiple sides and rarely are they right or wrong. While individuals certainly have their “side”, mindful citizenry understands there are other sides and seeks to understand those other perspectives;
- The ability to see linkages and impacts among various actions. Few public issues stand in isolation. Instead they are often linked to each other in obvious and not-so-obvious ways. A decision on one issue may impact another. While many of these linkages require technical analysis and require specialized knowledge, the recognition that issues are linked and the quest to have those linkages examined is a competency of the mindful citizen;
- The ability to consider trade-offs and risks in establishing priorities. In a resource constrained world, where money, natural resources, time and talent are limited, trade-offs are always required. In reality, there is always some level of risk. Being able to understand these realities, assess what level of risk and trade-off one is willing to take is a skill of mindful citizenry;
- The ability to prioritize immediate wants and needs with long term goals. Recognizing that wants and needs are elastic and highly susceptible to the forces of marketing, a skill of mindful citizenry is to prioritize immediate wants and needs in light of long term goals. While this is clearly a personal skill, it is also a skill of the mindful citizen in that communities also have to choose between short and long term good;
- The ability to seek and create mutually acceptable solutions that balance various perspectives. The oft quoted statement that watching law being made is like watching sausage being made has more than a grain of truth. Public issues bring forth a great range of concerns and offer a level of satisfaction sufficient to move forward probably does resemble sausage
making. The ability to understand that process, and engage as appropriate, is a competency of mindful citizenry;

- The ability to compromise. Being able to engage in give and take, to “give up” on certain wants in order to get higher priority wants is another competency of the mindful citizen. It requires an acknowledgement that one does not always get one’s way in public dialogue and decision making and that a “bird in the hand” is proverbially better than “two in the bush”;

- The ability to accept being in the minority on a position. In some cases or situations, mutually acceptable solutions cannot be derived. In these cases, one solution is chosen and others rejected. In those cases, the competency of the mindful citizen is to accept the status of minority for the moment and move on to either other issues or building a future majority if the issue is one which could be revisited;

- The ability to seek solutions that ensure that the rights of minority are respected and protected. A competency of the mindful citizen is that while we live in a majority rule system, there are rights which the majority cannot over-ride or take away. The ability to recognize that one is bounded even while in the majority is another way to be effective as a citizen.

_A word of caution: In a representative democracy, public engagement is not a substitute for reasoned policy making._

The section has addressed the need for, and value of, public engagement. Before closing however, it should be noted that the purpose of public engagement is to inform and assist the policy-making process, not substitute for it, except in cases of referendum and public vote where the voting public is the policy-maker. It is the responsibility of the elected or appointed bodies to make final decisions. Public engagement is not a substitute for that responsibility.
The Principles of Public Engagement

Six principles or purposes of involvement have been stated in the literature:\(^6\): The following list draws upon cited literature and other sources. The following are a set of principles which underlie public engagement:

- **Involvement is the people's right.** The public institution belongs to the public and the public is ultimately accountable for it effectiveness. The relationship between the Public Institution and the Community is one which involves political, civil and social rights and duties. It recognizes that citizenship grows and develops with the participation of citizens in democratic processes. It is the public in the end which must both support and hold accountable their public institutions.
  - The public institution believes that all citizens have the right to be consulted and to participate in its consultative and decision-making processes and will encourage and assist citizens to participate in consultative and decision making processes.
  - The public institution recognizes that there are a number of groups within the community who have particular requirements to enable them to participate effectively in consultative and decision-making processes. These groups include: the aged, youth, parents/one parent family/carers with child care needs, people with disabilities; people from different religious and cultural backgrounds as well as people with language barriers. It will ensure that any barriers to effective participation are addressed.
  - The public institution believes that the Community has the right to be informed about its services, activities, governance and decision making mechanisms. It believes that informing the Community about its services, activities and decision making mechanisms should be ongoing and should be accessible to all members of the Community.

- **Involvement makes the community stronger in itself.** The public institution believes that community well being, vibrancy, and sustainability is enhanced by citizens participating in its decision making processes.

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• **Involvement overcomes alienation and exclusion and builds trust.** There is a high degree of distrust of government. In many communities there is social isolation and many communities are economically and racially segregated. Public engagement can alleviate these issues.

• **Involvement builds partnerships.** When the public institution commits to working in partnership with the Community to shape the future of the Community and believes that the Community’s future is best achieved through an active and informed citizenry viable and productive partnerships are likely to emerge.

• **Involvement fosters accountability.** Involvement increases the likelihood that the public institution will be accountable to its Community through community consultation and participation for the management of its resources, assets, and expenditure and for the decisions it makes.

• **Involvement maximizes the effectiveness of services and resources:** When local strategies are developed with local people to meet the needs of local people they are more likely to be effective.

• **Involvement helps sustainability.** When the community owns an issue, when they have created the strategies, then the effort is more likely to be sustained.

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**The outcomes of public engagement**

Public engagement should result in the following four outcomes:

• **Strengthening of a mindful citizenry.** Public engagement can lead to a more active citizenry and a citizenry that is more capable of working effectively together to build a preferred future.

• **Strengthening of governance capacity in a community.** Governance refers to the linkages between the public institution and the broader environment in which it operates. It refers to how government gets its work done.\(^7\) By engaging the many publics in joint effort to plan and manage, governance capacity is enhanced.

• **Strengthening of social capital.** Social capital refers to the level of trust and strength of working relationships in a community. Public

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\(^8\) Putnam, R.
engagement builds linkages and competencies that strengthen social capital.

- **Strengthening of service delivery.** Finally, public engagement strengthens service delivery in two ways. One, it ensures priorities are addressed. Second, it builds a broader awareness of need so that additional resources can be brought to bear.

Public engagement, while using similar techniques and methods in many cases, is fundamentally different from customer or market preference research.

Public engagement, while using some of the same techniques as customer and market research, is fundamentally different in that its purpose and scope is much broader. It does, as does market research, inform about need, preference and price. It does, as does customer research, inform about satisfaction and desired services. But public engagement is much broader in strategy, seeking not only need and preference data but seeking to build the skills of mindful citizenry, foster social capital and build community capacity for governance.

**Consumer choice as a public engagement tool**

One of the critiques of traditional social service delivery models is that they create dependency. Instead, service delivery should be creating independence and interdependence, building the skills of mindful citizenry. The devil in this generally accepted goal is how to do that.

**There are a variety of publics to be engaged**

The “public” is one entity only at the most abstract level. Once one begins to seriously engage the task of public engagement the various ways the “public” can be defined become apparent. Among these definitions include:
The public as user or consumer of services. Many public entities are established to address the needs and issues of a specific group. Other entities provide general services difficult to tie to a specific group. In either case, there are public services which are consumed, be that park visits, Medicaid, use of highways or any other public function. From this perspective, there is a consumer whose perspective the institution wishes to hear;

The public as payer for public services. Public institutions are by definition funded by the public. Therefore for every service provided, there is a group of payers for that service that may or may not overlap with the users;

The public as voter. There is a subset of citizens who register to vote and a further subset who vote. It is this voting public that makes certain decisions and this is the public who ultimately holds public institutions accountable;

The public as applicant, regulatee or person whose actions are constrained by public policy, procedure or regulation. Public institutions have the powers of the state, including police and other enforcement powers. In these situations the public may be those persons or entities who fall within the jurisdictional powers of a particular entity;

The public as resident of a jurisdiction. Within even this seemingly clear category there can be sub-groups such as full-time resident, seasonal resident, part-time resident, homeowner, renter, primary home-owner.

The public as peer, i.e. other jurisdictions of public purpose. The work of any single public entity is often tied to, impacted by or limited by other public entities. In certain cases where the issue is one which crosses jurisdictional boundaries, these other bodies can be considered part of the public to be engaged;

The public as partner, i.e. public or private entities with whom a particular public entity has formed a partnership of some form to achieve an agreed upon outcome. Due to various privatization and outsourcing efforts, as well as the emergence of public management networks as an organizing tool, a variety of relationships exist between a single public entity and other organizations. These bodies all can be considered as a public;

The public as employee. Lest one forget, the employees of an public agency, unionized or not, represent another public whose concerns, perspectives, aspirations, values, etc should be considered. While work
on issues of employee morale, organizational climate, Human Resource policies are not normally thought of as public engagement, they do represent a form of public engagement.

- The public as contractor. Any public agency has a number of contractors, consultants and other temporary relationships. These entities represent another public to engage. While historically these relationships are viewed as commodities to be exchanged as needed, new relationships are emerging in what is termed the extended organization. In this model, these contracted relationships are viewed as critical to organizational success and fostered as part of a long term strategy.

- The public as stakeholder. Finally, as a generic category, there are a variety of entities which have some interest in the actions of a particular public institution. They may fall into one or more of the above categories. This category is stated here to reinforce the point that if the actions of a particular body impact some person or entity, then that person or entity has a stake in that decision and represents a public to be considered.

Obviously membership in these various publics overlaps extensively. One can be a consumer, taxpayer, voter, resident and applicant at any one time and therefore have multiple relationships with any one particular public entity. Or one may have a single relationship such as an employee who lives in a different jurisdiction and only interacts with a particular public entity in one role.

There is no right or wrong answer here. The point is rather than when we say we want public engagement we need to be specific about what public we mean. By specifying the public we seek to engage, we can better use the techniques and approaches which are most likely to yield an effective level and degree of public engagement.

**Strategies for public engagement**

When the various approaches to public engagement are considered, they fall within one or more of the following strategies of public engagement:
• Information gathering. This strategy is focused on understanding how the public thinks about, views, prioritizes, or understands a topic. How satisfied are they with our recreation programs? What would be their priority for transportation funding? What level of concern do they have about health care? These questions are all examples of information gathering which can be accomplished through a variety of methods or techniques.

• Information dissemination. This strategy concentrates on communication of information to the public. In this case there is information the public institution wants the public to know. Your new tax rate will be this amount. Here is our annual report about what we accomplished last year. Here is what you should do in a hurricane. Here are the library hours. These are all examples of information that the agency wants to transmit.

• Consultation. The consultation strategy is used when the advise and counsel of the public is desired. Most often used in design and planning stages, it seeks to ensure that the approach or approaches being considered are responsive and accepted by the public. Public opinion surveys, focus groups, charrettes, vision processes are all tools through which the public is consulted.

• Participation. The participation strategy overlaps with the consultation strategy but is distinguished by a more formal degree of authority. In this strategy the public is engaged via boards, committees or commissions that are given limited authority subject to review by the Governing Body.

• Decision. Finally, there is public engagement through referendum and election. In these cases the public is the decision making body.
Section Two: The practice of public engagement.

There are a variety of methods through which public engagement can occur. This section will briefly describe a number of techniques and approaches that can be used to engage the public. The selection of any one technique should be driven by the reason for engaging the public and the definition of the public to be engaged. The selection of technique is determined by who do we want to reach for what reason? Who and why determine what or how, when and where.

The various techniques of public engagement are summarized in table 1.
Table 1: Techniques of public engagement

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Prime Uses</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Action Planning</td>
<td>Particularly suitable for urban design and physical planning issues, such as: • regeneration strategies for specific regions or neighborhoods; • development strategies for specific sites; • solutions to specific problems such as traffic congestion.</td>
<td>Events are normally hosted by a partnership of local interests. They are facilitated by a multi-disciplinary Team, usually of around 10-15 people with a range of relevant expertise such as town planning, urban design, architecture, development economics, ecology and so on. Events typically last 4-5 days but may last anything from one day to several weeks.</td>
<td>Wates⁹</td>
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<td>ACT, CREATE, EXPERIENCE (ACE):</td>
<td>The premise of ACE is that the most effective way of involving young people is to start from their own enthusiasm rather than established practice. The key elements are: Time, Space and Action.</td>
<td>Young people • Identify issues that are of concern to them in their environment; • develop an understanding of sustainability; • prepare action plans.</td>
<td>ACE¹⁰</td>
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⁹ Wates. N., 1996. Action Planning: how to use planning weekends and urban design action teams to improve your environment, Prince’s Foundation,
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<tr>
<td>Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Provide counsel to convener</td>
<td>Group of experts or diverse stakeholder representatives who are asked to provide recommendations on actions</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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<td>American Assembly</td>
<td>A community planning tool</td>
<td>A form of town hall meeting in which selected representatives debate and vote upon a document</td>
<td>American Assembly</td>
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<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
<td>A planning methodology</td>
<td>Focuses on identifying strengths and developing strategies to enhance those strengths.</td>
<td>Whitney</td>
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<td>Audience Research</td>
<td>Understand how the public understands an issue</td>
<td>Variety of techniques all designed to elicit how people “frame” or interpret an issue</td>
<td>Signorelli, Jensen, Raboy</td>
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<td>Beo</td>
<td>A board game designed to show people co-operation, communication and creativity are essential to the solution of global and local issues.</td>
<td>The game usually forms part of an Outreach workshop that helps participants to progress from co-operative playing to co-operative action. Workshops can run from less than an hour to a whole weekend, with groups from six to over 30. Beo can be played with groups of all ages and abilities.</td>
<td>Clements</td>
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<td>Broad-Based Organizing</td>
<td>Develop community agenda with broad support.</td>
<td>This typically involves a trained organizer spending a year talking one-to-one with hundreds of local citizens to discover the issues that most concern them. Leaders of church groups and other civic bodies are brought together to work out a common agenda for action.</td>
<td>Citizen Organizing Foundation</td>
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10 ACE (Act, Create, Experience): A Youth Approach to Agenda 21. Available from WWF-UK. Panda House, Weyside Park, Catteshall Lane, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1XR Tel: +44 (0)1483 412483 E-mail: Cstone@wwfnet.org
11 www.americanassembly.org
16 Clements, M. BEO. Living Water Charitable Trust, 5 Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AE Tel: +44 (0)131 558 3313 Fax: +44
17 The Citizen Organising Foundation, 535 Manhattan Buildings, London E3 2UP Tel/Fax: +44 (0)208 981 6200
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| CHOICES                | Consensus on future community direction | There are four stages:  
1. **Meetings throughout the community**  
   People generate ideas that would make life better in the future.  
2. **Consolidation of goals**  
   All ideas submitted are presented to meetings or vision workshops led by facilitators. They are then consolidated into possible goals by people interested in the particular subject. The goals may then be clustered under 'vision statements'.  
3. **A 'Vision Fair'**  
   People vote on which goals matter most to them and on which goals they would like to work towards. The goals and visions are published.  
4. **Action groups are formed to carry out the chosen ideas** | Walker\(^\text{18}\) |
| Citizen Advocacy       | Citizen Advocacy involves trained volunteers and co-coordinating staff working on behalf of those who are disabled/disadvantaged and not in a good position to exercise or defend their rights as citizens. | Working one-to-one, volunteer advocates attempt to foster respect for the rights and dignities of those they represent. This may involve helping to express the individual’s concerns and aspirations, obtaining day-to-day social, recreational, health and related services, and providing other practical and emotional support. | CAIT\(^\text{19}\) |

\(^{18}\) Walker, P. Centre for Participation, NEF, Cinnamon House, 6-8 Cole Street, London SE1 4YH Tel: +44 (0)207 407 7447 E-mail: participation@neweconomics.org  

\(^{19}\) CAIT, Citizen Advocacy Information and Training, Unit 164, Lee Valley Technopark, Ashley Road, Tottenham Hale, London N17 9LN Tel: +44 (0)208 880 4545 Fax: +44 (0)182 880 4113 E-mail: cait@leevalley.co.uk
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<td>Citizen juries</td>
<td>Convened to gain lay community views on important issues.</td>
<td>Typically made up of 16 people, selected as far as possible to be representative of the community, with a balance of men and women and an appropriate mix of ethnicity, employed/unemployed, etc. There is no self-selection. The topic might be controversial, such as what to do about drugs in the community, or an issue on which suggestions are sought, such as how to regenerate a particular area. The topic should be substantial enough to justify several days’ attention, but not so huge that the jury cannot deal with it in the time available. A jury lasts for three to five days, usually four. The jury hears presentations from witnesses, who give different sides of the argument. The witnesses might be local authority officers, scientific and professional experts, representatives of pressure groups, members of the public with specific knowledge/concerns, etc. There are one or two independent moderators to help the jury process run smoothly. The jury sometimes has its own advocate or jurors’ friend to assist the questioning and discussion. After debate, the jury draws up its conclusions in a report presented to the commissioning body. The report should record any disagreements.</td>
<td>Hall¹⁰, Coote²¹, Delap²²</td>
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²¹ Coote, A. and Lenaghan, J. Citizens’ Juries: Theory into Practice, IPPR, Central Books, 99 Wallace Road, London E9 5LN Tel: +44 (0)208 986 5488

²² Delap, C. Citizens’ Juries: Making Better Decisions. IPPR, Central Books, 99 Wallace Road, London E9 5LN Tel: +44 (0)208 986 5488
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Panel</td>
<td>Obtain diverse set of perspectives from citizens</td>
<td>Effort to obtain a broadly diverse set of perspectives focused on the common good</td>
<td>General practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community appraisal</td>
<td>Obtain perspectives of limited geographic area via formal survey and iterative reports</td>
<td>The typical stages of a good <strong>Community Appraisal</strong> are: 1. A few enthusiasts seek to establish a sound basis of local support for the appraisal; 2. Form a widely drawn steering group to decide the 'what' and the 'how'; 3. Draft a questionnaire and plan a household survey; 4. Distribute individual questionnaires to every household for collection on a later visit. The response rate averages 70% and can be up to 95%; 5. Code and analyze responses (maybe using special software); 6. Draft an appraisal report together with any recommendations and action plan; 7. Place the recommendations in priority order and link them to the group or agency best able to take action; 8. Persuade the parish council or local authority to adopt the recommendations as official policy, so that they feel some responsibility to act; 9. Publicize the report via the press, local magazine, notice boards etc.; 10. Distribute the document locally and to outside agencies, either free or for a small charge; 11. Discuss the document within the community, perhaps at a public meeting, and seek consensus on priorities and action; 12. Set up task forces to take forward agreed action points within an agreed timescale; 13. Monitor and report progress.</td>
<td>Hughes(^{23})</td>
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\(^{23}\) Hughes, P. and Percy-Smith, J. no. date. Community Profiling: auditing social needs, Open University Press
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| Community indicators   | Enable a community to assess its status compared to other communities or progress on an issue of concern | There are six steps:  
1. **Getting started**  
   Raise awareness about the project, plan the next stages, seek appropriate funding and resources and enlist help. Who do you need to reach, and how will they receive the information?  
2. **Deciding issues**  
   Help the community to think through and reach agreement on the issues that are of most concern and interest. Use questionnaires, interviews and workshops to get people involved.  
3. **Choosing indicators**  
   Working from the list of common issues, try to identify one or more indicator ideas for each issue. A basic list of criteria will assist selection. The best indicators will strike a chord in the community.  
4. **Gathering information**  
   Harness the resourcefulness of the community to identify sources of data from official sources and develop ideas for information that the community can gather itself. Start thinking about agreed targets.  
5. **Communicating progress**  
   The information is turned into understandable indicators for the community. This is a crucial but often neglected stage. Use relevant media: newspapers, local radio, etc.; exhibitions; displays; publications; and material for schools. And be inventive!  
6. **Galvanizing action**  
   The indicators are for education and action: to grab people’s attention, make them think, and spur them on. The audience includes ‘powers that be’ outside the community, who become more accountable. It’s also time to review progress, so that the cycle of improvement is maintained.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | New economic foundation[^24]                           |

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<tr>
<td>Community liaison officer</td>
<td>Outreach to target groups</td>
<td>Proactive outreach by staff person to relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Site Management Plans</td>
<td>Build community ownership and support</td>
<td>Site management plans are usually written by a consultant ecologist. BTCV helped members of one community to write one over two day-long planning sessions held over a four week period.</td>
<td>Harris(^{25})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Community level strategic plan</td>
<td>Help communities to:</td>
<td>Corrom Trust(^{26})</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• identify a clear vision for the future&lt;br&gt; • bring together information on the area through an analysis of the current situation&lt;br&gt; • identify priority projects and actions&lt;br&gt; • agree on the most appropriate way to progress those projects and actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consensus building</td>
<td>Develop sufficient level of concurrence that action can occur</td>
<td>Variety of techniques which involve understanding different viewpoints and seeking points of common agreement.</td>
<td>Marlowe(^{27})</td>
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\(^{25}\) Harris, J. BTCV, 36 St Mary’s Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 0EU Tel: +44 (0)1491 839766 Fax: +44 (0)1491 839646  

\(^{26}\) Corrom Trust Community Strategic Planning Unit, Davidson House, Drummon Street, Comrie, Perthshire PH6 2DW Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1764 670333 E-mail: corrom@BTinternet.com  

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<tr>
<td>Enspirited envisioning</td>
<td>Enspirited envisioning includes three main practices or disciplines, which can be used by individuals, in pairs and in larger groups. <strong>Deep Imaging</strong> - eliciting images of the future; <strong>Deep Listening</strong> - listening to yourself or to other people with silence, attention and empathy and without judgment; <strong>Deep Questioning</strong> - listening for whatever questions inside oneself insist on being asked, and asking them.</td>
<td>A full event involves 20-24 hours’ work. The main stages are: 1. <strong>Clarify the main concern of the vision</strong> With deep imaging, for example, this means learning: • to make your images concrete; • not to censor them or try to interpret them; • to live the image as fully as possible. 2. <strong>Create individual visions of the future</strong> People take a leap into the future to see what it will be like when their concern is fully addressed. They identify a compelling future vision, with indicators (specific signs, behavior etc) to show that the vision has happened, positive or negative consequences of the vision and maybe stories and values. Visions are drawn or written on flipcharts for display. 3. <strong>Seek shared vision</strong> People with similar visions create a shared vision that identifies common ground. This contains a vision statement, long-term goal and set of assumptions as well as the indicators, consequences and stories above. 4. <strong>Strategy paths leading to action</strong> Teams put themselves into the future and remember how it came about. They compile ‘futures histories’ of the years between the present and the year in which their future is set, in say five year blocks. They then look at the futures histories to seek opportunities for action. To be able to act to realize their vision, people need to be prepared to • listen to their inner voice; form themselves into a community of learners in order to do so.</td>
<td>Ziegler\textsuperscript{28}, Ziegler\textsuperscript{29}</td>
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\textsuperscript{28} Ziegler, W. no date. Enspirited Envisioning for the Individual Envisioner and Enspirited Envisioning for Groups, Organizations and Communities, Denver: Futures-Invention Associates.

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<tr>
<td>Expert Panel</td>
<td>Provide expert perspective and information on complex issues</td>
<td>Forum of experts with various perspectives on a topic of community concern</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding Home - Visualizing our Future by Making Maps</td>
<td>Futures planning process</td>
<td>There are three phases. First, the facilitator, or Community Ranger, spends two months on familiarization and data collection. Secondly, participants create a Bioregional Atlas, over four months. Third, participants lead a long-term action and review program.</td>
<td>Alexander³⁰</td>
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<tr>
<td>From Vision to Action</td>
<td>Futures planning process</td>
<td>This is a workshop, ideally taking six hours, but fitting comfortably into three. There are three stages: 1. The long-term vision Groups of six imagine their community in the year 2020 and come up with headlines for the local paper, radio or television station. Each group displays its headlines to the others. 2. How did we get there? Each group takes three or four of its headlines and tries to imagine what happened by the midpoint 2010. If time allows they repeat for next year. 3. Getting started Each group is then asked, 'If that is what is happening in 2010 or next year, what has to happen within the next twelve months to get things started? Who is going to do what?' Personal and group action plans are developed.</td>
<td>Church³¹</td>
</tr>
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³⁰ Alexander, Y. Scottish borders project on sustainable development. Tel: +44 (0)131 331 1647 Fax: +44 (0)131 650 8019 E-mail: yahya@caad.ed.ac.uk
³¹ Church, C. Environmental and Social Project Development, PO Box 893, London E5 9RU Tel: +44 (0)208 806 1836
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<td>Future Search</td>
<td>A <strong>Future Search</strong> conference is a way for a community or organization to create a shared vision for its future. It enrolls a large group of stakeholders, selected because they have power or information on the topic at hand or are affected by the outcomes. Ideally there are 64 people, who form eight tables of eight stakeholder groups.</td>
<td>There are five stages to a Future Search conference: 1. Review the past; 2. Explore the present; 3. Create an ideal future; 4. Identify shared vision; 5. Create an action plan.</td>
<td>Weisbord&lt;sup&gt;32&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>GUIDED VISUALISATION</td>
<td>Create a vision of the future using visualization techniques</td>
<td>Guided visualization consists of five steps: 1. Setting the scene (explaining the process); 2. Where are we now (mapping of present); 3. Guided visualization exercise; 4. Describing and recording (sharing one’s thoughts re the exercise; 5. Taking action (next steps).</td>
<td>Walker&lt;sup&gt;33&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Historic time lines</td>
<td>Identify key historic events in the life of an organization, community, etc</td>
<td>Long tables are set up with a roll of newsprint, butcher paper or some other form of continuous paper. A start date is placed at one end and other key time markers noted on the paper. Participants then write in key events using short descriptors.</td>
<td>Marlowe&lt;sup&gt;34&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Hotlines</td>
<td>Real time information</td>
<td>Phone lines</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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<td>IMAGINE</td>
<td>Focuses on using the past to imagine a preferred future.</td>
<td>There are three phases: <strong>1. Understand.</strong> Questions are chosen that will draw out the best of the past. <strong>2. Imagine.</strong> The best of the past becomes a basis for what might be. <strong>3. Co-create.</strong> Partnerships are formed between various organizations and interested individuals to take different projects forward.</td>
<td>Elliot²⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive internet site</td>
<td>Mechanism for two way interchange on a topic</td>
<td>Mechanism to provide input and perspective and engage in delayed or real time interaction</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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<td>Kiosks</td>
<td>Real time information</td>
<td>Physical sites that are either staffed or electronic that provide relevant information</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local sustainability model</td>
<td>A tool to assist community members to assess impacts of new projects</td>
<td>A 3x3 matrix is completed by the community. The columns are environment, community culture and economy. The rows reflect robust, flexible and fragile assessments. There are 3 steps: 1. A group fills in the matrix, defining what is quality and diversity for each column. 2. What indicators to use to measure each of these elements; 3. What 'Robust', 'Stable' and 'Fragile' mean in their community. The current state of affairs can then be defined and possible projects assessed through their effects on the model. This is best done in groups of no more than seven people. Participants assess the likely performance of a project against the three columns in terms of the effect on quality and diversity. Effects are divided into those which: (a) Cause a component to improve or deteriorate in its current state; (b) Create the preconditions for change to another state; (c) Will by themselves cause the component to change to another state.</td>
<td>Mackie²⁶</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood meetings</td>
<td>Obtain neighborhood level data</td>
<td>Meetings of neighborhood residents to obtain perspective</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood planning day</td>
<td>Obtain neighborhood data; build consensus</td>
<td>Interactive events which engage residents in an important issue</td>
<td>Bound et.al. 37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>A highly flexible process requiring minimal pre-organization that facilitates a group discussion whatever issues it thinks are significant</td>
<td>Everyone starts in a circle - 'the fundamental geometry of human communication' - and is invited to identify issues that they are passionate about, and willing to take responsibility for. They write each of their issues on a sheet of paper and sign their name. Saying 'My issue is.... my name is....', each person announces the topic on which they want to convene a workshop session and sticks their sheet of paper on the wall with a post-it note from a prepared matrix of times and spaces available for the workshops. This continues until all the topics (sometimes over 150!) have been announced. Everyone then gathers around the wall, and signs up for whichever topics they wish to discuss. The sessions take place. The results are recorded, and sometimes fed into a computer. There is a final plenary, also in a circle. With events lasting more than one day, the whole group get together at the start and close of each day, recreating a sense of community and providing a forum for news and announcements. The report of all the sessions is available as participants leave, or soon after.</td>
<td>Owen 38</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARISH MAPS</td>
<td>The purpose is to encourage people to come together to explore and express what they value in their place and take an active part in its care and development.</td>
<td>The starting point is anything to do with place and people’s relationship with it. This could be nature, history, food, traditions, literature, buildings, legends, photography, community activity, or confrontation. The central question is: what do you value in your place? This makes anyone and everyone an expert, since no one else can tell you what is important to you. All that a Parish Map needs to work is a group that wants to have a go. A group of almost any size can set out to make a Map. They make their own rules and set their own pace. People can participate by: • gathering information; and • making the Map itself. Both these activities can take many forms.</td>
<td>Clifford39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Appraisal</td>
<td>Facilitate joint assessment and understanding of an issue of community concern</td>
<td>A methodology that creates a cycle of gathering data, reflection and learning - and hence action. Ideally, each group of participants moves through the various stages, first looking at their perceptions of the current situation, then identifying barriers or gaps and proposing solutions or areas for change. Normally, sessions are undertaken by groups of peers, with people choosing to participate and deciding their own level of participation.</td>
<td>Cornwall40</td>
</tr>
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39 Clifford, S. 1996. From place to PLACE: maps and Parish Maps, Common Ground, Seven Dials Warehouse, 44 Earlham Street, London WC2H 9LA, Tel: +44 (0)207 267 2144 E-mail: Sue.Clifford@commonground.org.uk
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| PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIC PLANNING | Its purpose is to enable a group to come to a shared vision of its desired future, and to create a detailed participant-owned plan of action. | The standard Participatory Strategic Planning process involves four half-day sessions. Each session uses a basic ToP Workshop process, which involves **brainstorming** to generate ideas, **organizing** to explore the ideas and new insights that emerge, and **naming** to discern the consensus of the group. Each Workshop involves a combination of working individually, in small groups and with the whole group together. The four sessions are:  
**1. Practical Vision**  
The Practical Vision is what the group would like to see in place in 3-5 years’ time. This workshop is often preceded by a visualization exercise.  
**2. Underlying Contradictions**  
The Underlying Contradictions are the obstacles or issues preventing the realization of the vision. What issues or blocks must be dealt with if the vision is to be realized?  
**3. Strategic Directions**  
The Strategic Directions are innovative courses of action that the group can take to deal with the underlying contradictions and move it toward realizing its vision.  
**4. Implementation Plan**  
The Implementation Plan is a set of practical actions that will initiate the group’s journey from where it is to where it wants to be. It is a clear outline of what is to be done, why, how, when and by whom.  | Burbridge⁴¹                                          |

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| PARTICIPATORY THEATRE     | Uses physical movement and creativity to explore people’s own experience. This helps lead on to a common vision.                                                                                         | **1. Image theatre**  
Participants use a series of exercises to develop images and tableaux.  
**2. Forum theatre**  
The players first perform a 10-15 minute play showing a protagonist trying to achieve a goal and failing. The play is then repeated. Members of the audience are invited to gauge whether the protagonist could at any point have behaved differently, with a better outcome. They are further invited to come onto the stage, replace the actor and try out their idea. | Boal\[42\]                                                                                       |
| Planning for Real         | A community planning tool to help people identify issues and changes in their neighborhood.                                                                                                                | Using the ‘Planning for Real’ process, a large 3D model of the neighborhood is made and used by the people who live there to show their needs in a non-confrontational way. Suggestion cards are then used to provide both structured and un-structured input as to needs, changes, opportunities, etc. Prioritization meetings can then follow. | Neighborhood Initiatives Foundation\[43\]                                                          |
| Public Hearing            | Provide mechanism for public input to governing body                                                                                                                                                      | Structured mechanism through which public is given the opportunity to speak before the governing body.                                                                                                         | General practice.                                                                               |
| Public management networks| Broad based stakeholder planning or oversight of topic that crosses jurisdictional boundaries                                                                                                            | Planning mechanism that foster effective governance by ensuring all stakeholders have a role in policy setting as well as prioritization.                                                                  | Thompson\[44\]                                                                                 |

\[43\] Planning for real pack. No. date. The Neighborhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF), The Poplars, Lightmoor, Telford, TF4 3QN Tel: +44 (0)1952 590777 Email: nif@cableinet.co.uk Website: www.nif.co.uk  
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<td>Real Time Strategic Change</td>
<td>Community based strategic planning</td>
<td>Real Time Strategic Change (RTSC) shares with Future Search conferences the ability to handle a large number of people at one event. Whereas Future Search is designed to work best with 64 people, though, RTSC works well with several hundred people. The design of an event is very flexible, since at the heart of RTSC is a set of principles that can be applied in different ways. An example of these principles is ‘max-mix’: the six to eight people seated at each round table are chosen to maximize the mixture of diversity within an organization.</td>
<td>Brooks45</td>
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| Round Table                   | The method brings people together to discuss local issues of shared concern, and brainstorm ideas for action, in a manner that allows maximum participation. | A workshop can be as short as half a day, but ideally forms part of a series spread over a month or so, with the outcomes of each feeding into the next. The event begins with a brief introduction setting the context and aims of the event, which has three main stages:  
**1. Specialist presentations (maximum one hour)**  
These provide technical information, along with case studies and lessons from elsewhere, to help generate ideas and new approaches.  
**2. Round table discussions (one and a half hours)**  
Brainstorm issues or themes. Participants write down any ideas on post-its, which are grouped by the reporter on a flip chart sheet, ensuring that every comment is recorded in the participant's own words, rather than paraphrased by the reporter.  
**3. Report back from the groups (one hour)**  
Discussion and questions may follow before a short concluding session. | Falk46                    |

45 Brooks, A. Vista Consulting, 16, Old Birmingham Road, Lickey End, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1DE. Tel: +44 (0)1527 837930 E-mail: anne@vistabrook.win-uk.net

46 Falk, N. no date. Town Centre Partnerships, URBED (Urban and Economic Development Group), 19 Store Street, London WC1E 7DH Tel: +44 (0)207 436 8050.
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| SOCIAL AUDITING | **Social Auditing** is used by organizations which realize that they will only continue to prosper if they satisfy the aspirations of their stakeholders. These include employees and volunteers, governments, funders, suppliers, customers, investors, local communities, environment and public interest groups. They are increasingly recognizing the need to measure, track and report on their social and ethical performance. | There are four ‘building blocks’ used in the social audit method:  
**1. Stakeholder Dialogue**  
Stakeholders are those individuals and organizations who can affect and are affected by an organization’s activities. The dialogue draws together the values, issues and indicators relevant to stakeholders in a language that is meaningful, consistent and useful for decision-making. This is done through focus groups, interviews and questionnaires.  
**2. Indicators and Benchmarks**  
Indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) of performance are generated. They should where possible be benchmarked against comparable organizations, compared with previous years, against relevant social norms and against procedures and policies.  
**3. External Verification**  
External verification ensures legitimacy by ensuring that the views of the stakeholders are secured within the accounting process.  
**4. Communication**  
The results need to be published in an accessible form. | Mayo\(^{47}\), Pearce\(^{48}\), Pearce\(^{49}\), Zadek\(^{50}\) |

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| TALKWORKS    | Involves a group of people attending a one-day core workshop in essential    | A TalkWorks event can be held at any stage of a project but is best run during the early days as it provides participants with a common set of skills and strategies which can help transform the productivity of teams. It can help ‘supercharge’ the outcome of any of the other techniques covered in this booklet.  
  
  During a typical workshop, the team engages in the following topics.  
  1. Working towards a definition of good dialogue and experimenting with what works and what doesn’t.  
  2. Identifying and experiencing the essential skills of better conversation, such as: putting the other person in the picture; listening for key messages; sharing understanding; searching for clarity; bringing stories to life, and controlling emotions.  
  3. Encouraging dialogue to take place when dealing with less skilled people.  
  4. Maintaining and repairing communication by ‘chairing’ your own conversations. | Hancock[^51]          |

[^51] Hancock, D.  TalkWorks: how to get more out of life through better conversations. BT TalkWorks, 5th Floor, Holborn Centre, London EC1N 2TE. Tel: +44 (0)207 492 8738. Web site: http://www.talkworks.co.uk.
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<td>TEAM SYNTEGRITY</td>
<td>Explore specific topic with a representative stakeholder group.</td>
<td>A Team Syntegrity event, or Syntegration, usually involves around 30 people who come together to explore a specific question over three and a half to five days. They must be carefully chosen to ensure they represent the cross-section of ideas within a community. The event has a tight structure to ensure everyone has an equal say, and that information from each topic group is shared with each other group. A syntegration is suitable when there is: a complex issue is to be discussed, needing input from people with a range of viewpoints; a need to break through the constraints of conventional thinking. The event has three main components: 1. <strong>Setting the agenda.</strong> The first task is to select 12 aspects of the question which they agree are the most important. 2. <strong>Topic groups</strong> In a group of 30 participants, each topic is discussed by five team members, and has five critics, who are invited to comment on the process and content at certain stages of the discussion. Each person is a member of two topic groups, a critic of two more, and can observe two more groups. The roles of silent observer and critic give people a chance to listen deeply in order to take ideas back to their group. There are three rounds of discussion; after each one, topic groups post a summary on a board, and observers and other participants give feedback and ‘visual applause’ in the form of dots before the next round. By the second round, ideas begin to reverberate between topics, as members and critics feed in information from other topic groups. 3. <strong>Conclusion and action</strong> Final group statements are shared with the whole group: these form an agenda for action. Action groups may be formed. A desired result is more ‘synergy’, or desire to work together, between participants.</td>
<td>Beer(^{52}), Leonard(^{53})</td>
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\(^{52}\) Beer. S. Beyond Dispute: The Invention of Team Syntegrity., John Wiley
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<td>Town Hall Meeting</td>
<td>Open public input</td>
<td>Community meeting where all can speak</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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<td>User Comments and Complaints</td>
<td>Real time feedback; monitor customer complaints</td>
<td>Cards or kiosks or other means that provide a rating of a service or event</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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<td>User Panel</td>
<td>Group of users who are asked to provide their perspective on services and priorities</td>
<td>Groups of consumers, customers, stakeholders who are brought together to share their perspectives</td>
<td>General practice</td>
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