



1h 00m



SMALL GROUP

DESCRIPTION

A “community” is a group of actors bound together by common interests, values, challenges, or simply the space they share. Many communities have fuzzy edges, i.e., there is not a clear line dividing members from non-members. Others have very clear and exclusive boundaries. Often there are subgroupings and factions over certain hot topics in the community. When calling a community involvement event, it is helpful to understand the makeup and stakeholder relations within the community so you can make a representative selection of who to invite. Community members from a broad range of groups and perspectives can identify needs and resources that may not be apparent to everyone.



PREPARATION

Identify and clearly formulate the issue or common interest the community you are mapping is going to be involved in.



MATERIALS

- Flip Chart
- Markers



TOOLS

None



GROUNDWORK



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- STEP 1** Decide on the number of participants you can handle at your event. While it is possible to host community meetings even with very large groups of several hundred people, this requires elaborate facilitation and event management skills, and appropriate space and resources. If you are new to the field, try aiming for a group of 20-40 people. **[05MIN]**
- STEP 2** Take an inventory of all the formal groups (associations, organizations, and institutions) and informal groups (types of populations, interest groups) that exist in the community. Identify communication and network brokers between these groups: who is an internal contact hub and connects with many community members and subgroups? Who receives and distributes information? Who has contact to the outside? **[20MIN]**
- STEP 3** Create a profile of the ideal participant of the community involvement event. What do you expect from a person taking part, what kind of role in the community should they play, which level of commitment and competences do you wish for? **[20MIN]**
- STEP 4** Start a short-list of community members to invite. **[15 MIN]**
Make sure to incorporate people from all parts of the community:
- people from all relevant formal and informal subgroupings of the community
 - actors concerned with major hot issues in the community
 - community leaders and regular members.
- In addition,
- Check for a gender balance;
 - Don't shy away from inviting critical people and community members that take on outsider positions;
 - Don't forget those at the fringe. Some of the most relevant and innovative ideas come from the edge of a community. You may even want to include close outside supporters.



FOLLOW UP

Refine and complete the invite list by using a "Snowballing Approach": ask relevant community actors you are already in contact with who else should be involved. Make sure to communicate your selection transparently when inviting people – it is not helpful to start an involvement process on a note of exclusiveness.