
The right to participate

Exploring culture change in the non-profit sector

Vibrant Communities Cities Reducing Poverty Eastern Summit

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Effie Vlachoyannacos & Kate Butler

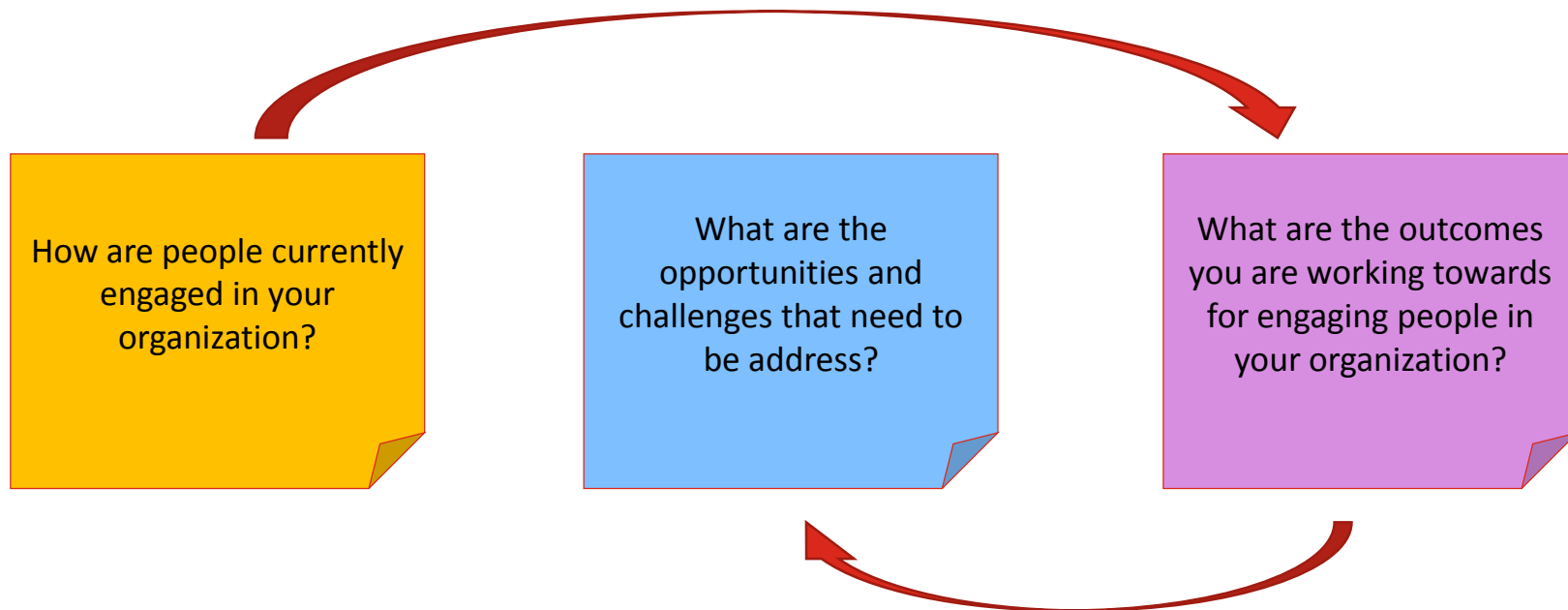


Our time together



- Getting started & questions to explore
- Why human rights matter
- What does it mean to have the right to participate?
- Where do we want to be?
- How can we get there?
- Next steps

Questions to explore



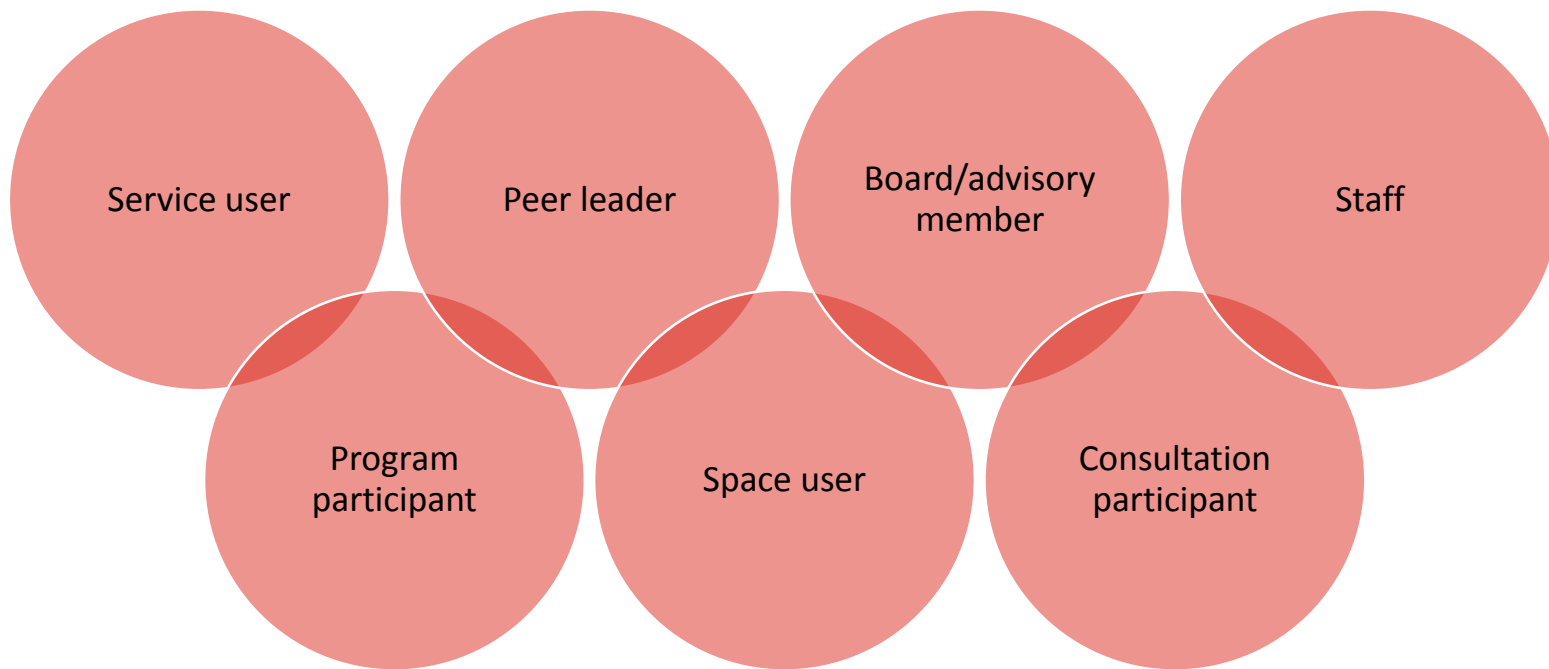
Getting started



How are people
currently engaged in
your organization?

- Program, service users
- Consultation participants
- Advisors
- Board members
- Others?

Type of engagement



Human rights matter



- Human rights inhere in the person
- Rights empower people living in poverty
- The rights approach demands
 - Recognition
 - Institutional support
 - Accountability
- Participation of stakeholders must underpin institutional & legal commitments

The human rights approach offers an explicit normative framework – that of International human rights... [u]nderpinned by universally recognized moral values and reinforced by legal obligations

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights

Right to participate



- “Beyond being good practice, the concept of participation is firmly rooted in international law.”*
 - These include the concept of “free, prior and informed consent” (FPIC) in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - The right to “active, free and meaningful participation” in the Declaration on the Right to Development
 - Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child outlines the right of children to participate in decisions affecting their lives

*Global Initiative Practitioners’ Guide, 2014

Right to participate



- Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
Principles and guidelines for a human rights approach to poverty reduction guidelines for participation includes 4 stages:
 - preference revelation
 - policy choice
 - implementation
 - monitoring, assessment and accountability*

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/PovertyStrategiesen.pdf>

Culture clash



Agencies

- Program/service delivery focus
- Tradition
- Senior leadership
- Resources
- Capacity

People

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Governance
- Independence
- Partnership

Two tokens and a sandwich



- Meaningful engagement is more than just making sure there is food and transportation support
- Challenge the power imbalance within the sector
- “People know what’s best but often get left out of the conversation”
- “People don’t participate in programs because it wasn’t something they wanted in the community in the first place”
- “There has to be space within your organization where staff can let go of power, because that’s when the pedal hits the metal, when you transfer power to residents”*

*<https://neighbourhoodcentres.ca/connecting-power-people-power-place-0>

Depth of participation



Figure 2: Depth of Stakeholder Participation in Decision Making

Stakeholders make decisions

Ability to select, implement, evaluate, and change alternatives

Stakeholders and decision makers are collaborative partners

Ability to develop key alternatives

Active input into development of alternatives and setting of priorities

Delegation and representation

Vote on alternatives

Decision makers are “trustees”

Direct solicitation of stakeholder opinions, wants, needs, ideas

Stakeholders are “subjects”

No consultation



<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2012/08/02/the-participatory-revolution-in-nonprofit-management/>

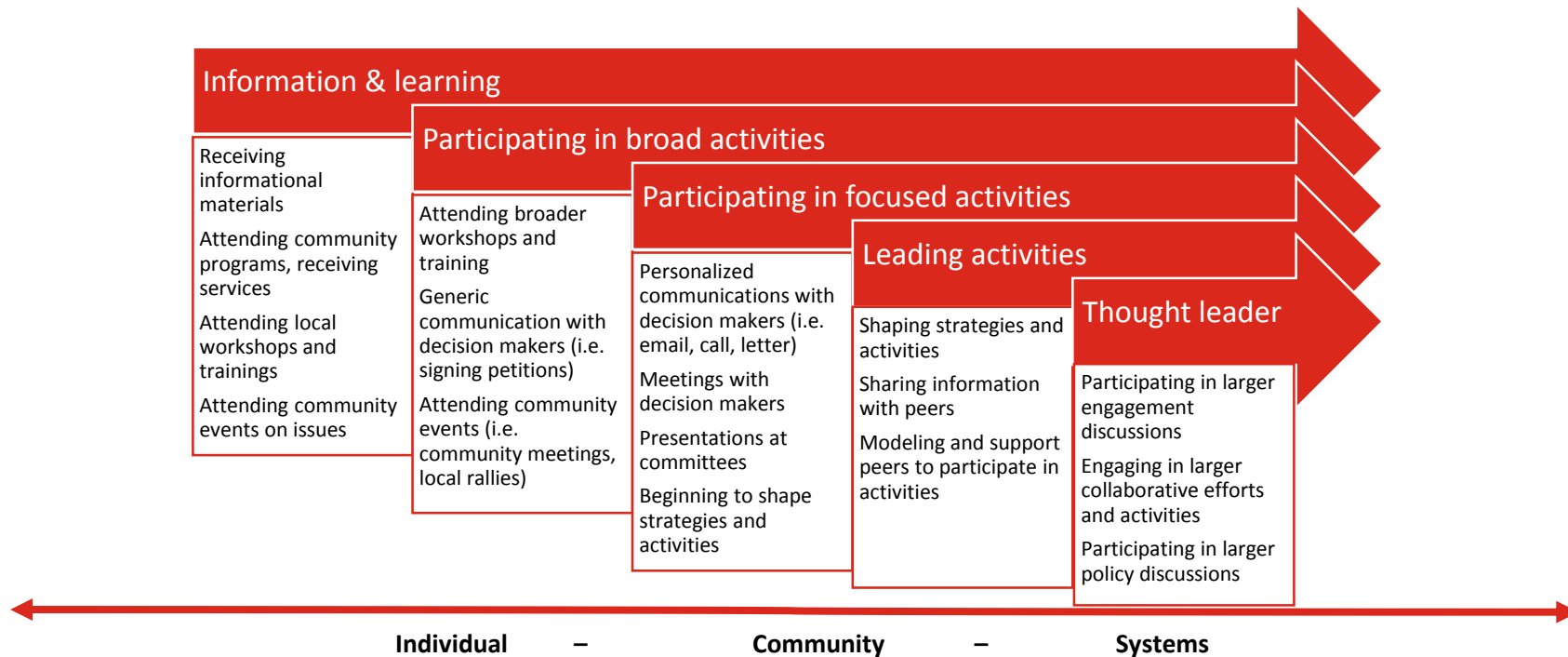
Where we want to be



What are the outcomes
you are working
towards for engaging
people in your
organization?

- Short term vs. long term
- People's participation
- Staff capacity
- Organization culture
- Senior leadership

Individual to systemic participation



How we get there



What are the opportunities and challenges that need to be address?

- Relationships with people
- Board/staff connection to work
- Funding and resources
- Organization capacity to engage
- Peoples' capacity to engage

Principles for leadership & inclusion of people with lived experience



Nothing about us without us:
Seven principles for leadership & inclusion
of people with lived experience
of homelessness

LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Bring the perspective of our lived experience to the forefront
2. Include people with lived experience at all levels of the organization
3. Value our time and provide appropriate supports
4. Challenge stigma, confront oppression and promote dignity
5. Recognize our expertise and engage us in decision-making
6. Work together towards our equitable representation
7. Build authentic relationships between people with and without lived experience

<http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/LEAC-7principles-final.pdf>

What is your next step?



What is the one or two things that you will commit to doing to advance the right to participation in your organization after this session?



Thank you!



Kate Butler

Lead, Human Rights & Learning

kbutler@maytree.com

Effie Vlachoyannacos

Lead, Engagement & Leadership

evlachoyannacos@maytree.com
