

# Public Engagement

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# Overview

- Background
- Why engage the public?
- What does public engagement entail?
- Some important considerations

# Background

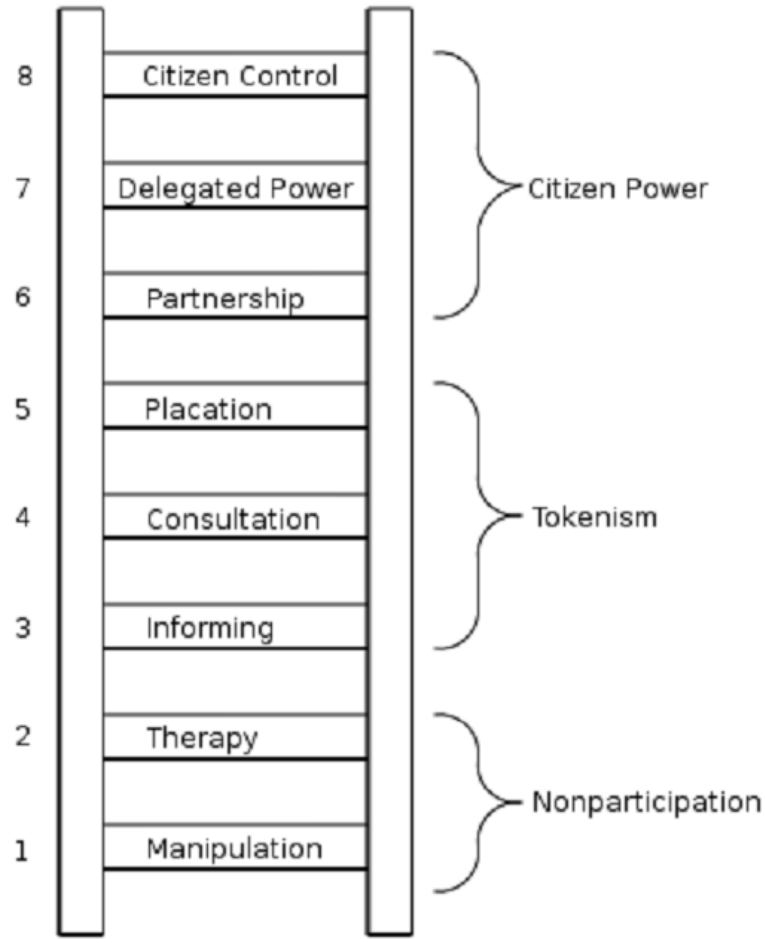
- Public engagement as a means to address low levels of public trust in science
- Public Understanding of Science (PUS) movement aims to increase public trust through public education
- PUS views the public as passive recipients of scientific knowledge
- Recent studies have highlighted the complexities of public understanding and attitudes and the value of public knowledge
- Moving away from public understanding and towards public engagement with science (dialogue instead of education)

# Why engage the public?

Public engagement:

- as essential within democratic processes
- as a means of making experts accountable
- as a means of ensuring projects/policies are publicly acceptable and appropriate
- as an opportunity for mutual learning
- as a means of empowering members of the public

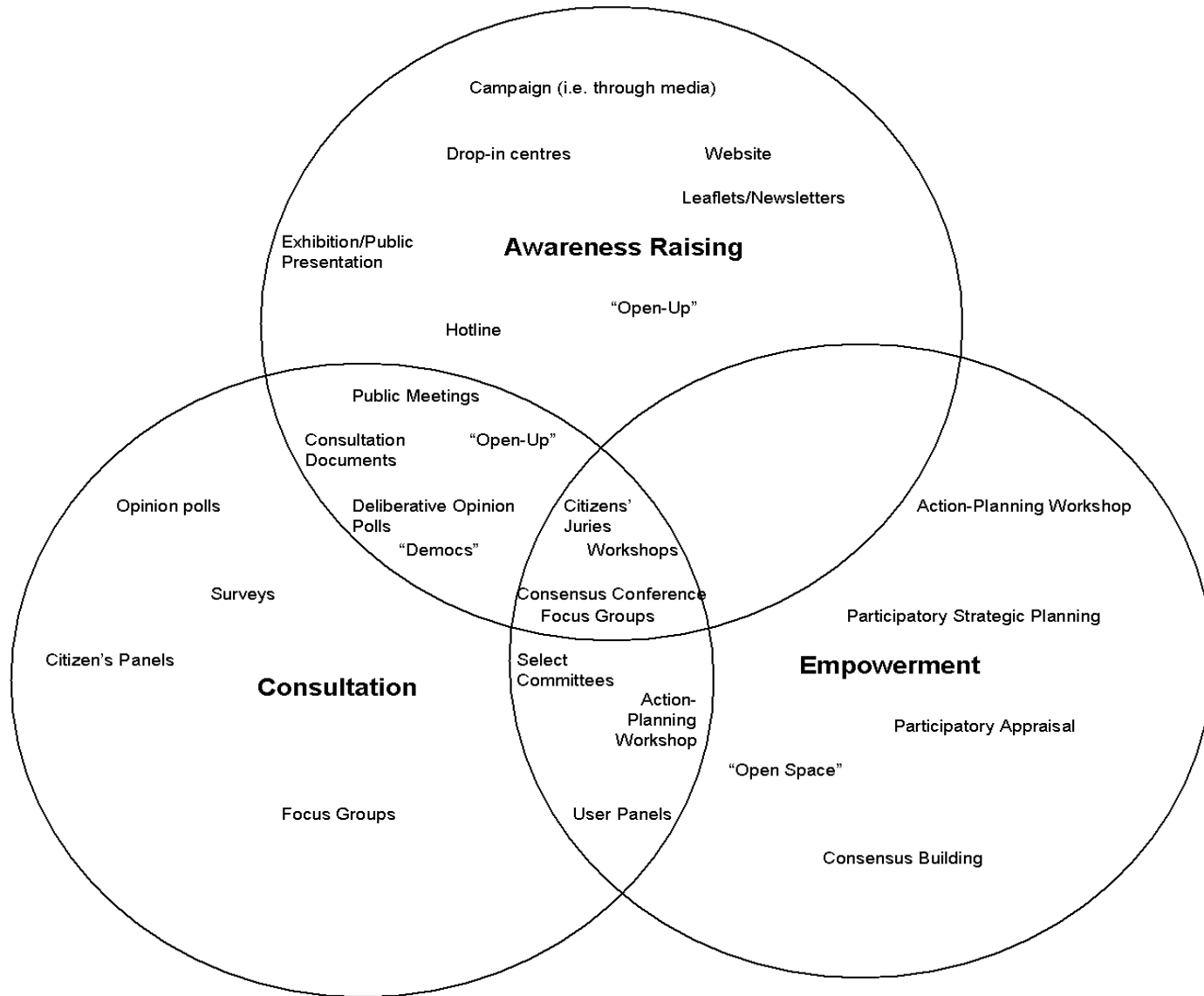
# What does public engagement entail?



Arnstein (1969)

# What does public engagement entail?

	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Potential Methods</b>
<b>Awareness Raising</b>	Information provision and public education.	Greater public acceptance or legitimacy for policy/project.	Media campaign. Public exhibition/presentations. Leaflets.
<b>Consultation</b>	To gain insight into public opinion/views.	Creation of appropriate/socially acceptable policy/project.	Surveys.  Focus groups.
<b>Empowerment</b>	To work with the public enabling them to play key roles in decision-making.	Greater social capital. Capacity building. Enhanced democracy.	User panels.  Citizens' juries.



# Important considerations

- Badly conducted public engagement can have far-reaching negative implications
  - Engagement which is not seen to be meaningful will lead to public mistrust and scepticism
- Meaningful public engagement requires clarity on its purpose and scope
- Participants should be fully and accurately informed of the potential influence of public engagement
- Those running the process may need to be prepared to share power with participants



# Summary

- Public engagement can add significant value through uncovering new perspectives and ensuring that projects advance in publicly acceptable ways
- Public engagement can take many different forms and serve various purposes (i.e. awareness raising; consultation; empowerment)
- However, it requires critical reflection on its purposes, scope and justification

# Public Engagement in SHIP

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# Public Engagement in SHIP

- To address social and ethical issues relating to SHIP;
- To inform the development of a governance framework;
- To add value to SHIP.

# Steering Group Expectations of PE

- To gain trust and public acceptance
- To ensure that SHIP operates in the public interest
- To find out what the public thinks
- To inform the public about SHIP

# The value of public opinions

- Expectation of low public awareness and understanding;
- “The public should have a hand on the tiller”;
- “Public opinion could inform some things slightly at the margins”.

# What role for public opinions in SHIP?

- To give SHIP legitimacy
- To avoid public opposition
- To avoid bad publicity
- To inform practices in SHIP
- To facilitate dialogue

# What questions should PE address?

- What do people know and think?
- What are people concerned about?
- Do people want to be engaged?
- Are current safeguards and systems sufficient?
- Which issues are most sensitive?
- What will people consent for?

# First Phase of PE: Focus Groups

- To explore public awareness, understanding, opinions and concerns;
- With a diverse range of public groups (including patient groups, young people, ethnic minorities...)
- Informal discussion where participants can raise a range of issues.



# Some preliminary findings

- Key themes emerging in focus group discussions:
  - Security
  - Confidentiality
  - Trust
  - Control

# Discussion

- What role should public engagement play?
- What form should public engagement take (i.e. information provision, consultation, empowerment)?
- How important/relevant are public opinions/concerns/preferences?
- What sorts of issues would you want us to discuss with publics?