COMMUNITY MATTERS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND POWER BUILDING GUIDE

increasing power sharing and community ownership

	Goal	Examples
COMMUNITY LED	Community stakeholders hold decision making power and invite others into partnership.	• Community run organization. • Community led programs/initiatives.
PARNTER	Work together with community stakeholders to co-create and co-own ideas, initiatives, etc.	• Community organizing group. • Community members serving on the board of directors. • Co-design of programs.
CONSULT	Collect feedback from community stakeholders to inform decisions.	• Survey. • Community input session. • Community meetings.
INFORM	The community is provided information about an activity or initiative.	• Flyers about an event. • Report or plan document. • Email or text informing about opportunities. • Open house event.
TOKENISM	Using people to create the appearance of collaboration or using stories to advance a cause without shared power.	• A story showing the non-profit as the hero saving someone from an issue.

It is critical to ensure that community members in charge truly represent the people impacted by the program/action/initiative.

Often an initiative will cycle between periods of partnership and community led. The key is to continuously analyze power dynamics in who directs the partnership and who makes decisions.

When used as part of a broader strategy, informing and consulting are important tools. Be cautious not to use them to give the appearance of engagement without any power shifting.

Tokenism is extremely harmful and it is detrimental to community building.

Adapted from IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation and the Ladder of Citizen Participation, Artstein 1969

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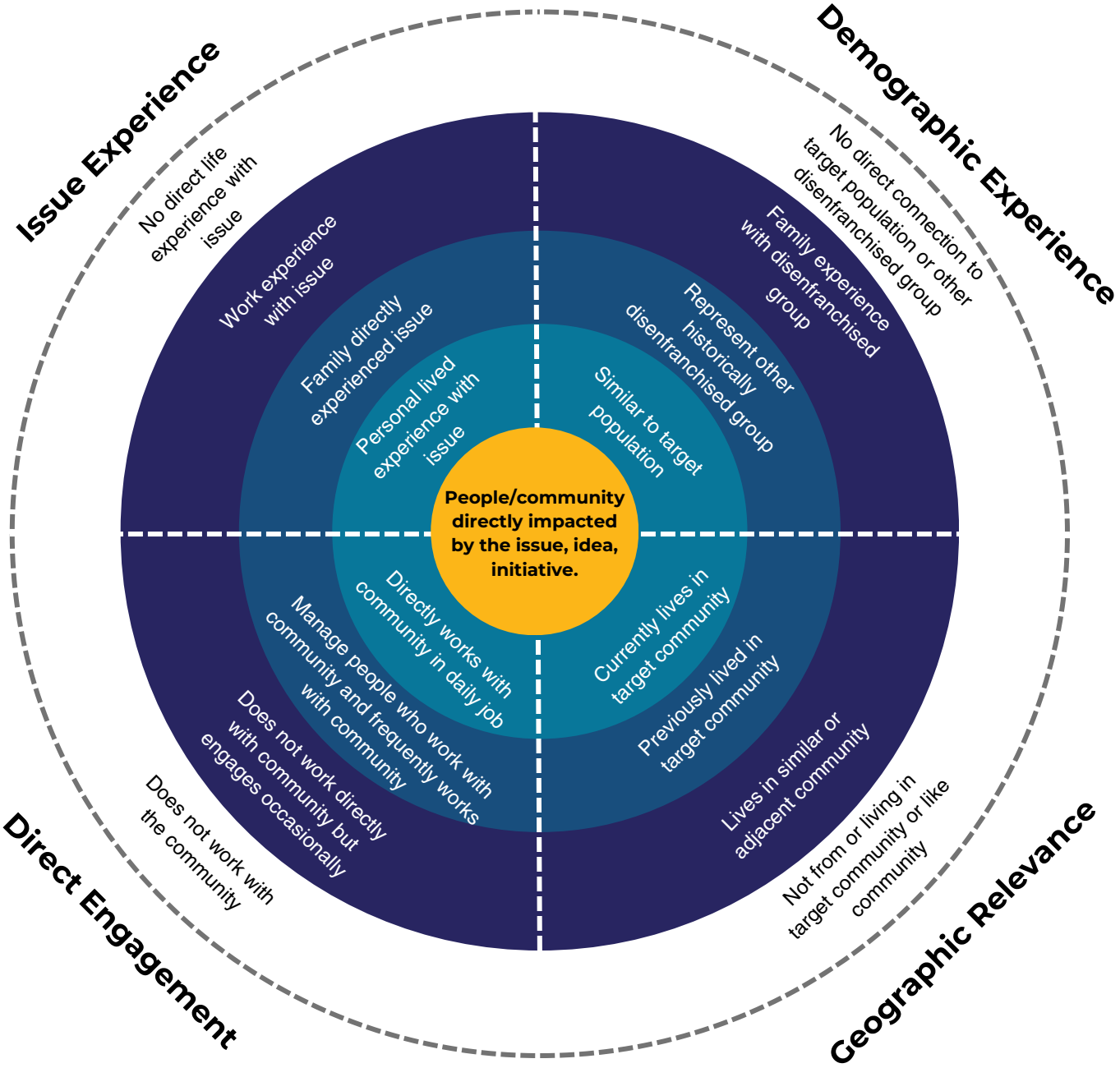

Adapted from Community Engagement Toolkit, Schmitz 2017

Who holds the power?	Neighbor	Direct Experience	Secondary Experience	Limited Experience	No Experience
Issue Experience					
Demographic Experience					
Direct Engagement					
Geographic Relevance					

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	What is the purpose and intended outcome(s) of the action, initiative, or program?	What role will community members play?	Who will make decisions?
Short-Term			
Long-Term			

WHO HOLDS THE POWER?

At the end of this initiative, who ultimately "owns" it?