

Strategies for Public Engagement: From Transactions to Transformations

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Introductions:

- Your name + organization
- Do you and/or your organization do public engagement work? If yes, what kind? If no, why not?
- One burning question about public engagement you would like to discuss

Why Public engagement matters:

- ICN / Vision Critical Survey. 2012: [Canadian Engagement on Global Poverty Issues](#)
 - *15% of those surveyed ranked 'Global Poverty' as among their top 3 most concerning issues*
 - *"Donating funds is the most common way Canadians engage in social issues."*

Why Public engagement matters:

CCIC. 2014. *Key Issues Affecting an Enabling Environment for Canadian International Development and Humanitarian CSOs.*

- “The majority of organizations supporting public engagement devote less than 10% of their resources to these activities, with small organizations much more likely to allocate larger shares of their revenue to PE.” (p. 27)
- “Public engagement is largely seen as a passive activity by many organizations... The lowest ranked objective is “advocacy,” followed by “empowering target populations.” (p. 27)
- Reasons to be optimistic, but also large red flags:
 - many organizations (34%) view fundraising as a one of their top 3 objectives for public engagement activities (p. 30)

Why Public Engagement Matters:

- “Over the past few decades there have been pressures on public engagement that have led to an increased adoption of transactional, rather than transformational, methods.”
 - Inter-Council Network, Global Hive web site: “How Change Happens”

The Global Hive

<http://globalhive.ca>

How Change Happens

Education

Gender Equality

Monitoring & Evaluation

Partnership & Collaboration

Policy

Youth Engagement



See all



Context



Good Practices



Tools



Case Studies



Resources



Webinars

A photograph of several children of diverse ethnicities looking through a chain-link fence. They are behind a table with signs that say 'Please Donate' and 'Please Help Feed'. The scene is outdoors at night or in low light.

The Global Hive: Tools for engaging global citizens

Click on one or more of the tabs above
this image to begin exploring

Session Overview

- Transactional vs. transformational PE
- Creative strategies for engaging non-traditional publics
- Big questions from the Global Hive (Break-out group discussions)

Transactional vs. Transformational Public Engagement

- *Transactional engagement* seeks to lower or eliminate barriers to entry and **calls for actions that are broad-based, easy and fast** – such as a small donation via a text message, or signing an online petition. While these methods can be an important and often vital part of public engagement, we don't believe that transactional methods alone will ultimately lead to the change we seek. In fact, some argue that they can be counter-productive for creating lasting change ([Finding Frames, 6](#)).

Transactional vs. Transformational Public Engagement

- *Transformational engagement* seeks to implicate individuals and groups in **dynamic cycles of learning, reflection and action on global issues**. This process requires spaces for deeper engagement and methods that foster longer-term participation. Techniques for transformational engagement might include learning circles, experiential learning (local or global), or deliberative dialogue to work through complex issues, among many others.

Transactional vs. Transformational Public Engagement

- “Generating change in global systems cannot happen exclusively through awareness raising. . . . More and more, [civil society organizations] of the **South are telling their northern counterparts that the best way they can support development is by catalyzing changed attitudes and practices in the North and to entrust them with their own local development efforts.** Public engagement needs to be holistic in its approach and include all of the actions leading to social change that citizens can take and this includes advocacy” (“Public Engagement in Challenging Times: The Context, Implications, and Possible Directions”, 18).

Transactional vs. Transformational PE: Questions

- What are the potential risks of focusing solely on transactional points of entry?
- What type of messages and narrative do you try to communicate to your constituents? What message or narrative do you think they are hearing?
- How can we move from transactional entry points to deeper forms of engagement?
- Is it possible to run a campaign which has both transactional and transformational goals? How can fund-raising and public engagement work together?

Creativity and Humour in strategies of Public Engagement

- <http://www.africafornorway.no/>
- [Action Aid : Drive Aid Campaign](#)
- <http://www.poo2loo.com/>

- [Baaken Riise, Anja. 2012. “How to effectively communicate your message” TedX Trondheim.](#)

Big Questions from the Global Hive

- What kind of changes do we hope will follow from public engagement initiatives? What is the intended impact of youth engagement (immediately, after 10 years)?
- To whom are we accountable in our public engagement work? To our donors? To our Southern partners? To our target audiences?
- How open are we, as a sector, to critical thinking and analysis in public engagement? Are we prepared to change our models of engagement?