

The Practice of Social Research Doctoral Training Centre

Impact

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What is the Public Good?

- Neo-liberalism argues that the combined social benefit from economic efficiency and choice leads in practice to a greater *aggregate public good*.
- It does not, however, take into consideration the impact on normative issues such as equality and social justice.
- What is the effect of this on the relationship between the contemporary university and the *public good*?

The Contemporary University

- The contemporary university may be said to have three *basic* social functions. These are its contributions to:
- Human and social development in all its forms.
- Knowledge and learning societies.
- Economic development and employment. This includes entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship.

The University & the Public Good

- Something needs to justify, in part at least, *public subsidies* to students and to providers i.e. universities and colleges.
- The public also expects a return on its investment in terms of the contribution of the university to economic and social development generally.
- This is the *social return* or the *public good*.

The University & the Public

Good

- Governments can provide, subsidise, contract or regulate university education.
- As stated, they invest in it for the economic, social and cultural benefits it is seen to bring to nation-building and sustainability.
- However, much of this is found in indirect and intangible social benefits and externalities which are very difficult to calculate.

The University & the Public Good

- It is claimed that university education:-
- Raises the productivity and incomes of all employees through knowledge transfer.
- Promotes technical change through research and development.
- Increases allocative efficiency and labour flexibility and mobility.
- Cultivates social cohesion, community values and stability.

The University & the Public

Good

- The university is both a creator of and repository of knowledge;
- and the incubator of sustainable economic and social development;
- and of intellectual and moral leadership;
- Each of these has local, national and global dimensions.

The University & the Public Good

- This was recognized by UNESCO at the World Conference on Higher Education in Paris, 2009. The communiqué concluded that the strategic role of higher education in human sustainable development was:
- ‘...crucial, and all the more so as we navigate through the economic crisis. Higher education systems must be expanded and strengthened to provide learning opportunities to all students regardless of their background.’

The University & the Public

Good

- In recent years there has been a re-consideration of the public role of the university and of the related issue of graduate employability.
- However, under the influence of neo-liberalism, this has emphasized the *economic* and market function of the university, rather than its *social* function. Certain questions deserve more consideration:-

How do publics view and value higher education?



Consumer opposition: The public, and especially organisations such as Friends of the Earth, have not taken to the idea of genetically modified crops, or 'Frankenstein foods' as they are commonly known

Science News

Pointless research: top 10 Ig Nobel award winners for silly science

As the government prepares to crack down on 'irrelevant' research, we look at some of the things we'll be losing, courtesy of the Ig Nobel awards.

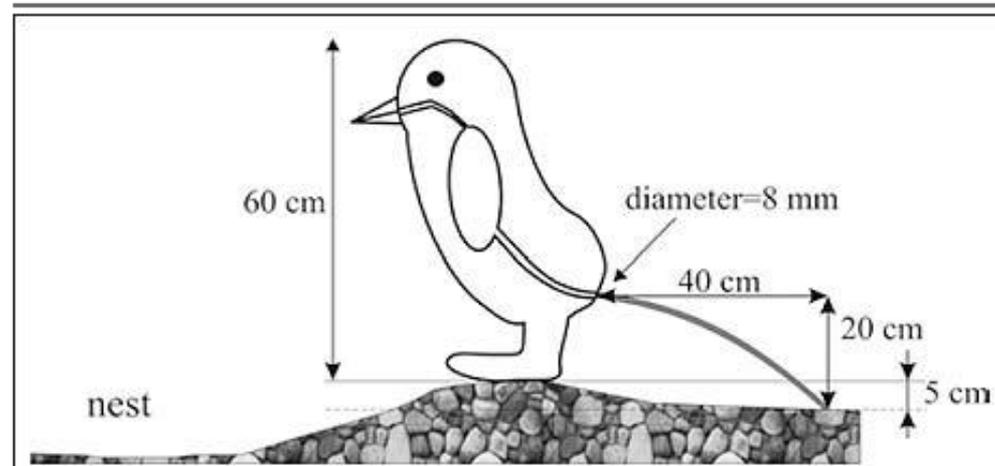


Fig. 1 Position of model penguin during defaecation and physical parameters used to calculate rectal pressure necessary to expel faecal material over a distance of 40 cm

Farts of the penguins: if you've ever wondered how far a penguin can poo, here is your enlightenment Photo: POLAR BIOLOGY

By Tom Chivers

7:30AM BST 24 Sep 2009

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Science News

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IN SCIENCE



Research funding plan should be abandoned, say academics

16 December 2009

A petition bearing 18,000 signatures calling for the abandonment of economic impact assessment in research funding applications has been delivered to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce).

Lee Cronin, professor of chemistry at the University of Glasgow, UK, believes the emphasis on impact could lead to a false picture of science being portrayed to the public. 'We're telling the public that our research is deterministic - it's not,' Cronin told *Chemistry World*. 'It's a massive rollercoaster of failure and inspiration and I think that if we don't tell the public that, we're actually losing something that is the soul of science, the soul of discovery.'



Thousands of academics and researchers have signed the petition



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

News and Events

The economic impact of the university

28 June 2006

A pioneering report investigating the socio-economic impact of a UK university has been completed by independent research firm, Library House.

The report, 'The Impact of the University of Cambridge on the UK Economy and Society', concludes that if the University did not exist, more than £50 billion and over 150,000 jobs would be needed to replace the University's impact on the economy.



News



Social impact of universities worth over £1.31 billion, says new report

UK Universities add at least £1.31 billion a year in value to UK society in the form of health and well being, citizenship and political engagement, according to new research.

What's the point of university?

Students are getting into deeper and deeper into debt, but they may not be getting much for their money.

Tomas Hirst

guardian.co.uk, Friday 27 July 2007 11.30 BST

[Article history](#)

A friend who works for Lloyd's of London recently told me that he would rather employ someone who had "lived in the real world" for a few years than a recent graduate. His logic was that graduates are taught abstract ideas and encouraged to write essays with distant deadlines, neither of which prepares them for the pressing demands of work.



Universities UK

Universities Week survey reveals the public are in the dark when it comes to universities

A new Populus survey undertaken to launch Universities Week 2010 has revealed that the British public knows surprisingly little about universities in the UK. Only one in five people know approximately how many universities there are in the country, and one in six people do not rate them as major local employers. Less than one-in-five people recognise the wider impacts universities have on society.

“less than one-in-five people recognise the wider impacts universities have on society.”

The public role of universities is hotly contested

- ‘public’ vs ‘private’ benefit
- ‘market’ vs ‘social’ value
- ‘applied’ vs ‘abstract’ knowledge
- ‘academic freedom’ vs ‘regulation’

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*The
Private
& Social
Benefits of Higher Education*

**HIGHER
LEARNING,
GREATER
GOOD**

WALTER W. McMAHON

WARWICK



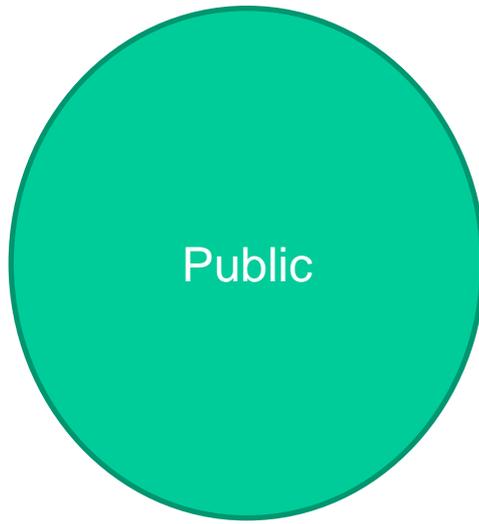
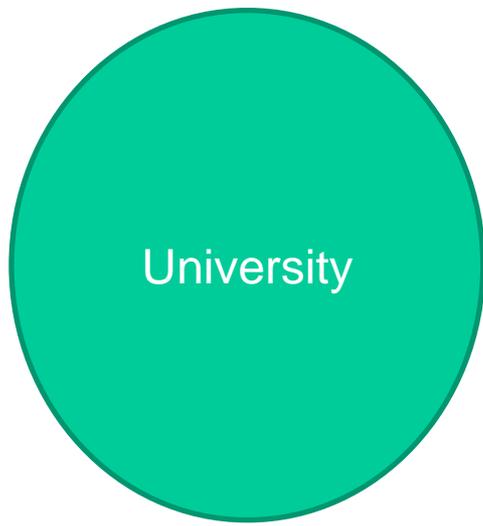
Degrees of value
How universities benefit society

	Accountability measures	Shorter term benefits	Medium term benefits	Longer run impacts
Market benefits				
Private non-market benefits				
Social / public benefits (benefits to others, to society at large and to future generations)				

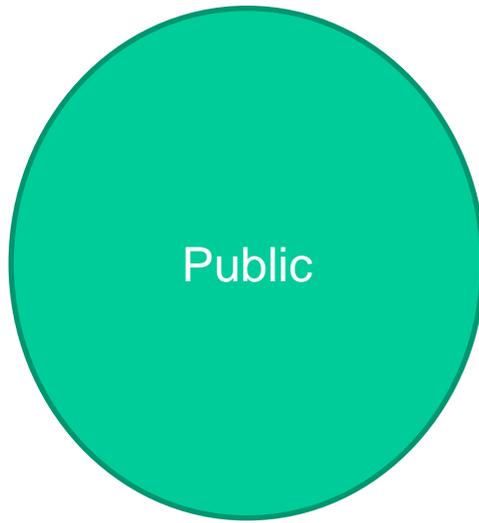
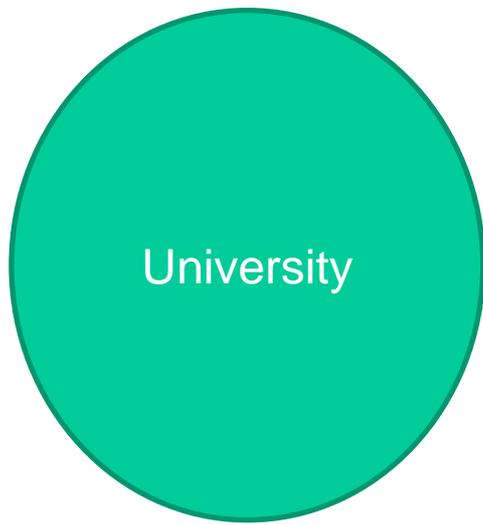
	Accountability measures	Shorter term benefits	Medium term benefits	Longer run impacts
Market benefits		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs • Starting salaries • Social mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifetime earnings • Better savings management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income growth • Per capita economic growth
Private non-market benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree completion rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better health • Less smoking • Less obesity • Less depression • Child health • Lower infant mortality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater longevity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slower population growth • More investment • Political stability • Sustainable environment
Social / public benefits (benefits to others, to society at large and to future generations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning (test scores) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic participation • Racial tolerance • Less cynicism • Charitable giving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of civic institutions • Larger middle class • Less support for authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule of law • Democratization • Human rights
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to graduation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting (books etc) • Child learning, college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational transmission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education increased
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access / affordability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower unemployment • Education finance reform • Universal access • Lower crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less poverty • Social cohesion (social capital) • Lower prison costs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New R&D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic growth

‘the estimate that **social benefit** externalities constitute about 52% of the total benefits of HE is an approximate guide to how far the privatization of HE should proceed before public investment falls below the level conducive to optimum efficiency’ (p 255)

How do you demonstrate accountability, generate trust and understanding, and clarify and negotiate your purposes?

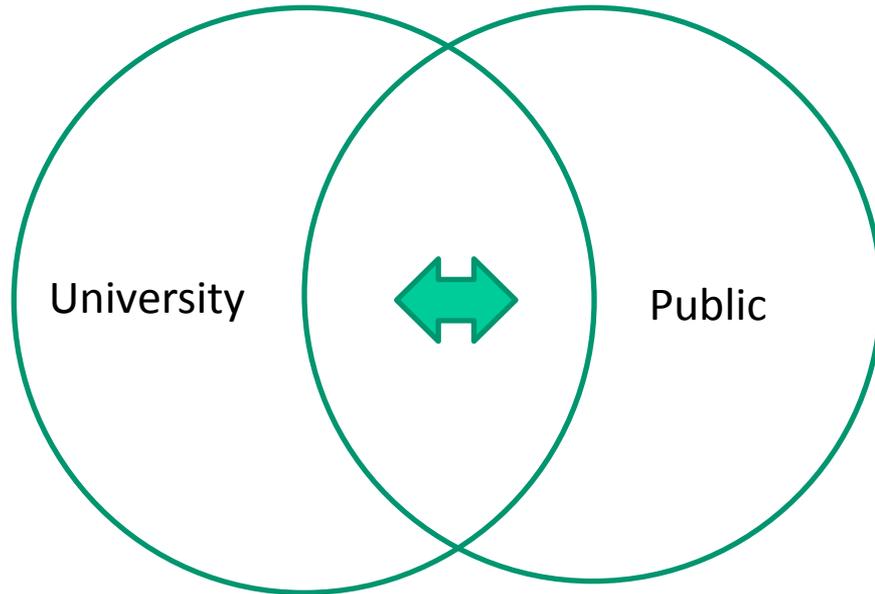


**Public
Relations**



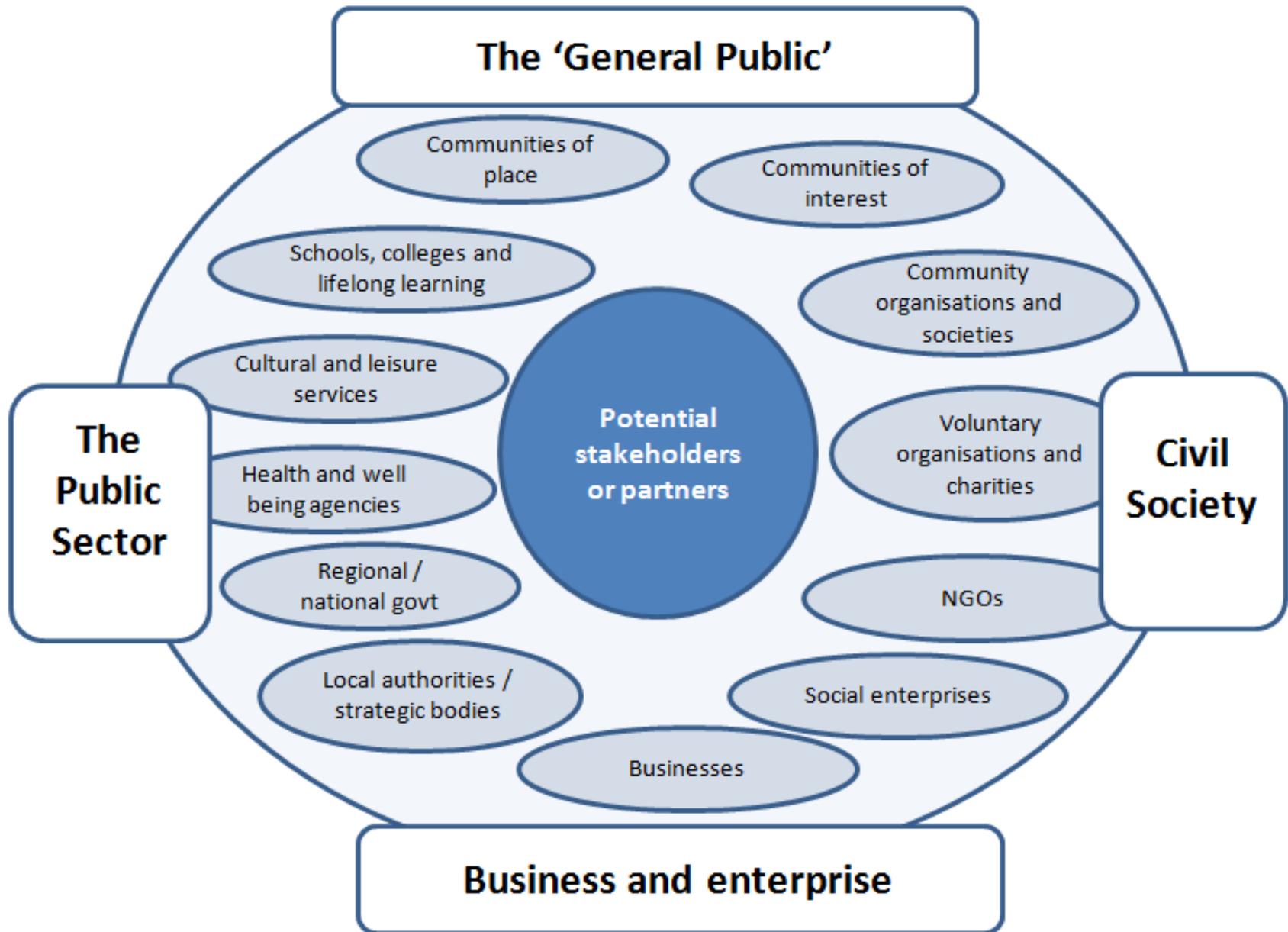
**Public
Relations**

**Public
Engagement**



Engagement implies strenuous, thoughtful, argumentative interaction with the non-university world in at least four spheres: setting universities' aims, purposes and priorities; relating teaching and learning to the wider world; the back-and-forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners; and taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens.

Association of Commonwealth Universities



HOME

WHAT IS PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT?

WHY DOES IT
MATTER?

HOW TO
DO IT

HOW TO
SUPPORT IT

HOW WE
CAN HELP

ABOUT US

Universities across the UK are signing up to our manifesto for public engagement



Are you new to this?

[Easy ways to get started](#) with public engagement

How to engage

We've created a [toolkit for people who want to engage the public](#).

Ways we can help

- [Join our public engagers' network](#)
- [Ask us for advice](#)

Universities already signed up include:



The NCCPE is part of the [Beacons for Public Engagement](#)

We also run [vinspired students](#).

Sign up for our newsletter

Latest

www.publicengagement.ac.uk

Defining Impact

- Impacts could include:
 - development in learning
 - attitude and behaviour change
 - a greater sense of self-efficacy
 - enhanced curiosity or interest in a subject

Defining Impact

- improved skills
- greater connectedness with others
- improved understanding of self and the broader world / universe
- improved confidence or skills, etc.

Defining Impact

- What difference have you made in people's lives?
- What ideas, relationships, interests, motivations have been transformed as a result of your intervention or contribution? (and in what ways?)
- OR: 'impact' is the difference between the profile of those you engaged pre-intervention and their profile post-intervention.
- That is, the overall net effects or results of an activity or intervention (intended or unintended).

Public Engagement can be:

- Science Communication
- Site-based (e.g. Zoo-based or Museum-based)
- Education
- Outreach
- New Media (e.g. Dialogue on Twitter / Facebook)
- Festivals
- Consultations
- Debate and dialogue
- Collaborative research

The deficit model

Public 'deficit' of:

- i. understanding of **scientific knowledge**
 - ii. **trust** in science – **more info, transparency, or explanation, will restore trust** (via 'understanding our motives')
 - iii. understanding of scientific **process** – science cannot give certainty nor zero-risk (Bob May 2000)
- all suggest public responses are emotional, irrational and 'without knowledge'
 - Citizens = naïve and gullible to media misinformation
 - Public should not question scientific-institutional culture

Public deficit model: 'Facts' over 'Process'

“Science education in schools focuses too much on facts, rather than process, leading to the misleading impression that science... deals in certainties rather than, as is more often the case, conclusions based on the balance of probabilities after evaluation of the available evidence”.

Robert May, FRS: UK Government chief-scientist: 11 July 2000, lecture Hannover Expo, Germany.

Beyond 'deficit model' of publics

- Yes, there is public ignorance of science
- There is also scientific / institutional ignorance
 - of science
 - of publics and their realities
- Public ignorance is NOT the cause of 'public scepticism' or public mistrust
 - It is not the case that to 'know science / zoos is to love them'
- Scientific denial, of *scientific* ignorance is a key factor in public mistrust / disengagement

New 'democratisation of science' agenda

-Dialogue

-public engagement

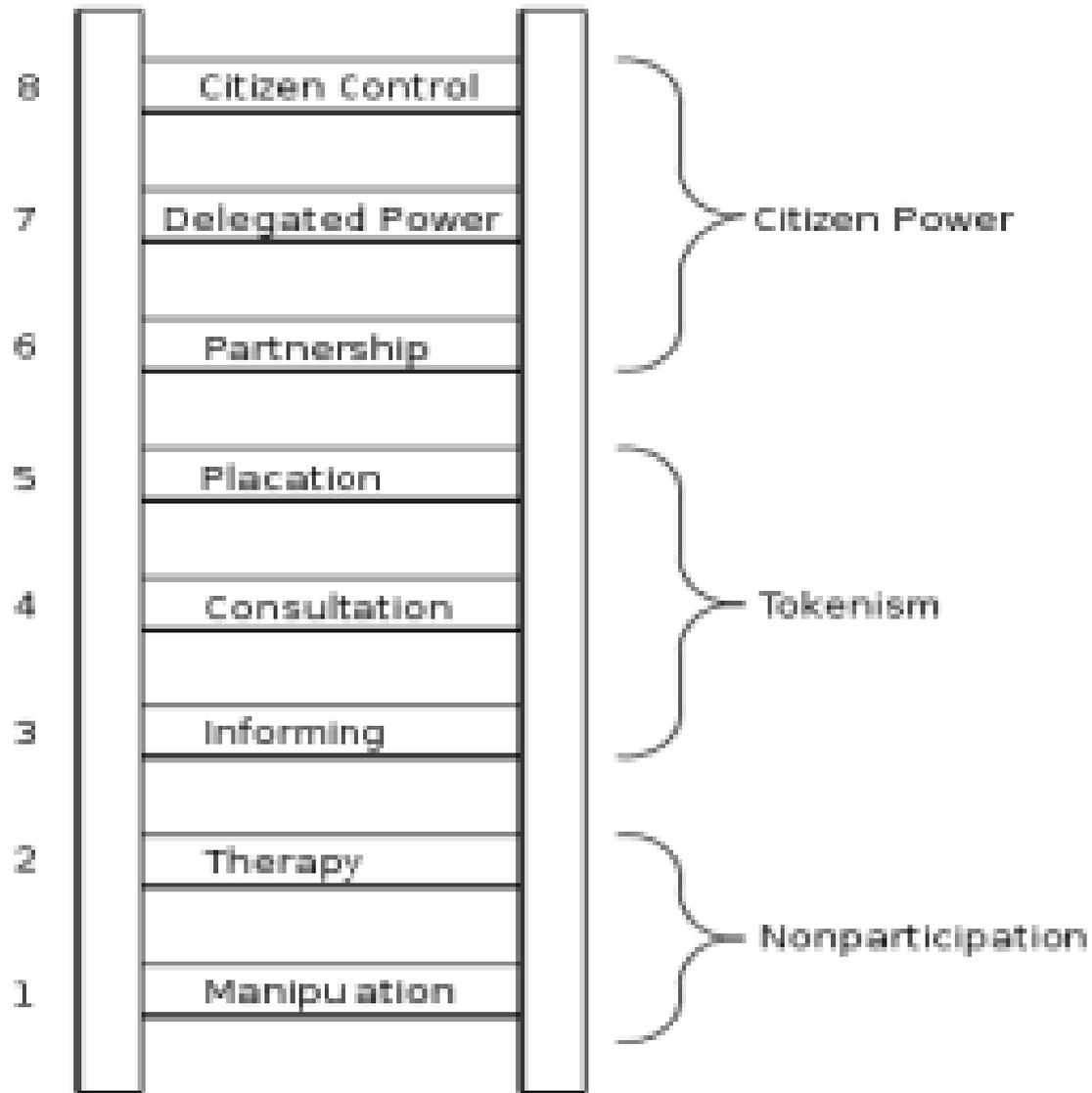
-participation (various methods)

-inclusivity of knowledges

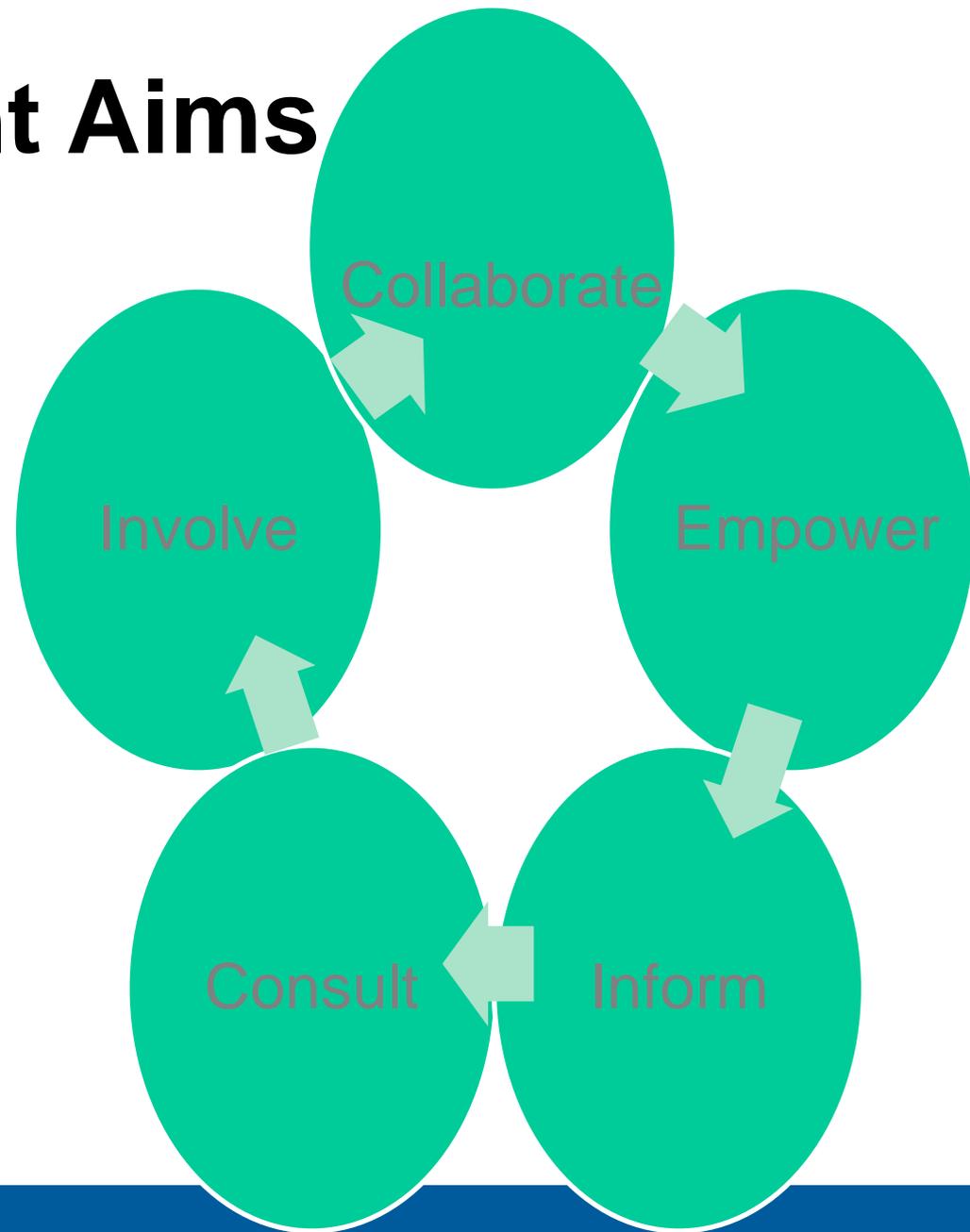
-transparency and accountability

i.e. "scientific citizenship" etc.

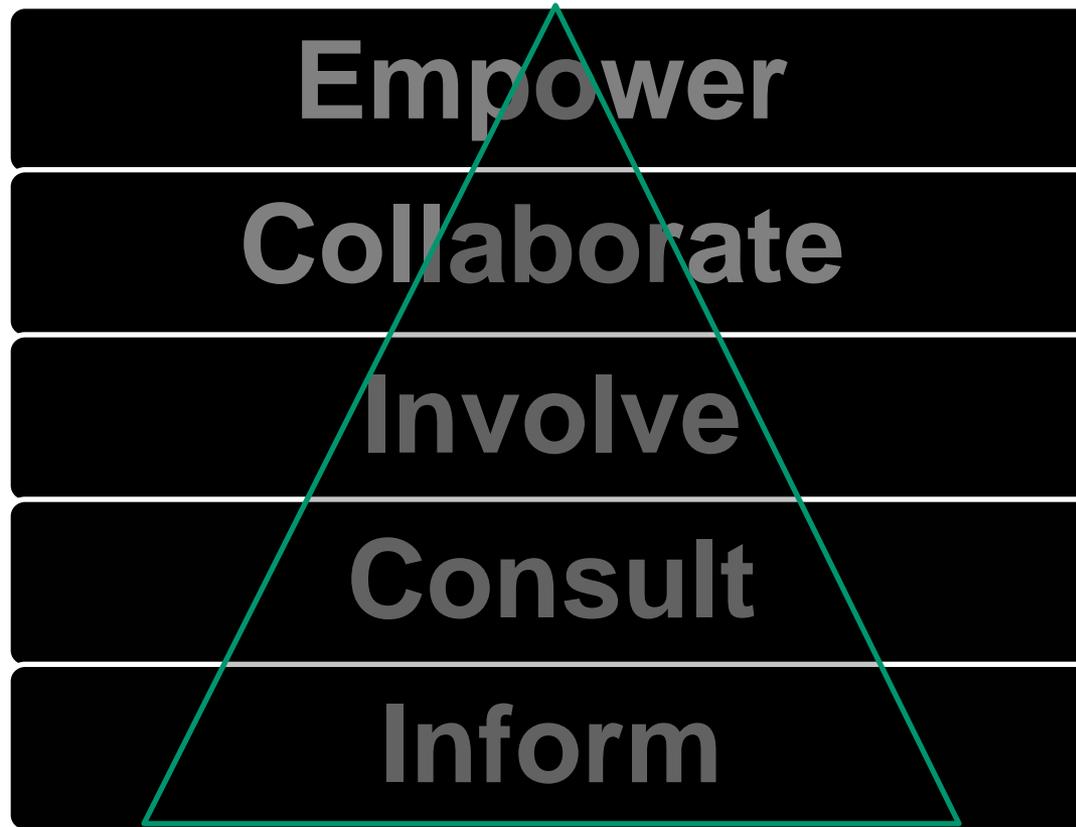
Arnstein's Ladder (1969)



Engagement Aims



And another way of looking at it



Number of people involved

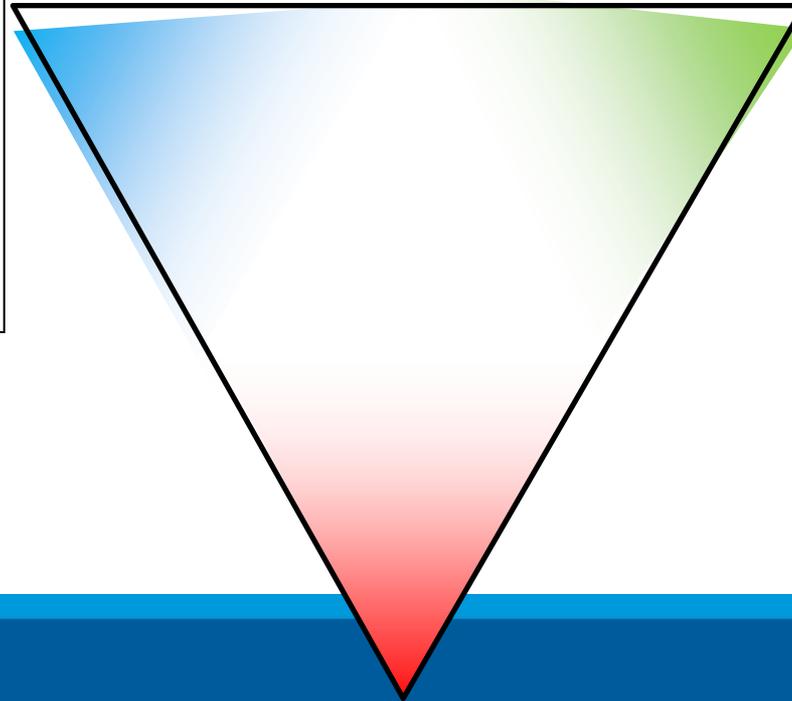
Public Engagement Triangle

Transmit

To inspire, inform, change, educate, build capacity and involvement or influence decisions of others (e.g. the public)

Receive

To use the views, skills, experience, knowledge of others (e.g. the public) to inspire, inform, change, educate or build your own capacity or decisions



Collaborate

To collaborate, consider, create or decide something together

Thinking about the benefits

- Engagement as an end in itself
- Engagement as an means to an end
- Engagement as an external requirement
- Engagement to benefit institution
- Engagement to benefit participants
- Engagement to benefit society