



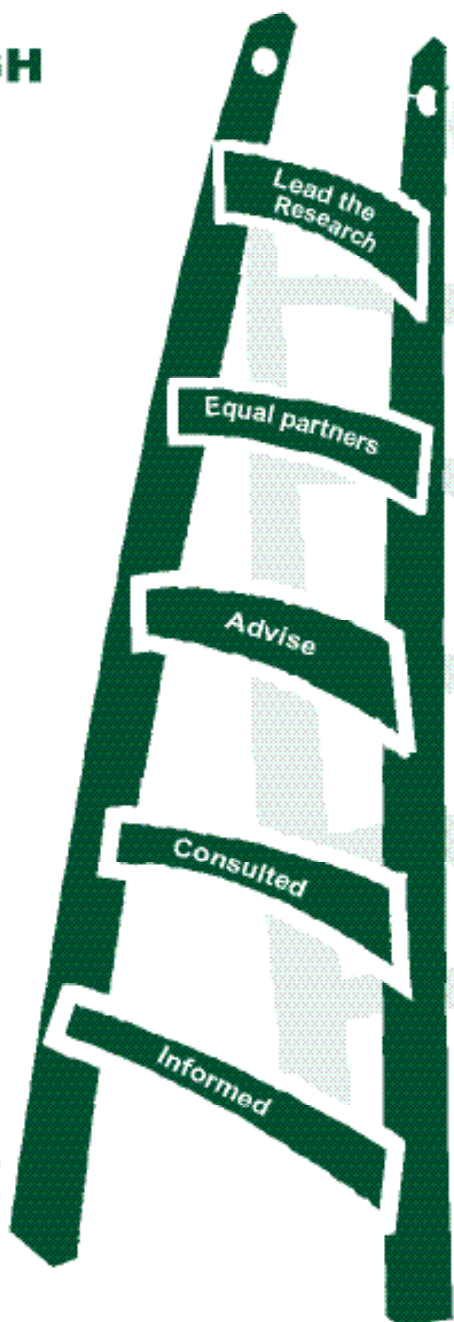
Consumer and community Participation Fact Sheet T03: Ladder of participation

Being clear about the level of participation you are seeking is very important. It helps you understand what you are aiming for, and in turn enables consumers and community members to make an informed decision about whether or not they want to work with you.

Using a ladder, as shown below, can help to illustrate the levels of consumer and community participation. It can also be shown as a continuum where there are no clear steps but a gradual change from low to high level as modelled by INVOLVE. www.invo.org.uk. Using either model can be helpful in identifying and explaining the level of participation that is planned for a research project.

The Ladder of Participation

HIGH



Consumers and community members identify the research need and set the appropriate research agenda. They then undertake the research themselves, or commission researchers to do this on their behalf.

Methods often used:

Consumer or community researchers, community led steering groups

Equal partners

Researchers work in partnership with consumers and community members to plan, undertake and/or disseminate the results of research.

Methods often used:

Consumer or community researchers, membership of steering group

Advise

Researchers seek the advice of consumers or community members – e.g. about how to recruit participants or how to disseminate results.

Methods often used:

Asking consumers or community members to comment on documents, community forums or conversations, reference groups, research buddies, meetings with community or consumer groups

Consulted

Researchers offer information about a research study or plan to consumers and community members and seek their views about it. They do not necessarily take these views on board, but they will usually offer feedback about what they have done in response to comments.

Methods often used:

Community conversations, focus groups, surveys, meetings with consumer or community groups

Informed

Researchers make information about the research available to consumers or community members. They do not seek views on the research.

Methods often used:

Websites, talks or presentations

LOW

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