Building Sustainable Communities: The Impact of Engagement

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: THE IMPACT OF ENGAGEMENT

Module 1: Introduction to Community Engagement

RYAN PLUMMER; AMANDA SMITS; SAMANTHA WITKOWSKI; BRIDGET MCGLYNN; DEREK ARMITAGE; ELLA-KARI MUHL; AND JODI JOHNSTON

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

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All five modules can be found here:

Module 1: Introduction to Community Engagement

Module 2: Information Gathering and Sharing

Module 3: Collaboration

Module 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

Module 5: Creating Connections for the Future

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About Us

This open access course was developed by members of the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre (ESRC) at Brock University. Located in St. Catharines, Ontario, the ESRC is a transformative and creative transdisciplinary community dedicated to research and education advancing environmental sustainability locally and globally. In working towards this mission, the ESRC:

- *encourages research excellence in environmental sustainability by faculty, librarians, and students;*
- *enables enriching educational experiences in environmental sustainability; and,*
- *engages in knowledge mobilization and fosters knowledge impacts.*

More information about the ESRC, including its undergraduate and graduate programming, is available here.

The ESRC is uniquely positioned to create the five open access modules about Building Sustainability Communities: The Impact of Engagement. It is one of the few universities worldwide to be located in a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It is also deeply committed to the enterprise of sustainability science. Throughout the modules, you will see examples of how the ESRC, and our partners are working to build sustainable communities.

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    - *Derek Armitage: Professor, the School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability, University of Waterloo (UW)*
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Module 1: Introduction to Community Engagement
Module 2: Information Gathering and Sharing
Module 3: Collaboration
Module 4: Monitoring and Evaluation
Module 5: Creating Connections for the Future

THE TEACHING TEAM

Derek Armitage

Dr. Derek Armitage is Professor and Associate Director in the School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability, University Waterloo. His research aims to support coastal communities and their partners to sustainably manage oceans, coasts and fisheries using ideas from cooperative (co-) management, adaptive governance and knowledge co-production. He has led a wide range of initiatives and working groups in several major research partnerships, including the Community Conservation Research Network, the OceanCanada Partnership, and most recently, a new global partnership on the vulnerability and viability of small-scale fisheries. He also serves on the Independent Science Panel for the Government of New Zealand's Sustainable Seas Science Challenge. He is the co-editor of several books, including 'Adaptive Co-Management: Collaboration, Learning and Multi-Level Governance' (UBC Press) and a forthcoming volume, 'Canada's Oceans: Pathways to Sustainability in a Sea of Change' (UBC Press).

Jodi Johnston

Jodi Johnston is a member of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, Ontario. Over the past 15 years she has traveled and made her home in many towns and small First Nation and Inuit communities across Canada. Jodi has worked extensively as an outdoor education teacher and spent large portions of every season guiding, paddling and snowshoeing in Temagami. Jodi Johnston is an honours specialist in Outdoor and Experiential Education from Queen's University and holds an honours Bachelor of Recreation and Leisure Studies from Brock University. She has spent the past 12 years working in education in student success programs, outdoor experiential education and alternative education with Indigenous students across Ontario, Labrador and Nunavut. Jodi is currently the Ojibwe language Teacher and Regional Consultant for First Nation,

Métis and Inuit Education (FNMI) at York Region District School Board. She is the Indigenous advisor for the outdoor ed committee, has her Master Educators Leave No Trace certificate and instructors, ORCKA Instructor Level 2, Wilderness First Responder, and is an Outdoor Council of Canada paddling, winter camping and hiking certifier & instructor.

Ella-Kari Muhl

Ella-Kari Muhl is a political ecologist and interdisciplinary sustainability practitioner. She holds an MSc. (with distinction) in Environmental and Geographical Science from the University of Cape Town (South Africa). Her research interests focus on issues of equity, the co-production of knowledge and sustainable governance of marine resources. Currently, she is contributing to the co-development of the evaluation framework for the Gwaii Hanaas Land-Sea-People Plan, and is also a collaborating researcher in a Kuu (sea otter) recovery initiative led by Parks Canada and the Council of the Haida Nation, while completing her doctoral degree in the School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability, University of Waterloo. Ms. Muhl has lived and worked across Southern Africa, Asia and Australia, and is a certified divemaster and yoga teacher. She has extensive volunteer experience, including with the Department of Parks and Wildlife (Western Australia) and Save Our Seas (South Africa) foundation which aims to help underrepresented children experience the benefits of the ocean.

Bridget McGlynn

Bridget McGlynn is recent graduate of the Master of Sustainability program and a research assistant at the ESRC. Her thesis research investigated collaborative governance for flood planning in the Wolastoq / St. John River Basin through social network analysis. This research was conducted in partnership with WWF-Canada through the Partnership for Freshwater Resilience. Her research interests focus on performance and social-ecological fit of collaborative governance.

Ryan Plummer

Ryan Plummer is Professor and Director of the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre (ESRC) at Brock University. He is also presently an Adjunct Professor in the Sustainability Research Centre at the University of the Sunshine Coast (Australia) and Adjunct Faculty in the Department of Environment and Resource Studies at the University of Waterloo (Canada). He has held the position of Senior Research Fellow at the Stockholm Resilience Centre (Sweden) and Science Director at the Canadian Rivers Institute (Canada). His multi-faceted program of research broadly concerns stewardship, environmental governance, and social-ecological resilience. He is the author of over 100 peer reviewed articles and the author/co-editor of four books.

Amanda Smits

Amanda Smits holds a Master of Education from Brock University and is the Centre Administrator for ESRC where much of her work focuses on project management of the multiple innovative community partnership the centre has formed over the past four years. She completed a Master of Education in the Administration and Leadership stream at Brock, where her research focused mainly on post-secondary sustainability policies in practice and in 2019 Amanda completed the Certificate in Knowledge Mobilization through the University of Guelph. Amanda was recently awarded with the Faculty of Social Sciences Staff Student Experience Award and was the 2019 recipient of FOSS's Staff Award for Community Engagement.

Samantha Witkowski

Samantha Witkowski is a recent graduate of the Master of Sustainability program and a Project Coordinator at the ESRC. Her thesis research focused on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategies in environmental planning and management. Within this, she investigated stakeholder perceptions of key performance indicators for M&E in two different environmental management contexts. Her research was conducted in collaboration with the Niagara Parks Commission, as part of the Excellence in Environmental Stewardship Initiative. In her current position at the ESRC she supports the activities of several innovative partnerships and projects within the centre.

MODULE 1 INTRODUCTION

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives

After reviewing each of the lessons in this module, you will learn how to:

- Define and critically assess the key course concepts of sustainable communities and community engagement.
- Communicate how community engagement has evolved over time.
- Explain why engaging actors is essential to navigating current challenges confronting communities.
- Describe different ways to respectfully engage with the community actors for research purposes that benefit the community as a whole and identify various actors to engage within the decision-making process.
- Explain why actively consulting Indigenous communities is essential to navigating challenges, and describe the process for actively consulting Indigenous communities.

LESSON 1: WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY?

Lesson 1: What is a sustainable community?

WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY?

"A 'Sustainable Community' makes choices that simultaneously enhance or maintain the wellbeing of both people and ecosystems while not placing unbearable burdens — environmental, economic, or social — on future generations.

To achieve this vision all community members – individuals, groups and organizations in all sectors, need to adopt sustainability as a core value to guide to decisions and actions."

– Sustainable Communities for a Sustainable Planet (written for the Government of Canada by Steven Peck)

ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Many communities have identified a vision for sustainability and are engaging in Integrated Community Sustainability Planning processes.

Select the "+" icons for more information on the principles of a sustainable community.

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https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=24#h5p-1

THE UNITED NATIONS' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015 the United Nations established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address the major social, economic, and environmental issues around the world. Each universal goal is equally important as they are interconnected, and transformative progress is required in all goals to develop a sustainable world. These goals are attempting to be achieved globally by 2030 and as such are becoming more prominently addressed.

The United Nations defines sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." It highlights the necessity for better practices now to ensure a prosperous future while maintaining quality living conditions of the present. Many organizations and institutions, such as Brock University, recognizes this definition and uses it in the sustainability policies that guide their organizations. Explore Brock University's Sustainability Policy.

'We The People' for The Global Goals | Global Goals

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GOAL 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Goal 11 takes interest into city and community improvements. It recognizes struggles of rapid urbanization through worsening air pollution, inadequate infrastructure, and inaccessible services in communities. Adapting to change with adjustments to new norms is necessary to achieving this goal.

Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Sustainable Development Goals Explained: Sustainable Cities & Communities

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THE SDGS: COMMUNICATING & MEASURING SUCCESS

Sustainability at Brock has an online SDG toolbox that was created by students. This toolbox showcases information about the SDGs and how they are being addressed here at Brock and locally in Niagara, as well as globally.

Living in Niagara offers a platform through Niagara Connects to unite people in the Niagara Region to plan, learn, and lead community action by collaborating to build evidence-informed action plans on social, economic, and environmental change for a stronger future.

In Fall 2019, Brock University offered a full training day focused on the SDG's that you can learn more about below:

Brock University SDG Training Day 2019

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=461#oembed-1

Why do organizations participate in sustainability rankings/ratings?

Many organizations, including post-secondary institutions, have recognized the importance of beginning to measure their success in delivering on the SDGs. Sustainability ratings are scores that are generated, typically by a third company, based on an organization's sustainability efforts.

What are sustainability ratings?	What are the benefits?	What are the challenges?
• Help assess environmental performance • Scores generated by a third party • Provide comparisons of organizations	• Accountability • Affirm company mission and values • Reduce environmental impact • Showcase areas for improvement	• Non-standardization • Transparency • Credibility

There are many benefits to sustainability ratings, such as the fact that they hold organizations accountable for their environmental impacts and encourage them to strive to do better and reduce their negative impacts on the planet. Sustainability ratings can also help identify areas that require improved sustainability efforts which help organizations set goals and targets for future years. You will learn more about these benefits and themes later in the course, in the Monitoring and Evaluation module.

There are also challenges when it comes to sustainability ratings. There are many different methods and types of sustainability trackers, so there is not yet a standardized system which means results are diverse and it may be difficult to compare from one system to another. Because organizations submit information for rating systems themselves, there is a risk that not all information is being fully disclosed which can affect the validity of ratings and threaten credibility. Luckily, these systems are continuing to evolve and support transparency.

Times Higher Education Impact Ranking (THE Impact Rankings) is a global ranking that captures universities' success in addressing all 17 SDGs. The third edition of THE Impact Rankings, which was published in April 2021, included more than 1,200 institutions from 98 countries and regions. Brock University has recently submitted for fourth edition of THE Impact Rankings and will receive the results in April 2022.

COMPONENTS OF A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Here we learn from Dr. Liette Vasseur, Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, Brock University, and UNESCO Chair, Community Sustainability: From Local to Global.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=33#oembed-1

Elements of a sustainable community developed by The Institute for Sustainable Communities

The Institute for Sustainable Communities developed a list of elements of a sustainable community, including leadership, civic engagement and responsibility; ecological integrity; economic security; and social well-being.

Read about how the Institute for Sustainable Communities describes a sustainable community, and learn more about the elements described above.

LESSON 2: WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Lesson 2: What is community engagement?

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

It is important to begin by gaining clarity on what we mean by "community" and "engagement." Defining these terms is complex and often dependent on the context and the people involved.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=44#h5p-3

From this, we may say that to **community engagement** is to involve, interact, or work actively with a group of people with a set of common characteristics, interests, or history, and/or people living together in a particular area. However, similar to the concept of a sustainable community, the term 'engagement' can have different definitions depending on the sector/discipline, service, or communities with whom you are engaging.

Community engagement according to the Centre for Disease Control

For example, the Center for Disease Control's public health agencies focus on promoting health and well-being. They define community engagement as...

"the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 1997, p. 9).

Community engagement according to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, a philanthropic organization devoted educational initiatives, defines "community engagement" through the lens of higher education with an emphasis on exchanging knowledge and developing educated, engaged citizens. They define community engagement as...

"collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (2020, p. 1).

HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=39#h5p-2

Engagement has occurred throughout history, long before the term 'community engagement' existed. The concept became widely popular in the 1960s-1970s, during the civic engagement movement, when individuals were encouraged to actively engage with their communities and promote democracy by expanding citizen participation in problem solving and broadening access to social and political capital. Whereas decision making, and "solving" societal issues had previously been understood as a government responsibility, it became more common for government to interact with the public in terms of informing and even consulting with community members on issues that affect them. This led to more demands for government, higher education, health systems, and others to engage.

SPECTRUM OF PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Adapted from IAP2, 2014

Community engagement can take many different forms and is often depicted as a continuum. This ranges from low-level engagement strategies, such as consultation, to high-level strategies such as community empowerment.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, developed in the late 1990s, with updates by IAP2 Australasia in 2014, is one of the most utilized and applied of international public participation models to describe the level of citizens' involvement in decision-making processes. It explains the different levels of engagement that organizations can engage their communities, with the furthest right of the spectrum highlighting the greater community influence on decision making. It is important to note that each level of participation in community engagement serves a purpose. It is not always 'better' or appropriate to have more participation in community engagement, as this is dependent on the overall goals and resources a project may have available.

Supplementary Reading

This website provides a review of 60 international public participation models.

Here is a link to Andrew Furco's article "Service-Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential

Education," in Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning (Washington DC: Corporation for National Service, 1996).

Read Principles of Community Engagement by the Clinical and Translational Science Awards Consortium
Community Engagement Key Function Committee Task Force on the Principles of Community Engagement.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Regardless of the type of community engagement, there are some overarching principles which guide community engagement. These principles were developed by the University of Michigan to be broad and expansive enough to cover a wide range of engagement activities and practice. The principle of recognition is related to the expertise and knowledge existing within a community. The principle of respect values individuals, communities, and their resources. Finally, the principle of equitable partnership focuses on reciprocal relationships, transparency, and accountability.

Click on the "+" icon over each principle to learn more.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=46#h5p-4

Source: Engaged Michigan. "Principles and Values." University of Michigan. https://engaged.umich.edu/about/principles-and-values/

KEY PRINCIPLES IN ACTION

Please watch the following TedTalk videos to learn more about the key principles of community engagement in action:

Want to help someone? Shut up and listen | Ernesto Sirolli | TED

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=48#oembed-1

This TedTalk titled "Want to help someone? Shut up and listen!" highlights the importance of understanding and researching a community before engagement begins. Doing this work will help prioritize what the community will get out of this experience, and can also help avoid failures, mistakes, or unintended harm. Listen while Ernesto Sirolli describes his experience working in Zambia, and think about how you might enact the principles of community engagement to avoid making similar mistakes in your own community engagement work.

Questions change everything in community engagement | Max Hardy | TEDxStKilda

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=48#oembed-2

This TedTalk titled “Questions change everything in community engagement”, discusses the importance of establishing a relationship and dialogue within the community to understand their needs, as well we regarding community knowledge as an asset. When we enter into a community with preconcieved solutions to problems, it may cause more harm than good. Listen to Max Hardy describe his community engagement experiences, and think about what questions you might ask your community when starting an engagement project.

LESSON 3: WHO IS INVOLVED WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Lesson 3: Who is involved with community engagement?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: FROM WHAT TO WHO?

Community engagement involves a strategic process with the specific purpose of working with*identified groups of people* to identify and address issues affecting their well-being. Inclusivity, diversity, and local knowledge in collaboration to solve real-world problems and improve society is central to engagement.

Successful community engagement means paying close attention to:

1. Who is involved – e.g., which stakeholders and rights holders?
2. Regulatory requirements – is engagement required by legislation or is it voluntary?
3. Individual choice and agency – do people want to be engaged?
4. Opportunity – not everyone has equal opportunity or access.
5. Barriers – what are barriers to engagement?

Reflecting on who is engaged will enhance procedural equity in ways that better capture the interests and influence of different groups, provide an entry point to understand potential conflicts or risks, and identify opportunities to build relationships among individuals and groups based on shared interests.

STAKEHOLDERS VS. RIGHTS HOLDERS IN CANADA

What is a stakeholder?

Stakeholder refers to an individual or group that derives benefits from the use of resources, is concerned about a particular issue and/or holds legal or de facto rights to manage or make decisions. Key stakeholders often include a mix of user groups (e.g., harvesters, industry, tourism operators), government organizations (at different levels – national, provincial, local) (e.g., Department of Fisheries and Oceans), and civil society organizations (e.g., non-governmental organizations).

Rights holders are not 'just' stakeholders to engage. In Canada, Indigenous peoples have constitutionally protected rights and there is a 'duty to consult' Indigenous peoples in Canada (e.g., in resource development projects).

What is 'duty to consult'?

The **duty to consult** emerges from the recognition and affirmation of Indigenous and treaty rights in section 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982. The Government of Canada has a duty to consult, and where appropriate, accommodate Indigenous groups when it considers conduct that might adversely impact potential or established Aboriginal or treaty rights. The requirement applies to the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The duty to consult needs to be integrated into the environmental assessment and regulatory review processes. The duty to consult has been affirmed and clarified by various Supreme Court of Canada rulings, such the Haida case (2004) and the Beckman v. Little Salmon/Carmacks case (2010).

Why engagement is different to duty to consult:

Different understandings among Indigenous communities and dissatisfaction with consultation, has often led to court challenges of project decisions. For example, recently, the Federal Court of Appeal overturned the federal government's approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline project in 2018, attracting the attention of politicians, media and the public.

Stakeholder and Rights Holder Groups

There are diverse stakeholders and rights holders that should be considered. Both stakeholders and rights holders can also be considered at different scales (e.g., local, national).

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=71#h5p-5

Click on the "+" icon to see examples of stakeholder and rights holders subgroups (Adapted from Mazur et al., 2006).

RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT

Respectful engagement with diverse stakeholders and rights holders is multi-dimensional and includes a need to:

- Understand the meaning of 'duty to consult'
- Consider inherent biases
- Reflect on the importance of identity and positionality

Inherent Bias

Inherent bias are assumptions that skew viewpoints of a subject. Inherent biases are often unconscious and operate outside of our awareness, affect our behavior, and they can be in direct contradiction our espoused beliefs and values. Bias emerges from and is related to our own identity and positionality and how we engage with the world; it is important to consider identity and positionality when engaging with rights holders and stakeholders as it influences who benefits and why?

Examples of bias may include:

- Bias in clinical assessments, compromising health goals of patients (e.g., different pain levels along perceived genders
- Bias in who is overseeing development projects and its purpose
    - Bias from economic incentives a person/group may receive for completing a project

Identity & Positionality

Identity refers to how people perceive themselves as and the behaviours, values, norms and subsequent actions people take in a given decision-making context.

Positionality refers to how people perceive their identity (values, behaviours, norms and actions) in relation to other people in a broader societal context.

Identity and positionality, and the extent to which there are equal opportunities for different voices (e.g., ethnicity, gender, class) is particularly crucial for groups which have historically been excluded from these processes (i.e., Indigenous peoples). Acknowledging the positionality of relevant actors (e.g., Indigenous knowledge holders, industry representatives, government representatives) in relation to one another can support better engagement and create opportunities for otherwise underrepresented voices.

ENGAGING WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Here we learn from Lowine Hill, University of Waterloo and Madu Galappaththi, University of Waterloo on respectful engagement.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=75#oembed-1

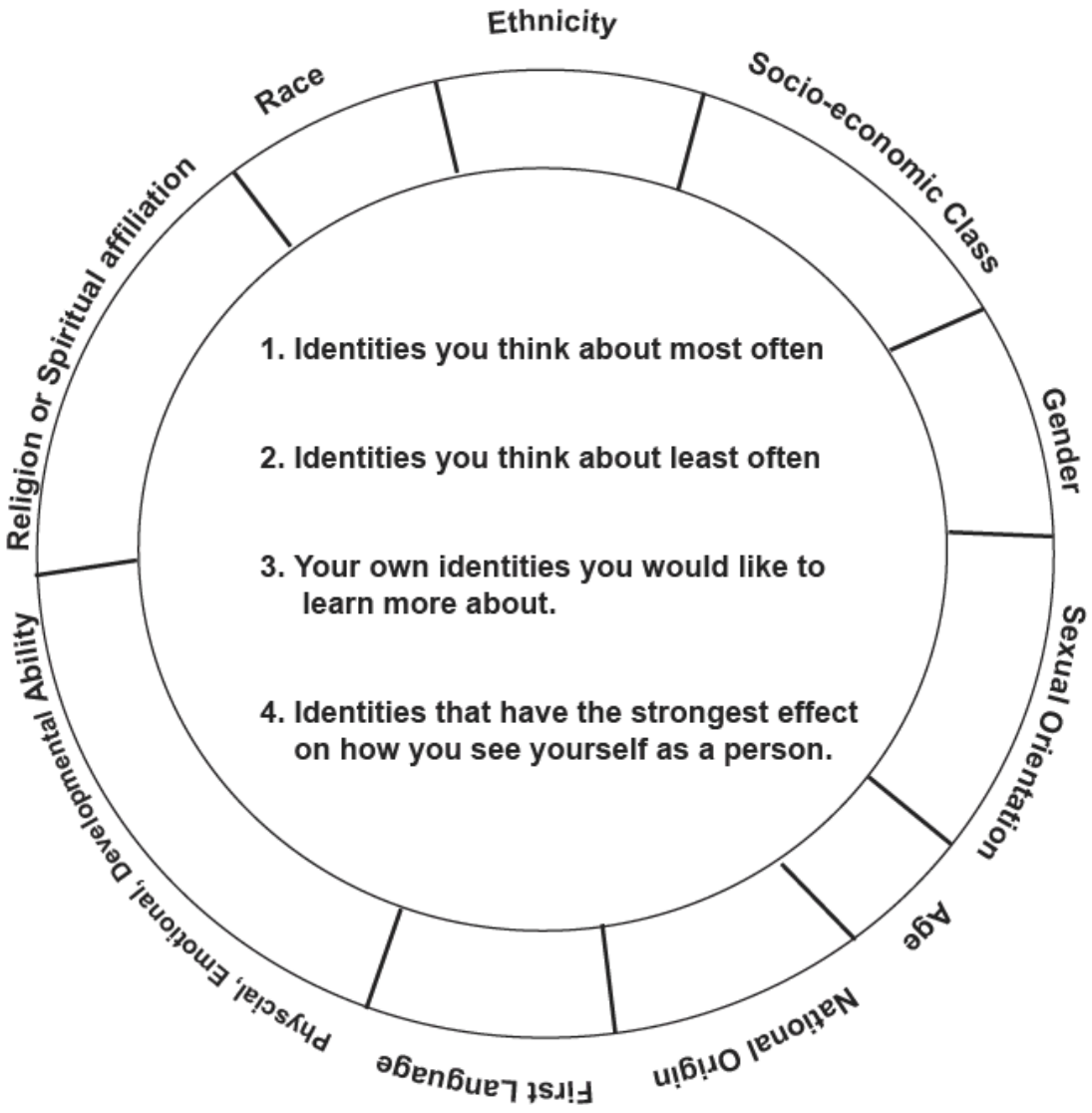
Explore the Social Identity Wheel

Engaging with positionality and identity requires engaging with your own identity and positionality. To help understand who is involved in community engagement, it is useful to consider the following questions:

1. Identities you think about most often;
2. Identities you think least about;
3. Your own identities you would like to learn more about; and
4. Identities that have the strongest effect on how you see yourself as a person.

Social Identity Wheel

(Adapted from "Voices of Discovery", Intergroup Relations Center, Arizona State University)



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DECOLONIZING ENGAGEMENT

Respectful engagement must be 'decolonized'. **Decolonization** is an ongoing and refers to Indigenous peoples self-determination over their land/cultures. In sustainability contexts, the values and interests of rights holders must not be superceded by other stakeholders (i.e., inherent rights have existed before Canada was created and before the Canadian state could "grant rights").

Please see the video below by Dr Derek Kornelsen on decolonizing engagement to better understand the significance of these themes.

Dr. Derek Kornelsen discusses Decolonizing Community Engagement

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PUTTING IDEAS INTO PRACTICE

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LESSON 4: WHY IS ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES IMPORTANT FOR BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

Lesson 4: Why is engaging with communities important for building sustainable communities?

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a frequently employed term and has many different meanings. Here, it is used to encompass the classical ideas of meeting the needs of present and future generation needs as well as the consideration of three-fold inter-related imperatives (environment, social, economic). It is also understood "...as a process, instead of an end product, a dynamic process that requires adaptive capacity for societies to deal with change" (Berkes et al., 2003, p. 2).

CONTEMPORARY PROBLEM DOMAIN

This lesson opens with the question:

Why is engaging with communities important for building sustainable communities?

Throughout the course, we focus on the contemporary problem domain. We use the term **problem domain** to frame the circumstances constituting the challenge as well as sphere of analysis germane to its solution. In line with the previous lesson on how community engagement has evolved, we concentrate on the contemporary situation in which community engagement can positively impact progress towards sustainability.

Circumstances characterizing the contemporary problem domain

Circumstances characterizing the contemporary problem domain are many. We concentrate on three characteristics that are particularly salient in framing our course on building sustainable communities.

1. Nature evolving (complex, uncertainty, change)

First, the contemporary problem domain is informed by a nature evolving perspective. This view, put forth by Gunderson and Holling (2002), stresses that, as opposed to continuous developing in predictable ways, system are dynamic and often behave in unpredictable or abrupt ways. Complexity, uncertainty and change are key characteristics of this problem domain.

2. Social-ecological systems

Second, is the inter-connections of social and ecological systems. Whereas social and ecological systems have historically been treated discreetly (and still usually are), a compelling case has been put forth by Berkes and Folke (1998) that they ought to be considered together. They introduce the construct of social-ecological

systems (SES) to signal the importance of this linkage. B. L. Cherkasskii first defined a social-ecological system as a system:

"... consisting of two interacting subsystems: the biological (epidemiological ecosystem) and the social (social and economic conditions of life of the society) subsystems where the biological subsystem plays the role of the governed object and the social acts as the internal regulator of these interactions" (Cherkasskii 1988, p. 321).

3. Pluralism

Third, is plurality of perspectives, unique ways of knowing, and diversity of values. These differences often lead to contestation and manifest in conflicts.

WICKED PROBLEMS

These characteristics often manifest in challenges in which resolution or solutions are particularly difficult, and perhaps sometimes even impossible. Rittel and Webber (1973) descriptively labelled such problems as being 'wicked' because they involve scientific uncertainties, interdependencies, deep-seated conflicting positions and ongoing change (e.g., Rittel & Webber, 1973; Lazarus, 2009; Balint et al., 2011).

Characteristics of wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973)

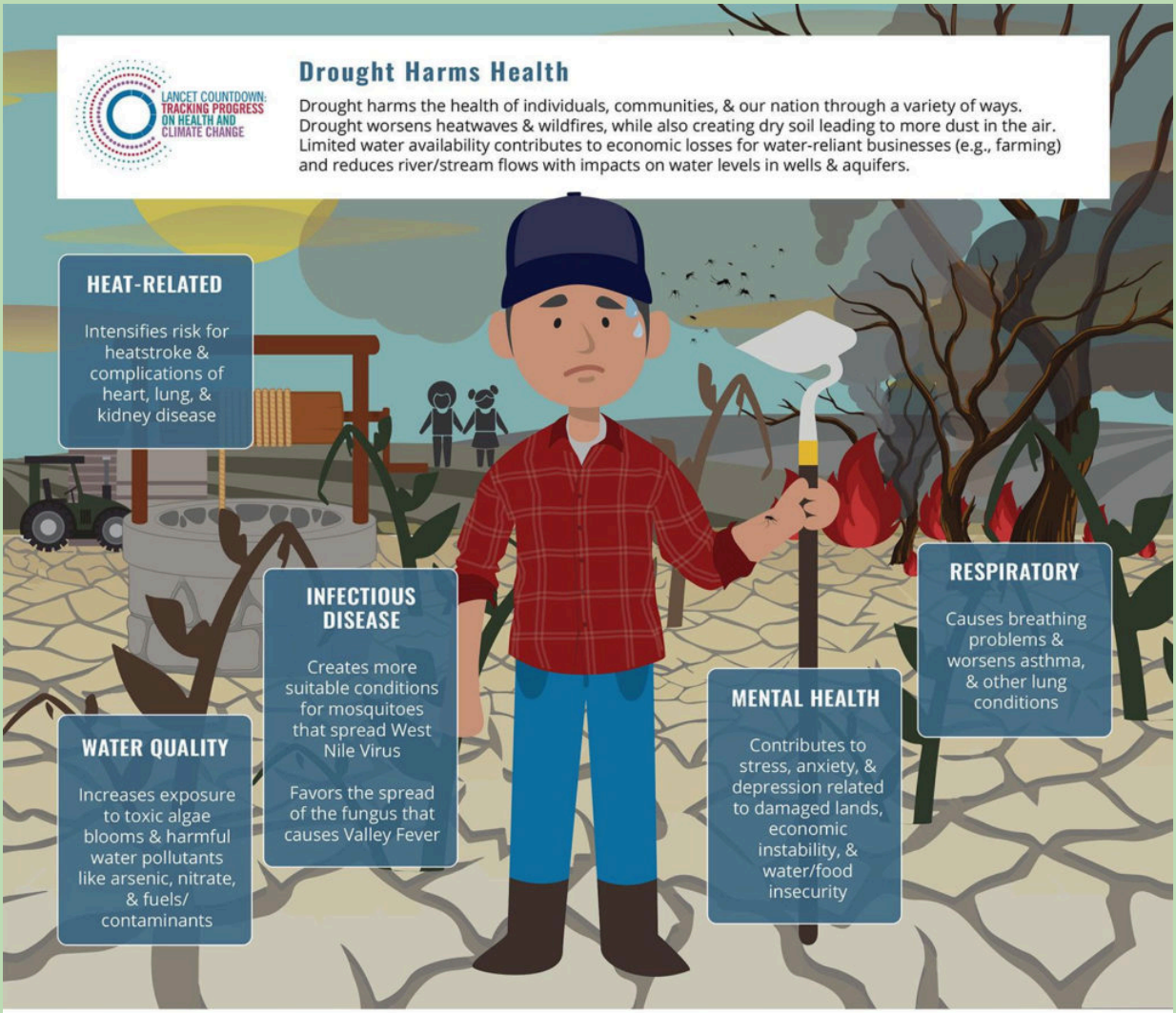
1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem.
2. Wicked problems have no stopping rule.
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad.
4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.
5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot operation" because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly.
6. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.
7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique.
8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways; the choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution.
10. The planner has no right to be wrong.

Super wicked problems

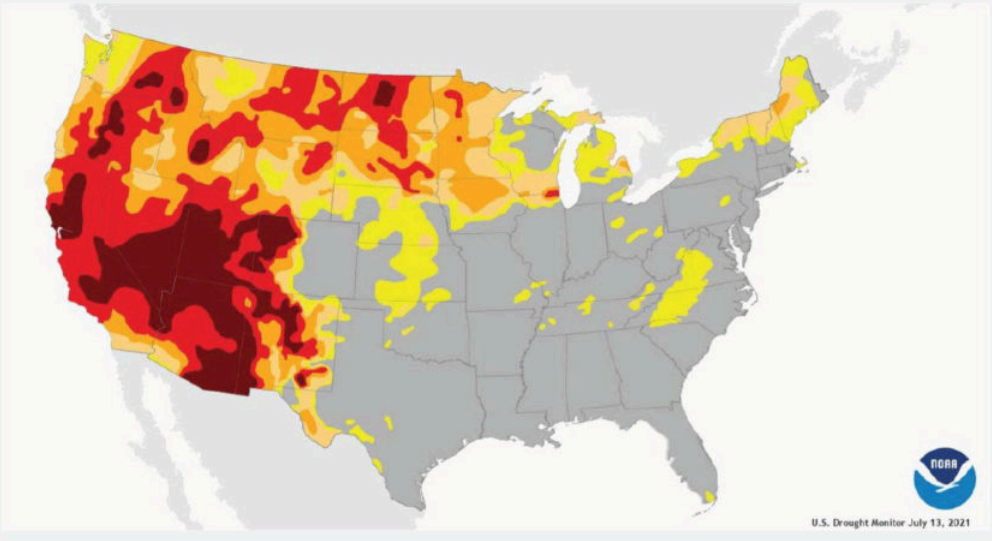
More recently, attention has been directed to problems which are 'super wicked'. This class of problem has the features of 'wicked problems' as well as additional exacerbating features – time is consequential, institutional mechanisms for resolution are absent, and those seeking to resolve it are also the cause (Lazarus, 2009).

Let's consider why climate change is a super wicked problem through some real-world examples outlined below:

https://twitter.com/WMO/status/1454833895376052224



U.S. Drought Conditions as of July 13, 2021



https://twitter.com/bbcworldservice/status/1455124191120961538

Climate change is a super wicked problem because its causes are **multiple and complex**, its impacts are **uncertain and interrelated**, and potential solutions to climate change are **unknown** or may cause further problems. Climate change is propelling the planet into unchartered territory, and is impacts people in multiple different ways every day. **What thoughts or emotions do these media clippings raise for you?**

ENGAGING COMMUNITY ACTORS: OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

With the rise in deepening and expanding public engagement globally, the importance of community engagement has become pivotal for well-functioning, twenty-first century democracies. Constructive relationships between communities and the institutions of government make community engagement not only desirable, but necessary and viable as it is likely to lead to more equitable, sustainable public decisions and improve the liveability of local communities. This is why community engagement is important for individuals, public organizations, and governments alike.

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MODULE 1 REFLECTION AND ASSESSMENT

Module 1 Reflection and Assessment

MODULE 1 LEARNING CHECK

Learning Check

After reviewing each of the lessons in this module, you should now be able to:

- Define and critically assess the key course concepts of sustainable communities and community engagement.
- Communicate how community engagement has evolved over time.
- Explain why engaging actors is essential to navigating current challenges confronting communities.
- Describe different ways to respectfully engage with the community actors for research purposes that benefit the community as a whole and identify various actors to engage within the decision-making process.
- Explain why actively consulting Indigenous communities is essential to navigating challenges, and describe the process for actively consulting Indigenous communities.

MODULE 1 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key Takeaways

- There are many definitions and interpretations of a sustainable community, often due to different worldviews.
- Participation in community engagement exists along a spectrum.
- It is important to decolonize engagement practices and promote Indigenous methodologies for engagement.
- There are respectful and law-biding considerations we must be aware of when engaging with different communities.
- We need to engage with communities to navigate contemporary issues.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Decolonization Is for Everyone | Nikki Sanchez | TEDxSFU

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Supplementary reading

Read Working in Good Ways: A framework and resources for Indigenous community engagement, a framework developed by the University of Manitoba in consultation with community partners.

Read Bringing the Sustainable Development Goals to life through stories, by David Obura in Current Conversations 2021, 15.2.

Explore the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and how the SDGs are being applied at Brock University.

Here is the link to an additional open access textbook by the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre at Brock University: Environmental Sustainability in Practice.

Academic journal articles:

Szetey, K., E. A. Moallemi, E. Ashton, M. Butcher, B. Sprunt, and B. A. Bryan. 2021. Participatory planning for local sustainability guided by the Sustainable Development Goals. Ecology and Society 26(3):16.
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MODULE 1 ASSESSMENT

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MODULE 1 REFLECTION

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https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/bscmodule1/?p=171#h5p-9

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