FACILITATION OPTION A:
COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Community Conversations Orientation

Community Conversations are a series of conversations between people to explore an issue. Through talking with each other we build connections and relationships, learn from one another, and stay connected with each other.

The process of a Community Conversation is to:

1. Get people talking and sharing their experiences with each other.
2. Co-generate learning between people by capturing insights, patterns and inspiring stories.
3. Create recommendations that will increase the capacity of the museum to build and strengthen their relationship with the community and to better handle the issues they face.

MATERIALS
Room set up in circles
Timer
Post-it notes
Markers
Printed worksheets
Tape or sticky tack
Star stickers

Community Conversation Facilitation

Divide the participants into groups of 6-10 and have them sit in a circle either at tables or simply by moving their chairs. Ensure Working Group members are present in each circle.

For each round of conversation, each circle should appoint a conversation leader and a note-taker.

- The role of the conversation leader is to a) ensure everyone gets a chance to speak, and b) help the group stay on topic.
- The role of the note-taker is to capture key insights on individual post-it notes.
- These roles can change each round so that the responsibility is shared.

Within each round of conversations, address the questions one at a time. Allow participants to share stories and experiences. Be welcoming and inquisitive.

Towards the end of the allotted time for that round, remind the group to capture key insights on the post-it notes (top 3 per question).

The session facilitator can collect these post-its and cluster them into themes as they are stuck onto a wall (there is plenty of time to do this as the groups participate in the next round of conversation).

ROUND 1

Understand the museum's relevance and worth within the community and establish a need to strengthen the relationship with the community

Q1. How would you describe the values and goals of this community?

Q2. What does the museum mean to you? How do you think your feelings are the same or different to the wider community?

Q3. Do you think this museum is connected with the community? Why is a connection with the community important?

(30 mins)

Remind the group to capture key insights on the post-it notes (top 3 per question) and hand them in to the facilitator.

ROUND 2

Identify the assets and opportunities within the community

Q1. When you think of this community, which organizations, institutions, groups, places and people (leaders, 'celebrities', do-ers, change-makers) come to mind as representing the community?

Q2. What barriers to participation exist within your community? Do they affect specific groups that you can identify?

Q3. Of all the groups, places, opportunities and barriers named, which do you think the museum could play a role in forming/strengthening a relationship with and why? (Select a max. of 5 per table)

(30 mins)

Remind the group to capture key insights on the post-it notes (top 3 per question) and hand them in to the facilitator.

ROUND 3

Generation of ideas for programs and services that would have meaning within your community

Q1. Think of ideas for ways the museum could go beyond its walls and into the community through these groups/places/people identified above (stretch the mind, there are no bad ideas!)

Q2. Think of ideas for ways these groups/places/people could come into the museum (think – programs, services, roles, responsibilities, access, events, etc.).

Q3. Of the ideas generated so far, which are standing out as having some potential (select 3 - 5)? How could each idea be improved? Write each idea on the front of an Idea Worksheet with overview information.

(45 mins)

Share back to the large group

1. Have each circle share their top ideas (2 mins per idea).
2. Paste the idea worksheets on the walls around the room.

(30 mins)

Dotmocracy

1. Remind everyone of the goal (of establishing a deeper, more sustainable relationship between the museum and the community), then ask everyone to walk around the room and put a star next to their top three ideas.
2. Count all the stars each idea has and write the number next to the title.
3. Gather the top 5-10 ideas (depending on group size) with the most stars together in a space everyone can see.

(10 mins)

ROUND 4

Expanding the promising ideas. Place each of the 5-10 top idea worksheets at a different table. Ask each person to go to the table of the idea that most interests them for this last round.

With your group, discuss the following questions and document on the back of the Idea Worksheet:

1. What problem is this idea solving?
2. Who could benefit from this idea?
3. Where will this idea be used?
4. When can this idea be used?
5. How can we make this idea better?
6. What do you need to make it real?

(30 mins)

Share back with the full group by having each table present their idea.

(10 mins)

Draw the following grid on a whiteboard or flipchart paper at the front of the room. To complete each share back, ask the table where they would plot the idea on the grid. Validate this placement with entire room as you write the name of the idea in the appropriate place on the grid. If there are differing perspectives, take a few minutes to discuss and together arrive at where to place it on the grid.
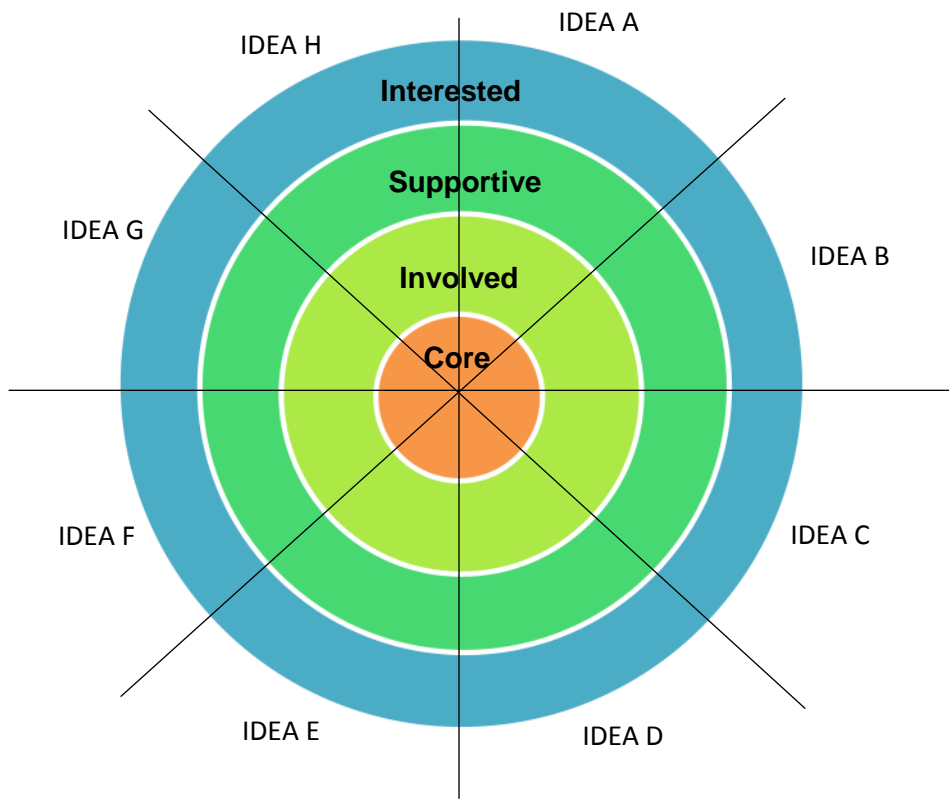
The facilitator should collect each group's idea worksheet once they are finished presenting.

<div align="center">

Significant impact

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Easy to implement ←————————————→ Hard to implement

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Lower impact

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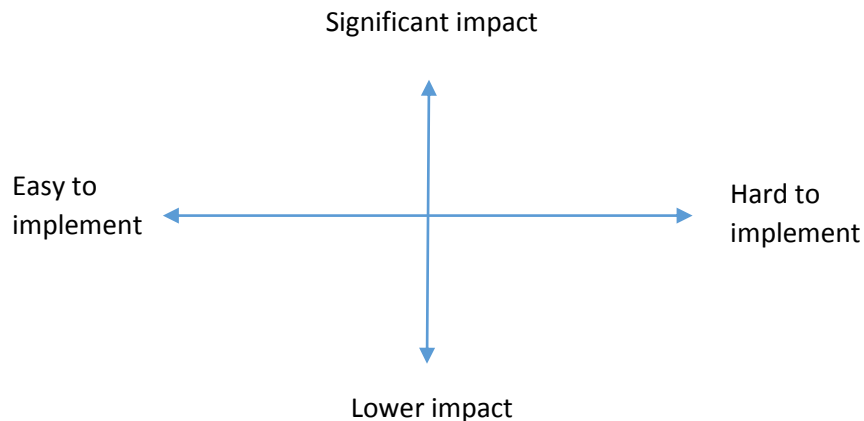
Closing exercise:

Use the Wheel of Engagement Worksheet to gauge interest in participation and leadership

- Take a few moments to summarize at a high-level how each level is defined:
    - **Core** - interested in being actively involved in the functioning and development of the idea
    - **Involved** - want to be frequently consulted and given opportunities to provide in-depth feedback. (i.e. attending topic specific/community specific/age specific discussions or workshops)
    - **Supportive** – want to provide some form of support and input (i.e. attending future community forums, answering surveys and providing input online)
    - **Interested** – want to be kept informed of the progress of the initiative, but not be directly involved in the work (i.e. newsletter, informed about opportunities to participate in events)
- Read out the top 5-10 ideas and ask participants to write them around the wheel
- Ask people to place a dot (or dots) to indicate the level of involvement they would like to have for each idea in putting the ideas explored today into action
- Hand these in to the facilitator

A circular diagram with concentric rings labelled from center outward: Core (orange), Involved, Supportive, Interested. Eight radial lines divide the circle into sections labelled IDEA A, IDEA B, IDEA C, IDEA D, IDEA E, IDEA F, IDEA G, IDEA H.

(10 mins)

Closing comments

The Facilitator/Working Group representative should thank the group for their participation and close the session by discussing the following items:

- Next steps in the process
- How we will share outcomes etc.
- Accountability back to you, the community
- Timeline