# The Participation Compass: A tool for navigating the participation landscape



### **Developed by MIT D-Lab:**

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With support from HIF and NSF



# The D-Lab Participation Toolkit

- 1. The Participation Matrix
- 2. The Participation Compass
- 3. The Participation Activity Field Guide
- 4. The Participation Quality Advisor











# The Four Step Approach

- 1. Identify the stage
- 2. Choose the type of participation
- 3. Identify tools and activities
- 4. Ensure the quality











# **Types of Participation**

- Categorizing roles of users
  - Consultation: providing information, sharing opinions, giving feedback
  - Partnership: making decisions
  - Leadership: directing



















### Consultation



### Input

- single event
- one-way flow of information
- no feedback or decision-making



### Interaction

- single event
- two-way flow of information
- no feedback or decision-making



### **Iteration**

- multiple events
- two-way flow of information
- opportunity for feedback on refinements
- no decision-making



# **Partnership**



### Collaboration

- stakeholder input is based on areas of expertise
- stakeholders are involved in decisionmaking, but without the ultimate authority



### **Co-Creation**

- stakeholder input is unrestricted
- stakeholders have equal decision-making authority

# Leadership



### **Empowerment**

- designer/implementor provides input
- designer/implementor is involved in decisionmaking, but without the ultimate authority



### **Ownership**

- designer/implementor does not provide input
- designer/implementor is not involved in decisionmaking

# The Four Step Approach

- 1. Identify the stage
- 2. Choose the type of participation
- 3. Identify tools and activities
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# The Participation Compass

Step 1

• Identify and assess benefits

Step 2

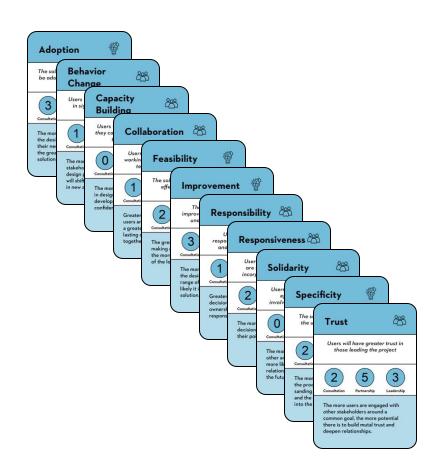
• Identify and assess barriers

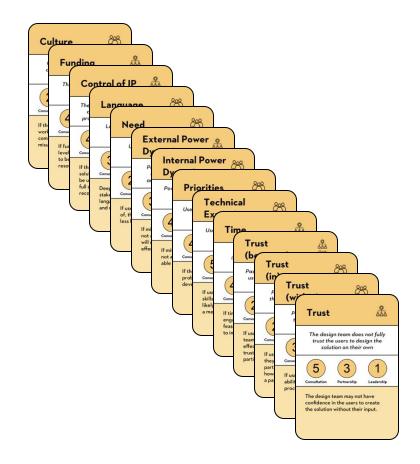
Step 3

• Consider tradeoffs and choose type

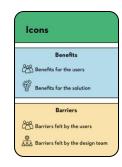


# The Participation Compass Cards

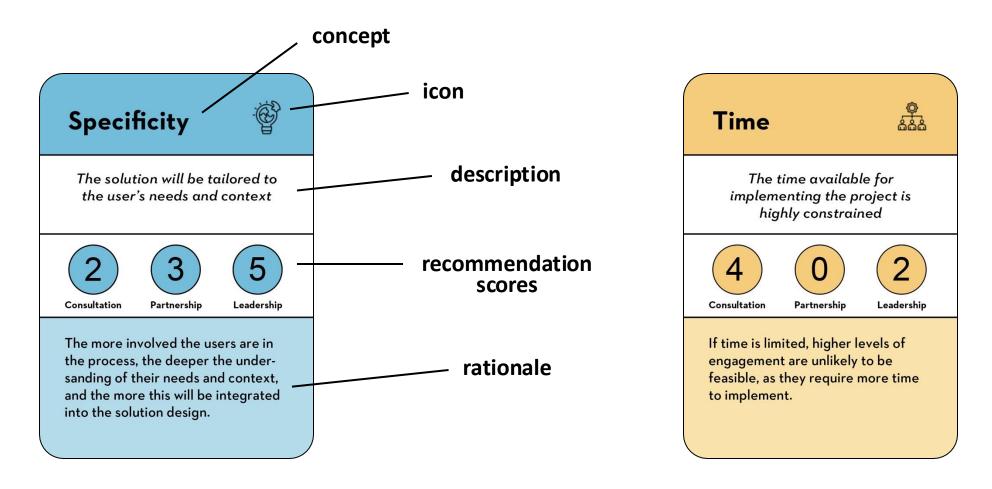








### **Elements of the Benefit and Barrier Cards**



# The Participation Compass Sorting Mat

Benefits					
Very Important	Important				
Somewhat Important	Not I mportant				

Barriers					
Very Limiting	Limiting				
Somewhat Limiting	Not Limiting (				

## The Participation Compass Canvas

Which stakeholder are you considering?							
Benefits (what are the desired outcomes of participation)			Participation Calculato	r			
Very Important ( x 4 )	Important ( x 3 )	Consultation	Partnership	Lead ers hip			
		Total:	Total:	Total:			
		Recommended Type	of Participation:				
Barriers (what are the contextual constraints which could inhi	ibit participation)	Participation Calculator					
Very Limiting ( x 4 )	Limiting ( x 3)	Consultation	Partnership	Lead ers hip			
		Total:	Total:	Total:			
		Recommended Type	of Participation:				
	Combined Total						
	Recommended Type of Participation		_	_			



# The Participation Compass Guidance

#### Guidance for the Participation Compass Tool\*

#### Introduction

Participation can yield important benefits in humanitarian innovation, however effective participation requires conditions and enabling factors that are often difficult to provide in complex humanitarian contexts. Different approaches to participation (consultation vs. partnership vs. leadership) can yield different benefits and require different levels of investment and enabling conditions. It is necessary to consider many factors when selecting the appropriate participation approach for humanitarian innovation projects. This frequently requires difficult tradeoffs between the desired benefits from participation and the feasibility of implementing it effectively.

The Participation Compass Tool can be used by program planners, design teams and humanitarian innovation practitioners to identify the appropriate type of participation for their project depending on the benefits they want to prioritize and the constraints they need to work within. The tool examines two main factors to be considered when engaging key stakeholders (usually the users of the innovation and/or the implementors of the project) in the process of designing and developing new solutions to humanitarian challenges:

- Participation Benefits: Why do you want to engage users in the design process? What benefits do you want to achieve or gain from their participation? Which of these benefits are critical, "must-have" benefits for the project? Which are less important, "nice-to-have" benefits?
- Participation Barriers: What constraints or challenges will you face in engaging users in the innovation process? Which of these barriers can be easily lowered or addressed? Which barriers cannot be reduced or addressed?

The compass should be used in the early stages of planning when considering the overall participatory approach (consultation, partnership or leadership) to use to engage users in the innovation process. Prior to using the compass tool, practitioners need to share a common understanding of the various possible types of participation (found in the Participation Matrix) and clearly identify the groups of stakeholders for whom they intend to improve or enhance participation. Furthermore, they should agree on what stages of the innovation process they seek to involve the users. Once consensus is reached, the Participation Compass can be used to identify the most appropriate type of participation.

The Participation Compass is comprised of three sets of cards and two canvases to help the innovation team evaluate the relative importance of different benefits and barriers to their project. Each card includes the concept, an icon which clarifies the context, a brief definition, a set of scores for each type of participation and the rationale behind the scores (see Figure 1). The blue cards describe potential <a href="https://doi.org/10.108/journal-state-three-t

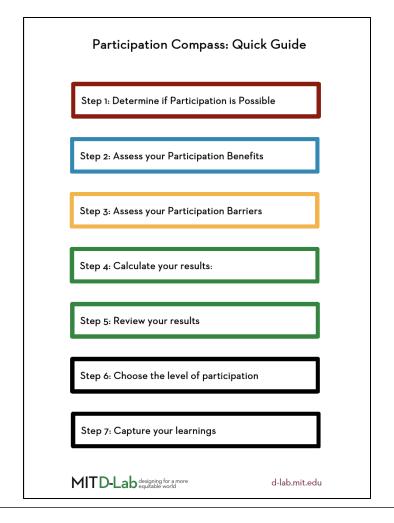
<sup>\*</sup>The Participation Compass was developed in collaboration with the Humanitarian Innovation Fund with the goal of helping innovation teams increase participation and bring the voice of the affected population into the innovation process. While created for the humanitarian context, it may also prove to be useful in the development context or any situation where the implementers of a project are interested in engaging with the users.



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# The Participation Compass Quick Guide





# **The Participation Matrix**

١	Which stakeholder are	e you considering?						Participat	ion Matrix	
	Choose the answer that best applies to your practice.  Identify the stage you are focusing on. Read down each column and choose the description that best applies to your project. Then look to the left to identify the type and level of participation, either what you are currently		Defining the problem   Identifying possible solutions / Creating an approach			Developing a solution		Testing the solution		
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How is the stakeholder engaged in		skeholder engaged in	Providing and/or gathering information?	Deciding which aspect of the problem will be addressed and what the priorities are?	Contributing ideas for possible solutions?	Selecting one or narrowing down to a few solutions from the many options generated?	Exploring options for the details of the solution?	Building the actual solution?	Providing and/or getting feedback about the solution	Prioritizing and acting on the feedback to refine and/or finalize the solution?
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### The Process...

- Decide if participation is possible
- Rank the benefits using the sorting mat
- Rank the barriers using the sorting mat
- Place the cards on the canvas
- Calculate the scores
- Calculate the results
- Review the results
- Choose the level of participation using the matrix
- Capture your learnings



# Before you start...





## Is participation possible?



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The solution will be more likely to be adopted and implemented by









The more the users are engaged in the design process, the more likely their needs will be addressed and the greater their buy-in to the

#### Responsibility 🖔



Users will take greater responsibility for implementing and managing the solution







Greater user engagement in decision-making leads to greater ownership and increased sense of responsibility over the solution.

#### Responsiveness 🖔

Users will feel their opinions are taken into account and incorporated into the solution







The more the users are engaged in decision-making, the more likely their point of view is prioritized.

#### දිසි Trust

Users will have greater trust in those leading the project







The more users are engaged with other stakeholders around a common goal, the more potential there is to build mutal trust and

#### **Behavior** Change



Users will change their behavior in signifcant ways due to the intervention









The more users engage with other stakeholders and are involved in the design process, the more likely they will shift their mindsets and engage in new attitudes and behaviors

#### Collaboration 🖔



Users will be open to continue working together with the design team on future projects











Greater engagement between the users and the design team leads to a greater chance of developing a lasting commitment to working

#### Capacity Building



Users will gain design skills that they can use to develop solutions to future challenges







The more actively users participate in design processes, the more they develop their skills and build their confidence.

#### Feasibility



The solution can be implemented effectively in the intended context











The greater the degree of decsionmaking authority the users have, the more ikely that their knowledge of the local contiions will prevail.

#### Specificity



The solution will be tailored to the user's needs and context







The more involved the users are in the process, the deeper the undersanding of their needs and context, and the more this will be integrated into the solution design.

#### Improvement



The solution will offer an improvement over an existing or underperforming solution









The more diverse the members of the design team, the broader the range of perspectives and the more likely it is to generate an improved





Users will work together more effectively due to their involvement in the intervention







The more users engage with each other around a common goal, the more likely they are to build relationships and work together in the future.

Benefits					
Very Important	Important				
Somewhat Important	Not Important				

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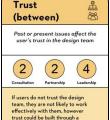


Partnership

If users do not feel, or are unaware

of, the need for a solution, they are

less likely to invest in developing it.



participatory partnership.

Trust





Funding

There is not enough funding to

engage participants in an extended manner

If funding is very limited, higher

resources to implement.

**Dynamics** 

levels of participation are unlikely

to be feasible, as they require more

External Power

Power dynamics between the

design team and the users

adversely affect engagement

Partnership

If mitigation of power dynamics is

not a viable option, stakeholders

will not be able to work together

effectively.





process will be limited.

Trust		88
trust the	n team does r users to desi ion on their o	gn the
5 Consultation	3 Partnership	1 Leadershi
confidence in	eam may not h n the users to o without their in	reate

Control of IP

There are requirements to retain

control over the intellectual

property related to the solution

If the IP rights or benefits of the

full design process without

recognizing their contributions.

solution cannot be shared, it would

be unethical to engage users in the

Internal Power

Power dynamics within the user

group adversely affect

engagement

Partnership

not a viable option, users will not be

able to effectively lead the project.

The time available for

implementing the project is

highly constrained

Partnership

If time is limited, higher levels of

feasible, as they require more time

engagement are unlikely to be

to implement.

If mitigation of power dynamics is

0

**Dynamics** 

Time

0

Language

Language barriers affect the

ability of users to engage

Deeper engagenemnt beween

and nuanced translation.

**Priorities** 

stakeholders who speak different

langages requires more consistent

to competing priorities

Partnership If the users do not prioritze the

problem, they will not invest in

Past or present issues affect

the user's trust in the solution

Partnership

If users do not trust the solution,

participating in the design process,

however trust could be built through

they are less likely to commit to

a participatory process.

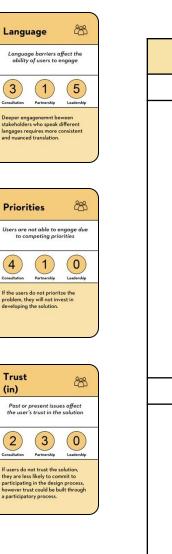
Leadership

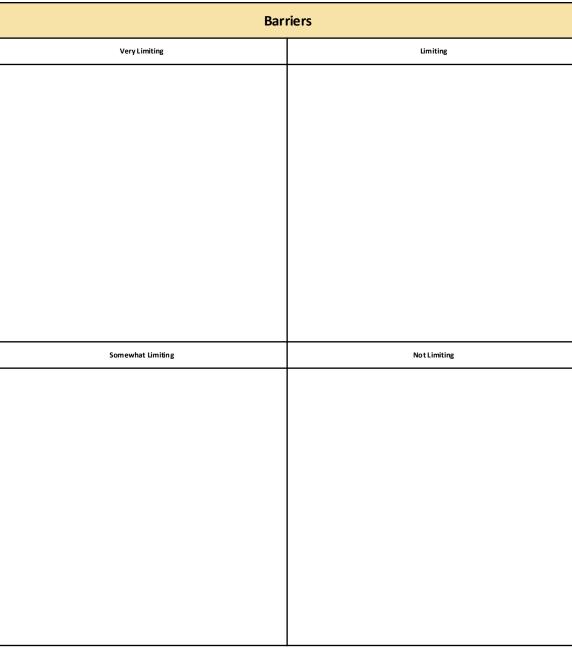
developing the solution.

Trust

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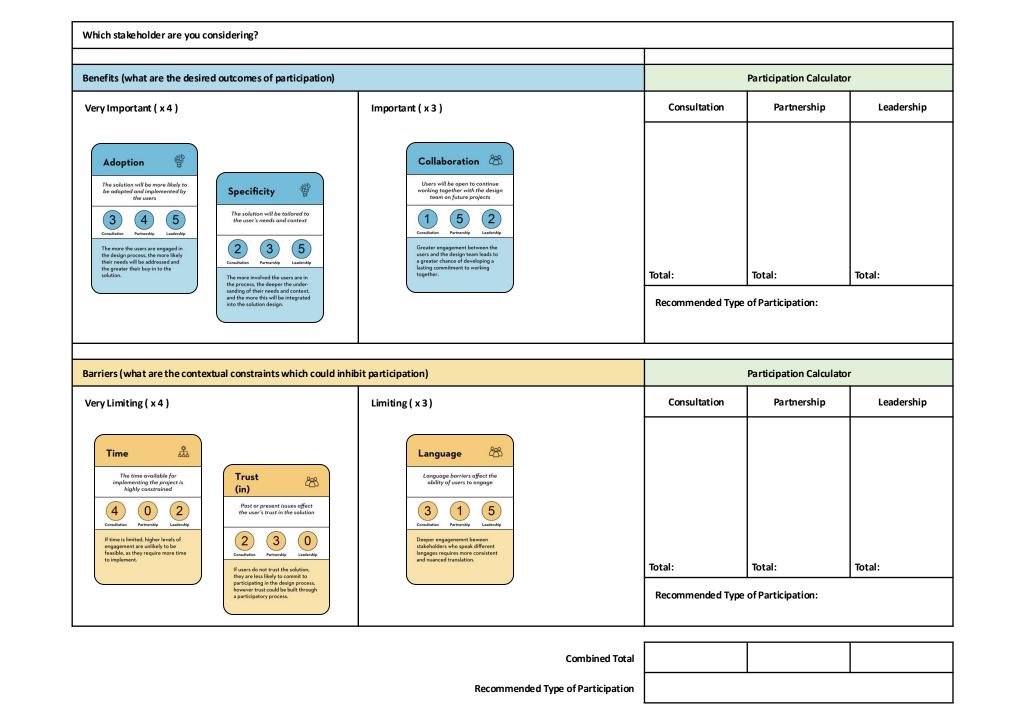




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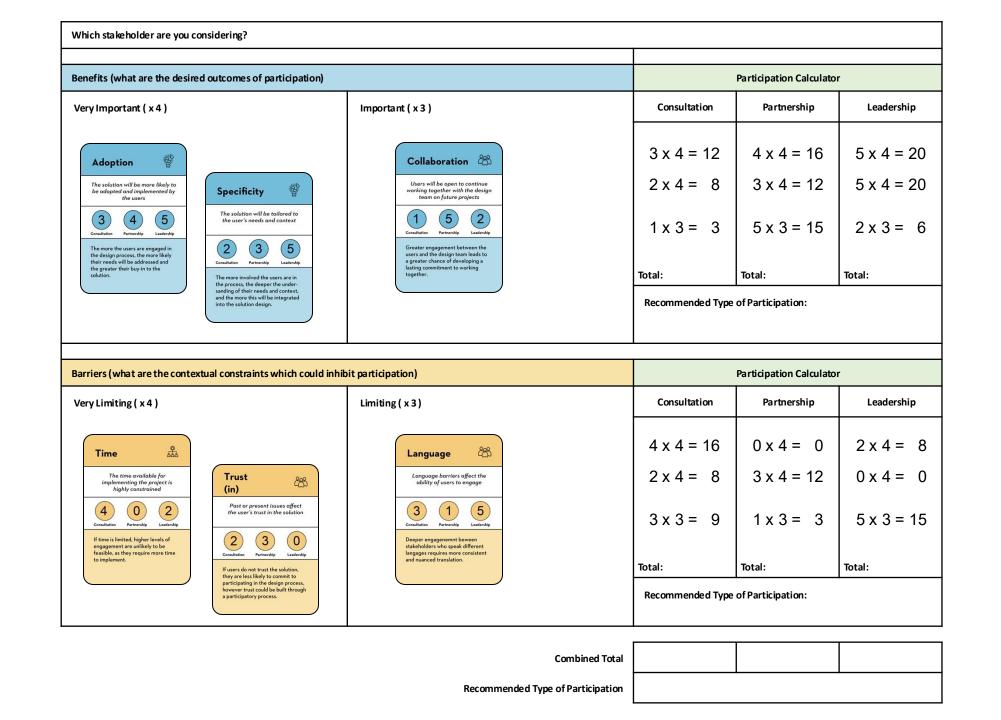
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# The Scoring Process

- The different levels of priority are weighted:
  - the very important and very limiting recommendation scores are multiplied by a weighting value of 4
  - the important and limiting recommendation scores are multiplied by a weighting value of 3
- The compass tool is designed so that scores on both types of cards indicate the degree of appropriateness of each type of participation, therefore the scores of the benefits and barriers are added together at the end.

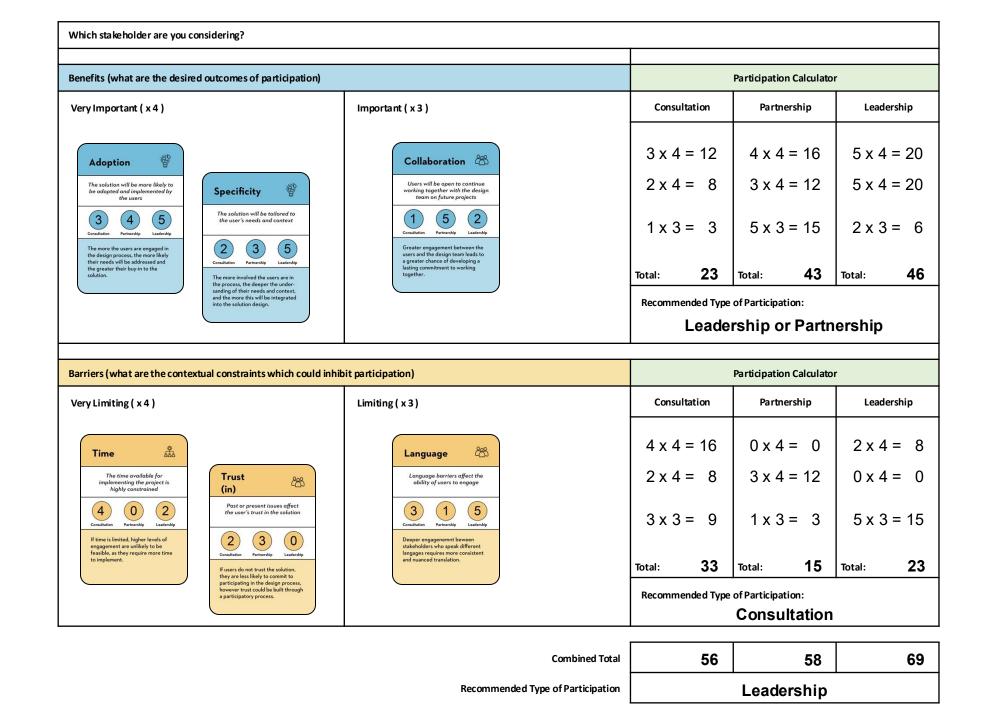




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# Questions?





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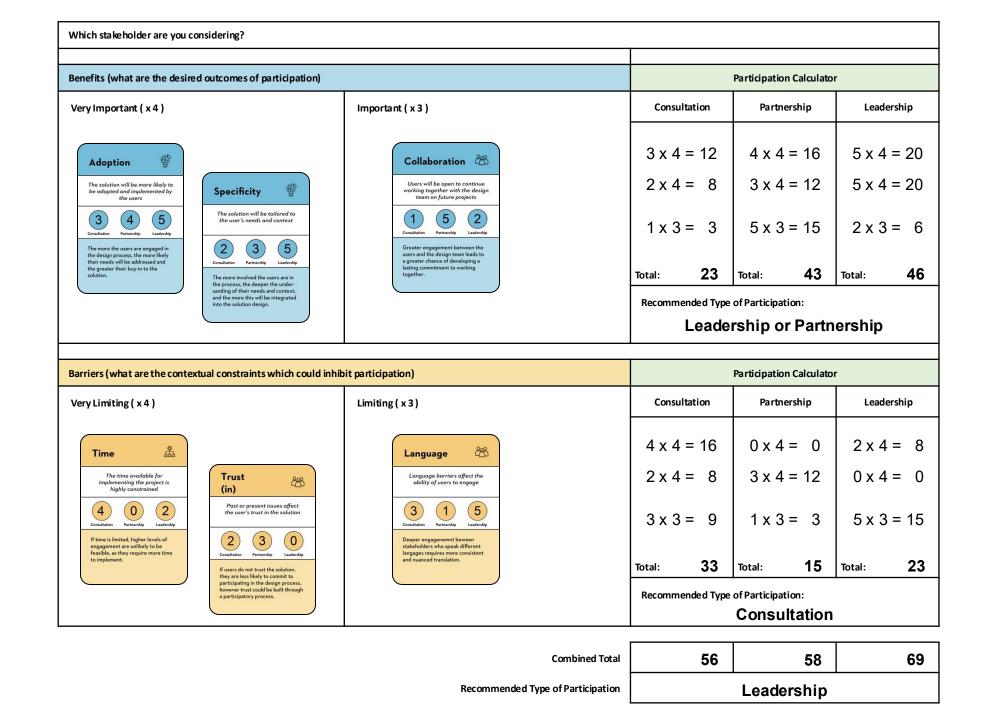


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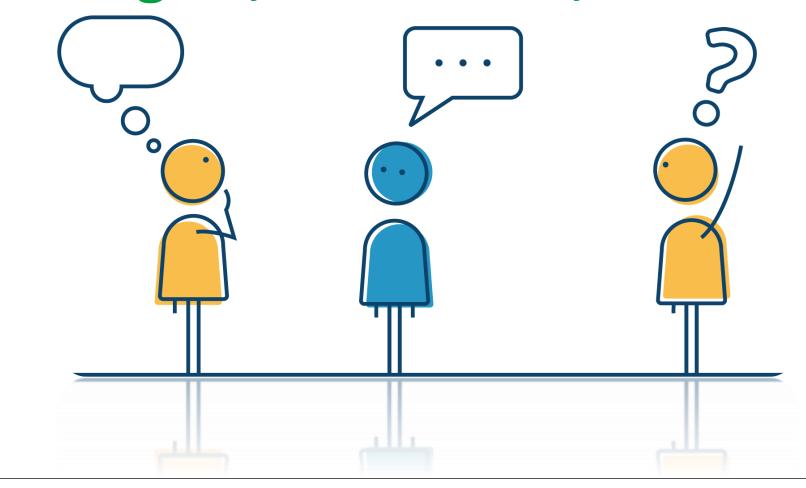
Use a project of your own

or

- Choose a case study
  - community radio station in Rhino Camp refugee settlement in Uganda
  - fuel-saving cooking technology in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya
  - community lighting in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh



# Reflection: Thoughts, Comments, Questions?



# Now What??





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### **Document the Process**

Prioritization of Benefits & Barriers							
Very important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important				
Very important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important				
What in		e discussing the benefits & bar					
Bene	efits	Barri	ers				

### **Document the Process**

Benefits	Total Score				
	Consultation	Partnership	Leadership		
Barriers		Total Score			
	Consultation	Partnership	Leadership		
Final Recommendation					
What in	sights did you gain d	luring this process?			

# **Next Steps**

- Consider and capture the following:
  - What could you do to mitigate the barriers?
  - Are there ways that you can enhance the benefits
  - Who do you need to engage in the planning and implementation of your participatory approach?



# The Four Step Approach

- 1. Identify the stage
- 2. Choose the type of participation
- 3. Identify tools and activities
- 4. Ensure the quality



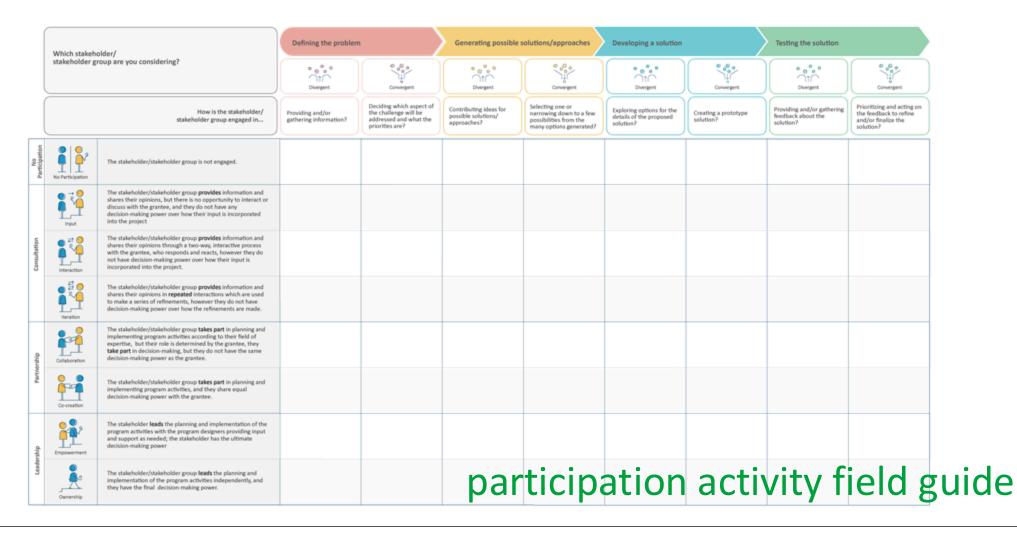








# 3. Identify Tools & Activities







# 4. Ensure the Quality

Before		Dui	ring	After		
Planning	Preparation	Environment	Engagement	Following Up	Finishing Up	
Representation	Building Relationships	Physical Environment	Content	Appreciation	Reporting	
Inclusion	Managing Expectations	Enabling Environment	Facilitation	Communication	Reflecting	
Logistics	Building Skills, Knowledge & Understanding	Power Dynamics	Documentation	Managing Relationships	Transition	
Mindsets	Mindsets	Mindsets	Mindsets	Mindsets	Mindsets	



quality advisor



# Thank You

