

Community Reporting Handbook: Practical Steps for Community Reporting



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1 Introduction



This handbook aims to provide practical guidance for non-experts engaging in community reporting. By following these steps, you will be able to structure your reports effectively, adhere to standards and ethical considerations, engage the community, select appropriate media, and foster meaningful discussions. These practices will enhance the impact and relevance of your community reports, and will inspire you to act as an advocate for the betterment of your community through the power of community media making.

1.1 DIY Media

Community media makers and reporters embracing a DIY approach to community communication, utilising non-professional media skills and attitudes that offer significant benefits for engaging with a wide range of people in our communities and neighbourhoods. Starting as amateurs, as we all must, with low skills and only a basic grasp of the importance of community-focussed communications, can be a powerful way to foster an increased participation and involvement, not just in the community reporting process, but also in the life of our communities. By embracing a DIY mindset, we create an inclusive environment where everyone can contribute and share their perspectives. By prioritising non-professional media skills, we can enable individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences to tell their stories and address issues that matter to them. This grassroots approach empowers people who may have previously felt excluded or lacked access to traditional professional media platforms.

Being relatively low-skilled initially should not be seen as a barrier, but rather as a starting point. Acknowledging our relative lack of capability opens the door for more people to get involved in the life of their community, and play an active role in shaping community narratives. DIY community reporting, therefore, encourages learning, experimentation, and growth, by fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the work produced, the stories told and the discussions shared. Furthermore, a DIY approach enables authentic and relatable communication. Non-professional media skills often bring a fresh and unfiltered perspective, resonating with a broader audience. By bypassing the polished and

sometimes distant nature of professional reporting, we create opportunities for genuine connection and understanding within our communities.



Incorporating non-professional media skills into community reporting also promotes diversity and representation. By encouraging individuals from all walks of life to share their voices, we enrich the range of stories being told and ensure a more accurate reflection of the community's realities. This approach challenges traditional power dynamics and amplifies the underrepresented voices that may otherwise go unheard. As we embark on our community reporting journey, let us embrace the value of being amateurs and low-skilled. Let us foster an

environment that encourages learning, collaboration, and continuous improvement. By doing so, we enable more people to participate, engage, and ultimately contribute to the vibrant tapestry of our communities and neighbourhoods.

This toolkit is structured into sections that identify good practice in using:

- **Templates** for figuring out what forms of media work best for the people we are serving in our communities.
- **Guidelines** for staying safe and protecting ourselves and the people we are serving in our communities from harm.
- **Examples of community reporting** and media that can inspire, challenge and use to communicate effectively with our neighbours, fellow residents, fellow citizens, friends, family and people we value in our communities.
- **Change initiatives** we can learn about that can help us to better understand the needs of our community and how to meet the challenges that we will be facing in the future.
- **Community membership** as an inclusive sense of belonging and shared experience that is lived by people who come from different backgrounds, identify with different concerns, but share a common need to build a cohesive society in which all can prosper.
- **Media selection** as a practical set of concerns for community advocates so we can better include a wider range of voices and ensure that no one is overlooked or left behind.

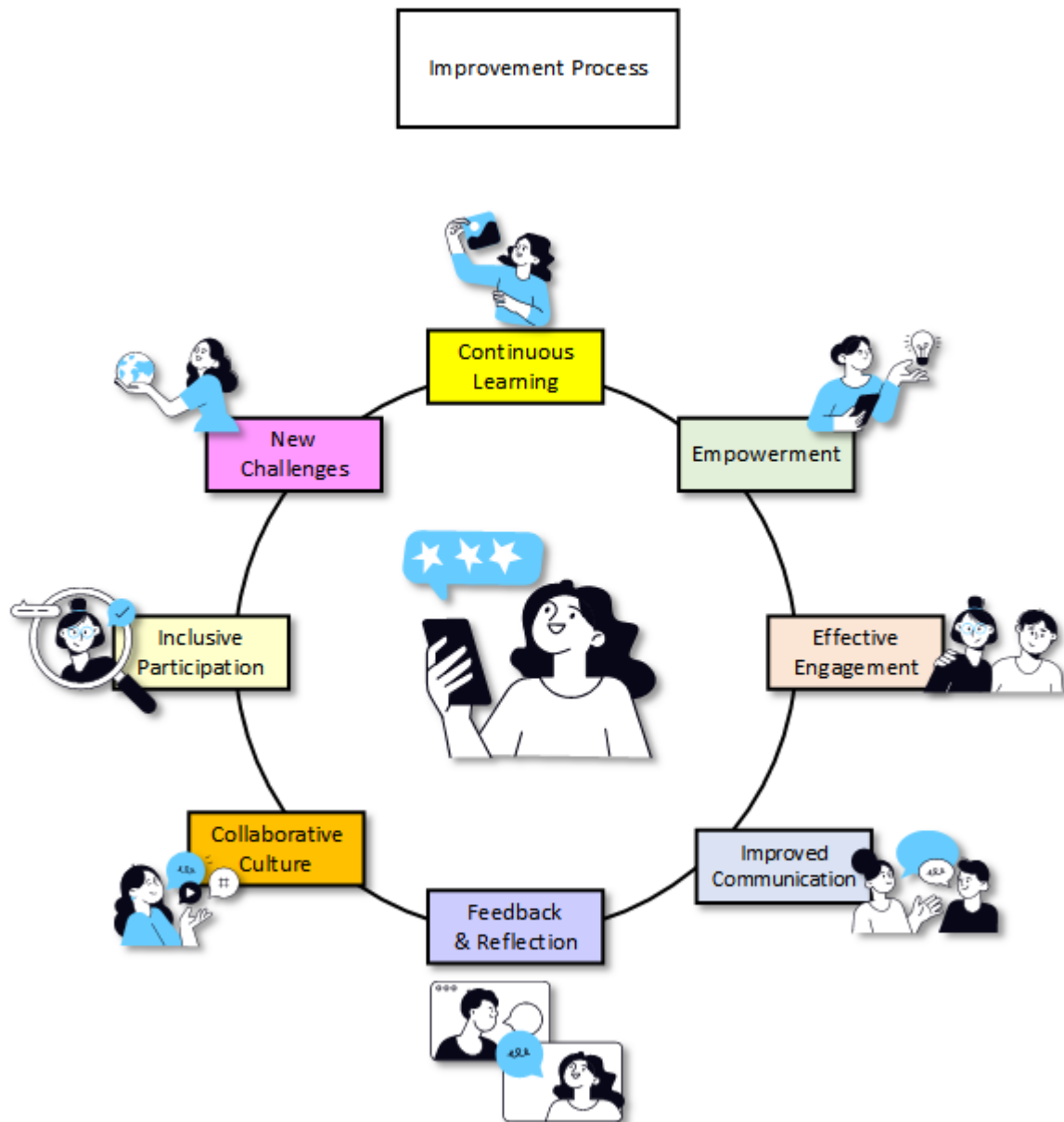


Figure 1 Community Communications Improvement Process

“Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”
 Paulo Freire

2 Templates



Templates serve as invaluable tools for community-focussed communication, providing a structured framework and tangible examples for working across different forms of media. They offer a starting point for community media makers, enabling them to create content efficiently and effectively.

Templates provide a consistent structure that ensures community reports, pamphlets, podcasts, infographics, social media posts, videos, games, newsletters, photographs, and other forms of media, fol-

low a standardized format. This structure helps community media makers organise their content and deliver information in a clear and coherent manner.

As community media makers gain experience and proficiency in producing different types of media for community communication, they can adapt templates to suit the unique needs and circumstances of their communities. Feedback from community members, popularity of certain content, and a focus on inclusivity can guide the adaptation process. By incorporating the insights gained from those who are under-resourced, less able, or marginalised, community media makers can ensure their templates address the specific needs and preferences of these individuals.

Adapting templates based on community feedback fosters inclusivity and ensures that the produced media reflects the values and desires of the community. It allows for customization, enabling community media makers to tailor content to engage diverse audiences and address specific challenges faced by their communities.

Templates also provide a valuable learning tool, allowing community media makers to refine their skills, experiment with different approaches, and identify best practices. By continuously refining and evolving templates, community media makers can enhance the quality and effectiveness of their community-focussed communication.

Templates play a crucial role in community-focussed communication by providing structure and tangible examples across various forms of media. They serve as a starting point for community media makers and enable efficient content creation. As community media makers become more

experienced, they can adapt templates based on feedback, inclusivity considerations, and the needs of under-resourced or marginalised individuals. Templates facilitate learning and improvement, ensuring that community-focussed communication is effective, relevant, and valued by the community it serves.

2.1 Understanding Reporting Templates

Familiarise yourself with the reporting template provided in the toolkit. Take the time to understand the structure and sections included in the template. This will provide you with a framework for organising your community reports effectively. Identifying how templates can ensure consistent reporting structure, making it easier for non-experts to organise their content. In this section we will:

- Define the purpose of reporting templates.
- Identify the components of a reporting template.
 1. Title and cover page.
 2. Introduction.
 3. Body sections.
 - a. Background/context.
 - b. Key findings.
 - c. Supporting evidence or data.
 - d. Interviews or personal stories.
 - e. Recommendations or next steps.
 4. Conclusion and summary.
 5. References and citations.
 6. Appendices or supplementary materials.
- Common elements to consider when designing a template:
 - Visual consistency (fonts, colours, logos)
 - Clear headings and subheadings.
 - Space for images, charts, or infographics.
 - Flexibility for different report lengths or formats.
 - Guidelines for language and tone.

2.2 Benefits of Using Templates in Community Reporting

- Consistency in reporting structure.
 - Facilitating easier comprehension for readers.
 - Providing a familiar format for stakeholders and audiences.
- Timesaving and efficiency for community reporters.
 - Eliminating the need to start from scratch with each report.
 - Streamlining the process of organizing content.

- Ensuring essential elements are included.
 - Promoting comprehensive and well-rounded reporting.
 - Guiding non-experts in covering all necessary information.
- Supporting collaboration and teamwork.
 - Enabling multiple reporters to follow a standardized approach.
 - Enhancing clarity and consistency in multi-author projects.

2.3 How to Make the Most of Reporting Templates

- Study and familiarize yourself with the template.
- Understand the purpose and structure of each section.
- Take note of any specific guidelines or instructions provided.
- Tailor the template to suit your specific report.
- Customize the content and headings based on the topic or focus.
- Adapt the visual elements to match the branding or style requirements.
- Seek clarification or support if needed.
- Reach out to supervisors or mentors for guidance on using the template effectively.
- Collaborate with other community reporters to share insights and best practices.
- Provide feedback for template improvement.
- Share suggestions for enhancements based on your experience.
- Offer insights on any challenges or areas that could be clarified or expanded.

2.4 Summary

Using reporting templates is useful for community reporters as they offer a valuable framework and established models for various media formats, serving as powerful tools even for non-experts. These templates provide structure, consistency, and guidance in organizing content effectively across different forms of media, ensuring that information is communicated in a clear and coherent manner. By leveraging templates, community reporters can enhance their reporting practices, improve their storytelling skills, and engage their audience more effectively. Embracing templates empowers community reporters to create impactful and engaging reports while streamlining their workflow. Therefore, community reporters are encouraged to embrace reporting templates and utilize them as a foundation to elevate their community reporting efforts, amplifying voices, raising awareness, and fostering positive change within their communities.

3 Guidelines



This section outlines the importance of working to a set of guidelines for community media makers and reporters. Rather than determining what we can't do, they offer a way to stay safe in relation to the law, the codes of ethics and behaviour that are expected of broadcasters, and the standards of accountability that are acceptable within the civic and social sector, where public services and inclusivity, fair representation and good faith are core principles for effective community development.

This section looks at how reporting guidelines

provide a framework for the purposeful use of media as defined by expectations and standards in public life. Pay attention to the guidelines for sourcing information, fact-checking, and ensuring ethical considerations in your reporting. Guidelines will help non-experts follow best practices, ensuring quality, accuracy, and ethical reporting.

In this section we will:

- Define the purpose of reporting guidelines.
- Identify key elements of reporting guidelines.

This will include:

1. Sourcing information.
2. Fact-checking and accuracy.
3. Ethical considerations.
4. Language and tone.
5. Attribution and citation.
6. Privacy and confidentiality.
7. Conflict of interest.

Here we will think about how guidelines help non-experts follow best practices by:

- Ensuring adherence to professional standards.
- Providing a framework for quality and accuracy.

3.1 Importance of Sourcing Information

- Verifying sources for credibility and reliability.
- Diverse sourcing to represent different perspectives.
- Balancing primary and secondary sources.

3.2 Ensuring Accuracy through Fact-Checking

- Fact-checking process and techniques.
- Cross-referencing information with multiple sources.
- Verifying statistics, quotes, and other data.

3.3 Ethical Considerations in Community Reporting

- Respect for privacy and consent
- Responsible use of sensitive or confidential information
- Avoiding biases and maintaining objectivity.
- Treating subjects with fairness and dignity.

3.4 Language and Tone in Reporting

- Using clear and accessible language.
- Adaptation to the target audience.
- Avoidance of jargon or technical terms.

3.5 Attribution and Citation

- Giving credit to original sources.
- Properly citing references and quotes.
- Following established citation styles.

3.6 Ensuring Privacy and Confidentiality

- Safeguarding personal information.
- Obtaining consent for publication or use of personal stories.
- Anonymizing or pseudonymizing identities when necessary.

3.7 Managing Conflict of Interest

- Identifying and disclosing potential conflicts of interest.
- Maintaining objectivity and transparency in reporting.
- Avoiding situations that compromise integrity or credibility.

3.8 Seek Clarification and Support

- Engaging with supervisors or mentors for guidance.
- Collaborating with peers to share insights and best practices.
- Asking questions when guidelines are unclear.

3.9 Implementing Reporting Guidelines Effectively

In this section you will study and familiarise yourself with the reporting guidelines provided in the toolkit:

- Read through the guidelines thoroughly to grasp their intent and expectations.
- Take note of any specific instructions or requirements outlined in the guidelines.

Apply the guidelines throughout the reporting process:

- During information gathering, ensure sources are reputable and diverse.
- Fact-check all information and verify its accuracy before including it in the report.
- Consider ethical implications and obtain necessary consent when involving personal or sensitive information.
- Maintain objectivity and fairness by presenting balanced viewpoints and avoiding biases.
- Use clear and accessible language to effectively communicate with the target audience.
- Attribute sources and provide proper citations to give credit and support the credibility of your report.
- Respect privacy and confidentiality by appropriately handling and storing sensitive information.
- Regularly review your work to identify and address any potential conflicts of interest.

Seek clarification or support if needed:

- If you encounter any uncertainties or ambiguities in the guidelines, reach out to your supervisors or mentors for clarification.
- Engage in discussions with fellow community reporters to share experiences and seek advice on implementing the guidelines effectively.

Continuously reflect on and improve your adherence to the reporting guidelines.

- Regularly assess your reporting practices against the guidelines and identify areas for improvement.
- Actively seek feedback from stakeholders and the community to gauge the impact and effectiveness of your reporting.
- Adjust and refine your approach based on feedback and lessons learned.

3.10 Benefits of Following Reporting Guidelines as a Non-Expert

In this section we will discuss what we gain by using clear and agreed guidance so we can:

- Ensure the production of high-quality reports that meet professional standards.
- Build credibility and trust with your audience and stakeholders.
- Enhance the accuracy, objectivity, and fairness of your reporting.
- Demonstrate a commitment to ethical principles and responsible journalism.
- Enable effective communication with diverse audiences by using clear and accessible language.
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals involved in your reporting.
- Minimize the risk of conflicts of interest that could compromise the integrity of your work.

3.11 Summary

Utilising reporting and communications guidelines is paramount for community reporters, as they play a crucial role in ensuring the quality, credibility, and ethical integrity of community reporting. Following these guidelines provides a framework for sourcing accurate information, conducting thorough fact-checking, and considering ethical considerations in reporting. By adhering to the guidelines, community reporters can uphold professional standards, enhance the accuracy of their reports, and build trust within their communities. Embracing reporting guidelines empowers community reporters to achieve meaningful and impactful reporting outcomes, making a positive difference in their communities and effectively conveying the stories that matter most.

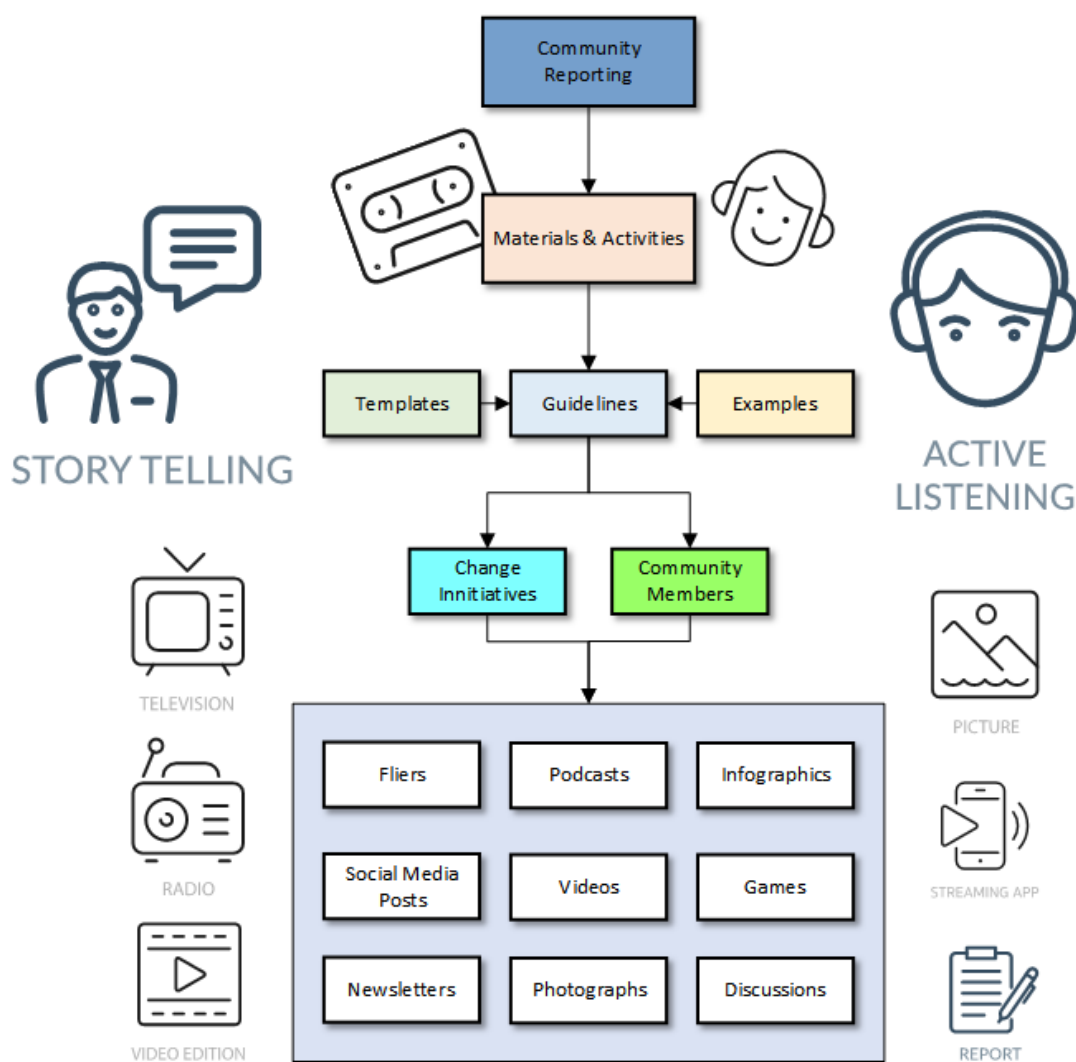


Figure 2 Community Reporting Activities

4 Reporting and Media Making Examples



This section will outline how a well-chosen set of provided examples of community reports can help community communicators to better understand the desired format and content for their chosen stories, messages and discussions. You will be asked to analyse how previous reports and examples of community communication effectively convey information and engage a wide range of people, with different needs and abilities, across a range of types of communities. You will be asked to look for ways to adapt successful

elements into your own report while maintaining originality. Examples have the potential to serve as references, inspiring non-experts with effective storytelling and information presentation.

In this section we will consider:

- Definitions and purposes of examples of community reporting.
- How examples serve as reference guides and sources of inspiration.
- The importance of studying examples for understanding format and content.

4.1 Types of Examples in Community Reporting

- Published community reports.
- Reports from reputable news organizations.
- Reports from local community media outlets.
- Reports from community-based organizations.
- Peer-reviewed research articles related to community issues.

4.2 Studying Examples for Format and Content

- Analysing the structure and sections of example reports.
 - Introduction
 - Background/context
 - Key findings
 - Supporting evidence or data
 - Personal stories or interviews
 - Recommendations or next steps
 - Conclusion and summary
- Visual elements (images, graphs, charts)
- Observing the language, tone, and style of effective storytelling.
- Noting the use of quotes, anecdotes, or statistics to engage the audience.
- Paying attention to the balance of objectivity and subjectivity in examples.
- Identifying techniques for presenting complex information in a clear and accessible manner.

4.3 Adapting Successful Elements from Examples

- Maintaining originality while drawing inspiration from examples.
- Incorporating effective storytelling techniques observed in examples.
- Applying lessons learned from examples to enhance your own report.
- Adapting visual elements and graphics to improve information presentation.
- Tailoring the use of quotes, personal stories, or data to engage your audience.

4.4 Ethical Considerations when Using Examples

- Citing and referencing the original sources appropriately.
- Avoiding plagiarism by giving credit to the authors of the examples.
- Respecting copyright and intellectual property rights.

4.5 Expanding the Range of Examples

- Seeking out diverse examples from different communities and contexts.
- Considering examples from various media platforms (print, online, audio, video)
- Exploring examples that address a wide range of community issues.
- Collaborating with other community reporters to share and discuss examples.

4.6 Seek Feedback on Your Adaptations

- Sharing your adapted work with supervisors or mentors for feedback.
- Engaging in discussions with peers to exchange insights and improvements.
- Welcoming feedback from the community and stakeholders to gauge impact.

4.7 Summary

Using well-chosen examples of community reporting holds significant importance and offers benefits for aspiring community reporters. Studying examples provides valuable references and sources of inspiration, allowing non-expert reporters to gain insights into effective storytelling and information presentation. By examining successful community reports, reporters can understand desired formats, engage their audience more effectively, and develop their own unique voice and perspective. Embracing examples empowers community reporters to enhance their reporting practices, while maintaining authenticity and originality. It is crucial to encourage community reporters to leverage examples as learning tools, drawing inspiration while ensuring they maintain their own unique voice and perspective in delivering impactful and engaging reports.

5 Change Initiatives



In this section you will identify relevant change initiatives models and process that relate to ongoing community development projects within your community. You will consider how to conduct thorough research to gather information on the progress, challenges, and impact of these initiatives, while highlighting the role and responsibilities of key stakeholders involved, and their roles in driving change. The aim of community reporting is to help provide recommendations or suggestions for further improvement or collaboration. Report-

ing on change initiatives have a strong potential to raises awareness, highlights progress, and encourages collaboration for positive community development.

In this section you will:

- Reflect on the importance of reporting on change initiatives in the community.
- Identify the benefits of highlighting how change initiatives affect everyone in the community, especially those who are non-experts.

5.1 Understanding Change Initiatives in Community Reporting

- Definition and significance of change initiatives.
- Types of change initiatives in communities.
- Social and environmental initiatives.
- Policy and governance initiatives.
- Community development initiatives.
- Role of community reporters in reporting on change initiatives.

5.2 Identifying Relevant Change Initiatives

- Conducting thorough research within the community.
- Engaging with community members, local organizations, and stakeholders.
- Exploring local news sources, community forums, and social media platforms.
- Collaborating with community-based organizations or activists.

5.3 Gathering Information on Change Initiatives

- Assessing the progress and impact of initiatives.
- Examining challenges and barriers faced by the initiatives.
- Identifying key stakeholders and their roles in driving change.
- Documenting success stories, case studies, and lessons learned.

5.4 Reporting on Change Initiatives

- Choosing appropriate reporting formats and mediums.
- Structuring reports to effectively communicate the purpose and impact of the initiatives.
- Highlighting the goals, strategies, and outcomes of the initiatives.
- Incorporating personal stories and testimonials from community members involved.
- Providing data, statistics, or visual representations to support the reporting.
- Addressing potential limitations or areas for improvement in the initiatives.
- Offering recommendations or suggestions for further improvement or collaboration.

5.5 Raising Awareness and Encouraging Collaboration

- Promoting visibility and understanding of change initiatives within the community.
- Engaging with diverse audiences and stakeholders through the reporting.
- Facilitating dialogue and collaboration among key stakeholders.
- Encouraging community members to get involved or support the initiatives.

5.6 Ethical Considerations in Reporting on Change Initiatives

- Ensuring accuracy, fairness, and objectivity in reporting.
- Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of individuals involved in the initiatives.
- Acknowledging potential conflicts of interest and maintaining transparency.
- Seeking consent and permission when sharing personal stories or sensitive information.

5.7 Impact Assessment and Follow-up Reporting

- Evaluating the impact and outcomes of the reported change initiatives.
- Conducting follow-up reporting to track progress and updates.
- Celebrating success stories and sharing lessons learned with the community.

5.8 Seek Feedback and Collaboration

- Sharing your reporting on change initiatives for feedback and validation.
- Collaborating with stakeholders and experts to enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of the reporting.
- Actively engaging with the community to incorporate their feedback and perspectives.

5.9 Summary

Working with change management models is essential for community development, and community reporting plays a pivotal role in encouraging non-expert community advocates to identify and deliberate on relevant change initiatives. By embracing these models, community advocates can effectively understand and navigate the progress, challenges, and impact of change initiatives within their communities. Community reporting acts as a catalyst for positive and inclusive community development by raising awareness of these initiatives, showcasing their importance, and encouraging collaboration among stakeholders. Non-expert community advocates are empowered to play an active role in reporting on change initiatives, promoting transparency, highlighting progress, and fostering a

sense of collective responsibility. Through a clear call-to-action, community reporting motivates individuals to engage, collaborate, and contribute to the positive growth and development of their communities.

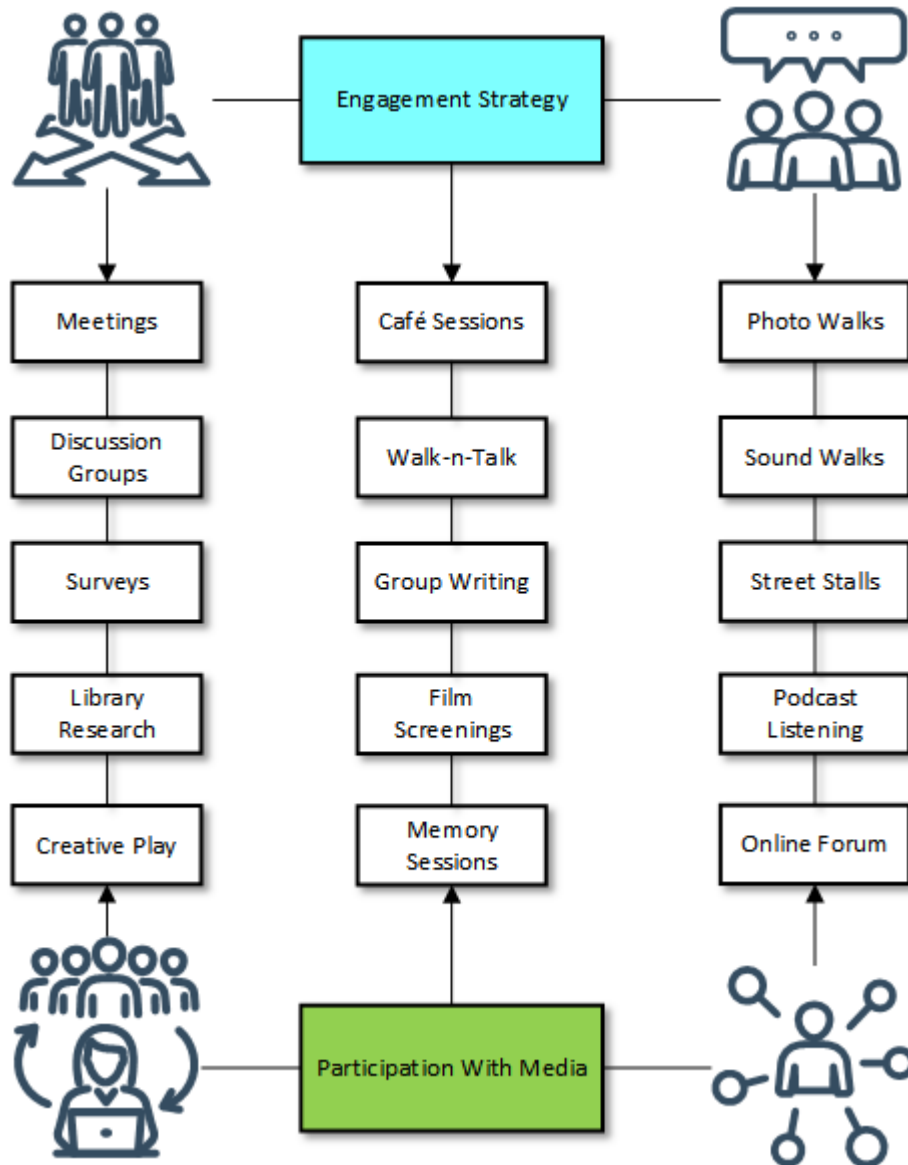


Figure 3 Community Media Engagement Strategies

6 Community Membership



Establish a strong connection with the community members you are reporting on is at the heart of community sensemaking and community media making. In this section you will consider different ways to engage in conversations and actively listen to other people’s perspectives, concerns, and aspirations. You will consider how to conduct interviews or focus groups to gather insights and personal stories that represent the diversity of experience and lived experience within the community. This means reinforcing the idea that building

connections within and between communities enhances trust, encourages participation, and ensures reporting and communications reflects the voices and concerns of all members of our communities.

In this section you will:

- Consider the importance of community participation in community reporting.
- Explore the benefits of building connections and engaging with community members for non-experts.

6.1 Understanding Community Participation in Community Reporting

- Definition and significance of community participation.
- Role of community reporters in facilitating community participation.
- Impact of community participation on the quality and relevance of reporting.

6.2 Establishing a Strong Connection with the Community

- Actively listen and empathize with community members' perspectives.
- Engage in meaningful conversations to understand their concerns and aspirations.
- Demonstrate respect, cultural sensitivity, and openness during interactions.

6.3 Conducting Interviews and Focus Groups

- Planning and preparing for interviews or focus groups.
- Identifying key stakeholders and diverse voices to include.
- Asking open-ended questions to elicit valuable insights and personal stories.
- Actively listening and creating a safe space for participants to share their experiences.

6.4 Embracing Diversity within the Community

- Recognizing and respecting the diversity of voices, experiences, and perspectives.

- Ensuring inclusivity by actively seeking input from marginalized or underrepresented groups.
- Taking steps to overcome language barriers, cultural differences, or accessibility issues.

6.5 Ensuring Authenticity and Trust

- Building trust through transparency, honesty, and integrity in reporting
- Representing the community's concerns and aspirations accurately.
- Giving credit and recognition to community members involved in the reporting process.

6.6 Collaborating with Community-Based Organizations and Leaders

- Establishing partnerships with local organizations and leaders.
- Leveraging their expertise, networks, and community connections.
- Coordinating efforts to ensure collaborative and impactful reporting.

6.7 Ethical Considerations in Community Participation

- Respecting privacy and confidentiality during interactions and interviews
- Obtaining informed consent for sharing personal stories or sensitive information.
- Protecting the anonymity and safety of participants, if necessary
- Maintaining objectivity and avoiding conflicts of interest in reporting.

6.8 Engaging the Community through Reporting

- Sharing the progress and findings of the reporting with the community.
- Inviting feedback, comments, and additional insights from community members.
- Facilitating dialogue and encouraging community participation through online or offline platforms.

6.9 Acting on Community Feedback and Suggestions

- Considering community feedback in reporting and follow-up actions.
- Addressing concerns and updating the community on the outcomes of the reporting.
- Collaborating with community members to implement changes or improvements based on their input.

6.10 Seek Continuous Improvement and Learning

- Reflecting on the community reporting process and lessons learned.
- Seeking professional development opportunities to enhance community engagement skills.
- Collaborating with other community reporters to share insights and best practices.

6.11 Summary

Promoting community cohesion through engaged participation in our media is of utmost importance, and community reporters play a vital role as facilitators in encouraging non-expert community members to actively engage, listen, and connect with one another. By fostering authentic connections and inclusive representation, community reporters empower individuals to contribute their diverse

voices and concerns, ensuring a comprehensive reflection of the community's experiences and perspectives. Acting as catalysts for community participation, reporters must define clear and simple calls to action for community advocates, motivating them to take an active role in shaping their communities. By actively engaging and listening to others, community advocates can foster collaboration, build trust, and create meaningful change. Community reporters must embrace their role as facilitators, nurturing a sense of collective ownership and encouraging the authentic participation of all community members to create vibrant and inclusive communities.

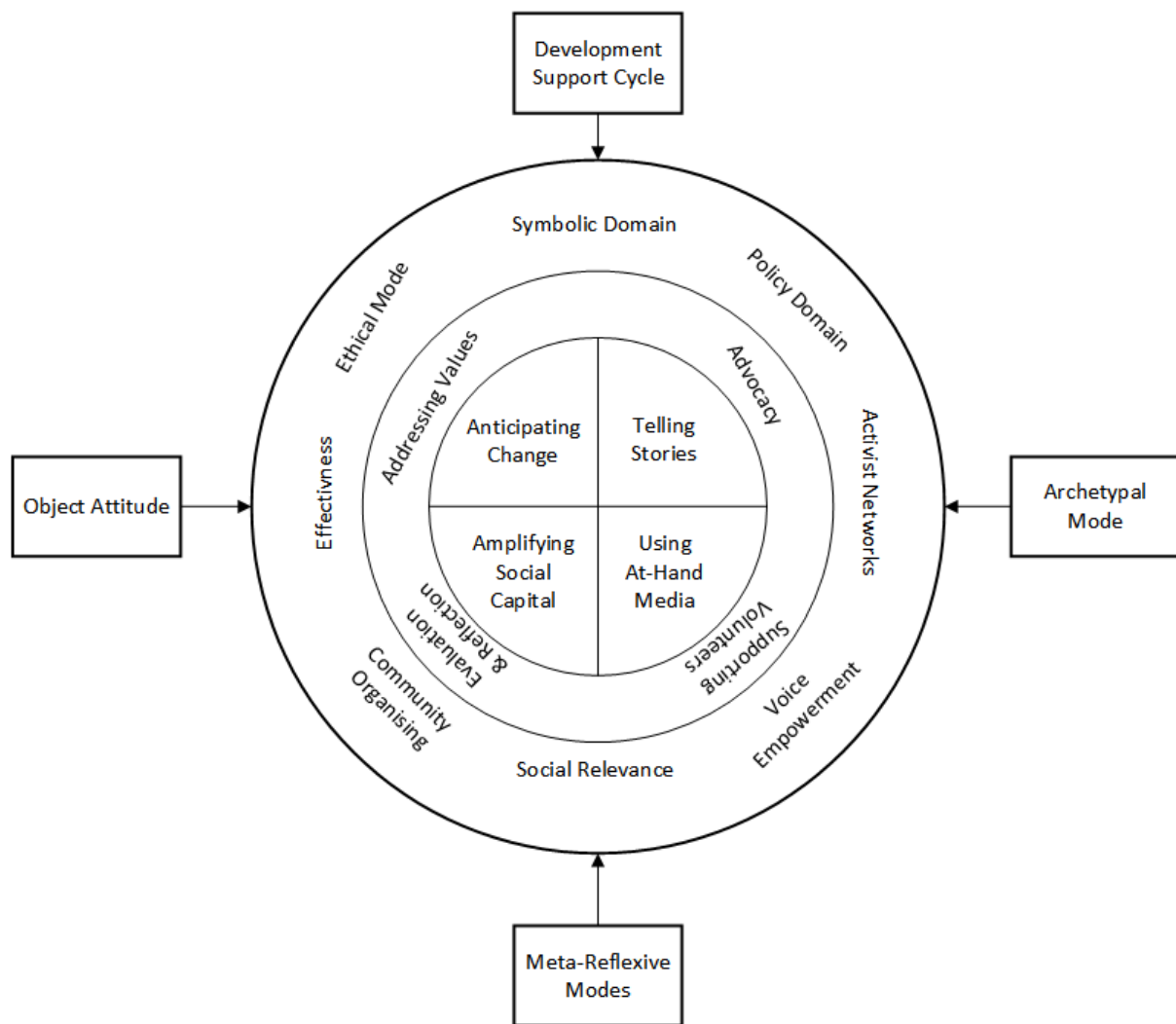


Figure 4 Development Support Cycle

7.3 Assessing Suitability and Impact

What do we need to think about when:

- Evaluating the alignment of the medium with the content and target audience.
- Considering the potential reach, accessibility, and engagement of each medium
- Gathering feedback from the community to assess the effectiveness of the chosen medium.

7.4 Adapting and Combining Mediums

What do we need to think about when:

- Exploring the possibility of combining multiple mediums for comprehensive reporting.
- Adapting content to fit different mediums while maintaining consistency in messaging.
- Leveraging the strengths of each medium to maximize impact and engagement.

7.5 Ethical Considerations in Medium Selection

What do we need to think about when:

- Respecting privacy and confidentiality when using certain mediums.
- Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity in the chosen mediums.
- Obtaining necessary permissions or releases when sharing sensitive content.

7.6 Seek Feedback and Adaptation

What do we need to think about when:

- Welcoming feedback from the community and stakeholders on the chosen medium
- Monitoring the impact and effectiveness of the selected medium.
- Being open to adapting the medium based on feedback and lessons learned.

7.7 Summary

Choosing appropriate media for community reporting is crucial to effective engagement and participation in the life of our communities, with community media makers playing a vital role in encouraging non-expert members of our communities, as well as more experienced community advocates to consider the practical benefits of each medium. By understanding the strengths and limitations of various media formats, community advocates can effectively select the medium that best aligns with their communication goals and target community. Whether it's fliers, podcasts, infographics, social media posts, videos, games, newsletters, photographs, or discussions, each medium offers unique opportunities to communicate and engage with the community. Community media makers must provide a clear and simple call to action that leverages the power of these different mediums to effectively convey messages, raise awareness, and foster engagement among their fellow residents, citizens, and community members. By utilizing the appropriate media, community advocates can amplify their voices, inspire action, and create meaningful change within their communities.

8 Media Options



In this section of the handbook, we explore alternative media options for community reporting, specifically tailored for individuals working as community media facilitators, makers and advocates in community-focused groups, such as charities, NGOs, and social/mutual aid groups. These DIY approaches offer powerful tools for amplifying voices, engaging communities, and fostering connections. By utilising media options such as pamphlets, podcasts, infographics, social media, videos, games, newsletters, pho-

tographs, and group discussions, you can effectively communicate your organization's mission, share impactful stories, and mobilize support within your community.

These media options provide a range of benefits, from creating concise and visually appealing pamphlets, to engaging audiences through audio storytelling in podcasts. Infographics simplify complex information, while social media platforms allow for community interaction and updates. Videos provide visual narratives, and games offer interactive ways to educate and engage. Newsletters provide regular updates, while photographs capture compelling moments. Finally, group discussions facilitate safe and inclusive spaces for meaningful dialogues.

By adopting a DIY media approach, you can make the most of limited resources while maintaining authenticity and creativity. These media options allow you to tailor your communication to your specific audience and foster connections within your community. Each medium offers practical tips and considerations, empowering you to effectively convey your organization's message and drive positive change. Incorporating these alternative media options in your community reporting efforts enables you to share stories of impact, inspire action, and engage with your community members in meaningful ways. Embrace the power of DIY media to create inclusive and engaging content that resonates with your target audience and amplifies the voices of those you serve. Other sections of this handbook provide further guidance and practical advice to help you leverage these media options for successful community reporting.

8.1 Zines Fliers and Pamphlets



Zines, Pamphlets and fliers serve as effective tools for community-focused communication, enabling the raising of awareness on various topics, issues, events, or activities taking place within a community. These tangible and visually appealing materials have the power to capture attention and convey important information to a broad audience.

By distributing zines, pamphlets and fliers, community members can raise awareness and generate interest in a particular cause, event, or initiative. These

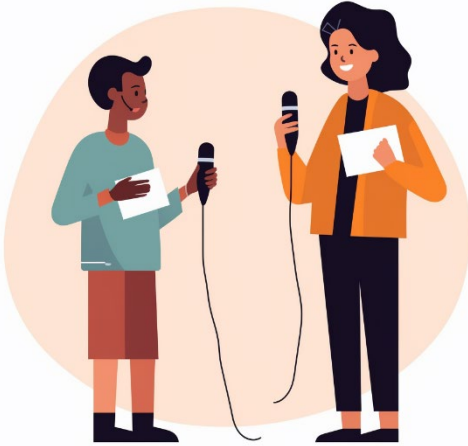
communication tools can be used to inform the community about local projects, community services, upcoming events, or public health campaigns. They provide a concise and easily digestible format to deliver key messages, including dates, times, contact details, and relevant information.

Additionally, the process of designing and making zines, pamphlets and fliers can be a bonding opportunity for community media makers. Coming together as a group to collaborate on the design, content, and distribution of these materials fosters a sense of unity and collective effort. It allows for shared creativity, the exchange of ideas, and strengthens relationships within the community. This collaborative approach further enhances community engagement and participation.

Zines, pamphlets and fliers play a vital role in community-focussed communication by raising awareness of important topics, issues, events, or activities within the community. They have the ability to capture attention, deliver resonant messages, and encourage community involvement. Furthermore, the process of designing and creating these materials can serve as a valuable bonding opportunity for community media makers, fostering a sense of togetherness and collaboration.

- Keep the content concise and visually appealing.
- Include key information, such as dates, times, and contact details.
- Distribute them in high-traffic areas or locations relevant to the topic.

8.2 Podcasts



Podcasts offer a powerful medium for community-focused communication, enabling the raising of awareness about topics, issues, events, or activities within a community in an accessible way. The spoken nature of podcasts makes them inclusive and particularly beneficial for individuals with low literacy skills.

Through podcasting, community members can effectively raise awareness and engage their audience in meaningful conversations. Podcasts allow for in-depth discussions, storytelling, interviews, and the sharing of personal experiences. By providing a platform to explore diverse perspectives and insights, podcasts can inform and educate the community about local projects, initiatives, social issues, cultural events, and more.

One of the significant advantages of podcasts is their accessibility. They allow listeners to engage with the content at their own pace, making it suitable for individuals with varying literacy levels. This audio format breaks down barriers and ensures that critical information and stories reach a wide audience within the community. Moreover, creating podcasts as a group of community media makers provides an excellent opportunity for discussion and collaboration. Coming together to record and produce podcasts allows for the exchange of ideas, diverse viewpoints, and collective decision-making. It fosters a sense of community ownership, empowerment, and creates a space for meaningful group discussions.

Podcasts are an effective tool for community-focused communication, enabling the raising of awareness about topics, issues, events, or activities within a community in an accessible manner. They provide a platform for engaging conversations, storytelling, and diverse perspectives. The spoken format makes podcasts inclusive and beneficial for individuals who are busy doing other tasks, as we can listen while we drive, walk and wash the dishes. Furthermore, creating podcasts as a group of community media makers fosters collaboration, discussion, and a sense of community ownership in the production process.

- Plan an engaging script with a clear structure.
- Use a decent microphone and free audio editing software such as Audacity for better sound quality.
- Promote your podcast through social media and relevant podcast directories.

8.3 Infographics



Infographics are a powerful tool for community-focused communication, enabling the raising of awareness about topics, issues, events, or activities within a community. They possess the unique ability to transcend cultural boundaries and simplify messages, making them highly accessible to individuals with low literacy skills, such as people who do not speak the host community's language proficiently.

Using visual elements such as icons, illustrations, charts, and graphs, infographics present information in a clear and concise manner. This format allows complex data and concepts to be easily understood, breaking down communication barriers and ensuring information reaches a diverse audience within the community.

Infographics excel at simplifying messages and condensing information into visually appealing designs. By incorporating minimal text and focusing on visual representation, they engage viewers and make complex ideas more accessible. This visual storytelling approach is especially valuable when raising awareness about topics that may require cross-cultural understanding or involve sensitive issues.

Furthermore, the process of designing and producing infographics as a group of community media makers provides an excellent opportunity for creative practice and collaboration. Coming together to brainstorm ideas, collect data, and create visually compelling infographics fosters teamwork, shared decision-making, and the exchange of creative perspectives. It strengthens community bonds and empowers individuals to contribute their unique skills and insights.

Infographics are a powerful medium for community-focused communication, enabling the raising of awareness about topics, issues, events, or activities within a community. Their highly visual nature helps cross-cultural boundaries and simplifies messages, making them accessible to individuals with low literacy skills. Creating infographics as a group of community media makers provides an opportunity for collaborative creative practice, fostering teamwork and the exchange of diverse perspectives. Together, infographics and community media makers have the potential to engage and empower communities through visually captivating communication.

- Simplify complex information into visual elements.
- Use colours and graphics to enhance understanding and appeal.
- Include data sources and references to maintain credibility.

8.4 Social Media Posts



Social media platforms provide a dynamic and effective means of community-focused communication, allowing for targeted engagement that links with individuals based on their identity and interests. By focussing on the positive and trusted capacity of social media, simple messages can be shared that raise awareness of important topics, issues, events, or activities taking place in the community.

Social media posts enable community media makers to connect with individuals on a personal basis by tailoring content to resonate with their unique identities and shared interests. The ability to personalize messages based on demographics, preferences, and online behaviour allows for precise targeting and engagement, though it does carry the risk of creating echo chambers and fostering misinformation is used in ways that are unaccountable. If used positively and inclusively, however, and by aligning content with individuals' identities, social media posts can effectively capture the attention of people in different ways than is possible with broadcast media, thereby encouraging different forms of participation.

Moreover, social media's highly visual nature further enhances accessibility. Utilising visually appealing graphics, images, and videos in social media posts allows for quick comprehension and engagement, making them accessible to a wide range of audiences, including those with low literacy skills. Social media also provides a platform for community members to associate with one another based on shared interests and identities. By building online networks and communities, individuals can connect, engage, and collaborate on community initiatives. The dispersed nature of social media enables community media makers to maintain contact and communicate effectively, regardless of physical location.

Social media posts are a powerful tool for community-focused communication, allowing for personalized engagement based on individuals' identity and interests. They provide a platform to share simple messages that raise awareness of community topics, issues, events, or activities. The highly visual and accessible nature of social media posts makes them effective in capturing attention and fostering community connections. Additionally, social media allows dispersed groups of community media makers to stay connected through their online networks, enabling ongoing collaboration and communication.

- Tailor your message to the platform and character limit.
- Include relevant hashtags and tags to increase visibility.
- Engage with your audience through comments and responses.

8.5 Videos



Video posts are a powerful medium for community-focused communication, enabling the telling of stories in an accessible way that visually and aurally relates to the experiences of community members based on their identity and interests. These videos allow for the sharing of simple messages that raise awareness of topics, issues, events, or activities taking place in the community.

Through video posts, community media makers can convey stories and information in a visually engaging and immersive format. Videos have the ability to capture the attention of viewers and create an emotional connection by showcasing relatable experiences and diverse identities within the community. Video formats can vary in length, ranging from short, impactful clips to mid-length narratives and extended documentaries. By tailoring video content to the target audience's preferences and interests, community media makers can effectively communicate their messages. The highly visual and auditory nature of videos enhances accessibility. Visual storytelling allows for the simplification of complex information, making it easier for viewers to comprehend and relate to the content. Videos provide a platform to address important community topics and issues, presenting them in a way that resonates with community members and fosters understanding.

Furthermore, videos can incorporate a clear call-to-action, motivating viewers to take part in community initiatives, events, or discussions. This encourages active engagement and participation, empowering community members to make a positive impact within their communities. Video posts are a valuable tool for community-focused communication, allowing for the telling of stories in an accessible way that visually and aurally relates to the experiences of community members based on their identity and interests. These videos enable the sharing of simple messages to raise awareness of community topics, issues, events, or activities. By leveraging the highly visual and relatable nature of videos, community media makers can effectively communicate complex information and inspire action through a clear call-to-action.

- Plan your video's script and storyboard to ensure a coherent narrative.
- Pay attention to lighting, audio quality, and visual composition.
- Edit the video to enhance its flow and add captions for accessibility.

8.6 Games



Games provide a unique and engaging platform for community-focused communication, offering opportunities for individuals to come together and participate in goal-oriented activities that relate to the experiences of community members based on their identity and interests. Games not only foster a sense of community and fun but also enable the development of questioning and problem-solving skills while delving into deeper consideration of topics, issues, or challenges that are of concern to the community.

Community media makers can use games as a means to create inclusive and interactive experiences that resonate with community members. Games encourage active participation and collaboration, allowing individuals to collectively explore and address community-related topics in an accessible and engaging way.

Shared and participative game playing can take various forms, ranging from traditional offline games such as board games, card games, and group activity games to electronic forms including video and

computer games. These games can be adapted or designed specifically to address community issues, encourage dialogue, and spark critical thinking. Games provide a safe and structured environment where participants can immerse themselves in the game's narrative or challenges. By relating to the experiences and interests of community members, games facilitate deeper engagement, promote empathy, and encourage a nuanced understanding of community concerns.

Moreover, games offer a platform for shared experiences, fostering a sense of camaraderie and connection within the community. Whether played in-person or virtually, games bring people together, promote social interaction, and create opportunities for open dialogue and collaboration. Games are a valuable tool for community-focused communication, providing an accessible and engaging way for community members to come together, participate in goal-oriented activities, and explore topics, issues, or challenges that matter to them. Through various forms of game play, including traditional and electronic formats, community media makers can create inclusive and participatory experiences that develop questioning and problem-solving skills while promoting deeper consideration of community concerns. Games offer a shared space for collaboration, social interaction, and community bonding.

- Design interactive games that educate and engage the community.
- Incorporate quizzes or challenges related to the topic at hand.
- Ensure the game is accessible and enjoyable for various age groups.

8.7 Newsletters and Newspapers



Newsletters and newspapers are a well-established and highly accessible form of media, and serve as valuable communication tools for community-focused communication, offering a well-tested approach to distribute information. These publications provide a means for community media makers to engage in a shared production and editing activity, fostering skill development in writing, researching, and design.

Producing a physical newsletter allows community members to come together and actively participate in the creation process. Through collaborative efforts, contributors can refine their skills, gain experience in content creation, and improve their ability to effectively communicate community messages.

This shared production activity strengthens community bonds and promotes a sense of ownership over the publication.

One significant advantage of newsletters and newspapers is their accessibility to individuals who are not digitally connected or who rely on non-electronic forms of communication. Particularly, older individuals and those with limited incomes often value these publications as reliable sources of information about their communities. Newsletters cater to their communication preferences and ensure they remain informed about local events, initiatives, and news. The tangible nature of newsletters and newspapers provides a tactile and easily digestible format for information. They offer a physical representation of community stories, events, and resources, which can be held, read, and shared. This accessibility makes them valuable tools for reaching a wider audience and bridging the digital divide.

In summary, newsletters and newspapers play a vital role in community-focussed communication by offering a well-tested and valued approach to distribute information. Engaging in the production and editing of physical newsletters fosters skill development and collaboration among community media makers. These publications are especially valued by individuals who are not digitally connected, including older individuals and those with limited incomes, as they provide an accessible means of staying informed about their communities. The tactile nature of newsletters and newspapers ensures they remain an important communication medium, reaching diverse audiences and promoting community cohesion.

- Provide valuable and concise content to keep readers engaged.
- Include a mix of updates, stories, and calls to action.
- Personalise the newsletter by addressing recipients by name.



Figure 5 AI Generated Image of Community Reporting

8.8 Photography and Photograph Making



Photography and photographs are powerful tools for community-focussed communication, offering a well-tested and valued approach to distributing information. Through the production and sharing of photographs, community media makers engage in a valuable activity that can enhance their visual skills, strengthen community bonds, and provide an authentic representation of the community and its stories.

Producing and sharing photographs involves community members coming together and actively participating in a shared activity.

This collaborative effort allows individuals to strengthen their visual skills, capture meaningful moments, and tell stories through imagery. Engaging in photography gets community media makers out and about in their neighbourhoods, attending events, and meeting people with stories to tell. This process fosters connections within the community and encourages a deeper understanding of its diverse perspectives and experiences.

Photographs hold immense value as they validate the connection between a story and its relevance to the people and places within a community. They provide an authentic representation of the community, capturing individuals as they truly are. This validation through photography strengthens community members' sense of identity, fosters pride, and ensures that their stories are accurately portrayed.

A DIY approach to photography is crucial in community-focussed communication. It allows for a more authentic representation of the community, avoiding the narrow representations often found in professional or stock photography. By embracing a DIY approach, community media makers can capture the unique and diverse aspects of their community, showcasing its richness and depth.

Photography and photographs are invaluable for community-focussed communication. They offer a well-tested and highly valued approach to distributing information. Community media makers engaging in photography participate in a shared activity that enhances their visual skills and strengthens community bonds. Photographs hold significant value by validating the connection between stories and the people and places within the community. A DIY approach to photography ensures

authenticity, showcasing the community's unique perspectives and avoiding narrow representations found in professional or stock photography.

- Capture compelling images that tell a story or evoke emotions.
- Pay attention to composition, lighting, and clarity.
- Obtain proper consent and respect privacy when photographing individuals.

8.9 Group Discussions



Group discussions serve as a valuable tool for community-focussed communication, offering an opportunity for people to come together, chat, and engage in meaningful conversations about topics that are of concern to them. These discussions provide a platform for individuals to share their perspectives, experiences, and ideas while fostering a sense of community and understanding.

The talking-shop or chatty-cafe approaches to group discussion have a well-established history and have been successfully utilised in various projects, such as oral history initiatives, memory projects, and intercultural programs. These approaches encourage participants from diverse backgrounds to gather and openly share their experiences, creating an environment of mutual learning and understanding.

Object-oriented activities, such as knit-and-natter and craft groups, provide an excellent framework for facilitating the flow of conversation in group discussions. By engaging in a shared activity, participants feel more at ease and less self-conscious, as the focus is on the task at hand rather than being the centre of attention. This creates a relaxed atmosphere that encourages open communication and meaningful exchanges. For more energetic discussion try a Talkaoke.

Group discussions have proven to be effective in fostering community connections, building relationships, and promoting empathy among participants. They allow individuals to express their thoughts, listen to others' perspectives, and collectively explore topics that are important to their community. These discussions serve as a catalyst for building consensus, generating ideas, and developing shared solutions. Group discussions are a valuable approach for community-focussed communication,

providing an opportunity for people to chat and discuss topics that are of concern to them. The talking-shop and chatty-cafe approaches have been successfully utilised in various projects, promoting understanding and knowledge sharing. Object-oriented activities facilitate the flow of conversation, allowing participants to engage in meaningful discussions while focusing on a shared task. These discussions foster community connections, promote empathy, and enable the exploration of collective ideas and solutions.

- Create a safe and inclusive space for discussions within the community:
- Set clear guidelines for respectful and constructive dialogue.
- Encourage active participation from community members.
- Document key points, perspectives, and insights from the discussions.

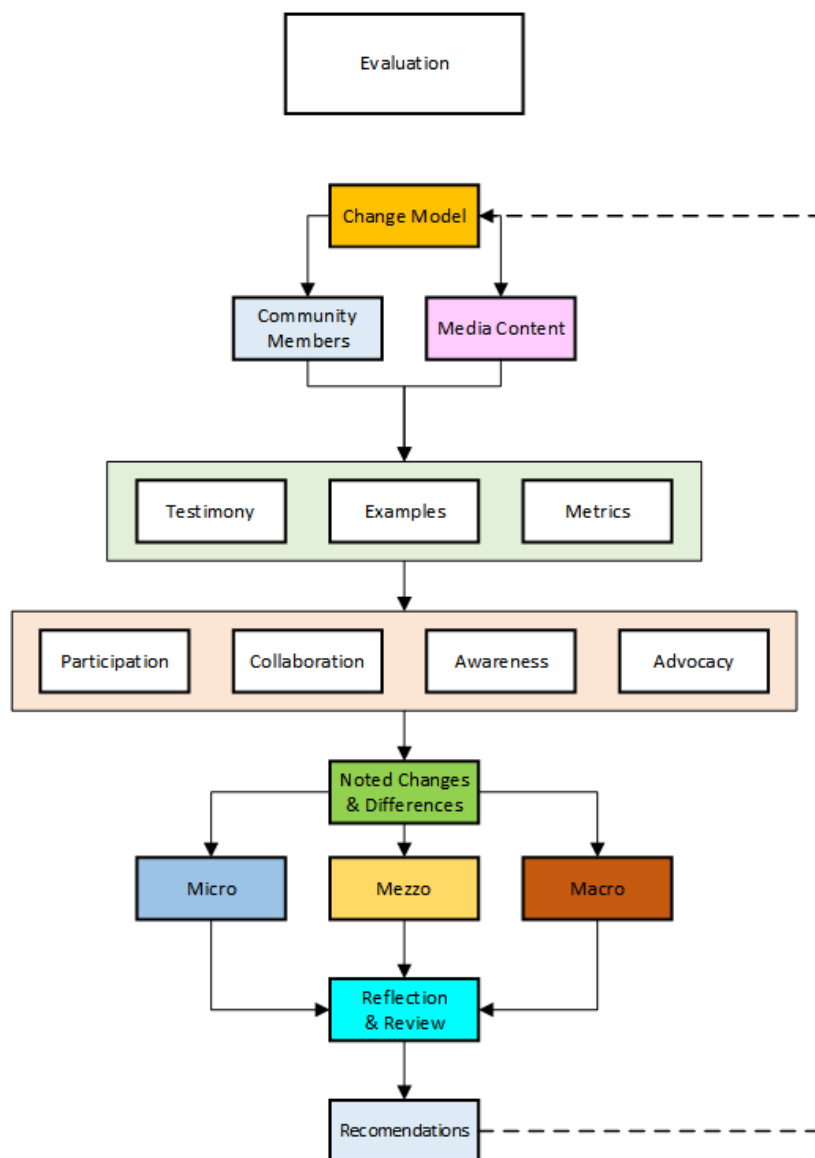


Figure 6 Community Communications Change Model

9 References

10 Acknowledgements