

## Community Mobilization: Degrees of Community Participation

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All participation is not equal. The Degrees of Community Participation show increasing levels, from the low end, which is co-option to the high end of collective action. As community participation increases, community ownership and capacity increase, with the result being community action and continuous improvement in the quality of community life making it more likely to be sustained over time.

Collective Action	Local people set their own agenda and mobilize to carry it out, in the absence of outside initiators and facilitation
Co-learning	Local people and outsiders share their knowledge to create new understanding and work together to form action plans with outsider facilitation
Cooperation	Local people work together with outsiders to determine priorities; responsibility remains with outsiders for directing the process
Consultation	Local opinions are asked; outsiders analyze and decide on a course of action
Compliance	Tasks are assigned, with incentives; outsiders decide agenda and direct the process
Co-Option	Token involvement of local people; representatives are chosen, but have no real input or power



To the left, are seven stages of a mobilization: conducting initial preparation, organizing the community for action, exploring the health issues, and setting priorities, planning, acting, and evaluating together, and scaling up. These steps are a part of the Community Action Cycle. This cycle draws on many of the theories and concepts of a social systems approach to individual change and social change.

<sup>1</sup> USAID. (2007). Demystifying Community Mobilization: An Effective Strategy to Improve Maternal and Newborn Health