



## TOOL | ART & CREATIVITY

Using art and creativity as a form of community engagement can be particularly effective at encouraging participation and generating interest and new ideas.

### WHEN TO USE

These methods are appropriate when you want to involve the local community in expressing and sharing their views and generating new ideas in a participatory way. They are useful when wanting to engage with people of all ages and abilities through education and school programs. They are often beneficial at the beginning of a community planning process to generate interest and raise awareness.

### STRENGTHS

- Suitable for all age groups
- Engaging and interactive
- Enables participants to express themselves creatively
- Can help develop a common vision
- Can be used as a tool to generate further discussion

### WEAKNESSES

- Participants may not be confident in their creative skills
- Often large space is required to exhibit results
- It may be challenging to interpret participant's thoughts and ideas

### IDEAS FOR USING ART AND CREATIVITY FOR ENGAGEMENT

Some ways you can incorporate art and creativity into your community engagement efforts are:

- Artwork
  - As part of a consultation, ask participants to respond to a question by drawing a picture. For example, draw the favourite parts of your community or what do you want your community to look like in 20 years? Drawing can be described and discussion can follow about similarities and differences between drawings. Artwork can also be displayed as part on your ongoing engagement.
  - Invite people to participate in a communal piece of art such as a mural or large canvas. Ideas or themes for the artwork can also be generated as part of a community consultation process. For example, you could talk to various groups about the history of the area and what makes it special. Themes that emerge could be voted on to determine a winning theme for the artwork.

- Photography:
  - Hold a photography competition and ask people to submit photos related to a certain theme. Offer a prize as incentive.
  - Provide disposable cameras to people of all ages to document a place or issue. For example, you could invite people with a lived experience of an issue to tell their story through photos, or ask a wider population to capture their likes and dislikes within their community. The results can be displayed to generate further discussion as well as promote events.
- Vox Pop:
  - Using radio or television, host brief, snappy interviews with people in different locations and at different times. The results can be used to expand the discussion to wider audiences.
- Songs and poems:
  - Invite people to submit a song or poem which describes their community or what they imagine their ideal community to be like. Offer a prize as incentive.
  - Invite a local musician to write a song about the community or issue and also involve the community in the process. People can apply to be participants or it can be offered as an internship for youth or community members.