Inclusive Engagement of Older Adults in Transportation Planning

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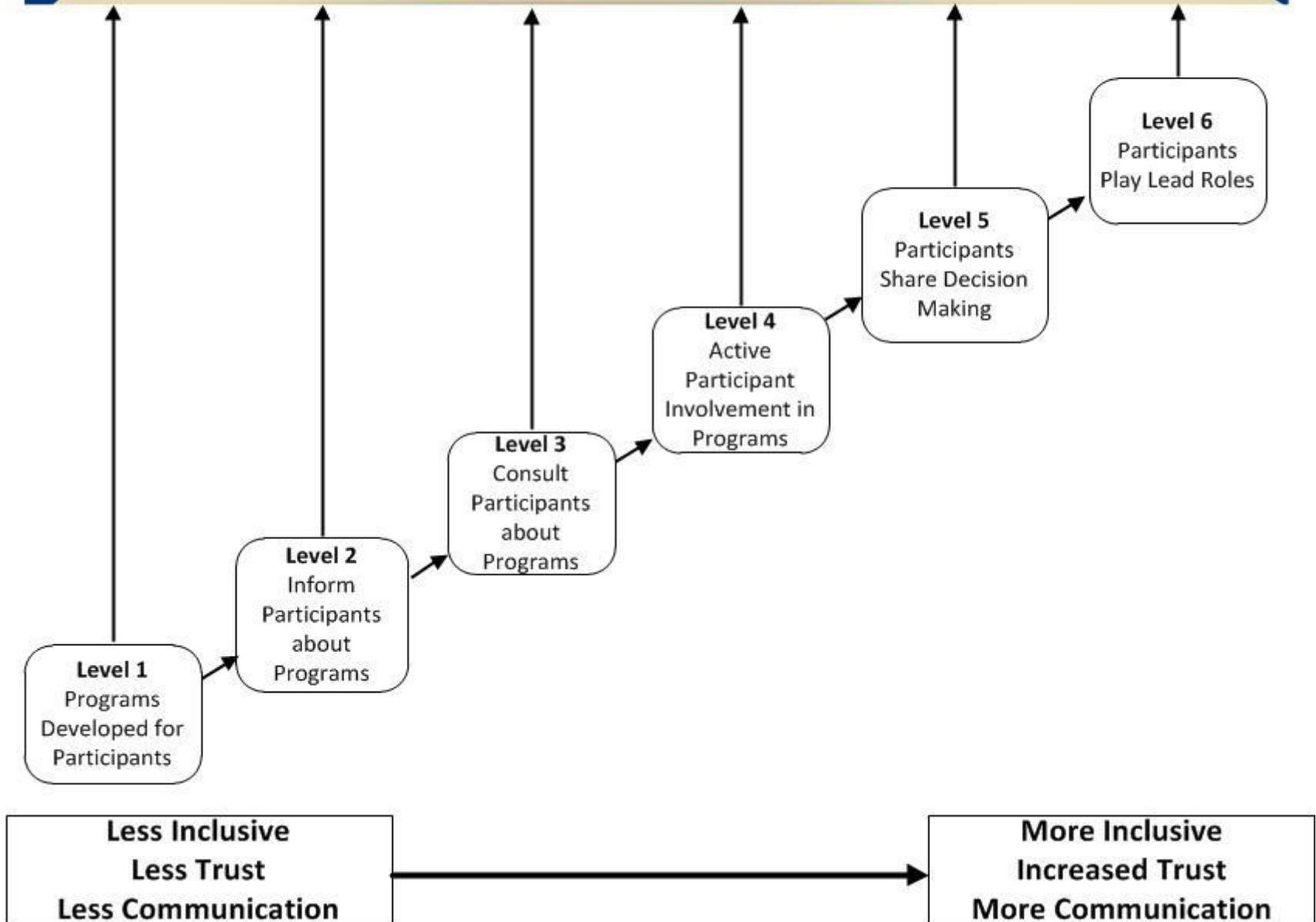
Participant Engagement

*All people, regardless of age or disability, should be able to live independently and participate fully in their communities. Every person should have the right to make choices and to control the decisions in and about their lives. This right to self-determination includes decisions about their homes and work, as well as all the other daily choices most adults make without a second thought. (*https://www.acl.gov/about-community-living*)*

Improvements in Program Planning, Operations and Services

Level 6
Participants Play Lead Roles

Level 5
Participants Share Decision Making

Level 4
Active Participant Involvement in Programs

Level 3
Consult Participants about Programs

Level 2
Inform Participants about Programs

Level 1
Programs Developed for Participants

Less Inclusive
Less Trust
Less Communication

More Inclusive
Increased Trust
More Communication

Inclusive Engagement:
Critical Issues

- How do you make each person feel that they are an important part of the project?

- Is it easy for all invited participants to attend?

- What is the best way to bring people into the process? Is it a meeting or something else?

- How can you ensure that everyone's opinion is sought and valued?

- What is your feedback loop?

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PLANNING 4 ALL

Inclusive Engagement: Critical Issues

- Recognize expertise

- Track ideas and solutions; also keep track of and acknowledge contributions

- Don't assume satisfaction

- Give up control

- Go beyond your own comfort level

- Never, ever assume you've reached everyone!

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Older Americans – A Dynamic Population

- Growth in overall numbers of 65+ population: from 49.2 million in 2016 to 98 million in 2060

- 1 in 7 (15.2%) of the U.S. population is an older American

- Growth in the 85+ population: from 6.4 million in 2016 to 14.6 million in 2040

- Increase in racial and ethnic diversity of older Americans: from 11.1 million (23% of all older adults) in 2016 to 21.1 million (28%) in 2030

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Aging itself is dynamic....

- There are vast differences in life experiences between 60 and 80 year olds

- The different generations of older Americans also have different perspectives on such things as the use of technology

- BUT age alone is not a predictor of health, mobility or receptivity to new technologies

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Ageism/Changing the Frame

- We have successfully extended the human life span, BUT the increased number of older adults is often viewed as a burden.

- Yet older adults continue to contribute to their families and communities as:

  - Workers   - Taxpayers

  - Volunteers   - Consumers

  - Carers

And as keepers of our history and culture

Ageism/Changing the Frame

All older people are not alike!

If you know one older person, you know one older person….

Strategies for & Engaging Older Adults

- **Be aware** of your own implicit biases and automatic responses

- **Replace stereotypes**: Instead of assuming a need for help, ask if assistance is needed

- **Embrace new images** but also understand the pitfalls of doing so

- **Individualize**: What unique challenges does this person face? How does this individual cope with day-to-day challenges

Strategies for & Engaging Older Adults

- Force a **change in your perspective** – What if it was YOU who was ignored? What if a stranger called YOU sweetie?

- **Get to know** older people as individuals whether as neighbors, family members...or in your work in this project

"Getting Rid of the Negative Stereotypes and Biases about Aging" in The Washington Post, 11/3/17

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