

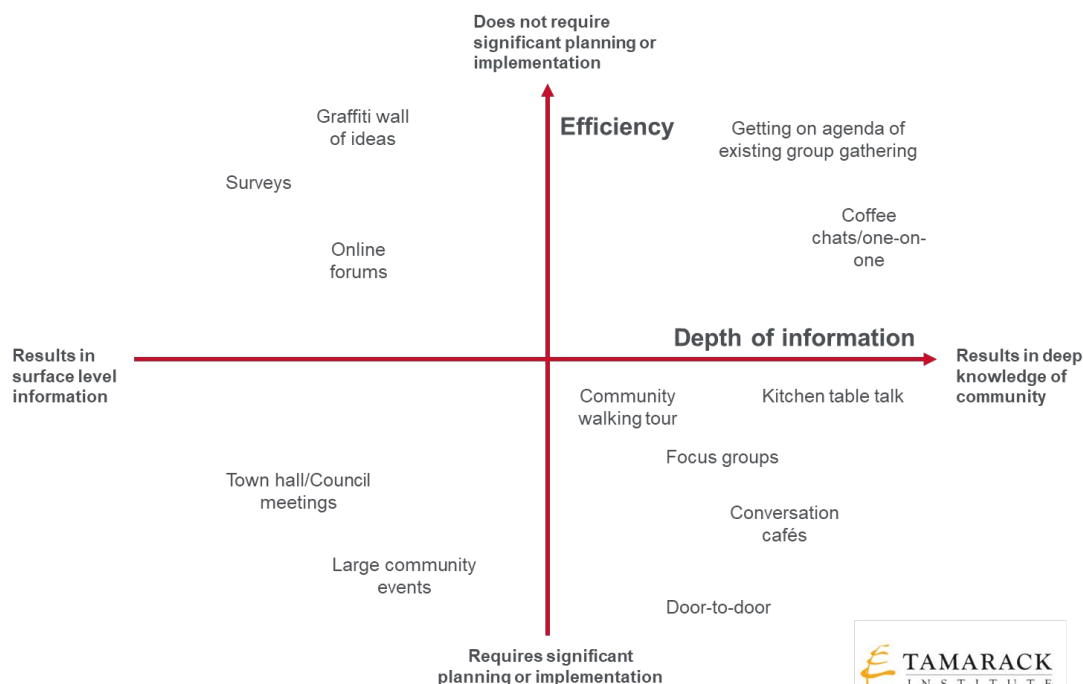
Module 4:

Community listening at a glance

Community listening can take various forms

- **Small conversation:** Individual conversations with community members can provide deeper insights into their unique perspectives, hopes, experiences and needs (example: kitchen conversations).
- **Community forums and online platforms:** Online forums and platforms dedicated to specific communities or neighborhoods can serve as spaces for ongoing dialogue, discussion and collaboration among members (example: neighbourhood Facebook groups).
- **Facilitated small groups:** Small groups of community members are brought together to discuss specific topics or issues in more detail, providing insights and perspectives that may not emerge in larger settings.
- **Event-based activities:** These are events that are organized with a large number of people attending to get feedback or ideas. Examples include town halls, open space or conversation café, or even something casual like a lemonade stand.
- **Surveys and questionnaires:** These tools allow community members to share their opinions, preferences and concerns on various topics, providing data for analysis. Note: surveys are best done with one of the above forms to understand the responses.

Common methods of community listening



Here are some things you can do to demonstrate and model active listening:

- **Attentive silence:** Allowing the speaker to talk without interruptions.
- **Nonverbal cues:** Nodding, maintaining eye contact, and using gestures to show understanding and interest.
- **Reflective responses:** Paraphrasing or summarizing what the speaker said to demonstrate understanding.
- **Clarifying questions:** Asking open-ended questions to gain further insight or clarify points.

Barriers to community listening

- Tension between taking time to listen, and the pressures to take action.
- Preconceived ideas: Making assumptions or judgments before fully understanding the speaker's perspective.
- Lack of proximity to people with diverse perspectives; lack of planning to reduce barriers to engagement (refer to Inclusive Engagement guide).
- It's important to understand cultural norms about dialogue and listening practices. In some cultures, it may be ok to ask direct questions but in others a different approach may be needed.