

# Carrousel



1.5 hours to  
3 hours



Maximum 10  
people/station



Low

## RESOURCES REQUIRED

### MATERIALS:

- Large room;
- Tables (optional);
- Posters for identifying stations;
- Chairs;
- Bell or sound-maker for station changes.

### HUMAN RESOURCES:

- Several facilitators (based on the number of workshops);
- Another facilitator to explain the activity and manage time.

## SUMMARY

A carousel is a collaborative knowledge transfer tool in the form of stations (or workshops). It allows participants to address many aspects of a common issue through an iterative and simultaneous process. Participants, in small groups, discuss a topic during a predetermined period. Once the set period of time is over, the participants change workshops. They therefore move from workshop to workshop to contribute to the discussions initiated by experts, who act as facilitators. This method has the advantage of dividing a large group into smaller working groups and, in doing so, dynamically involving a maximum number of people on the same topic in a short period of time.

## Strengths

- Adaptable to various sizes of groups and topics;
- Dynamic participation tool;
- Allows content to be focused on participants' specific needs;
- Low cost ;
- Easy to organize;
- Useful for sharing experiences.

## Weaknesses

- Does not allow for full consultation;
- Allows for an overview to better understand a topic, but does not address it in detail.

## INFORMATION

## CONSULTATION

Involvement

Collaboration

Empowerment

## OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the carousel is to share experience or information on several issues or topics on a particular theme with all members of a group. It can also be used to co-construct a shared vision of the discussion topic.

## WHEN TO USE

This tool can be used to transfer knowledge, share information and consult with stakeholders to gather ideas on a variety of topics. The carousel can be used to inform or, to a lesser extent, consult. In the latter case, it would be a preliminary consultation, since there is very little interaction among the participants from different groups.

The carousel is well suited to groups of people with conflicting views because it has the advantage of allowing a better understanding of participants' differing opinions and their points.

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

Estimated preparation time: 5-10 hours

### 1- Identify the topic and sub-topic

Before performing this kind of exercise, the topic to be discussed at the carousel must be chosen, followed by the sub-topics to be discussed at each of the carousel's stations.

### 2- Facilitator selection and preparation

The organizers choose facilitators (impartial people, experts, citizens, etc.) for the stations suitable for the chosen topic. The facilitators prepare a short presentation and the materials necessary for the understanding of their subject. The purpose of these stations is to promote direct exchange between participants. Facilitators need to be comfortable with the subject in order to adapt the content to the participants' interactions.

### 3- Form sub-groups

The organizers establish in advance the method and criteria they intend to use to form sub-groups. This can be done randomly (odd and even numbers) or according to certain criteria (type of stakeholders, similar/different fields of interest, gender, age, etc.). The organizers determine the time for each subject and the time to change stations before resuming discussion.

### 4- Set up the room

The organizers select a room that is large enough to hold several people and that can be divided into stations, providing some privacy between sub-groups. Before the participants arrive, arrange to install tables or posters to identify the different stations.

## ACTIVITY

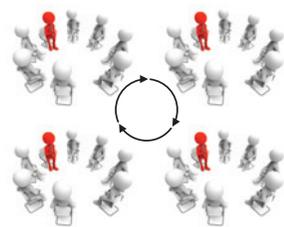
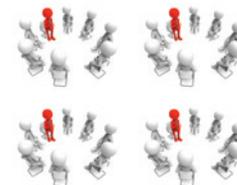


### 1. Explanation

The facilitator explains how the activity will unfold to the participants, and states the topic and purpose. This step clearly identifies the context in which the activity takes place (10 minutes).

### 2. Form sub-groups

The facilitator asks the participants to divide into sub-groups (stations) to discuss different topics (5 minutes).



### 3. Rotation

Participants move from station to station to listen to the facilitator's presentation and comment constructively on the material presented. If the goal is to inform the participants, they can ask questions or dig deeper into a subject that affects them more directly. If the purpose is to consult the participants, they can express their views on issues that affect them. It is important to keep in mind that the exercise is not a monologue by the facilitator (expert) or the participant. A bell sounds to warn participants that the set period of time for a station is over. The facilitator should then give directions on how to rotate among

the sub-groups. The carousel continues until all participants have visited every station or until the time runs out (15 to 20 minutes per workshop).

### 4. Conclusion

Depending on the purpose of the exercise, participants listen to a summary of each station by the facilitator and share the key points of the various workshops. If the purpose is to inform the participants, the conclusion can be short (10 minutes). If the purpose is to consult the participants on a subject, the conclusion may be longer (minimum 30 minutes). It is important to get feedback from each of the facilitators on what was said at their table. Participants should also be informed about next steps and how the results of the exercise will be used.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY

### Activity for information purposes

- Readings, information and additional training suggestions can be made as the carousel touches only on the subject;
- If experts offer their help in the future, the organizers can provide their contact information so that participants can contact them directly.

### Activity for consultation purposes

- Share next steps and how the information will be used;
- Prepare a summary of the consultations and send it to participants so they can check that it accurately reflects what they said;
- Inform them about the next steps in the consultation.

## PITFALLS TO AVOID

- Avoid too many stations. Limit stations to a maximum of four with two hours' activity time.

## PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

### CCC-CURA SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT CAROUSEL

In 2011, the Coastal Communities Challenges—Community-University Research Alliance (CCC-CURA) held its annual meetings with members from various coastal communities in Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The meetings aimed to engage communities in coping with climate change. A carousel was held to share transferable experiences in the area of citizen and stakeholder engagement. Four CCC-CURA partners facilitated stations on engagement tools and concepts.

- Topic 1: Who are these stakeholders? Why engage them?
- Topic 2: Are we engaged? The spectre of engagement.
- Topic 3: How do we maintain engagement?
- Topic 4: Engagement tools.

Of the four workshops, two did not include any documentation support, one included an exercise that encouraged participants to actively participate in the workshop and one showed one or two supporting slides. This activity made it possible to approach the subject from four different angles. The carousel's workshops were complementary: some facilitators were researchers and presented concepts, the Regroupement des organismes de bassins versants du Québec (ROBVQ) proposed a reflective exercise on their engagement practices, and the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de la Côte-Nord (ASSSCN) presented concrete tools used in the field.

The carousel was aimed at researchers, field workers and students. There was lots of exchange and discussion among participants, who were experts on the topic.

A person spoke to the participants as a group to welcome them, explain how the carousel would work, and provide background on citizen and stakeholder engagement and its strengths and weaknesses. Participants were then asked to sit at a station. Some English speakers were grouped together to facilitate discussion. The other English speakers were randomly seated among the workshops. It is important to have the same number of participants at each station.

Each workshop lasted 20 minutes. After the first two workshops, a 15-minute break was given to allow the participants to sit and talk to each other over coffee, water and juice. The last two workshops were then held. When all the participants had explored the stations, a longer 25-minute break was held. Lastly, returning to the larger group, participants were given an hour to discuss how to engage coastal and inland communities, with contributions from the four facilitators.

The activity ran into some problems. The facilitators' presentations were sometimes too long, leaving little room to adapt to the dynamics of the sub-group. Presentations should have been kept to a maximum of 15 minutes. An additional challenge was the language of discussion among the participants. Some facilitators were less comfortable in English, and the concepts are sometimes different in English and French. Lastly, if the carousel were held again, it would be useful to provide a longer explanation at the beginning to ensure that all participants understood the process so as to avoid answering the same questions over and over during the workshops.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

CCC-CURA, <http://www.defisdescommunautescotieres.org/>.

Bryant, C., Plante, S., Séguin Aubé, I and A. Verville, 2011. Le carrousel de la mobilisation - La mobilisation des acteurs et des citoyens. Available online in French only at <http://www.defisdescommunautescotieres.org/public/documents/bibliotheque/carrousel%20de%20la%20mobilisation.pdf>.

Chevalier J.M., Buckles D.J. and M. Bourassa, 2013. Guide de la recherche-action, la planification et l'évaluation participatives. Available online in French only at [http://www.sas2.net/sites/default/files/sites/all/files/manager/Toolkit\\_Fr\\_March7\\_2103-S.pdf](http://www.sas2.net/sites/default/files/sites/all/files/manager/Toolkit_Fr_March7_2103-S.pdf).

RAMSAR, 2008. Guide à l'élaboration participative de plans d'actions et techniques d'animation de groupes. Available online in French only at [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/outreach\\_actionplanning\\_guide\\_f.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/outreach_actionplanning_guide_f.pdf).

ROBVQ, Boîte à outils sur la participation citoyenne. Available online in French only at [https://www.robvq.qc.ca/guides/consultation\\_publique](https://www.robvq.qc.ca/guides/consultation_publique)

The Coastal Communities Challenges—Community-University Research Alliance (CCC-CURA) comprises a group of partners and researchers concerned with issues pertaining to resilience and governance for coastal and riverside communities in the context of climate change.

The Regroupement des organismes de bassins versants du Québec (ROBVQ) comprises some 40 watershed organizations operating in Quebec. It is a key partner of the Quebec government in the development of watershed management measures.



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