Levels of Participation in a Philanthropic Program

Degrees of Beneficiary Power (levels 6–8)
Degrees of Tokenism (levels 3–5)
Nonparticipation (levels 1–2)

Level of Participation	Description	Before (Research & Design)	During (Implementation)	After (Evaluation & Reform)
8 Community-Led	Beneficiaries govern the philanthropic program and are fully in charge of administration. The program is essentially community-led with no intermediaries.	Program is created and designed by representative beneficiaries who serve as administrators, often combined with other mechanisms of beneficiary input and consent.	Implementation strategy and execution is carried out by representative beneficiaries who serve as administrators.	With beneficiaries, representative beneficiaries (administrators) assess program and revise its design and implementation.
7 Delegation	Beneficiaries have dominant decision-making authority over a philanthropic program. Disagreements between administrators and beneficiaries *must* be resolved through a bargaining process.	Program's existence and its design is based on explicit beneficiary demand and input.	Implementation strategy and execution is based on synthesis of explicit beneficiary demand and input.	Post-implementation activities, such as impact assessments and design revision, draw primarily from beneficiaries, such as through explicit beneficiary demands and input.
6 Partnership	Beneficiaries are directly involved in decision-making mechanisms. Decision-making power is exercised through negotiation between beneficiaries and program administrators.	Administrators *must* incorporate the input and consent of beneficiaries in program conception and design.	Implementation strategy and execution *necessarily* includes beneficiary input and consent.	Post-implementation activities, such as impact assessments and design revision, *necessarily* include beneficiary input and consent.
5 Placation	Beneficiaries are allowed to advise ad-infinitum, but program administrators retain the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice.	Administrators open formal channels for beneficiaries to provide input on design of a program conceived without them, but retain full control over if/how to include that input.	Administrators have formal channels for beneficiaries to provide input on program implementation, but retain full control over if/how to incorporate that input in program activities.	Administrators have formal channels for beneficiaries to provide feedback on program implementation, but retain full control over if/how to incorporate that feedback in program impact assessment and design revision.
4 Consultation	Beneficiaries are involved in surveys, meetings, and the like with no assurance that their ideas and concerns will be taken into account. Beneficiaries are conceptualized as statistical abstractions.	Administrators conceive and design program without beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are surveyed, and their input may be used if/as it relates to the program's pre-existing design.	Beneficiary input is routinely gathered during implementation, and administrators may use this input if/as deemed relevant to program activities.	Beneficiary input is gathered following implementation and administrators may use it if/as it relates to post-implementation activities, such as program impact assessment and design revision.
3 Informing	Beneficiaries are recipients of a one-way flow of information from those administering a philanthropic program. There is little to no opportunity for beneficiaries to influence the program, e.g., by negotiating with administrators or providing feedback.	Administrators conceive and design program without beneficiaries and evangelize its purposes to them.	Beneficiaries are involved as passive subjects of a program entirely conceived and designed by administrators. Nature of program and its implementation is communicated to beneficiaries while program is under way.	Beneficiaries' experience of a program is defined by administrators and this narrative is marketed to beneficiaries in service of the program's purposes.
2 Therapy	Involves beneficiaries to generate social proof of their need for a philanthropic program.	Administrators conceive and design program without beneficiaries such that activities are unavoidable for them.	Beneficiaries are involved as passive subjects of a program entirely conceived and designed by administrators, and their supposed consent is used as evidence to reinforce implementation.	Beneficiaries' experience of a program is defined by administrators. The narrative and fact of the program's implementation is used as evidence to reinforce it.
1 Manipulation	Involves beneficiaries for the express purpose of engineering their consent to (or support for) a philanthropic program.	Administrators conceive and design program without beneficiaries and devise means of imposing it upon them.	Beneficiaries are involved as passive subjects of a program entirely conceived and designed by administrators.	Beneficiaries' experience of a program is defined by administrators and beneficiary input is engineered to support program's purposes, including to justify past and enable future implementation.