Community Policy

Staff at Patrolsec should aim to include community participation in their work. Patrolsec will support staff members to do so. Staff should be guided by these general principles at all times:

1. Communities are valuable partners that possess knowledge, expertise, and experience. Staff should recognize and build on community members' strengths.
2. Community participation should be strategic and have a purpose. This purpose should be clearly communicated to participants. The organization discourages tokenistic participation, or 'participation for participation's sake.'
3. Participation should benefit community members and/or their community. No community member should be placed at risk, marginalized, or disadvantaged for having partnered with the organization.
4. Participation should be inclusive and seek to reflect the diversity of our communities.

Community participation can take many forms and falls along a spectrum where the community has increasing impact on decision making. It is important to include multiple types and levels of community participation; however, staff should try to work at the high impact end of the spectrum where possible.

The Managing Director shall review this policy annually or following significant changes.

Procedures

1. Planning

Community participation should be strategic and planned.

1.1. Community participation should occur during project planning, implementation, and evaluation. Project plans should reflect this. An appropriate level of community participation can be decided by the staff member and their line manager.

1.2. A range of engagement techniques should be considered to include marginalized and difficult-to-reach community groups where possible. Staff should engage community members in spaces where they are comfortable. This may include reaching out to existing community groups or via social media platforms. If direct community participation is not appropriate or could lead to further disadvantage, staff should seek other means of community input, such as results from existing consultations.

1.3. Sufficient project funds should be budgeted to support community participation.

2. Communication

All communication with the community should be understandable, relevant, and appropriate to its audience. Communication should follow health literacy principles.

2.1. Consider the characteristics of your intended audience (e.g. languages spoken, reading ability, and cultural background). Patrolsec encourages the use of interpreters or translations for spoken and written communication when required.

2.2. Use varied and appropriate methods of communication when engaging communities. Consider using networks, peak bodies, word-of-mouth, social media, and traditional media.

2.3. When communicating with community participants, negotiate a preferred method (e.g. text message, email, or post). Participants should not be excluded because they are unable to use a staff member's preferred means of communication.

2.4. Communication should comply with relevant documents (e.g., communications policy, style guide, social media policy). Ensure listed documents incorporate health literacy and inclusive communication.

3. Recruitment and Support

Community participants should be recruited, supported, and reimbursed in a manner appropriate to their role.

3.1. All community participants should be provided with a clear role description. This will ensure all involved have a shared understanding of a community participant's role.

3.2. All community participants should be asked if they have accessibility, literacy, dietary, family, religious, or other needs, which should then be accommodated.

3.3. Recruiting community participants to positions that are ongoing or involve a high degree of responsibility should follow a predetermined recruitment process.

3.4. Community participants should be offered and provided with any reasonable support to fulfil their role. Support that can be offered includes:

- Orientation
- Briefing and debriefing practical aspects of their role and emotional support
- Training and professional development
- Supervision or mentoring.

It is the responsibility of staff working with the community participant to ensure that appropriate support is discussed and provided.

3.5. Community participants should be reimbursed for their time when they provide a specific service that will benefit Patrolsec, at the request of Patrolsec. Reimbursements should be budgeted for and approved by a line manager.

4. Feedback and Recognition

Community participants should be provided with both feedback and recognition for their input.

4.1. Community members who participate in any Patrolsec activity should be provided with feedback on the result of their input. This is a simple communication about what was achieved, how they made a difference or similar. It is important to help 'close the loop' of information and falls under Inform on the Spectrum of Public Participation. Examples include providing a workshop report, a copy of the resource they contributed to, or a follow-up phone call.

4.2. Community participants who partner with Patrolsec in an ongoing role should be provided with regular project updates regarding their role where possible.

4.3. Recognition means acknowledging and thanking a community participant for their contributions to a project or activity. It is important to recognize community participants' contributions. This can be done in many ways, e.g., an email to project stakeholders, a thank-you card, acknowledgement in a project report, or morning tea during the final project meeting.

Definitions

- Community participant: A community member who is working with Patrolsec in any capacity. This can refer to once-off or ongoing work.
- Community participation: Occurs when consumers, carers, and community members are meaningfully involved in decision-making about health policy and planning, care and treatment, and the well-being of themselves and the community.

This procedure has been developed to support the Community Participation Policy. Resources and templates for recruiting community participants are available [insert location].

It is the responsibility of staff working with the community

The Managing Director shall review this policy annually or following significant changes.

M. Naeem

Patrolsec Ltd.
Review date: 12/10/23