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# Bringing Science and Communities Together

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# Outline

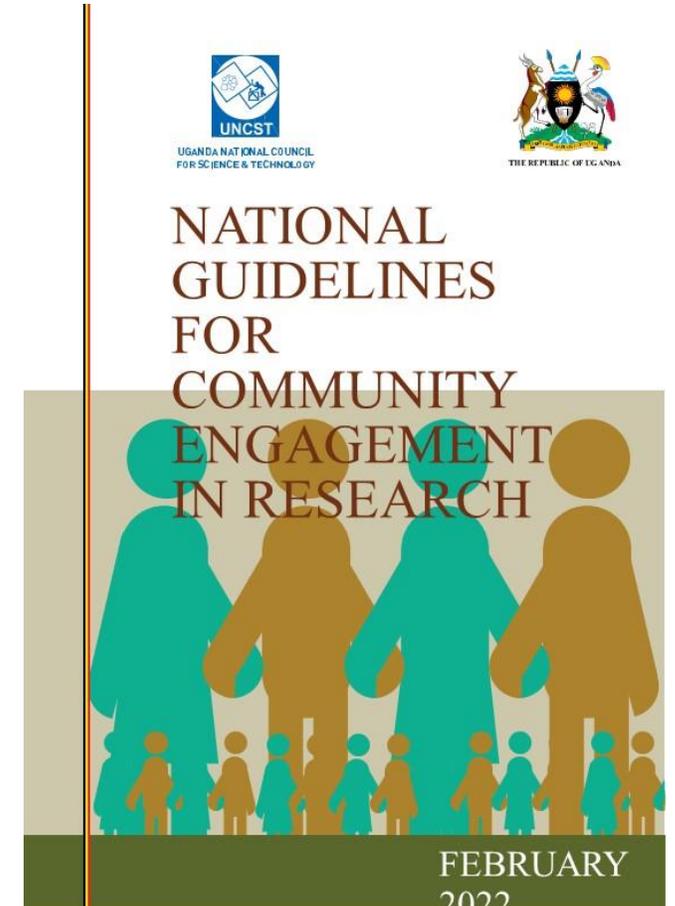
- Background
- Why Community Engagement (CE)?
- CE framework –Guidelines
- Principles of Stakeholder Engagement
- The MUL CE Journey
- Lessons learnt
- Challenges
- Conclusions

# Why Community Engagement ?

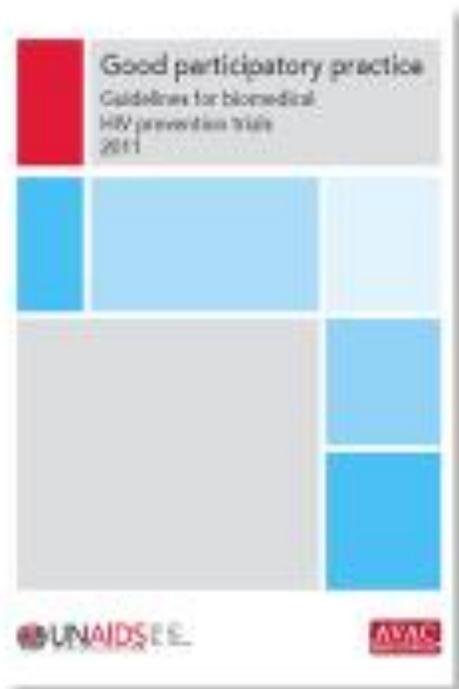
- MUL is committed to and believes in the unique power of partnerships
- Invested in a robust stakeholder engagement in the communities where we work to be able to:
  - Conduct high integrity research designed to answer community questions.
  - Build and sustain transparent, meaningful, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.
  - Promote research literacy and co-own research processes with communities that are empowered to contribute and participate in, and advocate for current and future research.

# Guidelines that support CE work

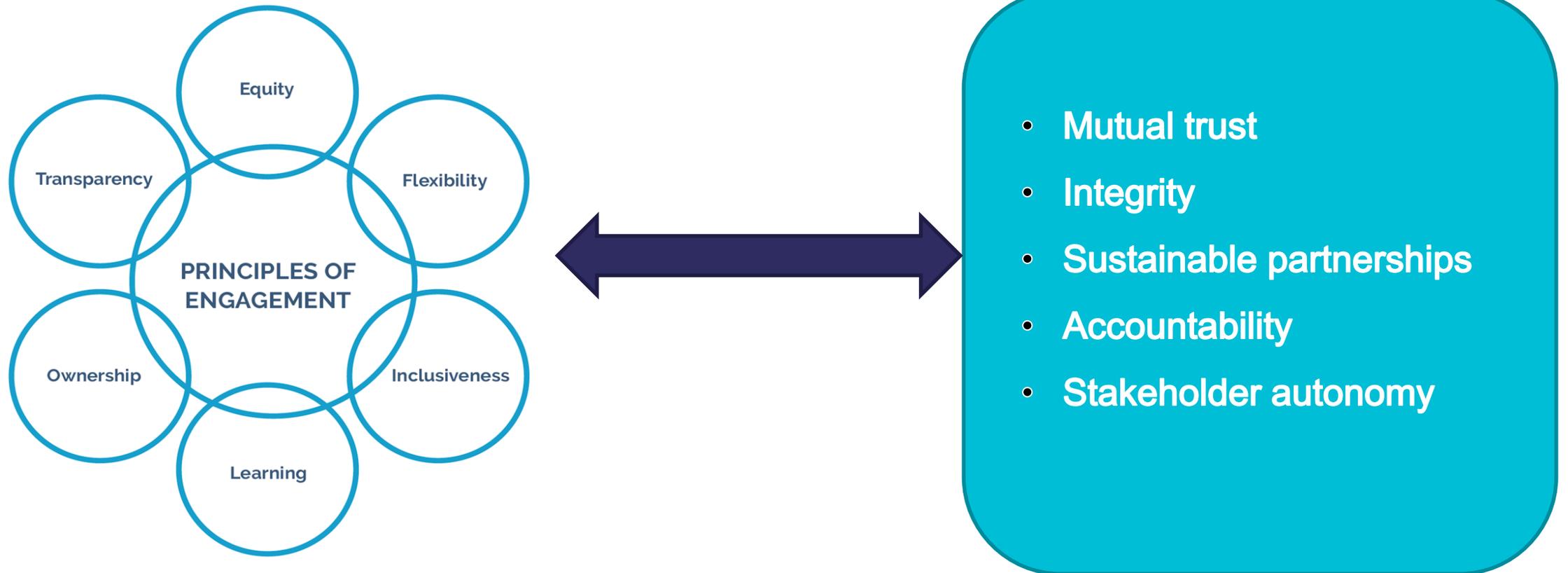
1. Local guidelines
2. International guidelines:
  - Ethical considerations in HIV prevention Trials (UNAIDS 2021)
  - Good Participatory Practices (GPP) guidelines for biomedical HIV prevention trials (UNAIDS 2011)
  - Good Participatory Practices for TB Vaccine Research (AERAS 2017)
  - GPP-ED: Emerging Pathogens (WHO 2016)



# Guidance documents for GPP

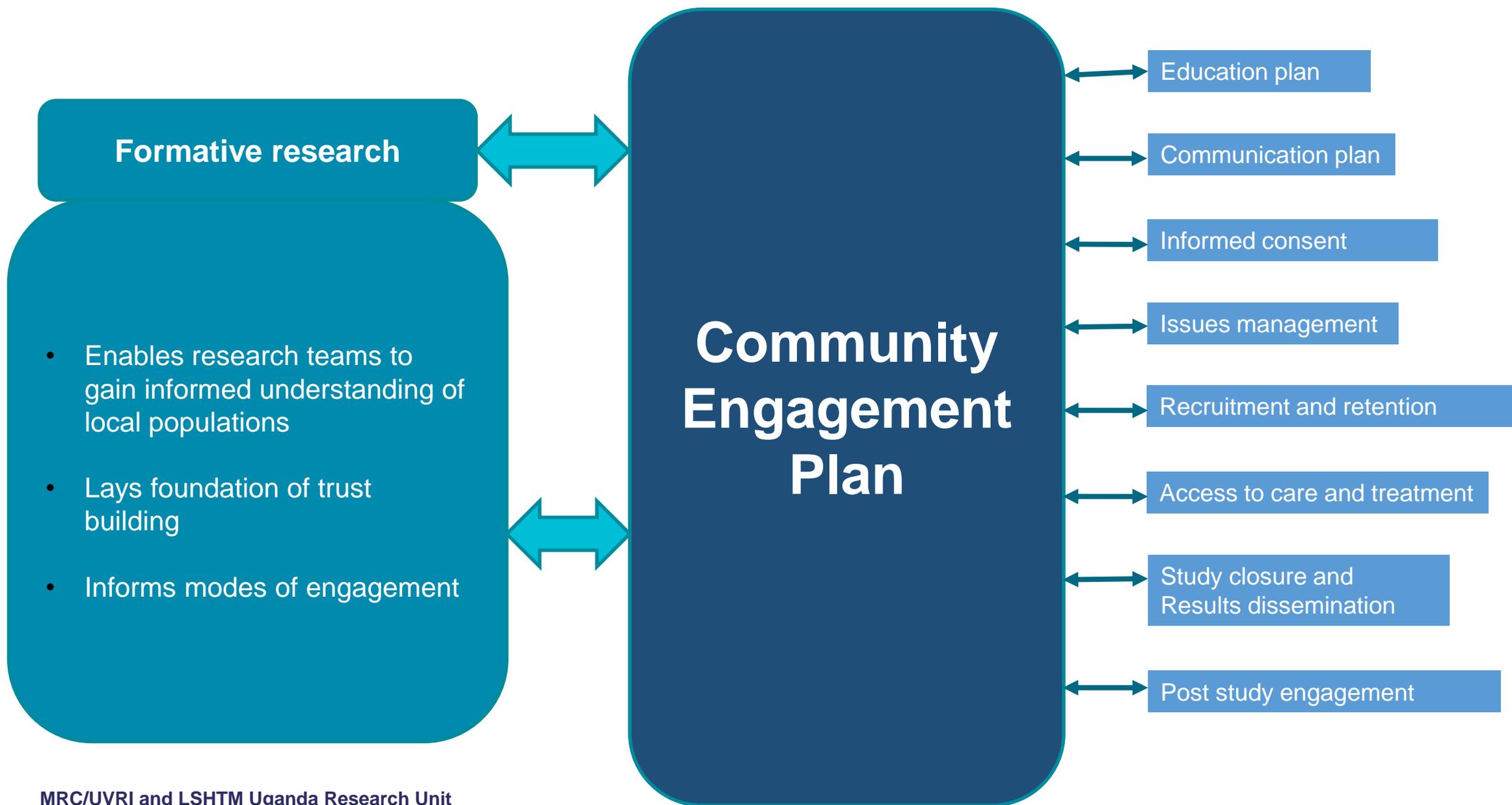


# Principles of CE

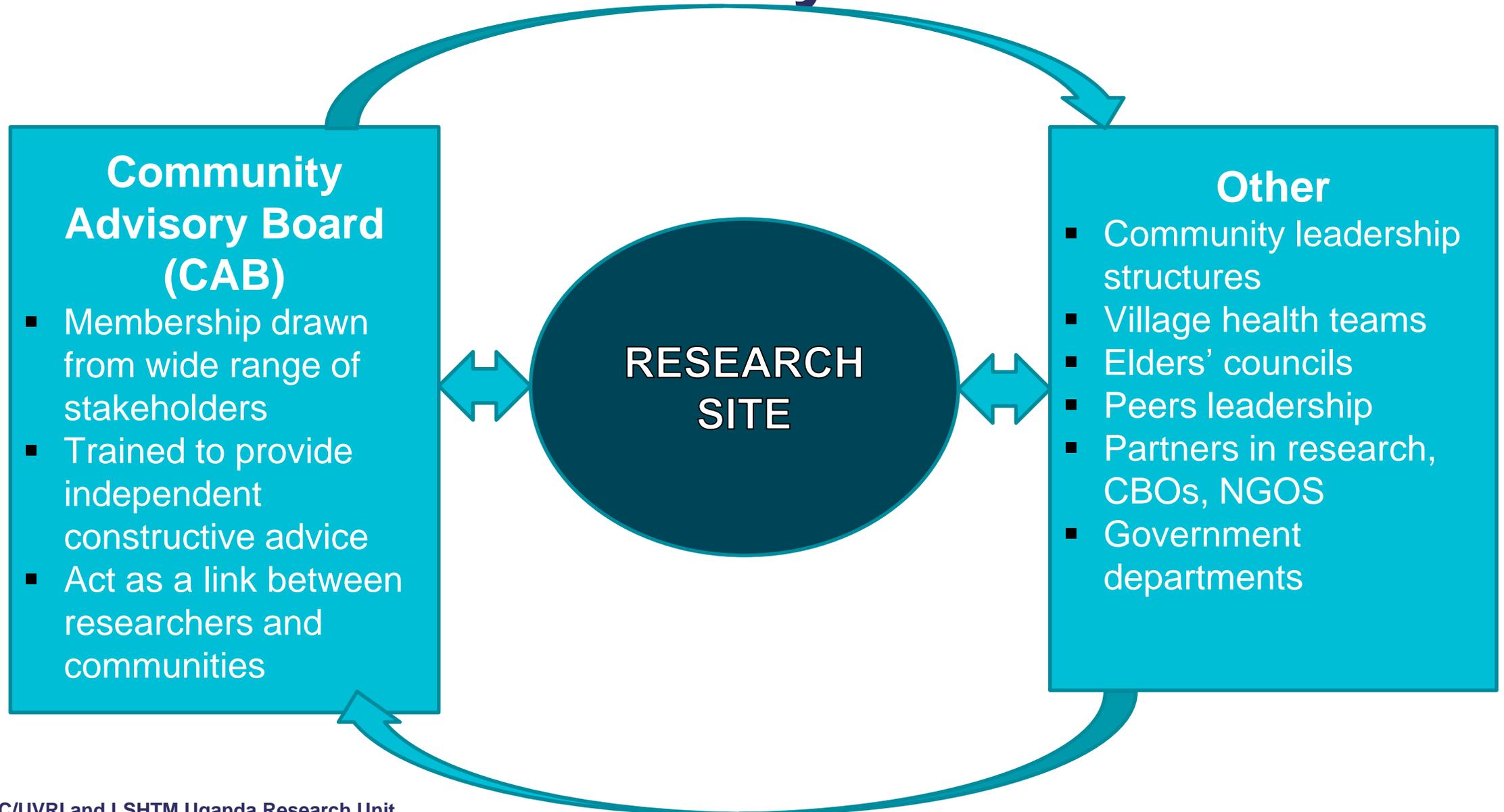


Based on the theory of change: Knowledge Transfer and Exchange is symbiotically beneficial to both scientists and communities

# CE pathway



# Stakeholder Advisory Mechanisms



# Engagement Channels and Tools

## Channels

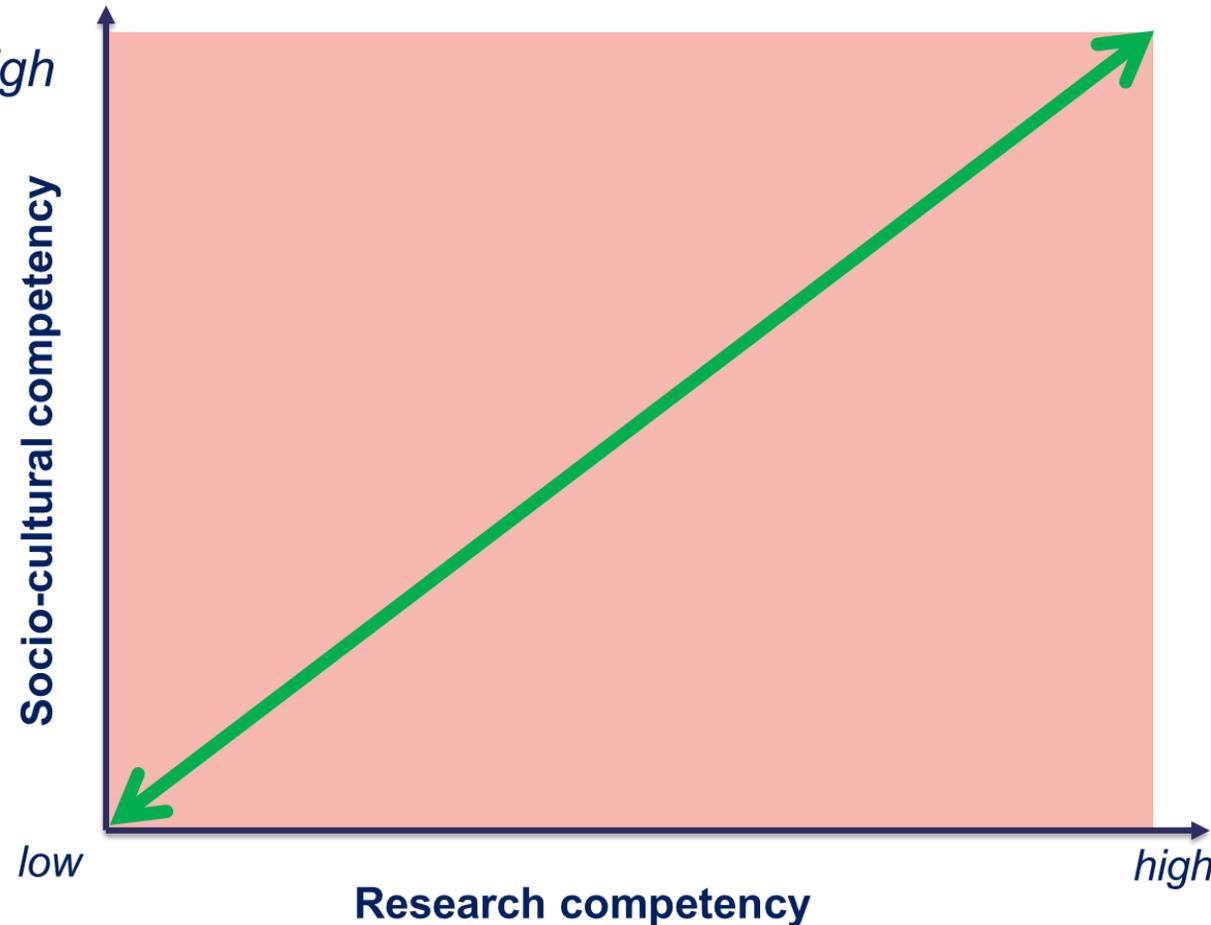
- General community research literacy promotion meetings
- Targeted consultations and workshops
- Study specific information sharing sessions
- Participants' retention and issues management platforms
- Corporate responsibility activities
- Results dissemination meetings

## Tools

- Study comprehension documents, phone calls, suggestion boxes, media, visual aids, videos, edutainment, games and sports, experiential learning
- newsletters, publications and up-to-date website

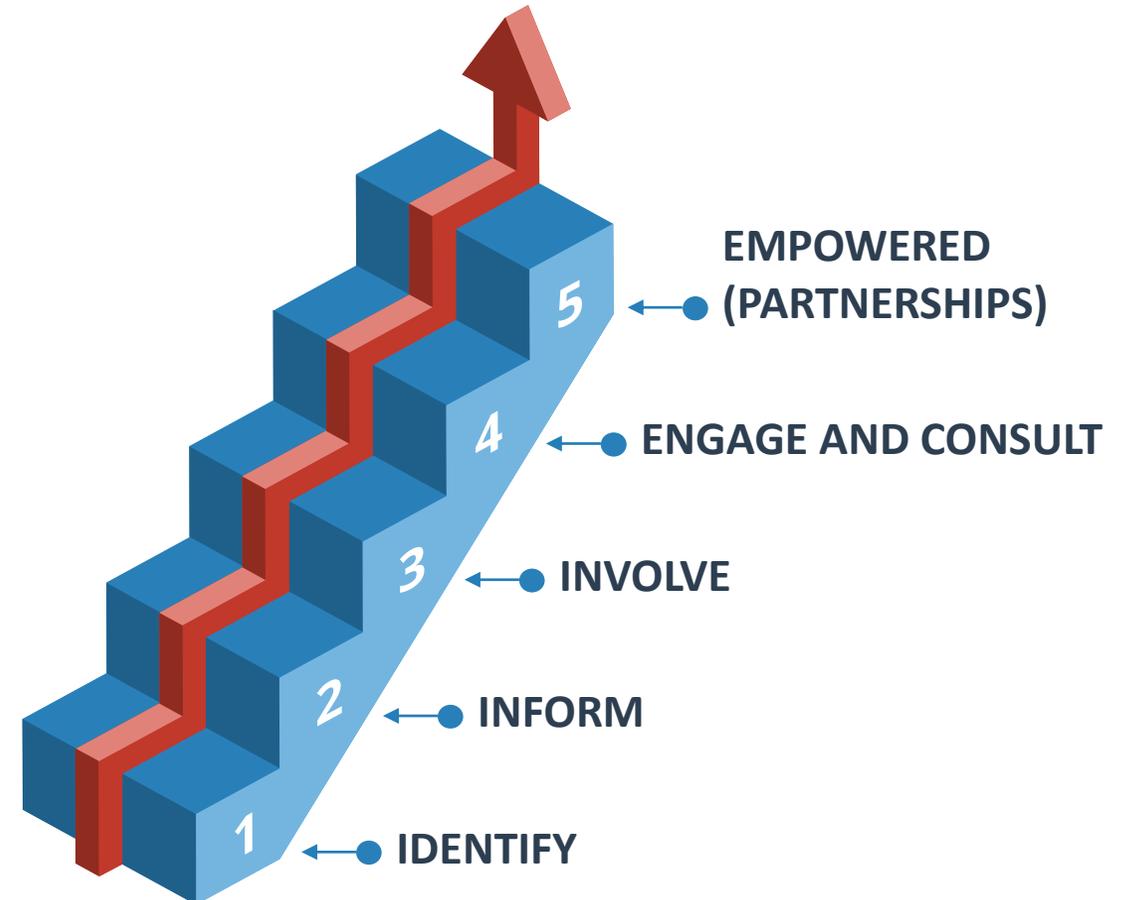
# Lessons learnt (1999-date)

- Building meaningful CE requires that diverse stakeholders work together to develop their *high* competencies
- Socio-cultural competency: Understanding norms, practices, beliefs, and local circumstances
- Research competency: Understanding the scientific processes of defining scientific questions, trial designs, data analysis, and results dissemination
- Balancing socio-cultural and research competency empowers all stakeholders to provide meaningful input and enhances sustainable partnerships



# Lessons learnt (2)

- To achieve success, CE should be structured, systematic and sustained
- It is a multifaceted process that requires adaptability
- Social Science integration in the CE process facilitates deeper understanding and timely collection and response to community concerns
- Basic and other core scientists are key stakeholders that must be engaged to appreciate CE value addition to scientific research processes



# Lessons learnt (3)

- Monitoring and evaluation is a crucial component of our stakeholder engagement strategy
  - Assess CE strategies
  - Justify resources allocated to CE activities
  - Evaluate CE value addition to research processes
  - Inform future CE mechanism, strategies, channels, tools and practice
- Responding to community needs through corporate responsibility makes research more relevant

# Challenges

- Keeping pace with ever changing scientific research world
- Addressing myths and misconceptions (skepticism, vaccine hesitancy, power imbalances, vulnerability etc.)
- Minimal funding apportioned for CE
- High levels of mobility among some communities
- Converting decision makers to support and integrate CE

Responding to community needs through corporate responsibility

# Conclusions

- Community Engagement is key in bridging the knowledge gaps between scientists and communities
- Competency building is a requisite for both scientists and stakeholders to blend science with people's way of life.
- Mutual Trust Building is crucial for successful research conduct and outcome acceptability.
- Best CE practices cement Science-Society relationships and create opportunities for current and future research



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- Host communities
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- MUL staff and leadership

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# Thank you

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