

Community Contribution Framework

Adapted from Wong et al., 2026, Autism.

The Community Contribution Framework provides a practical and transparent way to identify, describe, and recognise the role of community contributors within projects, research, applications, recommendations, and other collaborative processes.

The framework is designed to support clear reporting of community involvement while encouraging meaningful participation and appropriate recognition of contributions. Community input may occur through advisory or steering groups, interviews, consultation activities or other forms of engagement.

The framework can be used across a range of sectors including education, workplaces, sporting groups, healthcare, community services, research, and policy development. Organisations are encouraged to adapt the terminology or framework presentation to align with their community members and context. An editable version of the framework is attached.

Definition and Terminology

Community contributors: The term “**community contributors**” refers to the specific community members engaged by the project lead to provide lived-experience input. Another term for community contributors is a steering group.

Community member: The term “**community member**” is used throughout the framework and sample responses to represent the community cohort who will be impacted by the project. This term may be replaced with language more appropriate to the specific cohort of community members engaged.

Project: The term “**project**” is used broadly throughout the framework and may be substituted with a more appropriate term, including application, research, initiative, recommendation, program, framework, or proposal.

Organisation: The term “**organisation**” refers to the group/authority who is leading the project.

| Community Contribution Framework Steps | Explanation | Example |
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| <i>Design and approach</i> | | |
| 1. Key objective(s) | List the reason(s) you engaged community contributors for the project. | <i>To ensure our project is aligned with the perspectives of the community members who will be impacted by the project. To gain feedback on accuracy of our interpretation and accessibility of terminology from community contributors. To seek guidance from community contributors, without ownership of responsibility.</i> |
| 2. Where this framework applies | Community contributors provide feedback on the clarity of language used and how relevant stages of the project are framed from the lived-experience perspectives of the community contributors. | <i>To provide feedback on the language used to describe the problem statement and relevance to community members. To read public facing project materials and provide input on accessibility and accuracy of language.</i> |
| 3. Organisation and community input | Clearly outline what the organisation is responsible for and how the community contributors will provide input. | <i>The organisation is responsible for project planning, analytical and financial decisions. The community contributors inform the relevance of language used to describe the project stages that impact community members.</i> |
| 4. How community contributors are acknowledged | Clearly state how you acknowledged the input of the community contributors. Include any financial or gifted remuneration here. | <i>The community contributors are acknowledged for their contributions on the project title page. The community contributors will be invited and acknowledged at the project launch event. Community contributors who provided specific knowledge as a service were remunerated for their time accordingly.</i> |
| 5. Resource management & governance | Outline who was responsible for governance of the project, and where applicable, financial management and analysis of any data. | <i>The organisation reviewed and analysed resource delegation and maintained the required documentation of governance. Community contributors considered how appropriate resources were grouped and named for relevance to their community.</i> |
| 6. Statement | A clear statement on how this framework supports your organisation to articulate project steps and accurately recognise the contribution of community contributors. | <i>This framework clearly and honestly describes how community contributors were involved in the project process. It supports meaningful recognition of input, avoids overstating or understating participation, and encourages transparency, accountability, and consistent practice.</i> |
| <i>Community representation</i> | | |
| 7. Diversity of community contributors | Typically includes community members across relevant age groups, and close community members (e.g., parents, advocates), selected to bring a range of perspectives and experiences to the community contributor group. | <i>Eg 1. The community contributor group consisted of 2 autistic adults, 2 autistic youth, and 2 parents of autistic youth. Eg 2. The community contributor group consisted of 2 youth members, 2 youth coaches, and 2 adult coaches.</i> |
| 8. How community contributors were chosen | Describe how you engaged community contributors. Recruitment commonly occurs through existing community networks, relationships, or advisory invitations, with emphasis on trust, relational safety, and lived experience. | <i>Eg 1. The project manager coordinates a community social group for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community members. Through this network and established trust, we were able to engage our community contributors. Eg 2. The project team attended a local business event and were introduced to several small business owners in the region who were then invited to join the community contributor group.</i> |
| <i>Impact and outcomes of community contribution</i> | | |
| 9. Practical context | This step outlines the practical steps taken to make projects more relevant, accessible, and informed by community perspectives, without changing leadership or decision-making responsibilities. | <i>Community contributors participated in a group discussion about the challenges facing regional businesses. Later in the project development, community contributors provided feedback on the language used and relevance of the project business guide and support templates.</i> |
| 10. Impact of community contribution | Provide specific examples of how the community contributors input impacted the project. | <i>Eg 1. Community contributors tested the interview tool, resulting in a change in wording to question 3 from "On a scale of 1-5, rate how easy it is to get support for your business in the region?" to: "On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very difficult and 5 being easy, rate how easy it is to get support from local government services for your regional business?" Eg 2. When speaking with community contributors, an additional community need for access to transport was identified. Therefore, we increased the scope of this funding application to accommodate alternative transport services.</i> |

This resource is adapted from: Wong, M. L., et al., (2026). *Attendance Compulsory, Motivation Conditional: Autistic Youth Perspectives on Participation in Physical Education*. Autism.

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