

# Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation

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# Chapter I. Introduction

## a) Purpose of the handbook

*Welcome to the Handbook to Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation!*

This handbook builds on years of work at the Canadian Policy Research Networks bringing together cutting edge thinkers and practitioners in the field of citizen engagement. While it is not possible to capture all of CPRN's and others' work in one handbook, the hope is that this tool will provide a good overview of the breadth of the field – both the concepts and the methods – and supply ample resources (particularly online resources) with which to deepen knowledge on specific subjects.

The handbook is intended to whet the appetite for citizen engagement for those new to citizen engagement, and for those with experience to deepen the analysis behind citizen engagement projects and provide a synthesis of the field and a concise reference tool. The long term vision is to contribute to the closing of the gap between governments and citizens, to allow public servants and politicians to reconnect with citizens' needs, priorities and values.

This handbook is not a prescriptive how-to manual on citizen engagement. There is no one-size-fits-all in citizen engagement. Each context, policy or program development process requires a unique approach and adapted tools to address its specific needs. Engaging citizens in a meaningful way first requires an understanding of the philosophy and vision of citizen engagement. It calls for planning and preparation and sometimes institutional capacity building. It can demand a shift in organizational or departmental cultural conceptions of what citizens can bring to a policy process. This handbook is a starting point to think about these issues and a reference guide for those who wish to deepen their understanding and practice of citizen engagement.

Citizen engagement is premised on the belief that people should have and want to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. While some may claim that voting and consultation processes achieve this, it is clear that citizens are increasingly frustrated with these democratic mechanisms. They feel that their voices are not being heard and that decisions made by elites do not necessarily reflect their values. Citizen engagement provides a vision for a way forward – a way of reinvigorating current democratic practices and institutions, bringing meaning to people's participation and fostering a two way dialogue between citizens and governments. The hope is that this will not be seen as a mechanism for placating peoples' desires, but actually bring about a more just society where governments' choices more closely reflect the needs of its population.

## b) Intended audience

A number of audiences may find this handbook useful, including those working in community development, the public sector, the non-profit sector, the private sector and academia. However, it should be noted that this handbook has been written with the particular interests and perspectives of the government in mind – both public servants and politicians. While certainly not the only players to have a role in social change, public servants and politicians have a unique position in that they *act from within government*, granting them a unique opportunity and perspective on the policy process.

Other sectors (non-profit, private, academia, etc.) work *from outside of government*, and these efforts are often categorized as advocacy, lobbying or in some cases as expert consultations. While the philosophy and many of the tools of citizen engagement remain the same across these sectors, different strategies, positions of power and theories of change make it difficult to address these vast audiences in one handbook.

This handbook speaks directly to those initiating citizen engagement from within government, but will be of use to all those interested in engaging citizens in setting priorities and in making decisions.

At the time of conception and publication, this handbook was not slated to be translated and so the experience of citizen engagement in Québec, while vast, has not been included in the handbook.

### **c) How this handbook was developed**

In the summer of 2006, CPRN compiled extensive literature on citizen engagement and public participation in Canada for an international delegation, which was later developed into *A Learning Guide to Public Involvement in Canada*.<sup>1</sup> Based on this literature, a Table of Contents for the proposed handbook was developed, both of which were circulated to key informants for written feedback. Approximately 15 interviews were conducted with other key informants.<sup>2</sup> Finally, a draft was peer reviewed by three experts in the field of citizen engagement.

### **d) How to use the handbook**

A detailed Table of Contents provides a quick and easy reference for those seeking information on a particular subject. Each chapter and section starts with a brief overview of the subject, and contains a suggested reading list, identifying two or three key resources with web links (where available).

**Chapter II. What is Citizen Engagement?** addresses an important basic question. The concept of citizen engagement is explored within the context of distinguishing what it is and what it is not. The underpinning theory of deliberative democracy is sketched, followed by an introduction of some key citizen engagement frameworks and spectrums.

**Chapter III. Why Citizen Engagement?** provides a rationale for citizen engagement in the current Canadian context. It also highlights some of the common criticisms and fears about it (e.g. building false expectations in citizens) and elaborates on the hopes for citizen engagement in renewing current democratic structures.

**Chapter IV. Institutionalizing Citizen Engagement** considers longer-term goals of citizen engagement. While citizen engagement projects are often seen as ad-hoc, one-off endeavors with specific goals that don't connect to larger policy agendas, there is growing interest in how to institutionalize citizen engagement. This section discusses some approaches to institutionalization.

**Chapter V. Engaging Members of Specific Populations** takes a practical look at a major challenge of engagement processes – how to engage hard-to-reach populations. Tips are provided on how to reach those populations whose voices are less often heard.

**Chapter VI. Engaging Aboriginal Communities** frames citizen engagement as an opportunity for reconciliation, and looks at the unique opportunities, challenges and historical context of engaging Aboriginal citizens.

**Chapter VII. Getting Started** sets out a series of steps that should be considered when embarking on a citizen engagement process, from preparation to giving feedback to participants. Lists of questions, tools for capacity building, tables for matching goals to methods and other practical tools are included. Various methods of citizen engagement are presented in table format with references.

**Chapter VIII. Case Examples** briefly elaborates five different cases of citizen engagement. The section provides a cross section of various degrees of citizen engagement at regional, provincial and federal levels, as well as two examples of institutionalized citizen engagement.

**Chapter IX. Practical Tips** outlines suggestions and considerations from experts in the field.

## Chapter II. What Is Citizen Engagement?

### a) What citizen engagement is, and what it is not

Above all, citizen engagement values the right of citizens to have an informed say in the decisions that affect their lives. It emerged from the ideas of public participation, which is distinguished below from public communication and consultation (see Table 1). Both public participation and citizen engagement are different from traditional forms of interaction between governments and citizens because they are based on a two way interaction, conversation or dialogue. Citizen engagement emphasizes the sharing of power, information, and a mutual respect between government and citizens.

**Table 1. Three Levels of Involvement**

Level of Involvement	Flow of Information
Public communication	One way – sponsor to public representative
Public consultation	One way – public representative to sponsor
Public participation	Two way – between sponsor and public representative

Source: Adapted from Rowe G. and Frewer LJ. "A Typology of Public Engagement Mechanisms". *Science, Technology and Human Values* 2005, 30(2): 255.

Ideally, citizen engagement "requires governments to share in agenda-setting and to ensure that policy proposals generated jointly will be taken into account in reaching a final decision".<sup>3</sup> Citizen engagement is appropriate at all stages of the policy development process and is best seen as an iterative process, serving to infuse citizens' values and priorities throughout the policy cycle. In processes of citizen engagement, citizens represent themselves as individuals rather than representing stakeholder groups.

The potential of citizen engagement extends beyond an informed, active and engaged citizenry. Engaging citizens in a policy or program development process from the beginning can:

- increase citizens' sense of responsibility and understanding for complex issues;
- be an important mechanism to clarify citizen's values, needs and preferences allowing public servants and politicians to understand how the public views an issue and what is most important to them, what information the public needs to understand an issue and how to best frame or speak about an issue;
- lead decision-makers to make better decisions by helping them to understand the potential social and ethical implications of their decisions amongst populations that they may not be familiar with;
- allow politicians to share ownership for a controversial public decision with citizens; and
- increase the legitimacy of public decisions.

Table 2: Clarifying the Definition of Citizen Engagement summarizes the concept of citizen engagement (left column) and provides some examples of what citizen engagement *is not* (right column).

**Table 2. Clarifying the Definition of Citizen Engagement**

Citizen Engagement*	Not Citizen Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves citizens (individuals, not representatives) in policy or program development, from agenda setting and planning to decision-making, implementation and review</li> <li>• Requires two way communication regarding policy or program change (interactive and iterative): between government and citizens; among citizens; and among citizens and civil society groups</li> <li>• Aims to share decision-making power and responsibility for those decisions</li> <li>• Includes forums and processes through which citizens come to an opinion which is informed and responsible</li> <li>• Generates innovative ideas and active participation</li> <li>• Contributes to collective problem solving and prioritization (deliberation)</li> <li>• Requires that information and process be transparent</li> <li>• Depends on mutual respect between all participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages exclusively the leaders of stakeholder groups or representatives</li> <li>• Constitutes participation in a program where no decision-making power is granted regarding the shape or course of the policy or program</li> <li>• Involves participants only in last phase of policy development</li> <li>• Seeks approval for a pre-determined choice of alternatives</li> <li>• Intends to fulfill “public consultation obligations” without a genuine interest in infusing the decision with the opinions sought</li> <li>• Includes public opinion polls and many focus group exercises</li> </ul>

\*Please note that citizen engagement initiatives may embody some but not all of these characteristics.

Citizen engagement is still an evolving concept in an emerging field. As such the lines between citizen involvement, participation and engagement are often blurred (see section c) below).

**For further reading:**

Abelson, Julian and Francois-Pierre Gauvin. 2006. *Primer on Public Involvement*. Health Council of Canada. [www.healthcouncilcanada.ca/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=108](http://www.healthcouncilcanada.ca/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=108).

Phillips, Susan D., and Michael Orsini. 2002. *Mapping the Links: Citizen Involvement in Policy Processes*. Canadian Policy Research Networks. [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=169&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=169&l=en).

Visit the website of the Deliberative Democracy Consortium [www.deliberative-democracy.net/](http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/) and browse the articles in the *Journal of Public Deliberation* at [www.services.bepress.com/jpd/](http://www.services.bepress.com/jpd/).

**b) Beyond consultations and voting: citizen engagement and the renewal of representative democracy**

Citizen engagement emerges from a growing disquiet with the current practice of democracy. It seeks not to replace representative democracy but rather to renew and deepen it by narrowing the gap between governments and the public they serve and improving the legitimacy of decisions.

CPRN’s citizen engagement work, and that of other research-practitioners, is informed and influenced by deliberative democracy theory. This approach to citizen engagement proposes a genuine dialogue and reasoned deliberation as a means for generating new and innovative ideas and actions. It sees dialogue as more than a conversation – it requires one to be open to the other

and a willingness to be persuaded. Deliberation involves collective problem-solving and prioritization resulting in more legitimate decision-making processes.

### **How is this different than a public opinion poll?**

One leading view<sup>4</sup> argues that polls represent raw information that fails to take into consideration the processing of complex information that is necessary to come to what he calls “public judgment”, or an informed choice. Citizen engagement provides forums for citizens to process complex information so that they can come to a deeper understanding of a situation and thus become capable of making a well-founded choice.

### **How is this different than negotiations with stakeholder groups?**

Stakeholder representatives often come to the table with firmly entrenched positions that they are mandated to defend. Citizen engagement, which can be structured as a parallel or complementary process to stakeholder engagement, aims to include citizens in processes, as individuals who represent themselves. Public interest groups sit somewhere between citizens and stakeholders: they take a public interest perspective and may or may not have pre-determined positions that they bring to policy discussions.

### **How does citizen engagement fit with the concept of public involvement?**

Public involvement is an umbrella term that generally refers to the spectrum of methods with which to consult, engage or involve citizens and stakeholder groups in policy or program development processes. As such, citizen engagement is one of many theories, methods or approaches that fit within the concept of public involvement.

### **For further reading:**

For a brief introduction to Deliberative Dialogue and other theoretical issues: Quantum Governance’s IPAC Centre for Governance Dialogue. *Theoretical Toolkit Inventory*. [www.quantumgovernance.ca/toolkit/theoretical/theoretical\\_toolkit\\_inventory.html](http://www.quantumgovernance.ca/toolkit/theoretical/theoretical_toolkit_inventory.html).

One of the foundational books in the field of citizen engagement: Yankelovich, Daniel. 1991. *Coming to Public Judgment*. University of Syracuse Press, NY.

A detailed and thoughtful handbook on Democratic Dialogue in an international context with extensive practical guidelines: Pruitt, Bettye and Philip Thomas. 2007. *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners*. Canadian International Development Agency, IDEA, UNDP and GS/OAS. [www.idea.int/publications/democratic\\_dialogue/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/democratic_dialogue/index.cfm).

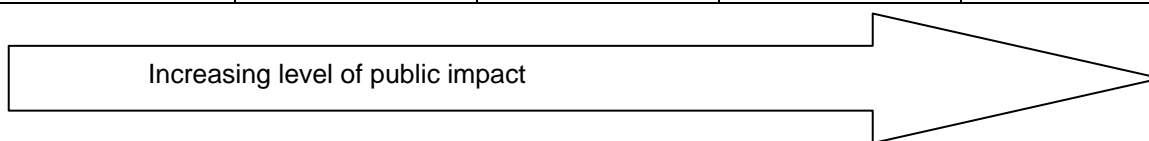
## **c) An introduction to the frameworks for citizen engagement**

The following section introduces three spectrums of approaches to citizen engagement through a number of frameworks.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) developed the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum (see Table 3).<sup>5</sup> The first two categories, “Inform” and “Consult” would not qualify as citizen engagement since they do not entail a two way flow of information in an iterative fashion.

**Table 3. IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum**

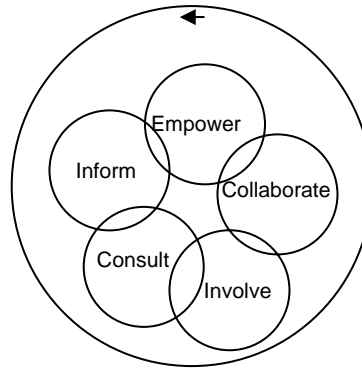
<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<i>Public Participation Goal</i>				
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that the public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
<i>Promise to the Public</i>				
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide



Source: International Association for Public Participation. [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)

Vancouver Coastal Health’s (VCH) interpretation of this otherwise linear framework is seen in Figure 1. The circular nature demonstrates the interrelationship between these different approaches, how one approach builds on and continues to draw from the previous one.

**Figure 1. VCH Community Engagement Framework**



Source: Adapted from *Community Engagement Framework*. 2006. Courtesy of Community Engagement, Vancouver Coastal Health. [www.vch.ca/ce/docs/ce\\_framework.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/ce/docs/ce_framework.pdf), p. 8.

Health Canada’s framework for public involvement is widely used in the health sector (reproduced in Table 4). Because of the criteria previously presented, only Levels 3 to 5 could be considered citizen engagement.

**Table 4. Health Canada’s Public Involvement Continuum**

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Low level of public involvement and influence		Mid level of public involvement and influence		High level of public involvement and influence
Inform or Educate	Gather information	Discuss	Engage	Partner
<p>Communication →</p> <p>← Listening →</p> <p>← Consulting →</p> <p>← Engaging →</p> <p>← Partnering →</p>				

Source: Adapted from *Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision Making*. 2000. [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/public-consult/2000decision/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/public-consult/2000decision/index_e.html) p. 12.

Citizen engagement frameworks are most helpful and relevant when they are adapted to their particular institutional and cultural settings. Choosing the level of engagement and methods appropriate to goals are discussed in Chapter VII. Getting Started.

**For further reading:**

Organisation for Economic and Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2007. *Citizens as Partners – OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making* walks through some of the elements that need to be considered when building a framework. [www.oecdbookshop.org](http://www.oecdbookshop.org).

Department of Justice Canada. 2007. *Policy Statement and Guidelines for Public Participation*. [www.justice.gc.ca/en/cons/pc\\_policy.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/cons/pc_policy.html).

The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation has extensive and searchable resources available on its website at [www.thataway.org](http://www.thataway.org).

## Chapter III. Why Citizen Engagement?

### a) The climate in Canada and the need for democratic renewal

It is no secret that voter turnout is declining in Canada, down to its lowest since 1898 during the 2004 federal election at 60.9%<sup>6</sup> and increasing only slightly in 2006. While it is difficult to pinpoint a single reason for this phenomenon, research indicates that Canadians are increasingly frustrated with and disconnected from their democratic structures and processes. Citizen engagement, a proposed deepening of representative democracy, is an important response to this democratic deficit – one that aims to reinvigorate and renew people’s faith in the democratic process.

While some studies point to citizen apathy as a root cause of this phenomenon, other findings reveal citizens’ deep longing for more meaningful ways to engage with political structures and decision-making. EKOS Citizen Engagement polling has revealed that:

- 85% of Canadians would be more confident in government decisions if it was clear that the government sought citizen’s input more regularly, and
- 68% of Canadians believe that there are not enough citizen engagement initiatives on issues of public policy.<sup>7</sup>

It is often suggested that there is a need to move beyond consultation, which is at times perceived by those being consulted as tokenistic and without influence or impact.

Over the last 10 to 15 years, there has been a theoretical, “shift from a top-down model of government to horizontal governance, which is the process of governing by public policy networks including public, private and voluntary sector actors.”<sup>8</sup> The fulfillment of this shift in practical terms is dependent on the politics of the ruling party. The rationale for this shift lies in the understanding that better decisions are made when the affected stakeholder groups are involved and that no one group has the answers to today’s “wicked”<sup>9</sup> policy problems. Various models of collaboration have emerged which emphasize partnerships between government and different sectors. Within horizontal management, government is expected to take a holistic approach to policy, moving beyond departmental silos to embrace citizen-centered policy analysis and solutions. Governments are no longer expected to have all the answers internally, but rather to play the role of coordinating and facilitating a collective process of policy development.

Building on this momentum, citizen engagement proposes a philosophy and related methods to contribute to this new vision of networked governance.

## b) The hopes and fears of citizen engagement

Apprehensions and scepticism regarding citizen engagement should not be ignored. Some question the value and benefit of engaging citizens, especially when it comes to addressing complex social or scientific questions. Others worry about citizens taking over or hijacking the delicate policy process or about raising expectations beyond reasonable limits. Pragmatists are reluctant to ramp up citizen engagement because of tight timelines and budgets. While these and other concerns are valid, many can be addressed with political commitment, proper planning, clear objective setting, transparent communication with participants and a flexibility to adjust course as required to deal with emerging realities.

The potential benefits of citizen engagement are elaborated below.<sup>10</sup>

**Making Legitimate Decisions:** No decision is value free, and thus relying solely on fact-based expert opinions in decision-making is limiting and paints a narrow picture of reality. Ignoring public values is short-sighted and ultimately results in dissatisfied constituents. Decisions that are perceived by the public as “legitimate” are more easily arrived at when citizen’s values are taken into account.

**Making Better Policy:** As discussed above, current thinking has moved beyond the belief that one sector can provide all the answers. By drawing on the vast and diverse experiential knowledge of the public (usually in combination with other forms of knowledge), the chances of making decisions that are reflective of needs increases.

**Overcoming Polarization, Reducing Conflict, Looking for Common Ground:** Through a well-structured process of dialogue and deliberation, parties who disagree may come to understand *why* the others hold the position they do, greatly helping in the long journey towards common ground or positions from which compromise is more easily attained. Through citizen engagement processes, relationships of trust are built. Giving citizens appropriate public spaces to come to reasoned collective decisions (rather than relying on typical debate-based adversarial processes) makes it much more likely that people will come to more public minded – less privately driven – responses to public policy problems. In very pragmatic terms, this can save time and resources that would otherwise be spent resolving a conflict emerging from a government decision.

**Building Competent, Responsible Citizens:** Through citizen engagement processes, citizens can acquire skills, such as active listening, empathy, problem solving, and creative thinking that can be put to good use in their personal and community lives.

**Engaging Citizens in Political Life:** Citizens want to have a say in their lives, and a large part of what shapes their lives is public policy. Encouraging and enabling citizens to participate in ways that are meaningful to their lives will both enhance their own lives, by giving them a greater sense of political efficacy, and potentially increase their confidence in political practices and structures.

**Including Minorities:** Representative democracy is established on majority-based principles that can fail to address and incorporate the needs and concerns of minorities. Electoral institutions do not reflect the diversity of the Canadian population. With an increasingly diverse Canadian population, there are compelling reasons to create mechanisms to engage minority voices’ in decision-making at all levels.

**For further reading:**

For a discussion of the shifting role of government, albeit in an American context see Policy Consensus Initiative and the Kettering Foundation, April 2006. *Legislators at a Crossroads: Making Choices to Work Differently*. [www.policyconsensus.org](http://www.policyconsensus.org).

Another discussion of the same: National League of Cities, November, 2005. *Building Democratic Governance: Tools and Structures for Engaging Citizens*. [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).

Lukensmeyer, Carolyn J. and Lars Hasselblad Torres. 2006. *Public Deliberation: A Manager's Guide to Citizen Engagement*. The IBM Center for The Business of Government. [www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/LukensmeyerReport.pdf](http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/LukensmeyerReport.pdf).

For a deeper look at citizens' desire and need for engagement see Wyman, Miriam. 2001. *Thinking about Governance: A Discussion Paper*. The Commonwealth Foundation Citizens and Governance Programme. [www.democracyeducation.net/Publications/publications.htm](http://www.democracyeducation.net/Publications/publications.htm).

## Chapter IV. Institutionalizing Citizen Engagement

In Canada, and around the world, very few governments, departments or large organizations have institutionalized citizen engagement. Most citizen engagement initiatives flow from a desire to attain specific policy goals and are limited in time and scope. This chapter briefly discusses the need for and the benefits of institutionalizing citizen engagement.

Institutionalizing citizen engagement has both structural and cultural components. First, it requires that citizen engagement becomes a regular, to-be-expected component of the policy development processes. Second, and equally important, the public and policy makers, both of whom are currently somewhat skeptical about citizen engagement, need to be convinced that citizen engagement processes and their results are of value and are a legitimate part of policy development and democracy.<sup>11</sup>

According to Turnbull and Aucoin<sup>12</sup>, there are four criteria necessary for the institutionalization of public involvement.<sup>13</sup>

1. **Public involvement is a core element embedded in the policy process:** Rather than remaining an occasional project, citizen engagement needs to be incorporated in policy development to the same degree that experts, stakeholders and interest groups are currently consulted. Greater trust can be built in the political process if members of the public do not perceive these efforts to occur only when it is convenient and instrumental to a larger political agenda.
2. **Public input is given substantial weight in policy development processes; it cannot be a “token” effort, in perception or reality:** As previously discussed, faith in the current consultative process has largely been eroded because citizens feel like their voices are not heard, that their opinion has been sought after a decision has been made or that the consultation process is in place simply to appease public desire for a say. If one of the overarching goals of citizen engagement is to renew faith in political process, then it is absolutely essential that this point be given substantive consideration throughout the planning and execution stages so as to not repeat past mistakes.
3. **The commitment to institutionalized public involvement is government-wide as opposed to concentrated in certain departments:** Many barriers to widespread adoption of citizen engagement are the result of prevalent false assumptions that citizens cannot grasp complex scientific and social problems, and that they are unconcerned with matters that do not directly affect them. As discussed, there is both a cultural and structural project ahead if citizen engagement is to be implemented across governments.
4. **The efforts to institutionalize public involvement include the public service and parliament:** Both the public service and parliament have different but complementary roles to play in institutionalizing citizen engagement. MPs could potentially use citizen engagement as a tool to maintain contact with their constituents, to better inform them of emerging policies and to better equip themselves to debate policy issues. Parliamentary committees and local constituency offices could use citizen involvement exercises to enable citizens not only to provide input but to dialogue with MPs on policy matters.

There are a variety of methods and tools to choose from when planning a citizen engagement initiative (Chapter VII provides further elaboration). The selection of method and tools depends upon one's objectives, context, available resources, timeframe, capacity and other variables. Institutionalizing citizen engagement holds its own set of considerations. In Chapter VIII, two case examples are provided of institutionalized citizen engagement.

**For further reading:**

Carolyn Bennett is an MP in Toronto who has utilized citizen engagement extensively in her work. Read more about it in her document entitled: *Citizen Engagement*. 2004. Available at: [www.carolynbennett.ca/issuePosting.cfm?ID=9&CFID=15429929&CFTOKEN=49682052](http://www.carolynbennett.ca/issuePosting.cfm?ID=9&CFID=15429929&CFTOKEN=49682052).

For a discussion of institutionalization and proposed models see: Turnbull, Lori, Peter Aucoin. 2006. *Fostering Canadians' Role in Public Policy: A Strategy for Institutionalizing Public Involvement in Policy*. Canadian Policy Research Networks. [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1404&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1404&l=en).

Lukensmeyer, Carolyn J. and Steven Brigham. 2005. *Taking Democracy to Scale: Large Scale Interventions—for Citizens*. *AmericaSpeaks*. [www.americaspeaks.org/document/docWindow.cfm?fuseaction=document.viewDocument&documentid=99&documentFormatId=167](http://www.americaspeaks.org/document/docWindow.cfm?fuseaction=document.viewDocument&documentid=99&documentFormatId=167).

Fung, Archon. 2006. "Democracy and the Policy Process". In *Oxford Handbook of Public Policy* Martin Rein, Michael Moran and Robert E. Goodin, (eds.). New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 33.

## Chapter V. Engaging Members of Specific Populations

A challenging question in the field of citizen engagement is how to reach people beyond the usual suspects – those who willingly participate over and over again, attend events, volunteer at numerous organizations and whose voices are heard loudly and clearly. Who sits down at the table is a critical element of citizen engagement. This chapter touches on factors surrounding exclusion, which are often unintentional, of specific populations from civic participation. Some suggestions as to how to overcome these barriers are also presented.

It is surprising to recall that it has been less than a century and in some cases even less, since various marginalized populations were awarded one of the most basic civil liberties – the right to vote. These historical legal barriers reflect discrimination and exclusion from power that is still largely at play today.

- At the federal level, white women won the right to vote in 1918. They actually got to exercise their new right in 1921. At the provincial level, this occurred between 1916 and 1940, when white women also won the right to run for elections.
- Late 1940s: women and men from Chinese, Indian and Japanese origin went to the polls.
- 1960: Inuit and Aboriginal men and women, on and off reserve, won the right to vote.
- At the municipal level, as property determined the right to vote, the less fortunate, including women, the poor, immigrants and minorities were excluded from the polls, in some cases, until late 1960s and early 1970s.

These differentials contribute to ongoing imbalances in economic, health and social standing. Marginalization and discrimination are the result of structures that perpetuate a difference in power between populations and are maintained by cultural beliefs that deem this difference in power to be fair. Exploring this complex subject is beyond the scope of this chapter. Having acknowledged these historical facts, the next step is to emphasize the fundamental importance of citizen engagement and its goal of engaging those who have historically been excluded from decision-making. The aim is to adjust the imbalance of power and to prioritize the needs of excluded populations.

The following table attempts to summarize some of the practical barriers, specific to citizen engagement, that impede participation and to offer some potential solutions and resources. It is worth noting that these obstacles are compounded by belonging to more than one category of exclusion (i.e. being a women of colour and living in poverty is much more difficult than simply being a woman).

**Table 5. Barriers to Participation and Potential Solutions**

Categories of Exclusion	Barriers to Participation	Potential Solutions
<p><b>Cross cutting barriers:</b> can be applied to all of the following categories</p>	<p><b>Sense of worth:</b> People living in poverty or with disabilities, women, sexual minorities, and people of colour or from ethno-cultural communities have been stigmatized, belittled and marginalized, for some, much of their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce in multiple ways that input is valuable.</li> <li>• Hire facilitators and staff who are sensitive and skilled at drawing people into the process. Alternatively, sensitize facilitators and staff through adequate training. See section b) of Chapter VII.</li> <li>• Hold special pre-sessions for people from these groups to start to voice their opinions in smaller, safer environment.</li> <li>• Create “speakers’ lists” to be kept by person sitting beside the facilitator, keeping track of how many men and women, white and non-white people speak. If dominant groups outweigh others, priority should be given to those of non-dominant groups who wish to speak.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic:</b> Poverty is by far, the most pervasive and cross cutting issue that excludes people from society.</p>	<p><b>Time:</b> Working three jobs to support a family makes participating in an event almost out of the question.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with target population about event times that work for them.</li> <li>• Respect end-times.</li> <li>• Provide food and childcare.</li> <li>• Hold event near work or homes of population.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Social and cultural access:</b> People from different classes inhabit different spaces in society and those with lower socio-economic status are less likely to have experienced civic participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose a space for the event that is inhabited by the target population(s).</li> <li>• Work with trusted community partners (i.e. non-profit organizations). They may be able to arrange a pre-meeting space so that participants can arrive in a group.</li> <li>• Hold event on main public transit line with regular services at times of the event OR provide transportation services.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Economic access:</b> This is perhaps the easiest to overcome from the standpoint of an organizer of citizen engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide remuneration for lost work time, childcare, transportation, etc.</li> <li>• Provide food and/or childcare at the event.</li> <li>• Provide an honorarium.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ethno-cultural and newly arrived Canadians:</b> Many of the barriers mentioned in the economic category also apply to these groups as they are generally more at risk of living in poverty.</p>	<p><b>Citizenship:</b> By virtue of the phrase “citizen engagement” members of communities who are not yet full citizens are excluded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use alternative words to “citizen engagement” in outreach material (e.g. people, the public, community members) OR clarify what is meant by citizen engagement.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Language:</b> English and French may not be the first language of ethno-cultural and newly arrived Canadians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translate written material into appropriate languages.</li> <li>• There are many options for event-based translation: whisper translation (one-to-one); group translation on the side; or official translation may be necessary for large groups.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Social and cultural barriers:</b> People of different cultural backgrounds inhabit their own unique space in communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research the social spaces, places of worship, newspapers, and other places of gathering and communication and use them to host events and perform outreach.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Framing:</b> This will have a large impact on who attends, as different groups may value and perceive issues very differently.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See section b) of Chapter VII on Framing.</li> </ul>

**Table 5. Barriers to Participation and Potential Solutions (cont'd)**

Categories of Exclusion	Barriers to Participation	Potential Solutions
<b>Stereotyping age:</b> Youth are idolized, and yet those who are too young or too old are discredited.	<b>Legitimacy:</b> Youth are stigmatized as being naïve and the elderly as being out of touch with contemporary times. Thus both of these groups are often excluded from discussions and decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define concepts and frame the problem in ways youth can understand and relate to.</li> <li>Adapt process in ways that youth will not be intimidated to speak up (e.g. small group discussions and reporting back in large plenary).</li> </ul>
<b>Ability:</b> The needs of people living with disabilities are often overlooked, which consequently excludes them.	<b>Physical access:</b> There are a surprising number of public spaces that cannot accommodate a wheelchair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that event space is accessible and advertise it as such.</li> <li>Set up the event space to accommodate those in wheelchairs (i.e. table height).</li> </ul>
	<b>Transportation:</b> Getting to and from events poses unique challenges to people living with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give sufficient notice of event for people to plan their adapted transport OR provide adapted transportation for them.</li> </ul>
	<b>Communication:</b> Depending on the person's disability, they may need assistance communicating with a group of people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On registration forms, ask people with special needs to specify what they will need to participate, using respectful language.</li> <li>Provide translation into Braille and sign language services (determining need before event).</li> </ul>
<b>Gender:</b> While 50% of the population is female, women are still underrepresented in positions of power, and policies do not necessary reflect their needs. With regards to lesbians, gays, trans/bi-sexuals, and others, their rights and freedoms are still being negotiated at the state level.	<b>Parenting:</b> While times are slowly changing, women still carry a disproportionate responsibility for childcare and parent care, placing a greater burden on their time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide childcare or elder care money to participating parents.</li> <li>Or provide childcare (and even elder care) at the event (ask people to register ahead of time).</li> </ul>
	<b>Legitimacy:</b> People who do not fit the dominant model of "male" or "female" are stigmatized and generally face problems of legitimacy in the face of authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See potential solutions for "Sense of worth" barrier above.</li> </ul>

Creation of an atmosphere of respect is fundamental to the inclusion of all people. By valuing contributions, integrating words and opinions into recommendations and decisions, power imbalances that are pervasive and ultimately unjust can begin to be adjusted.

**For further reading:**

Youth Engagement:

The Students Commission/The Center for Excellence for Youth Engagement has plenty of resources on its website [www.tgmag.ca/](http://www.tgmag.ca/).

PowerCamp National targets young women in particular and have a great publication entitled *Step It Up: The Young Women's Guide to Influencing Public Policy* [www.powercampnational.ca](http://www.powercampnational.ca).

Apathy is Boring aims to use art, media and technology to revolutionize democracy [www.apathyisboring.com](http://www.apathyisboring.com).

TakingITGlobal: [www.takingitglobal.org](http://www.takingitglobal.org).

### Ability/Disability:

For a list of considerations for making events accessible, Meetings Industry Gurus [vnutravel.typepad.com/migurus/patti\\_digh/](http://vnutravel.typepad.com/migurus/patti_digh/).

*Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2004* is a Government of Canada report, [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/odi/documents/advancingInclusion04/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/odi/documents/advancingInclusion04/index.shtml).

### Ethno-Cultural Communities:

Vancouver Coastal Health held a workshop entitled: *Language and Ethno-Cultural Differences: Engaging Diverse Communities in Public Participation*. The summary of the workshop offers helpful ideas to overcoming some of the above barriers. To obtain a copy, contact [Margreth.Tolson@vch.ca](mailto:Margreth.Tolson@vch.ca).

### General:

The Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre is committed to actively working against all forms of oppression and has its policy framework available at [www.accessalliance.ca](http://www.accessalliance.ca).

BIAS FREE Framework offers a process for looking at the biases and hierarchies that affect organizations

[www.globalforumhealth.org/Site/002\\_What%20we%20do/005\\_Publications/010\\_BIAS%20FREE.php](http://www.globalforumhealth.org/Site/002_What%20we%20do/005_Publications/010_BIAS%20FREE.php).

## Chapter VI. Engaging Aboriginal Communities

Engaging members of Aboriginal communities requires a unique set of considerations. The history of the relationship between government and Aboriginal people impacts the following diverse areas: non-Aboriginal interaction with Aboriginal communities and people; Aboriginal peoples' relationship to and use of the land prior to and since colonialization; their experience with historical and current treaty processes; and the unacceptable socio-economic, educational and health status of many Aboriginal people. Combined, these provide very strong moral, legal and practical reasons for pursuing avenues that promote decision-making processes that fully engage Aboriginal peoples in policies and programs that affect their lives.

The Supreme Court has affirmed a legal duty for governments to consult with First Nations and Métis people through numerous decisions. The Sparrow<sup>14</sup> decision (1990) affirmed and recognized Aboriginal peoples' freedoms and rights under the Constitution Act. The Haida<sup>15</sup> decision (2004) deems that, based on these rights, both the federal and provincial governments have a legal duty to consult Aboriginal peoples on any matters that may impact Treaty and/or Aboriginal rights as set down in Section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act*. The Taku<sup>16</sup> decision (2004) went even further to claim that regardless of the status of Aboriginal land claims, the Crown still has a duty to consult. Most governments have thus far applied this duty in the realm of natural resource management, but many Aboriginal groups have the view that these rulings also apply to all government decisions and policies that affect the lives of Aboriginal peoples, including health, social services, education and so on.

Beyond the moral argument to engage Aboriginal peoples, there are strong pragmatic reasons to do so. The public and private sectors have realized that consulting with Aboriginal peoples before making and implementing policy can avoid problems, delays and ultimately resources required to mediate conflict. For example, in Saskatchewan, non-smoking legislation was adopted and implemented in workplaces without giving due consideration to Aboriginal jurisdiction over reserves. This resulted in a jurisdictional tug-of-war with reserves taking an oppositional stance to the province, rather than coming to a consensual agreement that could have benefited the health of all in the province. Other potential impacts from failing to consult Aboriginal peoples include: failing to address intended needs targeted by programming or policy; perpetuating or exacerbating tensions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups; legal action; and civil disobedience (i.e. as experienced in Caledonia).

As previously discussed, there are both cultural and structural roots to the exclusion of Aboriginal peoples that need to be addressed. To begin with, there is a tendency for experts to be dismissive of "lay" or "traditional" knowledge and opinions, and this is seen even more strongly in the case of Aboriginal peoples. While Supreme Court decisions provide the legal duty to develop structures and institutions for the consultation of Aboriginal peoples, deeply engrained cultural beliefs and biases about Aboriginal people continue to erect barriers to genuine engagement and listening. In order to engage Aboriginal people in a meaningful way in program and policy development, it is essential to be respectful of cultural differences, acknowledge differences in power and history, work to overcome preconceptions about each other and attempt to find common ground.

As Aboriginal communities develop their rights and capacity for self-governance, they will continue to develop their own versions of citizen engagement within their communities. Several examples of this are informative:

- First Nations of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Saskatchewan, where members are being consulted at key stages of the self-government negotiations with Canada
- The Health Care System in Nunavut has integrated citizens into its governing body
- Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group has developed a Land Use Plan for its territory on southeast Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.<sup>17</sup>

The Government of Saskatchewan has developed a series of principles to guide employees implementing the duty to consult that are useful in thinking about engaging Aboriginal populations. Note that while the word “consultation” is used, it is clear from the guiding principles that the vision is much closer to that of citizen engagement. The following are a selection of the 12 principles from the Government of Saskatchewan’s Guidelines:<sup>18</sup>

- Whether government action may adversely affect Treaty or Aboriginal rights is a question that must be asked of all new initiatives and changes contemplated to existing activities.
- Consultations must be genuine and must be conducted with integrity and in good faith with the intent of upholding the honour of the Crown.
- First Nations and Métis people need to be directly engaged in the consultation process.
- First Nations and Métis people who are being consulted are to be given a say in how the consultation process should unfold.
- Consultation should occur as early in the decision-making process as reasonably possible and before final decisions are made.
- The consultation process should lead to the establishment of respectful and lasting relationships.

Citizen engagement, (as discussed in Chapters II and III), is motivated by a longer-term vision than simply to solve a particular problem at a particular point, important as that immediate need is. Part of the vision is to include people who have historically been excluded from decision-making processes. For Aboriginal people, this marginalization has resulted in long-standing conflicts between their communities, the government and sometimes segments of the Canadian mainstream population.

The purpose of consultation is to advance the process of reconciliation [between government and Aboriginal peoples]. It is not simply a step in a particular process, but an attitude that needs to inform the manner in which the government does its business.<sup>19</sup>

Following the principles provided above and carefully planning the process (see Chapter VII. Getting Started) will combine to provide a starting point for working towards a reconciliatory citizen engagement process between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

**For further reading:**

Government of Saskatchewan. 2008. *Interim Government of Saskatchewan Guide for Consultation with First Nations and Métis People*.

[www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/documents/policy/consultguide.pdf](http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/documents/policy/consultguide.pdf).

Centre for Research and Information Canada. 2005. *Finding Their Voice: Civic Engagement Among Aboriginal and New Canadians*. [www.nald.ca/fulltext/cric/eng/cover.htm](http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/cric/eng/cover.htm).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. List of resources: toolkits, guides and workbooks [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/awpi/gde/rsucs\\_3\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/awpi/gde/rsucs_3_e.html).

Flo, Frank. 1999. *Flying Together: A Partnership Guidebook*. CANDO, Edmonton: on developing partnerships between Federal Government and Aboriginal communities.

Alfred, Taiaiake, Brock Pitawanakwat and Jackie Price. 2007. *The Meaning of Political Participation for Indigenous Youth*. Canadian Policy Research Networks.

[www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1749&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1749&l=en).

## Chapter VII. Getting Started

This chapter sets out some guidelines and references for planning and executing a citizen engagement initiative. It is not prescriptive but rather, it frames issues as questions to help in the planning process. It is written so as to encourage the adaptation of the materials to particular needs and context.

### a) Preparation

#### 1. *Determine goals and rationale, plus assess context*

To begin with, consider why citizen engagement is an essential component of the envisaged policy or program development process, and identify the purpose of engaging citizens. The goals set at the beginning will inform the remainder of the planning decisions. These goals may evolve as the citizen engagement initiative progresses, but without a clear upfront understanding it will be difficult to keep focused. It is also important to place this initiative within an organizational/departmental context, as well as a broader political and societal context. Conducting a brief “environmental scan” will help. Take the time to sit with team members and decide on the what’s, when’s and why’s.

#### Consider the spectrum: listening, sharing power and decision-making

As discussed in Chapter II, citizen engagement involves a spectrum of approaches and methods. As shown in Table 3, each level of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum represents a different degree of power sharing with citizens. Involving citizens requires a genuine commitment to listening to, analyzing with transparency and reporting on what citizens have to say with the purpose of having their input influence and inform the outcomes. It is not about consulting them after a decision has been made. Working at the “empower” end of the spectrum requires a real commitment by the department or organization to do everything possible to implement what citizens decide. Determining what the department or organization is *capable* of, (at the organizational and broader government or societal level), is essential in order to choose methods and ensure that citizens are not “turned off” by false promises.

If the organization/department is ready to move towards the “empower” side of citizen engagement, the **BIAS FREE Framework** (available at [www.globalforumhealth.org](http://www.globalforumhealth.org)) may be helpful. This framework outlines a process to assist in uncovering the hierarchies at play in a given setting. By uncovering hierarchies, one can begin to see how power affects processes, structures and decisions. This helps us to move beyond these power structures towards a more equitable outcome. While the original document is written specifically for the health research community, the authors state that it can be applied in a wide variety of settings including both policy and programming contexts.

## **2. Assessing citizen engagement requirements**

Before starting, it is important to confirm that the necessary conditions are in place to help ensure the success of the proposed citizen engagement project.

### **Time**

In the world of politics, timing is of utmost importance. Undertaking an “environmental scan” should identify key periods in the process that require citizen input, and when it will be beneficial to have reports or events to leverage during these times. Expect the process to take longer than expected, and make allowances for this in the timeline. While not all citizen engagement projects are time intensive, working with citizens will usually take longer than consulting experts.

### **Resources**

One of the biggest obstacles to citizen engagement is the cost involved in executing the plan. As elaborated in the next section, budget expenses do increase once transportation, compensating for lost work time, building internal capacity in staff, etc., are factored in. So, in this early planning phase, take the time to properly explore the array of different methods (discussed below) and their associated scope, timeline, associated costs, etc. A strong argument for the benefits of citizen engagement (some of which this handbook aims to provide) will be required in the face of competing projects and status quo processes.

Government budget allocations do not routinely provide resources for citizen engagement, which hints toward an under-valuing of citizens’ knowledge. As Philips and Orsini<sup>20</sup> argue, the barriers to funding citizen engagement suggest that there is a need to transform the current political culture if citizen engagement is to flourish.

The range in budgets is wide. Citizen engagement projects can cost anywhere between \$5,000 and \$2 million! The devil is in the details of the plan – the method chosen, the scale (organizational to federal) and the number of participants – all greatly influence budget.

### **Capacity**

Organizations that have chosen to institutionalize citizen engagement will likely need to develop internal capacity. This can present some challenges and opportunities to plan for, such as:

- defining and filling new roles and responsibilities as well as acquiring or adapting skills to execute these roles
- fostering the capacity of decision-makers to genuinely listen to citizens
- incorporating this new source of information as part of the evidence-base with which to inform program and policy decisions.

These will be further discussed below in section b) Designing the process.

### **Conditions for success**

The following are overall conditions for success in citizen engagement endeavors that have been adapted from Abelson and Gauvin.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 6. Key Conditions for Success**

Key Conditions for Success	Questions to Ask
Representativeness	How will citizens be chosen so that they are representative of the population?
Independence	Will impartial facilitators/moderators be chosen? Is a fair process in place to give all involved a chance to participate, not favouring one perspective over another?
Early involvement	Will citizens be involved in setting the agenda? Defining the rules of the process? Choosing experts? Defining their need for information?
Influencing the policy decision	Will priorities or decisions made affect the policy decision? Is there willingness within the organization/department for this to happen? Is there a genuine commitment by the organization/department to the process and its outcomes?
Providing information	Is there a plan/budget to prepare an information package for participants? Will it be verified or tested to ensure that it is clear and easily understood by a broad audience?
Resources accessibility	Have participants been provided with enough time for to inform themselves and to discuss amongst themselves? Has money been provided for transportation, time off work, childcare, etc.?
Structured decision-making	Are the objectives clear, realistic and transparent? How will it be made clear to participants, <i>from the beginning</i> , how the information generated will be used? Has a communication strategy been developed to inform the general public and participants of how citizens will have affected the decision?

Source: Adapted from Abelson and Gauvin

**Some questions to consider:**<sup>22</sup>

- How will citizen engagement fulfill the strategic directions and goals of the organization/department?
- What is the vision for the project/initiative and how does it tie into the organization/department's vision? How is that communicated through this project?<sup>23</sup>
- What is the decision to be made or question to be answered?
- What is the federal/provincial/regional context?
- Are there issues to be aware of (i.e. lobby groups, highly visible or charged issues, connections to other projects, etc.)?
- Do all members of the team understand the spectrum of citizen engagement options and what the choice in method implies for sharing power with citizens? Is there a commitment to implementing the changes that arise from the process?
- Is there adequate time to prepare the citizen engagement project, to carry it all out in time to influence the desired decision? If time is limited, what options and short cuts are possible (e.g. engaging external consultants, modifying components)?
- Are there resources available to carry out the citizen engagement project?

### **For further reading:**

Involve, a UK-based organization dedicated to public participation in policy has a report entitled *The True Costs of Public Participation* available at [www.involve.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.viewSection&intSectionID=390](http://www.involve.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.viewSection&intSectionID=390).

Phillips, Susan D., and Michael Orsini. 2002. *Mapping the Links: Citizen Involvement in Policy Processes*. Canadian Policy Research Networks. [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=169&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=169&l=en).

### **b) Designing the process**

Once it has been decided that citizen engagement is the right strategy, the next stage is to plan the process. The following section is intended to help one think through the necessary steps to design a citizen engagement process.

#### **Key success factors for design:**<sup>24</sup>

- Create a “mix of mechanisms”. More than one method of participation may be needed to: address issues; accommodate the range of interests and knowledge; and meet public needs and the ability to participate (e.g. location, timing).
- Consult the department’s corporate consultation staff to help coordinate involvement efforts with other parts of the government/department and avoid overburdening participants.
- Conduct a risk assessment of the potential costs (e.g. social, fiscal, political, integrity of institution) that are associated with implementing the public involvement initiative.
- Make relevant, easily understandable information available to participants early through a variety of means.

#### **1. Developing internal capacity: new roles and responsibilities**

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) created an Online Consultation Centre of Expertise (OCCoE) to enhance government capacity for online consultation. In addition to developing a number of helpful resources for online citizen participation, it also elaborated a list of essential roles that are easily transferable to other forms of citizen engagement. These roles can be filled either internally or by an external contractor and some can be combined into one position. These roles are briefly outlined in Table 7.

**Table 7. Roles and Responsibilities to Consider**

<b>Role Title</b>	<b>Description of Role</b>
Convener/ Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The leader of the process who brings together other players and oversees the process and outcomes</li></ul>
Moderator/Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ideally an impartial outsider<sup>25</sup></li><li>• Knows the subject well enough to navigate with ease</li><li>• Orchestrates a process with a group of people towards a commonly agreed-to set of goals</li><li>• Encourages the participation of all those present</li></ul>
Subject Matter Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides timely, short term expertise (can be in house or external) and offers in depth knowledge about the breadth of information, consequences and debatable issues of a subject</li></ul>
Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acts as an intermediary between the expert and the citizen, distilling complex ideas into clear language</li><li>• Helps experts or decision-makers to clarify their ideas and facilitates face to face discussions</li><li>• Develops information booklets/workbooks for participants</li></ul>
Content Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The “librarian” of knowledge – sorts, categorizes and maps</li><li>• Translates knowledge between different fields/sectors</li><li>• Sets the stage for the Subject Matter Expert</li></ul>
Issue Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Researches, tracks and analyzes the opinions and positions of various stakeholder groups, communities or populations over time</li><li>• Assists in framing the issue to be of relevance to populations of interest</li><li>• Assists in implementation</li></ul>

Source: Adapted from PWGSC's *Online Consultation Centre of Expertise Research Compendium (2007)*.

### **Training staff in citizen engagement**

According to many sources, one of the biggest cultural obstacles to citizen engagement comes from staff and decision-makers' inability to listen to what citizens have to say. This is a cultural issue that has largely arisen from professionalization and specialization that leads experts to believe that non-experts have nothing or little to contribute (i.e. “*What could Joe at the bus stop have to say about a complex policy issue?*”).

While it is certainly true that experts have greater technical knowledge than lay people, in the world of politics, decision-making is informed by more than facts; moreover, experts themselves often disagree on facts. Most public policy decisions are underpinned by value assumptions and value choices. Different values lead to different sets of priorities – perspectives are informed by experiences and personal beliefs. While not a content expert, the “lay person” has valuable experiential knowledge to share. Thus, many experts benefit from exposure to and training in citizen engagement, bringing them to an appreciation of the role of citizen input and priorities in a policy process.

## For further reading:

Vancouver Coastal Health's department of Community Engagement has done considerable work in the area of internal capacity building for citizen engagement. To obtain a copy of the workshop outlines, contact [sue.davis@vch.ca](mailto:sue.davis@vch.ca).

## 2. Framing the issue in public terms

It is no secret that there is a disconnect between government and the public. One strategy for overcoming this is to “put yourself in the other's shoes” – no easy task. In order to have the desired participation, the sought input and to meet defined goals, it is essential that the issue is framed in a way that enables a heterogeneous public to engage with the issue. This framing will inform all communications strategies, including publicity material, the information packages provided to participants, the shape of the actual event and the feedback given after the event. It will also influence who attends the event, what kind of options are explored and ultimately, the outcomes. In other words, this is a crucial step in the design process.

Take the following example from Environment Canada, which under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) is required to consult the public. Here is the title of the first of many public consultations that were taking place during the summer of 2007, which the public was invited to participate in:

Notice of intent to amend the Domestic Substances List to apply the Significant New Activity provisions under subsection 81(3) of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 to benzenamine, 2,6-dinitro-N,N-dipropyl-4-(trifluoromethyl)-(trifluralin); 1,3,5-triazine-2,4-diamine, 6-chloro-N-ethyl-N'(1-methylethyl)-(atrazine); 1,3-benzenedicarbonitrile, 2,4,5,6-tetrachloro-(chlorothalonil); 1H-indene-1,3(2H)-dione, 2-[(4-chlorophenyl)phenylacetyl]-(chlorophacinone); benzene, 1,1'-(2,2,2-trichloroethyl)...<sup>26</sup>

As an intelligent citizen, would you participate in this consultation? Unless one has a PhD in biochemistry, the answer is probably no. While this example is a blatant one, it does point to a fundamental challenge of framing issues in terms the public can understand and thus engage with.

While using appropriate and accessible language is important, it is not enough. Issue framing also requires careful thinking about what information, alternatives and potential solutions are and how they are presented. This is discussed in section 7: Providing credible information to support citizens' participation.

Here are three options to start thinking about how to frame the issue:

- Test the event title, outreach material and issue framing workbook for clarity and understanding on the target groups.
- Hire a specialist in knowledge translation and/or use plain language to ensure that the intended message is being communicated.
- Involve representatives of the public or specific “publics” in the framing process. The Kettering Foundation ([www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org)) and the National Issues Forum ([www.nifi.org/discussion\\_guides/index.aspx](http://www.nifi.org/discussion_guides/index.aspx)) have extensive experience in this area. Their work has

involved the public in both the naming of a problem, along with discussing choices on how to solve it. According to these groups, investing in this work upfront will increase the chances of people being mobilized by 10 times!

### **For further reading:**

The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation has an article by Tom Atlee, *Framing Issues for Battle and Collective Intelligence* available at [www.thataway.org/exchange/resources.php?action=view&rid=1516](http://www.thataway.org/exchange/resources.php?action=view&rid=1516).

### **3. Recruitment: random, purposive or self-selective**

There are a wide variety of strategies to recruit people to come to an event. Please consult Chapter V Engaging members of specific populations as a necessary compliment to the following strategies.

Here are some of the most commonly used recruitment methods:

- **Random:** Much like in research, it is important to randomly select a sample of participants (usually with help from professional polling firms) from the target population in order to legitimately extrapolate findings to a broader population. This has the advantage of reaching people that other methods will likely not reach. It may be appropriate to initially over sample hard to reach or specific populations, since their later drop-out rates are higher, and this will ensure more representative data collection.
- **Purposive:** If there is interest in the input of a specific population, it may be most helpful to only do outreach to that community. This can include working with other organizations that have an established relationship with the community of interest.
- **Open:** This is achieved with an open invitation for people to participate in an event(s) – a simple first-come, first-serve concept.
- **Self-selective:** This method can be used in combination with purposive or open recruitment. Participants are selected from those who respond to an open or purposive invitation to create a group that represents the population(s) of interest to the event goals. This is a good alternative to random recruitment for those with a limited budget.

The following questions introduce several issues that need to be considered before choosing a recruitment method:

**What is the scale of the event?** Random recruitment is useful when working at the provincial, federal or large urban level but may not be required at the local or regional level. Open invitation may not be appropriate for a federal event, as it may overwhelm expectations.

**What are the event goals?** Is the goal to reach a conclusion that can be generalized to a population at large? Or is the goal to obtain a broad spectrum of different perceptions from the public?

**What population is being targeted?** If the goal is to hear from the entire population of a given area, then random selection may be a good choice. If the issue at stake is specific to one or a few different populations, then purposive or self-selective may be more appropriate.

**Who will be making decisions regarding the issue at stake?** A citizen engagement project will be more successful if decision-makers are involved in the planning of an event(s) or even if they simply attend the event(s). Specific invitations to them should be issued and (repeated) follow-ups conducted. Their participation in the event(s) will carry much more weight than if they simply receive a final report.

**For further reading:**

The Study Circle Resource Center has comprehensive guides targeted at getting a diverse group of people together on a local or community level. It also has a guide on organizing multicultural study circles. [www.studycircles.org/en/Page.Organizing.RecrutParticipants.aspx](http://www.studycircles.org/en/Page.Organizing.RecrutParticipants.aspx).

#### **4. Logistics: time, place and other considerations**

While these two issues may seem obvious, there are some important questions to take into consideration:

- **Physical Space:** Does the department/organization have the physical capacity to accommodate the number of participants targeted? If not, where will the event(s) be held? What will it cost? Can the room(s) be arranged to accommodate the process (e.g. plenary and breakout small group discussions)? Is it a pleasant and comfortable space with windows? Are acoustics and lighting adequate? Is there wall space for flip charts?
- **Access:** Will the desired population be able to access the space, physically, socially and economically? (see Chapter V)
- **Neutrality:** If the event deals with a politically charged issue, has a “neutral” space been chosen that abides by all sides’ needs?
- **Timing:** Has sufficient time for the process been allocated?
- **Language:** Has language translation/interpretation been arranged?
- **Childcare:** Is childcare (or elder care) being offered at the event, or a stipend for those who have young children?

#### **5. Choosing methods to match goals**

Form must follow function. The choice of methods must reflect goals, time, budget, the issue at hand and the context. Various methods can be adapted to particular needs and contexts and many can be adapted to an online environment (see the next section). There is no right method to accomplish given goals. As previously discussed, many success factors have to do with the details that are quite independent of the method, such as facilitation, providing balanced information, etc. The following frameworks may help in thinking about which methods match specific goals and circumstances.

**Table 8. Framework for Selection of Engagement Techniques**

Step in Policy Process	Agenda Setting	Analysis	Design	Implementation	Evaluation
What is the agency trying to accomplish at this stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the need for a policy reform</li> <li>Define the problem to be addressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the key challenges with an issue</li> <li>Align qualitative and quantitative evidence with appropriate policy alternatives</li> <li>Produce a draft policy document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate alternative policy proposals</li> <li>Develop workable policy document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish programs, guidelines, and effective processes to deliver public benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor policy outcomes to determine whether the goals of the policy are being met during implementation</li> </ul>
What are the rationales for doing public involvement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish values</li> <li>Identify priorities</li> <li>Generate outcome statements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve the public in identifying and stating in their terms the problems a policy will address</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage the non-expert public in understanding how policy prescriptions will address values, priorities, and outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure broad public awareness and support of policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure policy outcomes meet public goals</li> </ul>
What are the key challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk of raising expectations that input will become policy</li> <li>Ensuring that key views are represented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate expert and experience-based knowledge cooperatively</li> <li>Develop background materials that ensure balance and neutrality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that ordinary people who will be impacted by policy are involved</li> <li>Ensure clarity around how input will influence policy and program design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate process and outcomes broadly</li> <li>Ensure community capacity has been developed over the policy development process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop appropriate accountability mechanisms</li> <li>Create information-collection mechanisms</li> <li>Connect information collection to policy feed-back cycle</li> </ul>
Which engagement techniques might work best?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliberative Poll</li> <li>ChoiceWork Dialogue</li> <li>21st Century Town Meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizens Jury</li> <li>Consensus Conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21st Century Town Meeting</li> <li>Consensus Conference</li> <li>ChoiceWork Dialogue</li> <li>Study circles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public hearing</li> <li>Mainstream media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social monitoring</li> <li>Scorecards</li> </ul>
What are the strengths of this technique?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a random scientific sample</li> <li>Clarifies values</li> <li>Quantifies opinion shifts</li> <li>Generates media attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is cost-effective</li> <li>Uses a random scientific sample</li> <li>Allows for in-depth, technical issues exploration</li> <li>Incorporates expert views</li> <li>Avoids media spotlight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages large segments of the population</li> <li>Cultivates shared agreement</li> <li>Uncovers public priorities</li> <li>Generates media visibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is cost-effective</li> <li>Reaches large numbers of citizens</li> <li>Reinforces leadership role of public officials and experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages the public in follow-up</li> <li>Builds new skills</li> <li>Engages citizens in their community</li> <li>Distributes information collection widely</li> </ul>

Source: Lukensmeyer, Carolyn J. and Lars Hasselblad Torres. 2006. *Public Deliberation: A Manager's Guide to Citizen Engagement*. The IBM Centre for The Business of Government. [www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/LukensmeyerReport.pdf](http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/LukensmeyerReport.pdf). p. 19.

Appendix 1 provides one page summaries of a variety of popular methods for citizen engagement and includes a brief description, some strengths, limitations, examples and some key references to obtain more information. The methods listed in Appendix 1 include:

- Citizens juries
- Citizens panels
- Consensus conferences
- Scenario workshops
- Deliberative polls
- Citizens' dialogue.

### **For further reading:**

The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation's website has an excellent search engine for resources that it has compiled from a wide array of different sources. Recommended source for specific information on any one method or for broader discussions of issues:

[www.thataway.org/exchange](http://www.thataway.org/exchange).

The Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) has a Centre for Governance Dialogue with a number of useful toolkits (managerial, operational and theoretical). The Managerial Toolkit has brief descriptions of key citizen engagement methods with references.

[www.quantumgovernance.ca/toolkit/index.html](http://www.quantumgovernance.ca/toolkit/index.html).

The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation's *Engagement Streams Framework* provides a very useful table with various methods according to primary goal, group size, length of session and participant selection: [www.thataway.org/exchange/files/docs/ddStreams1-08.pdf](http://www.thataway.org/exchange/files/docs/ddStreams1-08.pdf).

Health Canada's *Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision Making* has a table on page 24 entitled "Matching Action to Needs" that pairs methods with the various levels of its framework. The toolkit also provides descriptions of a wide variety of methods. [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/public-consult/2000decision/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/public-consult/2000decision/index_e.html).

For a comparative table of various methods, including a brief description, strengths, weaknesses, recommendations for use and references see [www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/compareparticipation.pdf](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/compareparticipation.pdf).

For a "Process Design Worksheet" see Pruitt, Bettye and Philip Thomas. 2007. *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners*. Canadian International Development Agency, IDEA, UNDP and GS/OAS. p. 85. [www.idea.int/publications/democratic\\_dialogue/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/democratic_dialogue/index.cfm).

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has number of useful documents at [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org).

## **6. Consider online citizen engagement**

Online consultation and citizen engagement represent the new face of democracy. In the words of Stephen Coleman (p. 5):

Just as ICTs [information and communication technologies] have had profound effects upon ways that people work, shop, bank, find news and communicate with friends and families, so they will establish new channels to connect citizens to hitherto remote institutions of governance.<sup>27</sup>

Coleman argues that the Internet possesses the capacity to renew representative democracy, but that most governments have not realized this full potential. Most governments merely employ ICT to conduct polls and surveys. Very few have sufficiently explored the more challenging potential – that of supporting online public engagement in policy deliberation.

Online forums should try to adapt and build on face-to-face processes, and include introductions, icebreakers, background information and discussions according to the Best Practice recommendations of the Public Works and Government Services Canada’s Online Consultation Centre of Expertise. Most citizen engagement methods can be adapted to an online environment, but this requires much creativity, planning and support. Table 9 presents some of the opportunities and challenges of online citizen engagement (some of which are common to all citizen engagement exercises).

**Table 9. Challenges and Opportunities of Online Citizen Engagement**

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency and speed</li> <li>• Increased citizen access to information</li> <li>• Increased access to public opinion for policy makers</li> <li>• Potential to increase number of participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection and representation of participants</li> <li>• The digital divide – determined by age, gender, income and race</li> <li>• Information overload (both citizens and solicitors of information)</li> <li>• Asynchronous dialogue leading to less focused conversations</li> <li>• Institutional scepticism</li> </ul>

There are a variety of online technologies that can be utilized to reach goals, including email, instant messaging, mailing lists and newsgroups, forms (including surveys and petitions), chat rooms, bulletin boards, online forums, message boards, wikis and weblogs. Choosing the right technology is a matter that must be decided in a given context, keeping in mind budgets, goals and timelines.

For an example of a successful online consultation at the federal level, please refer to the Chapter VIII case example 3. outlining the online citizen engagement conducted by the Canadian House of Commons Sub-Committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada also has forums called *Policy eDiscussions* through which Canadians can discuss and inform current debates (<http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/participate/menu-en.aspx>).

**For further reading:**

For a conceptual discussion of online citizen engagement and its role in renewing democracy see: Coleman, Stephen and John Gotze. *Bowling Together: Online Public Engagement in Policy Deliberation*. Hansard Society [www.bowlingtogether.net/references.html](http://www.bowlingtogether.net/references.html).

Lukensmeyer, Carolyn J. and Lars Hasselblad Torres. 2006. *Public Deliberation: A Manager’s Guide to Citizen Engagement*. The IBM Center for The Business of Government. [www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/LukensmeyerReport.pdf](http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/LukensmeyerReport.pdf).

Visit Ascentum's website "dialoguecircles" for information about online and offline consultation and dialogue. [www.dialoguecircles.com/Default.aspx?DN=19,10,Documents](http://www.dialoguecircles.com/Default.aspx?DN=19,10,Documents).

Borins, Sandford, et al. 2007. *Digital State at the Leading Edge*. University of Toronto Press, IPAC Series in Public Management and Governance. [www.digitalstate.ca/](http://www.digitalstate.ca/).

## **7. Providing credible information to support citizens' participation**

To best engage citizens they should have access to key background information and facts, as well as a range of approaches, perspectives and solutions associated with the public issue under discussion. The information should be provided well ahead of time, in accessible, neutral language and format (for the general population, aim for a grade nine comprehension level).

Generally, it is important for participants to receive material in advance. It should include an easy to follow agenda, background information on the issue and several options from different perspectives to consider in thinking about potential solutions. These solutions, as discussed above in the section on framing, are best derived from dialogue/conversations with the public about the issue. The solutions should articulate the pros and cons and trade-offs implicit in each decision. See examples below.

### **For further reading:**

#### Workbook examples:

Canadian Policy Research Networks and Viewpoint Learning. 2002. *The Kind of Canada We Want: Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future – Workbook*. [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=152&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=152&l=en).

Nova Scotia Power. 2005 *Customer Energy Forum 2005*. [www.nspower.ca/energy\\_efficiency/customer\\_energy\\_forum\\_2005/index.shtml](http://www.nspower.ca/energy_efficiency/customer_energy_forum_2005/index.shtml).

The National Issues Forums Institute has a number of Issue Books/Discussion Guides available online at [www.nifi.org/discussion\\_guides/index.aspx](http://www.nifi.org/discussion_guides/index.aspx).

## **8. Facilitators/moderators**

Facilitators or moderators play a key role in any citizen engagement process. They serve as the conductor, guiding the group through what can be an emotionally demanding albeit fairly structured discussion. Their ability to provide impartial guidance is one key to the success of citizen engagement efforts, as citizens who feel their opinions are not heard will not respect the outcomes of the event.

There are different views about the relative importance of having a facilitator who has expertise on the subject under discussion. If facilitators are very well-informed about an issue, it is likely that they may have well-entrenched opinions, which may make it harder for them to remain scrupulously impartial (this may be particularly the case for facilitators who are tied to the department or organization hosting the event). On the other hand, their knowledge can prove helpful in keeping conversations on track. An alternative is to find a skilled facilitator who is less well-versed in the subject matter to whom information can be provided (see examples listed below).

### **For further reading:**

The International Association of Facilitators is a member based organization with online resources and a database of facilitators: [www.iaf-world.org](http://www.iaf-world.org).

For a discussion of the roles and qualities of facilitators, see Pruitt, Bettye and Philip Thomas. 2007. *Democratic Dialogue: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Canadian International Development Agency, IDEA, UNDP and GS/OAS. pp. 110-113. [www.idea.int/publications/democratic\\_dialogue/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/democratic_dialogue/index.cfm).

CPRN has guidebooks for facilitators of dialogues available online, including *Facilitators' Guide: Citizens' Dialogue on the Management of Used Nuclear Fuel in Canada*. 2004. To obtain a copy, contact [info@cprn.org](mailto:info@cprn.org).

## **9. Planning for evaluation and analysis**

### **Key success factors for evaluation:**<sup>28</sup>

- Evaluate and report on participants' involvement, contributions and conclusions/decisions.
- Provide staff with training and development opportunities on designing, planning and evaluating public involvement exercises.
- Disseminate best practices, methods and tools across the department in order to learn from the experience and enhance the department's capacity for judgment.

Often evaluation is not addressed until the end of a process when it may be too late to properly capture key information, and analyze/evaluate the valued knowledge that has been generated. Integrating these considerations into the planning process at the outset will save time and frustration at the end, and enable better learning from the process as it is taking place.

The following are elements of a good evaluation practice, as defined by Pruitt and Thomas:<sup>29</sup>

- **Clearly define what is to be evaluated:** What is to be analyzed based on goals (process, outcomes, impact, outputs, etc.)? What is to be measured/observed?
- **Build evaluation into the dialogue process:** Has evaluation been adequately planned for, allowing time and resources for the evaluation process?
- **Involve participants:** How will participants (citizens, politicians, staff, etc.) be involved in the evaluation of the process/outcomes?
- **Develop quantitative and qualitative indicators:** What data, qualitative and/or quantitative, will capture the learnings from the project? How will project outcomes be recorded based on data needs? Is it necessary to obtain consensus from participants?
- **Balance a learning orientation with an outcome orientation:** Can the evaluation be designed to provide ongoing learning throughout the project and determine when goals are met?

### **For further reading:**

Involve (UK) has developed a guide called *Making a Difference: A guide to evaluating public participation in central government*, available at [www.involve.org.uk/evaluation/](http://www.involve.org.uk/evaluation/).

Abelson, Julia and François-Pierre Gauvin. 2006. *Assessing the Impacts of Public Involvement: Concepts, Evidence and Policy Implications*. Canadian Policy Research Networks. [www.cprn.org/en/doc.cfm?doc=1403](http://www.cprn.org/en/doc.cfm?doc=1403).

For a great section on monitoring and evaluating see Pruitt, Bettye and Philip Thomas. 2007. *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners*. Canadian International Development Agency, IDEA, UNDP and GS/OAS. pp. 140-151. [www.idea.int/publications/democratic\\_dialogue/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/democratic_dialogue/index.cfm).

## **10. Reporting to decision-makers and participants**

How and what is reported to whom is clearly dependent on the project and the obligations surrounding it. This is an important aspect of transparency, which is part of what distinguishes citizen engagement from consultation. Reporting audiences should include not only funders and decision-makers, but most importantly, participants. Reports should include an overview of the process used as well as outcomes and clearly indicate where in the decision-making process the input fits and what will happen with that input. An example of a report is provided below.

### **Key success factors for feedback to participants:**<sup>30</sup>

- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with participants.
- Inform participants of the findings (when appropriate and possible share draft report with participants for their review) and impacts on proposed policy, legislation, regulation and program changes.
- Provide participants with information on next steps.

It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to give transparent feedback to participants. Reporting to participants in a transparent fashion is fundamental to the philosophy underpinning citizen engagement. Without it, power can be maintained in the hands of decision-makers, protecting decision-making processes from the scrutiny of citizens. Citizens should know how their participation helped in making a decision. Reporting to citizens means careful consideration of what they will want to know and should be written in a language that they will understand. If more than one event is planned, communicating with participants between events can keep momentum, help link the events and encourage their continued involvement. This is also a great opportunity to thank participants for their time and efforts and to invite them to participate further, if appropriate.

### **Document projects**

While the numbers are growing, there are relatively few well-documented and evaluated cases of citizen engagement publicly available in Canada. Documenting and publicizing citizen engagement projects, complete with successes, challenges and lessons learned, will make an important contribution to learning in this field.

### **For further reading:**

CPRN has a number of reports available on its website, including: *Responsible Action – Citizens’ Dialogue on the Long-term Management of Used Nuclear Fuel*. 2004. Canadian Policy Research Networks. [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1050&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1050&l=en).

National Issues Forums has a number of resources online, including: *A New Report – Public Thinking about Democracy’s Challenge: Reclaiming the Public’s Role*. 2006. [www.nifi.org/](http://www.nifi.org/).

## Summary of questions to consider for the planning process:<sup>31</sup>

### **Developing internal capacity:**

- Do the other members of the team understand citizen engagement?
- How open are other staff and decision-makers to citizen input?
- Is internal training required?

### **Framing:**

- Have materials been pre-tested on the target populations?
- Is the issue dealt with objectively and in an accessible way?

### **Recruitment:**

- What is the scale of the event?
- What are the goals?
- What population(s) is(are) to be reached?
- What groups have been vocal about the issue and/or who will feel the impact of the decision?

### **Logistics:**

- Have all issues been considered including: timing and timeframe; space for the event; accessibility; neutrality; childcare; etc.

### **Choosing a method:**

- What will the timeline and budget allow for?
- What methods will clearly match goals? Do goals include having citizens generate new ideas and/or having them make deliberate choices about policy or program directions?
- What methods match the organizational vision/mission/goals?
- Is the organization committed to having the citizen input influence and inform the outcome? Is the department/organization able to accept or integrate the decisions or recommendations that emerge from the project? In other words, are false expectations being generated in citizens by virtue of the methods that have been chosen?

### **Online citizen engagement:**

- Is there adequate internal capacity for an online project, or does it need to be built or provided externally?
- What are the reasons for using online citizen engagement? What will it add to the project?
- How will the limitations of the online environment be overcome?

**Information to provide participants:**

- Who will write the material and for what audience (taking into consideration literacy levels of the target population)?
- What information will be provided to participants and how will framing considerations be implemented in this material?
- How will information be provided to participants (documents sent in mail, website, etc.)?
- Does the material need to be translated, and if so, into what language(s)?

**Facilitation:**

- Is it important to have a facilitator that is well-informed on the subject matter?
- How important is the perception of neutrality regarding the facilitator?
- If external facilitators are to be hired, how will they be involved in the planning and design of the citizen engagement project?

**Evaluation and analysis:**

- Has evaluation been adequately planned for, allowing time and resources for the evaluation process? How will the event be recorded? How will consent be obtained from participants?
- What will be analyzed based on the project goals (process, outcomes, impact, outputs, etc.)? What will be measured/observed?
- How will participants (citizens, politicians, staff, etc.) be involved in the evaluation of the process/outcomes?
- What data, qualitative and/or quantitative, will capture learnings from the project? How will project outcomes be recorded based on data needs? Is there the need to obtain consensus from participants?
- Can the evaluation be designed to provide ongoing learning throughout the project and determine when goals are met?

**Reporting to decision-makers and participants:**

- In what format will participants receive feedback (letter, pamphlet, booklet, etc.)?
- How will feedback be distributed (email, website, mail, etc.)?
- Based on the evaluation or expressed expectations, what might be some key information to include?
- Who will write the feedback, and for what audience (taking literacy levels and language into account)?
- In circumstances where the policy or program outcome will not be known for some time, how best to report back?

## c) Implementation

Sufficiently investing in the planning phase of a citizen engagement process will ensure that the implementation flows relatively smoothly. Here are some considerations for ensuring that events run smoothly:

- Set ground rules that will ensure respect, fairness and safety. They can be as simple as: be on time, don't cut others off when speaking, etc.
- Ensure that staff members (including facilitators) are clear about their supportive roles during the event.
- Give participants: an agenda and clear explanation of the process – why they are here and how they will move forward together; an explanation of the role of all those present; and an idea of how the knowledge generated will be used and reported.
- Where appropriate, have content experts on site to answer questions (under the direction/guidance of the facilitator).

### Key success factors for implementation:<sup>32</sup>

- Ensure participants understand the policy development process.
- Be clear on the role of participants and how their views will be considered in the decision-making process.
- Be flexible to accommodate participants' reasonable new requests relating to process design.
- Allow for and allot time for participants to “vent”. This should be expected and can be viewed as a natural, healthy part of the process. Once completed, participants can move forward in their thinking.
- Timing is key – finding the elusive “just right” timing requires orienting the process to peak opportunities in the political and policy decision-making process.

### **For further reading:**

It is beyond the scope of this handbook to detail all of the many aspects of implementation that may emerge. For those wanting detail on implementation, see related section in Pruitt, Bettye and Philip Thomas. 2007. *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners*. Canadian International Development Agency, IDEA, UNDP and GS/OAS.

[www.idea.int/publications/democratic\\_dialogue/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/democratic_dialogue/index.cfm).

### Highly recommended websites in addition to CPRN's:

Canadian Community for Dialogue and Deliberation: [www.c2d2.ca](http://www.c2d2.ca).

National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation: [www.thataway.org](http://www.thataway.org).

Involve: [www.involve.org.uk](http://www.involve.org.uk).

International Association for Public Participation: [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org).

Hansard Society: [www.hansardsociety.org.uk/](http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/).

National Issues Forum: [www.nifi.org/](http://www.nifi.org/).

AmericaSpeaks: [www.americaspeaks.org/](http://www.americaspeaks.org/).

Public Conversations Project: [www.publicconversations.org](http://www.publicconversations.org).

## Chapter VIII. Case Examples

The following chapter provides a brief overview of five case examples of citizen engagement used to shape programs or policy. Three examples fit under the *Involve* level on the IAP2 spectrum (see Table 3), one at the regional and two at the federal level. One case study falls under the *Collaborate* and another under the *Empower* levels (IAP2 spectrum); the first is a regional example and the other provincial. Two examples of institutionalized citizen engagement are provided (Vancouver Coastal Health and Toronto Community Housing Corporation). In each of the cases, context, process and some outcomes have been provided.

### a) Involve

#### 1. *Vancouver Coastal Health's Community Health Advisory Committees* *Bridging between citizens and the regional health authority*

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) is the regional health authority serving the Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond and Coastal areas (including the North Shore, Sunshine Coast, Sea to Sky and the Bella Coola, Bella Bella area). In 2002 it created a Community Engagement Team department, unique at the time in Canada, with a mission to implement community engagement (closely defined as citizen engagement, although more inclusive of recent immigrants without citizenship) as a health strategy within the activities of VCH. Its Community Engagement Framework,<sup>33</sup> sets out these goals:

- To seek public involvement in policy matters, not only in program design and operations;
- To engage marginalized communities (e.g. ethno-cultural groups, people with disabilities, isolated elderly);
- To engage people in the range of participation levels (outlined in Chapter II).

Community Health Advisory Committees (CHACs) are one of the structures put in place to realize these goals and act as a bridge between local communities and VCH. There is one CHAC in each of the three Health Service Delivery Areas, as well as one that works closely with leaders in Aboriginal communities. The CHACs are populated with individuals who are active and informed members of their communities, and meet regularly to discuss and inform the VCH of developments, events, and concerns that are emerging in their communities. While the CHACs have no decision-making power, they provide an important feedback loop of input and information that would otherwise only be available to VCH through research and evaluations.

Information obtained through CHACs has led to participatory research projects, the development of new programs, and the shaping of acute care services to better meet the needs of citizens of the region.

#### **For Further Reading:**

You can read more about the Community Engagement Team and the CHACs, its guiding principles, functions and purpose on the website at [www.vch.ca/ce](http://www.vch.ca/ce). Specifically of interest are the CHACs Terms of Reference.

## **2. The Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada** *The most comprehensive consultation with Canadians to date*

In November 2002, the Romanow Commission released its final report based on what is arguably the most extensive consultation process to date in Canada. Entitled, *Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada*,<sup>34</sup> the report clearly embodies a balanced approach between *evidence-based* and *value-driven* information in decision-making when it comes to important and politically charged public policy such as health care. This is also clearly reflected in the research process which led to the report. It drew on a wide range of expert knowledge through round tables, commissioned research and site visits. It also incorporated the knowledge and concerns of patients and the general public through extensive consultations, including dialogue sessions with 489 randomly selected Canadians across the country.<sup>35</sup>

The citizen dialogue process led by CPRN and Viewpoint Learning, adapted the latter's Choicework Dialogue methodology. Day-long dialogue sessions moved citizens from their initial perceptions through a series of considerations that facilitated them to come to informed *judgments*, identifying trade-offs on various health policy options.

The process, in summary, unfolded in the following way:

- Based on initial research, four possible scenarios depicting future directions for the health care system were identified and elaborated in a workbook for participants.
- Randomly selected participants were provided with information and brought together in groups of 40 for a day-long dialogue session.
- During the session, participants:
  - were introduced to the process, issues and scenarios;
  - completed a pre-questionnaire to measure their initial views;
  - shared their views and opinions with both small groups and large plenary sessions;
  - assessed the various scenarios and their implications through dialogue;
  - decided on recommendations; and
  - completed a final questionnaire to measure if, how and why their opinions had changed through the day, and then shared these with the group.
- Researchers analyzed the audio and videotaped results; a report was written and shared with participants and decision-makers.<sup>36</sup>

Participants generally moved from a position of just wanting the system fixed to a more complex understanding of the systemic changes that would be required and the subsequent change in their use and expectations of the system (i.e. seeing a nurse instead of a doctor for routine health care needs through a primary care network). Participants came to realize that increased public funds were necessary to ensure equal access to care. They were even willing to accept increases in taxes so long as these were earmarked for the health care, and contingent on a number of other conditions, including the institutionalization of an independent auditor general for the health care system. The choices that emerged from this process reinforced the values of access based on need, fairness and efficiency.

The success of these dialogues is clearly reflected by the recommendation in the final report to develop a Canadian Health Covenant as a reflection of collective values and a consensual vision of the health care system. The report underscored that citizens must continue to be consulted in order to inform future policy decisions in health care. Commissioner Romanow also redefined the role of Canadians to one of active contributor rather than passive consumer of services and policy.

### **For further reading:**

For more information about Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Health Care in Canada [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=32&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=32&l=en) and for a detailed description of the process and impact *Matching Methods with Policy Purpose* [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1631&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1631&l=en).

For more information about Viewpoint Learning and its Choice Dialogue methodology [www.viewpointlearning.com/offer/choice.shtml](http://www.viewpointlearning.com/offer/choice.shtml).

### **3. *The Subcommittee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities***

*A parliamentary committee using e-democracy to involve citizens in policy and program development*

By 2002, constituents had made it clear to their parliamentarians that there were pressing problems with the Canada Pension Plan–Disability (CPP-D) program. In order to tackle this complex problem, the Subcommittee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities driven by MP Carolyn Bennett, a strong advocate for systematic engagement with the public, launched Canada's first-ever online consultation to be undertaken by a parliamentary committee. "The conclusions and recommendations in this report... are based on what are probably the most widely held views ever solicited by a parliamentary committee,"<sup>37</sup> having solicited the feedback of 1,700 Canadians. This case example demonstrates the emerging role of parliament as a mediator between the public and government.

The committee designed a process that drew on the strengths of more traditional consultation processes and combined it with innovative e-democracy methods to include the perspectives of citizens and those affected by the CPP-D. The process unfolded as follows:

- In May 2002, a roundtable of experts was gathered to identify key issues.
- In June 2002, an extensive website was launched by the subcommittee to provide information to all those interested, including research and policy papers, background documents, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), etc.
- In December 2002 (on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities), the online consultation was launched and lasted for 13 weeks. Citizens participated in several ways: completed an issue poll; shared stories; and/or offered potential solutions. Submissions had the option of being anonymous or not, and citizens were explicitly informed that they were assisting in the formulation of recommendations.
- Simultaneous to the above e-consultation, "regular" subcommittee hearings were held with a wide array of witnesses, including: policy experts, advocates, government representatives, medical practitioners, the insurance industry, non-governmental organizations, and many more. Findings from the e-consultations were "tested" with these experts as they emerged.

- The Sub-Committee held a final meeting with experts and a small number of participants to further deliberate on final recommendations.

According to the issue poll, respondents enjoyed participating in the e-consultation process, and “92% either agreed or strongly agreed that based on this experience they would participate in an issue poll again.”<sup>38</sup>

### **For further reading:**

Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. *Listening to Canadians: A First View of the Future of the Canada Pension Plan (Disability) Program*. June 2003. [www.parl.gc.ca/cppd/index\\_e.asp?Language=E](http://www.parl.gc.ca/cppd/index_e.asp?Language=E).

As an example of a federal politician who actively engages constituents in policy matters, see the website of MP Carolyn Bennett [www.carolynbennett.ca/](http://www.carolynbennett.ca/).

## **b) Collaborate**

### **4. Toronto Community Housing Corporation’s Tenant Participation System Giving marginalized people a say in housing decisions and budgets**

Since 2001, Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) has been involving its social housing tenants in decision-making including in the allocation of \$9 million/year, or 13% of its capital budget.<sup>39</sup> TCHC provides 164,000 tenants with social housing, making it the largest social housing provider in Canada. Tenants are generally from marginalized groups including people living with disabilities, recent immigrants and the elderly, all of whom live on a limited budget (average income of \$15,400). Facing pressure from tenants and budget cuts, TCHC decided to engage tenants in making difficult decisions regarding their capital budget.

The process of participatory budgeting spans three years and six phases of planning, summarized as follows:

- Tenants meet by housing unit building to decide on priorities and elect a delegate.
- Delegates from each building meet with other delegates from their region at Community Housing Unit (CHU) Forums where they deliberate and decide on spending priorities for the region and elect 40 to 65 delegates of their CHU.
- Staff draft budgets based on these priorities and CHU delegates are trained.
- Staff present these budgets at the Tenant Budget Council and CHU delegates deliberate the priorities. The Tenant Budget Council decides on top priorities.
- The Tenant Budget Council presents these priorities (over 200 per year) to the CEO, who makes a final decision about priorities which are submitted to the Board of Directors of the TCHC for approval.
- Staff and tenant delegates disseminate information about the decision and process to tenants and oversee the implementation of projects.

The Tenant Participation System has been evaluated and revised after the initial round (2001-2003), resulting in greater decentralization and increased decision-making power for tenants. According to Learner and Wagner, “[t]enants and management developed greater mutual understanding, trust and reciprocity.”<sup>40</sup> Tenants are now better able to accept prioritization of others’ needs when weighed against their own. The Tenant Participation System has seemingly transformed a bleak and confrontational situation into one of building community and democratic culture amongst some of Toronto’s most marginalized peoples.

### **For further reading:**

For further information on this and other cases of participatory budgeting in Canada, see Josh Lerner and Estair Van Wagner. *Participatory Budgeting in Canada: Democratic Innovations in Strategic Spaces*. Transnational Institute, 2006. [www.tni.org/newpol-docs/pbcanada.htm](http://www.tni.org/newpol-docs/pbcanada.htm).

Toronto Community Housing’s website is also useful: [www.torontohousing.ca/tenant\\_life](http://www.torontohousing.ca/tenant_life).

### **c) Empower**

#### **5. Ontario Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform** *Giving citizens the power to reshape electoral politics*

The Ontario Citizen’s Assembly on Electoral Reform was mandated by the provincial government to review the current electoral system, consider alternatives and make recommendations for the betterment of Ontario’s electoral system. A citizen from each of the 103 provincial ridings was randomly selected to participate in the eight-month process (September 2006 to April 2007). The Assembly recommended a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system to replace the current Single Member Plurality system. This recommendation was put to Ontario voters in the October 10, 2007 election,<sup>41</sup> when it was voted against in favour of the status quo.

The process had four broad phases:

**Learning Phase:** Between September and November 2006, members of the Assembly attended six intensive educational weekend sessions that informed them of Ontario’s current electoral system, as well as other systems.

**Consultation Phase:** Between October 2006 and January 2007, members of the Assembly undertook consultations with approximately 3,000 Ontarians through public meetings, written submissions and outreach sessions in their own communities.

**Deliberation Phase:** Between February and June 2007, Assembly members met over six weekends in order to discuss, deliberate and decide on their final recommendation. They collectively selected three main objectives against which they measured various systems. Three votes were held to narrow down the choices and decide on the final recommendation to be put to Ontario voters.

**Public Education Phase:** Between July and October 2007, a public education campaign was conducted to inform citizens of their right to choose between the status quo and mixed member proportional systems. According to many, the short time allowed for this complex education campaign is at least partially responsible for the referendum results.

Despite this demanding and time consuming process, Assembly members remained deeply committed, as noted by the Chair of the Citizens' Assembly, George Thomson:

The assembly members constantly amazed me with their enthusiasm and deep commitment to the task they were given. Throughout the eight-month process, not one member withdrew from the Assembly. Members applied themselves to learning about electoral systems. They talked to people in their communities about the work of the Assembly and chaired public consultation meetings. Some members read hundreds of written submissions. Others participated on working groups to advise the Assembly process or to do more research in specific areas. Many used an online forum to share information and discuss issues between meetings.<sup>42</sup>

This case stands as an example of a citizen engagement process that was not allowed sufficient time for public deliberation and education. The time commitment required in the deliberation phase (six weekends within three months), as well as subsequent phases, may have self-selected for participants who do not have children or elders to care for, do not work weekends or have other constraints on their time. The last phase, and arguably the most important phase, was not given sufficient time (and half of the four months were during the summer). Public education on complex issues such as electoral reform requires years, not months, and requires more than a simple passive approach to public education.

#### **For further reading:**

The final report of the Ontario Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform: *One Ballot, Two Votes: A new way to vote in Ontario*. [www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca/en/default.asp](http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca/en/default.asp).

For an independent evaluation of the process and outcomes by the Institute on Governance: *Citizen Deliberative Decision-Making: Evaluation of the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform* [www.iog.ca/view\\_publication.asp?area=15&publicationItemID=244](http://www.iog.ca/view_publication.asp?area=15&publicationItemID=244).

For a discussion of the merits and drawbacks of the process and MMP see *Getting Ready for the Referendum: Food For Thought... – Forum Highlights*. [www.rcrpp.org/doc.cfm?doc=1737&l=en](http://www.rcrpp.org/doc.cfm?doc=1737&l=en).

British Columbia also embarked on a similar journey of engaging citizens in electoral reform decisions. For information regarding this process go to [www.citizensassembly.bc.ca/public](http://www.citizensassembly.bc.ca/public).

See *Designing Democratic Renewal: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly and Democratic Renewal* edited by Mark Warren and Hilary Pearse, 2008. New York: Cambridge University Press for a detailed examination of the process, impact and significance of the BCCA.

#### Other case examples:

MacKinnon, Mary Pat, Sonia Pitre and Judy Watling. 2007. *Matching Methods with Policy Purpose: Two Case Examples of Public Engagement*. Canadian Policy Research Networks. [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1631&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1631&l=en).

Maxwell, Judith, et al. 2002. *Report on Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Health Care in Canada*. Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada. [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=32&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=32&l=en).

Watling, Judy, Judith Maxwell, Nandini Saxena, Suzanne Taschereau. 2004. *Responsible Action – Citizens' Dialogue on the Long-term Management of Used Nuclear Fuel*. Canadian Policy Research Networks. [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1050&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1050&l=en).

## Chapter IX. Practical Tips

Here are some nuggets of advice and wisdom from people who practice citizen engagement.

The OECD Handbook on public participation offers the following 10 tips:<sup>43</sup>

**Take it seriously:** It's not about how many documents are produced or the number of events that unfold, but rather their content, their process and what is done with the information. This requires planning and dedication.

**Start from the citizen's perspective:** Already outlined in the section on framing (Chapter VII), the success of the engagement process is dependent on the ability to determine why a citizen might be interested in participating.

**Deliver what you promise:** An essential step in building trust and civic participation.

**Watch timing:** This applies across many issues – time for citizens to prepare themselves to participate, timing for relevance in a larger policy process, time for trust to develop.

**Be creative:** There is no “cut and paste” model of citizen engagement. Every situation requires a unique approach and series of methods.

**Balance different interests:** No easy task, this is the ongoing challenge of government. Citizen engagement provides another source of input and opens the doors to understanding between differing parties, although this is not guaranteed!

**Be prepared for criticism:** People may perceive citizen engagement forums as a space to vent. Processes are not always perfect.

**Involve your staff:** Your staff deserves to be “engaged” as well, either for the project at hand or for internal policy and program development.

**Develop a coherent policy:** Strengthening government-citizen relations is in itself a policy and is an important complement, not replacement of, the institutions of citizen engagement.

**Act now:** Do not wait for relations with citizens to become stale. Taking action to engage citizens will prevent future problems.

The following tips were drawn from interviews conducted during research for this handbook:

“Youth engagement [or citizen engagement] is most successful when it is embedded in the process at hand – when it is a priority from the very beginning rather than an afterthought.”  
Nishad Khanna, Students Commission

“There are three requirements for a successful citizen engagement process: the Three R's: Real, Relevant and give Responsibility.” Peter MacLeod, The Planning Desk, drawing on Students Commission

“Citizens are more inclined to participate in urban planning processes at a smaller scale rather than a larger scale. We found that long-term plans and vision exercises tend to be a bit far from the day-to-day preoccupation of citizens. Citizens tend to be asked more often to contribute to concrete initiatives that will improve their quality of life.” Pierre Dubé, National Capital Commission

“The subject matter should drive the policy process. The more contentious it is, the more important it is to have all stakeholder groups involved in the decision-making process.”  
Katherine Beavis, Department of Fisheries and Oceans

**Document and share results!** This is not being done enough. There are great initiatives in Canada, but it is difficult to learn about them. By documenting the process, successes and challenges, champions of new citizen engagement processes will be contributing to an exciting and emerging field. The Canadian Community on Dialogue and Deliberation ([www.c2d2.ca](http://www.c2d2.ca)) hosts conferences regularly where practitioners in this field have a chance to share experiences, exchange and learn.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> This literature was compiled into a bibliography entitled, *A Learning Guide to Public Involvement in Canada* by Mary Pat MacKinnon, Sonia Pitre and Judy Watling. CPRN, Feb. 2007. It is available at [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1622&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1622&l=en).
- <sup>2</sup> See Acknowledgements at beginning of document for a list of key informants.
- <sup>3</sup> MacKinnon, Mary Pat. 2003. *Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future: A 21st Century Social Contract*. Presentation to the Canadian Centre for Management Development, Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, September 26, 2003.
- <sup>4</sup> Yankelovich, Daniel. 1991. *Coming to Public Judgment*. University of Syracuse Press, NY.
- <sup>5</sup> This definition of Public Participation is in clear contrast to that put forward earlier in this chapter and is reflective of the evolving nature of this field.
- <sup>6</sup> Elections Canada, *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada on the 38th General Election Held on June 28, 2004*. Available at [www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&dir=rep/re2&document=index&lang=e&textonly=false](http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&dir=rep/re2&document=index&lang=e&textonly=false).
- <sup>7</sup> EKOS Research Associates. *Citizen Engagement 2005: Government Performance and Public Preferences*. Part of Rethinking Citizen Engagement Study, Ottawa: EKOS, 2005.
- <sup>8</sup> Phillips, Susan D., Michael Orsini. *Mapping the Links: Citizen Involvement in Policy Processes*. Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2002.
- <sup>9</sup> "Wicked" is a term recently adopted by policy circles, used to describe complex societal issues without a clear "right" answer, often involving a moral positioning.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, and Lukensmeyer, Carolyn J. and Lars Hasselblad Torres. 2006. *Public Deliberation: A Manager's Guide to Citizen Engagement*. The IBM Center for The Business of Government.
- <sup>11</sup> Turnbull, Lori, Peter Aucoin. *Fostering Canadians' Role in Public Policy: A Strategy for Institutionalizing Public Involvement in Policy*. CPRN, March 2006. Available at [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1404&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1404&l=en).
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>13</sup> Public involvement in this document by Turnbull and Aucoin is defined similarly to the working definition of citizen engagement in this handbook.
- <sup>14</sup> To read the Judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada regarding this case, go to <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/1990/1990rcs1-1075/1990rcs1-1075.html>.
- <sup>15</sup> To read the Judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada regarding this case, go to <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/2004/2004scc73/2004scc73.html>.
- <sup>16</sup> To read the Judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada regarding this case, go to <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/2004/2004scc74/2004scc74.html>.
- <sup>17</sup> For a copy of the full Land Use Plan entitled, *Shxunutun's Tu Suleluxwst: In the footsteps of our Ancestors* and a copy of the Consultation Policy, visit [www.hulquminum.bc.ca/our\\_work/projects](http://www.hulquminum.bc.ca/our_work/projects).
- <sup>18</sup> *The Government of Saskatchewan Guidelines for Consultation with First Nations and Métis People: A Guide for Decision Makers*. Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Relations Department, May 2006, page 4. Available at [www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/](http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/).

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- <sup>19</sup> *The Government of Saskatchewan Guidelines for Consultation with First Nations and Métis People: A Guide for Decision Makers*. Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Relations Department, May 2006, page 2. Available at [www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/](http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/).
- <sup>20</sup> Phillips, Susan D., and Michael Orsini. 2002. *Mapping the Links: Citizen Involvement in Policy Processes*. Canadian Policy Research Networks. [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=169&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=169&l=en).
- <sup>21</sup> Abelson, Julian and Francois-Pierre Gauvin. 2006. *Primer on Public Involvement*. Health Council of Canada. [www.healthcouncilcanada.ca/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=108](http://www.healthcouncilcanada.ca/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=108).
- <sup>22</sup> Adapted from Questions provided by Vancouver Coastal Health – internal document.
- <sup>23</sup> Adapted from Questions provided by Vancouver Coastal Health – internal document.
- <sup>24</sup> Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision-making. 2000: 20.
- <sup>25</sup> Having an “impartial” facilitator versus an “insider” as facilitator is the subject of some debate and is further addressed in Chapter VII, section II, 8. Facilitators/moderators.
- <sup>26</sup> Environment Canada website. July 18th, 2007. [www.ec.gc.ca/CEPARegistry/participation/](http://www.ec.gc.ca/CEPARegistry/participation/).
- <sup>27</sup> Coleman, Stephen and John Gotze. *Bowling Together: Online Public Engagement in Policy Deliberation*. Hansard Society. [www.bowlingtogether.net/references.html](http://www.bowlingtogether.net/references.html).
- <sup>28</sup> Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision-making. 2000: 20.
- <sup>29</sup> Pruitt, Bettye and Philip Thomas. 2007. *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners*. Canadian International Development Agency, IDEA, UNDP and GS/OAS. [www.idea.int/publications/democratic\\_dialogue/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/democratic_dialogue/index.cfm).
- <sup>30</sup> Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision-making 2000: 20.
- <sup>31</sup> Some of these questions are drawn directly from Vancouver Coastal Health’s *Checklist for Citizen Engagement Team*, an internal document.
- <sup>32</sup> Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision-making 2000: 20.
- <sup>33</sup> Available at [www.vch.ca/ce](http://www.vch.ca/ce).
- <sup>34</sup> Available at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/care/romanow/index1.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/care/romanow/index1.html).
- <sup>35</sup> Maxwell, Judith, Steven Rosell, Pierre-Gerlier Forest. *Giving Citizens a Voice in Healthcare Policy in Canada*. British Medical Journal May 10, 2003. Vol. 326, p. 1,031-33. Available at [www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=292&l=en](http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=292&l=en).
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. *Listening to Canadians: A First View of the Future of the Canada Pension Plan (Disability) Program*. June 2003. Available at [www.parl.gc.ca/cppd/index\\_e.asp?Language=E](http://www.parl.gc.ca/cppd/index_e.asp?Language=E).
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* Chapter 1, p. 7.

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- <sup>39</sup> Most information regarding the Tenant Participation System is drawn from: Josh Lerner and Estair Van Wagner. *Participatory Budgeting in Canada: Democratic Innovations in Strategic Spaces*. Transnational Institute, 2006. [www.tni.org/newpol-docs/pbcanada.htm](http://www.tni.org/newpol-docs/pbcanada.htm).
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> Most information is drawn from the final report of the Ontario Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform. *One Ballot, Two Votes: A new way to vote in Ontario*. [www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca/en/default.asp](http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca/en/default.asp).
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.
- <sup>43</sup> Gramberger, Marc. *Citizens as Partners: OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy Making*. OECD, 2001.

## Appendix A. An Overview of Public Participation Methods

Method	Description	Strengths	Limitations	Examples
<b>Citizen juries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A method invented in 1971 by Ned Crosby from the Jefferson Centre of Minneapolis</li> <li>• Composed of 12-20 randomly selected individuals representative of their community who meet over several days to deliberate on a policy issue</li> <li>• They are informed about the issue, hear evidence from witnesses and cross-examine them. Then, they discuss the matter amongst themselves and reach a decision.</li> <li>• Another method is relatively similar in respect to its form and function: the planning cells. The planning cells were invented in Germany by Peter Dienel in 1969</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides opportunities to introduce new perspectives and challenge existing ones</li> <li>• More careful examination of the issue</li> <li>• Promotes consensus building</li> <li>• Brings legitimacy and democratic control to non-elected public bodies</li> <li>• Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusive - only a few individuals participate</li> <li>• Potential problems lie in initial stages of preparation (e.g., jury selection, agenda setting, witness selection)</li> <li>• Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>• Influence on final policy isn't guaranteed if the government is not formally committed to take the results into consideration</li> <li>• Can be difficult to generate neutral and complete briefing material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 1974, several citizens juries have been held in Great Britain, Australia and India but mostly in the USA under the auspices of the Jefferson Center.</li> <li>• Citizen juries have been used with issues related to environment, energy, health and education.</li> </ul> <p>A few examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physician Assisted Suicide (1998)</li> <li>• Comparing Environmental Risks (1996)</li> <li>• America's Tough Choices: Health Care Reform (1993)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Key references on citizen juries:</b></p> <p>Coote A. and Lenaghan J. <i>Citizens' Juries: Theory into Practice</i>, London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 1997.</p> <p>Jefferson Center. [<a href="http://www.jefferson-center.org">www.jefferson-center.org</a>].</p> <p>Lenaghan J., New B. and Mitchell E. "Setting Priorities: Is there a Role for Citizens' Juries?". <i>British Medical Journal</i> 1996, 312: 1591-1593.</p> <p>Lenaghan J. "Involving the Public in Rationing Decisions : The Experience of Citizens Juries". <i>Health Policy</i> 1999. 49(1-2) : 45-61.</p>			

## Appendix A. An Overview of Public Participation Methods (cont'd)

Method	Description	Strengths	Limitations	Examples
<b>Citizen panels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A randomly selected group of 12 citizens meet routinely (e.g., four times per year) to consider and discuss issues and make decisions</li> <li>• Used to guide health resource allocation decision</li> <li>• Panels act as “sounding boards” for governing authority</li> <li>• Attitudes, values and preferences of the panel are measured on a regular basis (generally via a survey)</li> <li>• Can take different forms: some are non-deliberative (mail or phone panels)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of panel members can be replaced at each meeting (i.e. 4 members) to increase the overall number of participants.</li> <li>• Multiple panels can be held and run to increase participant numbers (i.e. reduce exclusivity)</li> <li>• People benefit from discussion within groups, but also from discussing issues with family and friends outside of the panel</li> <li>• Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less exclusive than citizen juries, but still only a few individuals participate</li> <li>• Potential problems lie in initial stages of preparation (e.g., selection of panel members, agenda setting)</li> <li>• Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>• Can be difficult to generate neutral and complete briefing material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used for the last two decades in many countries : Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, and Canada.</li> <li>• Different policy issues like transport planning, environment, health and telecommunications.</li> <li>• In Canada, a few pilot projects of citizens panels organized with regional health authorities</li> <li>• Brant County – Ontario (Health priorities)</li> <li>• Charlevoix – Québec (Health priorities and resources allocation)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Key references on citizen panels:</b></p> <p>Abelson J, Forest P-G, and the Effective Public Consultation Team. Towards More Meaningful, Informed and Effective Public Consultation. Final Report to the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, 2004c.</p> <p>Bowie C., Richardson A., and Sykes W. “Consulting the Public about Health Service Priorities”. <i>British Medical Journal</i> 1995, 311: 1155-1158.</p> <p>Kathlene L and Martin JA. “Enhancing Citizen Participation: Panel Designs, Perspectives, and Policy Formation”. <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i> 1991, 10(1): 46-63.</p>			

## Appendix A. An Overview of Public Participation Methods (cont'd)

Method	Description	Strengths	Limitations	Examples
<b>Consensus conferences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed by the Danish Board of Technology.</li> <li>A dialogue between experts and citizens open to the public and the media</li> <li>The citizen panel plays the leading role (10 to 16 people who are introduced to the topic by a professional facilitator)</li> <li>The citizen panel formulates the questions to be taken up at the conference, and participates in the selection of experts to answer them.</li> <li>During the first day, experts present their answers to the questions from the citizen panel.</li> <li>During the second and third days, questions are clarified and discussions are held between the expert panel, the citizen panel and the audience. The citizen panel produces a final document, presenting their conclusions and recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process of communicating information about the conference topic provides a strong educational component</li> <li>Useful method for obtaining informed opinions from lay persons on complex issues</li> <li>Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment method may not ensure representative participation</li> <li>Exclusive process</li> <li>Elaborate process requiring significant resources</li> <li>Multiple conferences may be required to ensure that broad, representative opinions are sought</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since 1987, several consensus conferences were held in Denmark, Canada, France, the USA, Great Britain, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Germany, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, New-Zealand, Norway, South Korea and Switzerland.</li> </ul> <p>A few examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Xenotransplantation in Canada (2001)</li> <li>Agriculture and genetic technologies (1987)</li> <li>Food irradiation (1989)</li> <li>Human genome (1989)</li> <li>Infertility (1993)</li> <li>GMO (1999)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Key references on consensus conferences:</b></p> <p>Andersen IE and Jaeger B. "Scenario Workshops and Consensus Conferences : Towards more Democratic Decision-Making". <i>Science and Public Policy</i> 1999, 26(5): 331-340.</p> <p>Danish Board of Technology. [<a href="http://www.tekno.dk">www.tekno.dk</a>].</p> <p>Einsiedel E. "Assessing a controversial medical technology: Canadian public consultations on xenotransplantation". <i>Public Understanding of Science</i> 2002, 11: 315-331.</p> <p>Joss S. and Durant J. <i>Public Participation in Science: The Role of Consensus Conferences in Europe</i>. London: Science Museum, 1995.</p> <p>LOKA Institute. [<a href="http://www.loka.org/pages/worldpanels.htm">www.loka.org/pages/worldpanels.htm</a>].</p>			

## Appendix A. An Overview of Public Participation Methods (cont'd)

Method	Description	Strengths	Limitations	Examples
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Scenario workshops</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed by the Danish Board of Technology.</li> <li>• A scenario is an account or a synopsis of a possible course of action or events.</li> <li>• Before the workshop, a few scenarios are presented to inform the participants.</li> <li>• Between 24 to 32 participants come together for a two day meeting (decision makers, experts and citizens)</li> <li>• Using the scenarios as starting point, the participants formulate new ideas, solutions and recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate dialogue, collaboration and planning between every actor.</li> <li>• Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less exclusive than citizen juries, but still only a few individuals participate</li> <li>• Potential problems lie in initial stages of preparation (e.g., selection of panel members, agenda setting)</li> <li>• Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>• Can be difficult to generate neutral and complete briefing material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used in Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland.</li> <li>• Urban ecology 1991–1993</li> <li>• The future of public libraries 1995–1996</li> <li>• European Awareness Scenario Workshop (EASW) Initiative launched by the European Commission 1993-1994</li> <li>• EUROPTA project 1998-1999</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Key references on scenario workshops:</b></p> <p>Andersen IE and Jaeger B. "Scenario Workshops and Consensus Conferences : Towards more Democratic Decision-Making". <i>Science and Public Policy</i> 1999, 26(5): 331-340.</p> <p>Danish Board of Technology. [<a href="http://www.tekno.dk">www.tekno.dk</a>].</p>			

## Appendix A. An Overview of Public Participation Methods (cont'd)

Method	Description	Strengths	Limitations	Examples
<b>Deliberative polls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>James Fishkin developed the method in 1988.</li> <li>Builds on the opinion poll by incorporating element of deliberation</li> <li>Measures what public would think if it was informed and engaged around an issue</li> <li>Composed of a randomly selected sample of citizens:</li> <li>Large or small groups (50 to 500+ persons)</li> <li>Involves polling the participants, followed by discussion, and finally, polling them again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides insights into public opinions and how people come to decisions</li> <li>Seeks informed opinions, does not force people to reach consensus</li> <li>Large, random sample</li> <li>Changes in responses can be observed after the deliberative intervention takes place</li> <li>Help to measure citizen's values and preferences</li> <li>Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incentives (e.g., honorarium, transportation) are important requires a lot of preparation time</li> <li>Although sample size is large and random, ensuring representativeness is difficult</li> <li>Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>Can be difficult to generate neutral and complete briefing material</li> </ul>	<p>Deliberative polls were used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Great Britain for the future of the National Health Service and for policies to reduce criminality.</li> <li>In Australia for the reconciliation with native peoples and the abolition of monarchy.</li> <li>In Denmark for the adoption of the Euro as national currency.</li> <li>In the USA for energy and environmental policies.</li> <li>In 2002, a similar method was used for the project Listening to the City : Remember and Rebuild to rebuild Lower Manhattan.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Key references on deliberative polls:</b></p> <p>Center for Deliberative Democracy. [<a href="http://cdd.stanford.edu/polls/index.html">http://cdd.stanford.edu/polls/index.html</a>].</p> <p>Fishkin JS. <i>The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.</p> <p>Fishkin JS., Luskin RC and Jowell R. "Deliberative Polling and Public Consultation". <i>Parliamentary Affairs</i> 2000, 53(4) : 657-666.</p>			

## Appendix A. An Overview of Public Participation Methods (cont'd)

Method	Description	Strengths	Limitations	Examples
<b>Citizens' dialogues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Canadian Policy Research Network has been using the Citizens' dialogue methodology since the mid-1990s.</li> <li>A citizens' dialogue brings together a group of citizens to work through a workbook or guide that includes basic information on the issue (small group deliberation)</li> <li>The group moderator encourages participants to consider and reflect on each of the viewpoints provided.</li> <li>A dialogue session can last up to three hours. The participants move from defining values and identifying common ground to putting forward concrete steps that can constructively inform policy development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strives to inform policy and program development with an expression of citizens' underlying values</li> <li>Gives participants an opportunity to listen to other views, enlarge and possibly change their own point of view</li> <li>Provides information in the form of a workbook or guide carefully crafted to represent several perspectives on an issue, lending a layer of complexity and struggle to the discussion</li> <li>Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although sample size is large and random, ensuring representativeness is difficult</li> <li>Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>Can be difficult to generate neutral and complete briefing material</li> </ul>	<p>Many citizens dialogues where organized in Canada on very different issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Dialogue and Summit for Young Canadians</li> <li>Citizens' Dialogue on the Long-term Management of Used Nuclear Fuel</li> <li>Citizens' Dialogue on the Ontario Budget Strategy 2004-2008</li> <li>Citizens' Dialogue on the Kind of Canada We Want</li> <li>Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Health Care in Canada</li> <li>Asking Canadian NGOs What Matters For Aging</li> <li>Quality of Life in Canada</li> <li>The Society We Want</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Key references on deliberative polls:</b></p> <p>Canadian Policy Research Networks. [<a href="http://www.cprn.org/en/theme.cfm?theme=4">http://www.cprn.org/en/theme.cfm?theme=4</a>].</p> <p>Maxwell J., Rosell S. and Forest PG. "Giving Citizens a Voice in Healthcare Policy in Canada". <i>British Medical Journal</i> 2003, 326: 1031-1033.</p>			



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