



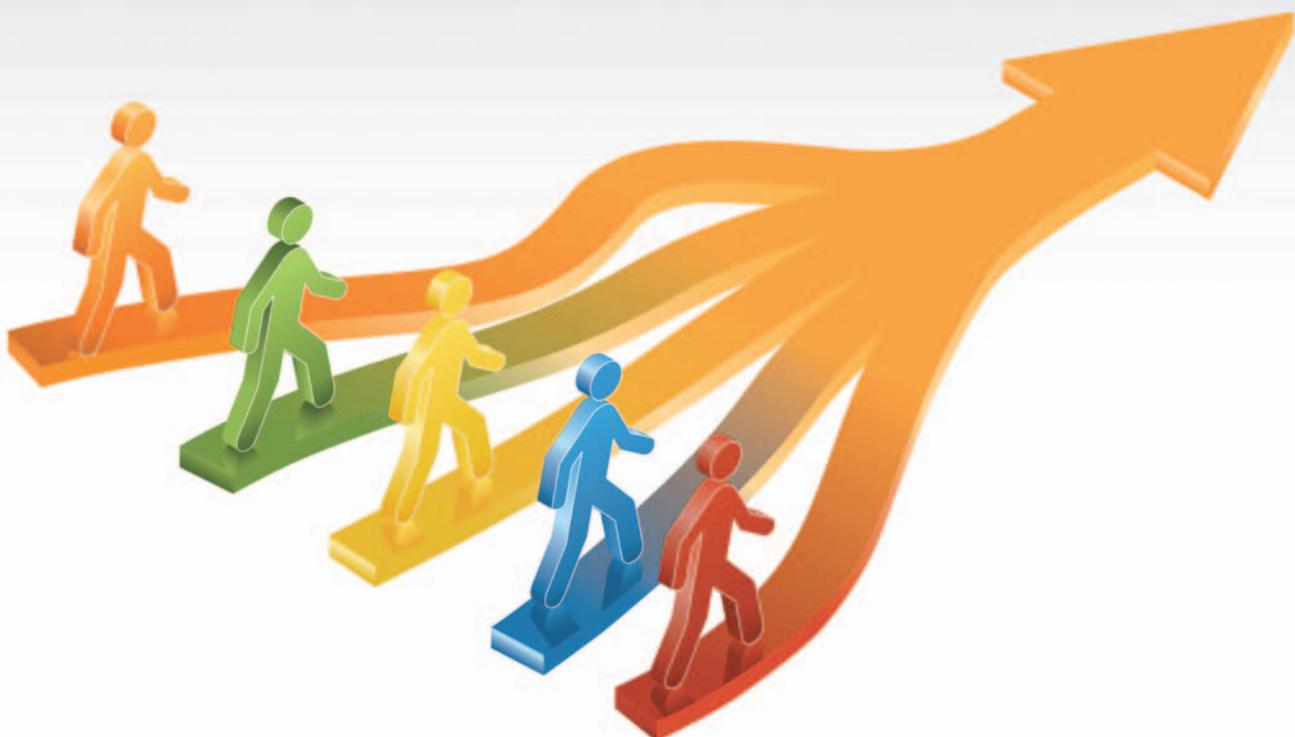
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Introduction

Participation is a fundamental human right. It strengthens commitment to democracy. All people, particularly young, marginalized and vulnerable groups, have a right to express their views on decisions directly affecting their lives. Participation is not a gift or a privilege bestowed from above (adults to children or Government to citizens), but the right of every person capable of expressing a view. This fundamental right can only be honoured if Government-citizen connections are further strengthened. Participation is not an end in itself; as a procedural right, it represents the means through which citizens may take part in and influence processes, decisions and activities in order to achieve justice, influence policy outcomes, expose abuses of power and secure their fundamental rights.

Adapted from Moghadam, 2002 and Hijab, 2002.



II. The role of civil society as a mechanism to strengthen Government-citizen relations

Civil society is a modern construct that allows citizens to maintain solidarities through associational life. It includes, among others, public voluntary associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations. How competing interests and conflicts are handled and resolved depends on the strength of democratic institutions, the nature of the State and the balance of social power.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have a crucial role to play in the policymaking processes of the State. Greater engagement of citizens and communities is becoming a feature of many Governments, and public and private organizations. CSOs are no longer restricted to a service delivery role. Around the world, policymakers recognize that the active engagement and participation of communities and citizens in the policymaking process not only establishes suitable institutional channels for dialogue with communities, but are also key to effective policymaking and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

Think tanks are public policy research, analysis and engagement institutes that generate policy research and opinion on domestic and international issues to enable



policymakers and the public to formulate informed public policies. Think tanks may act as a bridge between the academic and policymaking communities, serving in the public interest as an independent voice that translates basic and applied research into a language and form that are understandable, reliable and accessible to policymakers and the public.

Sources: Moghadam, 2002 and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007.

Global Overview							
There are 5,465 think tanks globally:							
North America		1,872 (34.25%)		Latin America and the Caribbean		538 (9.84%)	
Western Europe		1,208 (22.10%)		Africa		424 (7.76%)	
Asia		653 (11.95%)		Middle East and North Africa		218 (3.99%)	
Eastern Europe		514 (9.41%)					
Middle East and North Africa							
Algeria	4	Iraq	15	Libya	1	Saudi Arabia	3
Bahrain	3	Palestine	17	Morocco	9	Syrian Arab Republic	4
Cyprus	6	Jordan	13	Oman	0	Tunisia	8
Egypt	23	Kuwait	8	Yemen	7	Turkey	21
Iran	12	Lebanon	11	Qatar	1	United Arab Emirates	4

Source: McGann, J. G., 2008.

III. The advantages of citizen participation in Government policymaking decisions

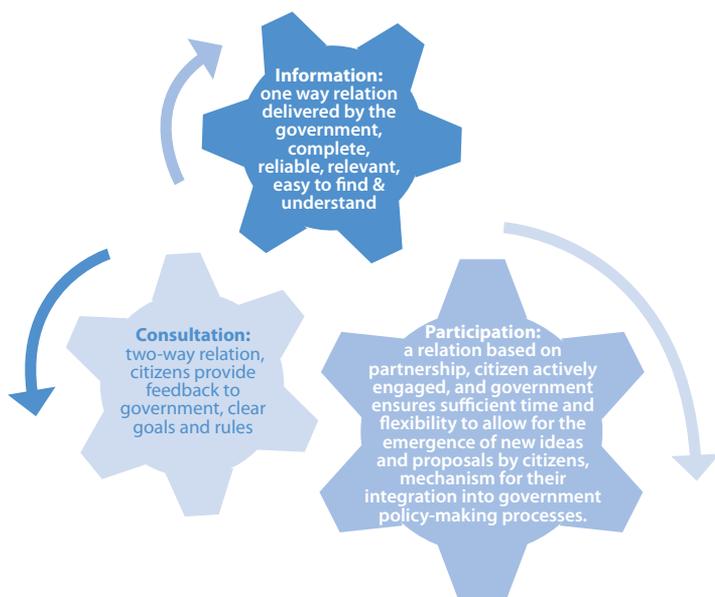
	Advantages to citizens	Advantages to Governments
Decision process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (citizens can learn from and inform Government representatives) • Persuade and enlighten Government • Gain skills for citizen activists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (Governments can learn from and inform citizens) • Persuade citizens by building trust • Build strategic alliances • Gain legitimacy of decisions
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain some control over policy processes • Better policy and implementation decisions • Promote well-being of people • Protect group rights • Human development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid litigation costs • Better policy and implementation decisions • Better performance of good governance • Strengthen commitment to and understanding of human rights and democracy

Adapted from Irvin and Stansbury, 2004.

IV. How to strengthen Government-citizen relations

Government-citizen relations cover a broad spectrum of interaction at each stage of the policymaking cycle. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) proposes viewing this complex relationship as follows:

The relationship between information, consultation and participation is subsequently developed into a legal policy and institutional framework for enforcement purposes as follows:



Source: OECD, 2001b.

V. Who are the partners and what are their roles?

Partners	Role
National Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction, guidance and leadership • Enabling environment for participation • National and local support • Partnership, transparency and accountability
Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic prosperity • Organizations and leaders of business and unions • Influence of large private sector domestic enterprises • Growth strategy support investment
NGOs/CSOs/civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen representation • Social dimension and participation • Implementation capabilities and accountability • Participatory: monitoring, budgeting and auditing
Academia, experts and think-tanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research support and partnership • Validation of methods and results • Database provision • Provision of functional relationships between options and impacts
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important source of information • Platform to debate approaches to addressing problems
International organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical specialized support and financial support • Execution and implementation capabilities • Representation and in-country linkage • Promulgation of enforceable policies, rules and laws

Adapted from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007.

VI. Guiding principles for public participation

(a) Conduct a situation analysis

Before starting a plan, a situation analysis should be carried out. This is likely to identify key decision-makers and stakeholders; the interests of key decision-makers and stakeholders; the changes desired; and the positions of the parties concerned towards such changes (whether they support or oppose them).



(b) *Decide on the desired levels of engagement*

A detailed model for increasing levels of public participation

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns 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.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns 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.
Example of tools available to the public	- Fact sheets - Websites - Open meetings	- Focus groups - Surveys - Public meetings	- Workshops - Monitoring public opinion	- Advisory committees - Consensus building - Participatory decision-making	- Juries - Ballots - Delegated decisions

Adapted from International Association for Public Participation, 2007.

(c) *Clarify the standards for public participation*

Applying standards for public participation ensures that effectiveness and efficiency are maximized, resulting in a high-quality participation process. Many standards have been established, of which the following two are examples:

(i) The International Association for Public Participation standards for public participation:

- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives;
- Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision;
- The process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all participants;
- The process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of people potentially affected by the proposed decision;
- The process involves participants in defining how they will participate and thus how the process will be structured;
- The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way;

- The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Adapted from www.iap2.org.

(ii) The Co-Intelligence Institute standards for participation:

- Involve all relevant parties;
- Empower the people’s engagement – in other words, get them feeling involved;
- Utilize multiple “forms of knowing”. This includes rational, scientific methods; narrative (story-telling) methods; and intuitive methods;
- Ensure high-quality dialogue;
- Establish an ongoing participatory process (as opposed to, for instance, a one-shot public hearing);
- Move from positions to interests, needs and mutual solutions;
- Help people feel fully heard.

Adapted from www.co-intelligence.org.

(d) *Decide on the stakeholders to be involved*

Stakeholders are those who are:

The value of citizen engagement: the example of New Orleans

Two years after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans – decimating the city’s infrastructure and exposing deep racial and economic disparities – the city remained without a recovery plan to guide rebuilding efforts and leverage Government recovery funds. Early planning efforts were met with anger and protest as the community struggled to distribute resources and revive an entire city in an environment where public trust in Government had been severely abused.

In December 2006, thousands of current and former residents of the city were invited to an unprecedented Community Congress that took place at 21 meeting sites across the United States (half the residents of New Orleans had not yet been able to return home). More than 2,500 people, representing the demographic diversity of pre-Katrina New Orleans, took part in the deliberative forum. Linked together by satellite and the Internet, residents struggled with the tough choices facing the city and articulated a set of collective priorities for rebuilding their home city.

One month later, 1,300 people came back together to review a recovery plan that had been developed based on their priorities. Support for the plan was overwhelming; ninety-two per cent of participants agreed that the plan should move forward. For the first time, community leaders had a public mandate to act. Building on this support, the city’s recovery plan was soon approved by the city and the state and has begun to be implemented.

Reproduced from Lukensmeyer, 2009.

- Affected by or who could significantly affect a priority issue;
- Directly affected by the outcome of a decision-making process;
- Possess information, resources and expertise needed for strategy formulation and implementation;
- Control implementation instruments.

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007.

(e) *Decide jointly on the issues to be addressed*

Only when citizens and Government officials work

together to prepare a plan can community needs and priorities be fully identified.

(f) *Choose tools and mechanisms for delivering information*

A variety of tools, adapted to local traditions and practices, is usually required to deliver information. The choice of tools depends on financial and human resources, and the time and skills available. Governments use a variety of tools to seek feedback on policy issues, including opinion polls and surveys. Citizens may use such tools as “passive” or “active” access to information. The tools for delivering information may also be categorized as “direct” or “indirect” as follows:

Direct	Indirect
Direct mailing: Delivering information directly to the citizen’s doorstep	Media: Use of press releases and press conferences to solicit media coverage of Government initiatives and policies (TV, radio and print)
Information centres: Providing information desks in public offices, sector-specific information centres or one-stop shops	Advertising: Purchase of advertising space (on TV, radio, newspapers, billboards and posters) to reach a wide audience
Internet services: Online discussion groups	Civil society organizations: Use of intermediaries to reach specific groups in society, business associations, citizens’ associations and trade unions
Telephone services: Provision of toll-free telephone numbers, automatic telephone services and call centres	Publications: Annual reports, brochures and leaflets
Events: Organization of special events (such as exhibitions) and participation in trade fairs (by taking information stands, for example)	

Adapted from OECD, 2001a.



Guiding principles for information, consultation and active participation in policymaking

1. **Commitment** at all levels, from politicians, senior managers and public officials;
2. **Rights** must be firmly grounded in law or policy;
3. **Clarity** in the respective roles and responsibilities of citizens in providing input, and Government in making decisions for which they are accountable;
4. **Time** sufficient for consultation and participation to be effective;
5. **Objective**, complete and accessible information provided by the Government during policymaking;
6. **Resources** include financial, technical and human;
7. **Coordination** across Government units to enhance knowledge management, ensure policy coherence, avoid duplication and reduce the risk of “consultation fatigue” among citizens and civil society organizations;
8. **Accountability** for the use they make of citizens’ inputs received through feedback, public consultation and active participation;
9. **Evaluation** of performance in providing information, conducting consultation and engaging citizens;
10. **Active citizenship** assists the Government to take concrete actions.

Adapted from OECD, 2009.

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Address

United Nations House,
P.O. Box 11-8575,
Riad El-Solh, Beirut-Lebanon
Tel.: +961-1-981301;
Fax: +961-1-981510
e-mail: webmaster-escwa@un.org
website: www.escwa.un.org