CITIZEN PARTICIPATION HANDBOOK

People's Voice Project
International Centre for Policy Studies

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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: A CATALYST FOR REFORM AND A MONITOR OF PROGRESS

Tom Monastyrski
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At the core of democratic development in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is the need for people to believe that the politicians they elect to represent them are addressing their concerns and best interests in improving the welfare and "quality of life" for the local community. This is increasingly important at the municipal government level where the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery is more acute and where the lack of accessibility of citizens and transparent decision-making fuels corruption, inhibits good governance and decreases the likelihood for social and economic improvements.

In the pursuit of more effective and efficient government service delivery, a number of local government bodies and representatives of civil society throughout CEE are taking active approaches through the implementation of a number of citizen participation mechanisms. The international conference that took place in Yaremche, Ukraine from November 22–25, 2001 under the auspices of the People's Voice Project provided an excellent opportunity for these individuals to share their methodologies, the problems that they encountered and, most importantly, the results of their work. The conference welcomed approximately 90 participants from 17 different countries throughout CEE and showcased a broad spectrum of different approaches, guidelines and possible strategies.

What was significant about the conference itself was that it represented a wide range of citizen participation methodologies and it was clear that there is an increasingly important trend to include the input and feedback of citizens in development of policies and programs. This trend manifests itself in a number of ways: public hearings, community advisory councils, social monitoring, report cards, participatory budgeting, etc. Some of the participants are making more progress than others, but there is no doubting the existence of a collective effort pushing the reform process even further and ensuring that politicians remain accountable to the citizens they represent.

The proceedings from this citizen participation conference in Yaremche, Ukraine were not only about sharing experiences and strategies. Rather, the participants used it as an opportunity to see what their counterparts in other parts of CEE are capable of accomplishing and to build and expand networks, both formally and informally, with them. The work being done in citizen participation is only one example of the increasing influence civil society is having on the process of reforming local governments. Coupled with other development initiatives, there is a growing force that pushes the reform agenda and proposes specific problems through monitoring service delivery and cooperating with local authorities in proposing policy alternatives.

The opportunity to share ideas and lessons learned in citizen participation has been an important part of the People's Voice Project. It is the hope of the Project management team that the results of this conference can be used not only in the Project pilot cities (Ternopil, Ivano Frankivsk, Kupyansk and Chuguiv), but in other parts of Ukraine and CEE. The Citizen Participation Handbook, which is the product of this conference, will be made available not only to participants of the conference but to partners and municipalities throughout Ukraine. It will initially be published in Ukrainian and English, but will eventually be translated into Russian. Portions of the handbook will be used as part of the training program associated with the People's Voice Project and will likely be used in the expansion of its methodology to other cities. It will also be made available on the website of the People's Voice project (www.icps.kiev.ua/pvp) and we hope that a number of practioners, academics and researches take advantage of this resource.

At this time, I would personally like to thank the organizers of the conference, specifically Olga Zakharchenko, Agnes Natkaniec and Gina Holdar, for all the hard work they did in organizing and facilitating the conference. I would also like to thank the Open Society Institute, the Canadian Bureau for International Education, the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for their financial support for this conference and other related initiatives under the auspices of the People's Voice Project.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION CONFERENCE AND HANDBOOK

This publication contains results of the international conference "Citizen Participation in the Decision-Making Process at the Local Level in Central Eastern European Countries (CEE): Concepts and Practices", which took place in Yaremche, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine on November 22-25, 2001. The conference was organized by the People's Voice Project, which focuses on building integrity and improving governance at the municipal level in Ukraine, and its local partners — the Urban Development Institute (Ivano-Frankivsk) and the Institute of Urban Development (Nova Odesa).

The goal of the international conference was to increase opportunities to enhance citizen participation in the decision-making process at the local level in CEE countries through the learning and sharing of concepts and practical skills. Approximately 90 individuals, including experts, representatives of NGOs, local authorities and donors participated in the conference, representing Ukraine, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Estonia, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

The Handbook on Citizen Participation is aimed at widening the impact of the international conference. It summarizes the plenary sessions, and provides step-by-step guidelines for the practical methods covered in each of the working groups during the conference. These include:

- Citizen Advisory Groups
- City Strategic Planning
- Coalition Building
- Community Organizing
- Participatory (Action) Research
- Participatory Budgeting
- Public Education
- Public Hearings
- Report Cards
- Social Monitoring

The handbook covers each of these citizen participation methodologies, with discussions and practical illustrations on how these concepts have been or might be used in the CEE region.

The Citizen Participation Handbook makes the work of the conference sustainable and far-reaching. Through the distribution to conference participants, their local contacts, other Ukrainian and CEE NGOs and local officials, the work of the conference is disseminated to a wider audience. The handbook will act as a reference source for all interested parties, providing general information and case studies from the CEE countries on the topic of citizen participation. Together, these initiatives serve to further the knowledge and practice of citizen participation and help to increase their usage in local contexts throughout the CEE region.

HANDBOOK STRUCTURE

The Handbook begins with an outline of issues on citizen participation, which were discussed during the plenary sessions and working groups. Subsequently, a variety of citizen participation methodologies are presented in the following chapters. These methodologies can be applied to facilitate dialogues between local governments and citizens in order to improve public service delivery. The following chapters discuss some of these techniques, which have proven to be effective in the CEE context:

Citizen Advisory Groups

They are an important way for the Local Government Unit (LGU) to engage citizens in the process of government and to keep in touch with changing public needs between elections.

City Strategic Planning

This is an important tool for communities attempting to achieve community health, including physical, economic and social well-being. The handbook covers two types of strategic planning approaches:

a) Participatory Urban Assessment in Capital Planning, and
b) Strategic Planning for Healthy Communities

Coalition Building

This methodology is necessary when one organization recognizes that by acting alone, it does not have the capability to successfully influence an issue and implement the desired changes

Community Organizing

This method focuses on how citizens should take power into their own hands and organize among themselves in order to implement changes.

Participatory Budgeting and Capital Investment Planning

This method focuses on how active participation of all stakeholders is fundamental to designing an efficient and practical budget and capital investment plan.

Participatory (Action) Research

Participatory research is a means of putting research capabilities in the hands of people. By utilizing this method, citizens can identify issues themselves as knowing actors through defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, and transforming their lives.

Public Education

Public education is a first-step method for involving citizens in the life of the community and in creating a participative culture.

Public Hearings

A public hearing can be viewed as a forum where individual citizens, citizens groups and local officials come together to exchange information and opinions about civic issues before action is taken.

Report Cards

Report cards utilize survey research methods to uncover citizens' attitudes toward issues in their communities. They can be used to guide the policy and actions of local officials and NGOs.

Social Monitoring

Social monitoring is a process that allows the public to follow the implementation of government decisions and policies at the local level, measure their efficiency and adequacy and provide feedback.

All of these chapters are the written version of the experts' presentations during the conference and were prepared according to the following outline:

- Overview of the Participation Methodology
- Context for Using the Participation Methodology
- Process/Steps for Successful Implementation
- Risks/Obstacles
- Resources
- Method Examples

The Handbook also contains a list of the international conference participants and Ukrainian and international references to help with a further understanding of participatory methodologies. Finally, the Handbook concludes with an essay entitled "The Role of Citizen Participation in Policy Development and Implementation". This paper provides an overview of public participation methodologies and how they are used in the context of the People's Voice Project in Ukraine.

PRACTICAL ISSUES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

What Is Citizen Participation?

Citizen participation is a community-based process, where citizens organize themselves and their goals at the grassroots level and work together through non-governmental community organizations to influence the decision-making process. Citizens get most involved in this process when the issue at stake relates directly to them. Furthermore, citizen participation occurs when all the stakeholders cooperate to implement changes.

Why Have Public Participation?

During the last decade, many countries in Central and Eastern Europe have been undergoing major changes, both in their political and economic systems. Among the challenges that these countries have been facing is the issue of incorporating citizens into the decision-making process. Very often citizens do not understand their rights and responsibilities and therefore are not able to express their opinions and concerns. Even though the process is slow and tiresome, the countries of this region are making great efforts to strengthen their democratic systems.

Public participation is a key ingredient in the recipe for democracy. Public participation increases transparency in the decision-making process. If citizens are involved in the policy development, they will be able to make government officials more accountable for their decisions. Therefore, individuals must be involved in the decision-making process because their input can help create useful solutions to problems, such as community housing or education, which are an integral part of their every day lives.

Who Should Participate?

Individuals and groups that are involved in the process of influencing decision-making are defined as stakeholders. These are people who have some interest in the policy and thus want to express their opinion. Every citizen should participate in the decision-making process at the local level, because, in one way or another, he or she will be influenced by the policies implemented by the government.

When Should Public Participation Occur?

Citizen participation should not be undertaken under any special circumstances, but should be a part of the everyday life of citizens. Public participation is not a seasonal event. It is each citizen's right and responsibility to participate not only during the election period but also in times between elections. Dissemination of information about policies and issues at hand can occur both in an upward (i.e. citizens express their concerns) and downward (i.e. government officials inform citizens about policies being developed and their rights and responsibilities) motion.

What Resources Are Required?

Time

Citizens need time to learn about an issue and how they can influence the decision-making process. It takes time to research an issue, set up meetings and organize campaigns. The public has to be patient and not get discouraged if there are no visible and tangible results in a few weeks. Sometimes it takes months to see concrete results.

Stakeholders

Various groups, individuals or institutions in the community that are interested in the issue need to come together and work as a team to influence the decision-making process. Numbers are key in citizen participation. People need to gather together in meetings such as public hearings, public meetings and public debates as well as seek the advice of various experts (e.g. advisory groups) in order to get the best results.

Information

In order to have effective citizen participation, valuable information has to be disseminated. This should come from both the general public and the government. Without information, citizen participation is virtually unattainable.

- ↓ Downward Dissemination — This is when the government informs citizens about policy development as well as their roles and responsibilities (through information centers, information stands at the city hall, meetings with public officials or though the local media)

- ↑ Upward Dissemination — This is when citizens express their concerns about the issue at stake (e.g. public hearings, advisory groups, public awareness campaigns or public budget meetings).

Media Attention

Media plays an important role in citizen participation. Information can be disseminated to the population at large in a very easy and efficient matter. Local media, especially, plays a key role in the process of citizen participation at the local level.

NECESSARY ELEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Initiative and Desire to Make a Difference

People need to want to participate in order to make changes. Very often initiative is spurred by closeness of the issue, where the decisions made directly affect citizens' lives.

Dedication to the Issue

Citizens have to be persistent, be committed to the issue and not give up after the first downfall.

Knowledge of Citizen Participation Methods

All the stakeholders have to be aware of citizen participation methods, how they work and what can and cannot be done in certain areas.

Awareness /Education

First and foremost citizens need to be educated about their rights and responsibilities in relation to government and the decision-making process. They have to be prepared to work with the government in order to solve problems.

Cooperation with the Local Authorities

Those in a position of power have to be able to communicate with citizens, be open-minded, understanding and active.

Each Stakeholder Has to Benefit

People will only actively participate in the process if the issue either directly affects them or they will somehow benefit from it. The benefit must serve both the citizen and the local authorities.

Planning and Implementation

Both sides should work together in order to smoothly plan and implement the changes.

Transparency

Both parties should be honest about the steps they are taking in order to influence the issue. The local government side especially has to be transparent in its actions.

Flexibility

Flexibility is definitively a key component of constructive citizen participation. All the stakeholders should be able to negotiate and cooperate with the other side.

Using Experts

Citizen participation methods have to be applied with the assistance of professional experts, such as specialists in public education, public hearings and budget issues.

OBSTACLES/RISKS TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

What Are They?

- Lack of trust
- Lack of cooperation between the stakeholders
- Limited access to information
- Little knowledge about rights and responsibilities
- Fear of the unknown
- Lack of self-confidence
- Limited or non-existent structures
- Lack of skills, culture of participation and experience in this field
- Lack of resources (e.g. experience, time, funds, skills)
- Lack of media attention to local issues
- Unrealistic levels of expectation
- Lack of awareness of the need for professional facilitation
- Risk of backfire
- Focus is on a minute issue rather than broad issues

How to Overcome Them?

- Though civic education and training
- Public awareness campaigns
- Communication strategies
- Networking and building bridges
- Sharing experiences
- Partnerships and twinning
- Fundraising
- Managerial skills
- Introducing volunteerism

CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUPS: ROMANIA'S EXPERIENCE

Daniel Serban,
Research Triangle Institute, Romania

OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Local governments in democratic systems commonly make use of citizens' advisory committees, commissions, or task forces to provide ongoing advice to city councils and city administrations on a variety of issues. We will refer to these groups as Citizens' Advisory Groups (CAGs). They are an important way for the Local Government Unit (LGU) to engage citizens in the governing process and to keep in touch with changing public needs between elections. Such groups should be able to provide citizen advice and opinion on important municipal government matters.

The desired effect of the CAG, as a public participation method, can be outlined as follows:

- First, CAGs **enhance both the quantity and quality of citizen involvement** in local government, thereby building those important bridges of trust between the government and the governed, and strengthening civil society.

- Second, for a government that wishes to be transparent and fully democratic, they r**epresent concrete and highly visible means** to demonstrate this commitment to the community.

- Third, they **are a mechanism for bringing some of the technical expertise** and opinions of the community to bear on solving local government problems.

- Fourth, they **provide a forum for people** with differing areas of expertise and varying opinions to inform one another, and thereby enhance the dialogue on the relevant issues in order to resolve conflicts.

- Fifth, they **enhance communication between the legislative and executive branches of government, between government and the community, and between branches of local government.**

- Sixth, they **are a source of new insights, ideas and options** for elected and appointed government officials, who may find creativity stifled by the pressures and complexities of everyday operations.

- Finally, in communities that have deep political, social or ethnic divisions, CAGs that are broadly representative of the make up of the whole community **can help to defuse tensions and de-politicise the process of governing.**

CONTEXT FOR USING THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Establishment of CAGs

It is important to note that in Romania there is no legislation that regulates the CAGs' activities. According to the Romanian Constitution (1991), people have the freedom to get together and express their opinions.

The initiative to have a CAG may come from either citizens or the local government or both. It is more logical to come from citizens, for example when they get together to solve a problem. However, the local government unit usually initiates such a group to collect citizens` opinions and sometimes to get them involved.

To get the maximum effect of setting up and getting an advisory committee equipped, there are some general issues on CAGs to be considered. A CAG can be established whenever the Local Government Unit (LGU) has a task to do that will benefit from ongoing citizen consultation. The LGU must define the task the CAG is responsible for, how many members it will have, how the members will be selected, how long they will serve (commonly between one and five years) and sometimes other matters such as how often the CAG will meet.

The city government provides logistical support for the CAG, such as a meeting place and a staff assistant to make meeting arrangements, assist with agendas, minutes and supplies, and facilitate access to city information.

Members of CAGs are volunteers. They may be selected by the city or chosen by election. Sometimes members self-select, they contact the city in response to an announcement of a vacancy and say they are willing to serve. However, once they are chosen, members must be confirmed by a formal appointment from the city.

Different CAGs will have different types of schedules and workloads. For example, a CAG providing advice on the city budget typically would meet on a monthly basis during the budget preparation season. But perhaps they would meet weekly during the intensive period when the budget is being finalised by the city administration and presented to, reviewed and approved by the local council. Other CAGs might meet once a month, but members do additional work outside the meetings. Some other CAGs meet only once a quarter, and can expect to complete their work during the meeting times.

Types of CAGs

There are two types of CAGs: *permanent and temporary*. Some CAGs are permanent and have ongoing responsibilities that continue from year to year. Other CAGs have specific time limited assignments. Temporary CAGs will be given a specific task clearly defined and in writing and a time limit for accomplishing the task. They conclude their work with a written report outlining their recommendations.

Sometimes the work of a temporary CAG can lead to the establishment of a permanent CAG. For example, a temporary CAG on neighbourhood improvement recommended in its report that the city should establish a special annual grants fund for "grass roots" neighbourhood improvement proposals. The city accepted the recommendation and set up a permanent CAG with the task of reviewing proposals and recommending the best proposals for funding each year. Such choices, made openly and on the basis of published criteria help assure citizens that the program is being run fairly, and transparently without bias.

Examples of *Permanent CAGs:*

- Planning Commission
- Budget Commission
- Parks and Recreation Board
- Economic Development Commission
- Transportation Board
- Sanitation Commission
- Housing Commission
- Sister City Committee
- Neighbourhood Conservation

Examples of *Temporary CAGs:*

- Advisory committees for specific projects (e.g. neighbourhood improvement or locality transportation plan)
- Task Force on Opportunities for Youth
- Committee for the Study on Attracting New Businesses
- Committee for the Study on Revising the City Charter
- Blue Ribbon Committees (panels of selected volunteer experts for very specific and usually highly technical assignments — e.g., health care improvement)

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

A CAG must have a clear mandate that sets out the source of their authority, the purpose of their work and the scope of their responsibilities. The CAG must be established in accordance with local and national laws.

The city government's mandate to the CAG should contain written instructions including at least the following points:

- Name and purpose of the advisory body
- Membership and how it is selected or appointed and term of service
- The product or outputs that the body is expected to produce (e.g., periodic progress reports, final reports, etc.)
- The authority of the group — letting the group know about the impact or influence it can expect to have in the areas of its responsibility
- Timeframe — whether permanent or temporary. If temporary, include the period of operation and how frequently the body is expected to meet
- Resources — e.g., support from an administration agency or agencies, documents to which it will have access, expenses (if they are to be provided), the meeting place, etc.
- Relationship with the news media and issues of confidentiality and conflict of interest

It is also important that these written instructions be made available to the public, through the news media, public bulletin boards, web sites, etc., and be available to members of the public on request. The schedule of meetings of the advisory body should be made public and meetings should be open to the public, unless there is good reason to keep a particular session closed.
Rules of Operation

Each advisory body should have a set of operating rules. Frequently, the initial appointees to the body define the rules on their own as a group and are empowered to make changes as necessary.

Some of the key issues that should be covered in the operating rules include:

- Time, place and duration of meetings
- Chairmanship, the role of the chair, selection process and duration of term
- How the group makes decisions or comes to consensus (voting is common, however, to avoid development of voting factions in the group an alternative is discussion to consensus with the chair having responsibility for stating and gaining agreement to the consensus of the group)
- Record keeping and report writing
- Informing new members of actions and decisions taken

Operational Checklist for Members of CAGs:

- ✔ Develop and adopt by-laws and procedures and adhere to them.
- ✔ Prepare a work plan, get it approved by the council, and let it guide the work.
- ✔ Regularly evaluate the work as a committee and be sure it is in accordance with the purpose and objectives established by the LGU.
- ✔ Ask to participate in the budget process if that is relevant to the CAGs' work.
- ✔ Meet and exchange ideas periodically with LGU officials.
- ✔ Invite appropriate members of the city administration and city council to attend CAG meetings.
- ✔ Work transparently. Have open meetings and have information available on request.
- ✔ Get input from members of the public. Have public forums to make the work known.
- ✔ Ask local government staff for any necessary material — don't be passive.
- ✔ Educate yourself continually; learn what other LGUs are doing in the area.
- ✔ Appoint a representative, usually the chair, to appear before elected officials and representatives to explain the work of the committee.

Evaluation Techniques to Measure the Effectiveness of the CAG

Specific outcomes of the CAGs' work could be better budget preparation, increased quality of a public transportation, better school system management, etc. It is also important that the group gets both community and city council recognition. Among elements that can contribute to measurement of the effectiveness of the CAG are better LGU management, improved citizen satisfaction on public service delivery, increased number and membership of the CAG.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

Lack of Motivation to Establish and Sustain the CAG

The CAG will not function well and will not be sustainable unless the task is a necessary and serious one, the public understands and supports the role of the CAG and their advice is taken seriously, by both citizens and the local council.

Lack of Civic Engagement

Usually people are reluctant to get involved in community business, unless they do not have a direct interest. Raising public interest takes time. Once a CAG is established, benefits for the members should be shown both for the community and for the local government. Building a proper attitude around this concept is the key issue of citizen participation, especially in Central and Eastern European countries.

Lack of Understanding the Benefits on Both Sides

Even though CAGs are one of the most effective and least expensive means available for obtaining enlightened and educated citizen input into local government decision making and operations, it can be difficult for the public to perceive the benefits. However, CAGs proliferation in local government, throughout the world, has served to greatly strengthen the civil society underpinnings of democracies everywhere.

Resistance to Examples from Democratic Countries

What works in Western Europe or North America may need to be changed and adapted by other countries. Some countries may have to chart their own course with respect to advisory bodies. For example, it may be that the elected council and the administration should jointly constitute a particular advisory body, or that some acceptable balance is achieved. Approaches used elsewhere can be adapted to local needs and conditions, and will be effective if the public can see that the government is seriously trying to be more transparent and effective.

METHOD EXAMPLE

CAGs' Activities in Romania

To illustrate the effectiveness of CAGs in previous contexts, a few Romanian examples are summarized below:

1. Citizens' Advisory Committee on Public Transport in Brasov

Brasov conducted a very successful public budget hearing in 2001, attended by 578 people. This is the third successive year that Brasov ran a public hearing on its local budget, but this time the quality and impact of the hearing was greatly recognized — last year only 35 people attended and the meeting was of little consequence. This year, the questioning from the public was both relevant and strong.

One important innovation that flowed from the meeting was the creation of the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Transport. This 14-member group of volunteers from various fields and professions was appointed to serve an indefinite term but will be working out its own rules and procedures. The principal purpose of the group is to help the city and its public transport utilities make funding decisions on transport, which was voted the third priority in the budget at the public hearing.

The CAC met once a month, or even more frequently, if needed. The first task of the group was to fill out a questionnaire on preferences regarding various options on transport fees, subsidies, taxes and bus purchases.

2. Budget CAG in Turnu Magurele

Turnu Magurele was one of the first communities in Romania, which seriously considered adopting the idea of a CAG for the local budget. The CAG consists of 9 individuals, selected by the mayor with advice and assistance from other city leaders. One criterion for selection is that members must have the ability to understand financial matters. The concept was new, and some people did not completely trust the idea at first. However, the CAG was extensively involved in preparations for the budget public hearing in December 2000, and played a useful and important role.

There was some debate about policy, and ultimately some recommendations to the mayor. The debated policy reflects the interest of the group against the budgetary process. Members with different opinions expressed their views regarding public expenditures, as well as ways of maximising income.

As a result of the debate, the mayor seriously considered the recommendations for the next debate in the local council meeting. Therefore, the local budget for 2001 had citizens' input and reflected the community needs, and not only the politicians' interest.

The chair of the CAG is an engineer and a director of public utilities. He is also a city councillor with budget responsibility. During spring 2001, the CAG has continued to meet every two weeks and to advise on the preparation of the final budget for 2001. In May 2001, the final allocations from the national government were established , and budgets were finalised by the end of the month. The CAG continued to meet after adoption of the budget, for monitoring purposes.

3. Education CAG in Turnu Magurele

In 2001, the mayor of Turnu Magurele initiated an advisory group on education. The initiative was timely, since educational finance was delegated to local governments. The members of the CAG are school principals. The purpose of this advisory group is to exchange information among the different schools, as well as between the schools and local government.

By the time of the first meeting, the mayor commented on the benefit of having the advisory groups and members of the public understand more about the limited resources of the local government. With regard to the CAG, he also commented that even excellent educators may sometimes benefit from improved administrative skills.

This was an important innovation, with potential for strengthening communication between the local government and the education sector. Other benefits would include allowing school officials to talk more knowledgeably with parents and other stakeholders about how the local budget affects education decisions.

4. Councils of Elderly Persons in Medias and Pitesti

In Medias and Pitesti, there are CAGs consisting of retired persons who wish to work on a volunteer basis with the city administration. In Medias, the group has 27 members. They meet at least once a quarter, or more often upon the mayor's request.

Sometimes, there is a particular focus to the meetings. For instance, one meeting focused on environmental matters where directors of some local manufacturing plants were invited. Environmental problems were discussed and some improvements resulted. Members of the group are invited to official functions and were kept informed about city plans and initiatives. They are always notified of dates and location of the city council meetings so they can plan ahead to attend.

In Pitesti, the group consists of 30 pensioners, all with university degrees, who meet monthly to work on problems assigned by the mayor and problems they identify on their own. Issues they have worked on include: holiday preparation, street cleaning, waste disposal, the stray dog problem and traffic issues.

5. CAG for Pasture Management in Cristian Commune

Cristian Commune (Sibiu County) established a CAG to work on the problem of maintaining and managing three common pasture areas. The CAG visited the pastures to determine more precisely the nature of the problem. The CAG then met with stakeholders (pasture owners, cattle and sheep owners, the Mayor and staff) to develop a plan for establishing pasture committees for each site. Some elements of the plan include:

- Members of the pasture committees are elected.
- One member of each pasture committee is a member of the CAG.
- The job of the pasture committees is: (1) to clean and maintain the pasture; (2) collect pasture fees; (3) manage rotation of animals in an equitable way and (4) protect against poachers.
- In return for their work, members of the pasture committees do not have to pay pasturage fees.

A public meeting was held to discuss this plan, where approximately 200 people attended. The CAGs proposal was accepted and pasture committees were elected. Reportedly, there is community satisfaction with the arrangement and the condition of pastures and collection of pasture fees has improved. The need for direct involvement by the commune administration in pasture management has been substantially reduced.

For more information on these examples, visit www.lga.ro or contact the author.

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City of Modesto, California, USA: http://www.ci.modesto.ca.us/council/cag/Default.htm

Local Government Assistance Program in Romania, USAID funded: www.lga.ro

PARTICIPATORY URBAN ASSESSMENT IN CAPITAL PLANNING: ARMENIA'S EXPERIENCE

Mais Vanoyan and Arthur Drampian,
Urban Institute, Local Government Program, Armenia

Go to the people…
Live with them…
Learn from them…
Love them.
Start with what they know…
Build with what they have…
But with the best leaders…
When the work is done…
The task accomplished…
The people will say…
"We have done this ourselves!"

Lao Tsu (China) 700 B.C.

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Participatory methods to involve citizens in strategic planning at the local level are multiple and various. The volume of literature addressing these techniques is impressive. Each technique matches the specific goals that are set by implementers. The methodology described below is developed for engaging citizens in the city capital planning process. The method is called Participatory Urban Assessment (PUA) and is specifically designed for the urban environment. It was developed by the staff of the Urban Institute (Armenia), based on the well-known Participatory Rural Assessment (PRA) technique applied earlier in many developing countries and countries in transition.

The main difference between PUA and PRA is fragmentation of the targeted city into districts, which enables the separation of communities with certain common problems. Each targeted city is divided into separate districts. The division is driven either by natural (rivers, landscape, etc.), cultural (historical district, downtown, suburbs, etc.), traditional or man-made boundaries (roads, bridges, etc.). It is important to mention, that the criteria for the division should be identified carefully, as each of the divided districts is considered to be a separate community. The criteria for fragmentation can be best provided by the city government authorities, who are aware of all the physical, social and economic details of their city.

Through direct participation, the residents assess their needs and problems and then rank and prioritize them across the district communities. The residents of each district participate in assessment either through interviews or through general meetings. Throughout each district, the methodology of Participatory Rural Assessment can be applied. General meetings with residents are held in each district community. Each district community forms its own Civic Action Group (CAG) comprised of representatives elected by the community through direct voting. Later, the CAG coordinators are co-opted into the city Capital Planning Committee to represent the interests of their district. The Capital Planning Committee is appointed by the mayor and may consist of city hall officials, experts and CAG coordinators. Each CAG is encouraged to present priority problems identified by their district to the board in the form of written requests. The methodology has been designed in order to reach the following objectives:

- To enable citizens to participate in the identification of city-wide needs;
- To increase citizen participation in the local government decision-making process;
- To ensure citizens participate in the development of an action plan (e.g. capital improvements program) to improve service delivery.

The Urban Institute (Armenia) adopted the method of PUA from the Participatory Rural Assessment (PRA). In 1995-2000, the Save the Children Federation (STC) applied Participatory Rural Assessment in Armenia for implementation of community development programs in several villages. During this period, STC has implemented about 400 projects with participation and/or in-kind contributions of residents.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

The main steps for undertaking a successful PUA in a city district are outlined below:

1. Preliminary Site Visits to:

- *Meet with city planning officials* in order to present the PUA technique and identify the districts within the city targeted for the PUA;
- *Collect the data* (reports and statistics on the community, including social, industrial, health, demographic, etc.);
- *Draw up a preliminary list of problems and opportunities* with input of local government officials and the city council;
- *Schedule the time/dates* for conducting the PUA;
- *Divide* each city into districts/sub-communities according to natural boundaries existing in the cities and particular characteristics of each district community (culture, traditions, customs etc.). Draw a map with these divisions.

2. Spatial Data Collection in Order to Develop:

- *A transect/sketch map* of the district/sub-community prepared in cooperation with residents.
- *A timeline* presenting the most important historical events in the district. The data are gathered through the semi-structured interview technique.
- *A trend line* illustrating the changes in resource availability and use over the last 30-40 years, such as population, productivity, soil loss, deforestation, rainfall, etc.
- A twelve-month *seasonal calendar* establishing cycles or patterns of activities within a community.
- A daily *gender calendar* showing the daily activity of women and men.
- *Sources of income* — A semi-structured interview with individual habitants is carried out to reveal sources of income. Questions are related to the social condition of the habitants, their salaries, pensions and the quality of municipal services they receive. The interviewers predetermine only a few questions. Other questions arise during the course of the interviews. These types of interviews are conducted with individuals, key informants (i.e. peo-

ple who possess important information about a community) and focus groups (e.g. women, youth, pensioners, etc.)

3. General Meeting and Ranking

The general meeting is the final step in the assessment. At the general meeting, the following two items are on the agenda:

- Problem ranking using the Pairwise Ranking Methodology (see Table 1 and refer to the Method Example), and
- Election of the CAG members that will represent the district community.

Table 1. Sample of a Pairwise Ranking Table

Problem	I	II	III	IV	V	Number of Repetitions	Rank
I							
II							
III							
IV							
V							

Explanation: In each cell, two problems are pairwise compared. For instance, in the first row under heading II problem I is compared to problem II. If problem I is preferable the person filling the matrix puts a plus (+) mark, if II is preferable then he/she puts a minus (-) mark. At the end of the row under the heading, the facilitator counts the number of pluses. The problem with the maximum number of pluses has the top priority 1, the second problem with the most pluses is placed as priority 2, etc.

The above mentioned evaluation technique can be used to measure the effectiveness of the methodology. A citizen survey is carried out before the implementation of the Capital Plan. The survey may pose questions about citizens' awareness of local government actions, attitudes toward different aspects of community life and municipal service delivery. This presents a baseline. A similar survey will be carried out the following year after the implementation of several projects in order to develop a general picture of the project results.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

There are numbers of challenges that the PUA team may face. The outcomes of assessment may have certain repercussions for the whole city. One important issue is who is the organization implementing the PUA? Whether it is the local government itself or an external donor organization the sponsoring organization may influence the set of challenges and obstacles.

There are additional risks and obstacles in conducting the PUA which include:

- Unenthusiastic attitude of city officials towards citizen participation in the decision-making process;
- High expectations from citizens for the implementation of projects that will improve the quality of their lives;
- Low capacity of local governments to improve their services, even if this is raised by citizens;
- Low fiscal capacity of local governments to finance capital projects suggested by citizens;

- Implementation of submitted project proposals may be donor driven and based on donor's priorities rather than on citizens' priorities; therefore donors may fund a project which is on the bottom of a citizens' priority list.

One should be aware that this is not an exhaustive list. Other risks and obstacles may appear depending on the cultural environment, political situation, educational status, traditions and many other factors of the society and the targeted community.

In conclusion, the PUA method is an efficient participatory tool for assessing priority needs in urban communities. It is a successful vehicle for engaging citizens in city capital planning and decision-making and encourages the broadening of public participation.

METHOD EXAMPLE

Implementation of the PUA in Armenia

Background

In January 2000 the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) initiated a Local Government Program (LGP) in the Republic of Armenia. USAID contracted The Urban Institute, a US-based research and consultancy group, to implement this program. The program targeted nine pilot cities and the capital city of Yerevan. The program is comprised of three key components:

1. *Legal reform* to draft and enact a new Law on Local Self-Government to enhance fiscal and administrative decentralization.
2. *Service delivery* improvements in local governments. LGP selected nine pilot cities in Armenia to demonstrate better management systems to increase service delivery.
3. *Citizens participation* in the local government decision-making process.

In Armenia, local governments face the challenge of improving infrastructures and meeting their capital needs, given their extremely limited financial resources. To meet this challenge, LGP commenced a technical assistance program in selected pilot cities to prepare Capital Improvements Programs (CIP). The LGP recognized that it is important to receive citizen participation at all stages in order to prepare and implement a successful CIP.

It is worth mentioning that current national legislation in Armenia does not clearly articulate the importance of citizen participation in the decision-making process at the local level. Particularly, the Law on Local Self-Government and the Law on Budgetary System in Armenia stipulate transparency and openness in budgeting and strategic planning and the necessity of making this information available to public. Hence citizen participation practices introduced to pilot cities under this project in fact exceed the requirements of the current legislation, although in no circumstances violate or contradict it.

In order to involve the citizens in city capital planning, the Participatory Urban Assessment technique was applied in all nine pilot cities. The team, consisting of 4 people with different skills and previous experience with Participatory Rural Assessment, conducted the PUA. Thus the

PUA has been applied in 86 districts in 9 cities. The estimated number of citizens involved in both interviews and general meetings is 10,000. Table 2 below includes general statistics on the nine pilot cities covered by the PUA.

Table 2. Key Statistical Data on PUA and Capital Planning in Pilot Cities

	Gyumri	Vanadzor	Alaverdi	Sevan	Ijevan	Yeghegnadzor	Jermuk	Sisian	Kapan	TOTAL
Population	211,700	172,200	24,900	30,900	20,800	11,780	10,300	19,000	46,800	548,380
# of Districts	15	15	11	10	9	6	3	8	9	86
# of Proposals Submitted to CIP Board	46	59	55	27	15	19	19	17	20	277
Total CIP Cost	1,188,430	2,709,070	1,330,000	1,406,574	344,420	799,523	1,713,125	800,852	733,923	11,025,917

Table 3 comprises problems and priorities expressed by residents from 8 districts in the city of Sisian. Sisian is a city located in southern Armenia with a population of 19,000. In the lower part of the table under subtitle "Analysis" the numbers show the frequency of certain problems occurring in different districts (see explanations below the table).

Each municipality has currently accomplished preparation of a CIP for the 3-year horizon. Funding is already secured for at least one project in each city. A group of Urban Institute consultants is currently working with the city government to assist in developing proposals on projects scheduled for the current year.

Lessons Learned

The major outcomes and lessons of applying Participatory Urban Assessment for Capital Planning in Armenian cities include:

- Participatory Urban Assessment (PUA) can be successfully applied in small and medium size cities, like its predecessor method of Participatory Rapid Assessment (PRA) in rural areas.
- While conducting PUA, some tools and techniques of PRA can be skipped (i.e. gender calendar, seasonal calendar, sketch map/transects), as they provide less important information than the other tools.
- The most important stage in performing the PUA is fragmentation of a city (i.e. division of the city into districts having either natural or manmade boundaries). Each district should be considered as a separate community with common interests and problems. The further progress of PUA depends on how effective the fragmentation is done.
- One of the main prerequisites of project success is building/strengthening community-based organizations and empowering people. Therefore, CAG's need permanent encouragement, nurturing and assistance in performing their activities. It is very important for CAG members to understand that their institution can become a partner with the city govern-

ment and donor agencies. It makes citizens feel that their hopes and anticipation to solve urgent problems can be addressed through this institution.

- It is crucial to train CAG members for further participation in the city Coordinating Committee. Training is an important component of technical assistance to CAG's. Its costs should be considered as a form of investment that will have returns in the future.

- PUA is an excellent method of ensuring that local decision-making is bottom-up instead of top-down. Participation in decision-making makes citizens more committed and allows them to feel as if they are the main stakeholders and equal partners with the city government. Participation in needs assessments and ranking community problems helps to mobilize community resources and makes a substantial contribution to the project.

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Table 3. City of Sisian — Aggregate Problem Priorities

No.	District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		Gas Supply to State-Owned Residential Buildings	Job Creation	Irrigation Water Supply	Improvement of Yards Around Buildings	Repair of Streets/Road Improvement Works	Cleaning of Vorotan River Bed and Banks	Renovation of the School & Kindergartens	Construction of Playgrounds	Reconstruction of Water & Sewage Supply Network	Construction of Storm Water Drainage	Rerouting the Pipeline Away from Cemetery
1	Gai	3	1	2	4	5						
2	Getap		2				4	1	3	7		
3	Ishkapos-											
	Avazanots		1	3		4		2	7	5	6	
4	Kentron	1			4	3				5		2
5	Kentron 2		2	3		4		1	5			
6	Shirak	4	2	3		5				1		
7	Shahumian/											
	Andranik		1			2		3			4	
8	Yeritasardakan	4	1			2				3		
		Frequency of Occurrence										
	Analysis											
	Priority											
	1	1	4					2		1		
	2		3	1		2		1		1		1
	3	1		3		1		1				
	4	2			2		1				1	

No. District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Gas Supply to State-Owned Residential Buildings	Job Creation	Irrigation Water Supply	Improvement of Yards Around Buildings	Repair of Streets/Road Improvement Works	Cleaning of Vorotan River Bed and Banks	Renovation of the School & Kindergartens	Construction of Playgrounds	Reconstruction of Water & Sewage Supply Network	Construction of Storm Water Drainage	Rerouting the Pipeline Away from Cemetery
5					2			1	2		
6										1	
7								1	1		
Priorities	**Agenda**										
1 Job Creation	Economic										
2 Road/Street Repair	Economic										
3 Irrigation	Economic										
4 Gas Supply (Heating)	Social										
5 Water Supply/ Sewage	Social										
6 Drainage Construction	Economic										
7 Playgrounds Construction	Social										
8 Culture Center Renovation	Social										

Explanation of the table under the "Analysis" section:
As priority # 1, the problem # 1 "Gas Supply to the State-Owned Residential Buildings" was identified in all districts 1 time.
As priority # 2, the problem #1 "Gas supply to the State-Owned Residential Buildings" was identified in all districts 0 times, etc.
As priority # 1, the problem #2 "Job Creation" was identified in all districts 4 times.
As priority # 2, the problem #2 "Job Creation" was identified in all districts 3 times, etc.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

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OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Strategic planning is a process that identifies major actions to produce change and to achieve overall goals. It is differentiated from tactical and operations plan-ning, which address the details of how something is achieved. The most impor-tant aspect of strategic planning is implementation, otherwise strategic planning is simply busy work. Strategic planning is an important tool for communities at-tempting to achieve community health — including physical, economic and social well being.

Involving stakeholders, or those with a direct interest in the matter, is essential to providing broad support to the strategic plan, for whatever the decision area might be (e.g. watershed, sustainable development, education, etc.). Also, com-munity members can often implement many actions themselves. This particular strategic planning process is designed to lead communities naturally to their suc-cess through implementation. The approach can be applied in virtually any com-munity setting.

The major aim of the methodology is to plan in such a way that results are achieved. The unique feature of this approach is that it is goal or results-oriented, which leads to a different dynamic than does an approach that is problem-driven. That is, the process is designed to help people clearly understand their own de-sired futures and to assure that the actions are likely to achieve results. It is also designed to follow the strategic planning phase with sustained advancement to-ward the desired future, rather than the oscillation toward and away from the goals that often occurs, despite the best planning and intentions. Groups find that they are motivated by the focus on a self-defined desired future and that they can organize their actions when they are clear about both the perceived future and the current state.

CONTEXT FOR USING THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

This methodology can be applied in virtually any community setting and at any time in which people want to plan for their future. The approach can be used ei-ther as a first step or following issue-focused methods. In this latter case, partici-pants already have some experience with planning processes and working to-gether and usually adapt to this new way of thinking and focusing. On the other hand, groups without prior experience may have an easier time as they are not already accustomed or attached to a different methodology.

The approach was used as the foundation for transforming the budgeting and management process in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. It was also the method used for a four-year agricultural and forestry development plan in the up-lands of Vietnam. In Armenia, it was the basis for the Peace Corps' Armenia an-nual plan and also for a Georgia/Armenia Student Forum in which students con-templated the future of the region, and identified actions they themselves could take to achieve the positive future they envisioned. Similar processes using this strategic planning method were implemented by organizations and groups in the Newly Independent States, businesses and communities in Latin America, the United Kingdom and Sweden, and in Healthy Communities Projects worldwide.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

There are several main components specific to this approach of strategic plan-ning, which include:

- Defining goals, developing objectives and evaluating results;
- Focusing on results, not on problems;
- Understanding the current situation, including community assets and those conditions which are not consistent with the desired future. In order to identify and measure these conditions, indicators must be developed;
- Implementing flexible actions.

The methodology can be used with groups of all sizes — from a small planning group in an organization or village, to a large community group. The time al-lowed to implement this strategic planning method should be sufficient enough to enable in-depth exploration. At least a few hours is needed for a small group, but one should add time for reporting and deliberation if several small groups are working together.

The following describes both the organizational structure and the processes that were used in the Albuquerque for its strategic management, along with some al-ternative methods that could be used if desired.

1. Organizational Structure

The structure for first completing the strategic plan and then monitoring its pro-gress includes two main components: open public meetings that enable the in-clusive participation of all interested parties and then an Indicators Progress Commission or a similarly appointed or selected body that conducts work over a longer period of time. Each of these components is described below. The overall process used is described in the next section.

Open Public Meetings: Open public meetings are an important beginning to as-sure that all interested stakeholders have an opportunity to be heard. At initial meetings, citizens first focus on the desired conditions of their community and how they want it to be in the future.

Key features of the preliminary work for open public meetings include:

- Conducting a community-wide advertising campaign of the open public meeting;
- Organizing a meeting on a weekend in order to ensure participation by all interested parties;
- Using trained facilitators to lead the participants' work in small groups;

- Developing collaboratively the top five desired conditions that citizens would like to see in their community, then describing what the relevant conditions are, and finally suggesting strategies for achieving the de-sired conditions.

Project managers then organize the material from all the groups into common themes and dominant desired conditions. The ideas regarding current conditions and strategies are compiled as well. Then the material is sent to the monitoring group which is the Indicators Progress Commission discussed below.

Alternatively, facilitators may visit individual communities to gather information and then consolidate the data into a plan for a larger area. A third alternative is to invite a specific group of citizens who bring a variety of perspectives or, if it is possible for groups to select their representatives, citizens who formally repre-sent various groups. The sectors or interests selected are specific to the planning topic but could include in most cases, business, social welfare, or government. They would provide the sort of initial input as that provided through the vehicle of open public meetings as indicated above.

The group could be selected in various ways — through a "discovery" process in which people in the community are asked for the names of experts or influential people relative to certain interest areas. For example, those people whose names are mentioned repeatedly are the logical choices. Or, as indicated above, they could be selected by those they will represent in whatever way their group decides. This would take the form of a formal a process such as nomination and voting, appointment by the executive board, or asking for volunteers, if they are to be considered legitimate by the larger community. If the individuals are repre-senting a formal group, that group should have the authority to choose the selec-tion process.

Indicators Progress Commission: Some sort of monitoring entity, such as an Indicators Progress Commission, is established to provide continuous monitoring of progress and ongoing participation. This may be a broad-based volunteer citi-zen group of about 20 members or fewer. The main objectives of this group are to make the desired conditions, preferred by the people attending the open meet-ing more concrete, to identify appropriate measurements for them, and to track progress. Each member works on a committee with experts, including managers of various functions, to develop indicators of progress that make sense.

Key aspects of this process include:

- Having members who are capable of working with and analyzing data;
- Developing the initial indicators over a short time frame;
- Having regular staff to search for data (not expecting volunteers to do this detailed and time-consuming work);
- Efficiently sharing the results of the work with the public.

2. Citizen Processes

The elements of this process, wherever it is used, are described as follows. The important distinctions between this and other methods of strategic planning are primarily that participants focus on the desired future or desired results, rather than on a problem or issue. Secondly, considerable attention is paid to assessing the current conditions, including "the good, the bad, and the ugly," not ignoring this element or addressing simply the latter two. The "good" includes the assets available for contribution to the desired future, an element often overlooked by groups, who tend to focus on what they do not have.

Examining the current state, relative to the desired one, is necessary if appropri-ate action steps are to be identified. Furthermore, this act tends to generate a sort of "creative tension," momentum that helps groups progress toward the de-sired future.

Vision First: In this approach, participants are more focused on the desired fu-ture conditions or "vision" rather than on the current state or problems. This worked well in Albuquerque, in villages in Vietnam, and in Armenia, but it re-quired initial training and development, because it is quite an unfamiliar ap-proach. Most people tend to focus on problems and how to solve them rather than to being visionary.

Although many different means are available, one effective method is to ask par-ticipants to think about and write their desired conditions on half sheets of paper. Then the group discusses them and chooses five conditions that they consider most important.
Reasons for starting with the end include:

- Making clear what the real, ultimate purpose of any action will be;
- Clarifying the desired end results so as to be able to formulate appro-priate actions;
- Energizing participants by shifting their focus to what they want rather than the myriad problems. When groups focus on problems or issues, they often simply want to hide their heads in the sand or are energized momentarily, rather than in a sustained way.

In this approach to strategic planning, people are guided to think about:

- Ends, not means;
- Desires, rather than problems to solve;
- Specific, not vague, desired ends (this includes avoiding comparative words such as more, less, increased and decreased).

Accurately Assess the Current Status: Sometimes the visioning processes ends at this stage. Although thinking about their visions usually initially energizes groups, this alone will not mobilize and sustain action. It is necessary to know what the current conditions are, so as to know what actions are required. Groups often have not closely examined the current conditions or examined their own thinking about them. They may have different mental models that produce differ-ent ideas about the current conditions. One popular and useful way to measure current conditions is by using indicators, as hundreds of communities throughout the US and elsewhere are doing.

Key aspects of indicator development include:

- Selecting a few important indicators which have widespread agree-ment in the community;
- Making sure they can be qualitatively or quantitatively measured, al-though not necessarily through existing data or traditional measure-ment approaches;
- Having a range of indicators that express the entire scope of conditions of interest.

Mapping Community Assets: Understanding the current community conditions includes understanding what the community has to work with, not only what is different from the desired conditions. Often community groups have an unrealisti-cally low opinion of what is available and thus what is necessary. For example, people in developing or transitional countries often think they need a larger sup-ply of natural resources. However, data shows that health or even prosperity is not limited to countries with the largest stock of natural resources.

Some key aspects of examining community assets include:

- Considering human, natural, cultural, economic, and other resources;
- Linking assets with desired conditions;
- Linking assets with strategies for achieving desired conditions.

Strategies and Choices: Achieving community goals requires that citizens and government leaders make choices to take action. These are the strategies or ac-tion steps designed to lead to the desired future conditions. Group learning en-hances secondary choices. It is achieved through an experimental approach — trying approaches, assessing results, and shifting procedures when warranted, and not sticking to a rigid plan.

Key aspects of this phase include:

- Trying some actions;
- Evaluating the results (are the actions likely to lead to the desired condi-tions?);
- Trying different actions when results have not been achieved.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

Some of the challenges of this approach include:

- Due to the different and new nature of approaching strategic planning, it differs from the tendency to focus on problems and participants require some additional guidance.

- Participants may not be used to thinking in terms of results. Instead, peo-ple often think about means rather than ends, or simply focus on problems or things they lack. Therefore, training is necessary to change this ap-proach to problem solving.

- This strategic planning method requires more time than some other ap-proaches for group thinking and analysis. It may best be done initially in a relatively small group committed to developing a solid plan. The rewards of establishing a plan that is designed to motivate participants and help them focus on those things of greatest importance are, however, worth the time.

CONCLUSION

Strategic planning is not a single action item and should be an on-going activity within the community. Participants, whether they are the monitoring group or those directly responsible for various aspects of implementation will need to con-tinually revisit the desired future or end results, evaluate the current state relative to the desired future, and change their actions if and when necessary.

As indicated, this results-oriented approach is the basis for a shift from business as usual to performance-based or results-focused management in a community or other jurisdiction or organization (keeping in mind the reasons for activities, not habitual tasks). Rural development programs, U.S. and foreign "healthy commu-nities" projects, and students and organizations around the world have put this process into practice in a variety of ways and have found it to be energizing and effective in sustaining action toward the desired future.

METHOD EXAMPLE

Youth Building a Healthy Caucasuses Region: The Role of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is an important tool in the development of Healthy Communi-ties in which citizens play a large role in determining the future of their communi-ties. This case study describes how this strategic planning approach was used during a Georgia-Armenia "Youth Forum of the Caucuses," in 2001. At this fo-rum, the student participants contemplated the future of their region and identi-fied actions they could take to achieve the positive future they envisioned.

Nineteen students from Georgia and 29 from Armenia convened at a popular Armenian mountain retreat, where they had an opportunity to strengthen rela-tionships through social and recreational activities, as well as through the strate-gic planning work. This event introduced students to collaboration and commu-nity building. It focused on what students from different places or different back-grounds have in common, rather than how they differ. It also focused on what is desired, rather than on issues or problems. The students applied the Healthy Communities tools, which took into account research showing that people who build a climate of trust and begin to collaborate and build consensus around a desired future, make their societies improve in many ways.

The opening of the forum included a Native American practice called the "Talking Circle" in which people speak, one at a time, about some matter while the others listen carefully. In this case, they responded to the question of what they like about their region.

On the next day, in small, interdisciplinary groups, participants first created visual images of a healthy region. They then met in new groups to address various as-pects of a healthy region, including arts and culture, economics, education, envi-ronment, governance, health, and human rights. They discussed and described the current reality relative to those visions and identified important assets in the region that are resources for achieving the vision. Finally, they worked in small groups to reach consensus regarding strategies for creating the desired future.

Many of their vision statements were eloquent and inspiring, their analyses of the current state were well-thought out and their strategies innovative and thoughtful. The organizers agreed that the future of the Caucuses region will be in good hands with these future leaders.

In between the formal sessions, participants had several opportunities to be out-doors in nature, visit the historic Kocharis Church, ride the chair lift to the top of the ski area and back, getting a good view of the abundant flowers growing on the mountain, and attend discos in the evenings. Some swam in the pool, played billiards and used the sauna. On Sunday, everyone came to Yerevan to enable Georgian students to see sights of interest in the city. After the event was over, several small groups continued to meet to discuss specific topics that were iden-tified.

Student response to the event was extremely positive. From the evaluation forms, ninety per-cent of the participants indicated that the event, overall, was very good or excellent. Students were also invited to respond to the following question, "What did your participation in this event teach you, and what will you do differently in the future as a result of your participation?" The responses in-cluded:

- "If you want to make any change in any sphere it will be through educa-tion. Education is our key to changing this region in the future".
- "It was a new experience for us to work as a team and we learned that even though we all may have different opinions we were always able to reach a consensus as a group."
- "When we thought about our future before it seemed chaotic and compli-cated. But by breaking [social reform] down in these workshops we learned that change is manageable."
- "We noticed that all people of the Caucasus have similar ways of think-ing."
- "The future of our region is in good hands."
- "We extended the horizon of our idealistic ideals. We learned to dream bigger."

Clearly, students were inspired through working together. They continue to talk about the experience and about how energized they were by focusing on what they could create rather than on the things that were wrong or on the barriers to success. Expanding such processes to include many more participants and also creating infrastructure for follow-up can help generate and sustain action toward Healthy Communities in many different settings, including those throughout the former Soviet Union.

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COALITION BUILDING

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OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Coalition building has become one of most effective citizen participation methodologies in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region. It empowers citizens to openly lobby their interests, and thus influence the government's performance. Coalition building is a process of bringing groups (such as NGOs, business associations, international organizations, etc.) together for a common purpose. For example, coalition building occurs when many different organizations in a community come together to explore various alternatives for solving an issue in their area. A coalition, therefore, can be defined as a free will, formal or informal union of organizations who work to achieve a common aim. It is based on similar management rules and methods, common interests, and sharing resources.

Each NGO coalition uniquely contributes to the development of civil society, through building a collective voice in proposing policy alternatives for solving specific problems. Some are advocates of the poor and disadvantaged; some conduct research and analysis; some help a country move towards a more transparent and democratic election process; while others provide services to the public on behalf of the state. Assembled, these are all important pieces of the puzzle that help to strengthen civil society, through providing a centralized and focused response to social needs.

The desired effect of the coalition building methodology is to make the voice of NGOs stronger through close cooperation, and to attract public attention to the policy-making process. Through the power of a group, each coalition member equally influences the decision-making process in order to improve the quality of life in the community. Many newly formed NGO coalitions have already established a close relationship with the local authorities, which is based on a recognition of mutual interests. This cooperation is crucial, because it builds trust between the government and the local community and increases the transparency and accountability of the local government.

This chapter summarizes the experience of coalition building in the CEE region based on the experience of Ukraine, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where coalitions have achieved tangible results. Box 1 indicates successful examples of NGO coalitions' activities in terms of their influence on the public policy process.

NGO COALITIONS IN CEE COUNTRIES

Slovakia

The first national NGO coalition in Slovakia was formed in 1996, when Meciar's government announced its plans to control and restrict the "nontransparent jungle of thousands of various foundations and associations". Slovak NGOs, under attacks of hostile authorities, established the coalition and together organized the "Third Sector SOS Campaign" aimed to stop the government legislative initiative of restrictive law on foundations. The coordinating team of the coalition developed a campaign strategy and common declaration about how the proposed foundations draft law would endanger not only foundations, but also the whole NGO sector. A number of regional NGO meetings followed and 300 NGOs joined the coalition by signing a petition with the declaration. Foundations received support not only from civic associations, but also from trade unions and the association of employers.

Although the NGO coalition could not stop the adoption of the new foundation law, its campaign has made NGOs more visible in the public eye and opened new topics for public debate on issues related to the importance of the third sector and its activities and services provided to citizens.

Ukraine

On March 15, 1999, a number of Ukrainian non-governmental organizations united in the "Freedom of Choice" coalition. This initiative aimed to conduct a Ukrainian-wide campaign, which would promote honest and fair presidential elections in Ukraine in 1999 and would guarantee the adherence to democratic principles, basic human rights and liberties. Fifteen active NGOs, which already had previous experience in election campaigns, founded the coalition.

The coalition concentrated on several spheres of activity including analysis of elections and sociological research, public involvement in the election participation and instruction of the electorate, collaboration with mass-media, TV and radio projects, public election control and monitoring, and projects for voters with special needs. During the election campaign period in Ukraine, non-governmental organizations and the participants of the coalition implemented more than 100 different projects aimed at increasing public awareness and mobilizing voters, providing information about the campaign and monitoring voting procedures. Members disseminated thousands of handouts to voters asking them to "Think. Vote. Don't be Apathetic." Special voting material was made available to the blind, popular radio stations broadcast messages aimed at attracting youth to the polls, and pamphlets were distributed to some of the smallest villages in Ukraine.

Results of the coalition's efforts were impressive. A national poll measuring the impact of their activities showed that 43% of respondents had been exposed to the voter mobilization and education efforts of the NGOs, 39% had seen printed materials produced by NGOs and 55% had seen or heard the coalition's TV or radio announcements.

CONTEXT FOR USING THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Coalition building is necessary when one organization recognizes that by acting alone it does not have the capability to successfully influence an issue and implement the desired changes. It is a common occurrance that in order to accomplish a goal, resources must be extended to include all interested groups, who have larger roles and experiences in local and/or national policy-making. Thus, NGO coalitions enable better cooperation and coordination of non-governmental activities, and the sharing of resources (e.g. experts, contacts, equipment, facilities, etc). They can also provide a stronger negotiating position when solving conflicts with the local government, or the business sector. Moreover, it is easier for local authorities to communicate with the coalition instead of trying to reach each NGO one-by-one[1].

Ukraine's experience shows that there are four key prerequisites, which are necessary for successful coalition building[2]:

First, political, economic and local conditions should be researched before forming a coalition. This knowledge makes it easier to identify the needs of the community and formulate issues that need to be addressed. For example, two local NGO coalitions in both Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk were established on the basis of public service delivery surveys, which indicated priorities for municipal issues.

Second, each coalition partner must be committed to the problem in order to reach the set goal. This commitment directs all coalition members towards agreement on strategy development.

Third, each partner should have the capacity to put a great deal of effort, experience, influence and resources into obtaining the goal. It helps to build trust and promote close partnerships in order to come up with alternatives to change the poor "local climate".

Finally, each partner should be competent to fulfill his task and manage internal coalition development. This prevents conflicts and helps to solve the issue more effectively.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

Coalition building is open to all interested citizen groups. It takes time to start the planning process, establish formally (or informally) the unity of organizations, and begin to implement an action plan. The process for building an NGO coalition typically includes the following stages:

1. Creation of the Initiative Committee: It is important to carefully select those people who will be invited to launch a coalition. Usually the group consists of about seven to nine (7-9) individuals who are representatives of the community.

COALITION TEAM

Coalition building needs the coordinating team, which is usually composed of the following members:

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[1] Tichy, Richard. "Coalitions of Non-Profit Organizations: Good Servant, or Bad Master? Risks of Non-Democratic Structures in the Civic Sector", Newsletter of the People's Voice Project , Issue #1 (Spring 2000).

[2] Nowadays, more than 15 NGO coalitions operate in Ukraine both at national and local levels. The most active Ukrainian coalitions are:

- ecological coalition "Public for new ecological policy - Alter-Eco" (1999), More info on www.alter-eco.org.ua/ukr/about.htm;
- ecological humanitarian union "Green World" at (www.khpg.org/organ/eczelsvit.html;
- Kharkiv regional anti-corruption coalition "Partnership for Integrity" (2000) at www.nobribes.org/unci/Documents/KharkivCoalitionReport%202001.doc;
- Freedom of Choice Coalition (1999) at www.coalition.org.ua/coalition.htm;
- "Coordination and Expert Centre of Ukraine's Business Associations" (1998);
- local Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk and Rivne NGO coalitions.

==> *Head* — conducts the meeting, defines the agenda, proposes the methods of work, coordinates the work and supports the group activity. Usually the head is the main contact person in a coalition.
==> *Coordinator* — makes the connections within the coalition, between its members and organizations through telephone conversations, meetings and mailing of written materials.
==> *Observer* — pays attention to the emotional climate, participants' equal rights and makes propositions that further group development and functions.
==> *Organizer (i.e. Secretary)* — helps in the minute keeping of different meetings and negotiations.
==> *Committees' Representatives* — are the members of the steering committee and/or secretariat.
==> *Representative of the Coalition (i.e. Speaker)* — is responsible for public relations.
==> *Strategist* — has experience in defining goals, objectives and tactics, and has both good policy and negotiation skills.

2. Defining the Goals and Aims of the Coalition: The coalition's aims may differ from case to case, depending on the type of social issue. For instance, a coalition can be created to share information, knowledge and new ideas, to work together for the community development, to locally promote the NGO sector and/or to lobby civil society interests.

3. Selection of Partners: The main task of this stage is to choose appropriate partners through a transparent and democratic selection process. It is important to evaluate other organizations that would or would not support the chosen issue. Knowing supporters and potential non-supporters will help the coalition develop a better strategy. Selection of partners requires answering such questions as: Who else should be asked to join? Who has the capacity to affect the issue? Who has the resources that could help resolve the problem? Whose experience can help?

4. The Constituent Assembly: At this meeting, coalition members vote on the name of the coalition, discuss and vote on its constitution, and elect the coalition steering committee and secretariat. Discussions concerning the activity area, coalition structure and financial support are important during this stage.

5. Development of an Action Plan: An action plan is often composed of a series of small steps that build the relationships and make larger steps possible, involving all coalition participants in the process. This helps to keep the coalition functioning properly.

COALITION 2000, BULGARIA: INSTITUTIONAL BODIES

Two main institutional bodies of the Bulgarian Coalition 2000 (launched in April 1998 with the aim to fight corruption in Bulgarian society) are responsible for overseeing the design and implementation of the action plan.

Steering Committee
The Steering Committee provides the coordination of the activities and outputs of the Coalition. It meets regularly, approximately every four-to-six weeks. It has a major role in the follow-up to

the policy forum meetings. The steering committee prepares the meeting agenda through advance consultations with the forum members and reports to the forum on the activities and outputs during the preceding year. The structure of the steering committee is intended to ensure two main objectives: efficient management covering all aspects (political/institutional, economic, legal, information and interface with international institutions) and public-private dialogue — with partnership as a key prerequisite for substantial impact.

Secretariat

For the purpose of providing permanent support to the work of the steering committee, a secretariat was established in the Bulgarian Coalition 2000. The secretariat provides the day-to-day operational management, logistical support and reporting of activities. In coordination with the Applied Research and Communications (ARC) Fund, the secretariat maintains a public information desk, hosting both online and print materials. These include survey data, original research developed by the Coalition, major publications and studies in the field of anti-corruption, and reference links to relevant information. Another task of the secretariat is to carry out monitoring visits/meetings in order to assist with the coordination work of the steering committee. The secretariat also surveys developments and initiatives, both locally and internationally, in the field of anti-corruption and informs the steering Committee.

Source: Stoyanov, Alexander. "Coalition Building and Monitoring Corruption: The Coalition 2000 Process and Its Results." Presentation at the Second Annual Meeting of the Anti-Corruption Network for Transition Economies, Istanbul, Turkey, 2-3 November 1999. For more info see:
http://www.nobribes.org/Documents/Istanbul99/SA_presentaion_22.doc

6. Implementation Stage: In order to achieve success in solving the issue at hand, other citizen participation methodologies can be used throughout this phase. For instance, it can be useful to launch public information and education campaigns, conduct public hearings and focus groups, and establish advisory committees and citizen information centers to include all stakeholders in the participation process.

7. Assessment of Results. There are many evaluation tools that can be used to conduct an assessment of the coalition's results. It can be done through surveys, focus groups or interviews with all stakeholders, including coalition members, community leaders, business and mass media. Evaluation results should be shared with citizens in order to inform them about the coalition's success and failure. Public opinion is an important instrument to change the action plan if needed.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

There are a number of active NGO coalitions, contributing to civil society development throughout CEE countries. However, many of them are still characterized by a weak institutional capacity and low level of involvement in the decision-making process. Listed below are the risks and obstacles for successful coalition building:

1. Unclear or Unrealistic Aim of a Coalition: A coalition without any real goal and strategy is doomed to fail. Before starting the coalition building process, it is crucial to decide which type of union it will be. "One issue" or "event" coalition only has to solve one specific issue. Such a coalition is dissolved when the task is completed. For example, a Slovak coalition "Civic Campaign OK '98" was established with the aim of promoting honest and fair parliamentary elections. After this goal was achieved, the coalition was dissolved.

A "multi issues" coalition has related issues, such as anti-corruption and transparency, health and the environment. This is a more permanent type of coalition, which recognizes the value of working together on actions over a longer period of time[3]. The Bulgarian Coalition 2000, which fights against corruption in society, can be an example of such a civic structure.

2. Ineffective Coalition Structure: Unclear definition of the duties, rights, and responsibilities of the coalition's members obstructs the effective coalition activity. One of the most effective coalition structures is based on not foreseeing the vertical principle of subordination of one organization to another, thus ensuring equal rights of all participants.

3. Resistance of the Government to Involve Citizen Groups in the Decision-Making Process: Ukraine's experience shows that some local governments are still not ready to accept NGO coalitions as their partners because it would decrease their control over the decision-making and implementation processes.

4. Weak Inter-Coalition Communication: Lack of access to information also works to undercut productive results. The coalition's activities should be transparent and open, thus, keeping both coalition members and the general public informed about successes and failures.

In order to combat these obstacles to successful coalition building, the coalition members must gain skills in coalition strategic and operational planning and management, government and media relations, teamwork, fundraising, and proposal writing. The People's Voice Project held a number of workshops covering these issues to help the NGO coalitions in both Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk strengthen their work.

METHOD EXAMPLE

NGO Coalition Activities in Ternopil

In October 1999, within the framework of the People's Voice Project (PVP), a non-governmental organization coalition was created in order to strengthen the role of civil society in the policy-making process. The coalition consists of 16 NGOs. Among them are several NGOs who represent the interests of women, youth and environmental issues. The goals of coalition are to:

- further interaction between the public and local government;
- to guarantee transparency during the decision-making process, and;
- to promote structural changes in the community, many of which are sponsored by the People's Voice Project.

The NGO coalition in Ternopil takes an active part in reforming the city's public service delivery system by monitoring local government activities, participating in various policy and program

[3]Stevens, Georgia. 1996. A Process for Building Coalitions. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service and Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

development processes, conducting educational and regulatory reforms and discussing different issues related to the communal budget and ecological spheres. The skills obtained during PVP seminars and workshops provide citizens with the know-how to effectively conduct these locally based development activities. Seminar participants acquire practical skills and theoretical knowledge in strategic planning, management, co-operation with mass media, teamwork, monitoring, proposal writing and fundraising.

The NGO coalition takes an active part in conducting roundtables, focus groups and international conferences in Ternopil. Between 1999 and 2001, the NGO Coalition initiated 15 public hearings and seminars on the following topics:

- City budget formation;
- Decreased regulation of local business;
- Land relationships and land market reform;
- City retail trade;
- Health protection;
- Education reform; and
- Improvement of Ternopil's communal housing management.

The creation of the NGO coalition promotes the development of a different form of public engagement in the process of policy making in Ternopil. Because of the Coalition, the citizens of Ternopil have become more informed about different aspects of the local government's role and citizens' rights and responsibilities. Therefore, the possibilities for civil society development in Ternopil are on the increase as citizens' interests are receiving more support and more attention by local government officials.

RESOURCES

Publications

People's Voice Project. 2000. NGO Coalitions in Central and Eastern Europe: Experience of Cooperation with Local Authorities. Ivano-Frankivsk.

Stevens, Georgia. 1996. A Process for Building Coalitions. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service and Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Stoyanov, Alexander. "Coalition Building and Monitoring Corruption: The Coalition 2000 Process and Its Results." Presentation at the Second Annual Meeting of the Anti-Corruption Network for Transition Economies, Istanbul, Turkey, 2-3 November 1999.

Tichy, Richard. "Coalitions of Non-Profit Organizations: Good Servant, or Bad Master? Risks of Non-Democratic Structures in the Civic Sector", Newsletter of the People's Voice Project, Issue #1 (Spring 2000).

Websites

Anti-Corruption Gateway for Europe and Eurasia:
http://www.nobribes.org/Documents/Istanbul99/SA_presentaion_22.doc

Coalition 2000, Bulgaria:
www.online.bg/coalition 2000.htm

People's Voice Project:
http://www.icps.kiev.ua/projects/eng/peoples_voice/

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Chuck Hirt,
Citizens Network, Slovakia

OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

"Let me give you a word on the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born in earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all absorbing, and for the time being, putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightening. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong, which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

Fredrick Douglas, "Letter to an American Slavery Abolitionist-1849." In
"Forward: Bobo K., Kendall J. " Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for
Activists in the 1990's. MD: Seven Locks Press, 1991.

This quote perfectly describes the heart of community organizing. People need to take power into their own hands and organize among themselves, in order to implement changes. Community organizing, therefore, is one of the key methods of citizen participation at the local level.

What is Community Organizing?

In simple terms, community organizing is a combination of three things:

- Building power through involving a constituency in identifying problems they share and the solutions to those problems that they desire;
- Identifying the people and structures that can make those solutions possible, enlisting those targets in the effort through negotiation, and using confrontation and pressure when needed;
- Building a community-based organization that is democratically controlled by a constituency, can develop the capacity to take on further problems and embodies the will and the power of that constituency.

Community organizing is a method of community work that originated in the 1940's in the United States. Community organizers in the U. S. found it helpful to distinguish their work from three other forms of community based strategies, namely *advocacy, service delivery and community development*. To illustrate:

Advocacy strategies (where an advocate offers to solve a problem in the community) are usually based on:

- Short-term orientation;
- Issues derived from the public agenda;
- Results orientation;
- Activities involving education, confrontation and negotiation;
- Involving staff who represent the interests of those affected and provides information and or educates.

Groups active in *service delivery* (where actual services that people need are provided to them —e.g. child care for their children) have strategies based on:

- Short-term orientation;
- Service derived from the community through activities such as needs assessments and planned activities;
- Process and outcome orientation;
- Cooperation with authorities;
- Services provided by the staff of a public authority.

Community development strategies (where communities are interested in improving either the economic or housing conditions in their neighborhood) are more often based on:

- Medium-term orientation;
- Issues derived from planned objectives;
- Process orientation;
- Cooperation with authorities;
- Project management.

Finally, *community organizing strategies* (where citizens campaign to advocate for themselves, and in turn, build citizen organizations) follow tactics based on:

- Long-term orientation;
- Issues derived from conducting one-on-one interviews;
- Action orientation;
- Confrontation and negotiation;
- A skillful team to organize citizens.

CONTEXT FOR USING THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Community organizing starts with citizens' involvement in the public arena (as opposed to personal life), which includes government, business and the NGO sector. It is the interplay of all three that forms the public sphere.

Thus, the focus of organizing work is not only on developing the citizens' capacity to engage with government, as some other public participation strategies emphasize. Organizing begins by placing emphasis on developing the citizens capacity to engage with either the government, business and possibly other NGO's. Citizens need to be prepared to deal with anyone else operating in the public sphere and with whom citizens need to negotiate with in order to have their needs met.

Community organizing does not concern itself with the nature of the relationship between government and citizens. Governments are free to choose whatever relationship they wish with citizens. Obviously, things work better in an environment of participation and collaboration, but sometimes governments choose other means. Either way, citizens need to learn how to engage.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

Often community groups are ineffective, as they are quick to rush to a particular tactic. For instance, a group may write petitions without taking the appropriate steps to help them assess whether or not it will help their cause.

Community organizing requires careful planning, just like government and business. There are several steps involved in community organizing work. These steps include (following this brief step guide will be more detailed information on several of the items like identifying the issue, or developing the strategy):

1. **Identify the Issue —** In this step, information about the problems that exist in communities is gathered. The community organizer carries out most of this initial work by conducting hundreds of personal interviews with citizens. Citizens then sort out and discuss these problems, choose one, and begin working on it. The problem is then narrowed down and solutions are identified.

Criteria for Identifying an Issue

A variety of criteria should be considered when choosing an issue. Not all of these criteria will apply in every situation, but the ability to maximize the largest number of them is optimal. Consider following this checklist of possibilities before choosing an issue. The issue should:

- Result in real improvements in people's lives
- Give people a sense of power and therefore alter the relations of power
- Be worthwhile and winnable
- Be widely and deeply felt
- Be easy to understand
- Have a clear target
- Have a clear time frame that works
- Be non-divisive and build leadership
- Set the organization up for the next campaign
- Be consistent with the organization's values and vision
- Develop a strategic plan
- Include tactics and action

2. **Get the Background Information on the Issue —** Doing homework is still important. To be effective in the public arena, a group must be competent in its work. This requires that the group knows all that it can about the issue and who has the power to bring about the changes desired. Ideas about what will be needed to bring about these changes are especially essential.

3. Define the Goal — At this stage the group focuses on its task. The agenda here is not only to clarify the actual goal in terms of solving the issue, but also to clarify the objectives for the group itself. The question that has to be asked here is: What does the group want the results of their work to be?

4. Plan the Strategy — Many new groups start the process of community organizing at this stage, and it is usually a mistake. It happens very often that when community groups gather for the first time, they talk briefly about a problem, and immediately start discussing possible tactics, (for example writing a petition, or arranging a meeting with the local city council member(s). Unfortunately, this usually leads to failure, as groups are not prepared to discuss strategy until they have completed the previous three steps. With the goal in place, the group can then proceed towards identifying the possible supporters and opponents, the target group for the campaign (i.e. who has the power at the lowest level to implement the requested change) and then possible tactics which could be employed to bring about change. This requires an analysis of power and what power the target has vs. the power of the group. The strategy plan should take all of this into account.

5. Obtain Support — Since the main source of power is people, the group needs to work hard to obtain citizen involvement. Unfortunately, people often tend to generalize, and assume that because some individuals do not wish to get involved in community organizing, the entire city population will act the same way. This is frequently the most difficult and discouraging part of organizing community work. Therefore, the group needs to work constantly to find techniques to acquire the needed support. Well-trained organizers can help in this process.

6. Take Action — This is really the heart of organizing. It is through action that people truly learn about their power and the public arena. It is through action that the group defines who they are and what actual power they have. This is also the time when real leaders arise and talkers will move aside. The process for implementation will need to be adapted to each country, their culture and conditions. This only adds to the time required to implement this type of program.

7. Assess Results — It is critical to constantly strive to learn more about community organizing. By assessing actions and strategies, the group begins to learn what it truly means to be citizens.

8. Modify the Strategy and Try Again — If changes are needed in any strategy, they must be made and those involved must be prepared to do the work required. In some cases, however, it is possible that one conclusion would be to move on to another issue, since the current one is not successful.

Evaluation of organizing work should consider the training level of the organizers, the number of successful campaigns, the number of citizens active, and the strength of the organizations built. It will be critical to assess the number of citizens active beyond just one campaign, as this work is focused on the long-term building of organizations.

In order to successfully implement the community organizing method, a minimum of three years has to be available for start-up. This time factor is one of the reasons why few attempts in community organizing have been made, since donors often are not prepared to consider this length of funding from the onset.

Developing the Strategy

When planning a strategy, it is important to consider these four rules:

1. **Get comfortable with such words as conflict and agitation.** There is no change without conflict. As citizens, we do not create conflict; we merely expose the conflict that already exists.

2. **The tool we use to expose conflict is agitation.** To agitate means to move to action, or change from the resting position.

3. **When we look to develop effective organizing strategies, we want to choose the strategy that will expose the conflict as openly, quickly and deeply as possible.**

4. **The organizing group is in control of the pressure.** The organization should release the pressure as soon as the opposing group or institution agrees to negotiate in good faith.

The strategic planning process is a realistic, detailed assessment of the organization's power and organizing potential. This process should lead the organization to one of two conclusions:

- The organization has the capacity to take on the opposing group or institution directly and win

OR

- The organization is not strong enough to win at the present time.

If the group determines that the second option is the answer, some options must be selected in order to help the group succeed. These options include a coalition with others, or choosing some secondary groups that will help the organization succeed. Another choice is to take on an issue campaign that might be easier to win and will build the organizing capacity of the organization, so that the primary issue will be resolved.

With this, the group should now be ready to start developing their strategy. It will be useful to follow the Strategy Chart on the next page developed by the Midwest Academy, (Chicago, USA) for the issues to consider in completing the strategic plan.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

There are several risks and obstacles, which should be considered before starting a community organizing project. The first is that a long-term commitment of funding, supervision and training is required if there is any chance of success. Even with a minimum start of three years, considerable attention will need to be given to long-term funding since this will continually be a major difficulty.

Strategy Chart
(Midwest Academy Chicago, USA)

After choosing your issue, fill in this chart as a guide to developing a strategy. Be specific but list all the possibilities.

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, Allies, and Opponents	Targets	Tactics
1. List the long-term objectives of your campaign. 2. State the intermediate goals for this issue campaign. What constitutes victory? How will the campaign: ● Win concrete improvements in people's lives? ● Give people a sense of their own power? ● Alter the relations of power? 3. What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal?	1. List the resources that your organization brings to the campaign. Include: money, number of staff, facilities, reputation, canvas, etc. What is the budget, including in-kind contributions, for this campaign? 2. List the specific ways in which you want your organization to be strengthened by this campaign. Fill in numbers for each: ● Expand the leadership group ● Increase experience of existing leadership ● Build membership base ● Expand into new constituencies ● Raise more money 3. List internal problems that have to be considered if the campaign is to succeed.	1. Who cares about this issue enough to join in or help the organization? ● Whose problem is it? ● What do they gain if they win? ● What risks are they taking? ● What power do they have over the target? ● Into what groups are they organized? 2. Who are your opponents? ● What will your victory cost them? ● What will they do/spend to oppose you? ● How strong are they?	1. Primary Targets: A target is always a person. It is never an institution or elected body. ● Who has the power to give you what you want? ● What power do you have over them? 2. Secondary Targets: ● Who has power, over the people with the power, to give you what you want? ● What power do you have over them?	1. For each target, list the tactics that each constituent group can best use to make its power felt. Tactics must be: ● In context ● Flexible and creative ● Directed at a specific target ● Make sense to the membership ● Be backed up by a specific form of power Tactics include: ● Media events ● Actions for information and demands ● Public hearings ● Strikes ● Voter registration and voter education ● Law suits ● Accountability sessions ● Elections ● Negotiations

Source: Bobo, Kim, Kendall, Jackie and Max, Steve. 1991. Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for Activists in the 1990"s. Cabin John, Maryland: Seven Locks Press.

Secondly, the work has to be adapted to the culture and conditions of the community involved. It is critical to be persistent despite the repeated resistance of "we can't do that here."

It is also important that citizens experience success. If the initial campaigns are too difficult and victories are not won, citizens will become discouraged. Choosing smaller issues initially that are winnable is generally a better strategy in order to build for long-term success. Generally, an open and supportive relationship with government or business will assist this. However, if the situation is handled well, an antagonistic relationship can paradoxically build the capacity of the organization in a very significant manner.

METHOD EXAMPLE

Community Organizing in Slovakia

There are numerous examples of community organizing, which have benefited citizens groups in Slovakia. A specific case is one of the very first campaigns, launched in the Sasova neighborhood in Banska Bystrica.

The paid and trained organizer responsible for developing a new citizen initiative began her work by conducting approximately 400 one-on-one interviews with citizens to listen to what their concerns and problems were in the neighborhood of Sasova. There were a number of steps involved in this case study. They include:

First Step
A number of potential leaders were identified, and invited to an initial meeting. These leaders were selected by the organizer on the basis of demonstrated interest and potential talent to provide the new group with needed skills. Several people were approached about running the session, and they agreed to assist the organizer with the preparation of activities.

Second Step
During the meeting, the problems the organizer had heard from people while conducting her interviews were reviewed by the group. Among the problems was a serious concern about crime and safety. After lengthy discussion, the group decided they would like to tackle this problem first. Several people from the group agreed to work further on this problem.

Third Step
The next step the group decided to implement was to meet with the chief of police to learn more about the problem. The group learned a valuable lesson from this experience. When they approached the police chief individually, he treated them rather rudely and did not seem interested in their concerns. The leaders shared their experience at the next meeting, and at the suggestion of the organizer, went as a group of four to a second meeting with the police chief. This time, they were treated very differently. He behaved more seriously and showed more respect. This inspired the group to continue working together.

Fourth Step
The group conducted additional research on the problem of crime and safety and eventually decided that the issue they wanted to have changed was the number of police officers assigned

to patrol the neighborhood. They learned that although nearly one third of the city's population lived in this neighborhood, only about ten percent of the police officers were assigned to work in the area. Instead, the majority of the police officers were assigned by the mayor and chief of police to patrol the downtown area. The specific issue of the group then became convincing the police chief to re-assign 12 of the 56 police officers to Sasova.

Fifth Step

The group analyzed the campaign and decided that the police chief was not prepared to make the change simply on the basis of their request. They began collecting signatures in a petition aimed at increasing awareness of their campaign and building additional support. This petition was presented to the police chief, but without any hopeful sign that he was open to the change.

Sixth Step

The next step the group took on was organizing a public hearing where members of the city council's safety committee were invited. Residents testified about the problem of crime in their neighborhood. After nearly an hour of citizens' comments, each of the members of the safety committee were asked if they would support the group's request to increase the number of police in the neighborhood from 6 to 12. Each member of the safety committee agreed and their answers were publicly recorded.

The following month, the committee introduced a motion asking for a report about the neighborhood request from the chief of police and indicating their support for this change. Although this still did not cause the police chief to make the change of assignments, he was clearly aware of the additional support.

Final Step

The last element in the group's strategy was to plan a large community meeting where the police chief was invited to discuss the request for increasing the number of police assigned to the neighborhood. Group leaders were aware that they would need at least 100 people to attend this meeting and were prepared to work to get this number to attend.

When they called the police chief to invite him to the meeting, he asked if he could meet with the leaders earlier and discuss the matter with them. They agreed, but knew it was important to have this meeting take place in their own neighborhood. They invited him to attend their next meeting. When the meeting started, the police chief attempted to give a number of reasons why the change was a problem, but the group defended their position. After an hour-long discussion, he agreed to increase the number of police officers patrolling the Sasova neighborhood to 10. It seemed that the likelihood of having to meet with at least 100 residents was a serious concern to the chief and it was easier for him to agree with this smaller group than to try to explain his reasons to a larger group of residents.

The group leaders accepted this decision. Within three months, the change was implemented, and the group celebrated their first victory.

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PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLANNING

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OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

The participatory budgeting method involves citizens in the financial planning of the city. An active participation of all the stakeholders is fundamental to designing an efficient and practical budget and capital investment plan (CIP). These are two of the most important financial decisions made by the local government that address the needs of the city and its occupants. All citizens should, at least minimally, be interested in their city's financial policies, because it is their tax money that is being spent, and most importantly, the implemented decisions will affect their everyday lives.

City Budget — is a detailed financial plan designed for a specific time period. It is the most significant policy document that the city council makes each year. The budget includes: a work plan for the coming year, estimates of future expenditures and revenues, financial information from operating departments and details about capital investments that the city will undertake.

Capital Investment Plan — is a multi-year schedule of improvements in the public sphere, which goes hand-in-hand with the budget. The schedule usually covers four to five years. The CIP outlines suggested future expenditures in the city's technical infrastructure.

The desired effect of the participatory budgeting method is to provide citizens with an opportunity to participate in the financial decision-making process of the city. The cooperation between citizens, non-governmental organizations, representatives of the business sector and the government will result in more transparent, just and effective financial policies. The participatory budgeting methodology is important, because it increases citizen involvement, strengthens democracy and ultimately, through the implementation of effective policies, improves the quality of life for citizens. This method can be implemented with the help of other citizen participation techniques such as public hearings, advisory committees, public meetings and civic journalism.

Citizen participation is a two-way street. In order to successfully implement the participatory budgeting method at the local level, all stakeholders have to be open to collaboration. The participatory budgeting method suggests that in order to have meaningful public input and engagement in the decision-making process, one must first build knowledge and awareness through public education and public information. Providing regular, ongoing education and information will create interest among the public with regards to financial issues. It will also help lay the foundation for a greater and more meaningful dialogue between the government and citizens, where the latter group is able to provide realistic recommendations and suggestions about the budget and the capital investment plan.

The basic principles of the participatory budgeting method and citizens' involvement in the process of its implementation are discussed in this paper. The case study about Capital Investment Planning in Poland, presented at the end this paper, provides an example of how the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are begining to involve citizens in public financial planning. The approach presented in this chapter combines several perspectives in an attempt to provide an extensive and reasonably complete methodology that could be applied by cities who lack written plans and policies to guide capital investment choices.

CONTEXT FOR USING THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Implementation of the participatory budgeting method benefits both the government and the citizens. It highlights transparency of the government, increases citizen participation and establishes further trust between both groups. If the public has access to information and if the information provided is presented in a simple and straightforward manner, the citizens will be able to grasp financial concepts more easily, see the correlation between budget expenditures and programs, and make useful recommendations. This will, in turn, improve the quality of service delivery to citizens and make governments more accountable for their policies.

Outlined below are elements needed to achieve the maximum effect of the participatory budgeting method. This methodology incorporates many other citizen participation methods, which are discussed in other chapters in this handbook.

1. Who Should Be Involved in Participatory Budgeting?

In order to achieve the maximum benefit from application of this methodology, all stakeholders should be involved in the decision-making process. The most important groups are:

- **Citizen Organizations (e.g., Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Trade Unions or Religious Organizations) —** These groups are extremely important since they have experience in organizing citizens, conducting campaigns and researching issues at hand. They often already have experts and advisors who are able to provide useful information to citizens in all areas of citizen participation. Additionally, they have prior experience in conducting public hearings and budgetary meetings;

- **Representatives of Businesses and Entrepreneurs —** Financial matters of the city are of great importance to local businesses, since they affect them directly. These individuals and groups already have hands-on experience in budgets and financial planning and therefore can contribute to the discussion about the budget and other policies;

- **Community Representatives From Different Professions —** These individuals should have knowledge of major sectors in government (e.g., education, transportation, or health). Their input will be especially valuable in capital investment planning, where specific expertise is required;

- **Representatives of the Local Media (e.g., radio, television, press) —** Dissemination of valuable information to citizens is key to the participatory budgeting process, and therefore local media plays a vital role. Citizens need to be provided constantly with current information;

- **Educators and Trainers —** These people must have knowledge of financial procedures and skills to educate citizens. If involved properly, they can act as intermediaries between local government representatives and the public (e.g. serve in advisory groups).

In participatory budgeting, these groups work with the local government representatives. During the key stages of the budget and capital investment plan preparation, these citizens should be consulted and their suggestions and recommendations should be incorporated into the final document draft. The case study at the end of this chapter acts as an example of how the public can be involved in the process of capital investment planning.

2. What Financial Information Should Be Provided to the Public?

- **Last Year's Budget and the Present Year Budget Calendar —** Local government officials should prepare a budget calendar, which lists the most important stages of budget development and outlines where citizen participation would be most appropriate. This should be given to the public as soon as the dates are available. Also, as a reference, the citizens should always have access to the last year's budget;

- **Detailed and Straight Foreword Information About How Budgets Are Designed and How They Are Approved —** Citizens need a simple explanation of how the city budget works, when it is implemented, what it consists of, and how it affects them directly. Each department should provide information about its expenditures and implemented programs, so that citizens can see how their tax money is being used;

- **Information About the City Capital Investment Plan and How It Is Designed and Implemented —** Since CIP deals with the city's infrastructure and the changes that the city plans to undertake in the near future (i.e. immediate needs of the public), citizens should be provided with as many details as possible. The city officials should explain, in an easy to understand language, how the capital plans are carried over from year to year.

The above listed information should always be presented in a format that is understandable to the public; it should be clear, precise and descriptive. It is vital to first provide citizens with relevant information, give them time to analyze and think about it, and then solicit their opinions through public meetings and surveys. If governments take this approach, citizens will be able to better understand government decisions. Non-government organizations and community groups' roles are to act as intermediaries between citizens and local government and provide ongoing assistance, expertise and advice.

3. When and How Should the Public Be Informed About the Budget and the Capital Investment Plan for the City?

- **A Copy of the Previous Year's Annual Budget (Including the Capital Investment Plan) Should Always Be Available to Citizens —** This information should be provided in the form of a guide or manual that is easy to read and understand;

- **The Public Should Be Regularly Up-Dated On New Developments in City Departments —** If there are any changes in the budget priorities, or any other major events in the city's financial matters, public officials should inform the citizens as soon as possible. Television, radio and the press are essential in the process of dissemination of information to citizens. Articles concerning finance/ budgeting issues should be placed in local newspapers, and the results of local meetings and consultations should also be made public through the media;

- **Updated Reading Material About Local Budgets and Capital Investment Plans Should Always Be Available to Citizens —** These written materials should be distributed to information centers, city hall, public libraries and the local media. Also, the city website should regularly be updated with financial information and critical dates in the budget and capital investment plan design and implementation;

- **Citizens Should Be Informed Approximately One Month Before the Public Meeting or Hearing About the Budget or CIP Is to Take Place —** The meeting organizers should provide the public with the time, location and purpose of the meetings, and if possible, the agenda of the discussion. All meetings should be open to the public, because during these meetings various issues related to the budget are discussed (refer to the Citizen Advisory Groups and Public Hearings chapters for more information);

It should be emphasized that public officials should regularly undertake campaigns, where they ask citizens about their opinion on the financial issues involving the city such as the budget, or the capital investment plan. This should be done using public surveys, public hearings and meetings, or call-in centers.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Ensure the Quality of Experts —** The intermediary groups and educators should be competent and dedicated to enhancing citizen participation. Try to involve experts from different fields of study. These people should have experience in capital investment planning, budgeting and strategic planning and be able to relate their knowledge to citizens during community meetings;

2. **Educate Local Authorities On How to Successfully Relate Information About the Budget and CIP to the Public —** This should be done by professional trainers and educators, and through practical activities such as study tours;

According to David P. Amborski, People's Voice Project Consultant , training should be provided to municipal staff in the following areas:

- **Public Facilitation/Citizen Participation:** This ensures that the public is properly educated and informed, and that there is a two-way flow of information where the public views are being articulated and influence local decision-making;

- **Municipal Budget Format/Techniques:** The use of program budgeting to provide an understandable system for the public, which leads to easy evaluation of projects and which can be linked to strategic planning or priority setting initiatives that should be undertaken by local government;

- **Community Based Strategic Planning or Priority Setting:** These approaches should be used as a basis for developing a culture of citizen input into local decision making, and as the basis for relating to priority programs for a program budget structure.

3. **Educate Citizens About Their Rights and Responsibilities in the Process of Financial Policy Development —** People need to understand their role in the whole process. Community organizations, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and local governments must assume the role of educator;

4. **Begin the Process of Involving the Public in Budget and CIP Development Well in Advance to Ensure Successful Participation —** Allow time to make changes in the budget and CIP based on citizens' suggestions;

5. **Provide Citizens With Relevant and Up-to-Date information About the Budget and CIP —** These documents and brochures need to be free of technical jargon, and if that is not possible, all technical terms should be explained in simple language. Also, information and results from budget hearings, public meetings and council meetings should be provided through promotion campaigns. This is important because citizens need time to prepare for these meetings. Time, location, purpose and other written information about what will be discussed at the meeting should be available to the general public one month in advance;

6. **Establish Citizen Advisory Groups that Specialize in the Budget and CIP Preparation —** The role of this group is to provide support to government officials involved in the process, act as a liaison between the public and the government, and educate citizens about the budget. Eventually the group should review the suggestions provided by the public and lobby for successful implementation of citizens' requests into the budget and CIP;

7. **Undertake Performance Measurement —** The budget is the ultimate statement of the government's priorities, and if the participatory budgeting method was applied correctly, it should reflect the priorities stated by the public. In order to measure the effectiveness of the method, citizen opinion should be solicited through report cards and public surveys. The collected data will show how effective the participatory budgeting method was.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

Because participatory budgeting and capital investment planning are relatively new forms of citizen participation in financial decision-making in CEE, there are a number of risks and obstacles that might make the implementation of this method challenging. These include:

- **Lack of a Citizen Participation Culture —** In the CEE countries, citizens express their lack of interest in issues related to local government decision-making because of their inexperience and lack of knowledge on how to participate;

- **Lack of Training —** Budget planning and capital investment planning require technical expertise and knowledge of the field. Very often citizens lack this knowledge, and therefore are not able to understand the process. This inability to understand discourages them from participating;

- **Lack of Financial Resources —** Money is needed in order to provide technical training to all the stakeholders on how to actively participate in the financial decision making of the city. Resources are also needed for holding public meetings and preparing information to be disseminated;

- **Resistance of the Government to Accept Community Suggestions —** Local governments have to be ready for criticism and accordingly, be willing to change. Otherwise, citizens will become discouraged;

- **Lack of Access to Information and Knowledge —** Citizens need to be informed and educated about the local financial process, because without this vital information, they cannot participate;

- **Lack of Active NGOs and Other Civil Society Groups —** These groups should be ready to pressure the local government to be more transparent and open to citizen participation, and also be ready to mobilize citizens to participate;

METHOD EXAMPLE

Capital Investment Planning in Zwolen Poland

Zwolen is one of many typical small municipalities in the so-called "Eastern Wall" of Poland. Seventeen-thousand (17,000) inhabitants are represented in the city council by 22 councilors. Both the local authorities and citizens are open to new ideas and new management tools.

In 1998, Zwolen was sponsored by USAID to implement a multi-year capital investment plan. Operational revenues as well as operational expenditures were predicted, the city budget was analyzed and a five year financial vision of how to cover the city's development costs was developed, with the help of Polish financial consultants.

Initially, local government officials debated if they should involve citizens in the decision-making process. It was the mayor who finally decided that citizen participation should be unlimited and citizens should be actively involved in all stages of the process. In order to involve citizens in this process, Capital Investment Cards were printed, through which each citizen was able to express his/her development project priorities. Capital Investment Cards were distributed to all possible public places such as schools, shops, businesses, post offices, etc. At city hall, citizens could both pick up Capital Investment Cards and seek related CIC information from the Investment Service Department officials who have been instructed in advance on how to deal with the public in the matter.

Through the use of Capital Investment Cards, local government officials were able to see what citizens' priorities were in terms of city development. Citizens were able to express their opinions and, thus help to set development goals for the future.

Important steps in preparation of the Capital Investment Plan are outlined below:

1. The city council passed a new resolution regarding the CIP and undertook its promotion in the community. The city council resolution consisted of:

- A detailed schedule for implementation;
- Capital Card Investment forms with instructions;
- An outline on how to prioritize and rank projects based on the Town Development Strategy;
- Appointment of an implementation committee (including names of individuals, their responsibilities, work regulations and the working agenda). The committee's responsibility is to ensure that the CIP process is being exercised according to schedule, and acts as an intermediary between government officials, experts and the public;

2. Capital Investment Cards were distributed to citizens, local businesses, schools, community organizations and NGOs;

3. The implementation committee informed the public about the CIP process though the media, public meetings, brochures and articles, as well as worked with various departments to prioritize projects;

4. Capital Investment Cards were collected from the public and city departments;

5. The city council and the implementation committee prioritized projects based on information from Capital Investment Cards and public meetings. This process took over one month. The committee focused on projects, which would enhance the city's economy, create workplaces and bring new revenue to the city. Projects that were already under construction or had a chance for outside investments were also prioritized;

6. The implementing committee carried out the first recommendation of the requested projects and created the first version of the CIP;

7. The first version was discussed with the city council Implementation Committee and the city board, where investment budget and city budget drafts were taken into account;

8. The city treasurer presented analysis of the city's financial potential and several proposals for increasing resources through loans;

9. Based on consultations, changes were made in the first draft of the CIP — first by the committee and then by the board. Then the second version was presented to the city board and the city council;

10. Finally, the city board, the city council and the implementation committee approved the final CIP draft.

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PARTICIPATORY (ACTION) RESEARCH

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OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Changing economic and political relations, based on the ownership and control of information technologies and communication, raise important questions for community organizing in an increasingly privatized, post-industrial knowledge society. In this situation, certain relevant questions must be asked, including:

- Who produces knowledge and for whose interests?
- What are the implications of a changing economic and social order for the relatively powerless?

Today's challenges call for rethinking of knowledge production in community organizing. Instead of conceptualizing research as a detached discovery and an empirical verification of general patterns in community practice, social/development research needs to be employed as a point of resistance and struggle. The participatory approach to community research offers a methodology that addresses people, power and praxis in the post-industrial, information-based society.

This paper will focus on describing how a participatory (action) research project is carried out in community practice through articulating key issues and roles of the stakeholders. Hence, a major focus of this chapter explores research methodologies by which social researchers and community practitioners can mobilize information and knowledge resources, as one part of their broader strategies for community empowerment.

General Background Information on the Participation Methodology

Originally designed to resist the intellectual colonialism of western social research into the Third World development process, participatory (action) research was a methodology developed to involve disenfranchised people as researchers in pursuit of answers to the questions of their daily lives. It is not new for people to raise questions about their conditions or to actively search for better ways of doing things for their own well being and that of their community. But what participatory (action) research is proposing is to look at these actions as research that can be carried out as an organized, cognitive and change-initiating activity. This vision implies a new framework of political will to promote research as a collective action in the struggle over power and resources, and as the generation of change-oriented social theory in the post-industrial, information-based society.

Knowledge becomes a crucial element in enabling people to have a say in how they would like to see their world structured and operate. Participatory (action) research is a means of putting research capabilities in the hands of people so that they can identify issues themselves as knowing actors through defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, and transforming their lives. It is a means of preventing an elite group from exclusively determining the interests of others. In effect, it is a way of transferring power to those groups engaged in the production of popular knowledge.

Desired Effect of the Participation Method

Participatory (action) research challenges practices that separate the researcher from the researched and promotes the forging of a partnership between researchers and the people under study. Both researcher and participant are actors in the investigative process, influencing the flow, interpreting the content, and sharing options for action. Ideally, this collaborative process is empowering because it:

- brings isolated people together around common problems and needs;
- validates their experiences as the foundation for understanding and critical reflection;
- presents the knowledge and experiences of the researchers as additional information upon which to critically reflect;
- puts into appropriate context those elements which have previously felt like "personal" and/or individual problems or weakness, and;
- links such personal experiences to political realities.

The result of this kind of activity is living knowledge that may get translated into action. Participatory (action) research reflects goal-oriented and experiential learning.

CONTEXT FOR USING THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Formulating Concrete Participation Aims

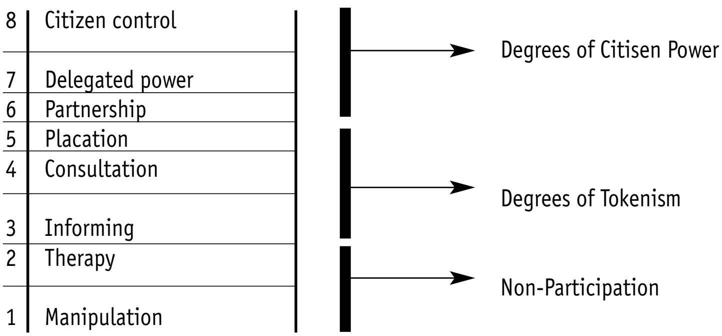
Before implementing any method of citizen participation, the desired effect should be identified and considered. That is, are the purposes of the method only to inform the community or are they to engage citizens through the public consultation process?

There are several approaches to levels of citizen participation. However, Sherry Arnstein (1969) and David Wilcox (online) have developed two models, which focus specifically on the community planning process. The following table outlines Arnstein and Wilcox's participation frameworks:

Sherry Arnstein (1969) described citizen involvement in the planning process in the United States as a ladder of participation: **1. Manipulation and 2. Therapy:** Both are non-participative. The aim is to cure or educate the participants. The proposed plan is viewed as optimal and the job of participation is to achieve public support by public relations. **3. Informing:** A most important first step to legitimate participation. But too frequently the emphasis is on a one way flow of information. No channel for feedback exists.	*David Wilcox (online) suggests thinking of five levels, which offer increasing degrees of control to others involved:* **1. Information:** The least you can do is tell people what is planned. **2. Consultation:** You identify the problems, offer a number of options, and listen to the feedback you get.

4. Consultation: Again, a legitimate step that includes attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings and public enquiries. Still, Arnstein feels that this is just a "window dressing" ritual. **5. Placation:** For example, co-option of hand-picked "worthies" onto committees. It allows citizens to advise or plan ad infinitum, but power holders retain the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice. **6. Partnership:** Power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens (stakeholders) and power holders. Planning and decision-making responsibilities are shared (e.g. through joint committees). **7. Delegated Power:** This is a participative approach whereby citizens hold a clear majority of seats on committees and have delegated powers to make decisions. The public now has the power to assure accountability of the program. **8. Citizen Control:** The citizens control the jobs of planning, policy making and managing a program (e.g. neighborhood corporation with no intermediaries between it and the source of funds). *Different levels of participation are appropriate in different circumstances. The key issue is what stance to take for initiating or managing a process of participation or partnership-building.*	**3. Deciding Together:** You encourage others to provide some additional ideas and options and join in to decide the best way forward. **4.Acting Together:** Not only do different interests decide together what is best, but they form a partnership to carry it out. **5. Supporting Independent Community Initiatives:** You help others do what they want, perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support provided by the resource holder. *The "lower" levels of participation keep control with the initiator but they lead to less commitment from others. Partnership operates at the levels of "deciding together" and "acting together". Information is essential for all participation, but is not participatory in itself.*

Levels of Citizen Participation: Two Models
Arnstein's Ladder of Participation (1969):



Even though formulating the aims of citizen participation in terms of phases and levels clarifies the intended role of citizens in a particular context, these abstract aims still need to be explicit and concrete in language everyone understands. Formulating the aims of citizen participation as concretely as possible helps in developing adequate strategies and procedures for citizen participation, appropriate ways to motivate people to participate, and in determining the resources (funds, time etc.) required to achieve the intended aims.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

Participatory (action) research can be defined as a "collective, self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social practices" (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988:5).

Four main elements can be identified in this process, which exist interdependently and follow each other in a spiral or cycle:

Reflection: This is the moment where the research participants examine and construct, then evaluate and reconstruct their concerns. It includes the pre-emptive discussion of participants where they identify a shared concern or problem.

The role of the researcher in this process is not only to learn from the participants, but also to facilitate learning, by posing questions and stimulating the dialogue. The researcher's sharing of perceptions, questions in response to the dialogue, and different theories and data invite the participants to critically reflect upon their own experiences and personal theories from a broader context. Learning involves examining the self from a new, critical standpoint. This may involve naming areas of ignorance or gaps in knowledge, which render people unable to link personal experience with political reality. Critical consciousness is raised not by analyzing the problematic situation alone, but by engaging in action in order to transform the situation. Dialogue acts as a means for fostering critical consciousness about social reality, an understanding based on knowledge of how people and issues are historically and politically situated.

Planning: This is constructive and arises during discussions among the participants. It must be a critically examined action by each of the participants and include evaluation of the change. Therefore, it is important that the locus of control remains with those who generate the knowledge to be used in their best interests.

The purpose of P(A)R is to solve immediate problems of a specific neighborhood or community — and not to extrapolate knowledge learned to other communities, although such research outcomes may have broader implications. Policies that result from P(A)R will have more significance and emotional support than policies made by professionals alone. Such policies have more emotional support because the locus of control of both the research results and policy-making remains with the community.

Action: This occurs when the plan is put into place and the resulting improvement to the social situation occurs. This action will be deliberate and strategic. It is here that this method differs from other research methods in that the action or change happens in reality and not as an experiment.

Observation: This is the 'research' element where the changes, as outlined in the plan, are observed for their effects and the context of the situation. Research tools, such as questionnaires, can be utilized to ensure proper scientific methods are followed and results have meaning. Observation and action often occur simultaneously.

All research seems to be associated with action. Not only is research itself an action in existing situations, but it always has consequences as well. Situations inevitably change as a result of research. The mere act of asking questions is an intervention into a situation, and asking and receiving answers and making sense of them, inevitably brings about changes to those involved.

Participatory (action) research is aware of its inevitable intervention into the social situations within which it operates. It seeks to turn the intervention into a consciously applied effect. Most participatory (action) research sets out to explicitly study something in order to change and improve it. It most often arises from an unsatisfactory situation where those most affected wish to alter the situation for the better (although it can also arise from the experience of something which works well, which provokes the desire to reproduce or expand it).

The group undertaking P(A)R identifies a thematic concern through discussion and reflection. These concerns are integrated into a shared or common goal. The group agrees to collaborate and participate in the project because of the integrated goal.

The group and members of the group are thus empowered to plan and act to create social change. A change in practice is affected and observed using an appropriate research tool. The group critically examines the results and then the group has new knowledge from which theory may be developed. The new knowledge and theory may be focused on the observed effects of the change or the processes that occurred, or both. During the entire research cycle the group members keep individual journals in which they observe and reflect upon the ongoing processes. These journals can become a source of data for analysis. A P(A)R project is only research when proper scientific methods are used to collect and examine data.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

Issues for the Local Governments and Communities

A number of participatory action researchers have highlighted the potential for authority structures to control the balance of power in the research process. Local authorities tend to employ hierarchical management structures, and as such, need to develop acceptance of the participatory nature and empowerment outcomes of the P(A)R process amongst all stakeholders involved. Appropriate communication styles and a willingness to share power is vital in the P(A)R process. Individuals need to have equal access to information, including a common understanding of technical jargon. Researchers must also be aware of power struggles, which withhold information or block the release of resources.

The institutional structure of local authorities, which is bound by tight cycles of planning, consultation and contracting, could also threaten the effective implementation of this method. The intent of public agencies "to get the job done" contributes to a lack of community control over decision-making, which leads to individuals' feelings of frustration and lack of control over their lives. This can ultimately result in cycles of dependency and apathy.

There is a general lack of understanding by professional practitioners of the many "subtle social influences" that exist in communities. This lack of understanding may lead to the implementation of policies that relate to institutional practices and procedures, rather than the needs or desires of communities. For example, a local authority wishing to use a participatory method to research the needs for playground development in a community must be flexible enough in their process to allow residents to redirect the identification of the problem to other issues. These other issues may be related to open space and/or recreation provision in their community, if it is deemed to be a priority. The local authority's capital works program must therefore allow for the P(A)R process to create a suitable environment for building community partnerships, otherwise the researcher may experience aggression or apathy from community members.

Citizenship implies that not only do residents have rights, but they also have corresponding responsibilities. Similarly, the community must also be open to taking responsibility for problem solving and may also need to consider such things as financial restraints and citywide priorities of the local authority. Consequently the role of the researcher as facilitator is paramount so that all parties have the information they need to work together as partners, rather than as "experts" and "subjects". The relationship between the residents and the local authority should be such that the community accepts constraints more readily than if a less participatory form of consultation had been undertaken.

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PUBLIC EDUCATION

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OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Before citizens express their opinions, and participate in the public decision-making process, they need information about the subject at hand. A civic participation process can not be built unless those who participate have a high level of education and information about the issue(s).

Through the public education process one can:

- Determine citizens' awareness about specific issues;
- Inform citizens about specific problems in which they can make a difference;
- Persuade them to change their behavior and actively participate in the life of their community.

Public education is the first step in involving citizens in the life of their community and in creating a participative culture. Through public education, the attitudes of citizens regarding the political system and its different components can be changed. Public education is the method used to implement a certain policy, to create a state of mind and define the role of good in society.

This paper summarizes the experience of the Romanian DIALOG Program developed by the Pro Democracy Association in order to facilitate the process of communication and cooperation among citizens, local administration and public institutions.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

Public education means informing and motivating a large number of citizens in order to solve a problem that affects them. The first important step in this process is developing an education campaign. A public education campaign is a method whereby information is sent to a large number of citizens to heighten their awareness of a problem and, as a result, encourage them to change their behavior. The planning process to develop a civic education campaign is complex, but not difficult. It takes time, usually from three months to a year.

The planning process is the responsibility of a planning group comprised of individuals interested in developing a campaign, along with the assistance of professional experts, such as specialists in public education. The planning group directs and advises staff who are responsible for the daily operations of the campaign. Often the campaign staff is part of the planning group, which is comprised of no more than twenty people. Their abilities to plan for success and make useful decisions will depend on their training. The planning group must be trained in areas such as:

- Establishing campaign objectives;
- Choosing the right target groups;
- Researching and interpreting data about the target groups;

- Selecting communication strategies and;
- Producing, implementing, and managing a campaign.

The planning group and the campaign staff must be trained before they start planning the campaign. Also, the planning group must begin with a full understanding of what the campaign planning process is before the planning process begins. Implementation of a campaign involves a number of critical, interdependent steps in order to make it successful. These steps include the following:

1. Communication Planning

The success and the costs of the campaign depend on the effectiveness of the communication plan developed by the planning group. Such important issues have to be covered during this step:

Statement of the Problem — What is the community problem that the group feels that they can and must do something about, and which specific populations are affected by this problem? Does the group know how to solve or, at least, alleviate the problem? What does the group think they can achieve by the campaign?

T*he General Objective —* What does the group intend to achieve by the campaign? The general objective defines the overall goal. Can the group achieve this objective? What specific audience does the group have to reach and motivate to change behaviors that will solve the problem?

Understanding the Causes of and Defining Solutions to the Problem — What is causing the problem? Who is responsible and why? What technical/social/psychological factors are involved? Changing specific behaviors of the target groups may indeed solve the problem or at least alleviate its impact.

Definition of the Target Groups — To whom will the campaign be directed? Before we begin to plan any campaign activity, the group must determine what individuals in which groups are responsible for or are affected by the problem. Whose behavior must change if the problem is to be solved? At the beginning of the planning phase it is better to conduct research in order to have more information about causes and effects of the problem as well as important background about the groups to whom the campaign should be directed.

The target groups must:

- Be aware of the existence of the problem;
- Acknowledge and accept the existence of the problem;
- Familiarize themselves with the problem;
- Have a vested interest in each target group and sub-group;
- Believe that there is a solution to the problem and, even better, know what that solution is;
- Believe that it will be psychologically, socially, politically, and materially possible to solve the problem;
- Have the necessary resources to solve the problem;

- Feel that most of the other members of the group, and especially the leaders of the group, will approve the action to solve the problem and;
- See the solution of the problem as a reward that will make the person who adopts the new proposed behaviors live and feel better.

Researching the Target Groups — The many techniques for doing research for a campaign include:

- Questionnaires;
- Surveys;
- Interviews ;
- Focus Groups Observations;
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP), and;
- Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs, Practices and Resources (KABPR) surveys.

Rapid assessment procedures are used to collect background data that is needed in a very short time and for a low cost. These include:

- Direct Observation;
- Focused Participant Observation;
- Semi-Structured or Informal Interview;
- Informal Conversation (Structured or Formal);
- Community Group Interview and;
- Focus Group Interview.

Message Content — Message content is the information that must be transmitted to the target groups so they can solve the problem. The content consists of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices that groups do not have, but must have if they are going to solve the problem. The messages must be attractive, intelligible, acceptable and credible so that the campaign gets the attention of the target groups. However, for these messages to be perceived as credible, the target groups must recognize their source as respected, truthful, honest, prestigious, and speaking on their behalf.

Duration of the Campaign — Often campaigns are planned for periods of two to five years. The decision depends primarily on how likely the target groups are to change the behaviors that are creating the problem. Duration also depends on the number of different target groups that must be reached, the communication strategies selected, and the resources required to implement the project.

Choosing the Best Communication Strategies — These strategies must follow three purposes:

- Make people aware of and interested in the problem;
- Inform/educate them about the problem;
- Persuade and motivate them to take action.

A communication strategy is not the same as a communication channel. Rather, a communication strategy uses one or more channels integrated into an educational and motivational process. To determine which communication strategies are needed, one must first find out to what extent each target group is aware of the problem and their readiness to take action.

Using Communication Channels — Communication channels are the different means to transmit messages from a source to a receiver. For a communication channel to be useful to a campaign, it must pass the tests of:

- Availability;
- Accessibility;
- Credibility, and;
- Affordability.

Promotion and Publicity — The members of the target groups must hear about the campaign, see its relevance to their self-interests, and become interested in receiving the campaign messages.

Feedback and Follow-Through Systems — Feedback allows the target group(s) to ask questions, request more information, ask for the services the campaign is offering, and to comment on the campaign itself. Follow-through is the response of the campaign in providing technical experts to these requests. If they cannot provide the answers themselves, they should pass the request on to the appropriate agency, institution, or individual who can.

Monitoring and Evaluating — Monitoring refers to overseeing the daily or weekly operations and management of the project and checking to see if there are signs of problems in the campaign process. Evaluation will focus more on the content of the information and motivational materials, communication strategies, and progress in reaching the stated objectives.

Calendars of Production and Implementation Activities (Flow Charts) — When completing a planning process, a visual outline of the plan should be built. That plan will contain sections of the campaign plan, production and implementation. The plan should list the activities during each month. This will provide a visual idea of what must be done and when activities start and must be completed.

Campaign Management Structure — Persons must be designated for each of the planning, production, implementation, and evaluation responsibilities. That activity must be carried out as soon as the calendar of activities is complete.

Estimated Budget — A budget estimate of what the campaign will cost is required. If resources cannot be found to cover all the expenses, the group will have to consider whether they must reduce the extent of the campaign. Should the number of target groups be limited? If so, which ones should be eliminated? Is it possible that the duration of the campaign be cut and still achieve acceptable results for the objectives?

Acquisitions of Resources — Resources include: money, personnel, and materials. Resources must also consist of the cooperation and contribution of outside agencies and individuals, and political and bureaucratic support for the campaign.

2. Production of the Materials Used During the Campaign

One of the most important steps in an effective education campaign is the production of materials. To attract the members of the target group(s), the campaign planners must develop a promotion and publicity campaign that will make people aware of the problem and its importance to them so that they will listen to the campaign messages and get involved in solving the problem.

A good publicity and promotion program requires a well-researched plan to reach the target groups with attractive, attention-grabbing messages, and strategies that work in collaboration with the media. There are a number of steps and criteria that must be followed in order to have relevant materials and good publicity for the campaign:

***Development, Pre-testing, Revision, Production, and Distribution of Informational Materials* —** Materials that are most effective will:

- Attract attention to the campaign and interest the public in the problem that the group wants to solve;
- Encourage the target groups to participate in the campaign;
- Provide information about the problem the group wants to solve;
- Propose and promote new behaviors to solve the problem, and;
- Be attractive, comprehensive, credible and persuasive.

***Organization of Communication Strategies* —** Selected communication must be well organized before the start of the campaign. A number of organizational issues should be resolved, which include:

- Who will organize the groups?
- How and when will they be organized?
- Where will they meet?
- How will discussion group leaders be recruited and trained?
- How will discussion materials be distributed?
- How will feedback be handled?
- Are there any expenses involved, such as room rental or refreshments for the meetings?
- Are all other logistical issues covered?

***Feedback and Follow-Through Systems* —** The campaign office will organize follow-through systems to arrange for and deliver agency responses. In anticipation of the kinds of requests that might arise, the campaign office will be able to give information about the campaign issues.

3. Implementation of the Public Education Campaign

The start of the campaign must be sustained through a strong promotion. The launching of the campaign must be "the event of the month". It is recommended that the launching of a campaign include a series of community events. A campaign is a long-term commitment and each day of the campaign cannot be a big event. Therefore, it is recommended that the campaign include planned events such as launching the campaign for a specific target group (e.g. pupils in schools), contests, a day of celebration, community events, etc.

***Publicity and Promotions* —** The publicity and promotions activities begin as soon as the planning group and staff can establish a starting date. The publicity and promotions should begin at least one month before implementation. The publicity and promotions campaign should include the channels through which information about the campaign can be easily communicated to the target groups: (e.g. schools, religious centers, unions, neighborhood associations and offices). Mass media will be used if the target groups are large and living in different parts of the city or country, or if you want the general public to know about the campaign as well.

Calendar of Activities — The calendar is a strong mechanism to ensure that some of the activities have not been forgotten to be carried out at the appropriate time. A wall-size calendar should be used so that everyone can see their progress throughout the entire process. The calendar should be updated regularly.

Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation — Campaigns should be reviewed at the end of the first, third and sixth months and then every six months thereafter until the end. A final impact evaluation should be conducted in Month 10 of the year of the project.

Managing a campaign also means going into the field to meet the target groups and hearing their feelings about the project. Hopefully, the target groups have been actively involved in developing the project and have some ownership and self-interest in the successful implementation of the campaign. Their suggestions will be very important. Formative evaluations for the purpose of revising the campaign, as it evolves, should occur every week for the first three to six months.

Feedback and Follow-Through — At least one person on the campaign staff should be responsible for following up on the requests from the target groups. Target groups and the general public should also be informed of successful responses. This will make the campaign more credible and may encourage more people to accept the message. If people do not hear about accomplishments, they may drop out of the campaign.

Final Evaluation and Report — The last activity of the planning group is the publication of the campaign results. The report contains whatever research data is received on the impact of the campaign and a history and archive of the campaign. The report should also include a critique of the campaign process and recommendations for other campaigns and educational programs. The report should be completed within three months after the end of the campaign.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

A campaign requires many resources. The lack of resources can affect the events that are organized and the quality of the materials that are supposed to convince citizens to change their behavior.

Good relations with public institutions are needed. Sometimes relevant institutions are not willing to collaborate because public servants only see such activities as complicating their work.

A contingency plan is required in order to successfully manage possible risks and obstacles that might occur during the campaign. A useful tool which helps to design a contingency plan is "The Johari Map", which consists of drawing a two dimension chart showing risks. We have to take into account, for each identified risk, the frequency of the risk contained on the first dimension and the magnitude of the risk for the second dimension. There is a critical region within the map that indicates what risks are the most challenging or dangerous.

METHOD EXAMPLE

Public Education Campaign for Improving the City's Environment (Romania)

The purpose of the "Ecological Patrol" project developed by the Romanian DIALOG project was to increase the level of citizens' awareness concerning environmental problems. The project was a result of collaboration among DIALOG, the local council, city hall, and the city education department. The objectives of the project were to involve the students in solving community problems and environmental protection issues, to determine a responsible attitude of local administration related to community problems and to motivate citizens to respect the environment.

Six hundred (600) students from twenty-two (22) schools were involved in the project. When students, who wore green vests, went to or from schools, they observed municipal and environmental problems in public areas around the city. They then recorded their observations.

The students' observations were collected and selected by the DIALOG staff. Based on their observations, DIALOG wrote official letters to the local administration or relevant institutions. During a two-month period, 5,412 observations were made by students. These observations were presented in a report to the local council and to the mayor.

A sum of almost US $5,000 (over 70% of all costs) has been provided to DIALOG by the local council in order to develop the project. It was the first time that the local council of Brasov provided funds to a NGO. In order to reward the most active students, a trip was organised for them. Also, diplomas were given to principals of each school involved in the project.

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PUBLIC HEARINGS

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OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Public hearings are formal meetings where local officials wish to solicit the views and opinions of citizens on a decision or action that they are set to make on behalf of the local government. A public hearing can be viewed as a forum where individual citizens, citizens groups and local officials come together to exchange information and opinions about civic issues before action is taken.

All parties who engage in the public hearings process should remember that the forum provides an opportunity for the locality to share information, give accountability and legitimization to public decisions, engage in public education and community empowerment exercises and a potential cause for power sharing in the community. Public hearings are public participation methodologies that promote trust between citizens and local government, which is a necessary element in ensuring a stable democracy.

Public hearings are a visible outlet for public participation during the time between elections when opinions need to be solicited and decisions taken on an issue that occurs during this interval period. Citizens should see public hearings as an opportunity to have their voice heard by elected officials during their time in office, while political leaders should see it as an opportunity to stay in touch with the electorate. In general, public hearings provide public evidence of the sincerity of local government in acquiring citizens' input on local issues.

CONTEXT FOR USING THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Public hearings are an essential tool in deliberating on a plan of action to be taken on behalf of the local government. Public officials listen attentively to comments from individuals and groups participating in the forum and take these comments into account when making a decision or commitment on an issue or action of public concern. These elements should be valued when a community wishes to utilize public hearings in order to create an atmosphere for their legitimacy and success.

Careful and deliberate preparation is essential for the success of public hearings. The purposes of the public hearing should be clearly set out so that all parties know what is expected. From the start of planning for a public hearing, it should be stated that the forum is open to everyone in the community, so that all citizens are assured that their information, comments and views are welcomed. Additionally, the hearing should be held at a time and location that is convenient for citizens who wish to attend.

A clear communication campaign should be established early on with the public, addressing what information the organizers wish to solicit from the public and how this information will be used. Additionally, when planning the public hearing, the organizers must be certain that the results and outcomes will be utilized, so as not to weaken future public hearings.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

Conducting a Promotional Campaign

In order to attract the public to come to the public hearing, you need to prepare and conduct an effective promotional plan. The following techniques are essential, but not exhaustive, in helping organizers convey their message, getting the public talking and ensuring a well-attended forum.

- ***The Communication Campaign Should Begin Early and Be Persistent Until the Very Day of the Event.*** A communication campaign should begin approximately one month before the public hearing takes place. This gives necessary time to prepare the messages, have them broadcast or published by local media and most importantly, get the issue into the public arena. That is, one-month advance time allows people to discuss the issue with their family, friends and neighbors and begin forming opinions.

- ***The Image That You Convey About the Issue to Be Discussed at the Public Hearing Is Crucial.*** The issue must grab the hearts of people, and therefore be simple yet strong. The use of all kinds of media to convey the image is crucial. That is, words alone may not be effective enough, but the use of photos or drawings such as blueprints may very well help you convey the issue better.

  The public image is crucial to give the public a preview of the issues likely to be raised at the hearing and an early view of the probable tone of the event. It also gets people thinking and talking about the issues and generally raises interest in the issue and attending the hearing.

- ***A Variety of Public Promotional Techniques Can Be Used, Which Not Only Have Various Degrees of Financial and Labor Costs, But Levels of Effectiveness With the Public As Well.*** These include, advertisements, billboards, brochures, direct mail, editorials, feature stories, letters to the editor, news conferences/releases, newsletters, posters, public service announcements, articles/reports, special events and word of mouth. Regardless of the technique, the organizers must consider the context of their community and gear their techniques appropriately.

- ***The Financial and Labor Resources Need to Be Considered When Conducting a Promotional Campaign.*** In this regard, sufficient monetary and staff resources should be set aside for conducting the campaign. Furthermore, a preparation checklist of activities, decisions and other details should be utilized for smooth running of the campaign.

Organizational Issues

Organization of a public hearing can be an enormous, yet highly critical task. There are many stages and aspects of organization to consider, some of which include the following:

- ***An NGO, Task Force Committee or Advisory Group Should Be Responsible for Planning and Implementing the Public Hearing.*** Public hearings involve a great deal of planning and work, so a fixed group of people should be responsible for its implementation. The organizing group should represent all stakeholders involved in the issue. This will help in including all possible perspectives in the organization activities, ensure a mixed yet high turnout, and in general, emphasize the participatory atmosphere of the event.
  The organizers, in turn, need the support of the highest ranking official involved in the issue. This helps to ensure the legitimacy of their work and provide possible access, information and/or resources needed for implementation.

- ***A Preparation Checklist of Activities, Decisions and Other Details Should Be Utilized for Smooth Organization of a Public Hearing.*** Much like the organization of the promotional campaign, the organization of the public hearing itself needs logical, planned and clear definitions of activities, tasks and responsibilities of all individuals involved. Utilization of a checklist is essential in outlining the responsibilities to be carried out, and ensuring that details are not forgotten.

- ***Deciding on the Time and Location of the Public Hearing Is Important to Ensure High Turnout.*** The date of the public hearing should be pertinent to the issue being discussed. Both the date and location should be convenient to the public. The location should not be intimidating to anyone attending. However, it should be large enough to accommodate the expected number of participants and accessible by public transport.

- ***The Agenda Should Be Constructed and Agreed Upon by All Parties. The agenda may include presentations and specific issues to be discussed at the hearing.*** Inclusion of all (or agreed upon "most important") aspects of the issue(s) should be decided by the organizers and sponsors of the event (if it is a government department). This guarantees that all stakeholders' views have been given an opportunity for presentation or debate.

- ***Essential Information and Documents Should Be Distributed Beforehand to Participants.*** Publish the agenda beforehand, perhaps directly on the flyers or posters advertising the event. Distribute documentation on the ground rules of participation at the public hearing. Any other documents considered important for the public to review should also be distributed beforehand and again at the meeting.

Managing Involvement

In general, effective public hearings depend on having an agenda, starting and stopping on time, using time and input efficiently and following through on the input received. In order to ensure that these elements are carried out effectively, a number of issues should be considered by the organizing team in order to manage involvement effectively.

- ***Establish Ground Rules for Participation.*** The ground rules should be set up to avoid pitfalls at the hearing in order to keep the discussion non-defensive, non-personal, non-political and efficient within the fixed time. Some questions to consider in setting the ground rules and helping to avoid these pitfalls include: What are the roles of all those involved? What is the time frame for discussing each issue? How many times will individuals be allowed to speak? How much time will each individual be allowed to speak? How will input be handled? How will input be utilized once the hearing is over?

- ***Have a Professional and Impartial Facilitator Run the Meeting.*** A professional and impartial facilitator can ensure that the ground rules are effectively carried out, while also acting as a neutral and fair manager of the debate. By using a professional facilitator, an image of seriousness is conveyed that the officials are carefully listening to the input of citizens. Additionally, a professional facilitator should be well-versed in knowing how to handle and quell conflict. In the case that conflict arises, the facilitator should try to strengthen weak voices rather than weaken strong voices.

- ***Set Up the Room and Appoint an Assisting Group to Ensure Democratic Participation and Smooth Running of the Event.*** Agree a room set up in advance with all stakeholders, which guarantees a "democratic" atmosphere. Have plenty of seats available for the public. Utilize audio-visual equipment so that participants can see and be heard, and check that it works properly beforehand. Set up a table for all relevant handouts which is labeled so that participants feel free to take materials. Collect the names, addresses and phone numbers of participants so they can be included in any follow-up notices. If necessary, have a display area in an adjacent room, which shows blueprints, photos, etc. of the proposed issue or project.

The assisting group should include individuals who are responsible for recording the meeting, press relations (if any), greeting the public, operating the audio-visual equipment, and miscellaneous tasks that come up during the hearing.

Follow-Up Activities

- ***The Organizers Should Summarize the Hearing in a Report Submitted to the Public.*** Someone from the assisting group should record the meeting as stated above. This person should summarize comments, questions and issues raised. The report should be written in an impartial tone and submitted to the organizers, sponsors and public. Public distribution of the report can be made through the local media and should be done as soon after the public hearing as possible.

- ***Those Promising to Take Action at the Public Hearing Should Do So and Report Publicly on Their Actions.*** The public hearing is part of the overall engagement process. Therefore, when individuals/officials agree at the public hearing to take action, they should follow-through and report their actions in the local press. Perhaps setting up a special committee to tackle the issue or initiating a media campaign to tackle the issue may be the best follow-through approach.

The public should be aware of how the input from the public hearing is used in official decision-making. This follow-through by individuals/officials can assure legitimacy and trust in the process and lead to the success of the current engagement process, as well as those employed in the future.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

- ***Public Hearings Can Be a Forum for Public Criticism. Once again, the role of the professional and impartial facilitator is emphasized.*** This person should not only be skilled in quelling conflict, but also knowledgeable in handling an overly critical atmosphere. The facilitator should be carefully selected in order to ensure that the public hearing is a positive, democratic and useful exercise for the community.

- ***There Are Financial and Labor Resources Required to Carry Out a Public Hearing.*** Local governments, citizens groups and individuals must be committed to holding a public hearing. This commitment often can be evidenced by the amount of time and financial resources departments, groups and individuals are willing to make.

  Complimentary use of rooms, audio-visual equipment, photocopying and other resources which have a price tag, should be requested from all stakeholder groups. Likewise, labor resources from all stakeholder groups should be solicited, not only to ensure equal division of the work, but also to guarantee democratic representation of all who actually do the work of planning and implementing the public hearing.

- ***Citizens Are Often Against Public Hearings Because They See Them As The Public Doing the Work of the Government.*** Public hearings are just one tool in a large toolbox of citizen engagement. All citizen participation activities allow the public voice to be heard between elections and on specific issues that arise in the community. Democracy does not exist only at the ballot box. Therefore, a community that is committed to the principles of democracy and democratic governance should welcome and utilize citizen engagement mechanisms such as public hearings.

METHOD EXAMPLE

Public Hearings in Ternopil: Positive Experiences from the People's Voice Project (Ukraine)

In 1999, Ternopil was chosen as a pilot city in western Ukraine for implementation of the People's Voice Project (PVP). One of the conditions of the Project is the support to initiatives, which are directed at strengthening public participation in the process of local policy development.

Public hearings are one of the most effective instruments in increasing public engagement in the policy development process. The Ternopil Urban Development Agency, together with members of the PVP Ternopil NGO coalition, organized public hearings to engage citizens in the development of local public policy. Representatives of local government, mass media, the local NGO coalition and other NGOs in the area, scientists, entrepreneurs and international and Ukrainian experts took part in the public hearings.

During 2000–2001 public hearings were conducted on the following topics in Ternopil:

- City Budget Formation for 2000 (4 public hearings were conducted)
- Renting of Communal Property

- Land Ownership in Ternopil
- Retail Trade in Ternopil
- Strategic Plans for the Development of Water Supply in Ternopil
- Issues of Health Care in Ternopil
- Education Reform in Ternopil
- Improvement of Communal Housing Property Management.

Public hearings devoted to the problems of education reform were the most successful. From September-October 2001, the range of problems existing in the educational sphere were defined based on citizens' complaints to the Ternopil Department of Education and research conducted by the People's Voice Project. As part of PVP's research, two focus groups were held in November and December 2001. Education experts and NGO representatives participated in the focus groups, where the following issues were discussed:

- Analysis of Educational Issues
- Definition of the Issues
- Prioritization of these Issues
- Identification of Possible Mechanisms for Public Engagement in the Problem Solving Process

Taking into account all propositions from the stakeholders (including members of the Municipal Policy Program policy units, city councilors and members of the Ternopil Educational and Science Committee) the following agenda for the public hearings on education was developed:

- The Creation of an Education Advisory Board Under the Auspices of the Ternopil Mayor's Office
- Educational Financing Issues
- Pre-School Educational Issues
- Student Motivational Issues
- Appropriateness of a School Uniform
- The Need for Self-Selection of a Major Topic of Study in Last Academic Year of High School

The active information campaign was one of the successful components of the public hearings concerning the educational reformation in Ternopil. Resulting from this, citizens began to regard public hearings as one of the key mechanisms which they can use in the process of decision-making at the local level.

A working group on education was also created as a result of the public hearings. The working group developed a number of legal documents on educational issues, including statutes for the creation of a city Educational Advisory Board, statutes for tutorial boards in city schools, statutes for the creation of a City Education Development Fund and programs of co-operation between the city Department of Education and NGOs in Ternopil. All of these documents were then submitted to the Ternopil city council for discussion and review.

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The Public Voice www.thepublicvoice.org

REPORT CARDS

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OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT FOR USING THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Report cards are documents that are produced by citizens groups or city administrations to present the results of a survey on issues important to the community. In conducting survey research, self-administered questionnaires or interviews can be used in the survey in order to obtain data about how people feel about a certain issue. Report cards provide a wealth of information and therefore should be used as advocacy documents, as the basis of a public information campaign, to create policy and to plan activities in the community. They are most commonly used to gain specific information about a community issue, improve public services, plan city budgets, etc.

Since report cards reflect the opinions of the population on a particular issue, they should be distributed widely to the public and local officials. Report cards are not only informative on how people feel about a particular issue, but they can also be used as advocacy documents to influence policy changes and activities at the local level.

When producing a report card, a community should broadly involve all stakeholders in order to guarantee community-wide ownership. Report cards should be produced when a community wants straightforward data and/or answers to a particular issue. Furthermore, they should only be implemented when a community sincerely intends to use the results to help form policy and plan activities. Finally, a report card survey should be repeated at regular intervals in order to track how the issue, and attitudes toward it, have changed over time.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

The process for conducting survey research for the purposes of issue-based report cards is comprised of several important elements. These include questionnaire construction, sampling, collating and analyzing data and writing the report card. When all of these elements are considered, one can be assured that the report card that is produced has followed the sound guidelines of survey research.

Questionnaire Construction

Questionnaires contain written questions that people respond to directly on the form itself without aid and are usually handed directly to respondents or are mailed to them. Questionnaires must be relevant to respondents and therefore, prior to questionnaire construction, researchers must make sure the questions measure the concepts about which they aim to uncover information. Before a question is included, one should consider how it will be analyzed and how the data in general will be presented/published. If this cannot be decided, forget the question. Do not waste the respondents' time with needless questions or they may become frustrated and throw the questionnaire away or skip parts of it.

Questions can be either closed or open-ended. Closed-ended questions provide respondents with a fixed set of answers from which they can choose. Open- ended questions allow respondents to write their own answers. It is possible to gain benefits by using both types of questions.

The wording of questions requires a great deal of attention. Specifically, questions should be in present tense, simple, direct, and should express only one idea. When constructing questions, one should not overestimate the reading ability of respondents. Also, using slang or technical terms and referencing things that are not clearly defined or which depend on the respondent's interpretation should be avoided.

There are clear procedures that one should follow when constructing a questionnaire. These include:

- ***Deciding What Information Should Be Sought —*** That is, formulate the precise problem(s) to be addressed in the survey and let the questions spring from these issues.

- ***Deciding What Kind of Questionnaire Should Be Used —*** The type of questionnaire to be used for the survey will depend on the respondents' educational level and the purposes of the survey. Also, a number of questions will need to be addressed, including: Will open or closed-ended questions be used or a combination of both? How will follow-up questions or probes be used? Will single or several questions on a particular point be used?

- ***First Draft of the Questionnaire —*** Here, an outline or list of topics for the questionnaire should be drafted. Then, one must figure out the best sequence of topics (not necessarily logical but a psychological sequence). Extra questions (i.e. 2 similar questions separated or with a change in wording) should be used to check reliability. Finally, one should use all other available suggestions or help.

- ***Re-Examination and Revision of Questions —*** A critical response from a questionnaire/methods expert and with those familiar with this particular field of study (perhaps use focus groups) should be sought. The questionnaire should also be tested by different minorities (e.g. ethnic, women, senior citizens) to see if any biases exist in wording. Finally, existing or old questionnaires on the same topic should be consulted for ideas.

- ***Pre-Test Questionnaire —*** Pre-testing helps to catch and solve unforeseen problems with the questionnaire. Pre-tests are usually done in the personal interview format and include a small number of people who are representative of the group (in terms of education/gender/opinions) who will be given the questionnaire. When conducting the pre-test, views, criticisms and suggestions should be recorded and incorporated into the subsequent draft. If substantial changes are suggested, do a second pre-test, or more.

- ***Editing and Specifying Procedures for Questionnaire Use —*** Respondents need to understand what is required of them when they complete the questionnaire. Therefore, one should check if content, form, sequencing, spacing arrangement and instructions are clear. Also, one should make sure there is ample space for replies and give clear, simple instructions.

There are several pitfalls in wording of the questions for a questionnaire such as double-barreled questions, ambiguous questions, level of wording, abstract questions and leading questions. Double-barreled questions should be avoided because they include 2 (or more) questions in one, which can confuse the respondent. Questions can be ambiguous because some words, slang or colloquialisms may be vague or mean different things to different people. One should also be cautious when drafting questions to keep the level of wording consistent with the education and characteristics of the respondent.

In drafting questions for a questionnaire, the rule is parsimony. That is, use as few words as possible. Long questions take up respondents' time and may be confusing. Simple wording is especially important in posted questionnaires, so that the information they are being asked to evaluate is clear. Even in interviews avoid complex wording or you will be asked to explain/clarify and this could lead to bias or change of meaning.

Questions should be concrete where specific matters are represented on the questionnaire by specific questions. Problems often arise when respondents are asked to remember events from long ago or are asked about abstract concepts like happiness, failure etc.

Finally, leading questions should be avoided. If the questions lead respondents to a particular answer, their answers may be biased. One should be especially careful about wording questions in which the respondent must admit socially undesirable behavior because this may also bias their answer. In this case, assume the respondent engages in the behavior, so as not to give them a way out of answering the question honestly.

There are a number of structure and design issues to consider when constructing a questionnaire. These include:

- **Directions —** Keep them simple, but do include precise directions for respondents. That is, if you want an X in the box, say so or if you want the intended audience to choose as many answers as they wish, specify this.

- **Order of Questions —** Questions asked early in the questionnaire should not bias answers to later questions. Questions dealing with intriguing issues should be asked first to get people interested and hold their attention. Also, never begin with age/sex/income etc. as people are so used to these questions that they will switch off or throw away the questionnaire. It is best to save these for the end.

- **Answer Formats —** The best results will be obtained by instructing the target group to place a definite X in the appropriate box. A check (v) on a line or beside a question is not such a good idea. Checks are too easy to write and respondents may become sloppy and start putting checks between answers.

- **Response Rate —** This refers to the proportion of a sample of people who complete and return a questionnaire, or who agree to be interviewed. Be aware that those who do not respond may differ in some way from the rest of the sample, which in turn, may affect the data.

- **Cover Letter —** This is the letter that accompanies a questionnaire and serves to introduce and explain it to the recipient. The cover letter should be on the organization's letterhead and include information about the sponsor, the address and contact number of the research organization and the deadline. The cover letter should also explain the confidentiality of responses, how respondents were selected, why the research is being conducted and the potential benefits anticipated from the study.

- **Length and Appearance —** As the length of the questionnaire increases, the response rate decreases. A good questionnaire should take no longer than 30 minutes to complete. Be honest about the estimated completion time in the cover letter.

Finally, in constructing response categories, you may want to use scales for some closed-ended questions. Scales allow people to respond in more detail to a question and more accurately measure their responses. They are most useful when you want more than a simple yes/no response. That is, questions where the response to a statement is requested and an attitude scale is provided, a more detailed response can be acquired. For example:

The city water supply is ecologically clean.

Strongly Agree	***Agree***	***Neither Agree/Disagree***	***Disagree***	***Strongly Disagree***
5	4	3	2	1

These are scaled responses, which have fixed numbers attached to them for coding purposes. Attitude statements will tell us about the strength of a respondent's attitude on a particular subject. The range of variation is very important to consider, in that you should make sure that all the possible variations of answers are covered in the scale.

Sampling

A sample is a fragment of the population selected to administer the survey to, whose results will be generalized to represent the entire population from which the sample was drawn. The sample must always be regarded as an approximation of a whole, rather than a whole in itself. Sampling is the search for typicality.

There are many advantages of administering the survey to a sample, rather than to the entire population. Sampling saves time and money. It also gives more control over a small number of respondents. Plus, huge amounts of data are unwieldy and it is easy to make errors when dealing with population data. Therefore, using a sample is much easier and efficient.

There are two kinds of sampling-probability sampling and non-probability sampling. A probability sample is one in which each individual in the population under study has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. When used, probability samples omit bias.

One type of probability sampling that is often used in community report cards is area sampling. In this technique, the city population is divided into a number of geographical areas. From the entire population of areas that has been divided, randomly sample several areas for the sample size desired. From these areas, sample a block of households. Then, all adults within these households are surveyed.

Non-probability samples are those where the probability of each population element being included in the sample is unknown. A major disadvantage with non-probability samples is that it cannot be claimed that the sample is representative of the larger population. Therefore, it is more difficult to generalize the findings of the survey. On the other hand, non-probability samples are less expensive, less complicated, can be done on the spur of the moment and are completely adequate if you have no desire to generalize findings beyond the sample.

Snowball sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that is commonly used for community report cards. When snowball sampling, begin by choosing a few individuals with the requisite characteristics and interview them. Then, ask them to identify others with the requisite characteristics, interview them, and so on. If given very large numbers of possible persons then randomly sample these at each stage to get a manageable sample to interview. This would make it a probabilistic snowball sample.

One common question that researchers have when thinking about sampling is what size should the sample be to accurately reflect the population. The size of the sample generally depends on the population size and the purpose of the study. However for statistical analysis, sampling error decreases only slightly when the sample is more than 400. When a sample of 400 is used, no matter what the population size, a sampling error of 5% or less will be yielded. That is, the data will reflect the population 95% of the time, with an error margin of 5%. When sampling, always select more than is needed as some respondents cannot be located, refuse to be interviewed or return illegible or incomplete questionnaires. It is also a good idea to enlist the help of a professional when drawing a sample, as the process can be difficult and confusing to the inexperienced.

Coding Data

When collating and analyzing data, responses are put into numerical form and manipulated based on their arithmetic properties. Typically, this involves the use of statistics, which are procedures for assembling, classifying, tabulating and summarizing numerical data so that some meaning or information is obtained

Collating data is important because as long as the data are on the questionnaires in verbal, or in any other raw form, they are useless. The collected data must be reorganized before statistics can be applied and an analysis can be made. Usually, data is collated by coding. Coding is the process by which raw data is transformed into a machine-readable format suitable for data analysis. It requires that each answer is translated into a numerical value or set of letters, which is the code. When coding, do it in such a way that all information is coded. It is critical that coding be well done because coding errors can ruin the most carefully collected data set and make the analysis confusing and/or meaningless.

On the one hand, the data source must be considered and to determine how the data can be translated into a coded form. On the other hand, one must be cognizant of the capabilities and restrictions of the computer program that will be used to analyze the data. Sometimes the coding is built into the way a question is asked and answered by using value labels (therefore, coding and the subsequent analysis of the data should be considered when constructing the questionnaire).

e.g. Are you:
1-Single
2-Married
3-Separated
4-Divorced
5-Widowed

In this case, the circled number would be the code for how a respondent answered the question, yet the numbers (or values) could not be manipulated mathematically. With some variables (such as family size, income, etc.) the actual value of the response is a number and can be used to code the data

There are two rules for establishing coding categories, which should be considered when constructing the questionnaire: all categories should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Mutually exclusive categories are those where a given response is coded into one and only one category for each variable. Exhaustive categories are those where every possible response has a coded category assigned to it.

A codebook should always be created to explain the coding that will be used with the survey instrument. A codebook is an inventory of all the individual items in the data collection instrument, together with the coding schemes. A preliminary codebook is usually prepared before the data are entered into the computer and is used as a guide for data entry. The codebook is not a static document because the researcher may wish to re-code variables or compute new ones. The codebook provides a lasting, hard copy document on how the data was developed, coded and managed.

Virtually all quantitative and much qualitative data analysis is done using computers. Computer programs which are commonly used in data analysis include SPSS, SAS, Minitab (computer statistical packages) and Lotus, Excel, Quattro (spreadsheet programs). The coding scheme that is created must provide specifications that also fit the computer program that will be used. A computerized data set usually has the appearance of a rectangular table of cells where the columns represent variables and the rows represent individual respondents.

There are two kinds of variables that computer programs usually accept. These include numeric variables and alphanumeric variables. Numeric Variables have quantitative values (e.g. age, income). Alphanumeric Variables have no quantitative meaning and cannot be used in mathematical computations (e.g. last name, passport number).

Coded data are commonly manually entered into the computer program. Optical scanning technology can also be applied to enter the data where the questionnaire is read by a scanning machine or faxed into the computer and the coded values are entered directly into the database for analysis. This is an efficient and cost-effective device, especially for larger projects.

Analyzing Data

Data analysis is the process of seeking out patterns within individual variables and patterns in relationships between variables. Data can be manipulated for univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses, depending on what the priorities are in the research.

- **Univariate analysis** describes the distribution of a single variable. Frequency distributions look at the raw frequencies of respondents for each category for a given variable.

e.g. Variable: Sex

Male:	**38**
Female:	**42**

N= 80

There are several kinds of graphs that can be used to display the data of single variables. The visual impact of a graph can help identify and summarize patterns in data that might not be detected as readily by just looking at frequency distributions. When used correctly, graphs are a powerful tool for communicating information about data. If used incorrectly, graphs can confuse or mislead readers on the meaning of data. Commonly used graphs include bar graphs, histograms, frequency polygons and pie charts.

- ***Bivariate analysis*** is employed when statistics are used to describe the relationship between two variables. Multivariate analysis is when statistics describe the relationship among three or more variables. When two or more variables are analyzed with descriptive statistics, the major feature of interest is the relationship between the variables, especially the extent to which they co-vary, or vary together. If two variables are related, a change in one of the variables is associated with a change in the other.

- ***Graphic displays*** can also be used to display the data from multiple variables. Frequency and percentage tables are the most commonly used graphic displays of multiple variables in report cards. A frequency table contains raw frequencies, whereas in a percentage table the frequencies have been converted into percentages.

Frequency tables are generally used as a starting point for creating percentage tables or as the basis for applying many statistics. When there is an independent variable and a dependent variable, the vertical columns are used to represent categories of the independent variable with the horizontal rows representing the categories of the dependent variable. When ordinal or interval level data are cross-tabulated, the categories should be ordered as illustrated with columns running from lowest on the left to highest on the right and rows from lowest at the bottom to highest at the top.

e.g. Frequency Table

		AGE (Independent Variable)			
		Low	**Medium**	**High**	**Totals**
INCOME (Dependent Variable)	**High**	**21**	**47**	**12**	**80**
	Medium	**38**	**41**	**20**	**99**
	Low	**79**	**14**	**28**	**121**
	Totals	**138**	**102**	**60**	**N=300**

e.g. Percentage Table

AGE (Independent Variable)				
		Low	Medium	High
INCOME (Dependent Variable)	High	15.2%	46.1%	20.0%
	Medium	27.5%	40.2%	33.3%
	Low	57.3%	13.7%	46.7%
	Totals	100%	100%	100%
		(138)	(102)	(60)

Writing the Report Card

Since so much time, effort and resources goes into designing the survey, collecting, collating and analyzing the data, an equal amount of care should go into writing up the report card. The report card is a document that will be used by different audiences in the community, including the general public, NGOs, interest groups and public officials. Therefore, it should be written clearly and simply enough so that all of these groups can utilize the report card to guide their policies and actions.

A well-written, clearly structured report card contains a title page, an executive summary, acknowledgements, a table of contents, a list of tables, illustrations and/or diagrams, an introductory chapter, a methods chapter, an analysis and findings chapter, a conclusions chapter, a references section, and appendixes. Each of these sections of the report card are outlined, in detail, below:

- **Title Page —** A good title will inform the reader about the main theme and major findings and should provide sufficient information for a reader to decide whether to pursue the report card further. A title page contains the report card's title, the sponsoring organization(s)' name, the funding agency (if any) and the place and date of publication.

- **The Executive Summary** is a summary of the report card which should be no more than one page in length. It contains a statement of the problem/issue, the research methods used, sampling techniques, and brief summary of the findings and conclusions.

- **The Acknowledgements page** thanks all those who helped in the production of the report card.

- **The Table of Contents** lists all preface material, chapter titles and reference matter (i.e. appendices, references etc.) and their beginning page numbers. It may also list sub-headings within each chapter.

- **List of Tables, Illustrations and/or Diagrams —** This lists the titles of tables, illustrations and/or diagrams with table numbers and page numbers on which the tables appear.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction —** In this chapter, one should focus from the general problem and move to the specific issues the report card will address. Also, one should state the issues addressed in order of importance. Chapter 1 includes a brief summary of the history and context of the problem and the institutional partners involved in the research. Mention any past studies that have been done on the issue in the region. Clarity is very important here because without it in this section, the remainder of the report card loses its meaning. The verb tense used for this chapter is either past or present.

- **Chapter 2: Methods and Data —** This is a very important chapter because it provides the basis on which the validity and generalizability of the conclusions will be judged. This chapter describes the sample that was studied and the research techniques employed. More specifically, it describes the study in terms of design, instrumentation (put the questionnaire in an appendix and refer to it here), sampling, data collection, and method of analysis.

  This chapter discusses how concepts are operationalized and what measurement devices were used. Readers must know what was done in the study and who participated in it. Because of the technical nature of this chapter, it must be written in sufficient detail. The verb tense used for this chapter is either past or present.

- **Chapter 3: Analysis and Findings —** This is the heart of the report card which includes a straightforward presentation of the findings, devoid of editorializing or comment as to the meaning of the results (that section is comes later). Here, you should present only data that has precise relevance and only describe what was found, without interpretation.

  Use the following procedure for writing this chapter:
  1. Re-state the research issue(s) and group the findings within sub-headings
  2. Give a full description of sampled cases, respondents, etc.
  3. Make analyses and place findings (as they relate to your research questions) in order of importance relative to the study's scope.

  This chapter typically involves the use of tables, graphs and statistics with explanation of their contents. One should take great care not to simply reiterate what a table already depicts, but rather explain the findings. This chapter may seem to have a dry style, but it is often the way analysis and findings are written. The verb tense used for this chapter is either past or present.

- **Chapter 4: Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations —** This chapter should state what the report card tells us about the issue studied and what this means for the future of the issue in the region.

  Use the following procedure for writing this chapter:
  1. Concisely summarize the Chapter 1-3 (parts of it may be used again in the abstract).
  2. Interpretations and conclusions from the findings should be presented in the exact order that the research questions were presented in the report card.
  3. Any comparisons or contrasts should be presented.

  All three of these steps should be discussed in depth with sound rationale for the conclusions derived. Unexpected findings may also yield interesting conclusions. Ask why the results were what they were. Feel free to interpret both objectively and subjectively but make sure that every conclusion drawn is both meaningful and defendable. Finally, make sure that the original research issue(s) is answered with results/answers derived from the study's findings. The verb tense used for this chapter is either past or present.

- **References —** This is a listing of books/articles/etc. mentioned in the report card. Use a widely accepted style or one like the following (in alphabetical order):

  Rybalko, Bogdan. 1999. "New Local Government Legislation." *Kommersant,* 19:21-23.

- **Appendixes —** This should include a copy of the questionnaire, with total percentages of responses filled in each answer category as well as any other documents that were referred to in the text.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

There are several risks and obstacles associated with producing a report card. First, report cards require a lot of time and resources to plan and implement. If a community is not committed to providing these resources, the effort is likely to be weakened or fail altogether. Secondly, since certain technical issues, such as sampling, and collating and analyzing data, are involved in conducting survey research, sometimes professionals are required to assist.

It is also important to ensure that the report card is objective and that it is not biased toward a particular policy or opinion. The report card process can lose credibility and citizens are less likely to take part in subsequent report cards if they feel their feedback was only used to support a particular position.

Finally, it is imperative that the report card does not just sit on the shelf and that the results of the report card are actually put to use in the community. The results should be employed widely and in all potential circumstances so that the greatest extent of usage can be made of the work.

METHOD EXAMPLE

Public Service Delivery Report Card in Ivano-Frankivsk

A public opinion survey was conducted in 2000 under the auspices of the People's Voice Project in order to assess the quality of public service delivery and its transparency in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk. It should be stressed that the survey was not conducted to collect material for criticizing the local government and public service providers, but exclusively to identify strengths and weaknesses in the provision of such services thus establishing the benchmarks for further development and improvements.

The survey consisted of five hundred (500) interviews of randomly selected representatives of the general public, one hundred (100) interviews of representatives of local businesses and sixty (60) interviews of local government officials.

The survey methodology included an analytical study of the responses acquired through standardized questionnaires and the interviewers' evaluations. Prior to conducting the survey, questionnaires were examined and amended by various focus groups. Issues raised during these focus groups were taken into account in the design of the final version of the survey.

Project implementation incorporated the following stages:
- sessions of focus groups and revision of questionnaires;
- interviewing;
- technical processing of survey results;
- analysis of survey results;
- report card publication, and;
- dissemination of the results among stakeholders.

Experts of the Association of Economic Development of Ivano-Frankivsk and Ukrainian State Center of Social Services for Youth were engaged in the survey analysis. Additionally, independent experts in sociology and economics, as well as several government officials assisted in the work.

The overall results of the survey were accepted in the community as trustworthy and logical. This was confirmed by the evaluation of independent experts, who are well aware of the situation with public service delivery, corruption, and legislative and regulatory environment in the city. The expert opinion was supported during the citywide conference organized jointly by the People's Voice Project of the World Bank and Ivano-Frankivsk City Administration on July 7-8, 2000. The aim of the conference was to generate discussion that will help to develop an action plan for the improvement of public service delivery based on the preliminary presentation of the survey results.

The report card on public services was the first of its kind in Ivano-Frankivsk. The results of the survey, which were published as a report card, have been of considerable importance to the city. The findings have been used widely and constructively in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs aimed at improving the quality of public services in Ivano-Frankivsk.

RESOURCES

Publications

Monette, Duane R., Thomas J. Sullivan and Cornell R. DeJong. 1994. Applied Social Research: Tool for the Human Services, New York: Harcourt Brace Publishers.

Методы сбора информации в социологическом исследовании. Книга 1, 2. М., 1990

Оцінка участі жінок у суспільно-політичному житті Тернопілля. Проект "Голос Громадськості".-Т., 2000.

Ядов В.А. Социологические исследования: методолгия, программа, методы. М., 1987

Websites

International Association of Public Participation: www.cpn.org or www.iap2.com

The Public Voice: www.thepublicvoice.org

Participation Toolkit: www.toolkitparticipation.com

SOCIAL MONITORING

Gennadiy Rusanov,
Association of Economic Development of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Social monitoring is a process that allows the public to follow the implementation of government decisions and policies at the local level, measure their efficiency and adequacy and provide feedback. Social monitoring is a rather complex process and can incorporate elements and approaches from other citizen participation methodologies.

Social monitoring in most cases requires the presence of an implementing agency or several agencies, either contracted out by local government or implemented by their own (community) initiative. Therefore, this methodology fosters good communication not only between the government and civil society, but also between civil society organizations and local citizens. The necessary ingredients for successful implementation of monitoring are discussed in the next section.

Social monitoring is a useful tool to measure processes and policies over an extended period of time. It is also a process that often involves many stakeholders and therefore requires good information flow amongst them and the monitoring agency. One of the drawbacks of this methodology, however, is that it is rather time-consuming and in most cases requires involvement of professionals, which may become expensive. Since the costs have to be covered by someone, this brings another problem which is the objectivity of results. The funding organization may require the alteration of the results or the implementing agency will try to present the results so as to satisfy the funder and thus possibly secure another contract.

CONTEXT FOR USING THE PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Social monitoring is a process that is flexible in form and methodology, depending on such factors as goal monitoring, initiating party (e.g. NGO, government, businesses, individual citizens, etc.), type of government decision or policy, etc. Successful implementation of a social monitoring initiative requires presence of a number of prerequisites, namely:

- **Civil Society Capacity —** Civil Society organizations should be aware of the applications of social monitoring and how to use them effectively. They should also have the ability to interact successfully and efficiently with the local government and the private sector, since these two are most likely to be involved in the monitoring process, either as contractors or stakeholders.

- **Local government that is supportive or at least non-obstructive to the initiative.** In Ukraine, the civil society sector is relatively young and not as independent as it should be. The legislative environment also does not contribute to strengthening NGOs. Therefore, in all their initiatives, NGOs have to take into account the social importance of the problem and the possible reaction of the government. Good contact with the local government and relative consideration of its interests contributes to the overall success.

- **A professional implementing agency with sufficient institutional capacity and positive image to implement the monitoring in a professional and transparent manner and effectively communicate its results to all the stakeholders is required.** This is one of the key ingredients of the overall success, since even the best work can be discarded if it has been performed by a politically-affiliated or biased organization. Thus relative independence of the implementing agency is very important.

- **The "Right Place and Time" —** Although somewhat vague, this is a very important factor since all of the previous major conditions and a number of smaller ones have to come together at a certain favorable moment in time.

It is also crucial to ensure that the problem/decision/policy being monitored:

- is socially important and will produce feedback and participation from all the stakeholders.

- can be monitored with available resources and within the available environment. A variety of factors, including economic, social and political must also be considered.

PROCESS/STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

The monitoring process typically includes the following stages:

1. Identification of the Monitoring Goals and Objectives — Typically, the overall goal of any social monitoring initiative is the improvement of living standards in the community through introducing better policies. Other goals and objectives may vary depending on the implementing agency, monitored problem, and even the political situation.

2. Selection of the Implementing Agency — Preferably, this is either an NGO or a specialized research institution. The selection process, however, has to be transparent and democratic, if possible, through an open tendering procedure.

3. Development and Approval of the Monitoring Methodology — The monitoring methodology may be very different from case to case and depends on many factors, such as the type of problem, available funding and other resources, as well as the government's position, etc. The monitoring typically includes elements from many other citizen participation methodologies, such as focus groups, surveys, and even public hearings. The crucial issue is to achieve the appropriate balance of all these elements so as to ensure both the validity of monitoring and open participation from all possible stakeholder groups.

4. Implementation of the Monitoring — At this stage it is important both to follow the developed methodology and also be flexible in case the methodology fails to be as effective as intended. The monitoring agency has to have the capacity and common sense to constantly evaluate itself and introduce changes as necessary. Throughout the implementation stage, it is also important to keep the general public and specific stakeholders informed about both the successes and failures. This will make the process transparent and open doors for public feedback.

5. Analysis, Discussion and Dissemination of Results — At this stage, the implementing agency has to develop a complete professional analytical report on the initiative and disseminate it to the key persons from all the stakeholder groups to initiate comments and discussion of the results. After the final report is prepared, it has to be made available to the public. An abbreviated version must be distributed to the citizens and presented through the media. A series of public presentations may also be initiated.

6. Development of Final Recommendations — After the incorporation of comments from the stakeholders and general public, final recommendations have to be developed and submitted to all key players. If the recommendations are in the form of a policy proposal, ideally they have to be approved by the local government and incorporated into its program/action/strategic plan or any other appropriate policy document.

7. Assessment of the Necessity for Further Monitoring — Since in most cases it is difficult to solve the problems from the first attempt, monitoring is often a continuous process. After one round is completed, it is necessary to assess the degree to which the problems have been solved and decide whether it is viable to carry out further monitoring. If the decision is positive, we can either start from Step 1. This happens when there is a need to improve the methodology or change the implementing agency. Otherwise, the whole process starts from Step 4.

RISKS AND OBSTACLES

Social monitoring involves many risks and obstacles. Their number and scale can be magnified with the utilization of other citizen participation methodologies, which may be, as discussed earlier, integrated into the social monitoring initiative. Some of these risks and obstacles were discussed earlier, however, this information is summarized below:

1. Obstruction of Local Government — This is the most serious obstacle. Since social monitoring, in most cases, is aimed at improving the government's policies and services, its success mostly depends on the readiness of the government to accept change and public advice. In this case it is important to either demonstrate the benefits of monitoring to the government or create a lobby powerful enough to overcome the government's resistance. In the Ukrainian environment, the latter alternative is, in most cases, undesirable and ineffective.

2. Absence of a Strong and Active Civil Society Sector in the Community — When the government is ready for social monitoring but there is no active NGO community to mediate the process, implementing social monitoring may be a problem since the community can respond negatively if monitoring is initiated directly by the government.

3. Absence of Information Dissemination — Information about monitoring results must be made available to a wide audience through public presentations, newsletters, publications, media coverage, etc. It is also important to keep all the stakeholders and general public informed throughout the monitoring process. This both helps to keep the process transparent and allows for public feedback, which in turn can help avoid many problems and mistakes.

4. Absence of a Qualified Implementing Agency — Problems may appear when the government is ready for social monitoring but there is no local agency to implement it. The easiest solution to this problem is inviting outside expertise, which, in all likelihood will cost more than local expertise. Another possible solution is to initiate the establishment of a local monitoring agency. Local government, for instance, can initiate such an agency in partnership with the private sector, provide startup funding for it and agree not to apply any political or financial pressure, in order to keep this agency relatively independent.

METHOD EXAMPLE

Quarterly Monitoring Survey in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

Ivano-Frankivsk is a city in western Ukraine with a population of about 250,000. The city has a relatively progressive and open municipal government, a sizeable SME sector (almost 50% of the city budget are generated from SME revenues), and an active third sector.

In 2000, Ivano-Frankivsk was selected as a pilot city for the implementation of the People's Voice Project, which began with the delivery of a large quality of public services survey (spring 2000). This was the first survey aimed at measuring the quality of services provided to citizens and businesses by the local government. Apart from providing a large amount of very useful benchmark data and information, this survey had another serious outcome — it brought about a general understanding (by both the public officials and the citizens) that the government is responsible for providing services, which can and should be measured in terms of quality, and for which the public officials are directly responsible.

The local partners of the People's Voice Project, from both the government and NGO side, expressed the need for launching a regular survey that would periodically diagnose the city life (i.e. local government operation, quality of public services, living standards, current problems, etc.). The proposed methodology was to survey a base group of 150 households from all city regions, every quarter, over a half a year period. This initiative was supported by the People's Voice Project and the first round of surveys was launched by the Association of Economic Development of Ivano-Frankivsk in May 2001.

Presently, three rounds of quarterly monitoring surveys have been completed, the results of which have been presented to the general public and local media. Questions for every survey are developed by a working group consisting of representatives from local government and NGOs. Results of every survey are summarized in an analytical report, which is distributed to the local government officials responsible for improving the areas indicated as problematic by the respondents.

In addition to the quarterly monitoring survey, a number of social monitoring initiatives are currently being implemented in Ivano-Frankivsk in the areas of strategic planning, communal housing and utilities reform, and business regulatory environment improvement.

RESOURCES

Publications

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Sukhorebra, I. 2001. Monitoring the Implementation of Community Strategic Development Plans. Ivano-Frankivsk: Association of Economic Development of Ivano-Frankivsk.

Websites

Association of Economic Development of Ivano-Frankivsk: www.aedif.if.ua

Association of Ukrainian Cities: http://www.auc.org.ua/en/

People's Voice Project: http://www.icps.kiev.ua/projects/eng/peoples_voice

THE ROLE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN UKRAINE: THE PEOPLE'S VOICE PROJECT EXPERIENCE

One of the cornerstones of civil society's actions is citizen participation. Democracy is efficient when citizens have the capacity to influence the process of policy development and implementation.

Under the modern indirect democracy system however, citizens' needs cannot be fully reflected in policy since their participation is basically limited to their elected representatives. Democracy, though, cannot be limited to the electoral process and its institutions (e.g. political parties, elections etc.) as it creates a serious gap between these representatives and their constituents. There is a real need in Ukraine to create channels of communication at the local level between citizens and their representatives in the periods between elections. Effective democracy is built through daily interaction; such interaction increases public awareness and helps monitor and evaluate elected officials on a continual basis.

Wide ranges of mechanisms for civic participation have been developed over the last few decades in numerous democratic countries. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses, and different methods serve different purposes. Unfortunately, such mechanisms and procedures have not been fully established in Ukraine. Before Ukraine's independence in 1991, there was no modern history of public participation in civil society. Mechanisms and procedures of citizen participation did not work because the clear idea of citizen participation was absent in both the people's and the government's mind. During the Soviet era, public engagement methods such as demonstrations and public meetings were held, but were ordered and controlled by the state. All these factors were destructive for civil society in Ukraine.

Though there have been several public engagement experiences in Ukraine, the People's Voice Project is helping create and develop mechanisms to increase civic participation through the implementation of a comprehensive methodology in a number of pilot cities. The People's Voice Project (PVP) is a three-year project, which began in 1999, that aims to assist in this transformation from a state-controlled civil society to one driven by the input of local citizens. The project is funded by the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency and focuses on building integrity and improving governance at the municipal level in Ukraine. The overall goal of PVP is to implement mechanisms and procedures that promote public participation to build an effective, responsible and open government, as well as to assure public participation in the policy-making process.

One of the main objectives of the People's Voice Project is to strengthen the capacity of both citizen groups and officials to interact with each other in order to enhance the overall quality of governance in selected cities. PVP initiated its work with local partners in Ternopil (the

Ternopil Urban Development Agency) and Ivano-Frankivsk (the Ivano-Frankivsk Urban Development Institute) and has implemented a number of activities to increase public participation in these cities:

Mechanisms Aimed at Increasing Public Awareness and Public Education

There is a growing belief that the success of almost all the approaches of citizen participation depends on how well citizens and users of services are informed about their government's performance.

Today, Ukraine faces a challenge to enhance the freedom of, and access to public information. Unfortunately, the actions of many government authorities in Ukraine are not public and transparent, and policy development and implementation processes are not open to the general public. Local administrative bodies remain outside public control and refuse to provide information to public organisations, violating Articles 5 and 9 of the Ukrainian law "On Information" (1992). The key, therefore, is wide public involvement during the early stages of developing policy documents to widen communication and public input.

Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk are two cities where local authorities are engaging the public in policy and decision-making. In conjunction with the PVP and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), a "Media Awareness Campaign Seminar" was held in March 2000 with participants from both cities. The seminar provided local NGO partners of the PVP in these cities with tools and skills to develop media awareness campaigns (e.g. press releases, publications, etc.) for activities associated with the project.

As a result of this training, local NGO partners in Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk have established links with local media outlets in covering their activities; numerous articles and reports have since been presented in local newspapers, TV and radio. Furthermore, local PVP partners have begun publishing the findings of surveys they've conducted on various issues in the form of service "report cards" and booklets on local issues. These publications are presented to the public via the local media and distributed to local authorities, citizen groups and other interested parties.

Advocacy Mechanisms

One of the main tasks of advocacy is the protection of those whose rights have been abused or ignored by public officials, the public investigation of such facts, the gathering and distribution of information about them and monitoring of the situation. Advocacy mechanisms include advocacy groups' activities, making complaints, protests and demonstrations.

From 1994-2000, opinion polls conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation/Institute of Sociology asked Ukrainian citizens which forms of public participation they would engage in if their rights or interests were violated. Respondents stated that demonstrations, mass meetings, participation in election campaigns and the collection of signatures supporting collective protests were perceived as the most efficient forms of public participation, and thus the ones in which they would most likely participate. In other words, in Ukraine, the protection of human rights relies upon traditional mechanisms of civic action.

In Ternopil, there has been an advocacy initiative focused on strengthening women's participation in the public and political life in the region. This initiative provided support for selected

NGO groups in Ternopil to develop their capacity to monitor the inclusion of gender and social issues in the city's public policy and programming.

In March 2000, a seminar on "Increasing the Institutional Capacity of Women's Organisations" was held in Ternopil and was attended by representatives from NGOs, the city administration and members of the mass media. The objective was to identify viable NGOs working on women's issues and to help them develop their potential by strengthening their organisational capacity and improving their ability to formulate and implement plans.

Following this, a gender audit was conducted between March and November of 2000, in Ternopil. The audit focused on the level of women's involvement in the decision-making process, the extent to which women's needs and interests were being considered in local policy and whether these needs and interests were being adequately addressed in the delivery of public services. The findings from the gender audit were published in a report card and presented to the public via the local media and distributed to local authorities, citizen groups and other interested parties.

A gender audit conference was held in November of 2000 in conjunction with the OLGA project, funded by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The aim of the conference was to conduct training, discuss women's issues and develop an action plan for increasing the number of women in elected positions. The results of the gender audit report card were presented during the conference as well as a guiding information base for these activities.

Local PVP partners are continuing their work in gender advocacy in Ternopil. In March of 2001, the Ternopil Urban Development Agency created a "Department of Gender and Social Research." The Department's aims are to study and promote gender democracy in the Ternopil region through projects, seminars, training, educational activities and judicial services.

Public Consultation

Public consultation mechanisms include public hearings, roundtable discussions, public committees, stakeholder meetings, etc. These types of mechanisms allow for the wide public involvement that can theoretically influence the decision-making, policy development and service delivery processes of local governments.

For instance, public hearings conducted on important issues give local citizens an opportunity to influence matters of importance to them. Organised groups, as well as individual citizens, can attend public consultations, express their views and benefit from the exchange of ideas and information that transpires at these hearings. All of this aids public accountability by increasing transparency and creating direct and open contact between public officials and local citizens.

Nevertheless, some authorities are not enthusiastic about widening public involvement-a new practice in Ukraine. Many government officials lack the knowledge and expertise required to make public hearings an efficient and helpful tool for policy-making activities. Frequently, public hearings turn into endless discussions and arguments or, worse, into forums where authorities report on "work" done by presenting irrelevant and cumbersome data, as was common in Soviet times.

However, there are successful examples at the local level of public consultation implemented as a technique for citizen participation in Ukraine. In Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk, public hearings have been held on education, budget and economic issues with training and assistance from PVP.

In October of 2000, a seminar on how to hold public hearings was conducted in conjunction with the PVP in Ivano-Frankivisk. Participants there represented local partners on the education project, NGOs and the city education administration, as well as those who wanted to know more about how to use a public forum for open budget hearings in the city. This two-day seminar covered conceptual, organizational and management issues related to conducting public hearings. In Ternopil, open budget hearings were held in 1999 with the purpose of informing the public of the needs and problems in the city budget. In Ivano-Frankivsk, a public hearing on education was held in November of 2000. Approximately 400 people, representing local citizens, experts, city administrators, school directors, teachers, students and NGOs attended the hearing. The hearings in both cities allowed local public officials to consider and then address the various concerns raised by school officials, teachers and parents in education reform issues.

Public Control Over the Government

Public input into government can be achieved through such mechanisms and procedures as public service delivery surveys, monitoring, advisory boards, citizen juries, civic journalism and NGO coalition building. This participatory approach can reinforce public accountability and transparency through monitoring and feedback generated by the public.

Public Service Delivery Surveys

In public service delivery surveys, people are asked to evaluate the quality, adequacy and other relevant dimensions of services; their feedback is used as an important criterion to judge the performance of the public agencies involved. In Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk, applications of this approach have been made through the assistance and support of the PVP. Surveys focusing on citizens' attitudes to public services were conducted early during the PVP's involvement in both cities. The results of the surveys were published and distributed to administrators, citizen groups, local media and other stakeholders.

Public Monitoring

Another useful instrument in evaluating local government performance is public monitoring aimed at how public authorities track people's attitudes toward policy implementation.

With the assistance and support of the PVP, a number of public monitoring initiatives have been implemented in Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk. Report cards were produced on issues such as gender inclusion, education, citizen hotlines, utilities payment centres and ombudsman's offices that were established. All of these documents contribute to public monitoring and transparency on issues where reform-minded initiatives have been adopted in these cities. These report cards demonstrate the degree of citizen satisfaction with any recent changes in policy or operation, thereby monitoring their development.

NGO Coalitions

A relatively new way to put public pressure on local administrations in Ukraine is NGO coalition activity aimed at mobilizing resources in order to strengthen civil society's bargaining capacity.

NGO coalitions are a temporary alliance of factions and groups representing the stakeholders that come together to lobby decision-makers on a specific issue. These joint efforts mobilise individuals and groups to influence the outcomes of a particular issue or policy. Typically, NGO coalitions organise candidate forums before elections in order to discuss specific local issues with elected representatives, conduct opinion polls on priorities of such issues, offer alternative solutions to them and take action to directly improve their local communities.

Ukrainian NGO coalitions are often ineffective in their activities. The main problems that hinder effective NGO coalitions in Ukraine are their lack of understanding of their own aims and goals, problems in structure, leadership and management, insufficient resources, inner conflicts and weak inter-coalition communication. The institutional capacity of NGO coalitions is particularly weak, and the government is not ready to see them as their partners, causing them to have a low level of involvement in local decision-making and implementation processes.

In order to combat these obstacles to successful coalition building, the PVP held a number of workshops to help the NGO coalitions in Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk strengthen their work. These coalition workshops have covered issues such as strategic and operational planning and management, media relations, teamwork skills, proposal writing and fundraising. As a result, the NGO coalitions in both cities continue to take an active role in helping reform local public service delivery by monitoring local government activities, gender related policies and programs, education reforms, budget issues, regulatory reforms, utilities and housing concerns and environment issues.

Community Strategic Development Planning

The main goals of local strategic planning are the creation of local social and economic policies for long-term consideration, to strengthen the city's economic position and improve the living standards of local citizens. Ivano-Frankivsk was one of the first cities in Ukraine to develop its City Strategic Development Plan in 2000, supported by the PVP. For the first time in Ukraine, a strategic plan was drafted with the participation of local authorities, NGOs, scientists, businessmen and with the support of the local community. This plan outlines the main areas of further development of the city's economy, through progressive legislation, enlargement of the manufacturing and public services and job creation to ultimately increase the welfare of the local community.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The achievement of good local governance by increasing citizen participation is a goal for Ukraine's future development. It can be accelerated through the range of mechanisms of citizen participation discussed in this paper. The wide range of such mechanisms shows the potential that citizens can have in strengthening local governments' performance.

However, Ukrainian citizens often lack knowledge about political institutions and avenues for their participation; they are accustomed to obey, rather than openly question those who make decisions. The lack of a democratic political culture in Ukraine's history means public participation mechanisms have not been seen as valuable tools for policy implementation and service delivery. The public has little faith in institutions of power and, conversely, those who serve in government have little faith in those being served.

The monolithic Soviet bureaucracy inhibited public knowledge of and participation in all levels of government; its lack of transparency contributed to both the corruption of those in government and the perception of a corrupt government in the general public. Without a sufficient public voice and, therefore, control in the decision-making process, Ukrainian communities remain politically impotent.

Ukrainians need to be educated about the participation process and how they as individuals and as a group can make it work. Local government officials must also be educated about the role and importance of public participation in the policy-making process. Citizens as well as administrators play key roles in reinforcing the proper functions of local government departments, and all must share responsibility in raising and promoting a community consciousness so vital to cultivating democracy.

Once Ukrainian society builds the individual and institutional capacity of its citizens, then it can satisfy the conditions and accomplish the tasks placed upon it by civil society. The dissemination of the procedures and standards of policy development and analysis empowers all citizens; giving them the knowledge of how to effectively manage change, thereby creating a climate of optimism and trust.

Successful initiatives have taken place in Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk for increasing such public engagement. However, citizens should only see these as the first steps towards achieving greater involvement in local government decisions and activities.

INTERNET RESOURCES ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

American Association for World Health
www.aawhworldhealth.org/WAD99/mediaoutreach.html

An excellent resource for media outreach, the AAWH Web page contains how-to lists, examples of using various kinds of media for public information campaigns, how to set goals, how to target your audience and samples of press releases that can be followed and applied to just about anything. There are a lot of excellent reminders on this page about what not to forget when conducting a media campaign.

American Civil Liberties Union (Student Organizing Manual)
www.aclu.org/students/organizingmanual.html

This is the ultimate A-Z of how to organize a group to create change. The ACLU has decades of experience in civic activism in the US, and a page dedicated to this topic on their larger site shows this. Special attention should be paid to the sections on writing letters (to newspaper editors, political leaders, heads of organizations, etc.), public speaking, event planning and publicity and how to plan effective goals for each stage of a campaign.

Anti-Corruption Gateway for Europe and Eurasia www.no-bribes.org

This site is not directly about citizen participation, but does have related information on all the countries of the former Soviet Union and the former Warsaw Pact nations. There is also a Russian language version.

Benton Foundation www.benton.org/Practice./Toolkit

This organization looks to help NGOs and donor or community-funded projects find grant money for organizations or programs that lack information technology resources, such as computers and the Internet. It provides a step-by-step guide on how to assess needs and include them in funding proposals, many of which are specific to the usage of computers as education or resource materials.

Center for Community Change www.communitychange.org/media.html

This is a good source of information about community organizing, coalition building, advocacy groups, housing, community development and lobbying. The CCC believes that a strong media strategy is essential to NGOs or community organizations that are working toward change. Getting the message out quickly and efficiently is a recipe for success. This site provides an excellent overview of what steps to take, what alternatives to consider and how to use the media to lobby government officials to bring about change. It includes links to related sites.

Central Europe Review www.ce-review.org

An online magazine, the CER publishes a variety of articles every two weeks on topics in politics, society and culture. Articles for the week of Nov. 5, 2001, include police corruption in the Czech Republic and the role of civil society in CEE. The site also offers online books and links to other media sources.

Civic Practices Network http://www.cpn.org/

This site features several essays on community organizing, social capital, and urban democracy, providing a broad range of approaches. It also lists different links to models, techniques, manuals, syllabi, and training centers. CPN is designed to bring schooling for active citizenship, which has always been at the heart of democratic and associational life, into the information age.

Civicus www.civicus.org

This is a useful site that promotes the active involvement of local citizens in their communities, wherever they live. Of special interest are the sections on "Services", the "Civil Society Index" and "Civil Society and Citizen Action." The "Services" section provides links to NGO and donor sites, online book lists and an online community events calendar.

Civitas International www.civnet.org

This organization believes that citizens must learn about government and how it works so that they can then make use of government to make democracy more effective, make elected officials more accountable and raise the standards of living for all. The site has resources for all those involved in learning about government, including students, teachers, parents and advocates.

Communities On-line http://www.communities.org.uk/ukco/

Community networks provide public space in cyberspace. The site provides links to various articles, community websites, both in the UK and throughout the world. It emphasizes the spread of information and communication technology (ICT), especially through personal computers and wide-area networks such as Internet, which provide rich opportunities for people to contact and influence their government officials.

Community Toolbox http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/

This websites provides information about community building tools. Its mission is to promote community health and development by connecting people, ideas and resources.

E-The People www.e-thepeople.com

More than anything else, this American site offers a window of possibilities for using the Internet to link governments and private citizens. Featured on this site are a variety of online petitions, online discussion forums and news on upcoming legislation. Americans can even pay speeding tickets online using this site!

Independent Sector www.independentsector.org

This organization is described as "a coalition of leading nonprofits, foundations, and corporations strengthening not-for-profit initiative, philanthropy, and citizen action." Though not particularly useful outside the United States, this site still demonstrates the strength that NGOs can gain by working together on topics of mutual interest or benefit.

Institute for Development Studies http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/

Through the work of the Participation Group, the Institute of Development Studies serves as a global center for research, innovation and learning on citizen participation and participatory approaches to development. The website is frequently updated with research papers and articles on various topics. It also provides links to other citizen participation websites.

Institute for Global Communications www.igc.org/igc/gateway

The IGC mission statement is to actively promote change in the areas of social justice, inclusive economic opportunity, democracy, and sustainable environmental practices. The site is essentially a forum for its constituent members. Their links are included on the right side and span the publishing industry, media, public think tanks, peaceful protest groups and others dedicated to real and lasting change.

Institute on Governance www.iog.ca

"Effective governance through thought and action" is the motto of this Canadian site. This is one of the most comprehensive, useful and navigable sites on the Internet dealing with citizen participation, building policy capacity and accountability. The site also gives access to many IOG publications on these and other topics (Adobe Acrobat required).

International Association for Public Participation http://www.iap2.com/

This is a website of the International Association for Public Participation. It is an association of members who seek to promote and improve the practice of public participation in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that effect the public interest in nations throughout the world.

Internet Democracy Project http://www.internetdemocracyproject.org/

The Internet Democracy Project seeks to enhance the participation of Internet users worldwide in non-governmental bodies that are setting up Internet policy. It seeks to advocate that these bodies adhere to principles of open participation, public accountability and human rights.

Making the Net Work http://www.makingthenetwork.org/

Making the Net Work aims to help those planning to get their organization or neighborhood group online, or create local technology centers. They are also interested in virtual teams and networks.

National Science Foundation (US) Website www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/index.html

Though this site is for a US audience, it provides excellent arguments for why students should have access to computers as a learning and resource tool. The information and statistics this site gives could be used to lobby government leaders for education funding, specifically for computers or to update technology in schools.

Online Democracy onlinedemocracy.winona.org

This site, from a small town in the United States, shows how the Internet can be used to link a community together. "The goal of Winona's Online Democracy Initiative is to empower, inform, and engage the citizenry by creating an ongoing community-wide discussion of local public issues." This site is similar to the "E-the People" site.

Open Society Institute/Soros Foundation www.soros.org/osi.html

The Open Society Institute works in areas of education, social and legal reform, providing resources and networking capabilities to people in the formerly communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Their office is in Budapest, Hungary. Look for the Budapest link for programs relevant to Eastern Europe.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development www.oecd.org/puma

As a separate link through the OECD, The Public Management Program (PUMA) offers a range of themes relating to its public management services. Special attention should be paid to the section on government-citizen relations, with online articles, an excellent documentation section (with questionnaires) and general information on engaging citizens in policy-making and providing services to citizens.

Participation Toolkit http://www.toolkitparticipation.com/

The toolkit offers information on tools which promote citizen participation in local governance. Hundreds of cases are described and analyzed. The site also presents articles and links for further reference.

Partnerships Online www.partnerships.org.uk

This site is a virtual A-Z guide to public participation (action plans, budgeting, consultation, etc.); it also includes a complete, step-by-step section on putting theory into practice. Check the resource collection for names, organizations, publications and more related to community involvement in government.

Pew Center for Civic Journalism www.pewcenter.org

"The Pew Center is an incubator for civic journalism experiments that enable news organizations to create and refine better ways of reporting the news to re-engage people in public life." Generally, an advocacy site for civic-minded journalism and media that support local, grassroots initiatives.

School to Work Website (US) www.stw.ed.gov/states/outreach.htm

Another excellent media outreach site for community activists and NGOs. It provides education about why media outreach is important, not simply providing a 'how-to' section. For an organization's media spokesperson, this site even provides information on how to prepare for an interview with the media to get the organization's message across properly.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory www.sedl.org/pubs/lc06/welcome.html

The focus of this site is community involvement/deliberation in education curriculum and decision-making. This well-organized site provides excellent anecdotal evidence and statistics of how community involvement in education makes school systems, and school graduates, more successful. Also included are appendices featuring various approaches to citizen participation in education reform.

SWAP (Successes, Weaknesses, Aims and Problems) www.roko.goe.net/swap

This is an elementary site aiming to help NGOs, community organizations and even individuals establish their goals, plan strategies, forecast problems and implement these plans. The plans outlined on this site are humble, too. They even include the strengths and weaknesses of the SWAP plan itself.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) www.usaid.gov

This American government site is useful as a source for online documents relating to public participation/partnerships (see the "Documents" section) and handbooks on a variety of topics, including the role of media, dispute resolution and legislative strengthening.

World Bank Institute Website
www.worldbank.org/wbi/home.html,
www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sbhome.htm

The home site for the WBI contains various information and resources relating to World Bank projects, research and publications, including the "public participation sourcebook." This link on public participation, in particular, summarizes the knowledge and expertise that the World Bank has gained in providing technical assistance to developing nations and regions of the world.

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