

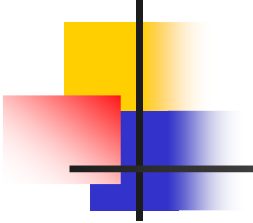
Community Deliberative Engagement in the Climate Change Debate



Majda Tafra-Vlahović
University of Dubrovnik



What is Deliberative Public Engagement

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- Distinctive approach to involving people in decision-making
 - Main difference: giving participants time to consider and discuss an issue in depth
 - Value: the sophistication of citizen`s political opinions increased
 - An integral part of meaningful civic engagement
 - Internet - infinite ammount of virtual spaces for such discussions

Unpacking “Engagement”

- Umbrella term comprising of several elements
- **Motivation**
- Not all interested in politics: negative coverage and **culture of non-participation**
- Not all politically educated to participate
- Issues are **complex** – not easy to have an informed opinion
- **Trust**
- Trust breeds engagement in a circle of social capital
- **Social capital** in the early stages of life leads to **political socialisation** which in turn leads to **civic engagement**
- Politically relevant social capital is created through **personal networks** and **social exchanges**
- Social interactions eventually lead to greater civic participation
- Internet has been accused of causing social isolation and mistrust, thus aggravating civic disengagement
- Opinions that trust is a variable independent of the Internet
- However, as the number of young people on-line increases it may have long-term effect on overall trust levels
- Virtual interaction in adolescence might lead to a **different kind of socialisation**
- **Education**
- Recent evidence indicates the development of an on-line youth civic culture expressed through awareness, volunteering, campaigning and the public exercise of voice

Deliberative engagement

- Involves people in decision making
- Scope for change must be part of the process
- Deliberation is embedded
- Process of **dialogue** that includes the **time** to discuss the information provided and to **explore** the key issues
- Participatory model
- Linked to public dialogue and decision making
- Collection/integration of divergent public views
- Citizens “reason” together
- Conditions that promote **understanding/trust**
- Decisions seems as broadly legitimate/**supported**

Differences

- Discussion between participants at interactive events including through **on-line technologies**
- Sufficient **time** is given to participants to gain new information and discuss in depth the implications of their **new knowledge** in terms of existing values, attitudes and experiences
- Working with a **range** of people and information sources
- Different perspectives, backgrounds and interests
- **A clear task or purpose: related to influencing a specific decision, policy, service, project or programme**
- What makes DPE different is that it provides much richer data, explores why people **feel** the way they do, allows time to develop ideas
- Opportunity to develop views **with policy makers**

Forms of deliberative public engagement

- **Deliberative research**

- builds on **market research techniques** used by research agencies for clients such as government departments (i.e. national citizens' summits and policy consultations in UK)

- **Deliberative dialogue**

- builds on **dialogue and consensus-building** techniques
- enables participants to work together (often with expert input) to develop an agreed view or set of recommendations
- May be involved in taking their recommendations forward to decision-makers
- This can encourage **shared responsibility** for implementation (national dialogues on science and technology)

- **Deliberative decision-making**

- builds on **partnership methodologies**
- participants and decision-makers enabled to decide jointly on priorities and programmes (partnership bodies and participatory budgeting exercises where power is genuinely devolved to participants).

When to use deliberative public engagement



■ Suitable

- contribution to **more robust decisions** based on a deeper understanding of public values
- the decision involves **complex issues**, uncertainty or conflicting beliefs, values, understanding, experience and behaviors
- the decision will require **trade-offs**
- **buy-in** from others required
- **Can be used**
- across all levels of government
- across all types of services
- **Should NOT be used**
- when crucial decisions have already been taken
- if there is no realistic possibility that the engagement process will influence decisions.

Principles of effective deliberative engagement



1. The process makes a difference
2. The process is transparent
3. The process has integrity
4. The process is tailored to circumstances
5. The process involves the right number and types of people
6. The process treats participants with respect
7. The process gives priority to participants' discussions
8. The process is reviewed and evaluated to improve practice
9. Participants are kept informed.

1. The process makes a difference

- Policy-makers listen to and take account of participants' views;
- There is clear evidence of how decisions or **policy** developments have been **influenced** by it;
- Participants **learn** about wider political and decision-making processes, as well as about the subject being discussed;
- Participants are engaged in a **meaningful** way and are therefore more **enthusiastic** about getting involved in the future
- Engagement can only be effective if it takes place at the right point in the **decision-making process**
- This may mean that organisational processes need to change, to **incorporate results from public deliberations** into decision-making

2. The process is transparent

- The information provided to participants, the reporting of participants' views, and the channels by which their views feed into decision and policy-making, are transparent.
- **Transparent information:**
 - comes from **clearly identified organisations**, publications or other sources;
 - is carefully drafted for the purpose, with **input from experts**, stakeholders, or citizens (including possibly via advisory panels) as appropriate;
 - reflects a range of **different (and potentially opposing) perspectives**; and
 - is accessible to all participants (taking into account different literacy levels and languages, and disabilities such as restricted hearing or sight).
- **Transparent reporting of participants' views means:**
 - participants are **clearly informed** about what is being recorded and reported in their name
 - every participant can expect to receive a report summarising participants' views.
- **Transparent policy and decision-making processes means:**
 - it is clear to everybody involved how the **results** from public engagement are intended to be **used**;
 - it is clear to participants how policy and decision-makers will use their contributions, along with evidence from other sources, in making their decision
 - it is made clear, after the engagement process, how the public input has had an **impact**.
- Transparent processes also take account of the **potential benefits** and **dangers** of working with the media.

3. The process has integrity

- The integrity and **openness of** everybody involved -those running it and those taking part in it - are among the most important elements
- The scope for **making a difference** to the policy or decision is explicitly declared at the start: important to be clear about things that cannot be changed as a result of the process - to manage expectations.
- Decision-makers are **sincere** in their willingness to be open-minded. They listen and take account of the views expressed by participants, both on points of detail and more generally on how policy issues are framed and considered.
- The organisers **clearly communicate** the results of the process.

4. The process is tailored to specific circumstances



There is no single design for deliberative public engagement. Each process is designed to meet its specific aims and objectives, and to meet the needs of participants as well as those of the decision or policy-makers.

- It is crucial that the following elements are clear from the outset:
- **the purpose and objectives** of the exercise (why and how);
- the intended **outcomes** (what will be achieved);
- the people who should be **involved** (specialists, decision-makers and public participants), and their potentially **different needs and aspirations**; and
- the context (social, political, historical, policy) into which the process will fit.

5. The process involves right number and types of people

- Involve people of **different ages, genders, social class**, ethnic groups, geographical location, as appropriate.
- Diversity as important as strict demographic representation
- Efforts are made to include people from **marginalised or seldom-heard** groups like people living in poverty or disadvantaged neighbourhoods, people with **disabilities, older** people, people in remote rural areas, commuters, and also those who lack the local or other affiliations that link others to their communities. It may be useful to make links through community and other activists who work with excluded groups.
- If appropriate, participants can be offered **incentives** or other support (for example, travel expenses, income remuneration, childcare), to ensure that they are not excluded from taking part on financial grounds.
- Efforts are made to include **the right number** of people. For example, if the event includes polling exercises, the number of people involved may need to be high enough to ensure a sufficiently diverse range of views.
- Similarly, large numbers of people can be valuable when it is important to demonstrate the importance of an issue or the high status of the engagement exercise.

6. The process treats participants with respect

- Contribution and needs should be clearly **valued and respected**
- Relevant policy and decision-makers may need to take part directly in the process.
- Organisers should fulfill their 'duty of care' to support participants so that they **know what is happening** and will not be harmed or distressed by the process.
- Organisers and decision-makers share a clearly stated commitment to taking the process **seriously and respecting the contribution** of the participants.
- Participants feel **valued, comfortable and welcome**.
- They can rely on:
 - a safe, **non-confrontational atmosphere** in which they can express their views freely;
 - a well-managed process which gives them **confidence** in the exercise; and
 - **a friendly and informal environment** where they feel they can speak openly

7. The process gives priority to participants discussion

- The majority of time is allocated to **discussion between participants**.
 - The views expressed in these discussions are carefully recorded.
- The exercise follows a **logical path through learning** and discussion, so that participants build on and use the information and knowledge they acquire as the process develops
- Participants are given a **variety of ways to express** their views - both collectively, through the discussions, and individually through other methods, such as **voting, post-it notes, postcards or flip charts**
- The process allows time for **plenary feedback and summing up**, so that participants can check and validate points that are being interpreted as the main results.
- Specialists, decision-makers and policy-makers are briefed so that they clearly understand that their role is to **stimulate and support** discussions among the participants, not to lead or direct them

8. The process is improved and evaluated to improve practice

- To assess what has been achieved
- To improve **future practice**
- Effective evaluation starts as early as possible in the process and continues until after the final policy decision has been taken
- Process is guided by measurable objectives
- They are used to test achievement
- Impact shared with the participants
- In-house or independently
- In-house evaluation - self-assessment and peer review, can help promote **internal learning**
- External evaluation can ensure **independent scrutiny, legitimacy and accountability.**

9. Participants are kept informed

Clear information on the process before, during, between and after meetings, events or online initiatives

- **Circulate a summary of participants' views** as they have been presented to policy and decision-makers
- Provide clear information on the **final decision**, and how participants' input has made a difference.
- Ideally, all reports and feedback to participants are **published**
- **Anonymous**; this enables everyone to contribute freely without fear of reprisals
- Effective deliberative processes can **stimulate interest in the policy issue**, or in civic participation generally, among participants.
- Organisers can support and harness this civic energy by:
 - encouraging participants to **stay in touch** with each other after the event;
 - giving participants information to help them stay involved in the issue or service through **volunteering, campaigning or interest groups**
 - providing information about other public participation initiatives

Value for decision and policy makers

- **Better policy and service delivery options**, grounded in better knowledge of public values and priorities;
- **greater transparency and accountability (and thus legitimacy)** for decision-making, based on greater knowledge about the acceptability (or not) of specific policy options;
- opportunities to **listen to public discussions** about contentious issues, and therefore to gain detailed first-hand knowledge of public priorities;
- greater **public understanding** of issues considered and, potentially, **shared responsibility** for successful policy and service delivery outcomes;
- **empowerment, education and motivation** of the public and service users;
- better relationships between government and citizens with the potential for more **effective longer-term partnerships**
- opportunities to build social cohesion by increasing **understanding and mutual respect** between people with diverse views, values and opinions from different sectors of society.

Value for participants

- a chance to **influence** decisions on important issues that affect their lives;
- **insight** into the subject, decision and policy-making, and about participation itself;
- an enjoyable and worthwhile way of being an active citizen, and increased **confidence and willingness** to take part again;
- the opportunity to meet and **share views** with other participants, stakeholders, technical specialists, policy makers, service providers and decision makers
- a platform for increased **understanding and mutual respect**

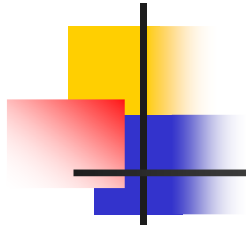
Citizens and climate change debate

- Internet contributes to the creation of new forms of citizenship and empowerment
- Conditions for equal distribution of those resources to the citizens:
 - Access
 - Engagement
 - Deliberation
 - Impact on public policy
- All four conditions need to be fulfilled when considering deliberative engagement of citizens in the climate change debate
- The crucial question for communication experts is
 - How do you get people involved in the first place
 - What is the role of communication in this?

Deliberative Engagement and Climate Change: an update

- Climate change is one of the biggest issues facing the world
- an increasingly pressing issue at both Government and inter-governmental level
- Governments are doing their part in setting the regulatory framework and country-level targets, and introducing both preventative and mitigation strategies.
- They can only achieve so much and it will take the commitment of communities and individuals to achieve the level of change required.
- The key: the contribution and buy-in of communities and individuals to developing local and national policy is key
- It is much more likely that climate change initiatives will be more informed and accepted at regional and local level, but policy built from the grass-roots can also inform national decision-making.
- One way to secure local commitment and tap into the wealth of knowledge and ideas that reside in communities is to create processes that facilitate deliberative engagement

Problems detected



- One of the principal problems with deliberative engagement is getting 'people' engaged in the first place – engaging for engagement.
 - How can engagement be made attractive?
 - How can a level of representativeness be established
 - How can engagement be sustained
 - What is/can **the specific role of communication** be in making initial contact, framing the debate and sustaining involvement?
 - These are some of the questions that we would seek to answer with our partners.

The project – UK part

- Aim: to look at the different approaches to getting people involved in deliberative engagement in rural, urban/rural and urban communities.
- The Yorkshire Dales National Parks Authority - rural partner, Calderdale Council - urban/rural partner and Leeds City Council - urban partner.
- All these organisations are in the Leeds City Region and will be part of the new Local Enterprise Partnership which give a 'whole region' perspective too.

Links and replications

- It is recognised that the engagement and climate change issues and priorities are different for each partner and setting
- There are some common issues, for example sustainable regeneration and transport.
- One of the tasks - to identify the areas of common interest so that a comparative study could be made
- Particular fields - may be linked to regeneration of specific urban areas, or to sustainable tourism.
- “Involve” (a highly respected NGO working on deliberative engagement and an advisor to Government)
- Opinion Leader (one of the UK’s leading private research companies who again specialise in consultation and deliberation and undertake substantial work in the public sector) as expert partners in the project.
- This project also links to two other similar research programmes that are being conducted in Canada and Australia.
- Replication in UK in other areas of Europe: Croatia, Italy and Sweden.