

## Education and Deliberation

Section B provides information on various tools and techniques that are designed to promote civic education and to enable civic engagement of citizens in a process of deliberation on crucial issues of public governance.

Civic education, also known as citizen education or democracy education is aimed to equip and empower citizens to participate in democratic processes and support democratic and participatory governance. Through civic education, not only a demand for good governance can be created but also a citizenry that is informed and engaged in a deliberative process in the public sphere. Civic education acts as the precursor for deliberative forms of participation by preparing the citizens young and old alike with the appropriate civic values, skills, attitudes and dispositions thus enhancing their capacity to be 'empowered and deliberative citizens.

A crucial difference between deliberative forms of public participation and the conventional forms of "consultation" such as surveys, public hearings and public comment periods used by the government is that deliberation emphasises information processing, i.e. "meaning-making" over mere information exchange. The deliberation tools not only provide citizens with objective information and enable them to understand the benefits and trade-offs between various policy choices but also facilitate structured dialogue to help clarify their values and priorities, assess a range of policy alternatives and express an informed preference. Deliberative tools envisage varying degrees and levels of citizen involvement some of which border on information exchange and consultation approaches while others are more "empowering" methods in which citizens are vested with necessary rights and authority to make the final decision.

### Benefits

The benefits of educative and deliberative methods of participatory governance include:

- Knowledgeable, capable, deliberative and active citizens with a huge long term potential for increased levels of civic engagement and political participation;
- Creation of opportunities for citizens to shape and, in some cases, determine public policy;
- Increased public ownership of the policy development process resulting in shared policy preferences across groups/different sections of society thus minimizing friction between interests and maximizing acceptance of the policy and its effective implementation; and
- Well informed, robust and equitable public policies and programs
- Enhanced public trust in the government and synergy between the state and civil society;



## Lessons

Educative and deliberative methods allow groups of citizens to come together to learn, discuss, and develop a shared understanding on an issue through consideration of relevant facts from various viewpoints. They favour experience based knowledge over “expert knowledge” to help shape public policies and programs. They seek to foster deeper levels of knowledge among citizens about a particular policy or program issue, and frequently emphasise quality and depth of that knowledge over the breadth and frequency of deliberation. At the same time however, like most participatory governance approaches, deliberative methods are most effective when institutionalised and implemented in a frequent and continuous basis.

Educative and deliberative methods are also known to face the problem of ‘elite capture’ allowing more dominant groups in society to monopolise the deliberative spaces thus discouraging participation of the marginalized and the weaker sections of society who infact are the main focus of such approaches. Therefore, educative and deliberative methods need to be designed considering the socio-economic and cultural barriers existent in various societies.

Democratic deliberation can be implemented in a range of contexts, both online and face-to-face, within and outside of government. Deliberation tools and techniques can be used throughout the public governance cycle from agenda setting, policy making and to programme evaluation.

## Educative and deliberative tools

There are six educative and deliberative tools in the current toolkit:

*Civic education* refers to approaches that aim to raise citizen awareness of their rights and responsibilities, as well as enhancing their knowledge of key public issues and governance processes.

*Citizen Juries* are a participatory decision advising tool created by the Jefferson Center based in the United States of America and used to engage a random sample of citizens in analysing and judging a priority public issue.

*Deliberative Polling®* is a method of public consultation developed by an American professor James Fishkin and brings together a representative sample of the population to learn about and collectively reflect on a priority policy issue.

*Study Circles* involve a group of community members addressing a collective problem and designing an appropriate solution.



*21st Century Town Meeting* is a public forum methodology developed by America Speaks, an organization based in the United States of America. It combines technology with small-group, face-to-face dialogue to allow large numbers of people to deliberate simultaneously on a policy issue.

*Appreciative Inquiry Summit* is a particular way of asking questions and envisioning the future that fosters positive relationships and builds on the basic goodness in a person, a situation, or an organization. In so doing, it enhances a system's capacity for collaboration and change.



## Resources

Civic Education: Practical Guidance Note. Bureau for Development Policy, Democratic Governance Group, United Nations Development Programme. (2004)  
[http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/A2I\\_Guides\\_Civic%20education.pdf](http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/A2I_Guides_Civic%20education.pdf)

☞ This is an excellent introductory how-to-guide on civic education with case studies of UNDP initiatives around the world.

Deliberative Democratic: Theory and the Key Challenges, Opportunities, and Innovations of 21st Century Democracy". John Gastil  
[www.biennaledemocrazia.it/pdf/lezione\\_gastil.pdf](http://www.biennaledemocrazia.it/pdf/lezione_gastil.pdf)

☞ This lecture delivered by John Gastil provides a useful overview of the theory of deliberative democracy including a list of resources and references

"Deliberative Democracy in Practice: The Perspectives of Practitioners in Germany and Britain" by Emmeline Cooper  
<http://www.psa.ac.uk/2009/pps/Cooper.pdf>

☞ This research paper examines the ways in which deliberative forums are currently practiced in Germany and the UK.

"Public Deliberation: A Manager's Guide to Citizen Engagement". Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer and Lars Hasselblad Torres, America Speaks for IMB Centre for the Business of Government  
[http://www.ostp.gov/galleries/opengov\\_inbox/ibmpubdelib.pdf](http://www.ostp.gov/galleries/opengov_inbox/ibmpubdelib.pdf)

☞ This guide, is designed for public administrators and outlines some concepts and practical tools for citizen engagement.

The deliberative democracy handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the Twenty-first century. Edited by Gastil, J., & Levine, P. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass. (2005)  
<http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-078797661X.html>

☞ The Handbook is a great resource for democratic practitioners and theorists alike. It combines rich case material from many cities and types of institutional settings with careful reflection on core principles. It opens a spacious window on the innovativeness of citizens in the U.S. (and around the world) and shows how the varied practices of deliberative democracy are part of a larger civic renewal



movement. The Hand book is a priced publication. Copies can be ordered from the web link given above.

## Organisations

Centre for Civic Education, USA

<http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=introduction>

The Center for Civic Education is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational corporation dedicated to promoting an enlightened and responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles and actively engaged in the practice of democracy in the United States and other countries. The site is an excellent resource on 'Project Citizen', a school based civic education programme.

Deliberative Democracy Consortium (DDC)

[www.deliberative-democracy.net](http://www.deliberative-democracy.net)

The mission of the Deliberative Democracy Consortium is to bring together practitioners and researchers to support and foster the nascent, broad-based movement to promote and institutionalize deliberative democracy at all levels of governance in the United States and around the world.

National Coalition on Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), USA

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

The [National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation \(NCDD\)](http://www.thataway.org) is a network of over 1,000 organisations and individuals who are working to engage and mobilise people around various development issues. NCDD uses web-based processes to bring together people and groups in the United States and around the world who actively practice, promote, and study inclusive, high quality conversation - hopefully thereby expanding the power of discussion to benefit society.

America Speaks

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

America Speaks' mission is to reinvigorate American Democracy by engaging citizens in the public decision-making that most impacts their lives. America Speaks gives citizens an authentic voice in local, regional and national decision-making on the most challenging public issues of the day.

