Participatory and Deliberative Democracy Strategies for the Intercultural City

Policy Brief

Intercultural cities
Building the future on diversity
www.coe.int/interculturalcities

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

INTERCULTURAL CITIES POLICY BRIEFS

Participatory and Deliberative Democracy Strategies for the Intercultural City (2017)

Engaging migrants and foreign residents in local political life

By Jack Leighninger

Rationale

When it comes to broad social policy, areas such as education and healthcare are generally legislated at the regional or federal levels of government. That being said, the successful cross-cultural integration and cohabitation of different groups of people almost always depends on legislation and policy at the level at which these groups actually interact: the municipal or local level.

Local authorities should encourage and facilitate the process by which migrants and their descendants acquire the nationality, and thus full civil rights, of their new country. However, in some cases, this can be a difficult and slow process with uncertain outcomes, making it imperative to provide other meaningful opportunities for non-nationals to take part in policy-making at the local level and thus cultivate a sense of ownership and belonging to the local community. This can be a powerful antidote to the feelings of exclusion and marginalisation that many migrants experience. Participatory Democracy is a principal method for cultivating this sense of contribution for all people, but particularly migrants and minorities. Participatory Democracy is also particularly meaningful for engaging asylum-seekers and temporary residents (expats, students) who do not have long-term plans for settling in the city/country.

What is Participatory Democracy? Public Participation can be defined as "an umbrella term that describes the activities by which people's concerns, needs, interests, and values are incorporated into decisions and actions on public matters and issues."[1] This definition extends beyond the political sphere, and focuses on decision making and the activities of citizens in a community. With this definition in mind, Participatory Democracy can be understood as having a focus on politics, but keeping true to the ideas of public participation by highlighting actions beyond just voting. The Oxford English dictionary defines it as "Individual participation in political decision-making, especially by direct action rather than through elected representatives."[2]

[1] Tina Nabatchi and Matt Leighninger, *Public Participation for 21st Century Democracy*, (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2015).

[2] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 20 vols, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/participatory_democracy.

Engagement strategies for Migrants, Refugees and newcomers

1. Using Technology

Using technology at the local level often centers on creating networks of people, much like any other form of civil association. In the same way that clubs, faith groups, or school parents groups can be mobilised for public participation initiatives, so too can online networks. These days, networks can range in their levels of political or democratic involvement. Something like a Facebook group could be a very general purpose network with occasional policy-focused exchanges, whereas an issue forum could be more focused on political debate.

a) Social network groups

Often, people can be either intimidated or simply disinterested in a network that seems to have a solely political purpose. Showing that the usefulness of being a part of this network expands beyond politics is a much more effective way to attract citizens to engage. Thus experts tend to lean towards Facebook and other general purpose platforms for networking purposes. When setting up these networks, especially when hoping to attract migrants, it is important to emphasise that these spaces are open and welcome to all, and to ensure adequate moderation to prevent and sanction expressions of intolerance, prejudice and hate. A simple and explicit message upon joining or during recruitment can be all it takes. This is most effective when that message comes from a trusted source, such as a leader amongst the community, but at the very least the message has to be present.

Emphasis should be placed on smaller locations, rather than trying to launch a city-wide initiative. Shared location can be a compelling reason for many to join such a network, while a city-wide network might seem too broad to be useful, especially to someone new to the community. Once (hyper)local networks are established, efforts can be made to establish a more integrated approach for a broader geographic area. Linking or otherwise connecting existing networks, or groups of network members, is often a useful tactic when attempting this sort of geographic expansion.

Another important point is use easy-to-access technology. A combination of Facebook groups and something like an email newsletter would probably cover a broad swath of the population. These technologies are already familiar to large numbers of people, allowing the system to be slightly more accessible. These technologies are common and intuitive, even for newcomers. It is important that organisers not be intimidated by fears of technological illiteracy amongst new arrivals. Even if it requires the help of a grandchild to explain the occasional question, not only are most migrants quite technologically literate, but many are willing to put in effort to adapt to new technologies if it means getting connected. In order to access older generations of immigrants, often one will need the help of younger generations. These children often act as a bridge, connecting the *online conversation* to the *dinner table conversation*. Relying on second generation immigrants or migrants to connect to first generation is a tactic that many types of initiatives can leverage, and is not exclusive to online networks.

Finally, people of lower economic background often get access to the internet mostly through their cellphones, so having technology that is mobile friendly is another key point to engaging with these groups. Facebook, and email are again both good candidates, and some initiatives have even used SMS connected polls and other strategies specifically related to cellphones.

b) Online community forums

In a 2016 interview for the journal of Public Deliberation, Steven Clift spoke to the value of online community forums for promoting the involvement of marginalised groups like immigrants. He and his team at E-Democracy, a U.S. based organisation committed to expanding participatory democracy through online technology, led efforts to create these forums in the Twin Cities in Minnesota. Most of the points above are attributed to later conversations with Steven. However he highlights 3 main points in particular during the interview.

First, Clift emphasises moving the focus of the forum away from politics. Clift saw much greater interest in the forum when politics was just one part of what it could do, in addition to being a way for people to share more general information. "The key is real relevancy in people's lives. This mixture of community life and free stuff with civics made the forums much more relevant to a wide range of people. It's amazing how many people have joined our forums because they lost their cat. You're trying to find your cat, and out of necessity, you join the network."[3]

Clift's second point about recruiting immigrants emphasizes the need to reach out directly to people. In his efforts in St. Paul, Minnesota, Clift hired a group of multi-lingual, racially diverse individuals to go door to door advocating for his network. He used census data to target neighborhoods inhabited by groups with low participation. Clift emphasized "People love to connect with their neighbors online. It helps them break down social isolation… Go with what is natural and you just build it—you create a Facebook Group for your neighborhood or now you are active on Nextdoor—you won't connect with everyone in the community unless you intentionally ask the question, 'Who's not here, and how do we reach them? And who will reach them?'"[4]

Finally, Clift argues for some light facilitation of these forums. At the local level, this starts with having people use their real names. The facilitators should encourage people on city-wide level forums, where conversations are more political, to leave room for discussion on opposing viewpoints, or at the neighborhood level, to intervene when someone is affecting the climate of inclusion. This can be easily achieved by having a clear set of rules, and a process to suspend future participation for those who violate the rules. Clift stresses that

[3] Abdullah, Carolyne; Karpowitz, Christopher F.; and Raphael, Chad (2016) "Equity and Inclusion in Online Community Forums: An Interview with Steven Clift," Journal of Public Deliberation: Vol. 12 : Iss. 2 , Article 11.
Available at: http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol12/iss2/art11

[4] Abdullah, Carolyne; Karpowitz, Christopher F.; and Raphael, Chad (2016) "Equity and Inclusion in Online Community Forums: An Interview with Steven Clift," Journal of Public Deliberation: Vol. 12 : Iss. 2 , Article 11.
Available at: http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol12/iss2/art11

people will generally be civil and kind to their neighbours, but these two policies will help to keep things in check.

Clift's exact technique relies heavily on labour and having access to funding to hire multi-lingual door knockers or online moderators. But his general strategies can still be applied even when working with low budget operations in other parts of the world. Go to the people you are hoping to recruit, in a language they understand, potentially using census data or other city records to help target specific communities. Make initiatives seem relevant to their lives, not just in politics, but in many other facets. And finally, moderation and facilitation are important factors of successful dialogue.

Case Study 1: New tools are helping community leaders and organizers to connect with groups that were previously difficult to reach. One example is U-Report in Uganda, which has an extremely young population. UNICEF, looking to "support actions that address youth concerns and empower them through participatory, reflective, and innovative mechanisms", created U-Report, a free SMS tool that allows youth to "respond to weekly polls and report issues, amplifying their voices at the local, regional, and national levels of government". Since its establishment in 2011, the program has since been expanded to 29 countries. Furthermore, the program is available in English, French, and Spanish, and has 3.5 million members across the globe. This initiative not only took advantage of technology's potential in terms of far-reaching connections, but also chose texting because it was accessible and comfortable for the demographic it was trying to reach. This sort of strategy should be replicated by other initiatives with other demographics, especially when coupled with free website translation technologies like Google Translate. Migrants are mostly getting online through mobile phones, so having a cellular technology, like this one, would be one opportunity to engage with them on mass. For further information, see http://participedia.net/en/cases/enabling-youth-participation-through-technology-u-report-uganda.

Key Points

- ✓ Emphasise openness and create a welcoming environment online
- ✓ Establish rules and employ light facilitation to enforce them
- ✓ Employ advocates (door knockers, community leaders) who speak the language
- ✓ Use accessible technology that is mobile friendly, and rely on well-known platforms like email or Facebook if possible
- ✓ Encourage family members to spread the network's discussions across language or technology barriers
- ✓ Integrate online activities into society, not just politics

2. Offline Networks

Not all networks can be found on the internet. Some of the best networks are still the ones that connect groups of individuals or organisations through traditional face-to-face meetings. The setting up and running of such thematic networks, and connecting them to policy- and decision-making requires a lot of thought, skill and sensitivity. Time and confidence are scarce resources, so activists and other citizens are likely to quickly lose interest and trust if they believe that networks are used as participation tokens or as rubber-stampers for decisions already taken by the governing structures.

It can be particularly challenging to convince migrants to join such networks and meetings, and confining efforts to engage them to networks devoted to migrant integration issues can be marginalising and counter-productive.

Case study 2: One of the best examples of the power of effective networks can be found in Dublin, Ireland. The city relies upon a massive Public Participation Network (PPN) to engage with a large number of organisations in order to inform decisions the city takes. How massive? The network has over 600 member organisations. These groups are extremely diverse in role and in membership, including everything from scout troops or addiction treatment groups to social inclusion groups such as Africa World Youth. The network is open to all non-profit or cooperative organizations in Dublin, and is easy to join. The network also nominates representatives to sit on the decision making bodies of the city council as well as participate with committees and other policy influencing bodies. This close cooperation between the city government and the Public Participation Network has led to several accomplishments. The city of Dublin, through consultation with the Public Participation Network, completed the Dublin City Local Economic and Community Plan in 2015, plotting the city's course for the following 5 years. Within the plan, thanks to advocacy from the diverse members of the PPN, there are several initiatives addressing the needs of migrants. The first of these is a renewed emphasis on the implementation of the city's integration strategy for 2016-2020 (which was designed through consultation with relevant community stakeholders). The broader local economic and community plan also called for supporting migrant entrepreneurs with business skills training, completing an analysis of the migrant population and trends in Dublin, and providing support to ethnic minority communities in part by setting up an intercultural forum.

However, networks don't simply run themselves. Face to face meetings of constituents, either from specific organisations or regular citizens, are still a cornerstone of public engagement and networking. There are several steps that meetings can take to make sure they are not only productive, but attractive and accessible to everyone. One key to making a meeting work is having good facilitation. This may be less technical than some of the strategies in this guide, but it is no less important.

Most importantly, the goal and expected result from the meeting needs to be clearly stated, together with the limitations and conditions which determine to what extent the meeting results can influence the actual final decision on a specific matter. Unrealistic expectations are likely to result in frustration and general disillusionment with the participation process. In order to make sure that all those in attendance share minimum common knowledge, it is

advisable to take time to explain the background and history of the issues at stake as migrants and young people in particular may lack the memory of past decisions and facts, and the overall policy/institutional literacy required for effective participation.

Good facilitation guides discussion by asking questions, mediating between opposing viewpoints, and making sure that everyone's voice is heard.[5] A good facilitator recognises the value that anyone, including (or especially) migrants, can offer the conversation, and makes sure to highlight contributions that might otherwise be missed. The facilitatior should try to simplify and clarify any positions and options discussed, together with their consequences, in order to enable all participants, even new to the subject/country/city, to understand the stakes.

Another point that organisers sometimes forget when trying to engage with migrants (and community members in general) is the need for childcare. Public meetings in the evenings or on the weekends can be hard to attend for anyone with kids, but this can be especially true for migrant families, who may lack the means to find alternative care for their children. Having childcare available removes one more barrier to participation, and also has clear social advantages for the meeting. The presence of children can make the gathering feel more like a community event, a chance to socialize or meet other families, rather than simply a dreary public meeting. This is a reiteration of Steven Clift's point about making participatory initiatives more appealing by making them part of how people socialise in the community, not just about politics.

Finally, having translation services or childcare becomes irrelevant to the turnout at the meeting if it is not thoroughly publicised ahead of the event. A hypothetical posed on the Participatory Budgeting Project's tips page illustrates this well: "Anna's daughter gets out of daycare at 5:45, and the meeting starts at 7:00. She doesn't see anything about childcare on the flyer, and worries she'd have to drag the stroller up the stairs anyway. She doesn't go. As it turns out, the location had both an elevator and childcare — it's just that neither were mentioned in every ad for the event."[6] Clear, complete, and consistent messaging is key to encouraging people to participate in any kind of initiative, whether that's a public meeting or an online network.

Key Points

- ✓ Incorporate groups with diverse missions and memberships into decision making
- ✓ Provide clear and complete information about the background, goals and expected results
- ✓ Explain the scope and limits of influence of the meeting results on the final political/administrative decision
- ✓ Encourage facilitation at meetings that emphasises all voices

[5] Tina Nabatchi and Matt Leighninger, *Public Participation for 21st Century Democracy: Skills Module* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2015).

[6] Hadassah Damien, "Why accessibility should be at the center of your work," *The Participatory Budgeting Project*, July 27th, 2017. https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/centering-accessibility-in-pb/.

- ✓ Provide childcare at meetings to encourage families to attend and to emphasise social aspects
- ✓ Employ clear, consistent, and comprehensive messaging for every advertisement

3. Participatory Budgeting (PB)

PB is one very popular method that cities have used to incorporate participatory, democratic initiatives into budgeting. Budgeting is not only one of the most difficult type of decisions that public officials have to make, but it is also one of the most difficult to explain to residents. Incorporating citizens and non-citizen residents into these decisions, through the use of participatory initiatives like PB, is a good way to help public officials make better budget decisions, and educate citizens on the complex tradeoffs that budgeting entails.

New York City's Participatory Budgeting Project defines PB as "A different way to manage public money, and to engage people in government. It is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. It enables taxpayers to work with government to make the budget decisions that affect their lives."[7]

One key European success story of Participatory Budgeting's implementation can be found in Paris. Between the years of 2014 and 2020, the city of Paris has committed to spending 500 million euros to fund participatory budgeting processes in the city.

The Paris process, like most PB processes around the world, works in several stages. The first stage involves residents of the city generating ideas they would like to see funded. This is followed by a period where similarly minded people get together to improve their ideas, perhaps combining them or otherwise improving their ideas through research and collaboration with city experts. The third stage has the residents share their ideas with the city, usually through a public event, and marshal support for their project ahead of the final vote. Paris has no requirement for citizenship to be involved in the process, only that you be a resident of the city. A further note on residency and voting rights can be found ahead of the conclusion of this paper.

The Parisians run PB annually, and divide €100 million amongst PB processes in the individual city neighborhoods. However, rather than divide the sum equally, they set aside capital for specific themes, such as €10 million for a school-focused process, €30 million for city-wide projects, and €15 million exclusively for poorer and more populous districts. After these allocations, the remaining funds are divided by population of each district. This strategy enables the citizens of Paris to focus on areas that need the most help, tackling problems beyond what could be viable with the district funding alone, such as programs that work with migrants or immigrants. Given its lack of citizenship requirement, PB is emphasized as being open to engagement of all residents. A main advantage of PB is that the process gives members of diverse communities, such as immigrants or migrants, a chance to come together with their neighbours to solve problems facing the area as a whole. Projects included new squares in low-income districts, public baths for the homeless,

---

[7] "What is PB?" *The Participatory Budgeting Project*, April 13th, 2016. https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-is-pb/.

and public exercise equipment in local parks. These are common interest goals, which are a benefit to everyone in the area, and are good examples of the types of local level problem-solving that PB can accomplish.

Voting in PB processes can be done in schools, in person through paper ballot, or online, thus making it extremely accessible to almost everyone. Another chief goal of Participatory Budgeting processes is increasing transparency and trust in government. Not only do residents learn about how the government operates, but they also can see the government putting their money to work and accomplishing goals that residents want. This is especially important for migrants and immigrants.

Especially when dealing with people arriving from countries with political systems different from their new homes, it is essential that trust and understanding is build between newcomers and the government or political system of the receiving community. These bonds of trust can improve many aspects of government efforts to connect with migrants, affecting issues like the distribution of public services or involvement in future participatory initiatives. In Paris, projects take about 18 months to complete, at which time they are publicized by newsletter and on the website (which is available in French and English for increased accessibility). Further online technologies could be used to increase accessibility, and newsletters should be publicized as fully as possible, again in order to build strong bonds of trust. For further reading on PB in Paris, go to https://www.paris.fr/actualites/the-participatory-budget-of-the-city-of-paris-4151. For further information on PB generally visit the Participatory Budgeting Project's website at https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/.

Case Study 3: Successful processes often leverage existing structures in order to connect with participants. One example of this is the participatory budgeting process in by the Phoenix Union High School District (PUHSD), which ran participatory budgeting in 5 different schools in the district. The lowest turnout rate of the five schools was 79% and through the process, approximately 3000 votes were cast. The process was deemed a success by teachers and students alike, who reported it an excellent way to not only learn about democracy and the board's budgeting processes, but also as an enjoyable social experience as well. This is relevant to migrants as it provides an example not only of the positive benefits of PB in terms of educational and decision making value, but also as a networking and social experience run through a common system like a school. Structures within the community that could be utilised to connect with migrants could include community centers or libraries. See the case study below on Libraries in Los Angeles for another example. For more information, see https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-happens-when-students-lead-pb/ .

Key Points

- ✓ Gives citizens a unique way to make a difference
- ✓ Prioritise areas with lower income

- ✓ Encourage participation amongst immigrants and migrants who stand the most to gain from these opportunities

- ✓ Eliminate citizenship and residency requirements as much as possible to ensure the process is accessible

4. Participatory Education

Especially when dealing with migrant inclusion, educating the native population about who migrants are and some of the challenges they face can be a key part of building trust and cohabitating communities. This process can start with youth, and use existing structures such as the school system to promote engagement and inclusion.

One instance of this was during the European Local Democracy Week in 2015, in the city of Ilion, Greece. Ilion ran its first "Teenagers Municipal Council", which consisted of a simulated municipal council meeting where a hypothetical group of refugees' request for settlement was debated. "The initiative was created with three broad aims: first, to introduce otherwise unengaged youth to the structure and goals of the Ilion Municipal Council; secondly, to foster dialogue about an issue that is seen as of critical importance for Greek society, and, finally, to mark Ilion's commitment to the Council of Europe's "Living together in multicultural societies: Respect, dialogue, interaction" mandate."[8] The teens, selected from the city's high schools, were encouraged to research and provide arguments for multiculturalism and integration. Furthermore, they looked into Greece's own history, particularly the experiences of the Greek people during the Greek Diaspora, for challenges that were similar to those facing refugees and immigrants today.

There are certainly some drawbacks to this method. As the Participedia file on this case points out: "Finally, more attention should be paid to making the simulation inclusive. Although the municipality hasn't publicised data on the number of participants, or their prior cultural experiences, it is safe to assume that the majority came from an ethnically Greek background. This means that the conversation was likely one-sided, and missed the potential of capturing immigrant and newcomer youth's unique perspectives."[9] In order to be successful, this method of education would also require close moderation to keep discussions focused. Additionally, having this sort of discussion in a debate format may not be the best way of presenting this sort of information. That being said, examples like this highlight the efforts being employed by cities across Europe and the world to use face- to-face, facilitated discussion to encourage education towards topics like diversity, interculturalism and social integration that might not come up in the classroom otherwise. It is also a good example of harnessing an existing structure, such as a school system, to preform outreach. It was also mentioned that future versions of the project would look to connecting students with actual refugees, in order to better facilitate the education that the initiative was trying to achieve.

Another type of initiative that has been employed to increase education is the *serious game*. One example is "Participatory Chinatown", which was developed as part of Boston's Master

---

[8] Fay Asimakopoulos, "The First Teenagers' Municipal Council: 'Living Together in a Multicultural World'," *Participedia.net,* https://www.participedia.net/en/cases/first-teenagers-municipal-council-living-together-multicultural-world.

[9] ibid

Plan. "Participatory Chinatown combines elements of digital worlds such as Second Life with the engaging mechanics of digital games to transform the way people think and deliberate about community issues. It turned game design into a community process by recruiting youth from Chinatown's A-VOYCE program. The game includes 15 virtual community members, whose biographies were developed from a series of interviews the youth conducted throughout their community. Additionally, the youth served as 'technological interpreters' during the game, giving them a sense of ownership in the project and fostering an atmosphere of inter-generational collaboration."[10] Players would encounter some of the same struggles that recent immigrants deal with.

This project encourages citizens to empathise with other peoples' problems, educates youth by having them work with immigrants to create an authentic project, and helps the city engage with a broader and more educated public on how to create a better Chinatown for everyone. The eventual plan developed in part through this participatory initiative highlighted the need to repurpose several land portions to serve as "land bridges" to better connect the neighbourhood and help end the ethnic segregation of the area. This example is of a particular interest for intercultural cities program which stand explicitly against ethnically segregated neighbourhoods.

Cities around the world are making efforts to disseminate accurate information about topics like migrant populations and immigration. The city of London has pioneered a particular approach with not only its data on immigration, but its data about the city generally. The city maintains a "datastore", a site where anyone can access vast reams of public data for free. This includes a section on the city's population, which tracks topics like population diversity and change. Easy to read graphs accompany the vast amounts of raw data, making the otherwise complex spreadsheets easily accessible to regular Londoners. Putting this information in the hands of the general public is a key strategy for combatting misconceptions or misinformation. The uses of this data are endless, and it can be put to work making cities more accessible for those who need it most. For more information, see https://data.london.gov.uk/ or https://citymapper.com/cities.

Other cities around the world, looking to educate the public, have launched their own campaigns against disinformation, focusing particularly on dispelling false rumours and helping migrant communities play a greater role in the cultural life of the city. The city of Amadora, attacking the myth that immigrant children "only bring problems to school", set up an anti-rumour campaign through the local school district. "As part of the campaign, 60 pupils of Seomara da Costa Primo secondary school were trained as anti-rumour agents. They identified the following rumours in the classroom: new students are never welcome, Spanish and Portuguese do not like each other, white people are believed to steal babies in Cape Verde, mathematics and Portuguese teachers earn more than other teachers, etc. The pupils also participated in a debate 'how do I see the others'. Finally, they presented an anti-rumour song at the C4i 3rd Coordination meeting in Amadora in December 2014 and expressed interest in joining more anti-rumour activities."[11]

---

[10]Kevin Um, "Participatory Chinatown (Boston, 2010)," *Participedia.net,* https://www.participedia.net/en/cases/participatory-chinatown.

[11] "Don't Feed the Rumour #2 ," *Council of Europe: Intercultural Cities Programme,* 2016. http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/don-t-feed-the-rumour-2.

This tactic, of training "anti-rumour agents" and equipping them with correct information, was originally pioneered in Barcelona. Since its inception, this strategy has spread to cities across Europe, and has proven its effectiveness at fighting disinformation about many different groups, especially migrants and immigrants. These sorts of campaigns are essential in promoting good relations between all inhabitants of a city. Large-scale networks of cities and organizations are working together to incorporate these practices into their broader cross-cultural strategies. The Council of Europe and practitioners in Barcelona have worked together to publish a guide on managing a successful anti-rumour campaign. It can be found at http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/anti-rumours. This manual should soon be replaced by a revised version that is currently being developed.

Case Study 4: Tapping into existing systems is a great way to reach specific groups that may be underrepresented in a democratic initiative. In North Fair Oaks, California, schools and mentorship programs were used to engage immigrant families in a "community alliance" dedicated to the prevention of crime and violence. By working through Spanish-speaking schools, as well as existing neighborhood level programs like the neighborhood watch, many members of the Spanish speaking community became engaged, and there was a clear positive effect on crime rates. For further reading, see http://participedia.net/en/cases/caron-community-alliance-revitalize-our-neighborhood-violence-prevention-engaging-youth-and.

Key Points

- ✓ Encourage youth to learn about and empathise with refugees and immigrants
- ✓ Use participatory and engaging tactics, such as serious games, to promote understanding of the needs and challenges others face
- ✓ Disseminate city data for increased transparency, and encourage civic developers to use to create tools for citizens
- ✓ Mount anti-rumour campaigns by using trained agents to recognize lies and disseminate accurate information.

5. Recruiting diverse participants, through various tactics

Everyday Democracy is a deliberative democracy organisation, specialising in project management and based in Hartford, Connecticut. They work directly with localities, using participatory processes to effect change on a wide array of engagement issues. In their guide to recruiting dialogue participants, reviewing (or establishing) recruitment goals is their first step in recruiting a diverse group of participants for engaging in high quality dialogue.[12] Key organisers should consider "why do these people have a stake in this issue, or who would care about this issue and deserves a seat at the table".

[12] "How to recruit dialogue participants," *Everyday Democracy*, January 4th, 2014. https://www.everyday-democracy.org/tips/how-recruit-dialogue-participants.

Next, Everyday Democracy emphasises the importance of having a clear consistent message or set of talking points. This is especially helpful when spreading the initiative's message through people who are already participating, to friends or family of existing members. People already included in the coalition of participants should try to recruit others, as each member has unique resources that can help the initiative expand, be it a business, broad faith community, or even a big family. In terms of outreach, the general rule of thumb is "people need to hear the same message at least three times before it begins to register." An emphasis should be placed on personal invitations, which can be either face to face or over the phone. "Whenever possible, give people a chance to take part in a sample dialogue. Be sure to allow plenty of time for questions and answers. Explain how the program can help them make a difference on the issue, form new partnerships and relationships, and strengthen their own organization. Capture the excitement that is generated on the spot by having sign-up forms with you." Finally, in reaching out to under-represented communities, use a variety of strategies such as finding a local spokesperson or leader, to help reach a broader group of individuals.

Case Study 5: Aawaz Voice and Accountability was a 5 year initiative organised in Pakistan. One of the initiative's key goals was to increase the role of women in Pakistani politics. The initiative ran forums at 6 different levels of government, from individual tribes up to the federal level, each demanding at least 50% participation by women. The argument was made to women that this quota demonstrated the initiative's commitment to having women's voices heard on issues that they cared about. Having this large quota, and strictly enforcing it, helped encourage participation by a group that would likely have not been able to engage otherwise. For further research, see http://participedia.net/en/cases/aawaz-voice-and-accountability.

Another example of the use of existing community structures to engage immigrant communities is Los Angeles' efforts to encourage citizenship applications. The city of LA has hundreds of thousands of permanent residents who qualify for citizenship, but never apply for it due to language barriers and other struggles that make the process difficult. To combat this problem and help bridge the divide, the city partnered with an NGO to establish "citizenship corners" in 73 public libraries across the city.

Each location provides information and resources, meeting room space, and access to study materials, supplemented by a robust and resource-rich website, establishing the [The Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL)] as the starting point on a person's personal path to citizenship. By making citizenship education part of LAPL's regular services, the city achieves several goals at once: help eligible immigrants apply for citizenship while reducing their vulnerability to unscrupulous agencies; attract new library users and expose immigrants to additional services provided by LAPL, including language training and other cultural programs; educate an array of native residents on the needs of potential citizens while making them personally

invested in the program; and establish a framework for collaboration with federal agencies and local nonprofits that can be leveraged for other initiatives.[13]

While not a directly participatory process, this example again highlights the value of using existing structures to engage with migrant communities. By putting in an effort to make city services as accessible as possible to these groups, individuals can now attain benefits that were formerly out of reach. The program also allows for cross-cultural exposure, as libraries present another opportunity for interaction between newcomers and current residents. Additionally, by packaging one necessary service in the same venue as other initiatives, for example language services, this further streamlines the process by which immigrants, migrants, and other disenfranchised groups can receive the help they may need. It is important not to ostracize or isolate groups when trying to provide services to them, so offering these services in a place that all members of the community use, such as a library, is one strategy to diminish isolation.

Case Study 6: Random sampling is another strategy employed to increase the representation of certain groups amongst the participants in participatory initiatives. When looking to create a committee or citizen jury, selecting participants through a random sampling system can be a good way to assemble a group that accurately represents the community. This is often best done when paired with a quota or strategy that specifically targets a group integral to the committee's discussion. For example, the city of Sydney, Australia ran a citizen jury on creating a safe and vibrant nightlife in the city. They used a random sampling system to select participants, but coupled it with a random draw specifically amongst university students, as their input would be crucial in a positive deliberation. Again, this is yet another example of using a specific recruiting tactic designed to target a specific demographic. For more on this, see further discussion below or http://participedia.net/en/cases/city-sydney-safe-and-vibrant-nightlife.

Key Points

- ✓ Establish recruitment goals (which groups are missing, how can they be reached)
- ✓ Clear, consistent and comprehensive messaging
- ✓ Find leaders or representatives in underrepresented communities
- ✓ Use existing infrastructure like schools, libraries, or community centers
- ✓ Use random sampling or quotas to increase diversity.

6. Participatory Arts

[13] Chris Choi, "Embrace and Integrate Newcomers: Promote initiatives that foster regular interactions between new and existing populations to strengthen communal bonds and mitigate the effects of false stereotypes," *Medium: 100 Resilient Cities Report*, May 9, 2017. https://medium.com/resilient-cities-at-the-forefront/embrace-and-integrate-newcomers-promote-initiatives-that-foster-regular-interactions-between-new-270d6cbaa33d.

These efforts often have participatory elements, coupled with arts or arts education, leading some to use the term Participatory Arts. Participedia, a databank for participatory processes from around the world, defines Participatory Arts as "forms of artistic expression – through media such as drama, video, and photography – that actively engage participants in the process of making art. Projects adopting this as a method stress shared ownership of the decision-making process, and their activities often address non-arts agendas, such as generating dialogue."[14] The Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology ran a study in 2013 on an arts project involving refugees in Australia. The study found that a large percentage said that the project helped them make friends, learn about a new culture, and develop personally. [15] Art has been a way for people to communicate and identify with other groups of people for centuries. Giving refugees access to art creation allows them to emphasise the humanity of their plight to hosts, showing that similarities between people can overcome their differences.

Case Study 7: Music for Change is an organisation founded in 1997 by Tom Andrews. Celebration, Education and Respect summarise its underlying philosophy for using music for change. The organisation is based in Kent, United Kingdom, but its operations are widespread across the South Eastside in London. In 2008, Music for Change reached over 120,000 people and engaged more than 150 artists in different types of artistic and music activities (Noble, 2009: 13). The bulk of artists at Music for Change are either current or former refugees from countries including Sierra Leone, Ghana, Bosnia, Argentina, China, India, Zimbabwe, Trinidad, and Jamaica. These artists worked together to break down and challenge preconceptions and prejudices, while at the same time highlighting cultural resemblances and valuing differences.

The primary focus of Music for Change were white primary schools in Kent. However, in late 2004, its operation expanded and started a new project aimed at young refugees. The project was primarily funded by the Arts Council and with an additional contribution provided by Youth Music Action Zones in Thanet and Surrey/Sussex. The project had two different but linked components. The first component focused on conducting workshops for newly arrived and more established refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants living in Kent. The second component included activities in schools such as holding music and performance workshops to enhance awareness and understanding regarding these refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants. This project was implemented in partnership with three other organizations: Migrant Helpline, Kent Refugee Support Group, and the Finding Your Feet Project. Each partner organisation helped at different fronts. For instance, Migrant Helpline undertook music activities in the centers that would offer stress relief, worked on overcoming barriers in communication between residents, and raised morale. These activities not only benefited the refugees and asylum seekers, but provided an opportunity for the host communities in the UK to get familiarized with something diverse. The workshop was facilitated and led by a UK-based Sierra Leonean.

[14]Naqibullah Salarzai, "Participatory Arts with Young Refugees," *Participedia.net,* May 11th, 2016, http://participedia.net/en/cases/participatory-arts-young-refugees.

[15] Christopher Sonn et Al, " Reflections on a Participatory Research Project: Young People of Refugee Background in an Arts-Based Program," *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology 5,* no.5 (2013): accessed August 10th, 2017. http://www.psysr.org/jsacp/Sonn-v5n3-13_95-110.pdf

Working with refugees and asylum seekers who live in the UK as exiles, either by choice or necessity, and using their expertise and skills not only helped in the integration and engagement of these refugees and asylum seekers, but also complemented and benefited the work of Music for Change.

Key Points

- ✓ Emphasise the human plight of new arrival
- ✓ Offer connection and co-ownership between those who have just arrived and those who are acting as hosts

7. Citizen Juries

Citizen juries offer a distinctly different system of decision making, especially as opposed to a process like participatory budgeting. These initiatives consist of a representative group of 20-40 residents who meet for a certain period of time, receive expert testimony, and eventually reach a decision on a recommendation to local or national government. The emphasis of a citizen jury is to share the problem and agree on a solution. In most cases citizen juries have a consultative role but sometimes can be entrusted with a real policy decision. For example, in 2014, a citizen jury was used to make decisions on how best to provide benefit funds to residents living near a proposed new train station in Moorebank, Australia.[16]

Instead of the Participatory Budgeting approach to divide citizen and government efforts, each with their own budgets to solve a problem, citizen juries allow citizens to directly inform governments on their solutions to these problems.

There are several key points to running a successful citizen jury. When selecting jurors, the established best practice is to use random selection, with the lens of trying to gather a representative cross section of the population. Experts generally agree that people equally want to help their community, so using random sampling will generally render a jury of representative backgrounds. Additionally, random selection helps target regular members of the community, rather than the most outspoken activists. These people work well as witnesses, but a jury that does not have preexisting commitments to a particular position creates a more robust process.

A few strategies in addition to random sampling can help build a representative jury. The first is to begin the search process with a descriptive look at the community's population, rather than a statistical look. Establish what a good cross-section of the population would look like. Set general goals for age, gender, and education cross-sections, etc. Include other relevant descriptions. For example, in the case of a location dealing with making decisions around migrants, establish a cross-section of established citizens versus new arrivals. Amongst immigrants, a cross-section of time since arrival could be beneficial, with a

[16] Lucy J. Parry, "Moorebank Intermodal Citizens' Jury," *Participedia.net,* May 18th 2016, https://www.participedia.net/en/cases/moorebank-intermodal-citizens-jury.

distribution of people who have just arrived to people who have been settled in the location for 5 or 10 years. Then use random sampling to draw from these groups of people in order to build a jury that represents the community as a whole.

Another common hurdle is achieving a good representation of people in terms of education and income, amongst both citizens and immigrants. The survey question "do you own or rent where you live?" works extremely well as a gatekeeper for establishing a potential jurors income/education level. Another key factor for recruiting low income jurors of every type, including immigrants, is to pay jurors. This enables jurors to potentially miss work, or pay childcare transportation costs. This policy occasionally runs into resistance from local government, but one should keep in mind that other decision makers are paid.

Experts presenting to citizen juries will generally work pro bono, except perhaps for transportation costs. Experts in any field are usually happy to share their input with the jury. Selecting experts can often be a complicated process, as any expert presents a bias. The accepted best practice is to convene a steering committee made of a group of stakeholders from various, often contradictory perspectives. This committee will pick a first round of experts to provide a base of information for jurors, who can then select subsequent witnesses on their own. Organisers should completely avoid picking witnesses, and must trust jurors to achieve a good breath of knowledge and opinion. This section is based on a conversation with Iain Walker, a specialist in the field. He and his team at the new Democracy Foundation, a Sydney based research group, are part of the Democracy R & D network, who are available to field questions and work with cities around the world. More information is available at https://democracyrd.org/.

Case Study 8: The city of Vaasa, in Finland, has seen a recent increase in migrants and immigrants arriving in the city. In 2012, the University of Vaasa endeavored to run a participatory process for coordinating the successful cohabitation and cross cultural integration of immigrants to the city. The process included three steps: an initial world café involving exclusively immigrants, a citizen's jury with immigrants, and a second world café where immigrants sat down with civic leaders and policy makers. A world café is a process where people engage in small group, facilitated discussions, where the goal is to bring a variety of perspectives to bear on the questions or issues being discussed.[17] In most cases, including this case, participants will rotate in order to have a chance to talk to everyone, while facilitators remain at their tables to explain the previous group's discussions to the next group. In Vaasa, the topic for the citizen's jury was "how to increase wellbeing and employment of immigrants in Vaasa", and throughout the process, jurors met with experts, and through facilitated discussion, made recommendations that included 11 concrete suggestions to be considered by the municipal council.

Key Points

- ✓ Share the problem, rather than divide between citizens and government

[17]Haley Jones, "The World Café," *Participedia.net,* June 3rd, 2010. https://www.participedia.net/en/methods/world-cafe.

- ✓ Collect a cross-section of the population through random sampling and targeted survey questions
- ✓ Pay jurors
- ✓ Allow committees and jurors to select witnesses, not organizers
- ✓ Contact experts

A Note on Citizen Juries versus Participatory Budgeting

Budgeting decisions are often amongst the most difficult for public officials to make. Allocating public resources often requires difficult "trade-offs" between projects. As a result, public officials often look to participatory processes in order to help ease the process. When it comes to making public decisions, particularly about budgeting, PB and citizen juries are very often the participatory processes selected to enable citizens to express their desires. However, there are significant conceptual differences between the two approaches. Citizen juries, since they make recommendations to local government that utilizes the full force of the government budget, "shares the problem" rather than dividing efforts between citizen ideas and government efforts. On the other hand, PB gives citizens the opportunity to directly invest public funds themselves, providing ownership and concrete results for citizens. Clearly the question for cities becomes deciding between the two processes, in terms of making budgeting decisons

Citizen Juries rely on a small, representative group of individuals who, through testimony from a broad array of experts, come to a well informed decision backed by the force of the government. This generally leads to a higher quality of decisions made by the process than by those made by PB. However, quality of a single solution to a single problem is not the only role of participatory processes. PB builds community through shared goals of garnering votes for specific projects. It also is an opportunity for hundreds or thousands of residents to be directly engaged by the process, while a citizen jury engages far fewer. Both processes help citizens to understand the complex budgeting tradeoffs that city officials have to grapple with. The best advice for cities is to bear in mind that there are many benefits to participatory processes, and it is important for officials to understand what they are looking to achieve before making a decision about one process or the other.

A Note on Residency

One barrier that can often stand in the way of refugee or immigrant engagement is this idea of residency, that because they are not citizens, they are barred from participation in local decision making. The question of who should be allowed to be part of the decision making process is a question that several cities have grappled with. In practice, participatory democracy platforms (in particular the web-based ones) tend to be accessible to every city resident, or even every internet user, without residency restrictions.

The town of Jun, Spain, as part of their citizen communication efforts, have a massive presence on Twitter. Through the social network, citizens can communicate directly with the mayor to do things like report problems, ask questions, etc. Citizens are encouraged to

verify their accounts at city hall. This is not a required step, as Twitter is open to everyone. However, the verification process lets the city know they're communicating with actual residents. Thus the emphasis is placed on geographic location, rather than citizenship. The Paris Participatory Budgeting process has a similar approach. Any resident of Paris can vote, regardless of citizenship, so long as they have a Parisian Zip Code and address. It is a positive point that participatory processes have been moving towards encouraging the engagement of non-nationals, as they have not limited people by citizenship. However, with a process like PB where there is a vote of significant scale, it may be worth removing even these constraints. Often, it is people without a fixed address, like some migrants or new immigrants, who stand to benefit the most from having their voices heard. Additionally, with voting of this size, the number fraudulent of ballots coming from outside particular neighborhoods or the city itself would likely be insignificantly small.

Clearly, the less restrictions a city places on who can get involved, the better in terms of ease of access. In practice, the challenge is more to attract real residents to the platforms, than to keep away those who have nothing to do with the city or country in question, as such "intruders" are rare. At the very least, cities should place the emphasis on geographic location rather than nationality or citizenship. This is particularly true when the discussion is large-scale, and allowing even constraints like fixed address to be removed can be critical to bringing the voices to the table that are needed the most.

A Note on Steering Committees and Panels

Another area where increasing diversity is a key priority is in the makeup of the steering committees or panels that run democratic initiatives. The more diverse the membership of these groups, the more likely they are to accurately represent the desires of the entire community. This is particularly important when attempting to balance diversity of participation versus diversity of outcomes. Even when an initiative has diverse participation, more privileged, highly educated individuals or groups could still potentially dominate the conversation. Thus having steering groups that are also diverse can be a good check, ensuring that the outcomes of the initiative match the diversity of the participation.

Case Study 9: Amsterdam faced a problem: though the city's population was becoming rapidly more diverse, the makeup of its citizen advisory boards was not. In order to combat this quandary, the government has partnered with the Atana Network since 2000. Atana has created a broad matching service to recruit, train, and match people with diverse background to positions on Amsterdam's boards. Training consists of lectures, meetings, and exposure to speakers who share their own experiences with local politics. The program has been so successful that it has spread to several other cities in the Netherlands. This focus on networking and recruiting within specific communities, with specific skill sets, is a major reason this program has been so successful, and can be easily applied to a variety of initiatives in numerous places. For further reading, see http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/matchmaker-matchmaker-make-me-a-match/

Overarching Themes

There are a large variety of tactics, examples, and strategies presented in this document. This is necessary due to the large number of situations that this document can hopefully be used in. However, in hindsight, several core themes seem to emerge about the design and implementation of participatory democratic initiatives that hope to engage with refugees, migrants or immigrants. Though these themes apply to these broad groups in particular, they are important to keep in mind when looking to design processes that can work with any marginalised community, or even with the general population.

The idiom goes: the first step to solving a problem is to understand there is one. The same is true here. The realisation of who's voices are missing from the political decision-making process is a key first step towards improving the process. Organisers must constantly ask themselves "who are we missing", "are there relevant stakeholders in this decision that don't have a seat at the table", and "which voices are being drowned out". Once these questions have been answered, then concrete actions can be taken to improve the process and bring these ideas to the fore.

Effective participation by any group is a combination of different factors. Participatory democracy, in order to be a relevant and thriving long-term source of information for citizens and decision makers alike, cannot be simply one individual action. It is a complex network of interconnected initiatives that take place over a period of time to build a network of trust, education and accountability between people and their government. This even more true when looking to the case of migrants or immigrants, who can only build bonds of community and cohabitation with frequent and high quality opportunities to participate. The benefits of a sense of cooperation and coownership of government and the activities of government cannot be stressed enough.

Before these bonds can be built, however, newcomers must first become part of the conversation. This is very difficult unless they are invited to become part of the conversation. Several strategies are showcased in this document, whether they be multi lingual door knockers, connecting initiatives to institutions like community centers or libraries that new arrivals already frequent, or connecting with a spokesperson or leader with the community of those newly arrived. In all of these the core message is the same. Invite people, in a language they know or through someone they trust, to become part of the community, the network, or the conversation.

Once these people are part of the discourse, it is important to maintain this engagement. This comes down to accessibility. Make education a priority, so those who have joined the discussion are not left without the tools to contribute. Emphasize good moderation, in order to highlight voices that might otherwise be left out. These are the ideas that organizers must be conscious of, and must be constantly thinking about.

Conclusion

When people become involved in their community through participatory and deliberative democracy initiatives, inherently they learn things, not only about the civic process and the

workings of local government, but about the people who are working on this process alongside them. Coownership and collaboration is a key element of any successful democratic initiative, and this sense of team work and shared improvement helps people to forget the prejudices of the past in favor of the possibilities of the future. Finally, whether it is through an anti-rumour campaign funded through PB, or a new strategy for successful cross cultural integration recommended by a citizen jury or online issue forum, participatory initiatives consistently support effective policies of integration. Not only do they support these policies, but often times consultation beyond the meeting rooms of city hall, creates a more useful and effective strategy for effective integration. However, these goals are most likely to be accomplished, or can only be accomplished, when newcomers are brought to the table and included. It is the hope that the strategies presented in this document can be a part of making that happen.