Participatory Democracy Incubator

Index Report – May 2016

Ovruch, Ukraine

Background

Ovruch is a city in the Zhytomyr Oblast province of northern Ukraine. It is the administrative center of the Ovruch Raion district and has a population of 16,614 people. The percentage of citizens eligible to vote in the city is around 80 %. The GDP per capita in the city is 3 000 $.

Participatory city definition

The optimal strategy for participatory democracy on a city level would involve a demonstrated commitment to public participation. When public officials and other leaders make strong, clear claims about the value of participation, they can help inspire citizens to get involved. Cities with a coherent regulatory and policy framework for participation are more likely to succeed.

Boards and commissions can be a powerful tool for public participation, especially if the members of these bodies believe that bringing other citizens to the table – not just representing their voices – is a key part of their role. When communities support regular, interactive, and meaningful participation on a broad range of issues, they are better able to meet the diverse needs and goals of citizens.

There are many different methods, tools, apps, and meeting formats for public participation. Because different tactics fit different goals and scenarios, and because citizens have diverse needs and goals, cities are more likely to succeed if they employ a wide variety of methods. While efforts to increase transparency and open government may not be sufficient to increase public participation, they are essential complements to participation initiatives. Transparency can increase government accountability, decrease corruption, and enable citizen problem-solving efforts by giving civic technologists access to government data.

Public participation is more likely to improve over time if it is being evaluated in regular, transparent, and interactive ways. If citizens themselves are involved in measuring and assessing engagement initiatives and structures, they will have a greater stake in the success of those efforts, and more ways to ensure that participation is equitable, accountable, and productive.

Methodology

The Participatory City Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 69 questions grouped in ten indicators. Including a set of sub-questions for some the 69 questions, the cities can gain a maximum of 164 points. The points are converted into a percentage measure to improve the comparability of the results. The ten indicators include commitment, regulatory and policy framework, advisory boards and commissions, civic associations, range of issues, range of tactics, grassroots problem-solving, young people, transparency, monitoring and evaluation. The index serves as a tool of self-assessment for the cities to critically evaluate and improve their structures for citizen participation.

Results

1. Commitment

The optimal strategy for participatory democracy on a city level would involve a demonstrated commitment to public participation. Citizens are often doubtful about their ability to help solve public problems, and skeptical about the willingness of public officials to respond to their concerns. When public officials and other leaders make strong, clear claims about the value of participation, they can help inspire citizens to get involved.

The rate of achievement of the city of Ovruch is considerably low in this area. Meetings of the city council are not open to the public and the city does not have a newsletter or some other regular bulletin that informs citizens about what the city government is doing and how citizens can participate. The city has not formally adopted a public statement declaring the importance of public engagement and it does not maintain active social media accounts. There is no participation commission or a participation plan in the city which guides the participation efforts of different departments or agencies in a coordinated manner. The city does not produce an annual report on the state of public participation and it does not provide official opportunities for citizens to give input on how participation should be structured and supported. Lastly, there is no annual awards program – supported by the city or by a non-governmental organization – which recognizes citizens, public officials, or other leaders for their efforts to support public participation.

Recommendations

- ✓ Meetings of the city council should be open to the public.
- ✓ Publish a newsletter or some other regular bulletin that informs citizens about what the city government is doing, and how citizens can participate.
- ✓ Adopt a public statement declaring the importance of public engagement.
- ✓ Maintain active social media accounts.
- ✓ Establish a participation commission.
- ✓ Develop a participation plan.
- ✓ Produce an annual report on the state of public participation.
- ✓ Provide official opportunities for citizens to give input on how participation should be structured and supported.

- ✓ Give citizens the opportunity to vote for policy options (rather than voting for elected representatives).
- ✓ Create an annual awards program – supported by the city or perhaps by a non-governmental organization – which recognizes citizens, public officials, or other leaders for their efforts to support public participation.

Best Practice[1]

Community Appraisal

Community Appraisals are surveys of local need and opinion about issues such as local housing, schooling, training, employment, culture, health, social welfare and community facilities. Community Appraisal is a method that includes gauging the viewpoints of members of a community on particular issues. Appraisals may be conducted to form a plan of action to resolve an issue or improve existing services. Traditionally, they are citizen driven initiatives although they can also be organised by local authorities. Whilst all Community Appraisals will vary in their application, many will include the following steps:

1. Form a steering committee to take an oversight role.

2. Write up a questionnaire which is to be distributed to households and later collected. As an alternative, software such as 'Village Appraisals for Windows' can be used instead of the paper option.

3. Sort the responses and compile a report of the findings.

4. Distribute the report throughout the community to citizens and to decision-makers in local authorities. Attempts can also be made to convince the local media to discuss the issues raised by the report.

5. Agree on actions to be taken that address the concerns raised by the report with the relevant bodies.

6. Monitor developments and report back to the community with information about the progress of the initiatives.

2. Regulatory and policy framework

In many places, the regulations governing public participation are outdated and unclear. In other places, public officials and staff do not have the participation skills and resources they need. Cities with a coherent regulatory and policy framework for participation are more likely to succeed.

It is positive to note that the city of Ovruch has regulations and policies that govern public participation, although the local regulations governing public participation have not been reviewed and revised at any

---

[1] All Best Practice examples in this report are available at www.participationcompass.org or www.participedia.net.

point in the last ten years. It is not given that public officials, staff, and citizens understand how the laws governing public participation are being interpreted and applied, as the city does not have a well-used, widely known document that helps public officials, staff, and citizens understand when and why to use specific participation approaches and how they will affect policy decisions. The city does not have a budget for public participation and it does not employ staff to support public participation activities. Facilitating, encouraging, or supporting public participation is also not included as a category in the job expectations of people serving in management-level positions for the city and the city does not provide training opportunities for public officials and city staff who want to learn more about how to support effective participation.

Recommendations

- ✓ Review and revise local regulations governing public participation if necessary.
- ✓ Publish a document – a policy, protocol, or set of procedures – that helps public officials, staff, and citizens understand when and why to use specific participation approaches.
- ✓ Allocate a specific amount of the city budget for public participation and employ staff to support public participation activities.
- ✓ Include facilitating, encouraging, or supporting public participation as a category in the job expectations of people serving in management-level positions for the city.
- ✓ Provide training opportunities for public officials and city staff who want to learn more about how to support effective participation.

Best Practice

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) uses questions to build a vision for the future, focusing on past and potential future successes. These questions are then taken to the wider community. The focus is usually on what people enjoy about an area, their hopes for the future, and their feelings about their communities.

The questions are designed to encourage people to tell stories from their own experience of what works. By discussing what has worked in the past and the reasons why, the participants can go on to imagine and create a vision of what would make a successful future that has a firm grounding in the reality of past successes. This process can be implemented in a number of different ways as long as the principle of retrospective appreciation and a future vision remains.

Action Planning

Action Planning is an approach, rather than a specific method, which helps focus ideas and decide what steps you need to take to achieve particular goals. It is a statement of what you want to achieve over a given period of time. Preparing an action plan is a good way to help reach objectives (this can apply to organisations and individuals). An effective action plan should give a definite timetable and set of clearly defined steps; for each objective there should be a separate action plan.

Action Planning is commonly used for town planning purposes on issues such as development, regeneration and identifying existing problems in an area. It is often local interest groups that come together to address the issues. These groups can consist of experts from different professions such as town planning and architecture, but can also include local citizens.

Action Plan events are generally structured in 5 phases:

1. A meeting of stakeholders, professionals and citizens where the issues are raised and investigated.

2. A series of topic and design workshops which are open to everyone.

3. A brainstorming of the ideas raised in the workshops.

4. An analysis of the ideas that have been put forward in the form of proposals.

5. The agreed proposals will be published in a report along with an outline of actions to be taken.

3. Advisory boards and commissions

Boards and commissions can be a powerful tool for public participation, especially if the members of these bodies believe that bringing other citizens to the table – not just representing their voices – is a key part of their role. It is unfortunate that the city of Ovruch does not have any boards or commissions on which citizens can serve.

Recommendations

- ✓ Set up boards or commissions (public bodies that have an official advisory role to the government) on which citizens can serve.
- ✓ Make sure that the members of boards and commissions are broadly representative of the larger population, in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income level, and immigrant/native-born.
- ✓ Encourage members of boards and commissions to regularly lead public participation efforts that bring other citizens to the table.
- ✓ Structure meetings of boards and commissions in ways that encourage productive dialogue, deliberation, and participation.
- ✓ Oblige public officials to give information to boards and commissions, and consider their recommendations.
- ✓ Make sure that boards and commissions regularly use online tools to interactively engage the public.

Best Practice

Citizen Advisory Groups

Citizen advisory groups involve 10-30 members of the public who sit as a committee to inform and advise decision making over an extended period of time. Advisory groups can create effective and on-

going dialogue that allow issues and concerns to be explored in depth, and ideally addressed, while the participants are still involved. Advisory groups can take many different forms depending on the exact purpose of the group. The group may meet either over a couple of days as a one-off event, or regularly over a longer period.

1. The selection of participants is crucial. Those who are most affected should be considered first and there should be an attempt to benefit from a spread of expertise amongst the participants.

2. Participants should be provided with all the necessary information to reach informed decisions on issues.

3. Participants should understand that there is a goal to be sought and the different values, problems and benefits of each decision should be weighed accordingly when attempting to reach it.

4. The participants' decisions and/or recommendations should be respected. Whilst this ought to apply for every instance, it is of particular importance for those groups that meet over a long period of time and cover a spread of issues. If the participants feel there time is being wasted they will not attend or contribute.

→ [Fernald Citizens Advisory Board (Fernald, Ohio, USA)](#)

4. Civic associations

Many cities have civic associations, operating in neighbourhoods, schools, and other settings, which help to engage people in public life. These associations are better able to contribute to public participation when they are inclusive, broadly supported, and well-connected to government.

It is highly positive that in Ovruch, there is an active online network of citizens in most neighbourhoods. However, there are no active neighbourhood associations in the majority of neighbourhoods and the city does not have a neighbourhood council system or some other network that gives neighbourhood groups an official role in public decisions. There is also no system of tracking who participates in neighbourhood groups and neighbourhood meetings or events do not regularly attract large, diverse numbers of people. The city does not support training programs that help build the engagement capacity of neighbourhood groups and there are no city employees who are tasked with maintaining communication between neighbourhood groups and local government.

It is commendable that there are active parent groups at the majority of all schools in Ovruch and that the meetings of the parent groups are structured and facilitated in ways that encourage productive dialogue, deliberation, and participation. The situation would be even better if the school system supported training programs that helped build the engagement capacity of parent groups. The leadership of parent groups should be broadly representative of the school population, in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income level, and immigrant/native-born.

Faith communities – such as churches, synagogues, and mosques –help engage large numbers of people in public decision-making and problem-solving in Ovruch. Other community organizing or advocacy groups could also be helpful in this regard. Regular social events would help engage large numbers of

people in public. Neighbourhoods should have buildings – such as community centers, schools, or churches – that are welcoming, widely used spaces for public participation events and activities.

<u>Recommendations</u>

Neighbourhoods

- ✓ Create active neighbourhood associations in the majority of all neighbourhoods.
- ✓ Establish a neighbourhood council system or some other network that gives neighbourhood groups an official role in public decisions.
- ✓ Structure the meetings of neighbourhood groups in ways that encourage productive dialogue, deliberation, and participation.
- ✓ Install a system of tracking who participates in neighbourhood groups.
- ✓ Support training programs that help build the engagement capacity of neighbourhood groups.
- ✓ Make sure that the leadership of most neighbourhood groups is broadly representative of the neighbourhood, in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income level, and immigrant/native-born.
- ✓ Task city employees with maintaining communication between neighbourhood groups and local government.

Schools

- ✓ Create an active online network of some kind – either official or informal – in the majority of all schools (this could be an email list, a social media group, or another online forum)
- ✓ Make sure that the school system supports training programs that help build the engagement capacity of parent groups.
- ✓ Ensure that the leadership of most parent groups is broadly representative of the school population, in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income level, and immigrant/native-born.
- ✓ Task city employees with maintaining communication between local government and the schools.

Other associations

- ✓ Involve community organizing, advocacy groups, ethnic associations or other social groups that help engage large numbers of people in public decision-making and problem-solving.
- ✓ Organise regular social events that help engage large numbers of people in public decision-making and problem-solving.
- ✓ Use buildings – such as community centers, schools, or churches – that are welcoming, widely used spaces for public participation events and activities.

<u>Best Practice</u>

Trade School

Teachers propose classes and ask for barter items from students. For example, if you teach a class about making butter, you might ask students to bring heavy cream, jars, bread, music tips, clothes, vegetables, or help with something like finding an apartment. Students sign up for classes by agreeing to bring a barter item for the teacher. Trade School is for people who value hands-on knowledge, mutual respect, and the social nature of exchange.

→ [Trade School Glasgow](#)

Hackathon

A hackathon is an event where people come together and use technology to collaboratively improve upon or build new software. Hackathons are sometimes undertaken to achieve a specific goal, but often they are an opportunity for organisations/groups to explore open ended citizen/public led, innovative ideas.

Hackathon events became widespread in the mid to late 2000s in which computer programmers and others involved in software development, including graphic designers, interface designers and project managers, collaborate intensively on software projects. The Method has since been used in many other areas to bring together citizens and experts to generate innovation.

Hackathons can last between a few hours and a week. Events typically start with one or more presentations about the event and the specific subject if there is one. Participants then suggest ideas and form teams based on individual interests and skills. The hackathon then begins and can last anywhere from several hours to several days. Sometimes there is an element of competition with prizes for the best ideas. At the end of the hackathon there is usually a demonstrations in which each team demonstrates their results.

5. Range of issues

Most cities face a range of challenges and opportunities that affect citizens and that deserve productive public participation. When communities support regular, interactive, and meaningful participation on a broad range of issues, they are better able to meet the diverse needs and goals of citizens.

The issues could include, inter alia, planning and land use, public health, education, budgeting and public finance, transportation, policing and public safety, or racism and cultural difference. A high quality citizen participation in each of the fields would involve large numbers of people (at least 5% of the population). The people who participate would be broadly representative of the larger population and the participation should be interactive, i.e. it should facilitate two-way communication between citizens and government, and among different kinds of citizens. There should be opportunities to participate at least once a month and the participation experience should provide people with the information they need. The participation experiences should give people a chance to discuss why the issue matters to them and provide people with a range of choices or policy choices to consider. Besides, the participation activities need to have a clear impact on policymaking and enable people to take action in a variety of ways (e.g. as volunteers, or in committees or task forces, or through other groups and networks in the community). Last but least, the participation activities should be enjoyable for people.

It is positive that the city of Ovruch provides participation opportunities for citizens in the field of education and schools which involve large numbers of people who are broadly representative of the population. The quality and quantity of the participation opportunity could be improved though. The city may also wish to implement participation activities in the other outlined policy areas.

Recommendations

- ✓ Provide quality participation opportunities for citizens in the following policy areas: planning and land use, public health, budgeting and public finance, transportation, policing and public safety, or racism and cultural difference
- ✓ Ensure that citizen participation has the following attributes:
  - o Involve large numbers of people (at least 5% of the population)
  - o Participants should be broadly representative of the larger population
  - o Interactive participation
  - o Opportunities to participate at least once a month
  - o Participation experience should provide people with the information they need
  - o Give people a chance to discuss why the issue matters to them
  - o Provide people with a range of choices or policy choices to consider
  - o Clear impact on policymaking
  - o Enable people to take action in a variety of ways (as volunteers, or in committees or task forces, or through other groups and networks in the community)
  - o Participation opportunities should be enjoyable

Best Practice

21st Century Town Meetings

21st Century Town Meetings bring together between 500 and 5,000 people, to discuss local, regional or national issues. By using technology, this method combines the benefits of small scale face-to-face discussions with those of large group decision making.

This method uses technology to overcome the common tradeoff between the quality of discussion and the size of the group. The participants are spilt up into groups of 10-12 people, where they have facilitated small-group discussions. Each facilitator uses a networked computer to instantly collate ideas and votes from the table. This information is sent to a central point where a team summarises comments from all tables into themes that can be presented back to the room for comment or votes. Each participant also has a keypad which allows them to vote individually on themes or questions. The results of these votes are presented in real time on large screens for instant feedback from participants. The computers and voting pads generate volumes of useful demographically-sortable data. This information is often quickly edited into a report which is printed and given to participants, decision-makers and journalists at the end of the event.

The whole process can either take place within one room, or groups can gather in many locations around the country or the world. Often, the participants are selected to be demographically representative of the whole population.

The interchange between the small- and large-scale dialogues is powerful as it allows participants to discuss the issues in a small manageable setting, whilst maintaining the legitimacy of a process involving large numbers of people. The immediacy of the vote also creates transparency during the meeting

→ Landscape Town Meeting (Tuscany, Italy)

6. Range of tactics

There are many different methods, tools, apps, and meeting formats for public participation. Because different tactics fit different goals and scenarios, and because citizens have diverse needs and goals, cities are more likely to succeed if they employ a wide variety of methods. The city of Ovruch has not yet experimented with methods or tools to increase public participation.

Recommendations

The city of Ovruch may wish to implement the following tools or methods to include citizens in local decision-making:

- ✓ Social Media Aggregation: Online aggregation tools sift through social media networks to find common words and strings of words.
- ✓ Surveys and Polls – offline: Basic data gathering tactic – can be conducted by phone, by mail, and in person.
- ✓ Surveys and Polls – online: Basic data gathering tactic – can be disseminated through email, texting, websites, and social media.
- ✓ Keypad polling: A type of polling, using handheld polling devices or smartphones, which is typically conducted as part of a face-to-face meeting.
- ✓ Focus Groups: Facilitated, face-to-face small-group discussions – can be used to delve more deeply into people's views and perspectives, as well as the values, needs, and concerns that lie behind people's beliefs. Can also be used to test how people's opinions change when presented with different options or pieces of information.
- ✓ Online Problem-Reporting Platforms: Smartphone-based tools that allow people to enter data about particular problems and conditions, such as potholes, graffiti, and environmental hazards.
- ✓ Crowdsourcing: Online platforms and face-to-face exercises that allow people to suggest ideas – and then rank, refine, and comment on all the ideas generated by the crowd. Some are framed as contests, with the most popular or useful entries winning prizes, badges, or vouchers.
- ✓ Crowdfunding and Minigrants: Online initiatives that enable people to ask for or donate money, and small-grant programs run by institutions to support volunteer projects.
- ✓ Serious Games: Online or face-to-face exercises that give citizens a chance to test their knowledge, strengthen their relationships, or come up with their own solutions to public problems.
- ✓ Wiki-Based Mapping and Writing Platforms: Online technologies that incorporate individual contributions into a central map, database, or document. In some cases, they include processes that help people interact and negotiate in areas where their contributions differ.
- ✓ Online Networks: Temporary or long-term online forums set up to encourage communication and collaboration within groups.

- ✓ Collaborative Planning Processes: Planning exercises, such as charrettes, placemaking workshops, and FutureSearch conferences, that bring people together to make design or architectural decisions – or visioning initiatives that focus on broader public issues like economic development or transportation planning.
- ✓ Participatory Budgeting: Processes that engage large, diverse numbers of people deliberation, planning, and voting on how to spend a pool of public money.
- ✓ Public Deliberation: Initiatives in which citizens, public officials, public employees, and other stakeholders interact in small-group sessions where they share experiences, consider a range of policy options, and decide together what should be done.

7. Grassroots problem-solving

Citizens have more ways to contribute to public problem-solving than ever before. Productive public participation strategies encourage and support citizens to take action in a variety of ways. In their public statements about the value of participation, public officials and staff should therefore support the idea that citizens can help contribute to solving public problems. The city of Ovruch should organize participation opportunities in a way that allows citizens to discuss and plan ways they can take action. The creation of a small-grant program would support the implementation of citizens' action ideas. The city may also wish to implement an annual citizens' academy or some other training program for citizens. Young people should be required to contribute a certain number of volunteer hours before graduation.

Recommendations

- ✓ In their public statements about the value of participation, public officials and staff should support the idea that citizens can help contribute to solving public problems.
- ✓ Organize participation opportunities in a way that allows citizens to discuss and plan ways they can take action.
- ✓ Provide a small-grant program to support the implementation of action ideas.
- ✓ Support an annual citizens' academy or some other training program for citizens.
- ✓ Invite young people to contribute a certain number of volunteer hours before graduation.
- ✓ Implement an annual awards program – supported by the city or by a non-governmental organization – which recognizes citizens for their efforts to solve public problems.

Best Practice

Deliberative Polling

A Deliberative Poll takes a representative sample of the population, provides them with information about an issue and time to deliberate about it before coming up with a considered opinion. These results are then used as a guide to what the whole population would think if they had a similar chance to deliberate.

Process:

• A representative sample of the population is selected, based on gender, race, education and socio-economic background.

• Participants fill out a questionnaire on their opinions on the issue.

• Participants are then invited to gather for a few days to discuss the issues. Participants have access to unbiased background material. They discuss the issues in small groups with trained facilitators. Participants can also ask questions to experts in the area.

• After this deliberation, participants fill out the original questionnaire again.

The resulting changes in opinion are thought to represent the conclusions the public would reach if they had the opportunity to become more informed about the issues. Often, Deliberative Polling creates dramatic, statistically significant changes in views. However, follow up studies tend to show that some of these changes are reversed over time. Deliberative polls are often run in collaboration with TV companies, which then broadcast parts of the process, allowing the wider public to share the learning of the participants. You should use a Deliberative Poll when you want to engage on a complex issues which the public know little about.

→ Marousi, Greece - Deliberative Polling

8. Young people

As the adult citizens of the future, young people need experiences and education that prepare them for their future roles. But young people can also be dynamic leaders in the present. Productive participation strategies tap into the present and future civic capacity of young people.

Therefore it is unfortunate that in Ovruch's school system, young people do not have meaningful opportunities to address key issues facing students and the schools. Also outside the school system, there are no opportunities for young people to take part in public decision-making and problem-solving. The city does not have a youth council.

Recommendations

- ✓ Create meaningful opportunities for young people to address key issues facing students and the schools inside the school system.
- ✓ Outside the school system, offer meaningful opportunities for young people to take part in public decision-making and problem-solving.
- ✓ Set up a youth council to present recommendations to the local government.

Best Practice

Future Workshop

A Future Workshop is a method for planning and forming a vision of the future. Workshops help define aims and identify problems. Future workshops incorporate a three phase process, sometimes preceded by presentations which outline the workshop objectives:

• Critical analysis phase involving detailed analysis of the situation/technology

• Visionary phase where future visions are built upon the analysis in the first phase; these are then subject to a reality check.

• Implementation phase where the visions are turned into actions

Following the completion of the workshop the action plan should be monitored and if necessary adjusted with more workshops planned. A future workshop can last for a few hours to a few days. One of the most common model involves a one day workshop where the critical phase takes place in the morning, the visionary phase takes place in the early afternoon and the implementation takes place in the second half of the afternoon.

→ Space of the Future (Casamassima, Italy)

9. Transparency

While efforts to increase transparency and open government may not be sufficient to increase public participation, they are essential complements to participation initiatives. Transparency can increase government accountability, decrease corruption, and enable citizen problem-solving efforts by giving civic technologists access to government data.

On this note, it is positive that the city has a website. The website could be enriched by livestreaming of public meetings with opportunities for remote interaction by citizens. The city could also release data on public services and public meetings as well as on financial data. It would also be useful to support efforts to help the local civic tech community use public data and help citizens understand and use public data.

Recommendations

- ✓ Televise or livestream public meetings, with opportunities for remote interaction by citizens.
- ✓ Release data on public services and public meetings, and financial data.
- ✓ Support efforts to help the local civic tech community use public data.
- ✓ Support efforts to help citizens understand and use public data.

Best Practice

Area Forum

Area Forums are meetings held locally, often hosted by the local council. The meetings are attended by local councillors, together with senior representatives from the local authorities, the Police, Primary

Care Trusts and other key local organisations, to debate key topics and answer residents' questions face-to-face.

The Area Forum workshops are normally run in the evenings and are chaired by a local councillor. A Chief Officer also attends each meeting and ensures that the recommendations made are properly fed back into the council's decision-making processes. Area Forums concentrate their conversations on the topics of particular concern to local communities in the area. The outcomes are reported to Area Forum members either on an individual basis or via an Area Forum newsletter, which is distributed to members after each meeting; the minutes from each meeting are normally available online. You do not have to be a member of an Area Forum to attend, but you are encouraged to join so that you can be regularly updated about meetings and developments that have occurred as a result of your input.

→ King County Community Forums, UK

10. Monitoring and evaluation

Public participation is more likely to improve over time if it is being evaluated in regular, transparent, and interactive ways. If citizens themselves are involved in measuring and assessing engagement initiatives and structures, they will have a greater stake in the success of those efforts, and more ways to ensure that participation is equitable, accountable, and productive.

Therefore, the city of Ovruch should publish a plan or protocol for evaluating public participation processes and outcomes. There should be a process for tracking the long-term effects of public participation on key social indicators. In this context, participation processes and outcomes need to be viewed through an equity lens. The city might wish to publish surveys, questionnaires, or other evaluation instruments that are used to evaluate individual participation opportunities and provide citizens with opportunities to give feedback on how official public meetings are structured and facilitated. The results of evaluations should be made publicly available and broadly disseminated. Lastly, there should be regular opportunities for public officials, staff, and citizens to analyze participation evaluations and make recommendations.

Recommendations

- ✓ Publish a plan or protocol for evaluating public participation processes and outcomes.
- ✓ Install a process for tracking the long-term effects of public participation on key social indicators.
- ✓ View participation processes and outcomes through an equity lens.
- ✓ Publish surveys, questionnaires, or other evaluation instruments that are used to evaluate individual participation opportunities.
- ✓ Provide citizens with opportunities to give feedback on how official public meetings are structured and facilitated.
- ✓ Make results of evaluations publicly available and disseminate them broadly.
- ✓ Provide regular opportunities for public officials, staff, and citizens to analyze participation evaluations and make recommendations.

<u>Best Practice</u>

Delphi Survey

A Delphi Survey is a series of questionnaires that allow experts to develop ideas about potential future developments around an issue. The questionnaires are developed throughout the process in relation to the responses given by participants.

Delphi Surveys are used to gather collective forecasts through questionnaires about likely or possible developments in particular areas. Delphi Surveys can be carried out face to face, online or by post. In online versions, participants are given their own login and password to access the site. This is useful when the expert participants are very busy people. The technique aims to derive the benefit of the opinions of a group of experts, while avoiding the disadvantages of 'group-think' and group dynamics where certain individuals dominate the discussion. The process takes place in a number of stages:

• The first questionnaire either asks the participants to individually identify issues and generate as many ideas as possible or to answer more close ended questions such as the likely dates for specific developments.

• The second questionnaire anonymously feeds back all the ideas and forecasts sent in the first round to all participants. This questionnaire also provides space for participants to refine each idea, comment on their strengths or weaknesses and to suggest new ideas.

• An additional questionnaire then summarises the input from the second questionnaire and asks for further clarification, strengths, weaknesses, and new ideas. This stage can be repeated as many times as necessary until consensus on key points is reached.

• The end product is either a consensus amongst the participants on likely and possible future developments, or a wide range of possible developments and their relative strengths and weaknesses.

→ [District of Okanagan-Similkameen, British Colombia, Canada](#)

Conclusion

The city of Ovruch has an aggregate participatory city index of 5%. The findings suggest that there is space for improvement in light of participatory policies in the city. The municipality could identify useful insights and examples from other cities and civil society organisations in the fields of commitment, regulatory and policy framework, advisory boards and commissions, civic associations, range of issues, range of tactics, grassroots problem-solving, young people, transparency, monitoring and evaluation, and remain an active member city of the participatory democracy incubator to improve the city's index results.