

## **ENGAGE CITIZENS IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING!**

**School on Participatory Democracy**

**Jointly organised by Council of Europe,**

**Istanbul Citizens' Assembly**

**and Argüden Governance Academy**

**Büyükkada, Istanbul**

**Türkiye**

**Final report**





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## INTRODUCTION

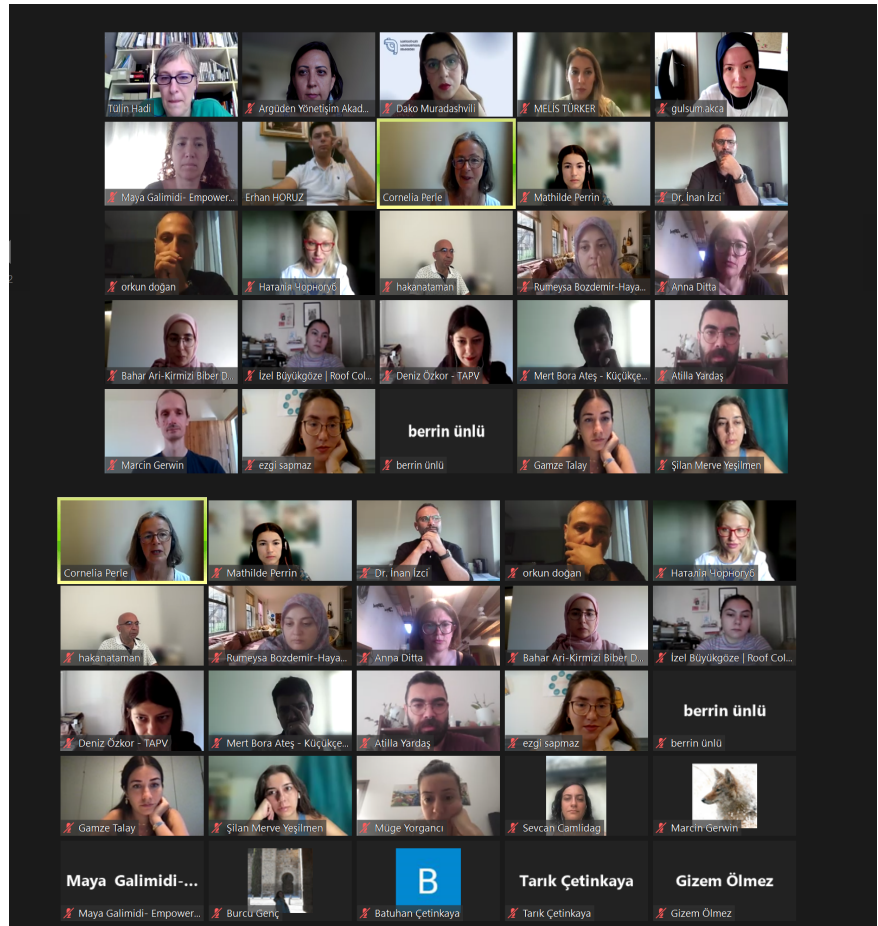
The School on Participatory Democracy, co - organized by the [Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy of the Council of Europe](#), jointly with [Istanbul Citizens Assembly](#) and [Argüden Governance Academy](#), has been an interactive learning and sharing event on the theory and practice of participatory democracy for practitioners from local authorities and civil society from Istanbul/Türkiye.

The School on Participatory Democracy comprised a half day online introduction meeting, held on the 21st August, and a 5-day on-site training “School on Participatory Democracy”, was held between the 18th and 22nd September on the island of Büyükada, Istanbul.

During the face-to-face training, the standards and tools of the Council of Europe on participatory democracy were presented by the national and international experts with broad experience in the field. An interactive learning environment provided the participants with opportunities to learn about good practices, share experiences and interact with experts and other practitioners on how to effectively engage citizens in local political decision-making in Türkiye.

**The online introduction meeting** was aimed at: introducing the School to the participants, its goals and its agenda, presenting the trainers, getting the participants to know about each other, give some organizational and logistical information about the 5-day in-person training event, start getting in the mood of the School, also with some questions (homework) for the participants, to reflect on:

1. What is participatory democracy according to your experience?
2. What are your expectations for the School?
3. Can you think about any best practices of participatory democracy in your community?



## AGENDA OF THE SCHOOL

### Training agenda: 18th - 22nd September 2023

- DAY 1: Objectives of the School
- Council of Europe's Standards and principles that inform and guide the tools
- Local framing of the participatory democracy: the Turkish context
- The Code of good practice for Civil participation in the decision-making process:** theory and group exercises
- DAY 2: **Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit**  
Community assessment and stakeholders assessment: theory and simulation
- DAY 3: **Public Consultations and Citizens Engagement on Public Space Planning and Implementation:** theory and simulation
- CivicLab Toolkit:** theory and simulation
- DAY 4: **UChange game:** theory and simulation
- School Participatory Budgeting:** theory and exercises
- Citizens' Assemblies:** presentation
- DAY 5: Q&A and in-depth focus on the various tools (Open Space Technology)
- Partnership making: building a community of practitioners
- Action plans and follow up: potential implementation of the tools
- Evaluation and conclusions



## CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKYE: LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND PRACTICES

The School kicked off with an informative session about the current state of participatory democracy in Türkiye. Dr. Inan Izci, CoE expert from the Argüden Governance Academy, focused on the following points:

- Representative democracy and participatory democracy: complementary and key aspects to good governance
- Why is participatory democracy beneficial to support good governance?
- The Council of Europe's approach to local participatory democracy
- Overview of the local governance structure in the country
- Key actors of the local participatory democracy in the country, their channels and level of engagements
- Legislative framework
- Positive practices
- Points for improvement.



On these two last points, positive elements were underlined such as

- ❖ the presence of **neighborhood councils** or visits (e.g. Nilüfer Municipality),
- ❖ **participatory budgeting** (e.g. Şişli Municipality and Istanbul Citizens Council),
- ❖ the formation of **platforms** (e.g. Izmir Economic Development Council).

Among the points for improvement, the following:

- ❖ **Change in culture** and governing practices – e.g. value, responsiveness
- ❖ Designing meaningful and **effective civil participation** (purpose-activity-result-impact) – e.g. measurement
- ❖ More awareness and **capacity for empowerment** of local/urban citizenship - e.g. training, resources.

The conclusion stressed the need for creating a continuous and interactive learning culture for participatory democracy at local level.



**Inclusive and Participatory Democracy**

Democratic Sovereignty

Sovereignty

Use of Public Authority & Resources

Civil Participation

Demands/Complaints  
New ideas/proposals  
Oversight  
Knowledge  
Expertise  
Resources  
Actions

Votes

Taxes

Better Democracy for Better Development and Well-being for All



## CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR CIVIL PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The Code was presented by Mrs. Anna Ditta, CoE expert and head of programs development department of ALDA, the European Association for Local Democracy.

The Code is a key tool issued by the Conference of International NGOs of the Council of Europe back in 2009, which frames the ideal conditions for a healthy participation and which is an important reference also for the other practical tools issued by the Council of Europe and presented during this School. In particular, the Code outlines **9 guiding principles**, that shall ideally be respected and actively promoted by all the actors of the civil participation:

- 1) openness, 2) trust, 3) independence, 4) participation, 5) transparency, 6) accessibility, 7) non discrimination, 8) inclusiveness, 9) accountability.

The Code then outlines the four different and subsequent **levels of participation**, articulated by degree of intensity.



### INFORMATION

A relatively low level of participation which usually consists of a one-way provision of information from the public authorities and no interaction or involvement with NGOs is required or expected.

### CONSULTATION

Public authorities may ask NGOs for their opinion on a specific policy topic or development. The initiative and themes originate with the public authorities, not with the NGOs.

### DIALOGUE

The initiative for dialogue can be taken by either party and can be either broad or collaborative.

*Broad dialogue* is a two-way communication built on mutual interests and potentially shared objectives to ensure a regular exchange of views. It ranges from open public hearings to specialized meetings between NGOs and public authorities.

*Collaborative dialogue* is built on mutual interests for a specific policy development. Collaborative dialogue is more empowered than the broad dialogue as it consists of joint, often frequent and



regular, meetings to develop core policy strategies and often leads to agreed outcomes such as a joint recommendation or legislation.

#### PARTNERSHIP

The highest level of participation where NGOs and the public authorities co-operate closely together while ensuring that the NGOs continue to be independent and have the right to campaign and act irrespective of a partnership situation. Partnership can include activities such as provision of services, participatory forums, and the establishment of co-decision-making bodies.

#### The six steps of the decision-making process

Civil participation happens across the decision-making cycle, which is made of six different and subsequent steps. CSOs and LAs can interact at each of these by employing different tools, falling into one or more of the four levels (e.g. at the agenda setting stage one might need to have proper information, but also consultation might be appropriate).





### **Methodological note**

The participants were subdivided in three groups, each taking three principles and responding to the following questions:

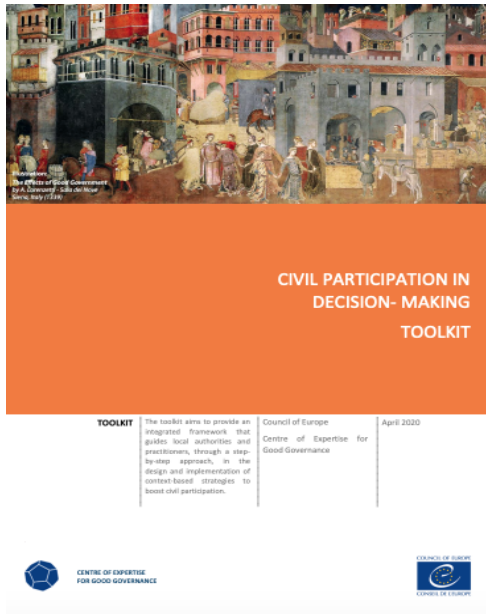
- 1) What is the degree of application of those principles in your community, according to your experience?
- 2) What actions shall be done to improve the current situation?

The exercises were followed up by a debriefing in plenary.

**The Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process (2019 updated version), is available here:**

<https://rm.coe.int/code-of-good-practice-civil-participation-revised-301019-en/168098b0e2>

## CIVIL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING TOOLKIT



The Civil Participation in Decision-making Toolkit (CPT) was presented by Mrs. Darejan Murdashvili, Head of Gori Office of Civil Society Institute (CSI), Georgia, and Mr. Hakan Ataman, Civil Society Development Center - STGM.

The tool was issued by the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance of the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia (ISIG), Italy (most recent edition: 2020).

The toolkit provides, through a step-by-step approach, an integrated framework to guide local authorities in the design and implementation of context-based strategies to identify local stakeholders to be engaged in local decision-making processes, and to increase a community's civil participation.

The toolkit serves as an operational tool to enable local authorities to:

1. contextualize the role of civil participation, understand the strengths and weaknesses of their communities to engage in participation, and identify the potential of actual engagement of each stakeholder in the decision-making process;
2. adopt strategies to overcome obstacles to effective and inclusive participation, including through the adoption of different levels of involvement at different stages of the decision-making process, and accompanying tools to enhance participation.



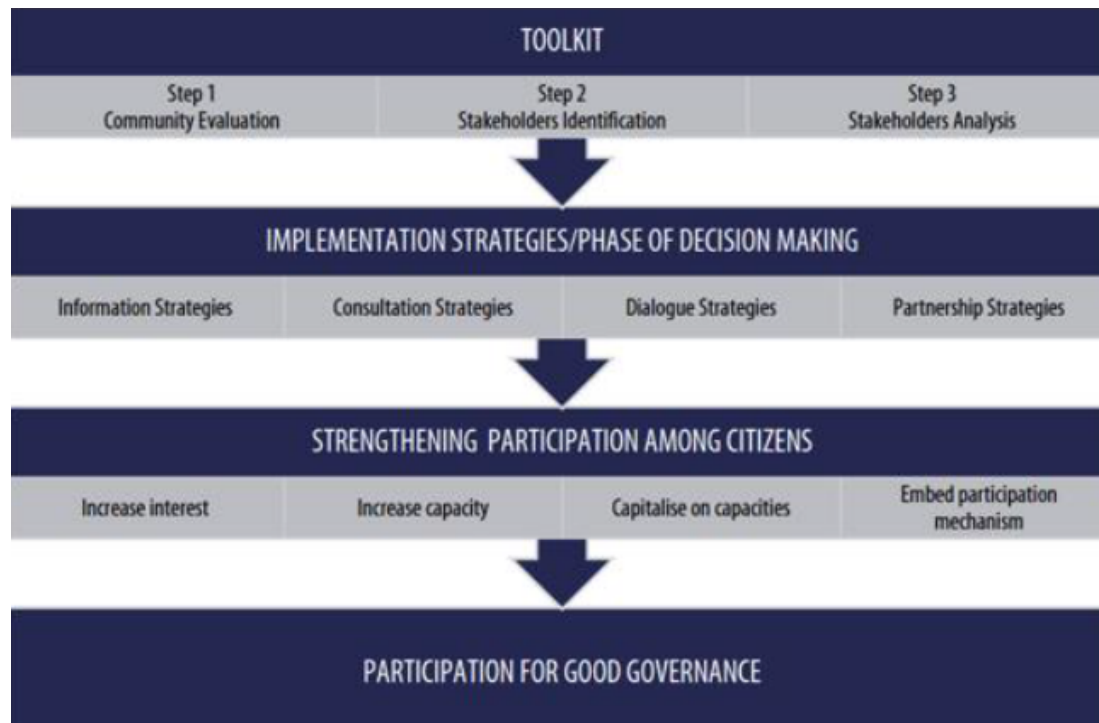
The tool is a three-step process:

**Step 1. Community Evaluation** - aiming at effectively contextualizing a participatory decision-making process in line with the community's propensity to participation (including assessing social, economic, human, and political capital)

**Step 2. Stakeholder Identification and Evaluation** – to identify stakeholders' interest to engage and their relevance for the topic at stake.

**Step 3. Stakeholder Plotting** – The "Stakeholder Evaluation" results in 2 scores (one for RELEVANCE of the stakeholder for the process and one for INTEREST of the stakeholder to engage. Scores are automatically plotted by the tool on a graph, divided into four quadrants. Each quadrant represents a different level of potential involvement of the stakeholder (the same four levels stated by the Code of good practice for civil participation).

Based on the quadrant where the stakeholder is located, the Local Authority will have the possibility to implement different strategies to allow its engagement.



## Methodology employed in the session

The session combined theory and simulation exercises, along the following steps:

1. Group work and brainstorming on real case studies about the application of the 9 principles for good participation, linking with and deepening the reflection on the principles carried out the previous day. Debriefing: how to improve these principles? With CPT!

### PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES

01

**Openness** - NGOs collect and channel views of their members, user groups and concerned citizens. This input provides crucial value to the political decision-making process, enhancing the quality, understanding and longer-term applicability of the policy initiative. A pre-condition for this principle is that the processes for participation are open and accessible, based on agreed parameters for participation

02

**Trust** - An open and democratic society is based on honest interaction between actors and sectors. Although NGOs and the public authorities have different roles to play, the shared goal of improving the lives of people can only be satisfactorily reached if based on trust, implying transparency, respect and mutual reliability

03

**Independence** - NGOs must be recognised as free and independent bodies in respect to their aims, decisions, and activities. They have the right to act independently and advocate different positions from the authorities with whom they may otherwise cooperate. They must be independent from the direct control of any government. NGOs must not be constituted as a political party. Respect must be shown for NGOs, whether their opinions are consistent with those of the public authorities or not.

04

**Participation** - NGOs have the right to participate in governmental and quasi-governmental mechanisms at all levels without discrimination in dialogue and consultation on public policy objectives and decisions. Such participation should ensure the free expression of the diversity of people's opinions as to the functioning of society. This principle also applies to the regulatory impact assessment for new legislation as well as public projects, which is a crucial process to ensure good legislation and minimize collateral negative side effects.

05

**Transparency** - All processes must be transparent and open to scrutiny from both sides, administration as well as NGOs. Timely public access to all documents, drafts, decisions, and opinions relevant for participation process is essential. Access to information must be ensured. In the same way civic participants / NGOs must state their objectives, vested interests, and possible conflicts of interest.

06

**Accessibility** - Civil participation should be propagated via the use of clear language and appropriate means of participation, offline or on-line, and on any device – based on agreed frameworks for participation.

07

**Non-discrimination** - Civil participation should take all voices into account and make them heard, including those of the less privileged and most vulnerable. Therefore, it must avoid all measures in the proceedings, ways of publication of information, organization of meetings and hearings etc. which would exclude interested persons or groups from participating.

08

**Inclusiveness** - Civil participation should include all groups with particular interests and needs, such as young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities or minorities. Many of these groups do not respond easily to a call of participation. Therefore, pro-active measures should be taken to reach out to these groups, empower them to participate and aid them in the process.

09

**Accountability** - Any process of participation must be directed to produce results and be open to change the original proposals. These results must be documented and made available to the public. All decision makers take responsibility for their decisions; decisions are reasoned, subject to scrutiny and can be sanctioned; remedies exist for maladministration or wrongful decisions.

2. The trainer explained the theory about CPT and the community evaluation
3. Simulation into groups on community evaluation, on the same case studies, using the four capitals and a given excel matrix, debriefing.
4. Theory about the stakeholders evaluation and simulation into groups about stakeholders identification, assessing each stakeholder against the criteria of interest and relevance, using the given excel matrix.
5. Debriefing and theory about plotting.



The Civil Participation in decision-making Toolkit is available here:

<https://rm.coe.int/civil-participation-in-decision-making-toolkit-/168075c1a5>

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS AND CITIZENS ENGAGEMENT ON PUBLIC SPACE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The tool for public space planning was presented by Mrs. Natalia Chornogub, Council of Europe expert and Head of NGO “Park Natalka” in Kyiv.

She has worked to bring together public authorities and citizens to foster greater citizen engagement in public space planning and revitalisation of public spaces in more than 20 cities throughout Ukraine.

The aim of the tool on citizen participation in public space planning is to support city authorities and NGOs in developing, adopting, and implementing (piloting) a mechanism that would prescribe procedures for the engagement of citizens, define the responsibilities of public authorities, identification of stakeholders, and creation of specific working or deliberative structures (e.g. working groups or platforms representing various stakeholders).

When is the right time?

And what are the key stages for engagement?

*Public participation should be included in the spatial planning process as an essential component of it, **as far as possible from the inception of the planning until its completion and beyond**, possibly covering the implementation and evaluation phase*

## Stages of the Public Consultation process

Pre-consultation	Consultation	Post-consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intelligence gathering</li> <li>• Stakeholder mapping</li> <li>• Promoting the consultation</li> <li>• Sharing information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring progress</li> <li>• Sharing updates</li> <li>• Promoting the consultation</li> <li>• Challenging misinformation</li> <li>• Answering questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing the consultation</li> <li>• Feeding back results</li> <li>• Explaining next steps</li> <li>• Ongoing progress</li> </ul>

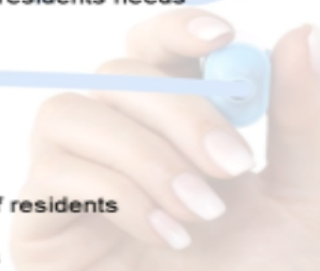
### During the session participants discovered the following issues:

- how to make a public consultation plan,
- how to identify and range stakeholders,
- how to make a communication strategy for engaging citizens,
- how to analyze a collected data,
- how to make a final report (the important parts that should be indicated),
- how to promote the final report.

**Benefits for cities to implement public consultation methodology for planning public spaces**

**BENEFITS**

- Creating comfortable, inclusive public spaces according to residents needs
- Civil society activation and community engagement
- Rising the creative potential of the community
- Reducing the level of vandalism
- Resolving conflict situations between different categories of residents
- Increasing trust and loyalty to the public authority decisions



The trainer also outlined **the benefits for cities** to implement public consultation methodology



for planning public spaces:



### **Methodology employed in the session**

This session combined theory and simulation.

The participants were divided in 4 groups, each representing a different stakeholder: Local Authorities, Civil Society Organisations, Business sector, Experts

The groups were assigned subsequent tasks to implement the tool:

- 1) Assess a given list of stakeholders from 1 to 4, against criteria of interest and relevance towards the topic at stake (planning a public space)
- 2) Indicate which communication channels they would use to promote the process, out of a given menu
- 3) Two groups were assigned the goal to prepare a communication plan to promote the consultation. The other groups had to prepare the agenda for that consultation
- 4) The map. Each group having a map in front, had to decide which facilities would be needed in the park. According to the situational task, the groups were limited by budget funds, so they had to choose appropriate objects taking into account budget limits.

### **Mandatory elements of the Report**

Introduction - information about space and analysis of public activity

Who participated - number of respondents, age, gender, social status, how do they use public space now (what activities)

How to participate - to rank in terms of different engagement forms in which they were involved, indicate the date, data source (questionnaire or offline event)

Residents' needs – generalize needs to the public space – generalized % of answers of all participants

Conclusions and recommendations

Applications – infographics, diagrams, photos from events

According to the methodology of the public consultation process namely pre consultation, consultation and post consultation, participants made tasks:

1. identified and ranged the stakeholders of the public space
2. chose different forms of consultations
3. made public space mapping ( placed objects on the map)
4. chose the priority/order of work



### Results of group work:

- Created announcement for the official website
- Chose appropriate stakeholders
- Chose methods of civil engagement and PR promotion
- Chose objects to the public space according to the situational task
- Prepared a short version of the final report of the public consultation

### WHERE TO FIND THIS TOOL?

- 1) Results of group work and findings can be found here  
[practice public space 20.09.23](#)
- 2) guidelines for making online questionnaires  
<https://rm.coe.int/guidelines-for-online-questionnaires-regulations-on-public-spaces-deve/1680a09788>
- 3) guidelines for making Report presentations  
[https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch\\_permalink&v=600230141364991](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=600230141364991)

## Useful templates

### **W** Templates Consultation Plan, announcement.docx

- Requirements to the announcement of the beginning public consultation process
- Example of the announcement
- Structure of the Consultation Plan
- Requirements for the final report
- Requirements for the presentation of the Final Report with agenda

## CIVIC LAB TOOLKIT

Developed by the Council of Europe within the framework of the Council of Europe project, "Promoting Civil Participation in Democratic Decision-Making in Ukraine", in co-operation with Oleksii Kovalenko, expert of the Council of Europe, leader of the "Kyiv Civic Platform" Association of NGOs (most recent edition: 2022).

CivicLab was presented by the expert Darejan Murdashvili. It is a structured results-oriented participatory process aimed to formulate concrete proposals to decisions, policies, strategies, based on the exchange of opinions, agreement between public authorities, individuals, NGOs and business. The tool includes a set of matrices (development and analysis of policy options) that can be adapted to the needs of the chosen policy topic and specific audiences.

The tool can be used for the development of national development strategies, proposals for action plans (e.g. Open Government Partnership commitments), regulations and local decisions, draft laws, and for adopting good practices in citizen engagement.

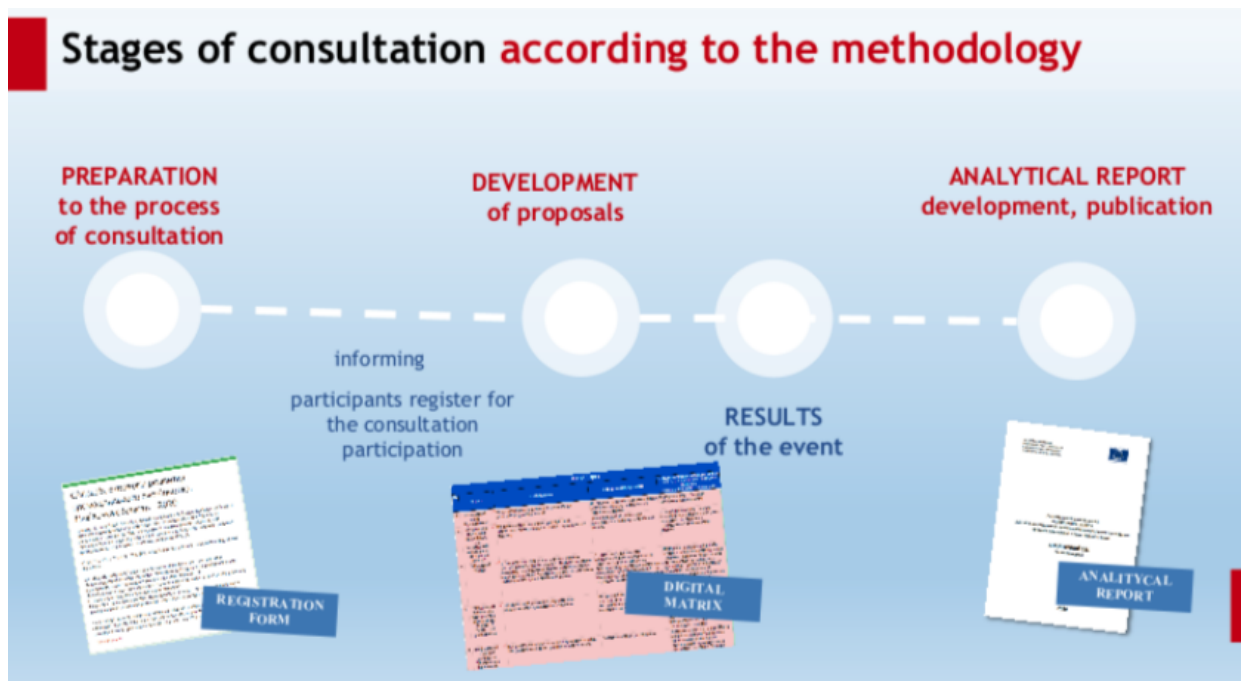
The CivicLab methodology offers four application components:

- 1) **Digital component** – a tool for developing policy proposals and analysis (including assessing realistic feasibility) of the results of decisions during consultations;
- 2) **Educational component** – "learning through action", where participants engage in practical exercises using real examples of best practice;
- 3) **Game component** (UChange game) – which allows for gamification of the consultations process, making it user-friendly and adapted to the needs of participants;
- 4) **General component** – qualitative assessment of audience needs and expectations, and methodology of inclusive selection of participants in the consultation process.





Combining online and offline methods, CivicLab is a handful tool to prepare, deliver and report on consultations.



### Methodology employed in the session

Participants tested, into groups, the consultation phase of the CivicLab.

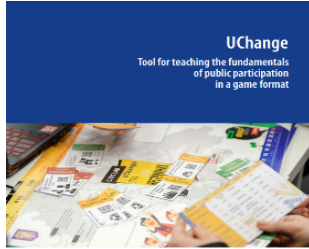
Taking a common issue for all the groups, **“issues in the public participation in your Country”**, the participants went through the matrix to indicate the various issues, investigate the causes of these problems, prioritize and propose solutions.



The result of group works is available here:  
[Istanbul\\_EN SDM\\_strategy\\_ideas and suggestions\\_ML\\_v3](#)

The CivicLab toolkit is available here: <https://rm.coe.int/civicl原因-a4-web/1680a729a1>

## UCHANGE



UChange was presented by Mrs. Melis Türker, CoE expert and representative of Argüden Governance Academy, UChange was developed by the Council of Europe in co-operation with Oleksii Kovalenko, expert of the Council of Europe, leader of the "Kyiv Civic Platform" Association of NGOs (most recent edition: 2022). It is a game component of the CivicLab methodology for teaching the fundamentals of public participation in a game format.



UChange tool can be applied for:

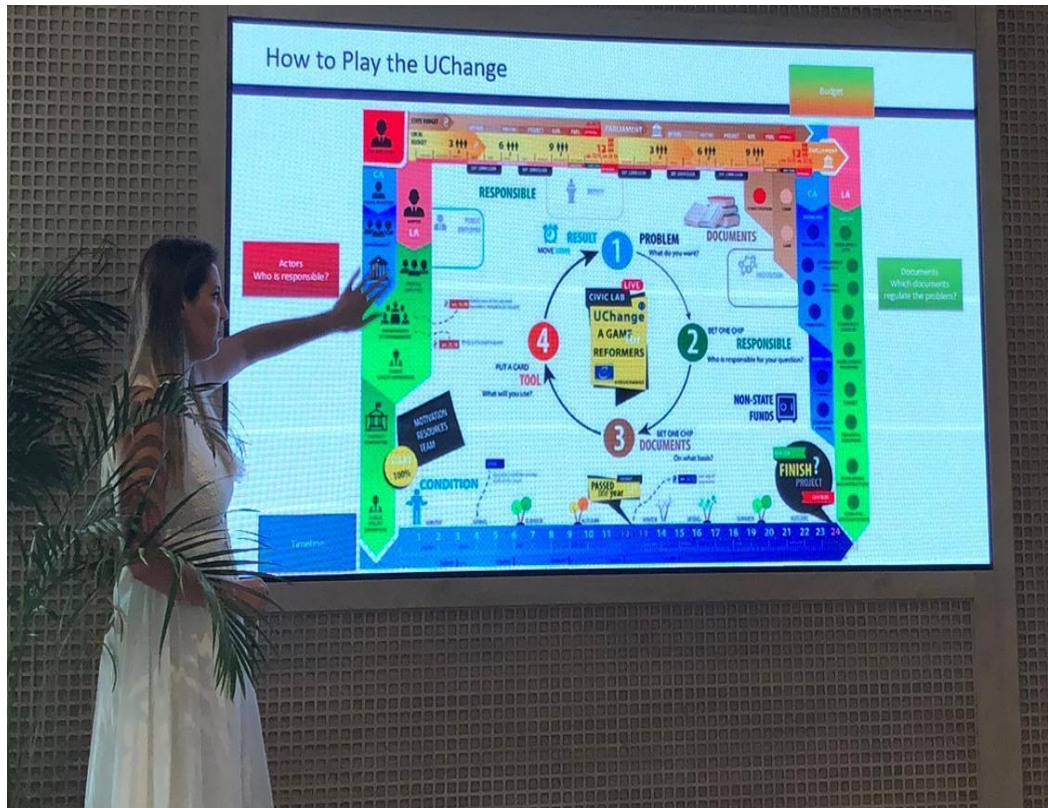
- Educational format of **“learning through action”** in addressing specific issues
- Implementing **initiatives and projects** (local, regional and national level)
- Utilizing civil participation among young people and vulnerable and marginalized groups of the population in decision making and implementation processes

Generally, we face complex problems in our neighborhood and need to know actors, documents and processes. UChange helps citizens learn how to influence the decision-making process of local authorities. Similarly, it facilitates government representatives in effectively connecting with the general public regarding important policy matters.



Additional Benefits of the UChange game include:

- Helping to develop effective solutions to problems in your community,
- Establishing a dialogue between civil society and public authorities on the most important issues,
- Learning how to efficiently put solutions into practice,
- Developing a communication and advocacy plan for implementing solutions,
- Finally taking a step forward in implementation



Players gain the skills to interact with public authorities, develop advocacy and communication models to support their policy preferences, and evaluate the potential community impact of proposed policies. They acquire knowledge on advocating for policies through civil engagement tools, as well as engaging in productive dialogues with various levels and branches of public



authorities in alignment with current legislation and strategic documents.  
This prepares them to initiate the realization of their proposed policies or decisions.

Finally, the Turkish UChange guideline enables participants to understand the fundamentals of the participation tools.

	NEREYE	KİM	BiÇİM	TAKVİM	ONAYLAR
<b>KATILIM ARAÇLARI</b>  <b>Uchange</b>	Muhtar Belediye Kamu Kurumlar	Bireysel/Toplu-STK	Sözlü/ Yazılı	Kuruma göre değişiklik gösterir	
	Kamu Kurumları	Bireysel Tüzel	Yazılı	15 iş günü	
	Muhtarlık	Bireysel	Sözlü WhatsApp Telefon uygulaması	İvedilikle	İlgili kuruma talep iletilir ve talep takip edilir
	Belediye	İlçe sakinleri (bireysel)/projesi olanlar/ iş yeri sahipleri STK temsilcileri	Başvuru Formu	3 Ay	Katılımcı bütçe uygulaması belediyeden belediye ye değişen süre ve koşullara sahiptir. Örnek olması açısından Şişli Belediyesinin süreci kullanılmıştır.
	Ülkemizde bu araç henüz kullanılmamıştır. Bu sebeple süre ve yöntem detayları yer almamaktadır.				
	Belediye Meclisi/ Komisyon	Meclis Üyesi	Yazılı dilekçe		Oy çokluğu
	Meclis/ Komisyon	Milletvekili	Yazılı dilekçe		Oy çokluğu
				Meclis başkanı komisyona gitmesi hususunu onaylatır. Bir sonraki meclis toplantısına kadar ilk yanıt verilir. Meclis komisyon kararını onaylar.	

### Methodology employed in the session

After the presentation, the participants were divided into four distinct groups to engage in the UChange game. Subsequently, they initiated discussions regarding the UChange process, which entails four essential steps for facilitating decision-making and resolving intricate issues within their community. Finally, each group delivered their respective presentations.

The UChange tool is available here:

<https://rm.coe.int/prems-005722-gbr-2541-uchange-web-bat-a4/1680a86b61>

## SCHOOL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING (SPB)

### Tool and Georgian experience

Developed by  
Elections and Civil Society Division  
within the framework of the project "Promoting civil participation in democratic decision-  
making in Ukraine"

### School PB TOOLKIT



**Civil Participation  
Be the Change**  
The Council of Europe Project  
Promoting Civil Participation in Democratic Decision-Making in Ukraine



This tool was presented by Mr. Pavle Tvaliashvili, CoE expert and founder of SIQA – Georgian Association of Educational Initiatives in Georgia.

Pavle Tvaliashvili is an Expert in the Piloting of SPB in the framework of a Council of Europe project in Georgia implemented with the support of Solidarity Fund PL Georgia with collaboration of Ukrainian organization CSDF.

The SPB tool was developed by the Council of Europe within the framework of a project named "Promoting Civil Participation in Democratic Decision-Making in Ukraine", in co-operation with Oleksii Kovalenko, expert of the Council of Europe, leader of the "Kyiv Civic Platform" Association of NGOs (most recent edition: 2020). School participatory budgeting is a civil participation tool designed to involve school children and

students in decision-making and allocation of funds in schools, while simultaneously developing a sense of active citizenship among young people.

The toolkit puts significant emphasis on ensuring a high level of inclusion in school participatory budgeting, ensuring equal opportunities for boys and girls, and outreach to socially disadvantaged school children.

It also stresses the need for students to participate in the development of the rules for the school participatory budgeting scheme.

With the help of step-by-step methodological recommendations, the toolkit incorporates the following steps:

Step 1. Selecting the basic model and developing one's own model (selection criteria are included in the tool);

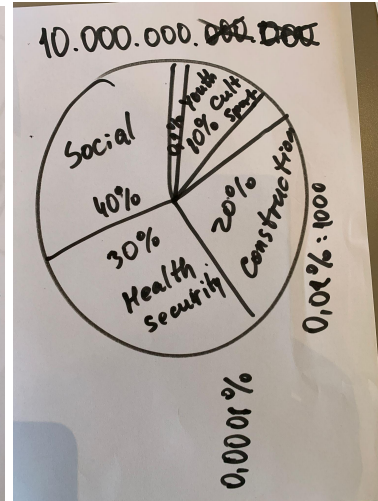
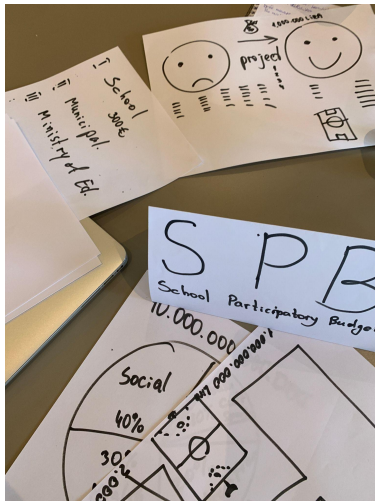
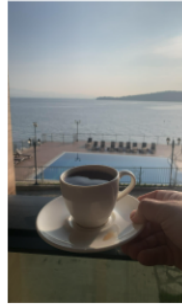
Step 2. Developing the regulation on school participatory budgeting and its parameters (a matrix and criteria are provided).

Guidelines are also provided on:

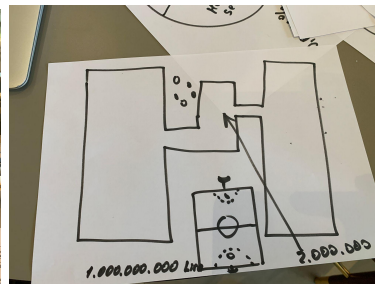
- allocation of funding for respectively small and large budget projects;
- raising awareness in schools about school participatory budgeting;
- proposal requirements, including submission requirements and collection of signatures of support;
- voting mechanisms, procedures for evaluating proposals, and supervision of the implementation of selected projects.



## Dream or to do?



1 ground prop	52000
2. price	...
3 stones	...
24. forms	100.000
	998.000.000
	22000.000





### **Methodology employed in the session**

The expert Pavle Tvaliashvili presented to participants the pilot implementation of SPB in 2 Georgian schools, explaining how it was used. Detailed information about the Expert camp, Stakeholders analyzes, and Civiclab Matrix was provided. There were discussions about whether a better school is a dream or is it achievable?

Participants were divided into 3 groups and with facilitation of Council of Europe experts they played the UChange game for SPB.

Participants tested SPB, they raised awareness about SPB based on Georgian experience. Working into 3 groups, Participants found problems they see in Schools and created project proposals. 3 projects were elaborated - 1 for each group. 1. Create Shelter in School 2. Renovate canteen 3. Create GYM in school space.

Participants received information about links in Toolkit, where they can find information from different countries.

Participatory Budgeting is great to bring into classroom because:

- It's democracy in action.
- It gives students a positive civic engagement experience.
- It serves as a bridge for students to be engaged in politics and their community.
- It strengthens the school community by building positive relations between students and the administration.
- It shows students the benefits of getting involved.

The School Participatory Budgeting tool is available here:

<https://rm.coe.int/school-participatory-budgeting-toolkit-eng/1680a091db>

## CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES

Mr. Marcin Gerwin, Council of Europe expert and co-ordinator of the Centre for Blue Democracy, Poland, is the designer of citizens' assemblies in Poland and internationally. He presented the key elements of a citizens' assembly, including organizational requirements.



A Citizens' Assembly is a representative group of citizens who are selected randomly from the population to learn about, deliberate upon, and make recommendations in relation to, a particular issue or set of issues. It comprises a representative sample of the population – of, for instance, a municipality, a region or even the whole country and meets to deliberate on important policy challenges. Weighing evidence and considering a wide range of stakeholder perspectives, participants deliberate together to design proposed solutions rather than just aggregating the opinions and perspectives they themselves bring to the Assembly at the beginning.

### INDEPENDENT COORDINATING TEAM



For a citizens' assembly to be credible and meaningful, it needs independent preparation and mediation, but for follow-up and implementation it is equally important that there is a prior commitment from the government to give serious weight and consideration to the resulting proposals. Citizens' assemblies propose rather than enact, as the participants do not have the mandate or powers to make

or implement policy. Nevertheless, it is important that their proposals are seriously considered, that feedback is subsequently provided on what is/what is not going to be adopted, and why.

In recent years, citizens' assemblies have increasingly been implemented at all levels of government across Europe and are considered a valuable method to engage citizens in political decision-making.

## WHY DO CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES WORK?

- Independent decision-makers
- Diverse perspectives
- Learning phase
- All stakeholders are invited on equal grounds
- Common good is at the heart of the process
- Favourable conditions for deliberation



## SPEAKERS, FACILITATORS, AND PRESENTERS

<b>SPEAKERS AND HOSTS (in order of appearance)</b>	
<b>Ali Galip Yükseltmek</b>	head of the Department of Strategic Planning, Metropolitan City of Istanbul
<b>Cornelia Perle</b>	Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy, Council of Europe
<b>Tülin Hadi</b>	Istanbul Citizen Assembly
<b>Dr. Yılmaz Argüden</b>	Chair of Trustees of Argüden Governance Academy
<b>Barbaros Büyüksagnak</b>	Head of Foreign Affairs, Metropolitan City of Istanbul
<b>Gaye Uğurlu Fırat</b>	Secretary General at Argüden Governance Academy
<b>TRAINERS (in order of appearance)</b>	
<b>Anna Ditta</b>	Head of Programs and development department at ALDA - European Association for Local Democracy
<b>Natalya Chernogub</b>	Head of NGO "Park Natalka", head of NGO "Open data association"
<b>Dr. Inan Izci</b>	Argüden Governance Academy
<b>Dako Muradashvili</b>	Head of CSI Georgia, Gori office
<b>Hakan Ataman</b>	STGM - Civil Society Development Center
<b>Melis Tüker</b>	Argüden Governance Academy
<b>Pavle Tvaliashvili</b>	Founder of SIQA – Georgian Association of Educational Initiatives
<b>Marcin Gerwin</b>	Founder of Center for Blue Democracy



<b>PARTICIPANTS (IN ALPHABETIC ORDER)</b>		
<b>Akca Gülsüm</b>	<a href="mailto:gulsum.akca37@gmail.com">gulsum.akca37@gmail.com</a>	Kadıköy Municipality
<b>Akçayır Ayşe Umay</b>	<a href="mailto:umayse3@gmail.com">umayse3@gmail.com</a>	Gebze Municipality
<b>Ateş Mert Bora</b>	<a href="mailto:mertboraaa@gmail.com">mertboraaa@gmail.com</a>	Küçükçekmece Municipality
<b>Bozdemir Rumeysa</b>	<a href="mailto:rumeysa.bozdemir@hayatsende.org">rumeysa.bozdemir@hayatsende.org</a>	Hayat Sende Youth Academy Association
<b>Büyükgoze İzel</b>	<a href="mailto:izel@roofcoliving.org">izel@roofcoliving.org</a>	Roof Coliving
<b>Çamlıdağ Sevcan</b>	<a href="mailto:sevcan.camlidag@gmail.com">sevcan.camlidag@gmail.com</a>	Oy ve Ötesi Derneği / Vote and Beyond Association
<b>Çetinkaya Onur Batuhan</b>	<a href="mailto:batuhan.cetinkaya@kadikoy.bel.tr">batuhan.cetinkaya@kadikoy.bel.tr</a>	Kadıköy Municipality
<b>Çetinkaya Tarık</b>	<a href="mailto:tarik.cetinkaya@sultanbeyli.bel.tr">tarik.cetinkaya@sultanbeyli.bel.tr</a>	Sultanbeyli Municipality
<b>Dakak Rojda</b>	<a href="mailto:rojdad@tegv.org">rojdad@tegv.org</a>	Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı (TEGV) / Turkish Education Volunteers Foundation
<b>Doğan Orkun</b>	<a href="mailto:orkun@hyd.org.tr">orkun@hyd.org.tr</a>	Yurttaşlık Derneği Citizens' Assembly
<b>Ergül Melis Şeyda</b>	<a href="mailto:melis_seyda@outlook.com">melis_seyda@outlook.com</a>	Red Pepper Association
<b>Galimidi Maya</b>	<a href="mailto:maya@empowerwithnature.com">maya@empowerwithnature.com</a>	Empower with Nature
<b>Horuz Erhan</b>	<a href="mailto:erhanhoruz07@gmail.com">erhanhoruz07@gmail.com</a>	Gebze Municipality
<b>Özkor Deniz</b>	<a href="mailto:deniz@tapv.org.tr">deniz@tapv.org.tr</a>	The Turkish Family Health and Planning

		Foundation
Saylam Gizem Ölmez	<a href="mailto:gizem.olmez@ibb.gov.tr">gizem.olmez@ibb.gov.tr</a>	İstanbul Citizens' Assembly
Talay Gamze	<a href="mailto:gtalay@argudenacademy.org">gtalay@argudenacademy.org</a>	Argüden Governance Academy
Unlu Berrin	<a href="mailto:bunlu@cu.edu.tr">bunlu@cu.edu.tr</a>	Adana Kent Konseyi
Yardaş Atilla	<a href="mailto:ayardas@turkiyeavrupavakfi.org">ayardas@turkiyeavrupavakfi.org</a>	Türkiye Europe Foundation
Yıldırım Emir	<a href="mailto:emir.yildirim@yandex.com">emir.yildirim@yandex.com</a>	Gençlik Politikaları ve Araştırmaları Derneği/ Youth Policies and Research Association
Yorgancı Müge	<a href="mailto:muge.yorganci@ipa.istanbul">muge.yorganci@ipa.istanbul</a>	Istanbul Planning Agency of Istanbul Metropolitan
<b>GUEST PARTICIPANTS</b>		
Irepoglu Yaman	<a href="mailto:yaman.irepoglu@gmail.com">yaman.irepoglu@gmail.com</a>	
Özacar Hovsep	<a href="mailto:ozacarh@gmail.com">ozacarh@gmail.com</a>	

## FINAL EVALUATION

The evaluation of the training was carried out through both non formal and formal methods.

### ***Assessing competences by having fun: KAHOOT!***

Before assessing the satisfaction of the participants towards the training, we needed to assess the competences they acquired. How well do they remember the lessons learnt? To do so we used the online quizz Kahoot. The average score of correct answers was 78%, indicating that the methodology used allowed to provide information in an easy and understandable way.



*The winners of KAHOOT on the podium!*

### ***Pizza evaluation***

A non formal method allowing to visualize the degree of satisfaction of the participants is pizza evaluation. The participants were asked to position themselves in a pizza drawn on the floor, according to six different aspects that the trainers wished to assess, corresponding to six pizza slices. The closer to the center, the better the evaluation was. Here the aspects assessed:

- 1) Content, 2) methodology, 3) logistics, 4) group, 5) individual commitment, 6) material

The participants had then the opportunity to comment their positioning and provide the trainers with inputs and recommendations.

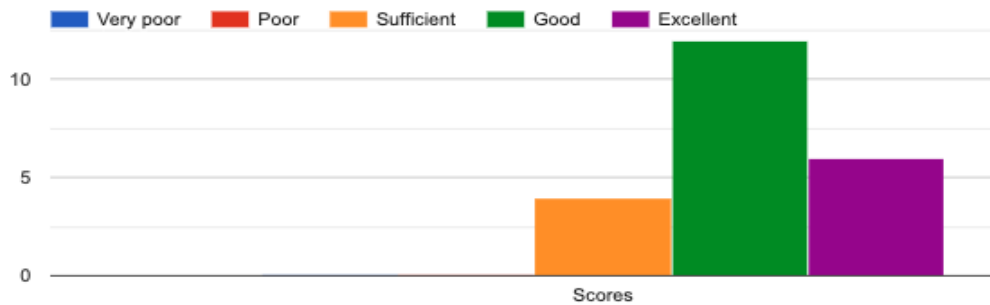
Their recommendations were precious to help the trainers and organisers to best plan the subsequent Schools, namely the one in Ankara, being held the following October.



### Final questionnaire

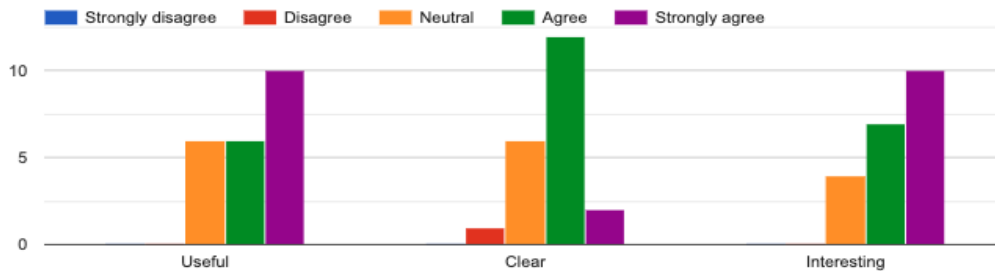
We eventually employed a classic anonymous written questionnaire to assess the satisfaction of the participants towards the School. The questionnaire was filled by the 22 participants. Here below the aggregated results, for each question.

How do you evaluate the logistics of the training (location, service...)

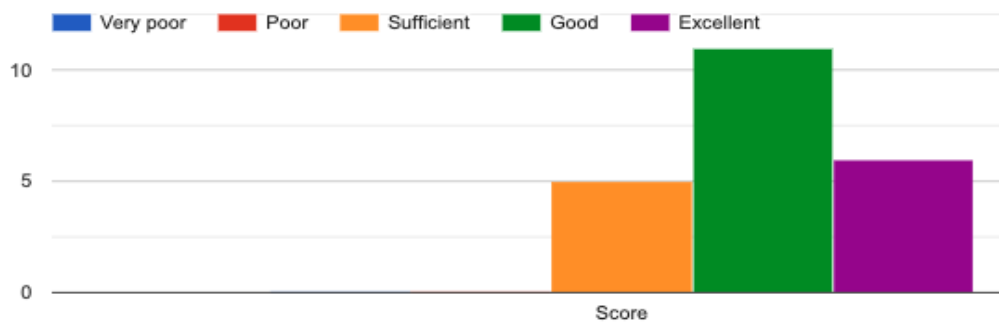


How do you evaluate the content of the sessions?

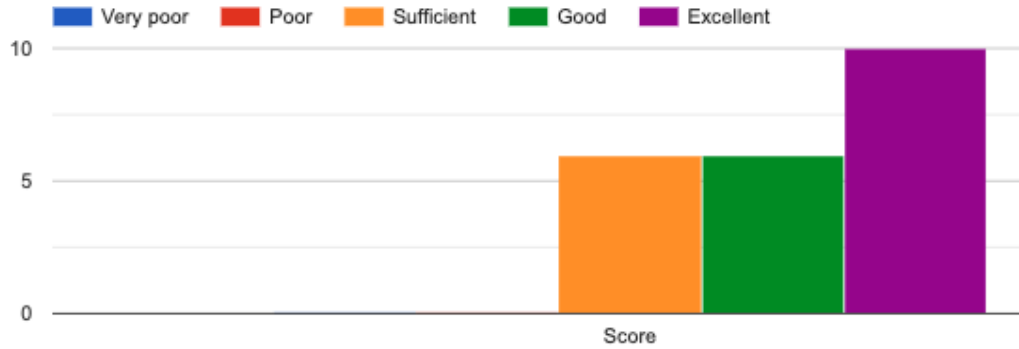
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How do you evaluate the methodology of the training (PPTs, work into groups, speed dating, clarification sessions, energizers....)?

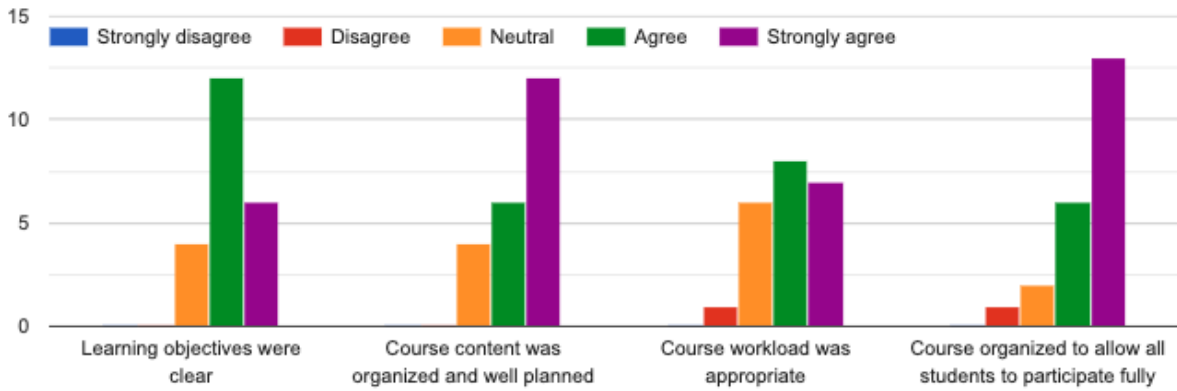


How do you evaluate the material provided (PPTs, toolbox, etc.)?

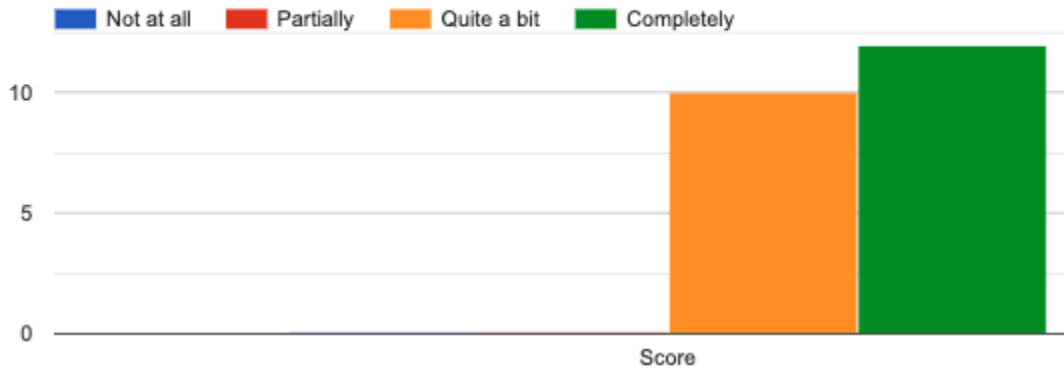


Course overall

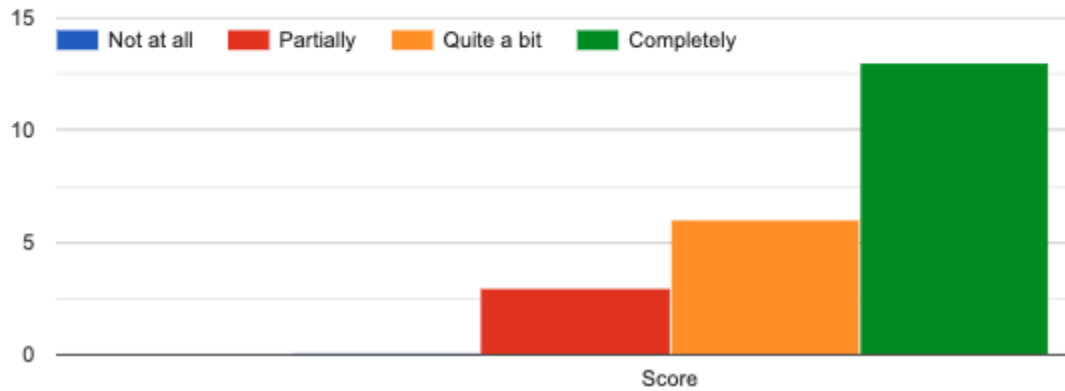
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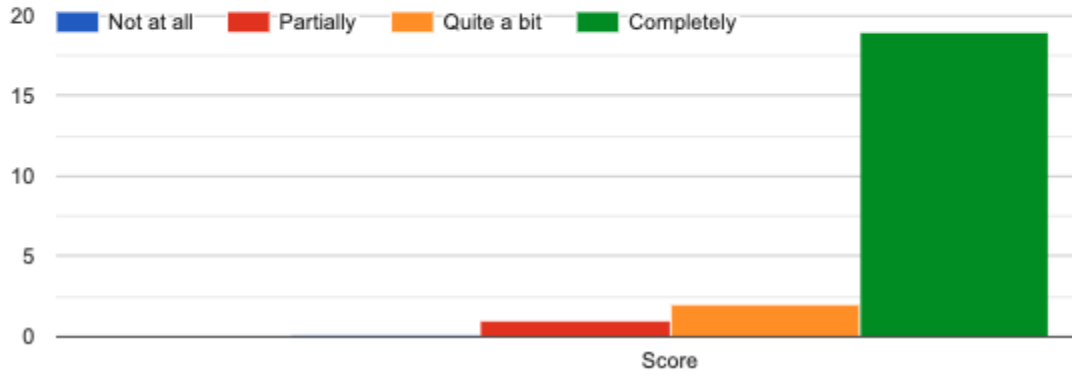
To which extent your initial expectations have been met?



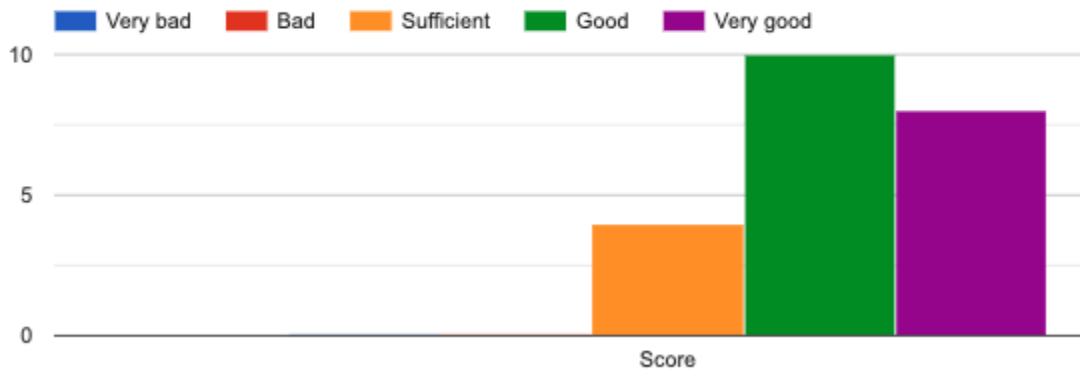
Did you identify any concrete possibilities where to apply the methods learnt?



Did you feel comfortable with the group (with the trainers, with the other participants)?

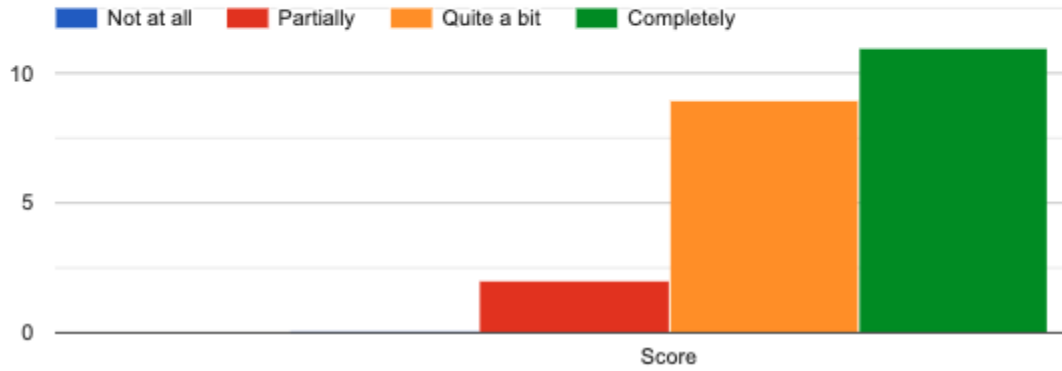


How would you score your personal commitment to the School?





To which level do you think to have developed your skills in using civil participation tools?



## MAIN INTAKES FROM THE SCHOOL

I think these methods can be applied to my Country. Thank you for the opportunity

I have couple of suggestions and feedbacks but overall, this has been not just met my expectations but was even more than everything I had in mind. Thanks a lot!

It was a very tiring and intense week, but really enriching. The energy was very positive. Thank you to all of you!

I met very interesting people with whom we have established cooperation for possible joint initiatives

You have planned the training in extremely detailed and orderly. As a team, you are extremely compatible and complementary. This team and this method are great. There may be other needs for other teams in the future.



*A powerful community of practitioners is growing here!!!!*



## NEXT STEPS

The second phase of the training cycle will be tailored to the needs of the participants. It will start with an individual training needs assessment and end with a closure meeting to reflect on the learning process and to share initial experiences with the practical application of the tools.

Planned schedule for the second phase:

- Training needs assessment (individually): November 2023
- Online group presentation of the training needs assessment results
- Registration of the participants to follow up trainings: End November 2023
- Follow up trainings: December 2023

## **BEPART FORUM – A TOOL FROM PRACTITIONERS FOR PRACTITIONERS**

In order to share future experience of practical implementation of participatory initiatives, participants were introduced to the BePART platform and invited to use and promote it broadly. The platform can be accessed on this link: <https://bepartforum.org>

BePART provides an interactive overview of civil participation initiatives, collected from civil society organizations, public authorities, and researchers. It will help those who wish to develop participatory practices – for example on urban development, gender policy, environmental protection – and who wish to learn from challenges and lessons learned by others.

As an interactive online tool, it provides an overview of existing good practice examples of how citizens participate in political decision-making within their communities, and it allows civil society organizations (CSOs) as well as public institutions to feed in their experience. They can share their examples on the platform and give their views on other projects. The tool allows interested stakeholders to find initiatives from their region or field of interest to learn from the experiences or simply to network with their peers. BePART also provides links to the most relevant Council of Europe's standards and tools regarding civil participation.

The BePART Forum is a joint initiative of the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity (DGII)/Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy, the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organizations (CINGO) and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

