An introduction to **deliberative democracy** for members of parliament



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Introduction

Deliberative democracy processes give randomly chosen citizens a framework to discuss and analyse a particular issue of concern and provides these citizens with the opportunity to make constructive recommendations. They are particularly appropriate to capture societal preferences as regards policy decisions with far-reaching implications for the lifestyle of citizens, such as climate change mitigation and adaptation and sustainable production and consumption. Policies such as these require deep cross-sectoral reforms of current patterns of economic activity that reach into every corner of daily life, including taxation, consumption and production, transport, work, housing, land use and agriculture and food systems.



In the area of climate governance in particular, governments are committing to achieving sectoral targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions within given periods of time, in keeping with their obligations as parties to the Paris Agreement, and embedding these sectoral targets, as well as economy-wide mid- and long-term targets into national legislation. However, these mitigation targets can be attained in different ways, and the different policy choices will create different sets of winners and losers and may require different adjustment measures to be also adopted. It is unsurprising that recent major deliberative democracy processes in France, the UK and other countries have focused on assessing societal preferences for specific policy options for climate change mitigation.

Deliberative democracy processes also create political space for decision-makers, as they provide these difficult political decisions with an additional injection of legitimacy. Many deliberative democracy processes around the world have shown that these processes can be very successful. However, unfortunately, there are many factors that could limit these innovative processes in many countries around the world, such as for example the high cost or logistics of random selection.

Based on the recent climate assembly in the UK, WFD has been solicited by a number of parliaments around the world to conduct a similar process. In order to support these parliaments, WFD and The newDemocracy Foundation undertook this research to identify opportunities and challenges of this new deliberative wave of democratic processes in developing country contexts and, in this report, to share good practices of deliberative processes in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is our hope that this research will inspire many parliamentarians and decision makers around the world to follow the deliberative democracy movement and embrace these innovative models.

Elected representatives can use their public profile to champion these methods and demonstrate their commitment to building trust in the working of the government. This report is designed to support the needs of elected representatives and their advisors—those who would like to strengthen how elected politicians engage with their voters. The report is meant for those decision-makers who want to be inspired by new and innovative ways to bring citizens to the heart of the decision. This report aims to provide decision-makers with an introduction to concepts, good practices and some lessons learned.

The first section of the paper examines what deliberative democracy is and is not and why parliamentarians and decision-makers at large should consider this innovative process. In the second section, the paper sets out the essential principles that need to be taken into account when embarking on a deliberative democracy process. These eight principles will help to guide decision makers and ensure that corners are not cut, that the methods are robust and trusted. The third section describes ten case studies from local deliberative democracy processes in Africa, Australia, Europe and Latin America, including examples from climate assemblies and climate or environment-related deliberative processes. These case studies offer practical solutions, including what can go wrong, what has been done elsewhere, and what can be learned from those experiences. The final section reviews how deliberative processes can be initiated and supported by parliaments, parliamentary committees and members of parliament, and in particular what issues should be taken into account at every step of the process. It will offer some guidance about the first steps in transitioning toward deliberative democracy. The end of this report provides links to many useful resources.

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Setting the scene: What is deliberative democracy?

Imagine a group of people, maybe 20 to 100—probably the kind of people who are rarely participating in any form of community consultation and coming from a wide range of backgrounds– assembled in the same room (or online).

They've been chosen via a democratic lottery. This group of strangers has never met.

They have only one shared ambition: they are going to tackle a complex problem together and work out where their different views are similar.

They are going to find and build common ground.

After they have heard a great deal about the subject at hand from expert speakers, politicians, and other key stakeholders, they are going to share with decision-makers what they agree on—recommendations that the entire group is comfortable with (with room for dissenting views to be reflected in this as well).

It will not be easy because there will be inevitable trade-offs.

But they will enjoy the challenges and they will complete the shared task diligently, with a sense of satisfaction and achievement at the end.

Not only is this possible. This has happened hundreds of times throughout the world.

It is called **deliberative democracy.**



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Setting the scene: What is deliberative democracy?

Deliberative democracy describes a form of active democracy ('democracy between elections') that brings everyday people into political decision making—it's a way of deciding differently, together. It is based on the idea that an entire population has a stake in political decisions and that those decisions are best made following fair and reasonable discussion, or deliberation, among a microcosm of that population. It offers a way to breathe new life into governance. Political work, in this model, is seen as a shared enterprise—not just among professional politicians, administrators, experts and advocates, but also with citizens who should be offered an opportunity to participate.

Deliberative democracy brings together everyday people who are rarely asked to weigh up the strengths and weaknesses of various options, to consider difficult **trade-offs**, and to explore their common ground to **assist** elected representatives to make difficult decisions. The political dividend of doing this is a chance to build trust in government, by working with a broad mix of people who are now willing to stand alongside elected representatives to justify their decisions and thereby build a culture of participation amongst citizens and policymakers alike.

These processes can also be used to break political deadlocks, when elected officials feel unable to develop new laws or policies due to the fears of voter retribution. This was one of the driving factors in the decision to use a citizen assembly to examine the issue of abortion in Ireland, an issue without an obvious "right answer" that had bedeviled Irish politicians for decades.[1]

The deliberative democracy trend has been gaining momentum for the past 50 years but has sped up significantly over the past 25 years (Gastil & Levine 2005). The OECD (2020) reports that deliberative engagements have occurred in both developed and developing countries and have arisen in part as a response to declining trust and legitimacy in governments everywhere. The OECD report "Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave"[2] identifies more than 300 deliberative processes (likely to be a considerable underestimate, particularly given its overwhelming focus on OECD member states), noting that many decision-makers have caught 'the deliberative wave.'









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Setting the scene: What is deliberative democracy?

International development and deliberative democracy

Multiple pilot deliberative processes have been conducted in a development context that demonstrates the universal nature of deliberation and its potential to bring citizens and governments together for a common purpose. These instances, where governments, citizens, and stakeholders meet and work together to solve a pressing issue, can offer a starting point for a renewed relationship amongst them. One that is based on trust, openness, and cooperation, and has the potential to inspire a social contract based on these same principles[3].

Deliberative democracy has many different models: citizens' juries, consensus conferences, planning cells, deliberative polls and more. Members of parliament might be more familiar with mini publics or citizen assemblies as these models have been used by some parliaments around the world[4]. Each is a process that strengthens citizen voices in the workings of government and does so by including people of all races, classes, ages, physical abilities and geographies in deliberations that directly affect public decisions. Therefore, deliberative engagement aims to create a much deeper form of dialogue and discussion that leads to effective, shared decision making.

What's the difference between a citizens' jury, a citizens' assembly and participatory budgeting?

These three terms have lots in common but they each describe slightly different processes. An assembly of citizens, demographically representative of the larger population, asked to learn together and provide informed recommendations on a policy question. A citizens' jury and a citizens' assembly have the most in common, they involve thorough citizen deliberation and differ only in their scale. The OECD describes citizens' assemblies as large processes with around 90 participants chosen through a democratic lottery, while citizens' juries average around 20-34. Assemblies also typically last for a greater number of days, often spread out over many months[5]. Participatory budgeting also involves citizen participation, but could in practice look very different from a citizen assembly or jury, including not using random sampling. newDemocracy has experimented with deliberative participatory budgeting[6] to allow citizens to weigh in on an entire local government budget. However, in general, participatory budgets examine a very small proportion of a budget and seek the involvement of many people on an opt-in basis, this self-selection means that the group will not be representative of the wider population, prioritising the involvement of more people at the cost of the group's representativeness and the depth of engagement.

At the same time, as the deliberative democracy approach has got traction, concepts like 'citizens assembly' and 'deliberative engagement' have become generic handles used to refer to various forms of public participation, which most often do not meet the requirements of genuine deliberative democracy processes from the point of view of their core process design principles. This has also occurred in the also in the environmental governance space. For example, 'deliberative engagement' is often used in reference to engagement interventions responding to requirements for stakeholder engagement and of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) related to carbon rights decision-making at community level under the REDD+ mechanism. We hope that this Guide will contribute to fill in the gaps in understanding what the core process design principles principles of deliberative democracy are.



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Setting the scene: What is deliberative democracy not?

Perhaps it is easier to understand what deliberative democracy is by describing what it is not. It is not an education campaign or opinion polling or any other survey work; it is not a public meeting or a focus group (which tests a potential answer rather than posing an open question) or a public consultation that attracts interest groups or the same voices each time. It is not a panel discussion or a committee inquiry.

These other methods have been routinely used, but have not had a marked impact on levels of trust in government (which deliberative democracy is meant to do). They are usually referred to as examples of consultation, a one-way seeking of feedback to help elected representatives make decisions. That feedback is an aggregation of individual opinions, without an opportunity to study the issues in depth beforehand or deliberate on them. There is no pursuit of common ground or wrestling with difficult trade-offs. Therefore, this collation of opinion may inform politicians where people are at now, not where they could be.

These other mechanisms have their place – they tend to be faster and are typically less costly – but they have proved to be inadequate if the aim is to give sidelined citizens a chance to do some deep reflection on complex issues and together agree on a way forward. Such an ambition is to the advantage of citizens and decision-makers alike. This joint problem solving can have real benefits not just for solving the vexing issue, but can also build trust between citizens and decision-makers and reclaim the declining legitimacy of the latter.

What if citizens were brought to the centre instead of the periphery of decision making to help shape policy? What if they were deeply informed about a topic and able to interrogate expert knowledge? What if it was possible to hear from those citizen voices that are never or rarely heard? What if a way can be found to draw people into the centrality of political decision making in a constructive way, treating citizens as partners in the enterprise of government, able to make a significant contribution to discussions about difficult policy choices and dilemmas, drawing on their invaluable lived experience?











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Setting the scene: Why would decision-makers consider deliberative democracy? What changes might a decision-maker expect?

Working closely with citizens can help to alleviate the entrenched mistrust that is felt towards the broad idea of a 'political class' even when individual members are popular locally. This scepticism and disengagement impairs the ability of an MP to act as a tide of negative public opinion is increasingly easy to activate. Remember citizens trust civil society even if trust in government is low. In particular, they trust people like themselves (2018 Edelman Trust Barometer). Deliberative democracy taps into that sentiment.



Further, citizens are far more willing and capable to do this collaborative work with each other than politicians might imagine (Neblo et al 2010). People that have never been invited to make a meaningful contribution to policy making have consistently shown they find participating in deliberative processes an overwhelmingly positive experience.

Average citizens (even those with negligible exposure to a given issue or government policy) are able to do this work because it is the combination of people that leads to sound, shared decision making in often surprising but pleasing ways (Landemore, 2012; Carson, 2017) (See, Group Diversity). Deliberative methods can help to deliver new and innovative approaches to solving a problem, though perhaps their greatest power comes from the legitimacy that comes from asking citizens what they prefer (OECD, 2020). In seeking the direct input of a representative group of people, one can feel confident that the solutions reflect the will of the population, instead of potentially serving the interests of a narrow group of politicians or special interests.

By sharing political decision making, policy outcomes can be enhanced. Policy failures can be avoided. This need not detract from an elected representative's clear responsibility to represent and govern. Rather, it is about sharing the problem and possible solutions for the benefit of all. Citizens are an under-valued resource because of their lived experience, their desire to live better and to help think about how to make that happen. There is no end to the topics that can be deliberated upon: electoral matters, climate change, air pollution, corruption, land-use planning, education, pandemics, constrained budgets. Deliberative examples abound worldwide.

Deliberative engagement makes sense when a representative or executive body has a problem that is proving to be extremely difficult, costly and/or controversial or may require some widespread behavioural change or significant infrastructure investment—for example, addressing deforestation, declining water resources, global warming, public health or energy use. These 'wicked' problems are ideal to share with the wider population, not just with active interest groups but with all citizens. One simple test is to ask oneself whether a person's 30-second opinion and 40-hour judgment are likely to be different. Deliberative democracy processes can support decision-makers in implementing these more controversial or difficult policy decisions by creating joint ownership. **Inevitable challenges will arise, and this report aims to help members of parliament and decision makers anticipate and address these challenges.**

Deliberative democracy might make some elected representatives uncomfortable because this type of process shares some of the decision-making power with citizens when they make recommendations on policies. These processes must be seen as complementary and not in competition with existing political authority. Competition can create a self-defeating environment where citizens feel their process has been sabotaged and MPs feel their authority is being handed away. This was seen during the recent French Citizens' Convention for Climate, where many MPs were not in favour of the assembly and argued that deliberative democracy would never be able to replace proper parliamentary debates by elected representatives[7]. Elected representatives might also feel that they could lose a lot if the process does not go smoothly. These concerns are justified, but there are sound reasons to share a complex problem with engaged citizens.

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Setting the scene: Why would decision-makers consider deliberative democracy? What changes might a decision-maker expect?

In summary, evidence collected by the OECD and existing research in the field of deliberative democracy point to six key reasons why representative deliberative processes can help lead to better public decisions and enhance trust (OECD, 2020):

1. **Better policy outcomes because it delivers considered public judgements rather than off-the-cuff public opinions.** Most public participation exercises are not designed to be representative or collaborative. Consequently, they can be adversarial —a chance to air grievances rather than find solutions or common ground. Deliberative processes create the spaces for learning, deliberation and the development of informed recommendations which are of greater use to policy and decision-makers.

2. **Greater legitimacy to make hard choices.** These processes help policymakers to better understand public priorities, and the values and reasons behind them, and to identify where consensus is—and is not—feasible. Evidence suggests that they are particularly useful in situations where there is a need to overcome political deadlock or make difficult trade-off decisions.

3. **Enhance public trust in government and democratic institutions by giving citizens an effective role in public decision making**. People are more likely to trust a decision that has been influenced by the considered judgment of everyday people, than one made solely by the government.

4. **Make governance more inclusive by opening the door to a much more diverse group of people.** Deliberative processes, with their use of civic lotteries and stratified sampling, bring in people who typically would not contribute to community engagement into public policy and decision making. These missing voices are likely to include people who are disengaged from politics, but also women, young people or other minorities.

5. **Help counteract polarisation and disinformation.** Empirical research has shown that echo chambers that focus on culture, identity reaffirmation, and polarisation do not survive in deliberative conditions, even in groups of like-minded people (Dryzek et al., 2019; see Grönlund et al., 2015).

6. **Provide a long-term vision on policy issues.** Deliberative democracy processes have shown that citizens can identify long-term solutions that go well beyond short-term policies that are linked to electoral cycles.

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8. A free-response

When embarking on these innovative deliberative processes there are essential principles that should not be compromised. If these principles cannot be adhered to, it might be better not to undertake a deliberative engagement because it is likely to lead to a further decline in trust.

Instead, it is important to adopt elements from these principles and make the traditional engagement process more deliberative. This could be done by giving participants more time, prompting their thinking with some reading before asking their thoughts, comparing their thoughts before and after reading, trying to reach a representative sample.

It is difficult for large groups of people to find agreement on complex decisions. **The OECD recommends a set of principles that make group decision-making easier**. These principles improve the deliberative quality of group work by creating the environment for the consideration of the broadest range of sources while giving participants time, an equal share of voice and authority.

The following eight principles are routinely adhered to by the growing number of convenors of deliberative processes around the globe and are an abbreviation of the more extensive OECD list.

Therefore, **it is important to note that, beyond these eight, there are further principles that underpin them**: the importance of respecting participants' privacy, having these methods conducted at arm's length from the decision-maker – for example, implemented by a civil society organisation (CSO) or university – preferably with independent oversight and independent evaluation (see the 2020 OECD report for the complete list).



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Essential principles

1 A clear remit

A clear, plain-language **challenge or question** should be asked of the group. It should be a neutrally-phrased question that explains the task, shares the problem and provides a strong platform for discussion about priorities and trade-offs. The question will determine the scope of the process, setting the boundaries for what the group is considering.

Pressure points

If the question is too general, any recommendations that emerge may be unhelpful. If it is too narrow, participants can feel constrained and victims of government engineering. If the topic ends up being narrow, it's important to be clear about why the scope has been limited. Here is one that worked well for a water authority. It is clearly expressed and sufficiently open and notes that trade-offs are required:

We need to find a balance between price & service which is fair for everyone.

How should we do this?

This attention to **trade-offs** is important. Wordy, generalised wish lists are not useful to decision-makers and citizens alike. The aim is to extract recommendations that are actionable and have considered the cost and impact of doing so, including any immediate barriers if recommendations are to be implemented.

If the remit lacks clarity, like the following one used by a local council, participants will become side-tracked, arguing over irrelevant matters:

How are we to manage the river better? What role should Council play and what resources should Council apply?

Compound questions are confusing. It is also important to avoid questions that attract a 'yes' or 'no' answer, they will curtail the discussion immediately. Here's one that does not direct people but allows for all responses and is easy to understand. It is being used in North Macedonia:

COVID-19 cases are falling. What can we do to prevent these numbers from rising again?

2 Transparency

The deliberative process should be announced publicly before it begins. The process design and **all** materials – including agendas, briefing documents, evidence submissions, audio and video recordings of those presenting evidence, the participants' report, their recommendations (the wording of which participants should have a final say over), and the random selection methodology – should be available to the public promptly. The funding source should be disclosed. The commissioning public authority's response to the recommendations and the evaluation after the process should be publicised and have a public communication strategy.

Pressure points

Project design necessarily involves subjective decisions and this will lead to attacks on the process unless it is robust and free from manipulation, as well as seen to be free from manipulation. To counter this, the process design should be published at the outset to understand why the designer made one choice over another. If the principles outlined in this report are adhered to, this should be straightforward

Transparency is also important, not just for the organisers but for the participants. If people respect that the organiser always explains why a given expert is speaking with them (selected by the government; selected by stakeholders; of the panel's choosing; selected by Minister etc.) then it's easy to invite the randomly-selected group to follow the same standard – if new material comes in, the participant should explain the context and the source in the same way. The French Climate Assembly offers an example of how participants can become politicised and start lobbying before they have established common ground and tabled their agreed-upon recommendations.[8]

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3 Diverse information

Participants should have access to a wide range of transparently-sourced, relevant, and accessible evidence and expertise, and are able to request additional information. Citizens should spend extensive time asking questions and identifying sources they trust for the information they need.

Pressure points

If participants are offered only government information, they will feel manipulated. Governments can provide baseline, factual Information. After that, the information that is provided should always include any counter-arguments and should be delivered in such a way that a layperson can understand it. Participants will often identify the information that is missing and organisers should ensure that those information gaps are filled to the satisfaction of participants.

Example: Designing a gender equality process

newDemocracy was asked to critically review the design of a gender equality process focused on potentially pursuing hiring quotas within the public service. With the best of intentions the department, acting on ministerial advice, had specified five speakers who would all offer much the same perspective. Without having any views on the merits of the issue, newDemocracy noted that this would provide ample evidence for critics suggesting the process was skewed, and that it was not a good use of the citizens' time. The project was amended so that a mix of perspectives was offered during the initial expert speakers' group. Citizens are capable, and efforts to 'protect' them from some sources do more damage to public trust than any possible gain to be achieved in 'quality.'

Further, within any population a range of education levels and learning styles will be encountered—some people preferring book learning, others through spoken interaction with witnesses/experts, others through small group social interaction and others will be visual. For this reason, organisers should be mindful that information in a range of formats will help in the shared learning approach where not every person consumes every source, but as a group, they will do so and share with one another.

In countries with lower literacy levels, the answer may lie in shifting the balance in favour of experiential opportunities. A 2020 project in Malawi [9] explored whether community development funds (CDF) were being used for community benefit, as they were viewed by some citizens as often being used dishonestly. In this instance, people visited projects and saw the results for themselves. They were also given simple disclosures of costs and pictures of projects where the funds were used. While written materials were also provided, there was a significant emphasis on visiting projects to provide an evidence-based, practical basis for considering the issue.



Essential principles

4 Democratic Lottery

A stratified sample of the community should be recruited through a democratic lottery (sometimes called a civic lottery). Simple demographic filters (age, gender, education, location) can be used to help stratify the sample to reflect the entire population. This happens in two stages: (1) a randomised invitation is offered to participate in a deliberation and (2) a transparent selection process is undertaken that will deliver a genuine cross-section of a population, one that matches the community's or country's demographic profile.

Most engagement by government does not enable a representative cross-section of the community to be heard, instead, incentives to participate are often geared to those with the most acute interest. The combination of selection by lottery and a meaningful opportunity to influence a decision attracts people from all walks of life.

Inclusion is one of the important principles in the democratic lottery concept. The process should consider how to best promote the participation of minorities and underrepresented groups. As participation of randomly-selected citizens is the ultimate objective in these processes, remuneration of expenses and compensation for the time they contribute should be considered to maximise inclusion.

An observer should be able to see and hear this group and identify group members as a miniature population and perhaps be able to consider that "there are people like me".

Pressure points

The ten case studies in the next section demonstrate multiple ways to ensure inclusion and diversity. This might take the form of handing out coloured cards in a market place in Malawi or randomly choosing houses in communities with very low incomes in Brazil. It is entirely possible to draw into a public deliberation people whose views are never sought. Not doing so, and relying solely on self-selection (by those with the loudest voices and most direct self-interest), will undermine the entire process.

It's important to be aware that the larger the group, the less likely it will be that deep deliberation will occur. For example, there are some innovative methods such as Stanford's Online Deliberation Platform which will enable thousands of people to share opinions and hear from experts but with little opportunity to explore common ground, deal with trade-offs and build consensus. Group size should suit the complexity of the problem (See, Carson 2018).

It is notable that the Irish Citizens' Assembly which, in many ways, is the iconic global example of deliberative democracy, used a polling company door-knocking houses to do their participant recruitment. Faced with repeated rejections, recruiters accepted 'interested' people – rather than purely random – which introduced a valid cause for criticism and mistrust. This remains an emerging field, and even very strong projects look for opportunities to refine the recruitment method for future processes. A printed invitation which gives more detail may be a better option. It should sell the opportunity to potential participants and inspire their involvement in something innovative.



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5 Adequate time

These processes develop participants' thinking on a complex issue by giving them multiple opportunities to question experts, learn from one another and find agreement on trusted sources of information. As deliberation requires adequate time for participants to learn, weigh evidence, and develop collective recommendations, the more time they are provided, the more thorough their consideration of the issue.

Pressure points

These methods are nearly impossible within half a day or a day. A citizens' jury usually takes four or more days to adequately consider a range of sources and find agreement on recommendations, while citizens assemblies can take over a dozen days spread out over a period of months or even a year. There is often push-back against lengthy deliberation due to cost or a need for a quick answer. If so, choose another method, not a public deliberation. The latter will deliver a sound public judgement, the former will give an idea of uninformed public opinion only.



6 Influence

It is important to be clear what impact the work of everyday citizens will have. The convening authority should publicly commit to responding to or acting on recommendations promptly. A meaningful opportunity to influence a decision must be demonstrated to participants before they commit their time.

Pressure points

The French citizens' assembly on climate demonstrated what can go wrong if interest groups and participants hear one thing, and those who govern say or believe another[10,11]. By contrast, Ireland demonstrated a good approach. It was clear that the citizens' assembly would offer recommendations that would be put to the entire population in a referendum and the Government delivered on this promise. This is important early work: to ensure that everyone understands the likelihood of recommendations being implemented. Think of it as a firm contract between decision-makers and those deliberating. Participants should be aware of any constraints, because of the sphere of government, legislative or budget impediments, and so on. It will not always be possible to guarantee in advance that recommendations will be acted on. For that reason, it is essential to state clearly what can be guaranteed—for example, a public commitment is made to respond to recommendations in a report after a set period, or a parliamentary Committee will launch an inquiry based on the recommendations in the report.

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7 Dialogue and deliberation, not debate

Group deliberation entails finding common ground; this requires careful and active listening, weighing and considering multiple perspectives, every participant having an opportunity to speak, a mix of formats, and skilled facilitation. The task for the group is to find common ground on answers to the question; this emphasises the avoidance of simple majorities and challenges them with finding where they can agree.

Pressure points

Some methods such as Planning Cells[12] place less emphasis on facilitation, others such as Citizens' Juries or Citizens' Assemblies see that role as crucial (See, Facilitating Public Deliberations[13]). What is essential is that a facilitator does not lead the group into a direction it does not wish to go. The group should be able to find its way to its recommendations with an enabling facilitator, not one who steers the group in a certain direction.

A public deliberation is a respectful, energetic space, with people voicing their views and questioning others. It is best to keep voting to a minimum and voting is best avoided early in the process to keep the discussion as open as possible.



8 A free-response

A group should not be asked merely to (critically) review a government or parliamentary reform proposal (or proposals entirely written by active stakeholders). Instead, group members should be given a 'blank page' to provide their own set of recommendations with a rationale and supporting evidence that emerges from their shared learning.

Pressure points

A public deliberation is perfect in circumstances where the group can consider a broad range of responses to a topic. Group members are often creative and considerate of a government's constraints. But group members will be resistant to rubber-stamping a decision that a government (or organising group) has determined in advance.

The New South Wales Parliament's 2012 Public Accounts Committee energy inquiry offers a pertinent example where citizens – courtesy of being able to freely respond to a remit (and not just tick off third-party pre-written proposals) – actually rejected the remit. They chose to answer the question in their own way, a decision validated by the Committee which cited the citizens' report over 140 times in the Committee's final report. The eventual policy decision which emerged closely aligns with one of the citizens' jury's original ideas. Note that this form of free response is what citizens want, and is the greatest single area where a bureaucratic desire for 'control of the pen' needs to be overcome.

WFD

An introduction to **deliberative democracy** for members of parliament

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Case studies: The United Kingdom: Climate Assembly UK

In June 2019, six Select Committees of the House of Commons called a citizens' assembly to understand public preferences on how the UK should tackle climate change. A Select Committee is a group of MPs from different political parties – they examine policy issues, hold the Government to account and make proposals for new laws. The six Select Committees involved were Business Energy and Industrial Strategy; Environmental Audit; Housing, Communities and Local Government, Science and Technology; Transport; and Treasury. The House of Commons contracted three organisations to run Climate Assembly UK on its behalf – The Involve Foundation ('Involve'), Sortition Foundation, and mySociety[14].

Climate Assembly UK brought together 108 people from all walks of life chosen through a civic lottery. The civic lottery process started with posting 30,000 letters to randomly selected households across the UK[15]. To ensure the most representative sample, 80% of those receiving an invitation were randomly selected from every UK household address in Royal Mail's Postcode Address File. The remaining 20% were randomly selected from the most deprived areas within the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File, simply because response rates were estimated to be lower from these postcodes.

People receiving an invitation could RSVP by phone or online. This created a pool of potential participants free on the relevant dates. Random stratified sampling, undertaken by a computer, was then used to select the 110 participants who together are representative of the UK population aged 16 years and over in terms of:

- Age
- Gender
- Educational qualification
- Ethnicity
- Where in the UK they live
- Whether they live in an urban or rural area
- Attitudes to climate change

The assembly members met across six weekends over several months. The first three weekends took place face-to-face in Birmingham between late January and early March 2020. The fourth and final weekend was moved online because of COVID-19 and split over three further weekends in April and May. Splitting up the final weekend helped ensure that the assembly remained accessible and enjoyable for all its members. This showed adaptability that preserved an emphasis on providing participants with the right time and conditions to adequately address their challenge.

At the weekends, assembly members heard from speakers with a wide range of views about how to get to net-zero and questioned them in-depth. They then discussed their views in detail, drawing on what they had heard as well as their own experiences and values. The assembly reached its decisions by voting by secret ballot.

The outcomes of their discussions were presented to the six select committees in a report[16] in September 2020. The committees have used these recommendations as a basis for detailed work on implementing the Assembly's recommendations. The Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee launched an inquiry on the findings of the Assembly's report and debated this in the House of Commons[17]. This Assembly provided an unprecedented opportunity for the public to contribute to the climate change debate, and to influence action taken by Government and Parliament. For example, the Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee has launched an inquiry on 'Net zero and UN climate summits'. The findings of the Climate Assembly have been shaping and informing this inquiry and ongoing work. Finally, the Path to Net Zero report was debated in the House of Commons plenary on 26 November 2020 and has been very useful in shaping the Government's work in the run up to COP26, which will be held in the UK in November 2021.

The Climate Assembly UK was funded by the House of Commons, with additional funding from two philanthropic organisations: the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the European Climate Foundation. These two organisations providing additional funding did not have a say over how the assembly was run.

The work of Climate Assembly UK is designed to strengthen and support the UK's parliamentary democracy by ensuring politicians and policymakers have the best possible evidence available to them about public preferences on reaching the net-zero target. It is intended that Parliament will use the report to support its work on scrutinising the Government's climate change policy and progress on the target. This means that the outcomes of the Assembly contribute to parliamentary oversight work and are distinct from something commissioned by an executive or decision-making branch of government, such as the French Citizens' Convention on Climate[18].

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Case studies: Brazil: Addressing waste disposal

In 2019, The newDemocracy Foundation partnered with Delibera Brasil to deliver the first demonstration project. The Conselho de Cidadãos saw 40 citizens selected through a civic lottery meet for five full-day meetings. They were asked to find common ground on recommendations that answered the question:

How can we make Fortaleza a cleaner city for everyone?

The issue of the disposal of solid waste is a challenge for municipal administrations in all cities in Brazil, and in particular in Fortaleza where a habit of disposing of garbage and debris in public spaces is seen to be deeply rooted in the population.

The challenge of this project was to find ways to solve the issue of irregular disposal of waste, involving actions of shared responsibility between public authorities, private agents and the community.

The citizens and citizenry participants of the Conselho were asked to reflect on previous experiences and solutions presented by the municipal management, to discover and propose alternatives, and to suggest ways for the city of Fortaleza to enable a policy for environmental, social and economic problems resulting from improper handling of waste and solid wastes, as well as stimulating the adoption of sustainable consumption habits.

The group found common ground on 19 recommendations for action that were included in their final report and filed at the City Hall. In January and February 2020, the Institute of Planning Fortaleza organised six technical meetings with teams from the municipal administration and members of the reference group to analyse the proposals. On 15 February, they held a preliminary meeting with the presence of members of the Citizens' Council, City Hall and 12 Councillors. On 5 March, the official event for the Citizen Council took place with the delivery of an Implementation Proposal for the recommendations by Mayor Roberto Claudio to the City Councilors.

How can we make Fortaleza a cleaner city for everyone?

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Case studies: Colombia: Bogota's itinerant assemblies

In 2020, Bogota City Council, through DEMOLAB, its public innovation lab, launched the Itinerant Citizens' Assembly (ICA). The ICA is a method of multiple citizens' assemblies each building on the one before, which deliberates at different times in a political cycle, with different groups of citizens selected at random. The main attribute of an ICA is its itinerancy. The idea is that citizens itinerate or circulate through the assembly. The town council of a small town convenes an ICA and throughout the three or more assemblies on a given topic, citizens can at some point have the opportunity to be part of the assembly. Because each chapter is made up of a different group of citizens, if a citizen is not selected for one chapter, he or she may be selected for the next. As in a relay race, each chapter passes the baton to the next. Each chapter tries to learn from the previous ones. The sequential chapters have different roles. In a typical example, one explores broad objectives, a second promotes a policy, and a third conducts an evaluation.

The ICA model differs from other models, including one-off citizens' assemblies and permanent citizens' bodies such as the Ostbelgien model[19]. Unlike one-off assemblies, the ICA has multiple chapters, but unlike other multiple assemblies, these chapters form a sequence over time and have different functions. And unlike the Ostbelgien model, in which a 24-person citizens' panel defines the agenda for ad-hoc assemblies on different topics, the ICA chapters address an overarching theme and are interconnected in a sequential learning process.

What are the strengths of the ICA model?

The itinerant model can have great advantages in situations where time and the political will exist to launch a long-term deliberative process; when the policy issue is too difficult to deal with in-depth in a single deliberative moment; when it would be prudent to separate the discussion into different stages; or when the policy problem is evolving.

The ICA model seeks to make improvements on three fronts:

1) Inclusion and pluralism. While each chapter may contain a small number of citizens to preserve deliberative capabilities, thousands of citizens may be part of the ICA in the long run. Some chapters can facilitate enclave or sector deliberation. For example, a chapter could be composed mainly of young people or of women to understand the issue from a specific age or gender perspective.

2) Distribution of deliberative work. Different groups of citizens take on different tasks throughout the deliberation process. The process moves from intra-body deliberation to multi-body deliberation. It also goes beyond the recommendations approach—in which the assembly makes recommendations to decision-makers—to a more interactive and shared approach, encouraging dialogue between the citizens' assembly and decision-makers.

3) Learning process. An ICA follows a spiral method, each chapter building on from the others. Additionally, the model moves from top-down education (experts to citizens) to horizontal education (citizens to citizens). With itinerancy, a form of citizen-to-citizen accountability develops. The model also facilitates a learning process for organisers: Instead of having a single opportunity, the itinerant model allows second chances to make improvements throughout the chapters.

GHANA

The development process entails solving multiple values-based policy dilemmas, long-term questions, and issues with clear trade-offs. These are precisely the types of policy problems that representative deliberative processes are well suited to address. Urban planning, health, and the environment are some of the policy issues that are addressed most frequently by these processes. In 2015, the Resilient Africa Network and the Center for Deliberative Democracy conducted a deliberative poll (a type of representative deliberative process) in Ghana, the Tamale Metropolitan Area. A group of 208 randomly selected citizens came together to deliberate face-to-face for two days over what the local government and donor agencies should prioritise when tackling issues of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as livelihood and food security. Results of this deliberative poll show that even though trade-offs for these priorities were significant and included hard choices, citizens provided the policy direction that they considered most appropriate.

Source: OECD blog https://oecd-development-matters.org/2021/03/16/a-deliberative-wave-for-development/

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Case studies: Australia: Water authorities

Water is a topic that is understood by everyone. We need it to survive. It is becoming a scarce resource as populations grow. An Australian water authority—one of many in Victoria (an Australian state) offers an example of how public deliberation can help governments address a 'wicked' problem.

Barwon Water had no choice but to do engagement well (See, Barwon Water Case Study). Legislation demanded it use the PREMO framework developed by the Essential Services Commission—Performance, Risk, Engagement, Management, Outcomes. The organisation could have done the minimum but it, and many other Victorian water authorities, has demonstrated how it can implement robust public deliberations with a community panel. Barwon Water (with deliberative designers, Mosaic Lab) won an industry award in 2018 for the way it handled engagement for its pricing submission. Now it has gone further with its Urban Water Strategy. Here's how the latter works.

Step one: Ask the broader community what their vision is for water in the region and how they think the current issues can be resolved over the next 50 years – these ideas are collected from thousands of people across the region for over a year and collated into clear identifiable bundles.

Step two: A civic lottery is undertaken; 52 people meet together and develop a vision—i.e. what they want when it comes to water and criteria for assessing if its vision will have been met. The panel considers the following remit:

With less rain and a hotter climate, it's time to think differently about how we use water and where it comes from. How can we create a new water future that balances all our needs?

Step three: The original randomised panel members reconvene and consider these many ideas and assess them for the extent to which they meet their pre-established criteria.

Step four: The water authority goes away and develops its urban water strategy.

Step five: The panel reconvenes and evaluates how well that strategy has been developed to address the panel's recommendations.

There are several reasons why Barwon Water (and the other Victorian water authorities) has embraced and improved its ways of engaging with citizens using deliberative approaches to solve a vexing environmental challenge:

- Legislation triggered the work and provided incentives for doing that work (ratings are applied and publicised).
- There is strong leadership from those in charge of the authority, with deep respect for citizens, especially those experiencing hardship, and a belief that the problem is best shared by those directly affected.
- Community members are treated as equals and literacy in water matters is taken seriously by the authority; learning is essential before a strong partnership can be established.
- The authorities have worked with skilled practitioners who have implemented robust deliberative designs.

In contrast, the Victorian Government introduced legislated requirements for deliberative methods into legislation in a different context. Local governments have to undertake major plans using deliberative engagement and have been offered no guidance on how to use these methods and no resources to do so. Corners are being cut. No doubt it would have made more sense to pilot deliberative methods in a small number of councils and showcase deliberative methods—an approach somewhat similar to the experience of Victorian water authorities.

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ARGENTINA AND USA

In La Plata, Argentina, in 2009, sixty-two randomly selected citizens took part in a representative deliberative process on transit and traffic issues in the city. Participants were surveyed before and after the process, and the results demonstrated a strong increase in trust in government after participation. Before deliberation, 60% disagreed strongly with the statement that "public officials care a lot about what people like me think." After deliberation, this position dropped to 20%[20].

In a US experiment called 'America in One Room'[21] pollsters found that voters involved on both the left and the right appeared to edge toward the centre. Democratic support receded for a US$15 federal minimum wage and for "Medicare for all"; Republican support grew for rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement and for protecting from deportation immigrants brought to the United States as children. Even in highly polarised environments greater trust and common ground is possible – indeed likely.

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Case studies: Belgium: Deliberative committees embedded in the Brussels Parliament

What is the Brussels model?

The Brussels Regional Parliament and the French-speaking Brussels Parliament have several parliamentary committees. The committees, which cover topics such as urban development and housing, environment, transport and sport, are intended to be deliberative. However, these committees often fall along party lines without incentives to find agreement. This, paired with the limited way they involve the public in their considerations, means that they have not been particularly inclusive or deliberative.

To address this limitation, Brussels now also has new deliberative committees made up of 45 citizens (via democratic lottery) and 15 Members of Parliament (MPs) (See, Democratie. Brussels). They're based on the growing international practice of citizens' juries, citizens' assemblies and mini-publics, but the two most influential examples from which Brussels drew inspiration were the ICC (in Ireland) and the Ostbelgien model in the Belgian German Community See, Ireland and Ostbelgien).

In Brussels, both MPs and citizens contribute to agenda suggestions for up to three deliberative committees each year, and a committee can arise from citizens who can gather 1,000 signatures on a proposed issue, such as housing and homelessness. Topics have three conditions: (1) the question for the proposed committee cannot ask for a "yes/no" response, (2) it cannot violate human rights, and (3) it must be a topic that is within Parliament's jurisdictional responsibilities.

The committee has a support body that has oversight of the process, made up of two MPs, two Parliamentary staff, four experts/academics on the topic and two people experienced with public deliberation. They oversee the process, from start through to the follow-up of recommendations.

The deliberative committee meets for approximately five days starting with a preparatory session for those who are likely to require familiarisation with the process and a building of confidence to deliberate—for example, young people, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, or those with disability. A day is dedicated to information offered by experts with opportunities for questions and answers, then a few days of discussion and deliberation and the development of recommendations. Finally, the committee delivers its report back to the parliament. A six-month deadline is set, from the conclusion of deliberation until a report comes back to the original group, addressing each recommendation and explaining why they were accepted or rejected. Financial limitations currently restrict the parliament to three deliberative committees per year.

Deliberation and disability

Deliberative process tend to be more accessible and thus include people with a disability proportionately to population without having to specifically 'curate' their involvement.

1. For the blind, the emphasis on written materials provided in advance of meetings enables them to participate on an even footing with most having access to 'Reader' software.
2. For the deaf, the emphasis on small group table discussions in structured formats is preferable to Town Hall style meetings.

For those with a mobility disability requiring specialist transport the fixed schedule and finite term makes this workable – as compared with open ended community group participation.

Specific projects on disability topics are thus eminently possible, but for any topic representation of those with a disability should naturally occur. Sector mini-publics have certainly been convened (Raisio & Carson 2014). This is likely to occur when the topic is extremely specific to the sector and there are circumstances when their voices have been excluded in the past. For example, this was the basis of a recent citizens' jury convened by Scottish Learning Disability Observatory. Discussion of this deliberation can be found via this podcast.

The participants themselves are featured in a video about the project, when they speak of their experience; this can be viewed here.

What are the benefits of the deliberative committees?

Both the topic nomination process and the opportunity to be randomly chosen to participate offer members of the Brussels community a direct and meaningful role in parliamentary conduct and the consideration of public decisions. When members of the public and MPs are given opportunities to work together it builds trust between the two groups, helping to tackle a wider global trend of growing mistrust between people and politicians.

Deliberative committees are sweeping across Belgium. The Federal Parliament is considering replicating the Brussels model in its entirety. As more and more committees are created and completed, their success might lead to a strengthening of the commitments made to their resourcing and authority. The committees themselves might evolve. Positive experiences with citizen deliberation led to growing trust in the process among MPs. This could lead to a separation between mixed deliberative committees and wholly citizen-led deliberative committees because there are only so many committees MPs can be a part of.

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Case studies: Ireland: Marriage equality, abortion, climate change

The Irish experience with deliberative democracy is considered to be a shining example: a way to bring the entire population together to solve difficult policy challenges. It began with a group of academics who wanted to replicate British Columbia's Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform as a way of bringing everyday citizens into political decision making. The project was called "We the Citizens". It attracted private funding and was designed to prove that public deliberation on a difficult topic among randomly-selected citizens could work. This project resembled the Australian Citizens' Parliament which newDemocracy convened in 2009 (Carson et al) (See, Australian Citizens' Parliament).

"We the Citizens" inspired the next iteration: the Irish Constitutional Convention (ICC)—held 2012-2014. The Convention included several well-known politicians. According to Professor David Farrell, who led the "We the Citizens" project, "there was an appetite for more citizen-focused political reform" (Farrell, 2017: 23).

The ICC operated over 14 months, meeting for 10 weekends, following deliberative practice. Its 100 members comprised 66 citizens selected by an opinion poll agency, 33 politicians from the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly and an independent chair who was appointed by the government (Farrell, 2017: 24).

What came out of the ICC was a series of questions, referenda, and parliamentary votes, including Ireland's historic support for marriage equality in 2015 (Farrell et al 2015). Support from a conservative Prime Minister challenged those who consider policymaking to be about adhering to a party line. The referendum pitched traditionalists including the Catholic Church against those in favour of gay marriage, including the Irish Prime Minister, a Catholic, who reassured voters there was nothing to fear.

The elected representatives who had participated in the ICC then became advocates for the next iteration: the Irish Citizens' Assembly (2016-2017).

The Citizens' Assembly tackled several questions, the first being the highly contentious issue of abortion, followed by the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population and how Ireland might become a leader in tackling climate change.

The Prime Minister now can request considered public judgment from randomly-selected everyday people as a counterweight to activist and interest-driven advocacy which tends to dominate public discourse. This has been historic for Ireland and, following the ICC, "the first time in the world that a deliberative process resulted in real constitutional change" (Farrell, 2017:24). It highlights the strength of institutionalising deliberative practice in public office and its capacity to open up politically fraught debate in a considered and evidence-based setting.

Following the second historic vote, it can be seen that Ireland is leading the way in democratic innovation—empowering its citizens to advise the parliament on future direction. Ireland has resolved two very difficult issues using public deliberation, followed by a referendum. Its government has demonstrated a robust method that is gathering momentum and has shone a light on the viability of meaningful citizen involvement in government decision making.

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Case studies: Kenya: Participatory Budgeting

In 2016, Participatory Budgeting (PB) was used in five counties in Kenya as a way to demonstrate more inclusive and effective citizen engagement processes when it comes to budgeting.

How to make their processes more inclusive

The Constitution of Kenya and supportive legal framework on administrative devolution, place a strong emphasis on public participation, transparency and accountability as a means of improving efficiency, equity and inclusiveness of government and service delivery. The devolution framework contains multiple provisions requiring county governments to make information publicly available and consult with citizens in planning, budgeting and monitoring of service delivery.

Over the years, Kenyan counties have made some considerable progress implementing the legal provisions, but with some difficulties. In particular, counties face challenges related to tokenistic forms of participation where forums are held without provision of adequate notice or advance copies of budget documents in simple user-friendly versions. The meetings often do not follow an organised format, where citizens are asked to prioritise their needs within a set budget ceiling. Counties had expressed concerns that meetings too often turn into citizens presenting wish lists in an unsystematic way making it difficult to translate them into practical development projects, and often led to deep dissatisfaction when these projects are not implemented.

Counties sought guidance on how to make their processes more inclusive and at the same time ensuring that citizen voices are represented in objective and structured processes. These concerns resulted in the Kenya Participatory Budgeting Initiative (KBPI) which aims to address these and build on ongoing practices supporting public participation and social accountability at both the county and national levels.

KBPI was implemented under the Kenya Accountable Devolution Program and is jointly led by the Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Global Practice and the Governance Global Practice of the World Bank. KPBI partnered with key government institutions namely, the Council of Governors, the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, the Kenya School of Government, Commission on Revenue Allocation and the participating counties: Makueni, West Pokot, Baringo, Kwale and Elgeyo Marakwet [22].

These Counties made use of PB processes that developed proposals and ideas from the village level up through sub-ward, ward, sub-county and county levels. These processes involved thousands of villages and concluded in events such as the Makueni People's Forum, held in 2016. While not using random selection, the organisers did focus on the principle of representativeness by curating non-traditional groups who would not normally participate.

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Case studies: Malawi: Addressing corruption

The newDemocracy Foundation is working with local practitioners in the Salima District, Malawi to pilot the country's first-ever citizens' juries. The overall objective of the project is to build local capacity in delivering future deliberative processes and to develop citizen recommendations that build public confidence in the effective use of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs).

The allocation of CDFs is a challenging issue throughout Malawi. It involves government, MPs, policymakers, councillors, district councils and the community. A lack of accountability and transparency in its implementation, the lack of community participation, and perceptions of undue political influence, all impact wider public trust in the program.

The CDFs are funding arrangements that disburse funds from the central government directly or indirectly to electoral constituencies for local infrastructure projects. These funds are made available to local Members of Parliament (MPs) to facilitate the implementation of minor projects in their constituencies. The CDFs in Malawi seek to provide MPs and their constituent communities with the opportunity to make choices and implement projects that maximise their welfare in line with their needs and preferences. The CDFs are there to respond to immediate, short-term community development needs. Decisions about how these funds are allocated and spent are profoundly influenced by MPs.

However, for a decade and a half, stories of CDF have hardly inspired confidence. In December 2011, the office of the Auditor General released the first comprehensive audit report on the country's CDFs. The report, which audited accounts of district councils for 2006, 2007 and 2008, showed that about K107 million (about USD 267 500) was spent without the approval of internal procurement committees (IPC) at Salima, Mmbelwa, Karonga, Nkhata Bay, Mulanje and Phalombe district councils. According to Rockford Kampanje, the then Auditor General, the CDF was 'being heavily abused.'

MPs have not outright denied abuse of CDFs by some of them in some cases, but they disagree with the tendency to generalise as if all MPs are corrupt. The MPs suggested that due to their position of influence even when the funds are mismanaged by the administrative secretariat, it is the MPs who bore the public complaints. The MPs observed that CDFs are the centre of controversy because it is the only fund that is visible and which has a meaningful impact on the lives of people at the grassroots although it is not enough.

Salima is a district in the Central Region of Malawi about 110km from Lilongwe City. The district covers an area of 2,151 km^2 and has a population of 478,346. 46% of the population is between the ages of 0-14, 50% is between 15-64 years while 4% is above 65. The literacy rate for the district is 61%. The district has 5 constituencies, 10 wards and 12 Traditional Authority areas. In this project, it is anticipated that 50% of the population will benefit from the project over the next three years should implementation of CDFs projects improve and meaningful benefits begin to trickle down to the community's poorest as intended by the Funds' design.

The project utilises a novel method of involving citizens in Malawi. Randomly selected groups drawn from across the community will propose workable solutions and find common ground by answering the question:

How can Salima District Council fairly and transparently utilise Constituency Development Fund money to achieve the objectives for which the fund was set up?

This project aspires to find a way of including people who are normally external to the political process to find common ground on recommendations for the future management of CDFs so that it is a fair, transparent and effective way of spending money. Specifically, the projects aim to allow participants the right environment to move from their opinion views to a considered judgement. This is in contrast to other countries such as Indonesia where the high price of a politics rooted in clientelism and constituent misunderstanding of the relationship between MPs and government itself can create divergent expectations. Where clientelism is a problem (as we heard from interviews in Indonesia) the use of randomly selected groups creates a process that is beyond the reach of entrenched political groups.

To date, each group has met on four occasions. The final meetings have been delayed due to local COVID-19 transmission in Malawi. Once it is safe for participants to meet in person, they will finalise their reports and deliver them to local MPs for their public response.

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Case studies: Uganda: Risk management in flood-prone areas

The Eastern Africa Resilience Innovation Lab and the Center for Deliberative Democracy (CDD) at Stanford University conducted Africa's first two Deliberative Polls (DPs) in July 2014. A random, representative sample of 427 local people from the Mount Elgon region in two districts, Bududa and Butaleja, were convened for a two-day deliberation in Uganda.

Deliberative Polling assesses the representative opinions of a population

Bududa and Butaleja, both troubled by frequent flooding, have about two hundred thousand inhabitants, mostly working in subsistence farming. The areas are characterised by low levels of formal education and high population density. The average population density in Uganda is 195 persons per square kilometre, but in the Mount Elgon region, the average population density is 950 persons per square kilometre. This population density puts pressure on subsistence farming and prevents investment in education. The low education levels are especially pronounced for women and girls, many of whom receive no formal education at all. The common environmental disasters lead to periodic evacuations and issues of resettlement.

Due to regular floods and landslides in the region, the government had implemented programs on land use in the region, including resettlement and integrated wetland management. Despite these directives, communities continue to encroach on high-risk zones. Authorities have faced issues with not communicating warnings effectively and further face issues with the misuse of land by civilians. This disconnect between government actions and community cooperation highlighted an asymmetry between expectations of the risk mitigation policies and effectively rendered them unsuccessful. This 'asymmetry' was largely due to the lack of educational resources in the Mt Elgon region, but mostly the lack of effective communication that has consistently strained the relationship between citizens and local government.

The project focused on three key topics: resettlement management, land management, and population pressure. These options were the principal topics in the pre-and post-deliberation questionnaires.

Deliberative Polling assesses the representative opinions of a population, both before and after it has had a chance to think about an issue and discuss it in depth. The idea is to gather a representative sample and engage it in transparently favourable conditions for considering the pros and cons of competing policy options. Deliberative Polling is a method that offers a representative and informed opinion. It offers a road map to the policies the public would accept upon reflection, and for what reasons. It can also indicate those policies the public would have reservations about, and for what reasons.

The main aim of the project was to establish a rapport between locals and government officials in which policy could be effectively developed and enacted. Through speaking to stakeholders and residents the government found the presented options didn't account for the local context adequately.

In the end, government policy was implemented with greater nuance and understanding of how people manage in times of flood, resulting in farmers being able to access land while the government had the understanding of what those people would do (build homes on higher land and be happy to travel to stay with extended family outside the affected area) to avoid a blanket ban on using valuable land.

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Case studies: Spain: Combining online and face-to-face

In 2018 Madrid experimented with a path-breaking method in a major city with a method that can be used locally and nationally. The decision-makers who initiated it had very little experience with deliberative methods, and this was compounded by later, newly-elected representatives who undid the bold experiment. It is a lesson worth heeding. When starting a new method, a government that wants to involve its citizens should be mindful that it will have to embed a deliberative practice within the tenure of the current parliament, else its good intentions will be undone.

However, the method is one worth replicating if that lesson is heeded. Here's how it was meant to work. The Government had a division known as the Participation Department and its principal tool was an online method: decide.madrid. Anyone could go to a website and register a proposal. It lacked the kind of guidelines that Brussels introduced, including that the proposal should be within the responsibility of the government. It did not guard against unrealistic ideas being lodged or even ideas that were already in practice. That happened in Madrid. But the idea in Madrid was to gather ideas and if a sufficient number supported the idea it would go to a referendum. Another problem. Attracting large numbers to a proposal can be 'gamed' and large numbers are not necessarily an indication that a proposal would have support across the population, even though it may be the favoured proposal of a special interest group. This 'gaming' can be achieved with a well-funded, well-resourced campaign, as happens in the US with citizen initiatives. Another layer, a deliberative element, can surely improve the overall process. In the US this happens in a few states with Citizen Initiative Reviews.

Indeed, this is what Madrid hoped to do, to have a deliberative assembly, to review the proposals. Known as Observatorio de la Ciudad or the Observatory of the City, this group of 57 would be made up of people who had been chosen via a civic lottery, to examine the proposals in-depth and to prioritise them for a subsequent referendum. It could also examine existing policies and initiate its own proposals for change (Carson & Mendiharat, 2020).

The model is a sound one: to take public opinion from the entire, interested population and subject it to rigorous public judgement of a smaller group of diverse citizens; then send the proposal back to the entire population via a referendum. It is a combination of direct and deliberative democracy.

There were some lessons learnt from this project. (1) It is best to start with a workshop of MPs and staff, to familiarise everyone with the benefits of a deliberative method and an explanation of how it will work; (2) it helps a government to have independent advice and to listen to that advice, not assume it knows better; (3) as mentioned, it should be scheduled to have at least one iteration completed within the life of the parliament that initiates it so that the method endures.



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"Getting citizens involved in these processes is extremely important for the future of our democracy"

UK MP Alexander Stafford

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Deliberative democracy: Processes for parliaments

Deliberative democracy processes can be initiated by the head of governments, ministers, committees, local councillors or sometimes members of parliament. The key difference between these convenors is their ability to make concrete commitments to the outcomes of the process. Typically, the executive can make assurances that a clear pathway to implementation for citizen recommendations exists. They will commit to a public response or even commit to the implementation of the recommendations. However, if these recommendations require legislative action, they will need to pass before the parliament.

These other methods have been routinely used, but have not had a marked impact on levels of trust in government (which deliberative democracy is meant to do). They are usually referred to as examples of consultation, a one-way seeking of feedback to help elected representatives make decisions. That feedback is an aggregation of individual opinions, without an opportunity to study the issues in depth beforehand or deliberate on them. There is no pursuit of common ground or wrestling with difficult trade-offs. Therefore, this collation of opinion may inform politicians where people are at now, not where they could be.

It is also worth noting that, despite hesitation among some MPs in using deliberative processes – due to a perception that this undermines their influence and legitimacy – in fact citizens' assemblies/juries can be a powerful tool in pushing back against executive obstinance. The experience in many countries is one of increasing centralisation and executive dominance, with legislatures often marginalised and their recommendations ignored. A legislature's intervention, backed by the direct feedback and support of citizens, can be much more powerful than one from a parliamentary committee or individual MP alone.

> **Getting citizens involved in these processes is extremely important for the future of our democracy"** [23]
>
> **UK MP Alexander Stafford**

It is important to be clear about the pathway to a decision. Managing expectations throughout the process will ensure there are no surprises for the convenor or participants.

When initiating a deliberative process, some specific considerations are important based on best practice and lessons learned from different countries around the world. They help guide the key decisions that will need to be made when planning to convene a deliberative process.

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Step 1

The decision to initiate a deliberative process

Before a member of parliament decides to initiate a deliberative process, a number of factors need to be taken into account that will decide whether or not such a process should be considered. The four key factors influencing such a decision will focus on the capacity of parliament to provide some level of decision-making authority to citizens and on the political environment surrounding support for the process.

Political buy-in

Cross-party and intra-party support is essential for such a process to be successful. It is important to consider that such political buy-in needs to go beyond the initiation of the deliberative process itself to include the buy-in to push for reforms once recommendations are published and political agreement on next steps. The latter commitments will be much more difficult to reach for members of parliament but needs to be agreed upon before launching the process. To achieve this, significant effort should be made to reach across the aisle and explain the fairness and transparency of the process. Champions within parliament or government—influential people who can change the narrative from 'this will never work' to 'let's try this!' are invaluable.

It is important to determine, realistically, if deliberative engagement has the chance to succeed. If major opposition to this process is anticipated, it will be very difficult to undertake such a process and it might be more judicious to work on getting more members of parliament to support this process first. Further, it is useful to ensure that deliberative engagement will conclude its recommendations at least within the life of the current parliament—a change of members of parliament can mean that the original agreements are likely to be ignored or challenged by the next parliament.

Members of parliament will need to build support within parliament but it is also essential to galvanise support outside the parliament. This can be achieved through building a coalition of the willing, including with people outside the decision making sphere, such as civil society organisations and the media that can bring pressure to bear. Some parliamentarians who are used to having a seat at the table might be resistant to the process and might therefore need to be educated about deliberative processes to be reassured that their views will be heard by the deliberative panel and that the process does not intend to change the nature of representative democracy but complement it. This can be done through involving MPs in the deliberative process (see below).

Authority

The authority conferred to the group of citizens must be clear and locked in when publicly announced. Any moving of the goalposts will significantly undermine trust in the process.

It is therefore important to determine from the outset how parliament will be able to respond to the recommendations and how the process will fit into decision-making structures. In some instances the recommendations that emerge from the deliberative process might not align with the positions of members of parliament. For this process to be successful, it is therefore recommended to make a prior commitment that each recommendation will be considered and responded to, especially when it is decided that a particular recommendation will not be taken forward. In that response members can make clear the path to implementation whether that is through legislation, regulation or other means at the government's disposal.

Time

Deliberative processes take time, this includes factoring in the time it will take for the convening authority to consider and provide a public response to the recommendations delivered by citizens. Whether or not the process will conclude during a parliamentary session or run-over into the next will impact commitments that the parliament will be able to make.

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Resources

Depending on the extent of the deliberative process, the cost can be quite high so the parliament needs to ensure that it can afford to resource such a lengthy and considered process. These processes can be fully funded by the parliament but external resources can also be mobilized as long as these funds do not impact the impartiality of the process.

Depending on the funding available and scale of the decision, the parliament should consider whether the issue requires a citizens' jury with 30 participants or a larger citizens' assembly with 50-100 participants. The larger the group, the longer it may take to discuss the issue and develop recommendations that are acceptable to a larger group. Large groups also cost more for facilitation, venues, catering and reimbursements and do not necessarily improve the deliberative quality of the process. The remit of the process can also influence cost. The broader the question and the more complex the issue, the more meetings will need to be held and the more experts will be involved to reach agreement on a set of policy recommendations.

Example of an indicative budget to run a local citizen assembly	
Participant cost	Development of the invitation, mail out of randomly selected households and stratification of respondents A gift for participants to recognize and reward their involvement Reasonable travel expenses
Witness/expert cost	Reasonable expenses for those invited to speak Reasonable expenses for advisory group members
Venue, catering and accessibility	Suitable venue Tea and coffee breaks and lunch Provision for BSL, hearing loops, braille, interpretation and caring costs
Preparation and design	Designing the assembly process Liaising with the advisory group Stakeholder engagement Background research Developing materials and liaison with participants
Assembly meetings	Lead facilitation Small group facilitation Support staff Travel, accommodation&subsistance
Publication and participant liaison	Designing and publish recommendations Ongoing liaison with participants

Source: Involve https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/knowledge-base/how-do-i-setup-citizens-assembly/frequently-asked-questions

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Step 2

Key design decisions and trade-offs

Once a decision has been made to initiate a deliberative process, there are key design decisions that need to be considered carefully, in particular:

Establishing the framework for a deliberative process

When establishing the framework for a deliberative process, the parliament, committee or MPs need to be clear about what is and is not within scope, what roles specific actors will play and how it is going to communicate the process and outcomes to the wider public.

Keeping in mind the essential principles described in Section 2, members of parliament and decision makers will need to make a decision on what the topic will be, what the specific question will be, who from the wider community will be eligible to participate, who and how participants will be invited and selected, how many times they will meet and how participants will be remunerated for their participation. All of these decisions should be documented in terms of reference or process design and made public before the process begins.

Developing a communications plan

Communicating the process to the wider public helps build trust in the process and develops the credibility of the final report. A communication plan ensures transparency about participants, diversity of sources and deep consideration of the evidence, which has led to these recommendations. Telling the narrative of a few diverse participants helps ensure the wider public sees someone like them is involved in this process. A communication plan also allows the parliament to show how it has been able to bring the wider public into the decision making process. Such activities can be part of the larger outreach and communication plan of parliament.

Securing wider public engagement

It is important to provide an opportunity for the wider public, those not chosen to participate in the process, to contribute to the deliberation. This can take the form of a community engagement process that gathers useful feedback about values or priorities in a form that is digestible for the citizen group. Members of parliament are particularly well placed to ensure wider public engagement by engaging with their constituents on the issues and sharing the recommendations of the deliberative democracy process.

Establishing a Stakeholder Reference/Advisory Group

Sometimes it is necessary to closely involve key stakeholders in the initial design of a deliberative process. Their advice can significantly improve the quality of a process by accounting for nuance and voices that might sometimes be missed or misheard. About 6-10 key persons can provide input on the question, develop a list of key speakers they think the participants should hear from and respond to the question themselves as a point of background information for the group of citizens. It is essential that this group is composed of persons that cover a range of views on the issue.

Ensuring independent facilitation

Deliberative democracy processes require a specific facilitation skillset that balances social facilitation skills with task-based facilitation skills. They also require independence from the convening authority to build public trust in the authenticity of the process.

Independent facilitation might be best provided by individuals, institutions or civil society organisations that have previously supported these processes. In the UK Climate Assembly, for example, the House of Commons published terms of references for the process to be led by academics and a consortium of organisations [24] independent from the parliament. It can help ensure public trust and that the process is rigorously followed and ensuring that all eight principles described above are met.

If the parliament decides to institutionalise the deliberative democracy process, such as in Ostbelgien for example (see case study above), the parliament might consider developing a network of independent facilitators or train their independent administration (parliamentary staff) to lead such facilitation.

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Step 3

The involvement during the process

Members of Parliament can play different roles during the deliberative democracy process. Depending on the parameters of the process, the complexity of the issue or the political nature of the question, the involvement of MPs can vary. Overall, their involvement should always be considered in light of the success of the outcomes delivered by the deliberative process.

Depending on the process, MPs can participate directly in the process as members. There are benefits and disadvantages of this:

Pros:

- It uniquely builds an understanding of the methodology. This allows MPs to develop their understanding that is useful when publicly communicating the process, building support for action on recommendations and support for future deliberative processes.
- It develops a two-way understanding between citizens and MPs, communicating the political context of an issue and explaining the stories and capacity of the everyday people in the room.
- It provides an opportunity for MPs to raise specific constituent concerns that they otherwise represent in a parliamentary process.

Cons:

- MPs can exert an influence on a process that is different to the dynamic between a mix of everyday people. This means it is necessary to consider the ratio of MPs to citizens, keeping it balanced so a high level of deliberation is maintained.
- Their involvement can distract from a focus on the topic because of the way it can politicise the process through their direct involvement.

Typically, MPs are not directly involved as participants. This is because they have many already established roles and opportunities for input. They can:

- Attend as observers where they watch without any involvement or contribution to the process.
- Attend as speakers where they contribute as an expert witness in a facilitated session.
- Attend as a stakeholder or advisor where they contribute to the Stakeholder Reference/Advisory Group (see above) or evaluate recommendations after the process[25].

Throughout the process, MPs should be encouraged to share their perspectives on the process including their interactions with citizens (emphasising their everyday-ness) and the breadth of views considered. However, it is important that MPs refrain from communicating their own personal views and opinion to social media or the press about a particular discussion that was held during the process as it could discredit it.

After the process, MPs will play a crucial role in building public support and trust for the recommendations provided by citizens. Those involved should share their experience and explain the process through which recommendations were reached. Those who observed should comment on the fairness and unique nature of the process.

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Step 4

Continuing the conversation after the process

A key measure of success for any deliberative process is that the everyday participants can find agreement and publicly support the difficult trade-offs behind their recommendations. The public commitment that was made at the beginning of the process (refer Section 4 - 1.2 Authority) must be honoured at its conclusion. The convening authority is responsible for keeping up their end of the deal once citizens have devoted much of their time to considering a complex issue and finding common ground.

MPs have a wide range of constitutional tools at their disposal to support the implementation of outcomes from these deliberative processes. However, it is useful for the participants to understand from the outset what role parliament can play in following up on recommendations. Therefore, participants and MPs might wish to consider organising an informal session to discuss how the parliament might be able to act on each recommendation and which recommendations are outside the realm of the parliament's competencies. It is also important for participants to understand the timing required to act on a recommendation. If a deliberative process can be conducted in a few weeks, it takes parliament months to pass a new law due to parliamentary procedure. This rigorous process is important as it allows the parliament to balance the actions of the executive.

Parliament as a lawmaking institution

One of the primary roles of parliament is to pass and amend legislation introduced by the executive. Following a deliberative democracy process, some recommendations might require a new legislation to be passed or an amendment to be tabled in parliament. If the deliberative process has been conducted by the executive, it might be useful for the parliament to be informed about the deliberative process as it can give some legitimacy to the law when it is introduced in parliament.

In most jurisdictions around the world, MPs also have the right to introduce new legislation to parliament. This means in practice that parliament can act independently to push for new legislation that follows from recommendations made through a deliberative democracy process. In many countries, however, this practice is not often used and MPs might use political party structures to get the executive to introduce a new law. A law that makes it to parliament as a result of a credible deliberative democracy process will certainly carry much weight.

Parliament as an oversight body

Parliament can hold the government to account for its execution of laws, policies and expenditures. It has many tools at its disposal to do so, such as question periods, by conducting public hearings and by inviting government officials to testify before committees. Because of its 'watchdog' role, it can question the government on the implementation or lack of implementation of the recommendations. Certain recommendations could have a budgetary impact. Parliament also plays a key role in the budgetary cycle by securitising the expenditure and revenue proposals of the executive, and by overseeing their implementation.

Parliament as a representative institution

Parliament is able to channel the views and concerns of citizens to the relevant government actors. This happens through its MPs' communication and collaboration with constituents, including civil society organisations, women, indigenous peoples to ensure that the outcomes of the deliberative process are known and supported by all and that the government decisions reflect a sense of urgency to act towards these recommendations.

It is important to continue communicating with citizens after the process. Citizens can be invited to be included in a review of a government response and evaluation of implementation down the track.

After the process, the parliament, committee, or MP should organise a review that evaluates and reflects on the process, the lessons learned and how the parliament might improve on or begin institutionalising deliberative democracy processes in typical parliamentary engagement. The OECD will produce guidelines for evaluation by the end of 2021 and these should prove to be very useful to inexperienced convenors of deliberative democracy.

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Step 5

Institutionalising deliberative democracy processes?

Deliberative democracy might lead to cultural shifts in parliaments as they become more confident in the ability of this process to contribute to democratic decision making. This may lead to parliaments going the extra mile to consider making this type of innovation permanent and incorporate deliberative processes into decision making structures and rules of procedures. The case studies of Belgium and Bogota (see above) show how it is possible to institutionalise this process. Institutionalisation of deliberative processes can take different forms. A permanent or ongoing structure of deliberative democracy could be created that compliments the work of the parliament, similar to a special committee. Alternatively, under certain conditions, the parliament could be required to organise a deliberative process.

According to the OECD [26], there have only been 14 examples of institutionalized practices around the world since 2020, so this phenomenon remains relatively rare. However, there are several benefits of institutionalising deliberative democracy. As with the one off deliberative democracy process, institutionalisation can help to consolidate trust in decision makers and MPs. Moreover, once MPs and staffers know and understand the process, institutionalisation can lead to increased efficiency and cost saving.

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If deliberative democracy is one of the innovative ways to actively involve citizens into decision making processes, it is not the only one. Parliaments have made incredibly progress in the past decade to increase participation of citizens into their processes, communicate and reach out to integrate people's views into their work. Members of parliament have gone beyond their constituency surgeries to increase outreach using technology and social media to collect this constituency feedback.

With the 'new deliberative wave' sweeping across the world, political decision makers and parliamentarians might be confronted to deliberative democracy. Even if the majority of deliberative processes are not yet initiated by parliaments, it is our hope that many parliaments around the world will surf on the wave and push the boundaries of this innovative model of involving citizens in decision making. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy and other democracy support organisations can play a role in supporting parliaments to roll out deliberative democracy processes, sharing global experience and innovation, and working with local civil society organisations, academia and think tanks to ensure these democratic innovations become sustainable in the long run.

By defining deliberative democracy, its value to decision-makers, the essential principles that should be adhered to, and many examples of such processes throughout the world, the report identifies lessons—positive and negative—that may be learnt from each. It also suggests some of the steps parliaments will need to put in place to conduct such a process.

The report does not cover in great detail how to deliver a deliberative process but there is assistance to be found in the Resources at the end of this document. There is plenty of valuable support, advice, learning is available from people and organisations around the world.

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Resources: Websites

Democratie Brussels
https://democratie.brussels/

This is the website for the Brussels Deliberative Committees, it explains their method and provides essential information for committees currently underway.

Doing Deliberative Democracy, The newDemocracy Foundation and University of Technology Sydney
https://open.uts.edu.au/uts-open/study-area/public-policy--governance/doing-deliberative-democracy/

This is an online course developed by The newDemocracy Foundation and the University of Technology Sydney. This short course is specifically designed for community engagement staff and professional facilitators who want to learn about specific deliberative engagement phases and methods and how they differ from traditional participation methods. Engage in self-paced online activities, interact in group work, participate in live webinars to master deliberative process design and delivery, to address the most complex issues in various communities.

Ireland's Citizens' Assembly
https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/what-we-do/what-we-do.html

The Irish Citizens' Assembly is one of the icon deliberative democracy projects. It is made up of 99 everyday citizens and they are tasked with considering a range of different topics given to them by the Irish Parliament having emerged from the Irish Constitutional Convention.

IIDP, How to run a citizens' assembly
https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/reports/2020/IIDP-citizens-assembly.pdf

The IIDP handbook on 'How to run a citizens' assembly' is an essential resource for anyone considering or planning to run a deliberative process. Starting with the question of whether or not to run a citizens' assembly, the handbook moves chronologically through the different stages involved with planning, organising and delivering a successful process.

The newDemocracy Foundation
Has a series of brief research notes that explain many aspects of deliberative democracy

https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/research-and-development-notes/

and as well as examples of the projects newDemocracy has undertaken.
https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/category/library/our-work/

The OECD (2020)
Has published a very influential report that outlines principles essential for the credible delivery of deliberative processes and an explanation of the growth of deliberative democracy throughout the world.

https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/catching-the-deliberative-wave-launch-event.htm

Podcast series: Facilitating Public Deliberations
Produced by The newDemocracy Foundation (2020)

https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/category/library/podcast/

With over 40 episodes, this podcast hosts some of the world's leading deliberative democracy practitioners and considers a wide range of topics focusing on facilitation and delivery of deliberative processes.

UNDEF (2019)
Enabling National Initiatives to take Democracy Beyond Elections, available online:

https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/newDemocracy-UNDEF-Handbook.pdf

The UNDEF Handbook was written by The newDemocracy Foundation and covers every single aspect of a deliberative democracy process right from the political decision making to initiate a project through to the day-by-day facilitation and delivery of the project itself.

We the Citizens (2011)
We the Citizens Speak up for Ireland. Participatory democracy in action – a pilot. This is the final report from the Irish 'We the Citizens' project that demonstrated the effectiveness and capacity of a national level deliberative process to consider a range of constitutional issue.

http://www.wethecitizens.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/We-the-Citizens-2011-FINAL.pdf

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[2] There is considerable research that demonstrates the impact of public deliberation on trust: trust in one's fellow citizens, in deliberative methods and in appreciation of the challenges of governing. For example, Gastil et al (2008) finds that jury deliberation promotes more positive civic attitudes. Gastil and Warren (2015) explore the impact of citizen-developed information statements on the wider population and conclude that deliberative mini-publics can act as trust proxies for the public. Weymouth et al (2020) examine deliberative mini-publics in Western Australia and compare these with the background trust in government. The increase in trust for the deliberating participants was significant. Also see Shelley Boulianne: Building Faith in Democracy: Deliberative Events, Political Trust and Efficacy (2018): https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0032321718761466

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[3] Ieva Cesnulaityte, 'A deliberative wave for development?', OECD blog, 16 May 2021: https://oecd-development-matters.org/2021/03/16/a-deliberative-wave-for-development/

[4] For more information regarding different models of deliberative democracy: https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/2017/05/08/forms-of-mini-publics/

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