

Civil servants' attitude towards citizens and integrating citizens' inputs

Inclusive Models for Public Service



APPENDIX 2

Document summary

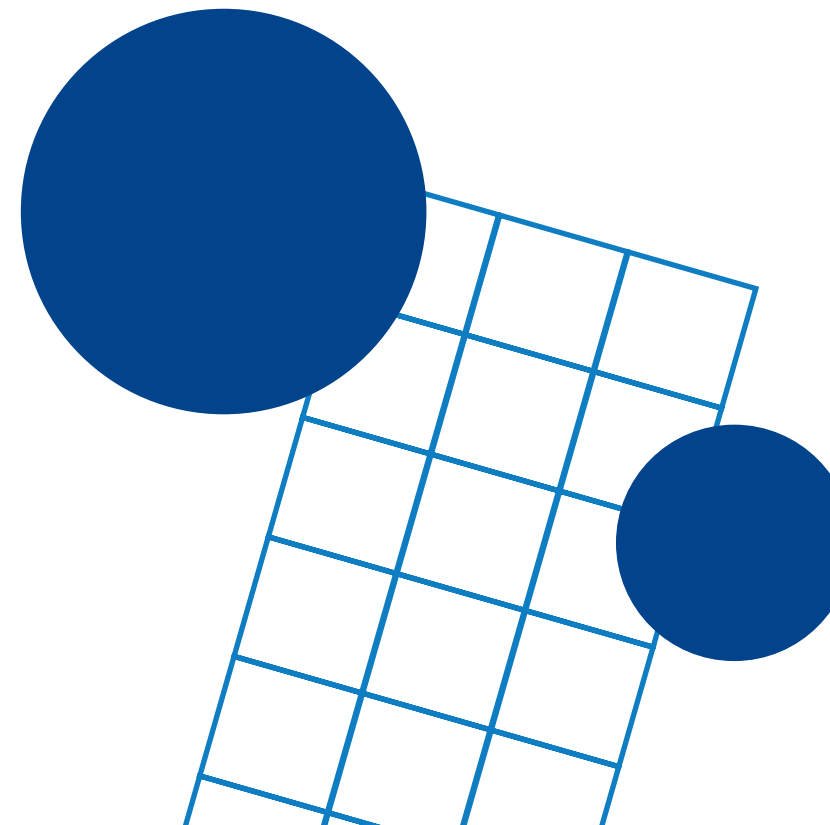
This training material was prepared within the framework of the “COMPETENCE – Capacity building Of eMployees of municIPalitiEs for beTtEr provisiON of publiC sErviCes” project funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation.

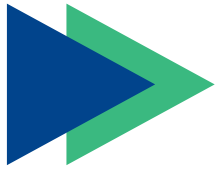
Purpose of this training material	Reference material. This material offers a starting point for planning and designing municipality projects and programs aimed at increasing the inclusion of public in civil service.
Target audience	Leadership positions at various municipality departments and institutions
Intended use	Reference material for individual reading. Leaders can independently read and apply its content in their daily work. It can also serve as discussion material for leadership & project meetings aimed at increasing the inclusion of public in civil service. It may also serve as input material for leaders of various municipality departments for defining training needs and designing training programs for their staff.



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1. PROGRAMS FOR ALL CIVIL SERVANTS

1.1. Work evaluation / Performance Assessment

Most civil servants' organisations/government institutions do not have any form of self-evaluation methods in the sense that there is an organised human resource management process that requires the employee to conduct an introspection of his work once a year. One of the forms of work evaluation is at the department/sector level where the superior leader, the boss, fills out performance assessment forms with evaluations of individual employees. This method has proven to be extremely ineffective, especially if it does not include some form of rewarding/punishing officials who have extremely good or extremely bad results. All the more so since the evaluation process itself depends almost exclusively on the position of power of the superior manager.

1.2 Designing a „customer care“ protocol

Receiving feedback from the public is an important step in public participation¹:

1. Suggestion forms

Suggestion forms allow practitioners to acquire information on public concerns through suggestion boxes, mails, emails or web-based techniques. It is an easy and convenient way to gain feedback.

2. Surveys and polls

Surveys and polls are excellent ways of gathering information about a service from the public. Organisations can obtain rich sources of data containing citizens' knowledge, attitudes and behaviour to improve their service and deliver better outcomes.

3. Interviews

Interviews are one-to-one meetings with citizens or stakeholders to gather information about a service and understand how effectively their need was fulfilled. Participation in an interview should be voluntary either in person or through the internet. However, face-to-face interviews are generally more beneficial to acquiring relevant information.

4. Community facilitators

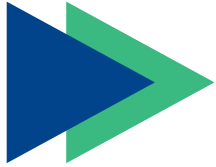
Community facilitators are qualified individuals or professionals who are responsible for project outreach in local communities. If selected and trained carefully, they can obtain relevant information efficiently.

1 <https://wesolve.app/techniques-to-provide-and-recieve-feedback/>

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), 2018. IAP2 Spectrum of public participation²

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Fact sheets → Websites → Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Public comment → Focus groups → Surveys → Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Workshops → Deliberate polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Citizen Advisory Committees → Consensus-building → Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Citizen juries → Ballots → Delegated decisions

2 <https://wesolve.app/what-is-public-participation-the-definition-and-two-frameworks/>



2. PROGRAMS FOR CITIZEN INCLUSION

2.1 Building participatory models/tools of decision-making processes

Participatory democracy is a form of democracy that ensures continuous participation of responsible and informed citizens in political decision-making processes. It is a socially inclusive process of decision-making, public policies or the implementation of projects of common interest that enables the creation of a collaborative relationship between

„More open and inclusive states and societies tend to be more prosperous, effective and resilient.“

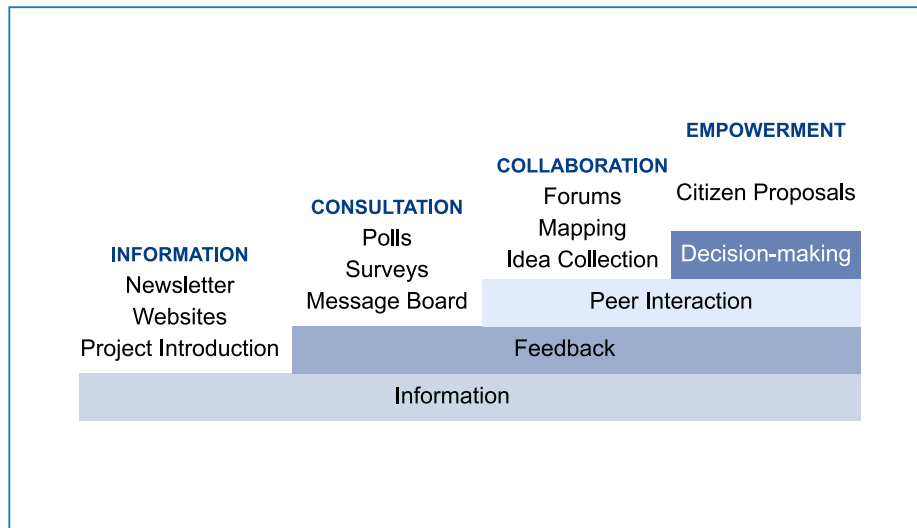
citizens and government representatives. Cooperation and joint problem-solving results in more appropriate solutions in accordance with the needs of citizens, with the ultimate goal of long-term community development.

ADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATORY MODELS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

- Developing a partnership/relationship between public authorities, the private sector, civil society and interested citizens.
- It contributes to the quality of community development and more effective prioritisation for the community.
- The democratic nature of the process legitimises the decisions made.
- Joint responsibility for the result of all participants in the processes.
- It increases trust in decision-making processes and in government institutions.
- It strengthens the role of citizens, especially vulnerable groups.
- It motivates citizens to be more active in the community.
- Citizens are informed about the process of managing public affairs and money, and included in the decision-making process, thereby realising the right to active participation in the political process.
- By implementing requested projects/requests, the city or municipality improves its relationship with the citizens.
- Citizens are more familiar with the powers of the local government and have a more realistic picture of the limited resources at their disposal.
- Transparency and accountability are promoted which reduces the possibility of corruption.
- Citizens' trust in institutions and their representatives is strengthened and the level of political culture is raised.

PHASES OF THE PARTICIPATIVE DECISION-MAKING MODEL PROCESS

1. Political will and decision
2. Planning (action plan, budgeting)
3. Public presentation of the project on the content and performance of the project, benefits and experiences of other local self-government units
4. Public invitation to citizens (stakeholders) to apply
5. Valorisation of proposals within the relevant departments
6. Presentation of proposals and selection of priority projects by vote of those who are present
7. Adoption of the action plan/budget/final document
8. Implementation of adopted projects in the next budget year



The four levels of participation

PREREQUISITES FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

Availability to all (interested) members of the community.

Direct participation of all (interested) community members.

Transparency of the process - for the sake of trust in the process and the decision itself, deliberation (confrontation of arguments) is the basic decision-making method.

Skills and time to strengthen the capacity of the community to be involved in the process.

Human capacities and support (volunteers, city officials, organisations).

Public communication of the entire process, well-informed community members with clear instructions about the entire process and methods of participatory budgeting.

Communication of the exact amount of funds to be decided on.

CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Costs

A major internal challenge in public participation is inadequate financial and human resources. Involving the public in decision-making is time-consuming and costly in terms of money and energy. Starting from the planning process, it needs a lot of time to establish a meaning process that can effectively engage people and their thoughts. Administrators already have a heavy workload, so it is challenging for them to spend more time and energy on public engagement. In addition, the arrangement of forums, workshops or public meetings requires adequate funds, long preparation time and enough staff. Compared to the benefits, the transaction cost may be even higher. Therefore, conducting a participation project at a low cost is challenging.

2. Lack of skilled facilitators

Some administrators who organise the public engagement process are not equipped with engagement skills. They may also have less experience in public participation. Skilled practitioners are critical to the success of participation as they can facilitate the process, maintain a good relationship with citizens and generate better results. Although

some agencies offer external service, courses or workshops to train the administrators about public participation, they are often expensive and do not take the context into consideration. In fact, a simplified engagement process that the practitioner can easily practice is more practical and beneficial.

3. Low efficiency

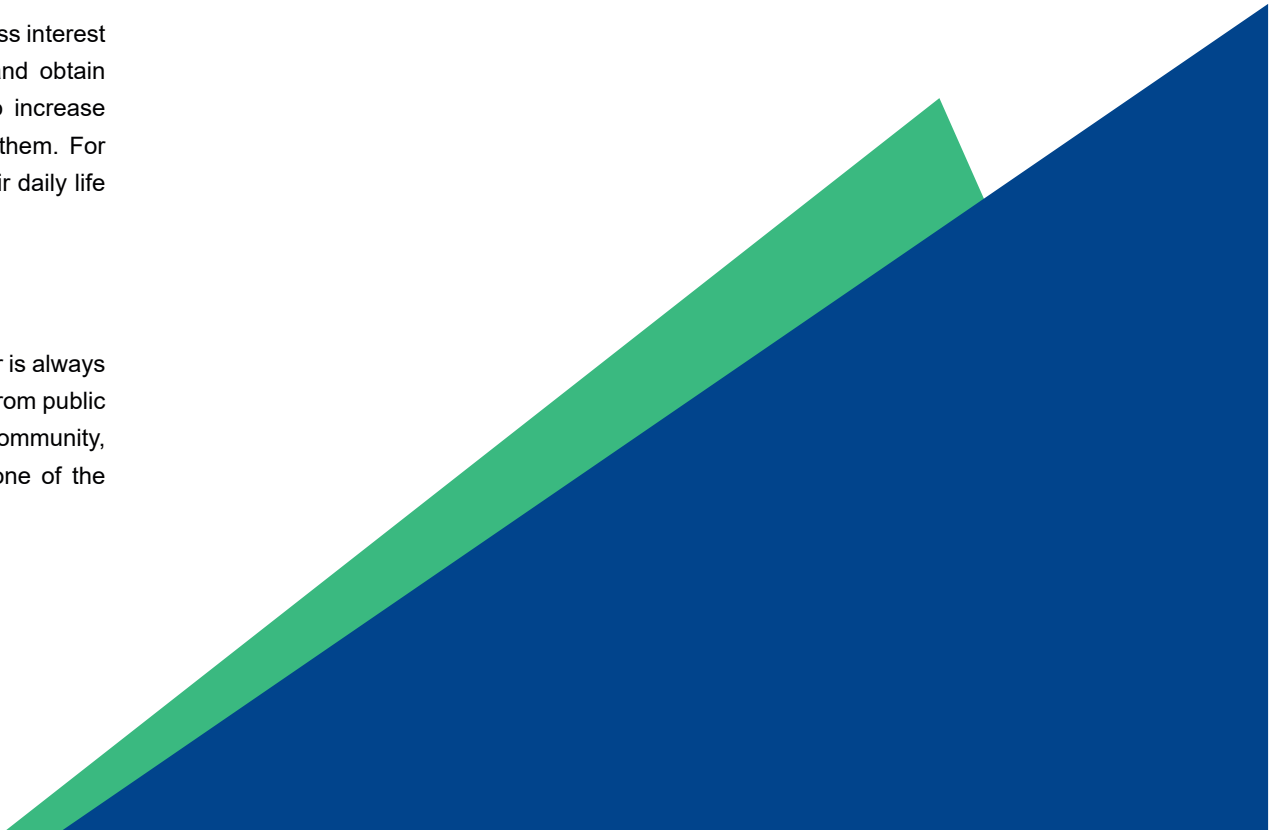
Participating in public meetings is usually not a priority for people when competing with work, household or other daily obligations. Less time is available after completing daily chores which makes the engagement more difficult. Furthermore, traditional public engagement approaches generally take a longer time with less satisfying results, leading to an even lower rate of participation. Thus, increasing the efficiency of the participation approaches without compromising the outcomes is an urgent need.

4. Public not interested in participation

Another external factor of the low participation level is that the public shows less interest in public matters. How to motivate the citizens, stimulate their interests and obtain meaningful inputs are the questions that practitioners need to answer. To increase the participation level, we can provide multiple ways and opportunities to them. For example, encouraging the public to participate in public issues related to their daily life or offering rewards for participation are possible solutions.

5. Language barrier

In the context where it has a variety of nationalities, culture or language barrier is always a problem. People who do not master the local language are often excluded from public meetings simply due to the language barrier. Especially in an international community, language is the main reason for excluding immigrants and foreigners as one of the marginalised groups.



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