

Improving Engagement



How can organisations improve citizen engagement, to secure better policy outcomes and more empowered citizens?

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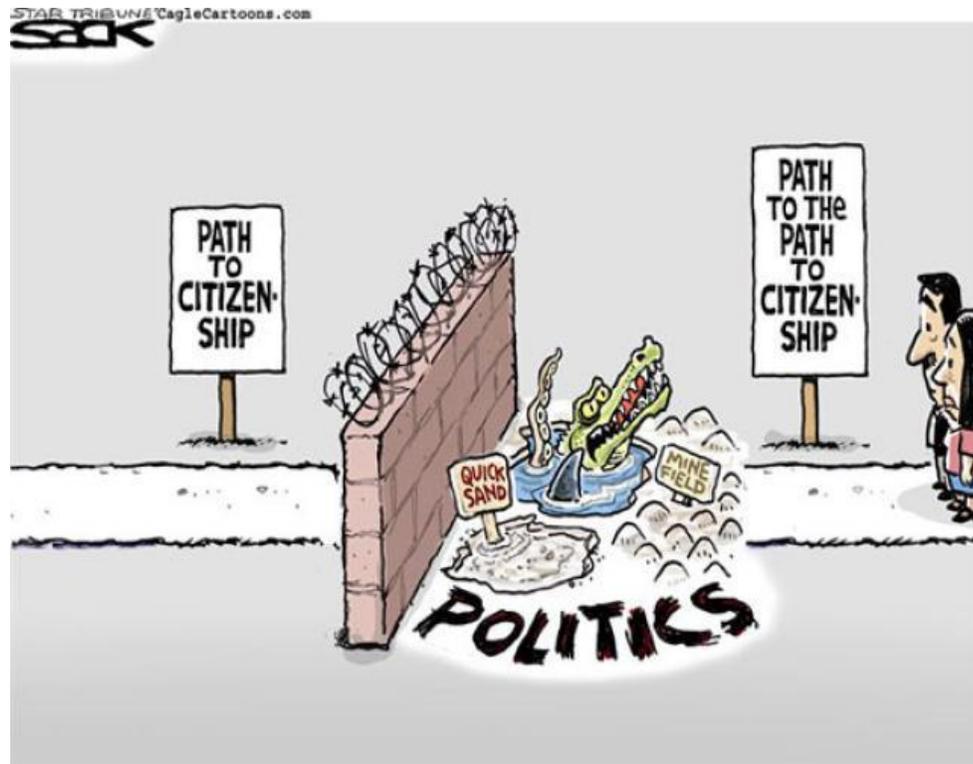
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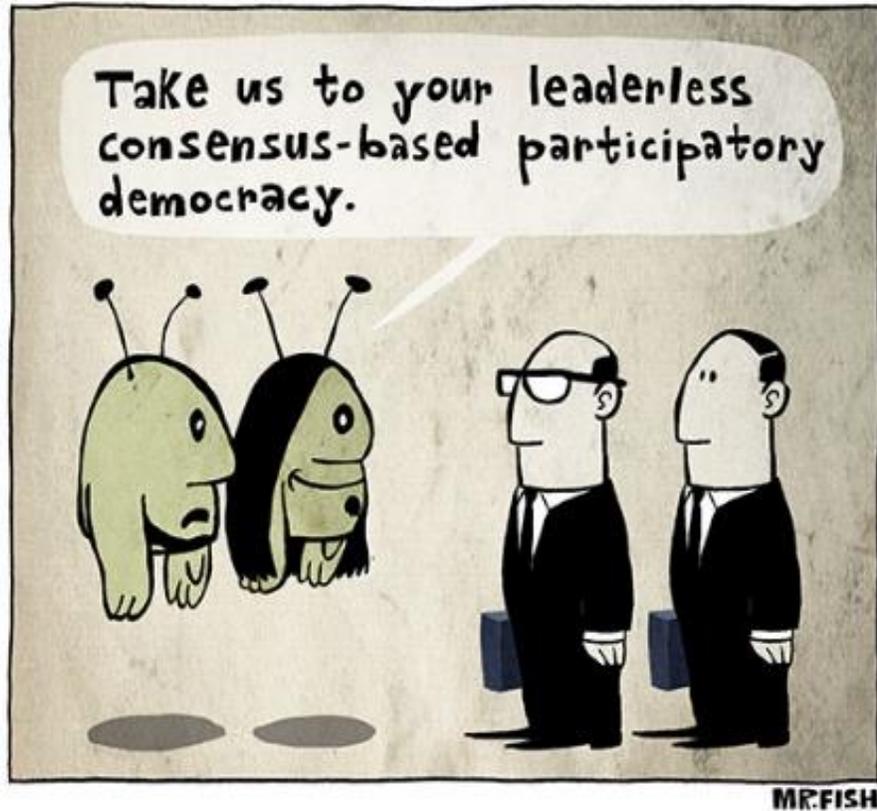
Open Government



Government works better for citizens when it's transparent, engaging and accountable.

- Transparency – opening government data and information in areas such as public spending, government contracts, lobbying activity, the development and impact of policy, and public service performance.
- Accountability – rules, laws and mechanisms that ensure government listens, learns, responds and changes when it needs to.
- Participation – involvement of citizens and other stakeholders in policy-making and decision making processes

Open Policy-making



In a democracy, public opinion should influence policy.

Open policy-making means enabling people to **influence and enhance** policy during its formulation.

It's not about a better form of consultation, it's about cooperative problem-solving.

The benefits of participation in policy-making include: better policy outcomes; better service delivery; more engaged and empowered citizens.

Rules of Engagement

A good deliberative public engagement process makes a difference – to participants, to decisions and to policy.

The process:

- is transparent
- has integrity
- is tailored to circumstances
- involves the right number and types of people
- treats participants with respect
- gives priority to participants' discussions
- is reviewed to assess what has been achieved and evaluated to improve practice

Citizens' Assembly

A citizens' assembly is a group of citizens selected at random from the population (but 'stratified' to increase representativeness) to learn about, deliberate upon, and make recommendations in relation to a particular issue.

They are not politicians or representatives of civil society organisations or other groups. They are regular citizens.

Citizen Assemblies build on the idea of 'deliberative democracy' and emphasise the importance of reflection and informed discussion in decision-making.

Deliberation allows people to adopt more nuanced positions on the issues at hand, with a better understanding of the trade-offs inherent in a given decision

Participatory Budgeting

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Real money, real decisions, real responsibility

Devolved leadership connecting with communities

Combining experiences and energies mutual respect and understanding

Stronger partnership working altruism and wellbeing

Co-production deliberative spaces **tackling the democratic deficit**

Participation alongside representation

Connected communities and infectious ideas

Forging relationships **building social capital**

- It's an innovative way to fairly and transparently invest funds into the community through a process that enables citizens to deliberate on priorities.
- It's about local people making direct decisions about how to spend some of their public money.
- It's about tackling inequalities, solving local problems and connecting with communities.
- It's about empowerment, meaningful engagement and achieving outcomes that people want.

NI Executive Commitment

Commitment: To explore, develop and trial creative and effective open policy-making and public engagement methods and share the learning across government.

Objective: To embed a culture of proactive and meaningful engagement with the public across government departments to ensure that public input contributes in a meaningful way to policy formulation.

Milestone: Government and civil society to co-design a pilot project to test open policy making methodology locally.

Timeline: December 2016 – May 2018

Useful Links

Report to support public sector organisations wishing to develop or mainstream PB initiatives:

<https://pbnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/PB-Mainstreaming.pdf>

Guide written by [PB Partners](#), at the request of the Scottish Government, to support the £2m [Community Choices](#) programme:

<https://pbnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Grant-Making-through-Participatory-Budgeting.-A-guide-for-Community-Choices.pdf>

Irish Citizens' Assembly: <https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/Home/>

UK Citizens' Assembly on Brexit: <http://citizensassembly.co.uk/>