Monitoring Social Participation: implementing the C.L.E.A.R model

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Why is social participation important

- Provides the bedrock of democracy
- Drives effective communication between governors and governed: learning, trust and capacity to govern
- Improves service delivery through knowledge exchange
- Supports service delivery through co-production

Why monitor social participation?

- It is important to audit what is done and not done in all area of public policy
- The responsibility of public authorities to respond to citizens' initiatives but also to be aware of gaps and omissions
- Consider issues of equity, variety and impact of engagement
- A question of judgement : how much participation do citizens want?
- Citizens' willingness to engage is not fixed but will reflect their sense of how public authorities are likely to respond

Existing research can be used to build an audit framework

- There is a lot of research done in this area:
- By surveys
- By case studies
- Even using randomised control trials
- That research is captured and then presented in an audit framework: C.L.E.A.R
- Developed initially in work for the Council of Europe
- Used by public authorities in a spirit of open-minded investigation

To explore further

- Set out the Framework
- Discuss the nature of the Audit process it supports
- Consider how to put it into practice
- Look out how to respond to the lessons it reveals

CLEAR: an audit framework

Factor	Research Insight	Audit check
Can do	Resources matter: those in the control of the individual and those they can get access to	The resources that people have or can be offered access to as well as their confidence to use them
Like to	Feeling a part of something stimulates a willingness to engage	A sense of involvement with the public entity that is the focus of engagement
Enabled to	Participation is most often done collectively rather than individually	The civic infrastructure of organizations that organize participation
Asked to	Mobilizing people into participation by asking for their input can make a big difference	How are citizens mobilized, what variety of approaches are on offer, who is reached
Responded to	Judgements about the openness of the political system and its responsiveness are vital	Listening and responding: what systems are in place to deliver that?

C.L. E.A.R Audit : What type of framework is it?

- Its not about providing exact measure of social participation
- Its not about alarm bells
- Its acts like a tin opener …it enables exploration and investigation of what goes on inside
- C.L.E.A.R framework is an aid to dialogue and debate
- Used by public authorities best it collaboration with civic society institutions

Putting C.L.E.A.R into practice

- Use existing data sources where possible to keep down costs
- In-house expertise or employ specialist consultants
- Mix collecting quantitative information (e.g. those around skills with qualitative techniques such as interviews or focus groups.
- The precise mix will depend upon the resources available to the organisation and the amount of effort they want to commit to the diagnosis.
- Important that the net is spread sufficiently widely to encourage appropriate learning
- Can undertake an initial diagnosis in-house extending the process

More on putting into practice

- For each of the five factors the tool provides a series of indicative questions (See Appendix A of paper).
- These questions suggest the types of issues that users of the tool might want to investigate under that heading.
- Not all questions will be relevant in every context.
- Moreover, in different local or national contexts it may be necessary to adapt the questions to suit the type of data that is available.

Where problems are identified solutions can be found

- Social participation presents complex challenges
- Public authorities can make a big difference by the way they work
- Quick wins not easy to get but a long-term commitment to engagement brings reward
- A vast amount of accessible international experience

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For instance, there will be articles on the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly of 2004, consensus conferences in Denmark, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre and other cities, local school council governance in Chicago, municipal evaluation meetings in China, and the People's Campaign for Democratic Decentralization (under the Panchayati Raj reforms) in Kerala, India. In addition, there will be articles on participatory methods, such as deliberative polling, citizens' assemblies, and participatory budgeting, as well as articles about the organizations that sponsor, implement, and study participatory governance. Over time, we hope Participedia will garner hundreds and perhaps thousands of such articles.
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Policy and Strategic Responses to Audit Lessons

Policy Response
CAN DO Capacity Building aimed at individuals or communities
LIKE TO Sense of community, civic engagement, social capital and citizenship
ENABLED TO To support the civic infrastructure: a set of viable civic institutions or stepping back to allow support to emerge
ASKED TO Public participation schemes that are diverse and reflexive : lessons abound
RESPONSED TO A public policy system that can show a capacity to respond makes a difference

Final reflections

- The offer of participation can be there and sometimes citizens will take it up and sometimes they will not.
- We know from research that there are reasons why citizens do not want to engage in civic or political life
- But equally we know that citizens' interest in engagement is not fixed and above all depends on signals sent out by public authorities.
- If you ask citizens if their interest would increase if the political or decision-making system was more open and fairly constructed a substantial proportion switch to wanting to engage more(you also get a response if you offer a negative trigger).

Conclusion

- The C.L.E.A.R tool is designed to be adaptable and usable in a variety of settings

- The C.L.E.A.R framework is about attracting citizens back to public decision-making for positive reasons- because barriers are removed ,openness is promoted and responsiveness delivered