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A JOINT RESEARCH PROJECT  
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ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC  
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CHARLES F. KETTERING  
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SCOTLAND

# PAINTING THE LANDSCAPE

A CROSS - CULTURAL EXPLORATION OF  
PUBLIC - GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING

## 1.1. Scotland

### Findings

Participants of this research were sourced from various organizations and positions in Scotland including Federally elected official, Local Administrator, NGO Leaders and Public participation practitioner.

#### Research Question 1

**What is the nature of public participation/deliberation in government decision-making processes across different cultures?**

Scotland is part of the British constitutional monarchy. The Scottish Parliament has "devolved administration for Scotland, dealing with all devolved issues independently of the UK Government. Devolution is the delegation of power from a central government to local bodies. This enables decisions to be made at a level closer to the point at which they have an impact. However, some areas remain reserved to the UK Parliament such as Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security, and Social Security."<sup>1</sup>

Interviewees from Scotland as part of this project placed more emphasis on the economic aspects of government decisions as the driver of regeneration, and the population generally is distrustful of political leaders.

Echoing this tension, a Scottish public participation practitioner said "one of the biggest problems in the United Kingdom" was that "Britain is probably the most centralized country in the OECD; so much power is wielded by central government and treasury." Specifically, this individual noted that "the British local authority would control about 30 percent of its own finance."

In addition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a radical role and are able to effect change without government agreeing it first. However, an NGO interviewee pointed to instances of cooperation with the Scottish Parliament. "We've had a number of events like that in the Scottish parliament, where it's been quite active and they've presented issues in an active way," this individual said.

#### Context of Public Participation

Another NGO leader described how the local Council played a role in encouraging community-based participation. "We spent a lot of time, supported by community

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<sup>1</sup> 2009. Scotland, The Official Online Gateway. <http://www.scotland.org/about/fact-file/government/index.html>. Accessed October 28, 2009.

development workers, just to discuss with communities what part they would like,” this person said. “That really came from, again, it has been a strong history lesson in [community name], so I suppose the initial impetus came from [community name] Council and the sort of democracy strategy. Again, way back when it was first a unitary authority first coming into authority, very much of it investing in the good people, investing in community councils, investing and making sure that the community are supported and empowered to be able to engage within the democratic structure.”

An NGO leader also noted how “gypsy travelers” have been involved, a term that seemed to imply the presence and influence of social advocates who work across borders in Western Europe. “What they've gone on to do is get involved in young people in Poland and Sweden and various things,” said the interviewee, “and learn from them what does participation mean in Sweden, what does it mean in Poland.” This NGO leader also noted the use of “methods from overseas,” such as participatory appraisal methodologies.

An NGO leader characterized the essence of public participation and deliberation within his organization as spurring the question, “where are the collective issues that we need to be tackling as a community partnership?”

Here, as in Sweden, the influence of business-oriented measures such as outcome agreements is seen. “For example,” this interviewee said, “there is an Audit Scotland study that suggests that a community planning partnership should be moving toward an outcome focus, especially because the Executive is keen to focus on outcome agreements, so we pre-empted that and started moving toward that in the community plan.”

This NGO leader also described how decisions are taken as a result of a desire for an outcome-based document:

There is an outcome agreement that again says that this is our 15-year vision; within the first 3 years, what do we have to do and who do we have to please as outputs to get us to the outcome? That was the broad, high-level stuff that we tackled, and that will be tackled really with the senior players, because at my level and others at my level or even at the service level, there is only so much you can infringe on that debate – it really needs to be the leaders and the politicians and the elected board members and it needs to be the chief executives because you have that debate about how they will organize the priorities to make sure that we meet these high-level outcomes. That debate happens in the new structure around the new steering group if you like where people will discuss and debate and have that going.

Expectations for public participation and deliberation include improved levels of participation and the benefits of “a process of continuous improvement,” according to a public participation practitioner. “...That is why we have continued to work together as a network, even when the funding has run out.”

## Research Question 2

### How do different cultures support or provide space for public participation/deliberation in government decision-making processes?

This research question sought to understand how different cultures – and in turn, different associated governments – provide support for or how they facilitate the practice of public participation among those they serve. Like all countries included in this study, Scottish participatory or deliberative processes is related to how participation/deliberation is conceived and defined. We identified support for public participation/deliberation in the data through responses to interview questions concerning how such processes are defined, how people access such processes and the specific tools or practices that are used to support engagement.

### How is public participation/deliberation defined?

This part of our research focused on how public participation is defined and the corresponding design framework.

### Concept of Public Participation

Public participation and deliberation in Scotland are represented by a range of conceptual definitions. These include:

- **An understanding of consultation that may differ from public participation**, according to a federally elected official: “I think it depends. I think there can be entity support, there can be entities, but there can also be entity cynicism if they don’t think that there has been any real effect. And I think at the moment in Scotland, we talk about consultation all the time – consultation is very different from participation for me.” For this person, “consultation is about going out there and explaining to people what you want to do and asking for their views. And that is good and necessary and a good thing, but there is no requirement on people to do anything other than respond if they feel like it.” This is contrasted with public participation: “Participation should be about going one step beyond that and facilitating and organizing for people, not only to be given the opportunity to become involved in that consultation, so that they are very much a part of the decision making process.” Here, a consideration of views is essential. “I think the secret to it is about being inclusive and also being able to demonstrate that there has been a consideration of those individuals’ views,” said this interviewee. “So public participation is about starting with a – you can start with a blank sheet of paper and see what would ideally you like. And then you take it to the stage which is, in an ideal world, what an individual would like and then you talk about the realities.”
- **Taking part.** To a Scottish NGO leader, “participation means coming along. Coming along and taking part.” This interviewee also said the participation pursued by this particular organization was defined as “developmental,” oriented towards capacity building.
- **“Creating a focus,”** according to a Scottish NGO leader.

- **Governance-based.** A public participation practitioner said that “participation is very much a part of the quality of governance. Governance is about leadership. It is about participation and it is about partnership, in a sense.” Further, leadership and participation are joined together through partnerships. “Leadership, I often say, is the reverse of the coin of participation. You do not find good participation where you do not have strong leadership. You can invite people to participate, but if you actually want to listen and implement some of what they are concerned about, you also need leadership. Partnership is where you link people together, including the volunteering, the business sector in a kind of a common agenda for local governance.”
- **Making a difference, responding to needs.** “Public participation are two things,” said a local administrator. “One, it’s about people actually being active in their own lives and in their own communities’ lives. And that may be about putting on activities, putting on – delivering services themselves. Having groups which are alive and like real. But it’s also about making sure that it’s that very local activity connects into the things that make a difference in people’s lives and the public decision-making that happens.” In addition, “whether that is local government, whether that is other public services, it’s actually about making sure that there is an in to those. And so that the decision making at those levels reflects also what people are looking for in the individual communities as well.”

## Common Terms

Common terms for public participation or deliberative activities in Scotland used by interviewees included public consultation (federally elected official), participating (NGO leader) and civic forum (NGO leader).

In response to this question a local administrator observed, “I suppose the term engagement is sometimes used, but I don’t actually think that means all of, about participation. It’s about becoming involved, it’s about having an influence and it’s about partnership working.”

## Justifications

Justifications provided for public participation/deliberation reflected more than a dozen different institutional, social and political factors (some factors are grouped together below).

### *Awareness*

- **Public participation as important and in need of continual improvement.** “So I do think that there has been a recognition that public participation is really, really important,” said a federally elected official. “And we’re getting better at it, but I think we still have a long way to go.”
- **Gathering views and raising awareness.** An NGO leader said it was important to obtain children’s views on poverty. “It’s about finding from young people the

way they think, the way they – and then saying to adults, actually, I work with a bunch of young people and I know this.” Moreover, “it's about raising children's awareness to their rights. It's enabling them to act on those rights and support them.” In addition, such efforts are “about broadening their horizons and developing their self-esteem.”

- **Balancing community needs.** Community processes are “about recognition of that, that if we are going to solve some of those issues, we need to actually put some things as an intermediary between the individual community and the broader council area,” said a local administrator.

### *Advocacy*

- **Supporting children's rights, and acknowledging children as originators of solutions.** One NGO leader is associated with a child rights organization. “First and foremost, that's what we are,” said this person. “We are a child rights organization. Because we are a child rights organization, we feel that children and young people need to be seen as full participatory members of any community, with all the rights that that bestows. Unfortunately, adults – there are laws to cover indiscriminate violence against adults, but for some reason children seem to always be the brunt of indiscriminate violence. A whole range of things.” For this interviewee, “it's about seeing that children have a part to play. They should be seen as solutions to problems.”
- **Changing government policy.** The “main rationale” for public processes “is actually to change what you might call the hearts and minds of government officers and elected members to encourage them to be more receptive to community participation, and to see its benefits,” said a public participation practitioner.

### *Engagement*

- **Addressing social exclusion and building capacity.** Such efforts have been “about addressing their social exclusion through their participation in community development and regeneration,” said an NGO leader, “because we were of the view that if we gave children and young people the support and the wherewithal to engage effectively in community planning, they would be up for it basically.” In this instance, the participation of children and young people “also needed to be developmental. They had to get something out of participating in this initiative. It had to help to support their self-esteem, life skills, personal skills. They had to have a sense of achievement. Although some of these projects were quite long-term, it would be broken up into milestones of achievements. Some of the things would be writing a letter. They didn't know how to write a letter, didn't know how to use the telephone directory. Once you do a little project around writing a letter, and once you've done that and written a letter and have sent it to the leader of the council, then you would celebrate that by an activity of their choosing.”
- **Developing “a common agenda for local governance,”** according to a public participation practitioner.

- **Improving service delivery.** “Why do we have participation, why is it a good thing? Well, it is a good thing for a number of reasons; if you look at the study that I did on [subject area] in Scotland you will see that it identifies a number of the benefits of participation that includes better service delivery on a sort of a day-to-day and a year-to-year basis because nobody knows better the quality of services in the neighborhood than local residents.
- **“Benefits to strategic decision-making.”** A public participation practitioner said that “people also are entitled to participate in strategic and long-range decision-making about the city or the region or the rural county; that may be issues of transport and land-use, the location of new housing, whether we have big supermarkets, or whether we preserve small retail areas.” A local administrator said that without public participation, “We are not going to get both services that are reactive to local people’s needs. Neither are we going to get people turning out to attach the vote, unless we do something at a very local level that helps to begin to connect people between the local and the strategic, the structural issues that the council actually deals with.”
- **Support of democratic processes.** A third reason is that I would have thought that participation is fundamental to democratic processes; where people are involved in those processes, they are committed to those democratic processes, and where they are alienated from those processes or where they realize that participation is, in fact, a waste of time then they are not going to participate in democracy at any level. One of the main concerns of the [project name] is in fact that we want to reinvigorate participation at the level of the nation-state, or even at the level of Europe, we should begin in the neighborhood, actually. So the neighborhood is the foundation of participation.” A local administrator concurred, stating that public participation “has been about a belief in local democracy.”
- **Setting priorities.** A local administrator said that “local community planning is very much about process and about identifying what are these local issues that we need to work on, so we have a sense of what that is. The area community planning process is again very much a reaction about the need to make sure that there is a link between – it wasn’t enough just to do the local, there wasn’t enough of a connection, we found, once we’ve done it, between the very local and the whole council or whole community planning partnership approach.”
- **Making things better.** In sum, “it’s all about making sure that that is – there is a sort of spectrum of ways to become involved in the democratic process and that that does feed into the decision making at the end of the day, because that is what makes a difference in people’s lives,” a local administrator said.

One interviewee described the importance of engaging with stakeholders outside of one’s organization. In the community where a local administrator works, there “is participation at a very local level before they get into any form of decision making. But you need that local, you need that support for that local decision making. But you probably also need your decision makers to be committed to doing it at the end of the day, and they can often show that, both through the information that they provide, by being visible.” This interviewee also noted the value of going beyond the local community to a larger or more regional community for such processes. In one instance,

it wasn't possible for officials to "service 40 local community-planning processes. There are some issues that actually you can only deal with them on a bigger geography than the very, very local geography."

This administrator said that participatory processes are employed when there is a need. "Processes and institutions are two different things, though, aren't they? People only access the processes when they actually want to," this person said. "So I think there is often the perception from people, that they don't know what is going on or they don't know how to do it. But actually once they have a need to do it, people I think probably easily discover how to form themselves into some form of organization, districting or how to make a stink about something, which then gets them into the processes."

Sometimes there are also pressing issues that create that need. "Getting into the institutions, I think, then depends on what they are actually raising, and that's probably is still an issue that we have to work on," the local administrator said. "Is that it depends on the particular issue, how easy it is for you to actually get in and how then it's – it's secondary, how easy it is for you to make any change. Because there are some issues that are probably still more difficult or take longer."

### **Types of public participation/deliberative processes**

Types of public participation/deliberation shared by the five Scottish interviewees included three general kinds: problem-solving, addressing community issues and various partnerships.

For **problem-solving**, a federally elected official described it as working with the public to address challenges at the community level. This official shared an example that gave rise to a public participation effort, which involved a local youth who was accepted to university.

His fallback position was [university name] and he wasn't going to be able to go to [university name]," the official said. "The problem was that he had no means of getting there. Mom and dad had the car and dad needed the car to get to work. He wanted to go by public transport to [community name] and he needed to get a train from [community name] into [community name], to wait half an hour and then get a train from [community name] to [community name] and then another hour to get there. Sadly, there was nothing that I could really do to help him and he didn't want to move away. In the end, he decided that he would have to stay in [community name]. Unfortunately, his parents decided that it wasn't financially possible for him. It just struck me that it was unacceptable that we didn't have any public transport infrastructure and I started a campaign. The local community bought into, we had petitions, we started talking to people in [community name] and [community name], whether or not they would like the rail line to be open. And we're now at the stage where we are meeting in the executive to pass the legislation which will be opening the rail line.

An NGO leader spoke about how such processes **address community issues** through a local civic forum. "It's a council body that came into being relatively soon after [community name] became a unitary authority, so that was 1996, and it was established by the council as a civic forum and really as a arm's length body supported by the Council – the Council provides clerking support and admin support but it's an independent body if you like," the interviewee said. "What it does is it brings together on a quarterly basis anybody in [community name] who wishes to attend it to consider issues that are felt to have a pan-[community name] affect." There are many discussions, the NGO leader said, "and they cover the issues that we know are around our communities and that we know agencies need to do this collaborative gain around. So they are around for safety and that takes in anti-social behaviour, regeneration, the economic development, both within the cities and the city partnership, and there is also as I mentioned a rural partnership."

These **partnerships** "are around learning in its broadest sense, so that is formal learning, both from schools, colleges, and universities, but also informal learning – adult learning, community development, and youth work - young people getting with the partnership," said the NGO leader. "We also have what we call a children and young people's partnership. That is a cross between a thematic and a population based partnership but really recognizing that the children and young people are our greatest resource and asset, so there really is a need to have something that concentrates on their lives and tries to pin it together so every service agency is working together....I think it would be wrong to say that the partnership is there largely because we have community planning forums, which again are geographically based and focus on communities and community geography."

"There is also a large voluntary sector that operates in [community name] but there are also smaller communities of interest. You might not find it so easy to take part in the planning forums, so there is something around us in engaging with the voluntary sector – a need to treat them distinctly - both for us to be able to communicate and dialogue, but also as a wealth of talent and resource that the community planning can benefit from. So there is an emerging idea of what to do and the partnership around that sector."

Health is another major issue around which there are partnerships; these efforts focus on "health and equalities in health improvement because again acute care is primary care's responsibility," said the NGO leader. This kind of partnership is key:

Community planning can come into its own when it is health improvement, because if it is a health improvement aspect, that is where partnership can come into it. As you know, it is more about a life circumstance approach to health than a purely clinical approach to health, so things like your ability to access a job; your ability to have a clean, safe street; your ability to have a safe, warm home are factors in your health and your long-term health status. We look at inequalities of [name of area] Scottish areas, which is one of our more affluent communities; the health inequalities there are quite staggering, so that is about

life circumstance and health improvement. So we have a healthy [community name] partnership that focuses on that.

There are also more informal partnerships that impact community-level planning efforts, the NGO leader said. “That’s one of the good things about [community name] and the culture that [community name] has, I think, generated from its very first days, which was very much about working in partnerships – with partner regions as well as communities – so that officers within the Local authority will almost as a matter of course in the day to day working environment have to talk to my colleague in health – in the case – that’s how we work – that’s how we deliver the best quality of services. That will happen sometimes with a form of community planning badge on it, and sometimes it just happens. That’s good. That’s when community planning becomes mainstream.”

For example, this NGO leader described engaging local people through community planning forums. “We have invested a lot of time and energy in talking with local communities about the best way to seek community planning engaging with them and their common plea is don’t overload us with things,” said this interviewee. “Don’t come and talk to us on 5 different nights of the week. We are really talking about what we see as the same issue. You, as agencies, might feel that it is a different issue, but to us it is a different issue.”

Some see public participation as **a more integrated approach to common challenges**, interviewees reported. For example, an NGO leader said, “local authorities, other organizations perhaps, but particularly community planning as well, they’re all in their little silos, of course. They just see a consultation. They don’t actually see what really needs to be done before that and then afterwards, as well as during. They don’t actually appreciate all the work you need to do beforehand and how that would really benefit the quality then of the consultation. You get so much more out of it.”

A local administrator gave a specific example that demonstrated this viewpoint. “I think that the NHS [National Health Service] needs to get better at how they do it. I think there are a lot of smoke screens about, amongst the public participation and involvement in the NHS, which actually doesn’t result in anything. I also think the NHS gets utterly confused between the patient, that person who is at that moment receiving the treatment and a broader approach to participation and decision making. So I think there is a lot that can be done, that should be done in terms of NHS.”

### **Regularity/frequency**

The regularity or frequency of participatory or deliberative processes varied as reported by interviewees. An NGO leader said, “We’re working with quite a broad age as well, and these could be broken up into groups, four or five groups that we were running a week. There would be a meeting on a regular basis.” This contrasted with another NGO leader, who described a somewhat less rigorous schedule:

One of our items was to actually be clear which partnerships we needed and which bits of the structure we could do without. We stripped out a whole level of functional thematic groups and we've gone straight from the decision-makers to the critical partnerships without this level in between. The new plans say here are your terms of reference; you have to meet 6 weekly, quarterly. Your support is, a clerk from [community name] council, a support officer from the Enterprise Company, whoever that may be. Your lead officer is – now, in some cases that's me as partnership manager and in other cases, for example, it's, let me think of an example – if it is the community safety partnership, then I would support that, but if it's the area of economic department who chairs it.

At the other end of the spectrum was a public participation practitioner, who noted that a project group “originally met three times a year. The innovation, of course, was ongoing over a three-year period. But now it has moved down when it has become self-funding and we meet on an annual basis.”

### **How people access participatory processes**

Interviewees also reflected on numerous ways that access is made possible to participation for people in Scotland.

*[Editor's Note: The categories to which these strategies/techniques have been assigned were made by the project team (and not by interviewees) as one means for organizing what appear to be like activities together.]*

### **Meetings, Committees and Community Dialogue – Face to Face**

- **Constituent surgeries or opportunities for constituent service.** “So for me, an important part of the job is knowing and being around in the constituency, being accessible,” said a federally elected official, “having a constituency office, which is accessible to people, but is easily identifiable so that people know that is where they can find me, either by telephone or by showing up at the office. That I have regular surgeries [constituent meetings] as well and advertised.” For such efforts, “We just would print, write out to part of the constituency and say that I’m going to be in the area that day and if people want to see me, they can either stick a poster in their window or if they don’t want to be that obvious – sometimes people don’t – they can contact the office at that number and we can make an arrangement to go in and see them that day.” Sometimes there are also “roving surgeries” in addition to regular surgeries. These roving surgeries are “most always...typical, but I do think it’s becoming more the norm for people. Rather than for people to come to us, for us as politicians to be willing to go to them. I do think that it’s not just about making contact with people who think that they have problems or who do have problems, because often people come and see politicians at a point when they are most frustrated and are experiencing real difficulties.” The interviewee said, “for me, being a good politician is about engaging my people and doing what issues are important to them. And I think, I believe that most people are interested in politics. However, if you were to ask them if they were interested in politics, they would say to you, 'No not at all.' But

then if you have a conversation with them, they start to talk about issues which are important to them, whether it's issues about the school that their children go to or the state of the roads and the difficulties they encounter getting to work in the morning because there isn't sufficient public transport."

- **Local structure planning efforts.** "It will be the norm that communities will participate and join up their local structure plans, their development plans," said a federally elected official. "Because only by participating in the decision making process will people have ownership over the work of a local authority, the work of the national government. It's not good enough just to sometimes pay lip service. And I do think that at the moment sometimes people misunderstand the difference between consultation and participation."
- **Citizens' panels.** "There are things like a citizens' panel and it may only get certain people involved, but it's another, if you like, it's another part of saying – we are showing that we are actually listening to you," said a local administrator.
- **Civic forum.** Civic forums are "a council body that came into being relatively soon after [community name] became a unitary authority, so that was 1996, and it was established by the council as a civic forum and really as a arm's length body supported by the Council – the Council provides clerking support and admin support but it's an independent body if you like," said an NGO leader. They bring community members with community-wide concerns together on a quarterly basis. "For example, the group has "discussed anti-social behaviour and they've discussed community council boundaries – they tend to discuss issues that affect everybody" in the area served by the Council. The forum is "run by an executive group, which means a group of people supported by advisors from the partnership – the president and the board advises them."
- **Focus groups.** An NGO leader said the organization had held "focus groups with young people in [community name] and in [community name]. I've done focus groups with young care leaders, young parents."
- **Participatory appraisal methods.** "We use participatory appraisal methods, mapping and stuff like that," said an NGO leader.
- **Lobbying of government,** said an NGO leader.

### Information Sharing

- **Access through "telephone, fax, Internet, text phone if they've got one,"** said a federally elected official.
- **Videos and big brother diary room.** "What we did with the teenagers was that we asked the local high school if they would be willing to have an event where we sent a video, the kids wanted to come in and get a video on this wall with messages about what they thought about [name], what would make a better place to live, what kind of facilities did we need," said a federally elected official. "And we also had a big brother diary room." This effort "worked, because those were things that they thought were fun, too, and there was no stigma attached to them speaking of the different things. They weren't necessarily talking to old fogies. We had youth workers running it for us, and it worked."
- **Community councils that are statute-based and voluntary,** that seek to influence change and **charitable organizations** that provide services in

response to local need and may receive funding, according to a local administrator.

- **Interactive websites and email.** These are emerging, a local administrator said. “There is the beginning of a new democracy project, which is focused on a number of community councils and developing interactive websites for them. And I think that is something that we will see being developed more and more. But as more and more people use email – they use email to just keep in touch, to develop things, and particularly in the rural areas that tends to be an appropriate methodology.” However, technology “is not an appropriate way of working within the regeneration areas or the more deprived areas, because people don’t have access to that form of technology. And the reality is that to be able to do that, we still have to be able to contact people face to face.” This interviewee observed, “I think that there is only so far that technology can go if we mean more than just a reactive participation. If we actually mean proactive participation where people are actually becoming more involved in the agenda setting, then people will still need to get together to do that.” These people “will need to get together, both the support people, but also with the agencies or services that they are trying to influence.” Similarly, a public participation practitioner described the use of interactive websites as part of overall outreach efforts as well as for reaching young people. This particular tool “provides a way of asking people about their concerns and logging those concerns, and then dealing with those concerns. In [community name] it is more about involving young people in local governance.”
- **Local newspapers.** It’s important to support efforts, “like perhaps a local newspaper, having things on the news that tell people about what is going on, that show their faces and other things,” said a local administrator.

### **Community Building and Partnerships**

- **Volunteer party.** A federally elected official said, in addition to surgeries, “We also need to engage with the people every day in their lives. So there are things that we need to go out and we need to go out and try to meet people in those kinds of settings. And one of the things that I do every year is I very much appreciate the work that volunteers around the constituency do and the contributions they make to their communities. So every year through the volunteers’ week, I throw a volunteers party and we invite every volunteer organization to nominate two representatives from their organization to come along to a celebration of volunteering and they just come along – there is tea, there is coffee, home baking and they get to socialize.” These events are “good for them, because they get to make connections with other voluntary organization that they wouldn’t often have come into touch with or know existed, so it’s good in terms of networking for them. But we also make sure that there other organizations there that help with capacity building and funding, so that there is information that they can gather. And I think they appreciate just being thanked. I think that we need to do things like that just to engage with people as well.”

- **Citizens' advice partnership.** "I think that things are a lot better than they were. I don't think that we are perfect and I still think there are things that we could do that would make those things better," said a federally elected official. This interviewee provided an example:
  - "I've got a pretty good example of a [name] citizens' advice partnership, which is the first in Scotland, which is basically a dedicated service for patients who are diagnosed with cancer. It's a well-recognized fact that people who are diagnosed with cancer who are often terminally ill don't receive the financial benefits and other support that they should when they are diagnosed. And one of the reasons often for that is that they have never been engaged with the benefit system, they have never asked for any help in their lives before until the time of the diagnosis. They are so confused and upset about the diagnosis that they don't know where to turn to for help. It's important that at the point of diagnosis, that there is a recognition and answers – refer to a [name] nurse, and a [name] nurse will automatically say we'd like to set up an appointment with you at the benefit supplier who specializes in cancer. You can do this over the telephone or come to your home and they will be able to give you some real advice that will make things just a little bit easier for you. And you have the right to opt out of that, but most people don't opt out of that. What it has done is bring in [community name], I think over the last year, I think something like in the 3 million pounds that otherwise wouldn't be claimed in benefits. So that is a pretty phenomenal amount of money....But we need a system that replicates that across the country." This project in particular "came about because the director of the [name] and I had a conversation in 1999 when he told me that they had done it. [name] had done a survey, and one of the things that the cancer patients had said to [name] was that one of the things they really struggled with at the time of diagnosis was benefits (i.e. money from the State). It appeared that there was a huge problem, particularly in [community name]. Now maybe that is because we had people who had, a higher percentage of people who came from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and we also have a higher than average levels of cancer. And so those two things made - our numbers were higher, so we thought this was as good a place to start as any. I came in touch with CAB and they together, set up a joint project, which has now been running for three years and is extremely successful and has been rolled out to other parts of the country."
- **Community campaigns.** A federally elected official described a local effort to establish public transport infrastructure in response to a personal situation. "It just struck me that it was unacceptable that we didn't have any public transport infrastructure and I started a campaign. The local community bought into, we had petitions, we started talking to people in [community name] and [community

name], whether or not they would like the rail line to be open. And we're now at the stage where we are meeting in the executive to pass the legislation which will be opening the rail line." As a result, the interviewee said, "what has been very positive in the case of [community name] and [community name] is the people said – wait a minute, the positive benefits of what this means, because of being involved in campaigning. Seeing it in terms of economic regeneration for our communities, better access to public transport, access for social and employment reasons to our capitol city and to [community name] – all of those things are very positive and those outweigh the negatives. So there has been much greater support for this."

- **Special partnerships.** "We also have what we call a children and young people's partnership," said an NGO leader. "That is a cross between a thematic and a population based partnership but really recognizing that the children and young people are our greatest resource and asset, so there really is a need to have something that concentrates on their lives and tries to pin it together so every service agency is working together. I've forgotten what now. I was about to say a third partnership as well. I think it would be wrong to say that the partnership is there largely because we have community planning forums, which again are geographically based and focus on communities and community geography."
- **Informal opportunities.** "There is also informal work here," said an NGO leader. "That's one of the good things about [community name] and the culture that [community name] has, I think, generated from its very first days, which was very much about working in partnerships – with partner regions as well as communities – so that officers within the Local authority will almost as a matter of course in the day to day working environment have to talk to my colleague in health – in the case – that's how we work – that's how we deliver the best quality of services. That will happen sometimes with a form of community planning badge on it, and sometimes it just happens. That's good. That's when community planning becomes mainstream." This effort involves singling "out the people who just make these links because they know that the value they can get from making the links is much more than what they might be able to do as a single service delivery agency."
- **Leisure activities, arts and crafts.** An NGO leader described how such activities are used in day-to-day work within this respective organization. "We started off by consulting with children and young people about their local communities. We asked them, what is it like for you to live here? We did that in a number of ways. We used various methods. For example, I come up through the play-work field. So I used a lot of play, a lot of leisure activities, arts and crafts and various things like that, to work with children and young people. These were ages 9-15, by the way. Got them to create a pictorial focus, a collage basically, made up of photographs and drawings and statements, about where they live. On that collage they had highlighted all the issues for them, what they disliked about where they lived as well as lots of the issues about what they liked about where they lived....So what we got them to do then is look at all these issues that were coming out through this focus and prioritize one or two

issues that they felt they would like to work on as a project. We're working with quite a broad age as well, and these could be broken up into groups, four or five groups that we were running a week. There would be a meeting on a regular basis. But even within the groups, for example, they would be ages from 12, 13, 14, 15, some as old as 16, or they could be ages from 8, 9, 10, 11. So there was a lot of team-building, because traditionally they didn't really mix, those ages. So there was a lot of work to do with them other than just consulting them....They weren't coming because, oh, let's go and do good things for the community. They were coming for various reasons -- some, because there was nothing else to do on a Tuesday evening or whatever it was, or for that matter, most evenings. But once they were there, they really got into it.”

- **Informal collaboration with other organizations.** For one NGO, “it's very much about working with organizations to try to make contact with these kind of young people.”
- **Transnational networks.** “The process was that we used the funding to initiate a series of pilot projects in each of the [number]-member cities,” said a public participation practitioner, “and then we also met as a transnational network in each of the cities when we then became in contact with community groups and youth groups, and what not. So we assessed the quality of the innovation on a kind of a rotating transnational network; that continues to this day, although it is now a self-funding network, as opposed to one paid for by the European Commission.”

#### ***Both Meetings, Committees and Community Dialogue -- Face to Face and Community Building and Partnership***

- **Community planning processes.** “Our first starting point is always with the community itself,” said a local administrator, “so it’s by making sure that people feel like – it’s about making sure that at a local level, generally what we call the local community planning process, that people are able to have worked out a way of expressing what the local concerns are. To make sure that they are locally relevant, so that they are actually supported by other people within their communities. They then are able to negotiate, work with other agencies – they can’t always solve everything on their own. They often have to work with the service provider or the budget to be able to change things. Like for the state of the roads – you can’t actually go out and start the pot holes yourself – you have to deal with the roads authority.”
  - Specifically, this administrator said that such efforts are “about ***making sure that communities have the support, they have the skills, they have the expertise to be able to go and work, to try and negotiate and influence a service provider.*** And then hopefully to be able to work in partnership with that service provider to solve the local issue. So we do that, both at the very local level and generally through the local community planning process.” However, “we also work at sort of next level up, where in [community name] communities have been grouped into seven, what we call area community planning forums. The idea of that is to ensure that – there are some issues, that at a very local community level, that is

too small to deal with. Some of the issues can only be dealt with at a bigger level. And that is what the local community planning forums are about – they are about an opportunity for communities to come together and to identify what the common strategic issues are for their communities and to then work with the service providers, the budget holders, about how the influence change, and very much is a partnership development.”

- There is also a component related to **service delivery**. “So again, the team I manage works with the communities to be able to – so they can, say the process of identifying the issues and identifying issues between communities. But also to sort out what their response to that would be – what sort of change are they actually looking with, and then work with the service providers so that their response to that. So that the communities are actually able to work positively with those service providers.” The team’s role “is both support to communities, but also an advocate for communities. But quite often what also works is the support to the service providers. You may not have the skills and participation and community engagement so that they are both supported and coming to talk to communities. But quite often, we act as a bridge between service providers and communities about expectations and about approach so that it doesn’t become a shouting match like it can become more productive, to be in a productive working relationship.” These activities happen “across the [community name] council area, not in any one particular community.” Meetings “take place mostly in community halls, mostly community halls and local community meeting places of some description.” Overall, “local community planning is very much about process and about identifying what are these local issues that we need to work on, so we have a sense of what that is. The area community planning process is again very much a reaction about the need to make sure that there is a link between – it wasn’t enough just to do the local, there wasn’t enough of a connection, we found, once we’ve done it, between the very local and the whole council or whole community planning partnership approach.”
- **Critical partnerships and community planning forums.** “They are by and large the thematic,” said an NGO leader. “They look at some of the cross-cutting issues that either we are directly funded to tackle via the Scottish Exec, and examples of that would be community safety, antisocial behavior, regeneration, children’s education, etc. These are fund that we are directly funded through the Scottish Exec to tackle as a community planning partnership. We do have currently in a lot of cases outcome agreements to measure how we deliver or not.” Meetings tend to take place “by and large within meeting venues that are owned by one of the other community planning partner. It would be the council. It may be run by the police headquarters. It may be – in the cases with youth – [community name] royal infirmary. It may be the enterprises offices.” Moreover, “For what we do in terms of engage local people, it is really through their **community planning forums**. We have invested a lot of time and energy in talking with local communities about the best want to seek community

planning engaging with them and their common plea is don't overload us with things. Don't come and talk to us on 5 different nights of the week. We are really talking about what we see as the same issue. You, as agencies, might feel that it is a different issue, but to us it is a different issue." Further, in "a community planning partnership, what we do then is build on that and we offer every community council area the opportunity to do a local community plan. That really is to sit down, supported by the community worker and maybe supported by a worker at the national park as well, supported by motion officer or some other community police person – all of these partners – to see what the community is like. Statistically, what is it like? What does it feel like? What do people like about it? What do people not like about it? What are some of the big things that may be happening to your community? That is a very important one in [community name] just now if you look at the physical redevelopment of [community name] (and other names). It's important to think about where the community might be going and then to see in terms of the issues that are around, what are they? What are your neighbors' issues? What are your children's issues? What are your own issues? What your [minority ethnic issues? What are these issues? Define them. Then work with partners to try and find some solutions. That, in essence, is the community plan."

Providing access to public participation is "the bread and butter of politics," said a federally elected official. "So people are interested, but politicians have a job to do in trying to make what we do more relevant, but also engaging with people so that they understand what we do. And engaging with them in the process so that they feel that politics is about them and not about the politicians – it's actually about the people that we represent."

Moreover, meaningfully engaging people requires serious ongoing effort. "I think it is still a case of – it's easy if you know where to go and if you know who to speak to and to ask the right questions," said the federally elected official. "But I think we can always be striving to make it better and to make sure that services are sign posted better. It's about recognizing that sometimes there are unique groups of people who need to be sign posted to services in a particular way. It's how you do that."

There can also be obstructions to participating that are less obvious. "Somebody who has never been to a formal meeting like that, that is pretty daunting. And I think that sometimes we don't realize just how daunting it can be for people and how off-putting it can be just to make that first step through the door. So I do think we need very much to think about how we change meetings and make them less formal and more open so that people feel more comfortable," the federally elected official said.

As a result, "I think the first thing you have to do is try to engage with them socially," said this interviewee. "Then once they maybe get to know somebody, then they are much more likely to want to come along. But also to try and break down some of the formal barriers, so instead of having a meeting, say, with a top table and rows of seats, you try to set people in smaller groups. Also somebody, if you get a group of people

coming along they are all together, make sure that if they come in and sign in, every single one of them has been sent to a different group so that they will be encouraged to meet new people, to mix. And also to discover that they might have slightly different views as well, facilitate an exchange of your experience.” In addition, “improving communication” as part of encouraging participation is also important.

“And I think that once we have done all of those things, you can then start to – if you get people coming along and see what are you are dreaming, that yes, we can do all of those capacity building things,” said the federally elected official. “First of all, we need to give people the confidence to be willing to accept training and getting them to come along to meetings. We will train you to participate in a group, we will train you to achieve person skills, all of those things. I’m not going to say, because all of those things are just far too daunting for them. So making them feel included, and then they can build up to that, I think.”

Sometimes accessing participatory or deliberative processes can be difficult, depending on the issues participants “are actually raising, and that’s probably is still an issue that we have to work on,” said a local administrator. “Is that it depends on the particular issue, how easy it is for you to actually get in and how then it’s – it’s secondary, how easy it is for you to make any change. Because there are some issues that are probably still more difficult or take longer.”

Knowing the issue and the community you’re seeking to engage is especially essential. “I think what is important is that you use methods that actually suit the issue you are working on and the people and the community that you are working in. They have to be ones which are accessible, that people can get into and use,” said the local administrator. Further, there need “to be clear ways in to those service providers that allow, often quite complex issues, to be understandable and to be broken down in a way that makes sense for them. So I don’t think that there are any – there is no panacea. Absolutely no panacea, but what is actually quite important is you use what is appropriate at the time. It’s a bigger skill.”

Similarly, an NGO leader described the value of preparation. For example, “When we develop our projects, quite often we try and make sure where a group has been run, obviously it will be open access and accessible to all.” This leader also makes sure “that when they come they’ve got something to eat.” This interviewee joked, “I bribed them with chocolate and stuff like this.”

Another person also highlighted the importance of knowing the community or group to be engaged. This individual, a public participation practitioner, said “the neighborhood is the foundation of participation.” An interactive website developed for this project in turn “fosters a whole variety of innovations in participation, ranging from changing the structure of governance, decentralization, localization of service delivery right through to more technical mechanisms of participation and/ or types of participation like citizen panels and citizen juries, interactive websites which enable people to participate as individuals rather than as members of some kind of social group.”

There are numerous tools that can provide access to participation, the p2 practitioner said, “tools like scenario building, for example, focus groups, all those things. But I think that if you want to develop participation it is not very difficult to find an appropriate tool. There is a lot of ways to get people involved. You can have festivals and events.” For example, this interviewee noted that in Denmark, there are annual “three-day festivals which keep people involved.”

### **Who is included and excluded**

Interviewee responses also reflected a broad range of who is included and excluded.

### **Who is included**

These individuals and groups included:

- **Primary-age schoolchildren and teenager/young people.** “I think one of the positive things about the parliament is that, particularly of children of primary school age in the parliament, they love coming to visit and they love engaging with MSPs [Members of Scottish Parliament] and they will tell you exactly what they think, which is great,” said a federally elected official. Teenagers are also engaged. Likewise, an NGO leader noted the involvement of children and young people in what is termed “a children and young people’s partnership.” Another NGO leader also said that youth were engaged between ages 8 and 16 and a third NGO leader and also a public participation practitioner reported working with young people as well.
- **School councils**, such as through design competitions (federally elected official).
- **Patients or those who receive services and citizens’ advice partnerships** (federally elected official). Similarly, an NGO leader said that service providers were included.
- **Voluntary sector** (federally elected official). An NGO leader also concurred. “There is also a large voluntary sector that operates in [community name] but there are also smaller communities of interest. You might not find it so easy to take part in the planning forums, so there is something around us in engaging with the voluntary sector – a need to treat them distinctly - both for us to be able to communicate and dialogue [sounds like], but also as a wealth of talent and resource that the community planning can benefit from. So there is an emerging idea of what to do and the partnership around that sector.” Another NGO leader and a public participation practitioner likewise reported working with the voluntary sector.
- **Local officials (staff and elected) and other professionals.** This includes “The local authority, other parts of the local authority or other community planning partners,” said a local administrator. “So it could be NHS, it could be the police, for instance, depending on the sorts of issues that people are raising,” as well as “the community itself.” An NGO leader concurred, stating that there are often informal discussions between local officers. A third NGO leader has worked with council-based local authorities and professionals including “teachers, head

teachers, nurses, ...youth justice, police.” A public participation practitioner said, “sometimes I am advising city councils on their participation program right across the local authority.” This person also engages “local government officers and elected members.”

- **Community members.** A local administrator said, “local community planning processes typically involve “people who are interested in what happens in their communities. In that sense, it is very obvious. But it can be a fairly wide ranging set of people – it can be people who have been involved in other types of community activity, so they may be part of an existing community organization of some description.” However, “it can often been a way in for people who have not otherwise been involved, but who actually want to – mainly because they feel that some of the existing organizations are a little bit more on the results than the usual suspects, and it’s a way in for them. So that happens in local communities and it happens in lots of different ways.” These “audiences still tend to be predominantly White and of a certain age in the adult community, but I think that’s throughout Scotland – I don’t think that we are that different in that,” said the interviewee. In terms of community members, an NGO leader described how the local civic forum “brings together on a quarterly basis anybody in [community name] who wishes to attend it to consider issues that are felt to have a pan-[community name] affect.” This leader also detailed how local department heads are involved, providing “an added value of all departments coming together to talk about issues.” In addition to work conducted with communities by a public participation practitioner, a second NGO leader said families also participated.
- **Businesses,** according to public participation practitioner.
- **Institutional representatives.** “I work closely with the partners at various levels, and I have a steering group in the company, which involves electors and chief executives of all the major agencies and elected members,” said an NGO leader. “I will work with every service within the [community name] Council. I work with Scotland Police and Enterprise Company. I work with Community Scotland quite closely for regeneration.” This person also works with the National Health Service. “I also work with non-strategy partners...[including those who] are big community partner players. I work at various levels with all these partners, depending on which particular project I’m doing. I also work very closely with the communities’ teams within different councils, who are responsible for the community learning development side of community engagement participation. Because that team is very much responsible for supporting local community planning, I’ve got a strong relationship there. I spend a lot of time with them.”
- **Stakeholder groups, including self-organizing community groups and representative organizations.** “Generally, groups in some ways, constituted themselves as a way of – if they want to do a project themselves, they can therefore gain funds to be able to do that,” explained a local administrator. “But it also gives them more of a standing with service providers if they can say that both they represent the local community, and actually part of a group. Not just a group, a list of people, of self-interested people who have come together.” In addition, an NGO leader works “with some of the representative organizations. I

work primarily with local community planning groups, although I do have contact with other groups but primarily planning groups or the regeneration-funded groups because we have they are a way, as part of the planning process, or again with the community planning forums which are sort of gatekeepers of community planning and the [community name] assembly. That perhaps would be my main link into local community activity.” This NGO leader, for example, also described how the local civic forum is operated by individuals in a representative capacity – it is led by “an executive group, which means a group of people supported by advisors from the partnership – the president and the board advises them.” This leader also noted that community planning partners are involved as well as “the non-stator ones like the college.” Another NGO leader also noted working with “key stakeholder organizations” and a public participation practitioner noted the involvement of community organizations.

- **Those who are wealthy and those who are the most vulnerable.** “One of the most challenging things from a community planning perspective is the differences in communities and the socio-economic polarity that they have and that we have a very high difference between the residents who are very wealthy in opportunities and, because of these opportunities, who have wealth and the people who are very much poorer in their opportunity and income,” said an NGO leader. However, these challenges make “service delivery a challenge and [it] also makes community engagement a challenge because there are different issues for people whose lives are very vulnerable, in particular makes it hard to take part in community activities.” A public participation practitioner concurred, reflecting participation across “quite a broad spectrum....from so-called deprived estates right through to strategic participation.”
- **Senior leaders.** An NGO leader described the existence of “an outcome agreement that again says that this is our 15-year vision; within the first 3 years, what do we have to do and who do we have to please as outputs to get us to the outcome? That was the broad, high-level stuff that we tackled, and that will be tackled really with the senior players, because at my level and others at my level or even at the service level, there is only so much you can infringe on that debate – it really needs to be the leaders and the politicians and the elected board members and it needs to be the chief executives because you have that debate about how they will organize the priorities to make sure that we meet these high-level outcomes.” Another NGO leader mentioned efforts that attracted the attendance of the justice minister and “various dignitaries.”
- **The Scottish Executive**, by providing funding to address “cross-cutting issues” (NGO leader).

## Who is excluded

Scottish interviewees likewise described who is excluded from such efforts. These include:

- **Carers.** “I think that sometimes carers are quite hard to reach,” said a federally elected official. “I think there has been a great deal of emphasis on them in the parliament, but I do think that carers, particularly young carers as well, who care

for a parent or a sibling, they don't have the same support networks there and it can be very hard to reach those groups, because they are socially excluded.”

- **Those with less experience in formal meeting settings.** “Somebody who has always worked in a factory shop or has worked in a supermarket – people like you and I going along to a formal meeting is not uncommon and it's what we do in our everyday life,” said a federally elected official. “We take for granted and easily we understand – you know, if you've got quorum (a certain amount of people required to allow a meeting to go ahead), you understand you've got a chair in the section. That's all a given to us and we understand those rules.” For someone “who has never been to a formal meeting like that, that is pretty daunting.”
- **Those with mental health challenges or learning disabilities.** “I think there are people who find it quite difficult, or they only take part in very select ways,” said a local administrator. “I think that we are probably is not very good at dealing with some of the community interest and trying to include their voice in the mainstream, people with mental health or people with learning difficulties. There probably are ways for them to be involved in certain of the decisions that affect them, but we are not very good at involving their voices in the mainstream. And that is something that we could do significantly more about.” In fact, this person said, “One of the things that we are looking at doing at the moment, we're doing it at the beginning of November, is start to talk to people with learning difficulties about the ways in which they – just exactly what we have been talking about today. How can they become involved in local community planning and area community planning.”
- **Small numbers of minority and ethnic communities.** Because “there isn't a huge minority ethnic community in this area,” said a local administrator, this “brings us difficulties for us as service providers or service supporters.”
- **Select young people.** According to an NGO leader, “there are young people who are excluded from the process.” These individuals “tend to be the ones who are a little bit more articulate, etc. In that way, of course, you're not reaching the children that you really need to reach.”

Notably, a public participation practitioner said, “most groups in many local authorities in Scotland are actually left out of the process. It does not matter whether you are talking about middle class community councils, community groups on deprived the estates, ethnic minorities, people in rural areas; in a lot of local authorities, almost everybody is left out of the process of participation. All of the local authorities pay lip service to participation; you cannot not pay lip service, so you make the right noises.”

Having said this, the interviewee noted that “obviously, there are some groups which are harder to reach. Young people are a real challenge; they do not respond to mechanisms which are designed for adults, so a big challenge is to get young people involved in democratic processes. It should not be that difficult in a sense that young people are very knowledgeable about their neighborhood, so if you start at the neighborhood and if you work with them in a way that meets their interests and you talk about things that they are concerned about, you should get a positive relationship.”

Among others who are hard to reach include those who are elderly. “Ethnic minorities are more difficult; they are more challenging. You need to reach out to ethnic minorities in a particular way. In [community name], for example, 50 percent of the population are Asian, mainly Muslims. And so I learned that you work in a different way to reach out to these people.”

## **Barriers to participation**

Barriers to participation included conceptual as well as more concrete impediments.

“I think **confidence**,” said a federally elected official. “People don’t feel confident about speaking out. I think particularly in more disadvantaged communities and poorer communities, people lack self-esteem and confidence and self-belief.” Whereas “in actual fact, I think that some of the people are really very sensible, but they lack the self belief to start, to go along to a meeting and start talking – just not talking rubbish, but this is what we need to do. So I think that is a hindrance.”

**Procedures** can be problematic. “I think that sometimes the procedures that are used by local authorities, by the Scottish executive, can be very daunting for people,” the interviewee noted. “I think that puts people off. And I think we have, to some degree, we all want an expert, so we always think that there is somebody who knows better than us. We are not an expert in that field, so we couldn’t possibly engage.”

Third, the federally elected official observed “that sometimes **very formal meetings** and people don’t have experience of engaging in that kind of setting. Somebody who has always worked in a factory shop or has worked in a supermarket – people like you and I going along to a formal meeting is not uncommon and it’s what we do in our everyday life. We take for granted and easily we understand – you know, if you’ve got quorum (a certain amount of people required to allow a meeting to go ahead), you understand you’ve got a chair in the section. That’s all a given to us and we understand those rules.”

Moreover, **the rote aspect of some processes** may subjugate original intentions. “I think there is text box mentalities sometimes,” this interviewee said. “I think that, especially for institutions, it’s about going through the motions. Being able to see – well, we’ve done this, we’ve consulted with people because we have the consultation documents.” In this person’s opinion, “I think we’ve got to move away from a text box mentality so that we are involving people and we start much more from a basis, a starting point where people see that ideally this is what we would like to do, how do we go about doing it? I think if we do that, then our outcomes may well be the same, but they will be much more inclusive and there will be far less resistance to them as well.”

An NGO leader explained a related concern, about **not overwhelming participants**: “For what we do in terms of engage local people, it is really through their community planning forums. We have invested a lot of time and energy in talking with

local communities about the best want to seek community planning engaging with them and their common plea is don't overload us with things. Don't come and talk to us on 5 different nights of the week. We are really talking about what we see as the same issue. You, as agencies, might feel that it is a different issue, but to us it is a different issue."

**Community polarization** can present difficulties for engaging people. "There were statistics, probably about four years old now so they would need to be verified, at that time [community name] was at the third most polarized in Britain, which makes service deliver a challenge and also makes community engagement a challenge because there are different issues for people whose lives are very vulnerable, in particular makes it hard to take part in community activities," said an NGO leader. "So it continues to be a challenge."

This leader also noted how the **scale of communities** may be an issue as well. For example, in addition to "a large voluntary sector that operates in [community name]...there are also smaller communities of interest. You might not find it so easy to take part in the planning forums, so there is something around us in engaging with the voluntary sector – a need to treat them distinctly - both for us to be able to communicate and dialogue [sounds like], but also as a wealth of talent and resource that the community planning can benefit from. So there is an emerging idea of what to do and the partnership around that sector."

Certain **organizational issues** also may prove problematic. For example, one community planning effort worked to address issues of resource development. In this community, "we can get resources here and community councils by their statute can't hold assets – the organisation around that has to be something other than a community council to enable them to apply for this kind of money," an NGO leader explained. Another NGO leader concurred, stating, "All too often it's all about cheap fixes. Local authorities and central government are not prepared to spend the money."

A public participation practitioner said, "you can do an awful lot with a minimum of resources, but it is very hard to accomplish things with no resources at all; and so having some funds, particularly at the community level, is also important. Even a place to meet, for example: you would be surprised at the number of community organizations in Scotland that cannot find anywhere to meet for free and they have no money to pay rent, have no money to pay heating bills, et cetera, et cetera....So I think that if we had a mechanism for allocating funding to neighborhood community organizations across Scotland, even in relatively modest amounts, and if that funding could be accountable and yet they did not have to apply for it every year, every two years, which is very debilitating with your funding constantly running out, I think that would really help community planning processes."

Other strategic issues identified by an NGO leader included "the things that elected members knew would be around in areas and they had trouble to take forward; the things that communities would actually share with a neighboring community, for

example antisocial behavior – a common complaint across the areas, maybe not some of the more Highland community plans but, of course, in the majority of them, there are issues of antisocial behavior, some of it more acute than others.”

A public participation practitioner said that the **top-down orientation** of local governments can be a barrier. “If we turn to Scotland, not very easy in a sense,” this interviewee said. “Scottish local government - I am mainly concerned with local government obviously - is and has been top-down. It has not encouraged participation; indeed, you would say it has discouraged it. It has encouraged the trappings of participation, so there are endless meetings that people are invited to; but participation has not as yet been built in a systematic way into governance processes.”

However, this person said, “that, potentially, is changing with the community planning regime under the Local Government of Scotland Act 2003, and so one can see the beginning of a change in the organizational culture of local authorities, which is what really governs their willingness to engage with citizens or partners. And if you look across all the local authorities in Scotland, somewhere out at the leading edge of participation, they are not perfect but people actually feel positive about participation processes; [community name] and [community name] are good examples; maybe the highlands and islands....There are a lot of local authorities which are kind of in the middle, and they are trying to now kind of reorganize themselves to be receptive. And there are some local authorities which are a long way from really doing much more than paying lip service to participation; some people use the terms ‘Stalinist local authorities,’ implying organizations which are completely top- down, which are self- serving and which mainly served to keep their own kind of employees in business rather than to encourage any kind of participation. So even in Scotland there is quite a range, as it were.”

“This is one of the biggest problems in the United Kingdom: Britain is probably the most centralized country in the OECD; so much power is wielded by central government and treasury. Very little of it trickles down to local authorities, and the local authorities then hoard what they have, what little authority they have, what little financial control.” For this reason, “unless you have quality participation at all those levels, and unless they link together, you do not get a coherent participative structure.”

It’s “also important in that structure that it not be top-down but that it be both bottom-up and top-down simultaneously; neither is more important than the other, which means that what happens in the neighborhood in terms of participation is just as important as what happens in the Scottish parliament, for example. So in a place like Hamburg you find innovation at all levels in the participation structure....The other thing you find, that the innovation brings together not just bureaucrats and community organizations, but people from the business sector, the voluntary sector, charitable organizations, people concerned with economic development. So if you want to achieve that kind of sustainable development, you need both that kind of vertical and horizontal integration that I have just described.”

As part of addressing this, there needs to be capacity-building within governmental bodies. “I think capacity-building should really extend to bureaucrats and elected politicians as well,” said a public participation practitioner. “It should not be something that is just confined to citizens’ organizations.”

**Organizational culture** matters, the public participation practitioner said. “The real challenge is the organizational culture of bureaucracies to make them responsive to citizen participation. So in [project name] we found it was not the innovation per se that was important; it was actually the organizational culture of bureaucracies, and that network identified changing that organizational culture as the biggest challenge to participation....So this is why I said earlier you can have the trappings of participation, but unless the organizational culture actually values what they are hearing from citizens, and unless it builds a mechanism for taking account of those views and marrying those with the legitimate views of professionals and elected politicians in some kind of a systematic decision- making cycle, unless it does that, you will not achieve beneficial participation.”

Most importantly, the practitioner said, “you have to reorganize the bureaucracy because if people realize that they are wasting their time in meetings or organizing community councils or neighborhood organizations, and they are not achieving very much because they need the bureaucracy to perform or they need the freedom and the resources to clean their own street, for example, if they find that is not possible then they become cynical or they just drift away and they go play golf or do whatever, watch television.”

**How people are engaged cannot be static across all of a community.** A public participation practitioner said, “obviously, there are some groups which are harder to reach. Young people are a real challenge; they do not respond to mechanisms which are designed for adults, so a big challenge is to get young people involved in democratic processes. It should not be that difficult in a sense that young people are very knowledgeable about their neighborhood, so if you start at the neighborhood and if you work with them in a way that meets their interests and you talk about things that they are concerned about, you should get a positive relationship.” This means that “different responses need to be tailored to different groups.”

There was also a realization by a local administrator that not all issues necessitate the same treatment. “Getting into the institutions, I think, then depends on what they are actually raising, and that’s probably is still an issue that we have to work on,” said this interviewee. “Is that it depends on the particular issue, how easy it is for you to actually get in and how then it’s – it’s secondary, how easy it is for you to make any change. Because there are some issues that are probably still more difficult or take longer.” Moreover, this person said, “I think that’s one of the things that people find quite difficult at times, is that change doesn’t happen overnight. And particularly, if you’ve got to actually change the way in which a service is operated or change the way in which a budget is developed, before you can actually make the change. It’s not going to happen overnight, those sorts of things. I think that some of the difficulty in Scotland,

and I'm sure it's nationally as well, is that the experience in one area is not the same as the experience in the other. That a lot of it is to do with the culture of the organization that you are trying to influence, about how easy it is to get in. And whether once you get in, you can actually make any change."

Gaining broad involvement is also challenging. A local administrator also observed that "it's quite difficult to set yourself up to involve huge percentages of the population in a meaningful way. So at the end of the day, in a meaningful way, you are only going to involve a very small number of people who are probably there in an avid interest or a representative way. So there always will be this need to ensure that there is full information out there....And that for the broader population, the information flow is probably what will get them accepting and supporting the policy at the end of the day rather than potentially a huge interest. It's hard to have 10,000 people involved in developing a policy, but you might have 10,000 people who have actually read something in the local paper about it and understand what the broad aims of it are and why things are happening."

### **Best practices**

Among the best practices shared by Scottish interviewees included engaging with people and "doing what issues are important to them," said a federally elected official. This also means engaging "with the people every day in their lives. So there are things that we need to go out and we need to go out and try to meet people in those kinds of settings." For example, this official hosts an annual volunteer party that seeks to demonstrate appreciation for "the work that volunteers around the constituency do and the contributions they make to their communities. So every year through the volunteers' week, I throw a volunteers party and we invite every volunteer organization to nominate two representatives from their organization to come along to a celebration of volunteering and they just come along – there is tea, there is coffee, home baking and they get to socialize." This event is "good for them, because they get to make connections with other voluntary organization that they wouldn't often have come into touch with or know existed, so it's good in terms of networking for them. But we also make sure that there other organizations there that help with capacity building and funding, so that there is information that they can gather. And I think they appreciate just being thanked. I think that we need to do things like that just to engage with people as well."

An NGO leader detailed a "holistic" approach to engaging people; "we want to really involve them in a meaningful way, we have to look at the whole view." Celebrating what was achieved is also important, as well as taking a longer view. In one project this person described, the organization "didn't want to just parachute in. We also wanted to leave a legacy. So what we did is we investigated what other organizations are in this area that would like to work with us in partnership."

This organization also seeks to engage children and youth in their policy work. "We try and make sure that they're in – with us at an organizational level. So for example, when we are recruiting staff, children and young people are involved in that process. We've

actually produced a pack for other organizations to use so that they can introduce that methodology as well, so that children and young people are involved in the recruitment and selection.” In one instance, this NGO established “a panel, it was me, there were others, but also children were involved in that panel as well because [organization name] have a really neat recruitment and selection policy and procedure.” The interviewee also provided other examples, explaining that such efforts are not “about labeling these children. It’s all about starting from where they are and not bringing any baggage, not pre-judging these children. You go and say, what is it like for you? Tell me, what is it like? You defer back to them. You leave your ego at home as well.”

A local administrator emphasized the value of listening and emotional support as a best practice. “And if there is this sort of sense of value in involvement, supporting involvement and listening to you, then that is – you start a culture where people think it’s worthwhile to become involved in a positive sense rather than trying to break down the barriers, because they feel there is not actually a way in for them,” this interviewee said. “But you do need to provide the support at the end of the day, because it won’t happen just on its own.”

Examples of not such good practice were also identified. A public participation practitioner said the tendency towards top-down local government was a negative approach. “It has not encouraged participation; indeed, you would say it has discouraged it,” this person said. “It has encouraged the trappings of participation, so there are endless meetings that people are invited to; but participation has not as yet been built in a systematic way into governance processes.” This tendency, however, is starting to change, the practitioner said, “and so one can see the beginning of a change in the organizational culture of local authorities, which is what really governs their willingness to engage with citizens or partners. And if you look across all the local authorities in Scotland, somewhere out at the leading edge of participation, they are not perfect but people actually feel positive about participation processes.”

### ***Hard to discern opinions***

Some opinions are particularly hard to discern, interviewees reported. These include young people (federally elected official); young carers (federally elected official); youth who aren’t as articulate, (NGO leader), “disadvantaged young people” (public participation practitioner and young people in general (public participation practitioner), service providers (local administrator) and the elderly (public participation practitioner).

## **Research Question 3**

**What positive and negative outcomes occur as a result of public participation/deliberation in government decision-making processes?**

This question sought to examine the results of participatory or deliberative processes and associated accountability mechanisms. The goal was to isolate what interviewees and their respective organizations saw as beneficial and also not beneficial as a byproduct of such efforts. The ethical dimension of engagement was also considered.

The Scottish public themselves appear knowledgeable about participatory process. A public participation practitioner observed, "Citizens are very good at getting themselves organized." A federally elected official said such involvement was natural. "It will be the norm that communities will participate and join up their local structure plans, their development plans. Because only by participating in the decision making process will people have ownership over the work of a local authority, the work of the national government. It's not good enough just to sometimes pay lip service."

## Impact on decisions

Once people have participated, several kinds of positive and negative outcomes may result. Among those identified by the five Scottish interviewees include:

- **Accountability.** "For me, consultation is about going out there and explaining to people what you want to do and asking for their views," said a federally elected official. "And that is good and necessary and a good thing, but there is no requirement on people to do anything other than respond if they feel like it. Participation should be about going one step beyond that and facilitating and organizing for people, not only to be given the opportunity to become involved in that consultation, so that they are very much a part of the decision making process."
- **Creating public understanding of decisions made, and acknowledging views were considered.** Participation "doesn't mean that people will always agree and always have the outcome that you want, but I think that people will better understand a decision if in some way, they see that they were able to influence that decision or that their point of view was taken into account," said a federally elected official. "And, at the very least, discard it because there was an explanation as to why their point of view wasn't, on that occasion, the right one." A local administrator said, "We're not going to make all the people happy all of the time and then sometimes those radically different ideas are from very good reasons. Overall, it should make a difference."
- **Problem recognition or problem-solving.** A federally elected official described an example of a citizens' advice partnership that developed as a result of challenges in funding and serving the needs of people with cancer. "Yes, it came about because the director of the [name] and I had a conversation in 1999 when he told me that they had done it. [name] had done a survey, and one of the things that the cancer patients had said to [name] was that one of the things they really struggled with at the time of diagnosis was benefits (i.e. money from the State). It appeared that there was a huge problem, particularly in [community name]. Now maybe that is because we had people who had, a higher percentage of people who came from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and we also have a higher than average levels of cancer. And so those two things made - our numbers were higher, so we thought this was as good a place to start as any. I came in touch with CAB and they together, set up a joint project, which has now been running for three years and is extremely successful and has been rolled out to other parts of the country."

- **Cynicism due to lack of impact.** A federally elected official described “a very negative example of public participation. At the moment, NHS (National Health Service) and [community name] have just consulted in the future of healthcare services in [community name] and they have spent a considerable amount of time and effort trying to tell people that they should engage so that they were a part of the decision making process and the future of delivery of how we would deliver primary and acute healthcare services in [community name]. We had a consultation that lasted six months and we encouraged people to participate, come along to public meetings and they came along to public meetings in the droves. We encouraged people to write to them, people wrote to them in their droves. But the preferred option that they started with at the beginning was the same decision that they took at the end of the process despite everything that happened during the consultation.” In this case, “people signed petitions, they wrote letters, they attended public meetings and gave them alternatives. And I think that is a huge failure. Because I think at no point during this consultation can you point to anything that NHS [community name] had done which has responded to the concerns of those people. I think that badly has damaged the confidence in public consultation. I think that is a particularly poor example of public consultation.”
- **Legislation and constituent service.** For example, a federally elected official described pending legislation to protect shop workers. “And that proposal came about because I stopped at the shop workers’ union and asked the members what did they think the Scottish parliament could do for them. They then spoke to me, because they had said that they wanted protection and they felt increasingly there was pressure for shops to start to want to open up on New Year’s Day. They feared that if that becomes the norm, then Christmas Day is next. I said – I wanted to know if there was support for this, so we went out and we issued a consultation document and there was a campaign, people were sending back postcards. People from around the country were engaged to participate....That came about because of something that shop workers thought that they required.”
- **Equal consideration of potential impacts.** A federally elected official said, “nobody likes developments like open casts and landfills. Nobody wants to live next to them. And I understand that, but we need these things. However, all too frequently decision makers take decisions that don’t include the communities and they take the easy option, which is always to put something next to those most disadvantaged communities because they are not as articulate and as outspoken. They end up bearing the brunt of the burden of most of those bad neighbor developments and I don’t think that’s acceptable. I don’t think it’s providing equal justice. All communities should have to take their fair share.”
- **Abstract concepts become real.** A federally elected official described an effort to secure a rail station in a local community. “Well, I think an example of that in terms of the rail line is that it was easy for people to come and see that they wanted the rail line to reopen. Once we actually stopped talking about something in the abstract and it actually becomes very new and the resonant part there. There is a negative impact to those people who are going to live closest to

the line and there are therefore objections from those people. And what has been very positive in the case of [community name] and [community name] is the people said – wait a minute, the positive benefits of what this means, because of being involved in campaigning. Seeing it in terms of economic regeneration for our communities, better access to public transport, access for social and employment reasons to our capitol city and to [community name] – all of those things are very positive and those outweigh the negatives. So there has been much greater support for this.”

- **Outcome agreements.** An NGO leader said that outcome agreements are used to address collective community issues through community partnerships. This was based on “an Audit Scotland study that suggests that a community planning partnership should be moving toward an outcome focus, especially because the Executive is keen to focus on outcome agreements.” As a result, there now “is an outcome agreement that again says that this is our 15-year vision; within the first 3 years, what do we have to do and who do we have to please as outputs to get us to the outcome? That was the broad, high-level stuff that we tackled, and that will be tackled really with the senior players, because at my level and others at my level or even at the service level, there is only so much you can infringe on that debate – it really needs to be the leaders and the politicians and the elected board members and it needs to be the chief executives because you have that debate about how they will organize the priorities to make sure that we meet these high-level outcomes.” This also leads to discussion and debate about these priorities.
- **Local activist involvement.** “I’ve worked in areas where, although there is a community council boundary, there actually aren’t sufficient people who are interested in having a community council,” said an NGO leader. “[Community name] has always had, to my memory anyway, a community council and an active community council. I think it has [number] community councils, most of which go to ballot and go to vote so there are activists out there who want to be part of the community council. There is really a strong foundation and a strong commitment of local activists who are supporting and are involved in democracy.”
- **Local resources.** An NGO leader detailed how as a result of local engagement efforts, a community council applied for funding for a new building. This “new community hall [was achieved] all through local people’s endeavors and actually attracted resources and supported by advice from the local authority, advice from NHS [National Health Service], advice from the national park, sometimes supported by smaller bits of money that groups have put together to match the larger bit to the lottery, in most cases, to get the physical development projects.” This “community started working very closely with the NHS and the [community name] Council and they actually managed to get themselves sufficiently advanced by the home and operate it as an enterprise. [Organization name] is now still there, still providing all of the services, but operating as a community social enterprise, if you like. It is a tremendous example of community where they really showed up and got more gains as a social enterprise.” This interviewee cited a second example of “the sustainable community enterprise in [community name], which is looking at maximizing

construction and ongoing maintenance of the public realm work that is happening in [community name], which is a very small community café in [name] and it provides an invaluable resource, all done on the back of, and commitment, of local people, supported by the skill, advice, and time of partners and, where appropriate, financial input, as sort of leverage money picks up money for partners as well.”

- **Expressions of choice or desires.** Another NGO leader who works with youth explained how youth felt about options before them. “The majority of things about what they liked about where they lived was very much linked to family and friends. The various things they disliked ranged enormously, from school, the attitude of teachers toward them. Not their words, but things like self-fulfilling prophecy, being put down by teachers. A whole range of things like that came out. Having no choice, lack of choice was one. Also how that affected their educational attainment, because they just didn't want to school basically.”
- **Community action campaigns.** An NGO leader noted the significant role that youth played in a local litter clean-up campaign. “An example would be one group of young people were involved – they did this project simply entitled ‘Littering is Wrong.’ They made these amazing posters – I've got artwork, because it draws people into working with them. But they produced these amazing posters, absolutely amazing. I'm biased, but they are amazing posters. The local authority in [community name] was so taken by them, they said we want to incorporate that as part of our Keep [community name] Clean campaign. But because they had their campaign citywide, what they then did, and the project was in [community name], they used it and distributed it throughout [community name]. So all the posters were distributed to the various places and et cetera. But in addition to that, I said to the young people, we're going to have a launch of the posters. We're working towards that. I said the people we're going to invite – they said, who should be invited? Because they were involved in all aspects of the work. The posters is like the end product, as it were, but even that it's – I want to hear how it came about, what you did, I wanted them to stand up in front of all those people (but they wouldn't want to so , instead ... ) we'll make a video. So they made a video which is absolutely brilliant. I'm biased again, but it is. Our last program director described it as the best video that a Scotland program had ever produced. It was funny, it was informative, it was all what it needed to be. It captured people, whether you were old, young, it didn't matter. Once again, the local authority, the people and places officer, got hold of copies and he used that to take to groups, to environmental groups – because it was very much about the local environment and what you can do, cleaning up your environment, etc.” Examples of other efforts cited included a graffiti clean-up.
- **Goals, learning.** “There's all these consultations but there's nothing actually comes out from it,” said an NGO leader. Rather, for youth “there needs to be an end, something they're going to get out of it. They might work through that whole process and not get that play park or whatever it might be, but what they have is they've gained a lot through the process. And they know why they haven't achieved. It's not because nobody could be bothered. They haven't achieved

whatever it was not because of their own efforts, and they've actually learned from that as well.”

- **Capacity building.** An NGO leader emphasized the importance of creating long-term value. “Also there was a legacy of this work being left behind, because part of our exit strategy was working with local organizations in support of this work, so that when we withdrew from our five-year program this work then carried on. The consequence of that is you have organizations that have changed their constitution, that we worked with, to enable children and young people to be involved in it. We've been able to develop other projects from it. That once again is carrying on consulting, developing, with children and young people.”
- **Toolkits.** “We produced this thing called “[name of guide],” which is the methodology we developed for working with children and young people and the methods I've just described,” said an NGO leader. “It's full of case studies and activities you can do with children. It's aimed at those people who would like to work with young children but perhaps don't have the experience, and experienced practitioners. It's a toolkit.”
- **Lobbying.** One NGO leader reported that “we do lobby government quite seriously.”
- **Case-based research.** “What we are able to do as well is we can support our research, our findings, with what young people are saying,” said an NGO leader. “We have masses of quotes and actual real qualitative information.” Findings from these efforts are “submitted to the Scottish executive and the UK government.”
- **‘Spreading the gospel’ about participation.** “That's what this is about, spreading out and disseminating our methodology so more and more organizations will work in a particular kind of model, methodology of inclusion for children and young people,” said an NGO leader. “It's kind of like the gospel according to [organization name].”
- **Dispelling myths.** An NGO leader described one outcome as “actually disseminating out to adults and then trying to dispel the myths about children and young people.”
- **Personal development.** “What I really love, and I've got it on video, I've got kids saying, before I came to this project, I was quiet, I was this, I was that – now listen to me,” said an NGO leader. Such efforts develop young peoples’ “personal skills, their life skills, all those kind of things.”
- **Impact monitoring.** One NGO examines what participants “have they gone on to do. What changes have you made in the local community, like with other organizations, with social inclusion partnerships? How have they changed because of your work? That's the impact. So it's what we call impact monitoring.”
- **Improved service delivery,** according to a public participation practitioner. A local administrator agreed, stating “I think we probably have some instances where that participation begins to affect both how the services that are offered look like.”
- **Trust, respect.** “What are some of the other transferable effects? So, for example, we have here trust and respect, accountability, a different feeling about

the government,” said a public participation practitioner. Moreover, “people are not only invited to participate, but that they are actually listened to and that their use have some influence on the decision-making and service delivery process; otherwise, they lose trust in the sense. Trust is built when people see that it is worthwhile to participate, and so I think that building trust is actually very important. You need to earn trust in the sense by your response to and your willingness to engage in participation.” Feeling better about government “is part of trust; you will know that alienation, democratic deficit, low voter turnouts, cynicism about government, all of that is because government does not genuinely invite participation, is not accountable, does not build trust.”

- **Support for broad-based participation.** A public participation practitioner described a transnational effort to build awareness and support for public participation. “Well, I mean I think that the [project name] project has been influential in a number of countries. I mean, it certainly changed policy towards participation in most of the cities that we have participated in. And partly it does that because as we have our traveling road shows to the individual cities, these are mounted as high-profile, week-long events which involve the mayor and the chief executive of the city, politicians and government officers. And so we work hard not only to develop the message but to convey the message to people who count. Secondly, [project name], I think, has an effect because it has now worked over five years in many of the cities that were involved; the city of [community name] in Belgium, for example, has gone through some difficulties involving far-Right politics, but we have been able to support broad-based participation, and been able to support the city council in trying to work through its problems, so I think that that being there, working in an action research mode, and having some knowledge.” Another benefit of this project is that “it does not just bring us together in a transnational mechanism but it also has greatly improved bilateral learning between the cities; for example, [community name] and [community name] have developed a kind of an ongoing relationship, which they can then discuss the kind of politics of the management of cities, how you deal with the media, et cetera. So in a lot of ways, I think it has had an impact.”
- **Confidence and self-perception.** A local administrator said that public participation can affect “the things that people can achieve for themselves.” In addition, it can change “the way in which decision makers view their communities, which can make a huge difference about the services that are offered in them at the end of the day.” However, at the same time, it is important “not undermine the very good evidence that we’ve got where people have managed – they do something for themselves or actually change the way that something has actually been developed in their community.” For example, this administrator said, “...we would also spend a lot of time supporting people about how they come to decisions within themselves and about their skills to be able to negotiate with others. Because there are skills in there that people do need to use. We’ve recently just developed a toolkit that covers all of these sorts of issues, to support our work with people.”
- **Decision maker support for participation.** A local administrator said that “...you need that local, you need that support for that local decision making. But

you probably also need your decision makers to be committed to doing it at the end of the day, and they can often show that, both through the information that they provide, by being visible.”

- **Sustainable decisions.** As a result of public participation, said a local administrator, “you get decisions made that actually are locally applicable and therefore things are more likely to survive and be sustainable. But you also get people understanding why decisions are made, whether that’s in a particular community or a community organization that involves others and therefore they decide to what’s to be done at the local people and therefore more people are likely to use it the benefits. But then I think it also works at a larger decision making level as well.”
- **Changes in policies or approaches.** A local administrator described a local new housing project that was being planned. “So there was always going to be new housing, but what their involvement brought was a change in the way that that housing was developed. They have had an influence on the types of housing that has been built, going to be built, both externally and internally. But also they’ve had a huge influence on the way in which the broader community was actually communicated about the development....But also that that recognition, it’s very nice to build houses, but you actually need to do something about supporting the people to live in the houses in a meaningful way in very vulnerable communities. That that has had a huge difference.
- **Developing relationships.** “...I think what more often happens is that what you do is you start a relationship between the service provider and the communities so that they now know who to go to if they wanted to talk about if it’s not quite working,” said a local administrator.

The influence or impact of potential of participation echoed some of the themes noted previously.

On the planning level, a federally elected official saw the impact at two levels – more information and clarification that results as well as the possibility of pursuing other avenues of action as a byproduct of input received. “I think sometimes they can have quite a considerable effect,” this interviewee said. “If somebody has got – and if somebody has got an important issue and a point to make, those things can be followed up. So it could result in parliamentary questions being put down to get more information. It could be something as straightforward as just dropping a letter to the local authority seeking clarification on something for them or doing a letter to a minister and getting some clarification for them. Or it could result in you being able to pursue something at a committee knowing that there is legislation being considered about that issue and those people being able to influence that.”

After the decision has been made, the federally elected official said, that “I think the most important thing in all of that is you really do have to get back to people. It’s not good enough just to say to them on an event like that or at your surgery or at any point when you meet people – that’s great to say, “I really understand what you are saying and I think it’s a good idea,” but then you never tell them what happens as a result of

it.” Even in instances where input does not result in change, “I think it’s fundamentally important that you say to that person, ‘Well, I’m sorry – I’ve tried and this is what I did. I can’t take it any further.’ Or that this is what we’ve done, so that there is a paper trail that people can see well, actually I’ve made a difference.”

An NGO leader emphasized the value of personal development or capacity building that results from participation. “They had to get something out of participating in this initiative. It had to help to support their self-esteem, life skills, personal skills,” this person said. “They had to have a sense of achievement. Although some of these projects were quite long-term, it would be broken up into milestones of achievements. Some of the things would be writing a letter. They didn’t know how to write a letter, didn’t know how to use the telephone directory. Once you do a little project around writing a letter, and once you’ve done that and written a letter and have sent it to the leader of the council, then you would celebrate that by an activity of their choosing.”

Public acknowledgement also was essential. For a recent anti-littering campaign this interviewee was part of, posters created by youth “were distributed to the various places and et cetera. But in addition to that, I said to the young people, we’re going to have a launch of the posters. We’re working towards that. I said the people we’re going to invite – they said, who should be invited? Because they were involved in all aspects of the work. The posters is like the end product, as it were, but even that it’s – I want to hear how it came about, what you did, I wanted them to stand up in front of all those people (but they wouldn’t want to so , instead ... )we’ll make a video. So they made a video which is absolutely brilliant. I’m biased again, but it is. Our last program director described it as the best video that a Scotland program had ever produced. It was funny, it was informative, it was all what it needed to be. It captured people, whether you were old, young, it didn’t matter. Once again, the local authority, the people and places officer, got hold of copies and he used that to take to groups, to environmental groups – because it was very much about the local environment and what you can do, cleaning up your environment, etc.”

To this interviewee, “that’s what consultation is about. It’s very much about making sure that you’re able to – one of the problems we have with consultation is that for a lot of people, and young people as well, they’re consulted out. What happens is there’s lots of consultations and then – but yeah, what happens? What happens with all this information we’ve given you?”

The evaluation aspect of the influence or impact of engagement is important. The federally elected official views impact of public input through the lens of measurement, as demonstrated by voters’ election day support or the lack thereof. “...I suppose that I am ultimately the measure of that is at the Election Day, for me. That’s what takes the local authority – have I don’t [done] my job right well. Ultimately, my constituents will decide that.”

A local administrator cautioned that expectations for impact are not always in line with reality. “I think that’s one of the things that people find quite difficult at times, is that change doesn’t happen overnight. And particularly, if you’ve got to actually change the way in which a service is operated or change the way in which a budget is developed, before you can actually make the change. It’s not going to happen overnight, those sorts of things. I think that some of the difficulty in Scotland, and I’m sure it’s nationally as well, is that the experience in one area is not the same as the experience in the other. That a lot of it is to do with the culture of the organization that you are trying to influence, about how easy it is to get in. And whether once you get in, you can actually make any change.”

As a result, “you get decisions made that actually are locally applicable and therefore things are more likely to survive and be sustainable. But you also get people understanding why decisions are made, whether that’s in a particular community or a community organization that involves others and therefore they decide to what’s to be done at the local people and therefore more people are likely to use it the benefits. But then I think it also works at a larger decision making level as well.”

### **How is feedback provided?**

Organizations that our Scottish interviewees worked with in some instances provide feedback to the public or stakeholders after they have provided input or participated in a public process. For example -- as noted previously -- an NGO leader spoke about the use of outcome agreements. The agreement “says that this is our 15-year vision; within the first 3 years, what do we have to do and who do we have to please as outputs to get us to the outcome?”

Another NGO reported using written reports. “Everything we do had to be written up before – I wrote up the framework for the work to be introduced, but everything that was done had to be written up before, during and after,” said this leader. “We would report on the work using case studies. These would be long and short-term case studies. We did that on a four-monthly basis. Then we were able after five years to draw from all those reports.” This organization also conducts training about this reporting methodology, and seeks feedback about it from participants. “So the first thing we got back was the evaluations from the training and from the guide itself - which was incredibly positive, actually. I delivered the training along with my colleague.”

Following that, the interviewee said, “What we’re looking to do now is go back to these people and say, you had the training a year or so ago, you’ve had the DIY [Do It Yourself] guide. How have you used it? Already in some meetings that I’ve had – I’ve gone to meetings about developing this methodology within community planning as it is now – I’ve gone to meetings and people have turned up with the DIY guide - because I brought them one. Oh yes, in [community name], for example, they’re very much informed, the work that they were doing. They said they made sure all the departments have a copy, etc. Which was really positive. I need to get back and write all this

up.” However, even though this organization works with children in participatory processes, the reports that are prepared are not written for a child audience.

A public participation practitioner described using interactive discussion sessions with youth in other countries. “In the meetings that we have in each of the member cities, for example, the last one was in [community name], and we spent a good amount of time because their focus is on youth participation. We spent a good amount of time in actually the young people’s drop-in centers; it was very interactive, and the young people were very much involved in discussing with our transnational network. At one point we had a two-hour discussion session with about 100 young people from all over [community name]. There were government officers and academics from Finland and Aberdeen and Edinburgh and Greece, et cetera. Other times we had more informal times with young people; they showed us their skills in playing music and break dancing, and what not. We were very much involved, and that is just an example. In each of the cities that is the main kind of feedback. Each of the projects, the [project name] project themselves, also feeds back in their own way.” This interviewee observed, “So there are lots of ways of feeding back, and that is just the example. Each city does it in a different way.”

A local administrator connected input with service provision. There need to be opportunities “where you can actually feed back to people – this is what you said, this is how it’s come about and this is what is going to happen from now on. And both in terms of representatives getting a voice, but also in terms of them then doing their work with the service providers.”

Developing that relationship can be particularly important for resolving future challenges. Not only do local individuals know who to approach about problems, “...the service provider has got a relationship and knows the people they are talking to, but they have a positive relationship about having solved an issue. And then to happily come back together to talk about how they might re-look at it. It doesn’t need to be developed over time. It doesn’t always happen, but I think there are instances when that has happened and is continuing to happen. And one of the things that we know that people get most annoyed about is when a decision is made and there is absolutely no feedback to them about what the decision has been and how they actually do something about it in the future. They disengage again.” This means that “one of the things that we do have to look at is how we can maintain people’s involvement. Feedback and actually knowing who to go to are the two things that keep people involved.”

Despite these points, the local administrator said that the council does not provide any reporting about participatory processes conducted locally. Perhaps this is because such processes are not stand-alone efforts but part of larger, functional projects such as building a housing project. “I mean, I think probably the way in which you would do it would tend to be more about if there is a new development or mention that there has been involvement interview [sic] that rather than say this year, we did X and Y that was about public participation. Because at the end of the day, all that does is it looks like

public participation is something that sits over there and this is actually part of the mainstream of what we do.”

“I’m not convinced about having a public participation strategy or report on it, because what we should be doing is doing it as part of how we deliver services and how we work together,” the local administrator said. “The only thing that will come will be some reporting back in terms of the area community planning process. So that will come, but even so, that will not be the only thing that is about public participation - it’s about one part of an approach to that.”

### **Efforts to balance opinions**

Interviewees reported that one aspect of participatory or deliberative processes is to balance between opinions. Sometimes this is trickier than it appears for a variety of reasons. One NGO leader said that there is almost too much collaboration at the community level. “What you will find typically in all of the officers and you hear it from local people is that there are too many partnerships on the ground,” this person said. “We are not sure of the differentiation between them all and we literally cannot attend them all.”

A local administrator, by contrast, described efforts to serve as a mediator between varying needs and opinions. In this community, “The role that the team plays is both support to communities, but also an advocate for communities. But quite often what also works is the support to the service providers. You may not have the skills and participation and community engagement so that they are both supported and coming to talk to communities. But quite often, we act as a bridge between service providers and communities about expectations and about approach so that it doesn’t become a shouting match like it can become more productive, to be in a productive working relationship.”

This administrator also works to guide the establishment of priorities. For this community, “it’s important to say that certainly as a team, what we have are a clear view on which of which are the priority communities and priority issues that we work with. And that is, then, a part of the planning process that we have. When we are working with communities, I suppose part of what we use are the skills that we have as community workers and group work to try and support people to come out at the end of the day. Both for people to be able to state where they are on a certain issue and to do it in a way where we can, that it’s not aggressive to other people, and not that we always manage to do that. But that we also use ways of working that allow people to actually come to commonality at the end of the day.”

The interviewee said, “there are lots of different techniques that we would use to be able to do that. We don’t necessarily always, we are not always successful in that, because I think that quite often, people in communities may have histories with each other that pre-date our relationship with it, and they may not always be positive. We can use as many processes as we want to, but at the end of the day, you are still talking about

people and people don't always get on for a variety of reasons. But also sometimes communities, sometimes there is no consensus because sometimes communities need – it's not like the lowest common denominator." Moreover, in some instances "people have to admit that there are differences in view and differences in view potentially about what the solution would be. And it's about how we help them to work through that and maybe acknowledge that each is different, that it's okay."

Techniques such as "brainstorming techniques to get people to put their ideas down on paper" would be used. "To look out, to maybe divide up a question and maybe quite a big question into sub-questions so that they can begin to see – right, okay, the real issue here is. This is maybe just the surrounding issues. Here we are, right in the kernel of what we are really concerned about," the local administrator said.

"So use a lot of techniques around about that, a lot of techniques where we would divide people up so that, trying to get away from big just group discussions where only a couple of people get to talk or where it's quite easy to become quite aggressive, and I suppose, stand and deliver on your point. So a lot of techniques, we would move into smaller groups, get them to discuss – actually get them into where they are beginning to talk and really talk about what the issues are rather than just hear a couple of headline statements. But we also would encourage people to also go back into their communities and make sure that their representatives were properly representative. So do you know, are you sure, have you gone back and checked that that is actually the right thing."

However, "we would also spend a lot of time supporting people about how they come to decisions within themselves and about their skills to be able to negotiate with others. Because there are skills in there that people do need to use. We've recently just developed a toolkit that covers all of these sorts of issues, to support our work with people."

Expectations for public participation mirrored the roles that interviewees play and the experiences they have in their day-to-day work. For example, a federally elected official emphasized improvements to service delivery for local people, particularly the elderly. "What could politicians do most that would change the lives and make it easier for them to do the job that they do and to continue to provide the service which we rely on. Because without all of the carers, in Scotland and the United Kingdom as a whole, would grind to a halt."

This interviewee also expressed an opinion that public participation is focused on realizing public ideals. "So public participation is about starting with a – you can start with a blank sheet of paper and see what would ideally you like. And then you take it to the stage which is, in an ideal world, what an individual would like and then you talk about the realities."

An NGO leader agreed, describing a community planning effort. This new plan "is in essence a policy response to the aspirational scenario, so it contains what the vision for

[community name] is in 15 years, because community planning is a high level vision. That is what we want to do for the position, as a city authority, as a city with regions but also as a city that has international aspirations. If that is where we want to position ourselves in 15 years or 10, what do we need to do in terms of policies now to get to see it?”

Another NGO leader spoke about a desire to broaden horizons and experiences. “If you're consulting with children and young people, they can only give you information back from what's within their frames of reference,” this person said. “So if you're consulting children on what they want in a play park, they will only give you what they know to be in a play park. Unless you take them and broaden their horizons and experiences.”

A local administrator described the community expectations around participation in the following way: “I think that there is certainly a sort of feeling that [community name] was certainly good at it and that it was part of what [community name] was about. So there were certainly expectations that, ways of involvement would actually have positive outcomes, whether it was for people – some of it was about can we say was good, alright, that is perfectly acceptable. But there is also an expectation from many of the members that where people raise issues, that we actually will respond to them. And that is very much about – if somebody comes to me and they say they would like some support about that – that's not happening, having some difficulty there, that actually the officer will respond to them. It's not just that they don't actually care about that. So I think those sorts of expectations are there and expectations that there will be very strong community organizations. May not always like what the community organizations come up with, but an expectation that they will be getting the support that they are looking for.”

### ***Capacity-building***

Interviewees also shared their reflections about the effect that participation or deliberation has on the capacity of people to participate.

Without an effect on the outcome, a federally elected official said, “I think it depends. I think there can be entity support, there can be entities, but there can also be entity cynicism if they don't think that there has been any real effect. And I think at the moment in Scotland, we talk about consultation all the time – consultation is very different from participation for me.” The lack of funds and also the need to see success are also contributing factors to the development of capacity, as evidenced by the citizens advice partnership on cancer that the official had a hand in replicating.

“I think the first thing you have to do is try to engage with them socially,” said this official. “Then once they maybe get to know somebody, then they are much more likely to want to come along. But also to try and break down some of the formal barriers, so instead of having a meeting, say, with a top table and rows of seats, you try to set people in smaller groups. Also somebody, if you get a group of people coming along they are all together, make sure that if they come in and sign in, every single one of

them has been sent to a different group so that they will be encouraged to meet new people, to mix. And also to discover that they might have slightly different views as well, facilitate an exchange of your experience.”

After those efforts have been completed, “you can then start to – if you get people coming along and see what are you are dreaming, that yes, we can do all of those capacity building things. First of all, we need to give people the confidence to be willing to accept training and getting them to come along to meetings. We will train you to participate in a group, we will train you to achieve person skills, all of those things. I’m not going to say, because all of those things are just far too daunting for them. So making them feel included, and then they can build up to that, I think.”

Sometimes people need to be invited to participate – formally. The federally elected official described issuing a consultation document on an issue. As a result, “there was a campaign, people were sending back postcards. People from around the country were engaged to participate.”

Strong organizational support for participation or deliberation can also guide capacity-building efforts. For example, an NGO leader cited a local community that “from its very early days as a council, had good, strong community council framework in their authority. I’ve worked in areas where, although there is a community council boundary, there actually aren’t sufficient people who are interested in having a community council. [Community name] has always had, to my memory anyway, a community council and an active community council. I think it has [number] community councils, most of which go to ballot and go to vote so there are activists out there who want to be part of the community council. There is really a strong foundation and a strong commitment of local activists who are supporting and are involved in democracy.”

Likewise, a collaborative culture or spirit can be beneficial. In this particular community, “community councils by their statute can’t hold assets – the organisation around that has to be something other than a community council to enable them to apply for this kind of money. So a lot of the groups have gone for community development trusts or company limited by guarantee, but most of them have gone to community development trusts, and they have attracted a resource. So [name], for example, has a new community hall all through local people’s endeavors and actually attracted resources and supported by advice from the local authority, advice from NHS [National Health Service], advice from the national park, sometimes supported by smaller bits of money that groups have put together to match the larger bit to the lottery, in most cases, to get the physical development projects.”

This “community started working very closely with the NHS and the [community name] Council and they actually managed to get themselves sufficiently advanced by the home and operate it as an enterprise. [Organization name] is now still there, still providing all of the services, but operating as a community social enterprise, if you like. It is a tremendous example of community where they really showed up and got more gains as a social enterprise.” In addition, “there is the sustainable community

enterprise in [community name], which is looking at maximizing construction and ongoing maintenance of the public realm work that is happening in [community name], which is a very small community café in [name] and it provides an invaluable resource, all done on the back of, and commitment, of local people, supported by the skill, advice, and time of partners and, where appropriate, financial input, as sort of leverage money picks up money for partners as well.”

“A lot of these things came out of local community plans and they were able to be taken forward by the community working in partnership with either all the community planning partners or a couple of them,” the NGO leader said. “There are also then a number of issues that, if you looked at them, they were the big strategic thing – the things that as partners we knew would be around in areas; the things that elected members knew would be around in areas and they had trouble to take forward; the things that communities would actually share with a neighboring community, for example antisocial behavior – a common complaint across the areas, maybe not some of the more Highland community plans but, of course, in the majority of them, there are issues of antisocial behavior, some of it more acute than others.”

Another NGO leader -- whose organization focuses on the developmental aspects of participation involving youth -- emphasized the value of starting small. Youth “had to get something out of participating in this initiative. It had to help to support their self-esteem, life skills, personal skills. They had to have a sense of achievement. Although some of these projects were quite long-term, it would be broken up into milestones of achievements. Some of the things would be writing a letter. They didn't know how to write a letter, didn't know how to use the telephone directory. Once you do a little project around writing a letter, and once you've done that and written a letter and have sent it to the leader of the council, then you would celebrate that by an activity of their choosing.” Benefits of this approach included “increased trust,” respect, and a “complete change of their behavior.”

“I think there is no point in doing the work that we do if more broadly there isn't a culture of an involvement, if you like,” said a local administrator. “Because then, people just get angry and they don't actually see that there is a way in. So I think things, information going out to people is very important. People need to know what is actually happening and when. People need – there has to be - a lot of participation also comes from a good groundswell of local organizations.”

Sometimes these gains are realized at the community level and at the political/organizational level as well. “Well, I mean, there is a lot of talk about capacity-building for community organizations, and they certainly could use assistance in a variety of areas, like accounting and what not,” said a public participation practitioner. “They can also become skilled in their own community development expertise, and if you are involved in community education then that is part of that whole thrust. But I think it is more important, actually, that you have capacity- building that involves all the members of the decision-making process, so capacity building that involves, for example, city officials and citizens together.”

Building such capacity at the community or organizational level is important. “It’s about making sure that communities have the support, they have the skills, they have the expertise to be able to go and work, to try and negotiate and influence a service provider,” said a local administrator. “And then hopefully to be able to work in partnership with that service provider to solve the local issue. So we do that, both at the very local level and generally through the local community planning process.”

To this point, “there is not a specific questions about are about the whole issue of skills development. I do think that on one level, we provide training to certain professionals about participation, and specifically in Scotland it has to be community workers who get that. But actually, everybody needs to do it.”

## Summary

<b>Scotland</b>	
<b>Common Terms For P2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public consultation (federally elected official)</li> <li>• Participating (NGO leader)</li> <li>• Civic forum (NGO leader)</li> </ul>
<b>Conceptual Definition For P2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An understanding of consultation that may differ from public participation, where consultation involves “going out there and explaining to people what you want to do and asking for their views. And that is good and necessary and a good thing, but there is no requirement on people to do anything other than respond if they feel like it.” This is contrasted with public participation: “Participation should be about going one step beyond that and facilitating and organizing for people, not only to be given the opportunity to become involved in that consultation, so that they are very much a part of the decision making process”</li> <li>• Taking part, emphasizing “coming along and taking part” as well as being oriented towards capacity building</li> <li>• “Creating a focus” around problems or issues</li> <li>• Governance-based, focused on leadership and participation, both of which are supported or facilitated through partnerships in support of a common local agenda for governance</li> <li>• Making a difference at the community level by responding to needs</li> </ul>
<b>Select Barriers To Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of confidence in speaking out, particularly among “more disadvantaged and poorer communities”</li> <li>• Procedures for engagement that are daunting to people, as well as the self-perception of a lack of expert knowledge by laypeople</li> <li>• Formal settings for meetings, when people may lack “experience of engaging in that kind of setting”</li> <li>• Community polarization that may discourage “people whose lives are very vulnerable”</li> <li>• Lack of resources</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of willingness to publicly bring forward difficult issues</li> <li>• Top-down orientation of local governments</li> <li>• Need for engagement efforts that are customized to individuals or groups</li> </ul>
<b>Select Examples Of Best Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer party that recognizes people's contributions to community issues, and that also provides networking and capacity-building</li> <li>• Taking a "holistic" approach to engaging people, while also engaging children and youth in policy work</li> </ul>
<b>Select Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating public understanding of decisions made, and acknowledging views were considered</li> <li>• Problem recognition or problem-solving</li> <li>• Cynicism due to lack of impact</li> <li>• Legislation and constituent service</li> <li>• Equal consideration of potential impacts</li> <li>• Abstract concepts become real</li> <li>• Outcome agreements</li> <li>• Local activist involvement</li> <li>• Community action campaigns</li> <li>• Capacity building</li> <li>• 'Spreading the gospel' about participation</li> <li>• Dispelling myths</li> <li>• Improved service delivery</li> <li>• Trust, respect</li> <li>• Support for broad-based participation</li> <li>• Confidence and self-perception</li> <li>• Decision maker support for participation</li> <li>• Sustainable decisions</li> <li>• Changes in policies or approaches</li> <li>• Developing relationships</li> </ul>