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

UNITED STATES

PAINTING THE LANDSCAPE

A CROSS - CULTURAL EXPLORATION OF
PUBLIC - GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING

1. UNITED STATES

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The implications of choosing this particular set of interviewees and how might the results have differed if another group had been selected?

This group represents a small sample of practitioners. Had the sample been larger (and it is recognized there were not resources to do that) it might have influenced the data. The U.S. group included two federal agency representatives; one state elected representative; a city (municipal) employee from a department responsible for development issues; one public participation practitioner; three nonprofits, one whose representative is Native American; a local school board (elected) member; and a state employee.

Based on some of the responses from the interviewees, there are clearly social groups who are under-represented or not reached in public participation processes. Results might have differed with more representation from practitioners from diverse ethnic populations, community groups, more grassroots practitioners, etc.

Broadening the sample to include participants in public participation processes might have changed the results also, although, again, there were budget constraints.

What surprises were there?

- the willingness of the interviewees to participate
- one interviewer leaving the team without notice
- similarities in responses from interviewees to some questions despite affiliation and/or region

What went well?

- Overall coordination with Beth Offenbacher made this project very manageable. She was timely and thorough in her responses. She did an excellent job of keeping me informed and assisting me when things went awry. It was a pleasure to work with her.
- The bibliography was helpful.
- The thoroughness of the final interview protocol and process
- The list of interviewer candidates and providing their biographies etc.
- Process for interviews (phone and in-person) seemed to work well once identified.

What did not go according to plan or was challenging?

- It was particularly challenging in the beginning to frame the research question. It was difficult to capture the essence of what Kettering was looking for and making it clear and concise to present to interviewers and interviewees.
- IRB regulations for the different universities participating were challenging when working with interviewers as they tried to maneuver through their university regulations
- While the list of interviewers was good to have, identifying them and then making a selection based on the biographies and a phone call was a challenge
- Selecting interviewers before the final protocol was done—hard to explain to interviewers what they were going to do!
- One interviewer went on maternity leave before the project was done leaving one interview undone and could not be reached. Project team had no idea this was pending and could have been prepared had we known
- Initial planning for in-person and phone interview transcription was a challenge.

Findings

Participants of this research were sourced from various organizations and positions in United States including Federal Administrators, State elected official, State Administrator, Locally 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?

The United States is a presidential democracy of 305 million people. The U.S. federal government is comprised of three separate branches – executive, legislative and judicial. Each of the 50 states that compose the United States in turn has its own constitution and respective laws.

Context of Public Participation

The cultural context of public participation and deliberation in the United States has been shaped by the longstanding tension between different conceptions of the role that government should play and the corresponding responsibilities of citizens. As a result, today there is a mix of active and passive approaches to government decision making. U.S. interviewees reflected both of these components of public participation and deliberation and elaborated on other dimensions that are uniquely American in nature.

Culture

According to a federal administrator, the cultural aspect of public participation is paramount to the effectiveness of processes that seek to engage people. "...The only way to ferret that out in a group is to have some kind of social, relaxed setting where they get to know each other as humans," said this individual. "Then you can pull them together to focus on problem solving fairly specifically about the thing they actually came to the table on. But there seems to be some kind of like social factoring that has to happen kind of early on, or there is a struggle; the group struggles."

However, there is little to draw on for gaining a comprehensive understanding of culture, whereas census and other sources can provide basic demographic data. Cultural information itself "is harder to come by," the federal administrator said, and it may not be easily captured by a staff member's regular patterns and experiences in the community. For example, where a staff member goes to church this may not result in interactions with other groups in the community that the agency seeks interaction. Both demographics and cultural data are equally important. Moreover, data – which this individual describes as "a huge connecting piece" -- requires unique skills that not all staff members possess.

"So, if I am going to work in like [community name]," this person said, "I can say something about the shape of that [subject], the physical geography, and the community that lives there - the population is this; it is stratified by -- if you look at census data, you are going to know sort of education levels, housing patterns, which would tell you something about how you invite people or engage people, where to hold meetings. And this is why sometimes the best end around that is just to go to the place and talk to folks."

Value of representation

There was a desire to ensure public processes are representative. "The Hispanics, you touched on that," said one local elected official. "To me that is important because I think every culture needs to be represented in some way."

Need for compliance

Interviewees reflected several implications for the organization of the American political system as a result of public participation and deliberation. A federal administrator described how public participation and deliberation serve as a means for complying with federal and state mandates.

P2 and deliberation as political action, change mechanisms

A local elected official described how the composition of the board she serves on has changed its racial and gender composition and the effect it has had on how the board does its work. She is the first African-American woman to serve on the board and the board also now has a female majority. The community served is predominantly white, with about 15 percent African-Americans and about eight percent Hispanic. As a result of these shifts and political affiliation, this official believes that public participation will have a "huge" impact when board elections next take place. Here, there is a move

towards public deliberation as a function of party politics versus public deliberation in and of itself alone.

A public participation practitioner described public participation and deliberation as a natural human tendency. “Most people come from a more tribal sense or this individual -- my home and my family, protective sense. I must protect. I must go out and get things to answer this or I must ward off attacks on it. But to sort of cut the rope and let you rise up in the air and then suddenly see yourself as a community, this is like in spiritual practice in the East. There was always that sense that you go through this just through your life span.”

This practitioner shared how he saw social and political change take place over the course of his own life as a result of public participation and deliberation. “You look at the change that happened over time, how people feel about the environment 30 years ago; that is very different,” this interviewee said. “I mean, even when you look at issues of segregation and racism. When I was a kid...I was born in 1959 and so, there was still -- I mean it was not -- [community name] is a very white city but at that time, Jews could not be members of the [community name] Tennis Club.”

Issue specific

Likewise, certain issues from time to time also have an impact. An NGO leader explained, “I think health care has potential for more public participation. There has been a lot of work done in our area on that, on specific issues where people are.” The interviewee’s own organization is a research and policy-making group that has “convened people together to share input and thoughts into health care issues.”

Sometimes internal

A state administrator noted how fickle support can be for projects that result from internal deliberation. “Since I had spent many years working on the Hill and I know how often politicians like to squirm away from inconvenient findings even though they may have been enthusiastically after them at point one, [same clause] by three years later when the findings start piling up and they say – ‘My God, who is responsible for this terrible study, we never wanted this!’” As a result, this administrator developed a deliberative process that focused on achieving consensus support for the project outcomes, creating a 15-member board composed of four elected officials, four executive branch senior officials, four county career staff officials and one public interest advocate. The county-level participants were appointed by a professional organization that is “quite influential” in the state within the profession concerned and the group was co-chaired by two former elected officials (one from each party).

Language matters

Some U.S. interviewees expressed awareness of cross-cultural comparisons as a means for understanding how efforts could be enhanced at home or what their own practices might mean in a broader cross-cultural context. A federal administrator observed differences in terminology across other cultures and communities. For example,

“...in my international work it is ‘civil society participation in decision making.’” This individual also noted how some phrases do not translate well: “I actually speak a number of different languages. When you go to use the term ‘public,’ the translation in other language is public participation sometimes gets difficult.” The word “community” is another that translates differently according to context. “In the US we use, ‘Get your community,’ or ‘Involve your community.’ Or we equate ‘community,’ ‘public involvement,’ ‘public participation’ -- sort of all blend together in our dialogue and language. ‘Stakeholder involvement --’ we like to use the word ‘stakeholder’ a lot. Find out who the stakeholders are.” Moreover, the word ‘stakeholder’ “does not mean anything in any other language I know,” this person said, “so much less asking a Russian translator to translate it.”

This federal interviewee also said that this knowledge had changed the nature of how this individual’s agency used language when working internationally. Our agency “has done some public participation or public involvement workshops overseas and we use our terms, we are now learning to drive our English language just in a different way,” this person said. “And ‘civil society engagement’ is becoming more of the terminology we are using because it is a little easier in other languages to get there.”

The interviewee reflected on a workshop attended by people from around the country that sought input at the state level about involving the public in natural resource management. But I was in a workshop where I was helping -- the State of Massachusetts was going to go to a [subject]-based approach for managing their natural resources. A woman from Idaho stood up at the meeting, this person said, “And I will never forget her. And this is cultural bias from a Western state. She said, ‘Every time I hear the word ‘stakeholder,’ I know who is being left out.’”

Desire to share knowledge

A state administrator reflected a desire to share knowledge about public participation and deliberative work outside of the agency’s core constituencies. “...Our publications and our website are really our only way of making this more readily available,” this individual said. Occasionally the organization received inquiries from outside the United States. “That is always a lot of fun,” said this official. “We always try to respond to things like that because those are relatively simple requests for us. But you know, we know that there are these mountains of people out there toiling in the community who are service providers and advocates who are just not able to find this kind of information on their own. I am not suggesting that everything that we do would be of interest to them, but maybe some of it would be to some people some of the time. We don’t have a way of communicating with them and they don’t know how to find us and I don’t know how to fix that, absent new resources.”

However, some practices may not be transferable

A federal administrator described how this work “really is place-specific,” based on this person’s national and international experience. “Every place has a unique set of physical characteristics, cultural characteristics and population cultural standards,

cultural vibrancy.” Further, how the work is carried out – whether by staff or in conjunction with consultants – also varies from place to place.

Institutional Expectations

There are institutional expectations for public participation and deliberation.

Minimizing controversy

According to one local administrator, these expectations involve trying “to try to gain the greatest level of community consensus around a project and the various elements of a project, and to work the issues to the point where you have really minimized the level of community controversy that may attend to any one project.”

Institutional expectations internal to agencies

Sometimes there also are institutional expectations that are internal to agencies. A state administrator stated how after many years of engaging legislators and others on policy issues, “now, we have kept a very high level of engagement amongst these principals. They actually show up, they do vote, they get very engaged, they have sometimes fairly passionate debates. It is very interesting to observe. So I think that has made a difference in terms of the focus of the group, because these are decision-makers.”

Professional expectations and the 'public good'

“You got to be able to know things. And you have to have enough information to be able to ask good questions,” said a federal administrator. There also are programmatic expectations that seek to serve the public good. For example, a state administrator noted the value of putting data it collects online and making it publicly accessible. This administrator also described leveraging non-profit funds in order “to reach out to organizations and advocates and non-profit and direct service providers at the community level that might benefit from some of this work, but don’t know about it.”

This administrator expanded on this concept:

“If we had money outside of our regular state appropriation that we could devote to trying to provide the same kinds of services that we do to our government officials to sort of find a way of reaching out to the non-profit community and to the advocacy community and to the public at large...and so I would like to see a way where we can improve our ability to get all of the groups and the advocates and the academics who are in this game to improve their game. That is how I think you can make a difference. That is how I think these organizations can really influence public policy-making. The process would work better because people would actually pay attention. You would have something useful to share and people would recognize that it is useful. Because everybody would agree that while the issue is controversial, the outcomes are the outcomes and you can’t dispute them because the methods were good and sound....”

Based on outcomes

A state administrator said:

"I remember one foundation official asking me 'well, would I be able to show that a bill had been passed as a result of this?' And I said that 'no, of course not – nothing works quite like that.' No, we can't point to something and say that because of the study we did, we changed that policy. Nobody can make that case successfully or if they can, it would be so rare as to be the exception that proves the rule...So I think that is one measure of whether or not they perceive that the work we are doing to be valuable to them."

Another interviewee, a public participation practitioner, said the following about outcomes as a concept of public participation and deliberation:

"...I think most of the time, most institutions internally have decided what they need to achieve and then they want to go out and engage with the public, maybe on a more cynical level to ward off any opposition that may keep them from achieving it, or maybe from a genuine level of feeling that 'Yes, we would like to tweak this,' or 'If we could make this a little bit better for the community, that would be great'...I guess the outcomes that most agencies are looking for is how can we meet our agency's mission or needs versus -- there are enlightened people out there who get that...but it is the lack of conceptual thinking, strategic thinking skills as we as humans -- and I do not know if this is an evolutionary thing because there are not that many people who think in that fabric kind of pattern. So, that is where I wonder what really is the real capacity for societies and humankind to do this kind of broader engagement on an ongoing basis."

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. 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

Out of 10 United States interviews, several conceptions definitions of public participation/deliberation emerged. These included:

- **Participation as partnership.** A state elected official said, "I partner with citizen groups, League of Women Voters, common-cause type organizations, civic

groups, and we work on political reform issues that have as a common theme citizen involvement, level the playing field so that citizens have greater or fair access to the legislative process. That includes -- the kinds of activities include my providing consulting and educational and coaching services to citizen's organizations outside the legislature, to encourage them to -- [indiscernible] to brief them about how the process works on paper and how it actually works in reality, the internal behind-closed-doors dynamics, and I support them in devising action plans, approaches, strategies for increasing their effectiveness at the legislature."

- **Educating and collaborating with citizens.** "I have sponsored continuing education class, a non-credit class during the legislative session held at the Capitol," said the state elected official. "I have helped sponsor national issues forums on legislative issues, other community forums."
- **Increasing accountability of legislators to citizens.** "My experience as a legislator is that legislators tend to make up their minds with some awareness of where the citizen groups are at," said the state elected official, "but because citizens groups, their opinions, if they are very different than what legislators' views are, citizen groups' views can be, not necessarily disregarded, but not heeded as much as lobbyists views. And my opinion about that is the reason is there are no consequences. Well, very little consequences because when it comes to election time, citizen groups do not hold their legislators accountable, whereas lobbyists and moneyed interest groups have the capacity, through funding, to hold legislators accountable for killing or supporting the bills that funded interests have. And so during the legislative process, the legislators tend to pay more attention to the opinions of those persons and groups who are more likely to hold them accountable to whether they pay heed to those opinions."
- **A means of changing power paradigms.** "I see these two paradigms of power and the traditional paradigm of amassing power, wielding power, domination or submission-type power, is the kind of power, in my view, the paradigm that excludes citizen participation and views citizen participation as a threat to the freedom to wield power," said the state administrator. "The more citizens get involved, then you have more constraints. You cannot make deals as much. And the other where you want to... power sharing, kind of empowering others model, you view -- it is having the skill set to collaborate, so it is a different kind of skill set, skill sets of collaborating, of generating consensus, of including people, of fostering understanding of different views rather than wedge-issues type, who is right and who is wrong. It's a different skill set, different paradigm and that second paradigm, I think, is the paradigm within the power-holding societies, cultures, or clubs that can hold some promise for enabling and empowering and encouraging citizen participation as we have defined it in our conversation today."
- **Awareness of limitations.** A locally elected official defined participation as a means for voicing needs or concerns. "Public participation to me would mean the fact that we have the public engaged in whatever our topic is, that their voices are heard, their concerns are heard. Now rather we go wherever you like us to go. That is always going to be up for debate but I think that is very, very

important, to have the public involved.” This person acknowledges that some might consider such participation as “more as a dialogue.”

- **Civic entrepreneurship.** An NGO leader defined the term in this way, stating: “I think that civic entrepreneur is something, not two words that are often put together and it is not really a field that has been defined. We do not have a theory for what it is. We do not have language for what it is, but I know a lot of people including me that think that there is some distinction between civic entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship”.
- **Civic problem-solving.** An NGO leader said, “...I think that to be perfectly honest, I come from a particular bias and that bias is that the public has the capacity to engage around public problems and quite often to generate new and creative ways of thinking about problems and solving problems that we have not thought of before, and a lot of times that comes not from the individuals in the public but from putting all of those ideas together and something new emerges that we had not considered before”.
- **Listening and being non-judgmental.** “I mean, we feel like most of the time that what we are doing to encourage public participation is going back to the basics – of listening, focusing on perspective development and critical thinking and non-judgment, being open to explore your own thinking first before you label someone else's,” said an NGO leader. “And all of that said, this is all incredibly hard to do within the political landscape we live in.” A local administrator said, “it really means listening, number one, and actively trying to take what you hear and incorporate it into public decision-making. I guess that is the shortest answer that I could give; that the input that people give should be used in a meaningful way.”
- **Opinion research that is nonpartisan,** according to an NGO leader.
- **A broad concept.** An NGO leader observed that participation and deliberation changes “some by context. And one of the things that I think that the field needs to think more about is the variety of purposes and contexts in which public engagement and public participation can be useful. But in general it is the idea of giving the general public and citizens a greater voice and greater opportunities to participate in the development of public policies or decisions or initiatives that are addressing public problems. And again, I think it is more contextual and situationally specific than people sort of realize typically.”
- **Meaningful engagement.** “I think the terminology often can get in people’s ways because some people may check the box,” said a local administrator. “I notify people, I held a meeting, I collected their input and I did the project, and they can check all the boxes. But if they never really, meaningfully engage people, truly listen to them, and try proactively to incorporate what they hear, to me that is not public involvement.”
- **Electoral process and elected officials’ response.** “We are a country that fought a revolution to be self-governed and to have deliberative bodies that we would elect that are representing our views. So to me, the clearest manifestation of that kind of public participation is the electoral process and then how our elected officials act on our behalf”, said a state administrator.

- **Stewardship and ownership of decisions** an NGO leader and a federal administrator said, in public participation, “the community owns the vision”. At the agency the administrator works for, “we want the community to feel a greater sense of responsibility of caring about how their community evolves.” The goal is to have the community “understand the value ...we want them to feel a sense of stewardship”. In this way, participatory efforts reflect a “circle of engagement,” according to this official. There is a connection “to an issue at both the intellectual and emotional level.”
- **Mutual consideration.** “I think every time you take an action, you have to think about affected parties and as well as those who are likely to have an interest and be ready in any project -- because I have done other projects besides water projects -- to be able to respond to those constituencies,” said a federal administrator. “And a proactive engagement is always preferable to an after-the-fact engagement for participation.”

Differentiation between ‘public’ and ‘civic’

A locally elected official differentiated between ‘public’ and ‘civic’ as it relates to participation. In this way of thinking, “even with being on the school where you have really hot topics and you have some topics that are just better, just personal.” Participation that is labeled ‘public’ “has more of a positive spin on it.” The official explained this reasoning: “Because ‘civic’, sometimes people think ‘civic’ like they have to have association when they do not understand the way that it is being used. I think that we have to take our time to educate people but in the beginning getting that, we sometimes need to come to their level to get them more involved, to get them more engaged, and then start introducing other terms to them.”

Finally, a local administrator contested the idea of a conceptual definition for participatory or deliberative efforts, stating that instead, “public participation is really a value you hold.”

Common Terms

Common terms for public participation/deliberation used by interviewees included the following listed below:

- Public dialogue, citizen dialogue (local elected official)
- Civic dialogue (federal administrator)
- Outreach (local elected official)
- Civic engagement (public participation practitioner, two federal administrators)
- Public involvement (local administrator, two federal administrators, state elected official)
- Stakeholder involvement-(federal administrator)
- Public outreach (local administrator)
- Community engagement process (federal administrator)
- Stakeholder engagement (federal administrator)
- Public information (public participation practitioner)

- Public input (federal administrator, state elected official)
- Strong democracy (public participation practitioner)
- Participatory democracy (public participation practitioner)
- Citizen choice work (NGO leader)
- Community and also, Involve your community (federal administrator)
- Public participation (state elected official)
- citizen lobbyist (state elected official)
- public testimony (state elected official)

The state elected official also commented: “Inside the legislature, the halls of the legislature, amongst the legislator’s community, so to speak. Outside the legislature talk, conversations that legislators have among themselves, the citizen groups, they may use more like ‘public deliberation’ or ‘deliberative democracy,’ which refer to a higher level of participation which refers to, I guess, a public desire to be part of the deliberative process.”

Challenges associated with varied terminology

An NGO leader observed that the different terminology used “is part of the problem that we have. There are a lot of synonyms and we use them interchangeably and do not often have a chance to think about them and that is why I’m really excited about this civic entrepreneurship thing where none of the terms have been defined and there is no theory so we get to kind of make it up. But synonyms for me would be public participation, public engagement, civic action, public acting.”

Moreover, “I think various streams of dialogue and deliberation use the concept in lots of different ways – It is public acting at [organization], at least it was last week, and next week it will be something else because they have the luxury of sitting down and thinking about these things, but for most of us that do not, we use those terms interchangeably and then when you start trying to add on a verb of what you are doing, when you are someone like me, well, am I fostering it? Am I promoting it? Am I creating the conditions for it to happen?” This interviewee also noted, “I cannot even really describe for you why I use one at a particular time over another one.”

An NGO leader concurred. “People do not use that [terminology] a lot, really. I mean, kind of out there in the media, in the newspapers and just listening to people talk, they might say things like ‘public engagement,’ ‘citizen responsibility,’ things like that, civic life-type stuff. We do not tend to use these words that much.” Instead, a common question is: “What are our responsibilities? In fact that is a word we use a lot. When we are confused or not sure about what to do on the issue, we say ‘Well, what are our responsibilities to the issue? What are our responsibilities to the people?’ That is kind of how we talk.”

A federal administrator noted the limitations of using specific terms. “And some of the problems around even communicating on this issue is how different phrases in different places have come to be used or developed. Because if you look up ‘public participation’ on [agency]’s website, you are not likely to get anything, so it looks like the agency is

not doing anything. But if you used the term 'public involvement,' there is not only a master page but a whole subset of information out there which you can use."

An NGO leader placed more emphasis on the public's role as an 'other.' This person said, "I think you could talk about engaging the public. I think you could probably talk about citizen participation, public participation. I think you could talk about getting citizens more involved in some kind of public decision making process or getting the public or getting leaders to listen and interact with people more. Things like that."

"We have recently done a very interesting internal dialogue about what is the difference between the words 'advice,' 'input,' and 'recommendation,'" a local administrator said. "Is there any difference? When you go to a community and you ask for them to give you advice, input, recommendations, feedback, whatever you call it, is there any meaningful difference among those words? And I say, 'No,' and other people will parse that and say, 'Yes, there are meaningful differences.'"

Finally, a federal administrator who has worked internationally differentiated between conceptions of participation at home and abroad. "Well, in my international work it is 'civil society participation in decision making.'"

Justifications

Justifications for public participation/deliberation include those that are public-oriented and may reflect social benefits; community-oriented or outcome-based.

Public-oriented:

- **Encourage public accountability.** "My experience as a legislator is that legislators tend to make up their minds with some awareness of where the citizen groups are at, but because citizens groups, their opinions, if they are very different than what legislators' views are, citizen groups' views can be, not necessarily disregarded, but not heeded as much as lobbyists views. And my opinion about that is the reason is there are no consequences," said the state-elected official. "Well, very little consequences because when it comes to election time, citizen groups do not hold their legislators accountable, whereas lobbyists and moneyed interest groups have the capacity, through funding, to hold legislators accountable for killing or supporting the bills that funded interests have. And so during the legislative process, the legislators tend to pay more attention to the opinions of those persons and groups who are more likely to hold them accountable to whether they pay heed to those opinions."
- **Embrace a civic mission.** "I think it is all going to kind of come out but I'm particularly interested in how civic entrepreneurs emerge in public, within public institutions that have at their heart a civic mission and may or may not be living up to that mission to varying degrees," said an NGO leader. "I'm thinking of public libraries, well, actually any library, museums, higher education, public education, so I think that there are some unique circumstances within those public institutions that often prevent them from being as public, or at least being very entrepreneurial about their civic duties or civic mission."

- **Establishing a level of commitment.** “...I’m not being gratuitous about this,” an NGO leader said, “but I think the IAP2 spectrum is one of the finest tools that I have ever seen for helping me and helping others get a handle on the varying degrees of public participation, so when I think of public participation or if somebody asks me what do you think about public participation, it is like what level of commitment do you have and what level of listening are you willing and implementation of what the public has to say are you willing to engage in?”
- **Defining critical issues, taking responsibility.** An NGO leader said, “a big component for me of public participation is public participation not only in defining what the critical issues are and beginning to craft a way in which to talk about them and find ways of working together but also I have taken responsibility for implementing the solutions and taking responsibilities for the consequences of those solutions so to me, public participation is not simply I had a voice and I told you what to do to fix the problem and went away. It is far more collaborative and inclusive and we all have some kind of a role or responsibility in implementing those solutions.”
- **Loyalty to the public.** “I have been in office [number] years, and citizen groups generally distrust politicians and many politicians who... historically, this is my own experience being here [number] years. They work with citizen groups, but at some point there are situations where the loyalty of the legislator is tested and you are either going to be loyal to the colleagues, the legislators club, or the citizens and others that have worked with citizen groups have had to be loyal to their colleagues. I have, over the years, earned a reputation of being loyal to the citizen groups. I have found a way to do that and while over time, at first my colleagues were distrustful and there was a sense of disloyalty on my part, but I have been doing this long enough that my colleagues know that I’m not out to get them and that I’m not doing it for political ambition. So I’m not, for the most part, not considered a threat to the political -- well, I am a threat to political establishment but I’m not a personal threat. I’m not out to get or harm anyone, harm the political establishment. I have my beliefs and my alignment with the citizen values, but...”
- **Providing opportunity for everyone to be engaged with issues.** “I would love to see our businesses value this and understand the value and provide the opportunity for all levels of their employees to be engaged with issues,” an NGO leader said, “because the adult literacy students that come to a forum and learns to find their voice and learns to think critically about the issue and understand the cause and consequences of different policy decisions and learns how to listen to other people in the room who have very different opinions, those are the kind of soft skills that are really, really hard for employers to develop and do not get. They do not spend a whole lot of time with their lower level employees working on those skills but wow, would that not be something?” This person also said, “I tell you, you participate in a few deliberative forms and you learn how to listen, and learn how to think about what people are saying and what is behind it, and learn how to value them even though they hold a different opinion, you are a much better cashier.”

- **Bring together diverse perspectives.** “Well, the initial vision was if we can bring these folks together, why not bring together diverse perspectives?” an NGO leader said. “Why not hold a citizens' national convention in 2008 along with the political party convention? And why not provide opportunities for citizens to come together around the question of, what is our vision for America, what is the history of the future, what is the story that we want told, and use that as a way of setting the agenda regardless of who gets elected? And why hold just one citizens' national convention? Why not hold a whole series of them? And so anybody that is engaged in public engagement or deliberation and dialogue work your own networks and bring folks together around this question.”
- **Identifying common values.** “...all of our participation and all of our discussion about public issues is really -- the underlying question really is, who are we, what do we value, what do we -- how do we want to be known, what is important to us and what is our vision? Whether you are talking about healthcare or education, at the root, they're really saying something about what is important to us as citizens,” an NGO leader said.
- **Helping Americans “explore and understand critical issues,”** said an NGO leader through public policy institutes. This means better understanding “the complex policy issues and helping leaders and policy makers better understand the public's concerns, values, points of view,” with a goal of “sort of trying to bridge the gaps between decision makers and the general public.” This was particularly valuable since “ways in which the reformers and the professionals tended to think about issues, talk about issues, prioritize problems was very different from the way the general public was.” There was “a desire to, as they [the founders of the concept] put it, change the conversation and get people talking more effectively to each other and trying to build some common ground and common understanding.”
- **Establish relationships with citizens.** “I have virtually -- I think all of the citizen leaders that worked with the legislature I have a relationship with, and they consider me an ally and I have an open door and so over time they have found myself to be a source of information about the real dynamics that's going on,” said a state-elected official. “They have found -- what I provide, I maybe provide coaching or input or some thoughts or ideas and it is up to them to decide what they want to use and they can use it at their own risk. And over time, they have -- many or most, if not all, have come to see that for the most part, interacting with me has value....So to me, it is what I'll call an integrity-based relationship. Whatever I say, and I do not ask them to do anything....I share with them and they make up their own mind, and I want them to do what fits their own integrity. And we have what I will call integrity-based relationship.”
- **'Truth-telling.'** “I got a note handed to me just before I called you from the League of Women Voters, said the state-elected official. “They have come in to - - one of their members had given in their will significant funding and they are looking for educational programs and I had thrown out some ideas and they are very interested. So one way, one idea is to -- what I would call -- what I was planning to do is to go on a speaking tour, and it may not be just me but maybe other people, and what we would do would be speak - I do not know what you

call it – truth-telling talks; campaign finance reform and ethics reform and election and all that. There is lobbyist and open government and lot of the issues, and basically they are essentially without casting aspersions on the legislature, it appears that the design of the legislative process is such that there is -- citizens have an uphill climb to even be taken seriously in the deliberations of the legislature, and so one would be to have a public program. So to announce, to share, to just talk up that there is a program - and I'm using the League of Women Voters but we are going to connect various other organizations as well - to empower citizens to weigh in on legislative decision-making by acting as a collective, by increasing the numbers in a network, number one. And number two, that they are entry points through the League of Women Voters and other organizations who are prepared to educate, provide orientation, and assist citizens to -- basically, most people who start have to get over their cynicism and frustration and anger and blaming and so forth, to kind of own up to that is their government....And then thirdly, to then develop a collective action program. Identifying a certain number of bills and getting on an e-mail list and action alerts and when to come in and testify, when to send e-mails or postcards to legislators and so forth, so a kind of a collective action agenda....And then the fourth item would be then to have an evaluation after the legislative session. It is almost like a citizen's scorecard, legislation that are more citizen-oriented or consumer-oriented or public-oriented, and issue a scorecard that has a semblance of, reflects an intent for accountability.”

Community-oriented:

- **Work that is focused on serving community needs is important.** “For instance, we have done for about five years now film forum series where we might show a documentary film that is related to some kind of pressing issue in our community, said an NGO leader. “And sometimes it is not related to a pressing issue. Sometimes it is just a way to get educated together about our history.” Such efforts are “just about nurturing public participation, [indiscernible] exchange of ideas, those kinds of things.”
- **“Community building, just getting to know each other as neighbors, and to essentially work hard to not judge one another,”** said the NGO leader. “To get a chance to just listen to another person's point of view about a book.” This person also said, “I mean, we feel like most of the time that what we are doing to encourage public participation is going back to the basics – of listening, focusing on perspective development and critical thinking and non-judgment, being open to explore your own thinking first before you label someone else's. And all of that said, this is all incredibly hard to do within the political landscape we live in.” **Developing community relationships** are also part of this justification. “I think maybe the core of our relationship is really about being good relatives so that we have a very strong sense of seeing one another really as brothers and sisters and their children,” said the NGO leader. Often, “it seems like people are often hiding behind papers and reading stuff instead of just talking to each other and listening. And we are all about creating situations that allow people to be fully human and just visit.” In sum, “I mean, we are really about encouraging people

to just to sit down and visit and talk as neighbors.” This particular NGO structures “a lot of specific activities and we use a lot of -- like I said we might use discussion guides or films or this or that but it really comes down to practicing visiting, just as normal respectful human beings.”

- **Supporting deliberation among community members is key** said the NGO leader. This involves “just recognizing that a deliberative process for talking was valuable and also was one that embraced all people, no matter where you came from, or what your orientation that most of us can think of some sort of deliberative tradition in our history and ancestry.” This interviewee also said, “I am constantly thinking about public participation and how can each person in this classroom have a voice, share power, be involved in designing the reach of their own life, et cetera.”

Outcome-based:

- **Participation in order to** “a) **inform** people of what we are doing, and b) to **engage** them to give us input so that we can shape the projects to be compatible with what the community desires, to at least take that into consideration as we develop the projects,” said a local administrator.
- **Power-based.** “I think my sense in talking to other legislators in other states, the [state] legislature is just like other legislatures,” said a state-elected official. “It essentially -- it is power based and it is oriented around power rather than participation...And the traditional sense of power of collecting power, you build power, you amass power. So power as a -- when someone is not powerful, they are more powerful than other people, which is different from power sharing, where power is viewed as a way to empower people, a way to have people feel included, a way to inspire or empower, or enroll other people in and getting them engaged to help solve problems.
- **Emphasizing ‘buy-in.’** A local administrator said, “pragmatically, it really comes down to there has to be a certain level of community buy-in to the projects that we do in order for them to be accepted by the public, and that if we do not do some level of engagement of the community, public participation, then the projects will not have support and we will not be able to implement them. But I do not think there is anything more altruistic than that.”
- **Focused on persuasion.** “You have lots of very good-hearted people trying to represent them [poor people] who have very real issues and concerns and complaints, very legitimate,” said a state administrator. “And then they do just a bad, bad job of marshalling the kind of persuasive information that is going to help change anybody’s mind.”
- **Direct action.** “So ours [approach to public participation] is a sense of wanting to get citizens to take more directed action to care about issues that are important to the future of their community,” said a federal administrator. “And then to find ways that are safe for them to provide that input.”
- **Giving people faith in politics.** A state-elected official said, “my role in all of this as I can see it, and it is not only my role but there are, I think, a few others, is I hold, like, the torch because I have gotten over a lot of -- kids, they grow up. We get upset at the world, and at some point you grow up to say okay, the world is

the way it is. Politics is the way it is, fine. Get over it. And once you get over it, it is okay now...it is possible to make a difference, to have an impact and so my job is – one, is to support people in getting over it but more importantly to hold open the possibility that real and authentic and fundamental changes can occur, and my vision horizon is like 20 years.”

- **Transparency in decision-making**, such as through ‘spot involvement’ efforts to reverse efforts to make the legislature’s decision process open to the public and not behind closed doors that were described earlier by the state-elected official. This interviewee also was instrumental in having “cable television broadcast of legislative hearings and floor sessions” for purposes of transparency.

Half of interviewees also described efforts that engage practitioners or specialists outside of their organizations in order to develop and/or implement public processes. For example, a federal administrator noted how a particular state hired a contractor “to provide local support,” specifically “an engineering firm that is actually gathering the data and information.”

Similarly, a state administrator spoke of using external resources. “If we think that there is something that is really worthwhile from another state or from a federal study, we will bring people in. Our budget is limited, but we can fly somebody in. We don’t pay them, there are no honoraria. The only incentive is that they’ve got something important to say, they think and we think. We create these venues where they are talking to the crème de la crème of the California decision makers in this arena.”

There is great emphasis in such instances on making the presentations germane for attendees. “We said to our presenters who were often academics of great research capabilities that these would be very different presentations. This was not an academic audience; they weren’t going to go through pages of regression equations. We would overhaul quite considerably, and sometimes much to the distress of the researchers, their proposed slide presentations and handouts to make it accessible for our audience.”

An NGO leader commented on external reformers that sometimes become involved in participatory processes. These reformers – such as in the case of education reformers – “are not necessarily activists because activists tend to be grassroots folks. These tend to be academics and foundation folks, the kinds that I was talking about before. People that have these ideas about how to make things better and at some point find out that they need to actually talk to parents and students and taxpayers if these ideas are going to actually fly.”

Interviewees discussed numerous subjects that are the focus of participatory or deliberative efforts, such as environmental issues and issues involving animal relatives, as an NGO leader noted. Some topics are off limits, according to a local administrator: “...there are quite frankly sometimes among those issues there may be -- we may be very clear about segmenting what we really want public input on and what we do not

want public input on.” For example, this administrator explained, “for transportation that is certainly true, for parks it is true, for housing it is less true.”

“That is the way it is here; there is less openness really to that public involvement,” said the local administrator. “And partly, it is because there are more limited -- what the public can actually engage in. They can engage in the details of how a building looks, how many people are housed in that building, sort of the design details. But for the work that I do now, there may be elements of a financial deal that are non-negotiable with the public, so we are not taking input on that element. I think it is important to be clear with people about that. So there are some things -- that is, I guess, a place where there is a differentiation.”

Types of public participation/deliberative processes

Types of public participation and deliberation identified reflect panoply of applications, from mandated participation to such as civic entrepreneurship (as previously noted).

As one NGO leader noted, different approaches make sense: “There is not a particular, single procedure that is going to make sense for every public decision.” This interviewee commented, “There are situations where broad-based citizen participation is not as meaningful or does not work as well because, for example, you are dealing with, at this point in time, a particularly technical piece of an issue, as opposed to a broad direction question of an issue. A local administrator agreed. “I think it is important to tailor both the message and the outreach, and the tools you use to that particular audience. And so, a meeting that is really focused on getting input from a business community is going to perhaps look different, be held at a different time, and a different location than one where we are seeking input from people in a neighborhood, and so really tailoring those tools and methods to them.

One-on-One (Meetings)

Participation “can be one-on-one, or if they come to a meeting... like if we have a government liaison meeting they can come and then we can discuss it there.” In other instances, there are open meetings about decisions to be made. “Once the committee was selected, we held three public meetings that were advertised through the newspaper or in the [community name] school television site. So, this gave the community an opportunity to come and to discuss or really become educated about what [name of act] is,” said the official.

Informal Efforts

The elected official also described how informal efforts in the community provide opportunities to develop capacity for participating in formal processes. “I am involved with an organization called [organization], which has recently come to [community name] two years ago. I was the co-chair and now I am the evaluation person, and that organization is basically helping the predominantly black areas weed out a lot of the crime that has taken place, whether it be drugs, prostitution, illegal gambling. And the

seeding part is helping develop the community and so teaching how to get job applications, how to own a house, how to get better finance yourself.”

This interviewee likes “the informal because I think it removes the barriers of titles and allows people to talk freely. Now, if I was sitting in a room with a bunch of educators, I would say, ‘Okay, we are going to do a formal discussion.’” In this community, the topics addressed informally by community members through this organization are “closer to their heart. They have more passion for it. I would do an informal when I'm really just trying or I'm not sure where everybody is coming from and we are not all on the same education; we are not all in the same... we do not all have the same idea, whatever the topic is.”

One time - "Spot Involvement"

A state-elected official described the use of what he calls ‘spot involvement’ to engage people versus ‘sustained involvement.’ “One time come in, get involved, then leave” is how this person defines ‘spot involvement.’ “And the other is sustained involvement where you come in and you feel like you make a difference and those who feel they make a difference, they come back.....And so, the one-time spot involvement, they get involved but for the most part if they get upset or turned off or disillusioned, you do not see them again.” For example, this person said, “So, for the one time [or ‘spot involvement’], I have done a number of one-time, like, campaigns. So, we did a grassroots campaign, got thousands of people involved to repeal a Chair veto rule. There was a legislative rule that -- in the legislature, we have House and Senate, we have a conference committee at the end.” This is an important rule because “Virtually all important bills go into a conference committee.”

These “conference committees are like the third House. There is the House, Senate and you have conference committees, because conference committees, they basically finalize all the major legislation and those decisions that are all made virtually behind closed doors, and they come out in public to hear the proposal and have both House and Senate conferees agree on it and vote on it in public....And there was a rule two years ago where one Chair, even if there was a majority of conferees on both the House and Senate, if one single Chair, usually there is two or three Chairs on each side....One Chair can veto the entire committee, can veto the majority.....so it is like a veto power and I and citizen groups launched a campaign to -- and the media joined in because it was pretty much undemocratic, because it went against the principle of majority rule.”

“So, people jumped on and in partnership with the media. So, the media is actually a key player.....Where the media can take and join in and be a partner in these populist efforts, and they were in this case, and a lot of people got involved, and the rule was repealed because of public pressure and really a wave of public support to reverse what the legislature was doing....And then a lot of them said they are open to get involved in other projects but many of them did not....So, the most successful it would be where the legislature is doing something clearly bad, so to speak, from the public's point of view and people get upset and they get involved....So, that is where the public has more of impact, and it is mostly to stop what the legislature is doing. As to getting the legislature

to do things that a lot of citizen groups want, that is far less successful because the intricacies of legislative process and many opportunities to derail a bill and have plausible reasons why a bill does not get not get passed....Without knowing really what the reason.”

On-going Opportunities for Input

Some view participation as an ongoing versus one-topic or occasional event. “It is when you invited the public to come to a formal meeting to dialogue around a certain issue but now we see it much more as a multi-faceted, ongoing community engagement process which is much deeper in terms of civic dialogue and civic engagement,” said a federal administrator. “So we have gone from sort of a much more singular view of public involvement to a really comprehensive way in which we intersect with the public on a day-to-day basis. And then we clearly understood that different constituent groups and different ethnic and other communities of interest have different ways in which they feel comfortable interacting with their government so that no one way is ever sufficient.”

As a result, “what we tried to do is to have almost a menu, a fairly broad menu, of the ways in which we decide to get public input into any issue that we are dealing with in the park. And so we do not have a set formula...We try to develop now an engagement strategy for every issue we are dealing with or every new project we are dealing with. We say, ‘Well, what is the broader engagement strategy? What are the elements that make that up? Who are the communities of interest we need to intersect with and to get involved? And what is our approach to getting that accomplished?’”

This interviewee gave an example that illustrates this approach. “So I would take a really specific example, like, we are just working on a whole transformation of the West end of [community name] we call [name] and putting in a whole new trail system that connects the various communities in that western sector of the park to their park land and then through their park lands. And rather than just sort of coming up with a plan ourselves and then taking it to the public for reaction, our engagement strategy starts at the very, very basic level, where we try to determine what is the particular interest in that area that people need to learn about and get educated about to assist them in how they might want to provide useful input to us.” The federal administrator went on to explain a specific engagement process involving regional forests. “We went to every single neighborhood organization...But at the end of the day, the community owns the vision and ours is about getting ownership of the vision from as broad a group of stakeholders as possible, because more and more we are seeking funding to be able to accomplish completion or implementation of the vision from both public sources of funds and private philanthropy. And controversy does not breed good ability to fund projects, so the more you can get that engagement down to the very basic community level and the more effective you are at bringing diverse points of view together behind that common ownership, the easier it is to actually excite them to become part of its implementation...And that includes a lot of what we call social science work now. Much more survey work, phone survey work, intercept survey work; just trying to get a better pulse of where people are at.”

Today, this federal agency is “moving to focus meetings, smaller meetings, meetings that we talk to the community organizations. This is a lot more intense, labor-intensive but much more effective we found out in the long run.”

Social Context Planning Efforts

Another federal administrator explained how stakeholder engagement or public involvement (the terms the interviewee used) are part of the agency’s broader approach to planning activities. “It really is place-specific and this is true both for my national work as well as my international work,” said this person. “Every place has a unique set of physical characteristics, cultural characteristics and population cultural standards, cultural vibrancy. And those elements sort of determine what can happen in a place”. For this official, “in order to get [the public] to collaborate with you, to do kind of a cohesive, proactive plan or problem-solving approach, there has to be some pooling together of the group at hand. I think the most important process in that building the infrastructure for a group to work is the social end of things. And when we did our training in the Baltic countries and actually taught public engagement methodologies, we talked about how you invite people to a meeting, how you get them there, and then what keeps them there and coming back. We talked about food. We talked about kind of social context. Make it fun so they get to know each other as human beings first”.

For this agency, “depending on the level of engagement, whether it be a town hall meeting or something in response to the Federal Register, or something maybe even more deeper, it can take different forms. There is different levels of meetings that may take place.” There also “are different levels of participation. Assuming a higher-level involvement or participation would ordinarily occur in the town or the locale where the project is based, or is about?”

Legislative Requirements

Sometimes legislation creates a requirement for particular types of participation. This federal agency uses “diverse tools,” the administrator said. For example, “like [name of legislation] has a requirement to go in and hold public meetings about the cleanup site. So, we take a whole bunch of displays and we will do a little overview of the problem and what we are doing to solve the problem and we have these open-houses and people come and go and they can ask us questions; they can submit things for the record, and public involvement. So that is a different approach than for [subject] planning where we convene stakeholder groups to help develop and implement plans on a [subject] bases.”

There are also instances where the agency works in conjunction with state agencies. For example, “in the case of [state], they have a clean lake program that their own funding, their tax-based funding goes to, so we are not providing funding for clean lakes. They had developed [subject] plans using their own money. Now they developed their own stakeholder groups; we sometimes participated in those groups.”

Regularity/frequency

The regularity of processes included both ongoing and periodic or project-based participation.

Federal: One agency reported conducting civic engagement across almost every project. This agency has “a concept we call [name], or the incremental hook.” This person said, “From our [federal agency] point of view, we want people to understand that they have a [federal agency] at their doorstep, to understand the value that [federal agency] areas contribute to their community, and we want them to feel a sense of stewardship of that asset. So we realized that that just does not happen by us sending out material or asking them to come to a meeting. It comes through a very deep and sustained engagement process.”

State: A state administrator said that this agency’s group, consisting of state legislators and county directors, and “only met twice a year and at most, three times a year.” A state-elected official described the timing of elections and engagement. “I guess I’m introducing the notion that there is a connection between elections and law-making and the connection is elections are really the time of holding legislators accountable,” said this person. “Another time of holding legislators accountable is after the legislative session. There is a citizen group, which includes environmental groups, citizens-based groups, community-based groups -- like for example, environmental groups may issue an environmental rating that may grade legislators based on their support or opposition to environmental issues. So there is a certain degree of accountability after legislative session, and while these citizen groups may not spend a lot of money or weigh in heavily during election time, their ratings are often used during election time to cite how a candidate is pro-environment or anti-environment, et cetera.”

Local: Meetings in one community are generally held “at times, that are reasonably convenient for the people in this community to attend,” said a local administrator.

In another community, a locally elected official said that “school board meetings are held twice a month,” in addition to committee meetings. For a local referendum that the school board is planning, state law requires the school board to hold a public meeting. “By state law, we were required to hold one but we held three because we wanted to give people an opportunity to come and to support -- a lot of times when we just have one meeting everyone cannot make that. So we put three meetings and figured so maybe at least able to attend one of the three, if not all of them,” said the official.

NGO: An NGO convenes meetings “once every two months, at least.” These meetings have been ongoing for some time, noting that “we are still convening them even now many years later.” These participants “have been in a really solid relationship for over 10 years.”

How people access participatory processes

Access is made possible for stakeholders or the public through a variety of means.

[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*

- **Community conversations.** “Well, the community conversation model that we typically employ at [organization], a citizen choice work [audio glitch] conversation model, we really try to do that, working through local leaders, organizing community fora of various sorts,” said an NGO leader.
- **Coalitions.** “I began with local folks that have decided that the public needs to get more involved in an issue,” said an NGO leader. “So it is a different coalition in different places. In [community name], [state] it was the mayor, the local college, and the school system. It is different in different places, depending on who is stepping up to the plate and saying, ‘We need more public input, public involvement. The general public needs to be part of this.’ And then we can work with them strategically on who else they need to bring into the coalition and what are some of the strategies for getting folks into the room.” “I’m also the chair of [program name] right now, which is one of the [number] coalition offices in [community name], part of our neighborhood system,” said a public participation practitioner. “So we are the coalition office that provides assistance to [number] neighborhoods in inner southeast [community name]. So a lot of our focus there is what kind of technical assistance -- it is again building that capacity in the community. It is easy to say that we want people to engage, but you need engagement capacity both on the government side, that they know how to do it and that they are willing to listen to it and know what to do with the information. But, also, you need to have people in the community organized enough to be able to know what their interests and concerns are, to be able to talk to each other about that, and then to be able to engage with government from a position more of strength of knowing their interests and concerns.”
- **“Walks and talks.”** A federal administrator described a program developed in order to guide community members in learning “about the forest history, the bird history, the human history and the forest health” for an overplanted forest. Following an extensive outreach effort to neighborhood and community groups, “the word then began to get out and they said ‘Well, these are fascinating. Have you been on that walk?’” This interviewee also commented, “But at the end of the day, the community owns the vision and ours is about getting ownership of the vision from as broad a group of stakeholders as possible, because more and more we are seeking funding to be able to accomplish completion or implementation of the vision from both public sources of funds and private philanthropy. And controversy does not breed good ability to fund projects, so the more you can get that engagement down to the very basic community level and the more effective you are at bringing diverse points of view together behind that common ownership, the easier it is to actually excite them to become part of its implementation.”

- **Public meetings.** A locally elected official said that regular meetings of the school board “are open to the public.” “If the public wants to be heard, they can participate on agenda items, which means those are the things that we are talking about that night. Or they can also participate in non-agenda items, and what happens is anyone can come to a meeting. They are public meetings and they fill out a form. And they tell us whether they are talking about an agenda or non-agenda item. And when that comes up, the school Board [title] opens the floor to allow them to speak as long as they do not talk about personnel issues.” At these meetings, there is “a ground rule where we really like to keep people to talk up to two minutes. That way, that gives anyone else a chance to discuss their item. We do not allow for a long debate. A lot of times if it is a hot topic, we will let the community discuss that item and then we will tell them how we are either going to resolve it or what our next steps are.”
- **Forums.** “When we do them, they bring us into one of their largest committees where they can have anywhere between 30 and 45 to 50 of the directors there,” said a state administrator. “Directors may not want to stay for it, but they can if they wish to. That is really the largest room we play. It’s also the toughest room we play, because half of the people in the room think that research is a complete waste of time and ‘tell me something I don’t know.’” These forums have evolved over time. “When I first approached them, just like I wanted to bail in on the [organization acronym] meetings rather than renting a room and inviting people, I went to the guy who was the director of the unit that oversees [subject] and [subject] and other kinds of analysis in our arena. I said – ‘look, we’re going to be doing these forums and we would like you to host them for the legislative staff.’ We will bring the content and you send out the invitations to the right people. We are looking at leadership staff, people who work for the Speaker and the ranking Republican and the President of the Senate and the ranking Republican on that side. And the committee people on both sides of the aisle, the people who are actually on the committees that have authority over these programs....So that is the second thing. And then the third group is the senior executive branch officials. Because we have these secretaries or department heads who sit on our board, they host these things for the senior executive branch staff. Again, they get the room, they send out the invitation and we show up when we have these things. We do them irregularly – there is no set number we do. We shop things around.” An NGO leader described a forum focused around films. “For instance, we have done for about five years now film forum series where we might show a documentary film that is related to some kind of pressing issue in our community. And sometimes it is not related to a pressing issue. Sometimes it is just a way to get educated together about our history....But we will show a documentary film and then we will do a circle process discussion following that showing of a film.” There may be a community potluck as part of this event. This interviewee also said, “We also host and lead a book forum seasonally. Each season we will read a very specific book. It is kind of like -- well, it is not like a book club but just a group of people where we are committed to investigating an issue with our families, with our church group,

with our tribal college, just with a group of folks. And again, we meet very specifically. We write the discussion guides that accompany the books.”

- **Community-based committees.** A locally elected official described a committee that sought to recruit members from the community it serves. “There is a current committee that was just ended and it was called [project name]. And that [project name] consists of about four residents and myself as being the Board person elected and what we discussed on our three meetings is there was going to be a referendum for the next election on [indiscernible] on income tax or personal income tax. So at this study, we looked at a random of information that was given to us from the 2000 census to discuss should we raise the taxes by one percent on earned income or a personal income level? This gave the community an opportunity -- they had to actually write a letter if they wanted to be a part of the committee and then the Board, we selected who we chose.” The selection process “was done openly. Once the committee was selected, we held three public meetings that were advertised through the newspaper or in the [community name] school television site. So, this gave the community an opportunity to come and to discuss or really become educated about what [name of act] is.”
- **Citizen advisory committees.** “The kinds of tools that we use, generally, I would say, we use -- we would identify the public stakeholders who are most intimately impacted by a potential project, who either have something to gain or lose by a project going in, and we would most likely form what I would call a citizen advisory committee, and we have that citizen advisory committee be representative of the community and try to have those folks checked back with their representative organizations,” said a local administrator. “We then notify the public that we are doing a project, generally, by sending a kind of an introduction to the project out to people, telling them that we are doing the project, that we are having meetings, inviting them to attend these advisory committee meetings, and/or inviting them to attend a broader meeting like a public open-house or some other event that, specifically, for the broader public, where the citizen advisory committee may have given us some input, for instance, towards the development of a park improvement, and we may get so far along and then go to the community and say, “Hey, this is what we have been doing.”
- **Grocery store outreach.** A local administrator described going “to the grocery store and hang out there for a while, asking people about a project with a display and things like that. I think it is easy to access our processes, but you have to be pretty dedicated and have a strong desire to do so.”
- **Dialogue and then deliberation.** “Educating the public or having a dialogue with the public about the importance of an issue and seeing if they agree,” said an NGO leader. “Before you can talk to the public about e solutions in the true sense of deliberation, deliberating different possibilities of different paths, you may have to have a dialogue about whether or not this is an important issue.”
- **Focus groups.** An NGO leader noted the importance of verifying “that issues are more or less ripe for public engagement, or communities are more or less ripe to deal with different issues. And the [name of model] is one way of thinking that through, for us anyway -- for me. And sometimes we do some preliminary

research on this and one of the things -- before we -- we often times want to do some focus groups before we get into an engagement initiative.”

- **Community deliberations.** “I would screen [videos from the television show, ‘A Public Voice]...at Borders,” said an NGO leader. I would just pop it in the TV and before you know it, the school superintendent would be there and the mayor and the girls from the Borders breakout sessions, and we just kind of [indiscernible] pulled people together and say, ‘Well, what do you think about what these citizens are saying? What do you think about how the elected officials are responding? What does it mean for our community?’ That is just kind of like who we are and what we do wherever we are.”
- **Speaking tours.** A state-elected official described the use of such tours for “...I do not know what you call it – truth-telling talks; campaign finance reform and ethics reform and election and all that. There is lobbyist and open government and lot of the issues, and basically they are essentially without casting aspersions on the legislature, it appears that the design of the legislative process is such that there is -- citizens have an uphill climb to even be taken seriously in the deliberations of the legislature, and so one would be to have a public program. So to announce, to share, to just talk up that there is a program - and I’m using the League of Women Voters but we are going to connect various other organizations as well - to empower citizens to weigh in on legislative decision-making by acting as a collective, by increasing the numbers in a network...”

Trainings, Education and Research

- **Research, dialogue, education.** “We would sometimes try to bridge the gap between leaders and the public through research and sometimes through dialogue initiatives and citizen education and issues of various sorts,” said an NGO leader. “It really evolved out of the sort of full-time organizational devotion to citizen engagement and dialogue and participation in decision making and trying to weave those things together out of the research around education reform that we were doing and essentially we were doing some fairly groundbreaking public opinion research on education that showed much more clearly than had ever been the case the gaps between the reform community and the general public.” This NGO also “got involved in a number of education-related dialogue initiatives in communities. We had a national demonstration project where we developed community form models and materials, community dialogue kinds of strategies, models, and materials.”
- **Video discussion starters.** “We created six video discussion starters that were organized around a sort of trademark [organization] approach to helping citizens sort through and deliberate which is choice work and laying out three or four different strategies,” said an NGO leader, “and it is something that kind of sprang from [name]’s work and then that we started working with [organization] on.”
- **Training.** An NGO leader said that this organization would work with local organizers and sponsors “in terms of providing them some tested materials and methods that would help them to be most effective. At least provide them with a tested model that they could then use and learn about and get better at it and adapt to their own needs and purposes.” As a result, the NGO provides

“organizing training. We do moderator training of local folks. We do not bring in experts to run these things. And we really try to develop processes that are easily transferable and that is why the work goes on when we leave, essentially.” “I was just in [state] in December and conducted a training with a group of citizens for [organization] and the citizens that are going to be going out and conducting town hall meetings that are being convened by a number of organizations,” said another NGO leader, “and those town hall meetings are developing a vision of the history of the future and reporting back on their vision of [community name] as the next great city, and then using that vision to inform journalists with the [community name] Inquirer so that in an upcoming mayoral campaign, the journalists will be focused in on what it is that people say when they come and they deliberate what the future of [community name] might be and what their vision is.” “So the strategy that I’m starting to implement here in [state] is working through institutions that care about the process,” said a third NGO leader, “institutions that have access to people who are affected by the issue or institutions that are dedicated to working on the issue, and so last spring I did a two-day workshop, our public policy institute, whatever you want to call it, and I went to some key organizations and I said, ‘I’m going to reserve four slots for your staff to come to this training. You want to tell me who you want to send?’ So instead of just opening it up to the general public, I actually targeted organizations where I think this kind of practice should be embedded.” Similarly, workshops are sometimes conducted by an NGO leader, “along with some tribal government officials and university-type folks.”

- **Asset-mapping.** “We are moving beyond the neighborhood system to this broader definition of community where we would be playing a role of community asset-mapping,” said a public participation practitioner, “where we are helping communities look at who they are, what are the kind of organizations we have, what are the kind of people we have. And then you can develop a strategy of how do we engage all these groups. How do we link them together? We are sort of the host. We want to be the hostess of the party to identify people, bring them together into this party, and then get them to start to know each other and develop those relationships. That is a big part of it, and we are also playing a big role in this rethink of [community name]’s engagement system.”
- **Capacity-building efforts.** “...I think with [program name] as well, there is an ongoing process just to try to build capacity in the community; leadership capacity, strategic thinking capacity, knowledge of tools in engagement and outreach groups that have not traditionally been well-represented,” said a public participation practitioner. “That is a big push right now to do that.”
- **Evaluations or citizen scorecards.** The state-elected official noted the use of evaluations “after the legislative session. It is almost like a citizen’s scorecard, legislation that are more citizen-oriented or consumer-oriented or public-oriented, and issue a scorecard that has a semblance of, reflects an intent for accountability.”
- **Consulting, educational services and coaching of citizen’s organizations.** A state elected official said, “I partner with citizen groups, League of Women Voters, common-cause type organizations, civic groups, and

we work on political reform issues that have as a common theme citizen involvement, level the playing field so that citizens have greater or fair access to the legislative process. That includes -- the kinds of activities include my providing consulting and educational and coaching services to citizen's organizations outside the legislature, to encourage them to -- [indiscernible] to brief them about how the process works on paper and how it actually works in reality, the internal behind-closed-doors dynamics, and I support them in devising action plans, approaches, strategies for increasing their effectiveness at the legislature."

- **Continuing education classes.** "I have sponsored continuing education class, a non-credit class during the legislative session held at the Capitol. I have helped sponsor national issues forums on legislative issues, other community forums," said the state elected official.

Information Sharing

- **Websites and emails.** "[Agency]'s public involvement website actually has lists of where in our statutory authority we engage public [name of legislation], [subject], [name of legislation] all those acts have various requirements to engage the public in some way," said a federal administrator. "Some of it is going to be public notice work and feedback, Federal Register notices. There is a huge suite of tools that the agency uses in a public contact." However, there are limitations to access. Our interviewer asked this person, "Do you view the Freedom of Information Act as a collaborative Act, or a restrictive Act? In other words, there are certain things that may be redacted or not shared with the public. What is your view towards that?" The interviewee responded: "Well, most times you cannot sway on things that are pre-decisional [indiscernible] we are in a process. After the decision is made, I'm going to say most of the time you are going to have access to most of the documents that are part of that decision process, so you will be able to track that. But it is not available until the actual decision is made." Another interviewee, with a state agency, said that the agency puts data online so that it is publicly accessible. This agency has "an online [subject] research database which we do make publicly accessible," said the state administrator. "In fact, I am trying over the last year and this year, to reach out to a broader audience to make sure that groups that we are not really required to serve are aware of the resource and can take advantage of it." This person also noted that "We direct people to the website when we have new things that we want to bring to their attention using that kind of notification. On our website, which I think is fairly user-friendly and I use myself as the test case. I'm terrible at this stuff and I can navigate our website pretty easily. They can find not only the publications, but the presentations. So if you click on 'policymaker forums,' up will come two different ways, a chronological ordering of these things or a topical area, that you can peruse. And if you click on anything that you like, it will bring up not only the slide presentations, but any associated publications that we made available. You can find our own research publications there and we

also provide a list of helpful resources and links to other credible sources of information. So we have federal offices and state offices that provide and post data. We list a large number of research institutions that we think are worthy sources.” A local administrator said, “We have internet, and we let people know what is going on.” An NGO leader also mentioned the use of the internet, noting a particular website that has “sort of basic primers on different issues, each of which has a choice work guide attached to it. And again, the choice for guide being the notion of providing a non-partisan spectrum of perspectives on an issue each of which... there will be three or four. You are getting beyond a sort of typical polarized rhetoric of the dominant political culture of having to be a for-and-against, pro-con kind of crossfire approach to an issue.” The state elected official said, “there is a whole range of activities we conduct through e-mails, through websites, but basically my interest is in increasing civic citizen organization capacity to understand and have accurate assessments of what the political and legislative landscape is and have a kind of the wherewithal to design fact-based or intelligence-based plans, action plans and strategies, and to insert citizen views in the legislative process.”

- **Email, letters, visits.** A locally elected official said that people contact her “definitely either by e-mail, or come in and pass the administration building and dropping mails or letters. I can be contacted as -- we will take first senior citizens, they do not feel that they are being represented in the schools because we have part-time positions for retirees and everybody -- let me not make it that general. People who have friends, when they get their other friends, or when it is not just that easy anymore, but we have guidelines. I’m always approached about why we cannot go back to do things the old way, meaning politics played a huge part in how decisions were made.”
- **Review documents, public notices, meetings.** “Review documents...and impact statements are another avenue where [agency] reviews other agencies’ federal actions for their impact on [subject]. And all of those are public-noticed,” said a federal administrator. “So the agency who is conducting that particular activity has to do public notice and some kind of public involvement. And [agency] looks at those public comments, may hold separate public involvement meetings to get more feedback depending on how contentious a particular issue is.”
- **Federal Register.** “Most of the federal regulation and federal statutory requirements talk about publishing in the Federal Register,” said a federal administrator. “But if you are a community activist in any level, you do not spend your day reading the Federal Register. Although now, because the Federal Register is online and there is really good screening tools where you can do a keyword search, groups who are pretty savvy about the requirement on federal actions to publish will take a week’s worth of publication and just do a keyword search.”
- **Publications.** “We certainly disseminate publicly any publications that come out of the research we fund,” said a state administrator. “We created a

website that includes not only our online database, but also that provides complete access to all of the publications and presentations that we do only for government officials.” The agency “preserve[s] the integrity of those studies, findings, and then we publish them and we put them on our website. But again, we don’t have the money to do big campaigns to reach out to people, so it is word of mouth. We communicate via email.”

- **Mailings.** A state agency “mail[s] hard copies of our reports and policy briefs. We insist that any report that we put out have a four to six page policy brief that is really just, what we would call an executive summary. It’s often the same document. We require all of our reports to have these, and then we publish those separately from the reports, because we know that the harried legislative staffer is only going to read the four to six page document if we are lucky. So we make sure that those are mailed out to all legislators’ offices in a large group of these state and county officials. We also send out email notices to what we call the three large constituencies, plus we have a cadre of what we call senior staff who are people that we have worked with over the years, who may even move around and take other jobs, but we always give them the option of staying on our senior staff list so that they will get electronic versions of these things.”
- **Surveys.** A state administrator detailed how the agency conducted a large survey, which was translated into three different languages – English, Spanish and Vietnamese. “But the two parent families, it was almost 23 or 24 percent, it was almost a quarter of two parent families in the [subject] program in the State of California needed to be interviewed in a language other than English, Spanish or Vietnamese,” said the interviewee. “Now that was a shock to me that it was so high. And so I said – ‘look, if you want to get representative samples, then this is what you have to do. But boy, it is a pricey thing to do.”
- **Informal contacts.** A locally elected official serves as “the government liaison where if people are having an issue about how they think that we should be better running the schools, they have the opportunity to contact me through the school. And they can leave a note. They can leave a phone number and tell me what their complaint is or -- it does not always have to be a complaint. It can be a positive compliment that they want to give us and then I respond back to them.” These contacts “can be one-on-one, or if they come to a meeting... like if we have a government liaison meeting they can come and then we can discuss it there.” Alternatively, “they can drop off a letter to the school at the administration building and I receive -- all school board members receive a packet every week and it will come inside my packet.” In many instances, “they will leave their information. If they go out to the administration building they will have to leave their phone number if that is how they want me to respond back to them.” This interviewee commented, “I like the informal because I think it removes the barriers of titles and allows people to talk freely. Now, if I was sitting in a room with a bunch of educators, I would say, ‘Okay, we are going to do a formal discussion.”

- **Newspapers, television, newsletters, word-of-mouth, libraries, humanities councils.** A locally elected official said that when there “is something that is really of interest to the public,” the school board “will continue putting it in the newspaper. We will continue to advertise on our TV site, so that way residents get a chance to come and participate and voice their concerns.” In this community, teachers publish “quarterly newsletters that go out,” said this person. “We ask them to put a little subject in there, seeking parents to get more involved.” A local administrator in another community said that “there are variety of citizen notification activities, like putting notices in newspapers, developing -- we have a bulletin, a newsletter, for our urban renewal area -- that get sent out to interested parties. We send e-mails to our advisory committee and to interested parties for any project that we are working on. We have a website that we keep up-to-date. And for any one, we have a number of projects that we work on, and for any one of those projects, we may use all of those tools and more to notify people: a) inform people of what we are doing, and b) to engage them to give us input so that we can shape the projects to be compatible with what the community desires, to at least take that into consideration as we develop the projects.” This interviewee also noted that “...going to other people’s meetings, that is another thing that we would do. For instance, go to the neighborhood association and say, ‘This is what we are working on,’ and really trying to keep them abreast of the project.” “I went to the papers and the libraries and the humanities counsels, all that kind of usual suspects to kind of begin efforts toward public participation,” said an NGO leader. “What I found, however, was that all the sort of usual suspects in the community were not used to working with native people. And so there was a built-in sort of lack of information or lack of experience in working across difference.”
- **Radio.** An NGO leader said, “tribal radio is such a strong link for open meetings, just broadcasting the meetings live for tribal council, et cetera.”
- **Podcasts.** “There is a citizen journalism piece, for example,” said an NGO leader. “Who gets to tell the stories of our communities? What are the stories that are not getting told? So how do we cultivate those citizen journalists? So I’m working with a former news director for a public television and radio station and we are developing that infrastructure, developing the content, podcast content that can be widely distributed for folks to hear stories of what other communities are doing that they could replicate in their communities.”
- **Citizen information centers.** The state elected official said, “[state], I think, is probably, I believe, one of among the better, more user-friendly, more public-friendly legislatures. But I follow legislatures around the state, around the nation. State legislatures are really not citizen-friendly bodies. [State] has one different -- we are the only state in the nation that has what we call a [name]...And that [location] has staff, several staff in the legislative session. So a citizen, if they have an interest or they read something in the newspaper, they can call the [name], and that is like an educational center that they will teach people how to learn the legislative process, they will

teach them how to identify bills on the website and so forth. There is a citizen assistance sort of center. But in other states, you are on your own.” This center, which the official played a role in establishing, “is located in the State Capitol, in the building itself. So it is one room in the building that a citizen can feel like it is their home..... That you can spend a day. Because our [name] provides copying. They will take e-mail testimony and make copies. They are a full service assistance center for citizens.”

- **Broadcasts of House and Senate legislative hearings and floor sessions.** However, the state elected official said, “in the last eight years, I have proposed that this broadcast be put on the web. And so because all of our hearing rooms are wired for sound and when they are not videotaped, which is only a couple a day, the legislature or the citizen group could post the audio streaming of everything that goes on in the rooms. In that way, the public would know, can have access to what goes on inside the legislature. It has gone to conference committee two or three times, but it has always died in the end and it does not cost that much. It cost maybe \$40,000. It is a smaller dollar amount but we have not been successful at that.” The webcasts would be for the general floor, discussions on the general floor and in the committees. “So we have 10 hearing rooms and two chambers, so it would be 12 streaming audio or video.”

Community Building and Partnerships

- **Relationship-building in support of advocacy.** A federal agency “developed this what we call our [name], where we try to move people from an initial exposure to the park to an area where we create with them an understanding of the value of a particular site or a particular initiative or program that we may be involved with,” said a federal administrator. “From that exposure and understanding, we then try to generate caring by that individual corporation, organization about that particular venture or issue, and then from that caring stage, we try to get them to commit to some kind of action to do something about their caring. Ultimately we want to get them to feeling that they are really connected to it, and like they feel like they want to advocate on behalf of it to their friends publicly or otherwise.” This person also commented, “So that is one of our more selfish objectives, but I think at the basic level, we just feel like the American people and the community should care about what is happening and we have got to find avenues to make that easier for them.....So when we actually go to the neighborhood level or the community level, to the organizations that are organized around that community and we talked to them about what is the best way in which we can engage the people who live in your neighborhood, to get their input because how to engage them varies, interestingly enough, even from one neighborhood to another in the city.”
- **Collective action programs.** The state-elected official said such a program would identify “a certain number of bills and getting on an e-mail list and action alerts and when to come in and testify, when to send e-mails or postcards to legislators and so forth, so a kind of a collective action agenda.”

Toolbox of Public Participation Processes

“I think it is important to tailor both the message and the outreach, and the tools you use to that particular audience,” said a local administrator. “And so, a meeting that is really focused on getting input from a business community is going to perhaps look different, be held at a different time, and a different location than one where we are seeking input from people in a neighborhood, and so really tailoring those tools and methods to them.” “I think that we have to operate with multiple levels, multiple definitions of public participation depending on the circumstances and the context,” agreed an NGO leader.

However, engaging people can be challenging, said the local administrator. “But in our culture, there is so much -- people lead very, very busy lives. There is so much mail and TV and internet, e-mail that comes to people that it is very difficult to actually stand out in a crowd to get your message through, that to have people even recognize that they have received a piece of mail or e-mail that might notify them of an opportunity. I think technically it is there, but you have to be pretty interested in the subject and pretty darn dedicated to actually get involved. Very few people do.”

Moreover, “You have to have a toolbox,” this interviewee said. “And it is just darn hard work. And I think you will always have to be nimble and trying. If you are really dedicated to it, I think you have to be nimble and try a lot of different things, and it takes a lot of resources to do that. It just really takes a lot of resources to do that.”

This community has “talked from time to time about paying people to participate, which may give, again, double-edged sword. You may be giving people some compensation that they really, really could use, but then I think you have to balance that with are you getting -- how good are the views you are getting if you are paying people to attend? Paying people to come just because they may have different motivations like, ‘I really want that \$10,’ rather than, ‘I really want to give input about this project.’” This local administrator also observed, “The tradeoff there is that I do not think that in our culture -- I do not think it [paying people to participate] would be acceptable.” As a result, this locality “will raffle off a Fred Meyer card. So those are some ideas of the ways, besides the obvious things that we try to do - hold meetings when people are more likely to be able to attend, tailor the time and place to those audiences, and meeting people where they are, not forcing them to come to your meetings.”

Incentives in Participation

Another interviewee – an NGO leader – discussed the role of incentives in participation. “In some instances, we might have been able to develop funding for some kind of an initiative that we are able to either subsidize or recruit or partially subsidize citizen participation and something,” said this person. “And this is the example I gave in [state] wherein we kind of put an application process, right? So there what I would say was a visionary hunter who wanted to, again, as they put it, change the conversation about education in [state] because they thought it was dysfunctional. And we came up

with a strategy in a sense so we invited communities to participate. They participated because, A, the importance of changing the dialogue and improving the dialogue made sense to them for their communities; and, B, they knew they were going to get some technical assistance and a little bit of stipend money to help them do some work and build some capacity around it, to be part of a statewide project and so forth.”

An NGO leader said, “we will use anything as a prompt for public discourse. We have used art, and sometimes even using national issues-forums books or the study circle resource center book, pre-prepared discussion guides. We will often also bring in art, music, whatever there is to further spark dialogue.”

This NGO leader spoke of meeting regularly and talking “about the difficult issues facing our community -- there were a whole bunch of different people involved in that - the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor, different people....We then turned to some tribal elders in the community and just asked them like, ‘What do you think about what we are doing?’” Then, “we would have meetings and we would follow a process with guidelines for dialogue and discourse and protocols for public conduct.” This “turned into, like, a three-month seminar with [name], [name] and myself and these elders discussing at length and with great passion and a good sense of inquisitiveness what were the best ways to simply conduct ourselves in public? Whether you are an elected official, whether you are a citizen, a person, what were the important things for us to keep in mind? And that really became -- it strengthened us to understand how important it is to account for [indiscernible] those older than you who have been around and who know multiple languages.” Today, “We still regularly convene them and kind of take our stuff to them so that they can guide us in our own work, community building work.”

This leader said, “the thing that keeps us so involved in this work despite the fact that we all have other jobs is we constantly reflect on our practice, constantly, like, how did that go? Did everybody get a chance to speak? What would we have done differently? And then also trying to figure out how to make everything we do more deliberative and more inclusive and all about engaging people.” Considering these questions “through the lens of native culture and probably through most cultures is really important, and yet we do not often talk about are what are the behaviors within yourself that promote public participation. You have to have an incredible amount of patience, right?You really have to have fortitude and perseverance; you have to be generous with your time, with your commitment to the community, sometimes with your money, with your resources.”

Encouraging Diversity of Participants

Another NGO leader said, “I have a real passion for the less educated and coming out of the literacy field and still working closely with that field, we talked a lot in the public engagement world about having diversity among our participants and I agree. I think that is critical, but I think -- but let’s be realistic, the adult literacy students, unless they are, well, even if they are ESL, adult literacy students who have spent a lifetime hiding the fact that they do not read well and avoiding situations where they might be embarrassed, starting out may not feel comfortable participating in a community

program so in the program that I was running, we layered all kinds of other programming on top of our public forums...So before they even got to the forum, they had already worked with their tutor on the issue. They had learned about the issue. They have done additional research. They have gone through the issue book. They identified the words that were difficult to read and knew what those terms meant so they were well prepared. They had a level of comfort with the issue and had experienced engaging with that issue in a very comfortable place to begin, gain their confidence so that they could engage outside. So, I think it is a matter of being creative and thinking about, "What do people need to get to the table."

Role of Federal Agency Employees in Guiding P2 Processes

A federal administrator described a particular role that agency employees play in guiding people into participatory processes. "As public servants -- government is a public servant -- you are expected to be able to interact with any part of our external partners and others. So whether it is the state [agency] or community person from [community name, state], if they call, we are expected to be able to assist them. If we cannot, we actually have internal protocols about turnaround time and voice mails and e-mails to public so that you are turning around information. If you cannot answer those questions or provide the information, you need to be able to direct folks to where they can find the answer."

Who is included and excluded

Interviewees noted who is and is not included in participatory processes.

Who is included

Who is included in participatory or deliberative efforts varies greatly.

- Citizens, citizen groups, League of Women Voters, common-cause type organizations, civic groups (state elected official)
- General public or citizen activists, government employees, elected officials, consultants, professionals (federal administrator)
- People who are interested in the problem and interested in the solutions (federal administrator)
- A federal administrator said, "the public we deal with cover the absolutely full spectrum of community, so we deal with the corporate sector on an ongoing basis. We do major fundraising work with private companies and the non-profit community. Our issues cover such a broad spectrum they intersect with about every individual in one way or another in the broader community, and then we are responsible for making this [federal agency] area relevant to the diversity of the [geographic area] community as well as national and international visitors that come to the park....So we have gone from sort of a much more singular view of public involvement to a really comprehensive way in which we intersect with the public on a day-to-day basis. And then we clearly understood that different constituent groups and different ethnic and other communities of interest have different ways in which they feel comfortable interacting with their government so that no one way is ever

sufficient.” This also includes going “to the neighborhood level or the community level, to the organizations that are organized around that community and we talked to them about what is the best way in which we can engage the people who live in your neighborhood, to get their input because how to engage them varies, interestingly enough, even from one neighborhood to another in the city.”

- “Because our money comes from the government,” a state administrator said, “the state government and directs the [organization] to make these expenditures on behalf of government officials – legislators, state executive branch officials, and we include in that group the county [subject] officials who are appointed by elected boards of supervisors in California’s 58 counties.” In addition, “I am trying over the last year and this year, to reach out to a broader audience to make sure that groups that we are not really required to serve are aware of the resource and can take advantage of it. We certainly have made it known to public interest advocates. We certainly are trying to reach out to the academic research community, at least in the State of California, to make sure that they and their students know about it.”
- Teachers unions, teachers, parents, taxpayers, African American and Hispanic people; “There are business people; there are retirees; there are singles, family; there are a family of a two-parent household; there are grandparents that are taking care of grandchildren. It is a wide representation of everyone.” (locally elected official)
- According to a local administrator, “it really ranges from individual citizens to neighborhood association members, members of the business community, developers, lenders, so it is really a mix of citizens and some more just regular folks and then the... more of business interest. It is really a mixture of those two.” Moreover, “we would identify the public stakeholders who are most intimately impacted by a potential project.” The locality tries “to keep as many people as we can think of who may be interested in the project, aware of the project so that if they want to become involved, there is an avenue for them to do so, and just keeping the lines of communication open.” This interviewee also commented, “I do think that our traditional public outreach tools really -- we speak to a lot of people, the same people over and over again...Because they are the dedicated and potentially obsessive few who will attend the public meetings that we have and will probably serve those people the very best.”
- An NGO leader said they’ve worked with the State Department of Education and the group is “tending to work with local leadership to work with the general public.” They have worked “with school districts, parents’ groups, in some places local chapters of the League of Women Voters, other kinds of civic organizations, the Urban League, et cetera.” Who specifically was involved depended “on who sort of stepped up to the plate in different communities and decided that a civic engagement citizen participation process was needed in their community to help improve.” This could include a “combination of school district, parents’ group, the local library, and some other... chamber of commerce, something like that. But it would be different

in different communities.” In addition, this NGO works “with school boards and they are elected officials, so... yes. And in [state], we worked with [state] several times and we worked with the State Board of Education and they are locally elected from different parts of the state, so sure. And occasionally, mayors get involved as well.” For participatory forums this NGO works on, “The object is to bring together very diverse stakeholders, including a real cross-section of the general public and the kinds of folks that do not typically — like would not typically necessarily come to a public meeting, and to actually go out and recruit those folks and through various strategies. But the ones -- the types of people that would not, like, voluntarily come to it, some kind of a government public meeting, input meeting, a school board or on some environmental issue, compliance issue, or something like that.” Breakout groups at these forums are “intentionally designed the groups to reflect the diversity of stakeholders and voices in the community.” However, “one of the things they tend to be afraid of are organized special interests that are good at dominating decision-making processes. So that could be a particular business group; it could be a politicized religious group of some kind who have been dominating school board meetings or whatever. And the question is should we include them?”

- An NGO leader said “the team includes men, women, myself, as well as our families and a team of elders and youth whose counsel guides how we practice our work.” Others involved include “our families, with our church group, with our tribal college, just with a group of folks,” “elders,” “the Chair of the [department name] at a tribal college,” “a traditional chief deeply involved in the well-being and the life of his community,” “a political activist,” “school superintendent,” “mayor,” people “at Borders,” [a bookstore chain] and “a retired minister.” In addition, “we have worked as well with tribal colleges and regular state-run universities, with government agencies, for example, the Department of Justice, the Justice Department, and work with religious organizations. [name] also works at the [organization].”
- For the most part, I’m working with people who are working with people who are doing the work,” said an NGO leader, “so I’m maybe one step removed. Part of it is intentional just because I want to leverage my limited time and resources, which is why I struggle with whether or not I have much to contribute to a conversation on public participation because I’m working with people who are working with the public, more so than with the public directly....So instead of just opening it up to the general public, I actually targeted organizations where I think this kind of practice should be embedded.”
- A public participation practitioner has “have been working a lot with students.”
- The state elected official said, “I work with various organizations that I have founded. I have founded a group called [organization]. Their role is mostly ethics issues and they are a placeholder for [organization]. The [organization] [state] chapter was disbanded about four years ago and I’m trying to re-establish them, but [organization] is kind of filling in for their role.

Another citizen group, [organization], another group on open government issues called [organization].”

- “In [state], there are a lot of environmentalists, obviously, and people have concerns but they are not organized, so Sierra club is a major organizing element,” said the state elected official. “Human services, where you have from homeless, to those who need some public assistance and to health, consumers, the regular consumer of health services, to consumer products, consumers of products and other services. Basically it would be the issue areas that a regular citizen could relate to. And I think those areas, I think there is -- legislators are more open to the extent that they are aware that citizen types may weigh in and citizen – community based, citizen-based type interests or lobbying is different from paid lobbyists, because paid lobbyists’ interests are more predictable, and you can negotiate with them and they get paid, and so most of them have more than one client, and so there is more negotiation, and I think there is more compatible community almost with legislators and lobbyists because that lobbyist helps legislators in various ways and vice versa. So, that is more of a symbiotic relationship.”
- “Businesses, small business, there are a few small business organizations, and so the issues they have identified are watched and monitored and they get represented,” said a state elected official.

Sometimes the development groups who become involved are part of the process itself. A federal administrator observed there is value in understanding “the cultural context and understanding the cultural context and the perspective of the individuals. And the only way to ferret that out in a group is to have some kind of social, relaxed setting where they get to know each other as humans. Then you can pull them together to focus on problem solving fairly specifically about the thing they actually came to the table on. But there seems to be some kind of like social factoring that has to happen kind of early on, or there is a struggle; the group struggles.”

This interviewee also observed that there are also preset beliefs that those who are leading processes bring with them; “we do tend to assume some people are ‘in’ and some people are ‘out’.” Another federal administrator commented, “We found too often that there is a small cadre of folks who are intensely involved who dominate the process to their desired end, and that can be really good or bad depending upon where they are at.” This may lead to the exclusion of some.

Who is excluded

Other related observations about those who are excluded from participatory or deliberative processes include:

- **Young people, retirees, working people, people not affiliated with unions.** “I think young people, the interests of younger... from students to young people there, their interests, they are busy and so are not really -- and there are really not many younger groups. A lot of the citizen -- actually, most of the activists that I worked with, most of them are retired because if they are working, the ones that

are working are those that are university -- people who have flexibility, but people who are working regular hours and not have flexibility, they are not able to really - - if their participation limited to after work, it is limited....So, it is those workers, non-unions, the unions look out for the regular workers, the union workers.”

- **Small businesses.** According to the state elected official, “those issues that affect small businesses that are not in the agenda that may pop up and sometimes there are issues that are not planned for and the resources are already spoken for, so sometimes just by the lack of capacity to watch and monitor new issues, bills, issues fall between the cracks, so to speak.”
- **Unorganized interests.** A state elected official said, “it is all the unorganized interests that are really are not represented or can easily be -- fall between cracks.” Such groups “groups would be or those individuals or collective’s interests would be those that are hard to organize. I have been trying for years to form a consumer organization but there is just not -- we have not really found -- I mean the groups that we have, there are two, but they are just almost just in name only, and maybe just one person who can watch bills and testify but there is really, without paid staff and it takes a lot of work to organize consumers because that is just a generic group....So, when we have legislation that may affect consumers from bank interest rates to car rental fees, to whole range of consumer-type issues, it is kind of broad and generic community that it is hard to organize. So, consumer organization, just a general consumer interest --....I think are under-represented. So, some bills can slide through because there is really no one watching out for consumer interest....There are bills that just stay under the radar and are not monitored, and so the impacts are not known until after the legislation is passed.”
- **Those with limited resources.** In one particular state, citizens groups, such as the League of Women Voters, “watch issues that tend to be consumer-based, consumer oriented, more populist-type issues which are followed by these groups as opposed to legislation that is promoted or monitored by paid lobbyists,” said the state elected official. “I worked with — I would call them the non-paid citizen lobbyists. So this would be senior citizen groups, human services groups, environmental groups in addition to the ones I mentioned earlier are what I call good government groups. Consumer organizations and most of these groups are mostly in name and have one or a small number of active or activist-type leaders who do devote the time during the legislative session to monitor and also testify.”
- **Certain ethnic communities.** “Certain ethnic communities simply will not come to a public meeting because they are uncomfortable speaking up at a microphone before a group of people where they feel there may be views that are different than theirs,” said a federal administrator. “So ours is a sense of wanting to get citizens to take more directed action to care about issues that are important to the future of their community. And then to find ways that are safe for them to provide that input.” A related observation was provided by a state administrator, who described a survey effort. “And if you didn’t speak English and you didn’t speak Spanish, you just weren’t going to be in the study. So this time, we thought we were going one step further when we said – well, how about English, Spanish and Vietnamese? And then at a board meeting, the L.A.

County [subject] Director said, 'Do you know what the largest language minority is in L.A.?' And of course, we all guessed Spanish and he said 'no, Armenian.'" Yeah, that was my reaction – "are you kidding?" And in Sacramento, it is Russian. So we realized that – I mean, I guess we always knew that we were excluding lots of little language minorities, but we didn't realize until we did this study just how large it was. It was in the single digits. I think there was – don't quote me on this – but I think it was like 7 percent of single parent families wanted to be interviewed in languages other than English, Spanish and Vietnamese."

- **Nonprofits, advocates, the public at large, for-profit organizations, foundations.** "So we have not done significant outreach to advocates, to the press, to the public at large, to really any outside private or non-profit or for-profit entities that might have an interest in this, because our funds are very constrained," said a state administrator. "We feel that we have instruction from the legislature to do this at their request and for them and these other officials. However, we took further than the legislation required the instruction to keep track of [subject]-related research being conducted in the State of California." This person also said, "I know that there are associations of foundations, for example, and I know there are tons of advocacy groups that may have an interest in the studies that we've done and the publications that we are bringing out and the presentations that we do when we make the slides available and put them up on our website."
- **Citizen activists, the public in a specific circumstance, low income, senior citizens.** Also, "I think that people -- the average person, if they are not a part of a political game or know the 'ins and the outs,' they do not get a fair chance," said a locally elected official. "They are always pretty much put towards the back because they do not have that right connection. And sometimes, it is not about the connection. Sometimes you need to give people a chance because of how they presented themselves." Moreover, "if you have a low poverty, a low income community there, definitely not engaged," said the official. "And rather it's -- just because the lack of awareness on what is really going around, or that we're not taking that time to engage them. I think we miss out on the senior citizens because, again, we do not engage them in some of the discussion. The Hispanics, you touched on that. To me that is important because I think every culture needs to be represented in some way."
- **People of color, those with less time available, people with lower incomes.** These persons "have got different priorities and things to focus on," said a local administrator. But whether you are approaching at the door, their doorstep, or the grocery store or invite them into a meeting, I'm not certain, it is unclear to me whether those more pressing issues are ever going to be less important than, you know, the project you are there to talk about. It can often seem very, very irrelevant when you are standing on someone's doorstep and they have got three kids pulling on them and they are clearly frazzled." The local administrator also commented, "It is easy to focus on people of color and low income. We know that the methods we use do not really reach them. But I'm not sure that they reach...how well they truly reach anyone."

- **An NGO leader said, “important parts of the public, are typically left out.”** This “could be the general public or could be particular parts of the general public - disenfranchised, marginalized, disempowered and so forth; parts of the general public.”
- **Animals, children, women, elderly, native people, immigrants.** “I think who gets excluded the most, the segments of our society are what we would call - and again I hope you can hear this fully - the society of [indiscernible] four-legged, the animal nation do not get heard nor considered in decision making, and I mean that very deeply.” Moreover, “We do not look at the implications of our actions on the environment or on animal life. I think children are routinely excluded and purposely excluded from the decision making processes. And in this state, in particular, women are often excluded, and elderly.” This leader also sees “exclusions for native people; I see it very strongly, and for newer immigrants as well....I see a lot of exclusions and a lot of people who wish that it were not so, but mostly just seem to wish it were not so and not actively work to change it.”
- **An NGO leader said that “the less educated” are excluded.** “I would love to see our businesses value this and understand the value and provide the opportunity for all levels of their employees to be engaged with issues, because the adult literacy students that come to a forum and learns to find their voice and learns to think critically about the issue and understand the cause and consequences of different policy decisions and learns how to listen to other people in the room who have very different opinions, those are the kind of soft skills that are really, really hard for employers to develop and do not get. They do not spend a whole lot of time with their lower level employees working on those skills but wow, would that not be something?”
- **“I think most people are left out** and I think that sort of what happens is then sometimes we get -- because clearly there are under-represented groups that are immigrant groups, low-income groups, groups that are sort of marginalized for different cultural reasons, whatever,” said a public participation practitioner. For example, “my neighborhood has 10,000 people in it. Most of them feel disengaged and they are almost all white. It is a sense that I think it is important for us to target outreach to traditionally under-represented groups. But I think most people feel disconnected.”

“There are situations where broad-based citizen participation is not as meaningful or does not work as well because, for example, you are dealing with, at this point in time, a particularly technical piece of an issue, as opposed to a broad direction question of an issue,” said an NGO leader. “So, for example, whether or not a district should -- a school district in community should have some more rigorous, challenging, educational standards and graduation requirements, for example, it is a kind of issue that you can really engage the public on. They want to talk about it; they are able to talk about it. It is a decision about how rigorous -- exactly what those should be in terms of the details of some kind of testing procedure or something like that.”

Barriers to participation

Barriers identified by U.S. interviewees included:

Institutional/Capacity Barriers:

- **Lack of organizational resources.** For example, a state elected official said, “I have been trying for years to form a consumer organization but there is just not -- we have not really found -- I mean the groups that we have, there are two, but they are just almost just in name only, and maybe just one person who can watch bills and testify but there is really, without paid staff and it takes a lot of work to organize consumers because that is just a generic group....So, when we have legislation that may affect consumers from bank interest rates to car rental fees, to whole range of consumer-type issues, it is kind of broad and generic community that it is hard to organize. So, consumer organization, just a general consumer interest --...I think are under-represented. So, some bills can slide through because there is really no one watching out for consumer interest.” According to this person, “those issues that affect small businesses that are not in the agenda that may pop up and sometimes there are issues that are not planned for and the resources are already spoken for, so sometimes just by the lack of capacity to watch and monitor new issues, bills, issues fall between the cracks, so to speak.....So, it is all the unorganized interests that are really are not represented or can easily be -- fall between cracks.” The state elected official described a transparency-based initiative (webcasting hearings, etc.) that has been ongoing but that cannot be funded within the legislature itself. “We are just not well-equipped,” said a federal administrator. “We do not fund people, either in federal government, state government or local government, to provide the level of support needed to do big participation processes. So there is an automatic limit on it just because of staffing and resources from the initiator or the need -- where the need is.” This interviewee also described an instance where staff and resources limited the ability to support a certain level of activity.
- **Lack of interest on the part of legislators.** “Legislators deliberate among themselves,” said the state elected official. “But the legislators -- my belief or my perception as a legislator is that other legislators do not believe that public testimony and involvement, that that is part of the deliberative process. Legislators deliberate among themselves. They do not consider -- it is like representative democracy. So legislators are elected and we deliberate among ourselves and we have no obligation to deliberate with the public.....The public gives us their opinions but the legislators deliberate among themselves, whereas the public... or to some extent and this is not widespread, but there is a line of thinking or belief or expectation or hope amongst citizen participants that the hope that the legislators would deliberate with them.....And include them in the deliberation, and they are almost always disappointed.”
- **Lack of places to meet.** “I think we lack public space. And libraries are public spaces, but they are filled to the hilt with books, and so that is a barrier,” said an NGO leader.
- **Difficulty initially engaging people.** “The other missing component is just the infrastructure for people to get to the table in the first place,” said an NGO leader.

- **Lack of continued momentum.** In one particular state, a state elected official said, “well, my sense is that the body politic, which includes both legislators and the public, is not well. The collective well being of the body politic is not well. It is suffering. There is suffering, and I do not know if you could call it illness, but the symptoms reflect a body politic that is not well. So it is sort of like a community that is ill at ease and there are some integrity -- there are issues and problems and not any kind of clear pathway for becoming well. And now to get to the sort of background but just to get to your question a little bit more directly, I believe there is a movement that can be perceived. Well, let me back up a bit. There appears to be enough sentiment in the community outside the walls of the legislature. There appears to be enough individual sentiment and individuals who hold an ongoing and sustainable desire to change things. And while they may not have a clear grasp of how to do that and it’s tinged with frustration and not knowing what to do, reservation perhaps sometimes, anger, et cetera. The fact that there are enough of that sentiment out there to me has revealed an opportunity to coalesce the network. It is an unorganized, un-networked group where you have thousands and thousands of people but they are not connected yet.” A public participation practitioner expanded on this barrier, explaining that agency’s cannot just do one major outreach campaign and then fail to return to the community. “You cannot just do it once,” said a public participation practitioner. “As sort of, ‘Oh, let’s do some big engagement thing,’ and then it withers away because you have turnover and you have new people.” Rather, “I think we have to get it in our minds that engagement is not a hobby or an option. Engagement is a vital piece of the infrastructure of our society.”
- **Legislation.** Regarding the Freedom of Information Act, a federal administrator said, “Well, most times you cannot sway on things that are pre-decisional [indiscernible] we are in a process. After the decision is made, I’m going to say most of the time you are going to have access to most of the documents that are part of that decision process, so you will be able to track that. But it is not available until the actual decision is made.”
- **Lack of data and information.** “...I do not think the data and information that people assume we might have access to is actually here,” said a federal administrator. “cultural information is harder to come by”.
- **Need for “homework.”** “We found it much more difficult if you just send out a whole lot of notices of the meeting without doing homework to get people there,” said a federal administrator
- **Lack of good data, data collection problems.** A state administrator relies “a lot” on secondary data analysis, because “even when you go out and collect original data, you may want to link it to existing admin data at the county and state level to come up with a richer picture of what is going on, and a lot of survey research. It’s difficult to do here in California, because we have so many different ethnic and language groups and if you are going to get really good representative samples, you have to translate the instruments.” Additionally, “Once you have validated them, you have to go through all that process and it’s very lengthy and it’s very costly and low-income populations are very hard to

interview. So cost to complete an interview is high, and if you want to get an adequate response rate, brother, you are going to spend a lot of money.”

- **Lack of capacity.** A public participation practitioner emphasized the importance of capacity to participate, “...just building an infrastructure of democracy in the community, just like you’re building...we build streets; we build electric systems, the grid and everything like this. Unless you have sort of an ongoing capacity in the community for community organizing and engagement and helping people learn the skills of engagement, it is not going to work because over and over you are going to go out to a public that is unprepared to engage. And so, this infrastructure of democracy piece, it has to be there and you have to fund it and keep it going.”
- **Lack of ethical embrace of governance.** “One piece that I think is crucial is getting something into the actual charters of cities that says, ‘Here is our governance ethic. We are a partnership government, not a top-down government. Here is sort of the bill of rights. These are the principles of public engagement that are going to guide what we do,’” said a public participation practitioner. “Just like in the Constitution, we have the Bill of Rights. Unless you have some ability to institutionalize these process values, the next elected official that comes along may say, ‘I was elected to make the decisions and I am going to do it. You elected me. We are a representative form of government and that is it.”
- **Lack of accountability.** A public participation practitioner said, “unless people are engaged, you really are not able to hold governments accountable... if you are really going to have any sort of a democratic system, there has to be that ability for the public to be a check on government action, or private sector action. So that accountability piece is very important.”
- **Lack of organizing.** A public participation practitioner said, “often, agencies just want to know, ‘What do you want?’ But who speaks for the community? Unless there is some sort of organizing out there, nobody can really legitimately speak for the community. I think that is a big challenge.”
- **Bureaucracy.** “Because you need so many skills to actually access the systems now because the systems are very bureaucratic,” said a public participation practitioner, “and so you have to develop this sort of policy wonk-ish ability to speak that language, have the flexibility to go to meetings and understand the bureaucratic speak to be able to have an effective voice, or you have to be good at political theatre which other groups are, where you do some dramatic fun thing to get coverage, but are you then integrated with the decision-making process or have you just stirred the pot? So, yes, I think it is a big challenge.” Moreover, this person said, “there are lots of government policies and private sector policies that cause tremendous damage or at least do not move us forward because they have not had that broader interaction.”
- **Lack of responsiveness following participation.** “I think that is what you see all over the country where people say, ‘Our people are not voting, they are not engaging. What is the matter with them? They are lazy. They are apathetic,’ said a public participation practitioner. “But over and over what you hear from the community is, ‘I engaged in a process. I was on this committee,’ or ‘I gave

my input...First, nobody got back to me to tell me what happened with it, and then I saw that they pretty much just disregarded what I did anyway. So why in my busy life would I ever participate in another one of those processes again?' And so I think [community name] really does a lot better than most places at having process, but I think there is a tremendous amount of frustration."

Public Perception:

- **Lack of time or interest.** "I think young people, the interests of younger... from students to young people there, their interests, they are busy and so are not really -- and there are really not many younger groups. A lot of the citizen -- actually, most of the activists that I worked with, most of them are retired because if they are working, the ones that are working are those that are university -- people who have flexibility, but people who are working regular hours and not have flexibility, they are not able to really -- if their participation limited to after work, it is limited." In addition to people "working hard," there are also limitations on the "time and resources" of those who do this work, said an NGO leader.
- **Elite culture vs. citizen culture.** "I think there is a consensus amongst the citizenry or leaders at least and others that I have talked to, just regular citizens. I think there is a general consensus that legislators will do what they want to do, and the best citizens can do is try to persuade, and where it may not be in alignment with the citizens' views, that the best citizens can do is to try to impact and try to cajole or pressure or lobby legislators to do, to take positions or take actions that are more in alignment with citizen views," said the state elected official. "Fundamentally, there are like two cultures. One is the political insider elite, political politician legislative culture or club....And then there is the citizenry who are basically, for the most part, not too hopeful and cynical and some are resigned and some are determined to try to change it, and so in answer to your question, why do we participate? Why do citizens participate, and I kind of put myself in the citizen role. My views are more in line with the citizen views and I'm kind of like -- I happened to be -- indeed, to play the inside role for citizen groups, so I'm kind of like one of their - few, or if not only kind of link to inside the walls of the legislation, inside the closed doors."
- **Poor attendance,** according to a locally elected official.
- **Lack of political knowledge.** "...I think that people -- the average person, if they are not a part of a political game or know the 'ins and the outs', they do not get a fair chance," said a locally elected official. "They are always pretty much put towards the back because they do not have that right connection. And sometimes, it is not about the connection. Sometimes you need to give people a chance because of how they presented themselves."
- **More interest in discord, power issues.** "I think that usually most people, if you really can sit and talk with them about the interests and values, that really helps get at that," said a public participation practitioner. "But lots of times, there are some people who are not really interested in solving the problem, they are interested in fighting. Those people can be very disruptive and that is hard to deal with. And sometimes you can appeal to the group because most people do

want to have reasonably thoughtful processes and interactions and do not like that kind of conflict. They are uncomfortable with it...So that's another big obstacle, is getting people who have the power to make or break the agreement to actually sit down and participate in the process. I think that is the biggest challenge."

Education/Access:

- **Attitudes such as combativeness and labeling of others, according to an NGO leader.** "And so we -- as much as we like to say we do not, we do walk in with a particular mindset. And I think that is even stronger recently than ever before that if you are an A, then you must also be a B, C, D, and E. And most of us are not that but we do not get a chance to be an A, an F, a G, a Q because we are already painted with a certain brush.
- **Lack of diverse participation, need for sustained engagement and type of setting.** "Certain ethnic communities simply will not come to a public meeting because they are uncomfortable speaking up at a microphone before a group of people where they feel there may be views that are different than theirs," said a federal administrator. "So ours is a sense of wanting to get citizens to take more directed action to care about issues that are important to the future of their community. And then to find ways that are safe for them to provide that input...So we realized that that just does not happen by us sending out material or asking them to come to a meeting. It comes through a very deep and sustained engagement process."
- **Personal skills.** A locally elected official said, "I would say in the beginning I do not think people knew how to approach me...I do not think that personally had anything to do with me as a person. I think it had everything to do with how can I approach her and not make it a black issue."
- **Lack of representation due to lack of engagement.** "If you have a low poverty, a low income community there, definitely not engaged," said a locally elected official. "And rather it's -- just because the lack of awareness on what is really going around, or that we're not taking that time to engage them. I think we miss out on the senior citizens because, again, we do not engage them in some of the discussion. The Hispanics, you touched on that. To me that is important because I think every culture needs to be represented in some way."
- **Language.** For past research efforts, a state administrator said, "if you didn't speak English and you didn't speak Spanish, you just weren't going to be in the study. So this time, we thought we were going one step further when we said -- well, how about English, Spanish and Vietnamese? And then at a board meeting, the L.A. County [subject] Director said, 'Do you know what the largest language minority is in L.A.?' And of course, we all guessed Spanish and he said 'no, Armenian.' This administrator said her reaction was "'are you kidding?' And in Sacramento, it is Russian. So we realized that -- I mean, I guess we always knew that we were excluding lots of little language minorities, but we didn't realize until we did this study just how large it was. It was in the single digits. I think there was -- don't quote me on this --

but I think it was like 7 percent of single parent families wanted to be interviewed in languages other than English, Spanish and Vietnamese.”

- **Lack of preparation to participate effectively.** “Many groups that advocate for positions when they approach their elected officials – I think this is equally true at the state level as well as in the Congress – I think do a phenomenally bad job,” said a state administrator. “They spend a lot of effort to be heard, but what they bring to the table is often very poorly put together, and therefore they marginalize themselves.” This interviewee also said, “I think it is particularly true in my field because you have lots of poor people. You have lots of very good-hearted people trying to represent them who have very real issues and concerns and complaints, very legitimate. And then they do just a bad, bad job of marshalling the kind of persuasive information that is going to help change anybody’s mind.”
- **Lack of an engagement system.** A public participation practitioner said that “every city should have some sort of a broader engagement system, and I think that is what people have talked about. Whether people grouped together as neighborhoods and geographic community or interest-based community or identity-based community, churches and ethnic groups, things like that. Somehow, there needs to be some sense of that as a whole. That that is where people are naturally drawing into community and organizing themselves. In this instance, “there is a place that you can start to try to interact and have some of this interaction where you cannot do it just person-by-person, but to have some mechanism that is city-wide where you have some vehicle for every single part of the city so you do not just have well-organized, higher-income communities that will always organize themselves into a neighborhood association. But it is the lower income, the disadvantaged, the immigrant communities that often do not have that ability.”
- **Sense of the cultural context.** For example, a public participation practitioner said, “there is immigrant group here that is afraid of government, like the Slavic community. They do not want government people to come out there. Or formal meeting stuff does not work for them. Or they are -- it is a culture where the men make all the decisions. So here, if you are doing outreach and talking to Vietnamese women, we have been told, ‘Forget that because whatever you agree with the woman, the man will make sure that does not happen because you have now -- he has lost face because you have done this.’ So, it is just having some sense of the context.”
- **Need for governance skills.** There is a need for developing the capacity of people to practice good governance skills. A public participation practitioner cited a person who “said that if people were put in charge -- most people, if they are given governance responsibilities, they will govern badly. But over time if they are given these experiences working with -- whether it is the Lions Club, or the street lighting club, or this club, or that club where you try to accomplish things in the community, you start to develop these skills and a whole different way of thinking about what is the process by which things get done.”

Not seeing immediate impacts can also be barrier. A state administrator said, “the reality of not making a difference is a significant damper on citizen spirit to sustain a desire to participate....So then, that is where the general public [is] and then there are exceptions, there are people who are like here and there, because of their own personalities, they are so -- not addicted, but kind of like enthralled, or that is just their life. Some people, their life is just civic work.....And so, I think, that speaks more to the type of people they are, rather than -- despite the environment that does not nurture citizen participation, despite that, they kind of heroically... they are like heroes that have a certain heroic, courageous quality that sustains them.” The official used the description of such a person as “A Mother Theresa of civil engagement.”

Similarly, an NGO leader said: “Well, I think that for many people, they want some assurance that something is going to happen and something is going to change. And the something that they want changed often is really huge, really huge, and it is hard to recognize those incremental steps that we are taking. So I think that is one thing. I think it is trust and I do not think that our media and popular culture and politicians necessarily do us a whole lot of favors in the trust area because too often, we see groups painted as the ‘other.’”

An NGO leader said, “You really have to have fortitude and perseverance; you have to be generous with your time, with your commitment to the community, sometimes with your money, with your resources.” This leader also said, “I see a lot of exclusions and a lot of people who wish that it were not so, but mostly just seem to wish it were not so and not actively work to change it.”

Best Practices

Best practices were shared by many U.S. interviewees. These included “establishing clear roles and responsibilities for those advisory committees and having a clear purpose for them to come together,” said a local administrator, as well as “being clear about how their input will be used, and being clear about who the ultimate decision maker is just in order to manage expectations.” Top-notch facilitation skills and small group work, which “can be very effective in getting people to talk to one another and articulate their views,” were also cited as best practices. This type of group is valuable “because it engages people the most and you can do sort of more one-on-one answering people’s intimate questions and delve down deeper;” and “potentially, while you may not be able to reach out to as many people, potentially you are getting richer input.” However, “the tradeoff is you cannot touch as many people and get as much awareness and input from more people.”

An NGO leader noted a best practice of “Working with partners who have trust in the community.” In addition, this person said, “Knocking on doors. This is just a kind of a euphemism but go out to the parking lot. The woman I know who works with the Episcopal church in the Iowa Forum on Immigration, and they did get some ESL students that agreed to come to a forum, and the church that they attended on a regular

basis was a church that had services in English and services in Spanish and so, it was a space they were comfortable with. They have been invited by a trusted source and could only get as far as the parking lot, so going the extra 20 feet out the door to the parking lot to draw them in. I think we are telling that story.”

Other practices this interviewee offered included working through existing networks or structures. “So to me, an obvious way of supporting existing things that are taking place and getting that feedback and supporting decision making and action is working through places where there is already the infrastructure, where they already have their citizen. There are citizen advisory councils, but I cannot remember what they call them. And so, I have only reached the point where I have got the first level between me and those folks, but they already have buy-in to citizen engagement.”

Finally, this NGO leader also spoke about citizen journalism as a best practice. “I mean this is a huge -- this is way, way off topic of what you want to talk about, but this is really a huge thing with a lot of pieces. There is a citizen journalism piece, for example. Who gets to tell the stories of our communities? What are the stories that are not getting told? So how do we cultivate those citizen journalists? So I'm working with a former news director for a public television and radio station and we are developing that infrastructure, developing the content, podcast content that can be widely distributed for folks to hear stories of what other communities are doing that they could replicate in their communities.”

An NGO leader described a specific best practice example where this particular organization worked with 10 different communities. “And in each community we trained local moderators, trained local organizers, provided them with some organizing guides, moderating guides, recorder guides, et cetera, et cetera, different kinds of discussion starter materials that we tested. And that you know serve a menu of different things that they could improvise on and use for different settings. And then the next year we did -- and this was partially organized by the in-state organizers where... the State League of Women Voters and some other statewide organizations that they pulled to the table. And they started working this every year. So, next year, we trained another eight communities, and then we trained the League of Women Voters to do the trainings. So, again, we made ourselves sort of obsolete. So the League of Women Voters started to provide the technical assistance that [organization] originally did. So that was not brought in-state.”

Reflecting on this experience, this interviewee observed, “The kind of public engagement that I think is meaningful is deliberative public engagement where people are given -- you are creating the conditions that help citizens and allow them to understand the various sides of issues and to weigh different possibilities and relationships to issues. And not simply doing sort of quick-hit superficial overnight polls, or something like that.” This NGO leader also commented:

“And I think one of the people that have provided a way of conceptualizing why that is, actually, is [name]. It is his book, *[name]*, which kind of lays out a whole way of

conceptualizing the difference between knee-jerk public opinion, where people have not really had an opportunity to think about an issue very much and yet they are being polled on it versus issues where they have thought about it and have lived with and understand the consequences of different kinds of solutions and are willing to make tradeoffs.”

“When you get sort of quick-hit results from surveys or superficial interviews, or whatever, that people have around issues that people have not thought about, that they are extremely unstable and you change a little wording and everything flips to the opposite direction; things like that, versus situations where people have thought about the issues and understand them in their own ways and brought their values to bear on them and kind of know where they stand and understand there are consequences in making decisions and things are much more stable, and they are sort of more willing to take responsibility for their ideas and to work through them.”

“But if it is well-designed and the materials are designed in a way that invites deliberation and reflection and cross-talk, and the facilitation is aimed at bringing out different perspectives in an interesting yet respectful -- lively and respectful ways, things like that, it is extremely satisfying.

The benefit of this particular practice or approach is “the way in which the thing is designed usually allows us to neutralize those special interest-dominating dynamics that people are afraid of in these settings.” In addition, “one of the ways of trying to neutralize that problem is to invite those groups to be a part of the organizing coalition. Sometimes it makes sense; sometimes it does not to do that. Sometimes it makes sense to invite them to be participants. But it is part of the challenge of this work.”

An NGO leader described the attributes of what comprises a best practice, based on experience. These included focusing on “individual and collective relationship building,” paying attention to spiritual needs (“sometimes, we forget about how our spirits can be settled just by paying attention to natural rhythms”), compassion and listening skills. For example, this person said, “right now, this organization is looking at disaster relief work in the region where Katrina hit....And what they are doing is a listening tour. They are really trying to listen deeply to the people most affected.... And take their direction from that instead of swooping in with bottles of water, whatever. They are really trying to listen to what their deeper needs are, and the deeper needs may be to attend to the issue of racism, or poverty. And I have been really impressed by that. It makes me feel like the work matters and is having an impact.”

This interviewee also noted the existence of good examples of participatory practices “in the field of poverty where more public participation is invited.”

Not Such Good Practice

However, there also are instances where a community process does not represent a ‘best practice.’ An NGO leader noted one community where “most of their experience

with the public has been really nasty and ugly and stupid and pointless. And they do public hearings because they are mandated to by law, perhaps, or it is good public relations form. But it is usually quite unpleasant because they are so poorly designed and they end up -- I mean, my general policy is that under the right conditions, citizens can do incredible work around public participation; under wrong conditions they do horrible work. They do terrible things; it is ugly and unproductive.”

Other attributes or examples of ‘not such good practice’ include what are termed ‘shotgun approaches,’ as a federal administrator noted (“because you may not reach the right person, or may not have the appropriate feel for the community”) as well as legal constraints imposed by law (such as a locally elected official noted in regard to the No Child Left Behind legislation, which this interviewee said ties the school’s hands in some ways).

A state elected official, for example, said: “I should note that my assessment of the level of citizen participation in the legislature is meager....As opposed to robust.”

A public participation practitioner lamented the loss of accountability in the United States, stating that “in other parts of the world this is dramatically the case where people -- governments pretty much do whatever they want, it seems, in many cases. We are seeing that more and more in the United States as well.”

Funding limitations also can contribute to ‘bad process.’ A state administrator said, “Now initially when I was brought in to do this, another [organization] colleague said ‘well, you know, we can just hold the call for proposals and then whatever comes in will be funded and when we run out of money, then we are done.’ I just felt that was not a particularly good way of doing this.” On the flip side, there can be too much emphasis on the wrong things, this person said. “I remember when I was working for [name] – this is more than 20 years ago – the Ford Foundation spent, I shudder to think at how much money they spent on this, it was millions of dollars, producing a report that was beautifully written and said basically absolutely nothing that was of value to people like me who were trying to legislate.”

Sometimes background or informational materials are poorly prepared. “Before, I was on the receiving end of that as a Congressional staffer, working for members who were doing bills or sat on major committees or whatever,” said a state administrator. “So I have been at both ends of this and it just really pains me to see so much stuff, so much effort, so much money basically going down a rat hole because the organizations have important points, they don’t marshal the facts well. They don’t put things together in a way that is persuasive.”

How participatory or deliberative processes are treated or used was also discussed by interviewees. A federal administrator said this particular agency is “very thorough in looking at public comment on [subject area] impact statements.” Another federal administrator commented, “we look at public engagement and public involvement differently than we did even a decade ago. It is much more intensive; it is much more

hands-on; it is much more responsive to different components of the community, with a better understanding of what people respond to and act and feel comfortable with in terms of giving their input in different kind of environments and that we need to explore all of those. And that includes a lot of what we call social science work now. Much more survey work, phone survey work, intercept survey work; just trying to get a better pulse of where people are at.”

By comparison, at the local level, a locally elected official stated: “And I do not want to sugarcoat your question but I cannot say that if a group of people came out and my decision on something was totally different, that it would change my mind. But I cannot say it wouldn’t change my mind depending on what it is. I like to gather all the information I possibly can before making that decision.”

A state elected official emphasized partnerships with citizen groups that is more part of this legislator’s own portfolio: “...we work on political reform issues that have as a common theme citizen involvement, level the playing field so that citizens have greater or fair access to the legislative process. That includes -- the kinds of activities include my providing consulting and educational and coaching services to citizen's organizations outside the legislature, to encourage them to – [indiscernible] to brief them about how the process works on paper and how it actually works in reality, the internal behind-closed-doors dynamics, and I support them in devising action plans, approaches, strategies for increasing their effectiveness at the legislature.” This official has also “sponsored continuing education class, a non-credit class during the legislative session held at the Capitol. I have helped sponsor national issues forums on legislative issues, other community forums.” However, at the institutional level, this person is “co-chair of a joint legislative committee made up of House and Senate members, and we conduct our activities in a more collaborative, open manner with citizens to separate the divide between those elected officials in our elevated status of being legislators and citizens who testify -- we kind of operate -- kind of more in a town meeting fashion rather than the traditional hearing style.” There also are “a whole range of activities we conduct through e-mails, through websites, but basically my interest is in increasing civic citizen organization capacity to understand and have accurate assessments of what the political and legislative landscape is and have a kind of the wherewithal to design fact-based or intelligence-based plans, action plans and strategies, and to insert citizen views in the legislative process.”

Interestingly, an NGO leader saw a complementary relationship between different kinds of participatory or deliberative processes. “In a sense, advocacy and partisanship and nonpartisan public deliberation sorts of processes or multi-partisan or deliberation processes kind of complement each other, and they almost need each other in some ways,” this person said. “...So, the growing practice and growing capacity and expertise of the field of deliberative public engagement on the one hand and the growing dissatisfaction and unease and mistrust of *status quo* and the way things are done now amongst the general public, those things can work together. And, hopefully, we [name] not completely screw things up until [cross-talking].”

Focusing on inclusiveness is a key measure of effectiveness for an NGO leader. This person said, “the thing that keeps us so involved in this work despite the fact that we all have other jobs is we constantly reflect on our practice, constantly, like, how did that go? Did everybody get a chance to speak? What would we have done differently? And then also trying to figure out how to make everything we do more deliberative and more inclusive and all about engaging people.” This experience also prompts for this leader the observation that “how I wish elected officials would show these same qualities of perseverance and really cooperating.”

Hard to Get At Opinions

Interviewees reported that some opinions are harder to get at as part of participatory or deliberative processes.

The opinions of regular citizens are hard to obtain. “My experience as a legislator is that legislators tend to make up their minds with some awareness of where the citizen groups are at, but because citizens groups, their opinions, if they are very different than what legislators’ views are, citizen groups’ views can be, not necessarily disregarded, but not heeded as much as lobbyists views,” said a state elected official. “And my opinion about that is the reason is there are no consequences. Well, very little consequences because when it comes to election time, citizen groups do not hold their legislators accountable, whereas lobbyists and moneyed interest groups have the capacity, through funding, to hold legislators accountable for killing or supporting the bills that funded interests have. And so during the legislative process, the legislators tend to pay more attention to the opinions of those persons and groups who are more likely to hold them accountable to whether they pay heed to those opinions.” This official also noted that those who are not self-organized (such as people who aren’t union members) and those organizations without many resources can be difficult to reach, as well as young people and retirees.

A federal administrator tries to isolate different interests as part of this puzzle. “What is it about the plan, the original plan, the new plan that particular community that is creating a very small level of interest? Because even in rural areas you can get people to a meeting if the subject matter is of interest and it is relevant. So the relevancy piece is pretty key.” Another federal administrator emphasized the value of not painting the community with a broad brush: “We found it much more difficult if you just send out a whole lot of notices of the meeting without doing homework to get people there.”

Institutional limitations can make doing this challenging. “Even though we only do the presentations for very small, select audiences, we make the presentations available publicly,” said a state administrator. “But we don’t have a way, really, of communicating that adequately, in my mind. Every once in awhile, I fantasize about getting some foundation to give us a large five year grant where I could hire another person who would be dedicated to reaching out to the non-profit and public sectors that are not amongst our government constituencies, but would have an interest in this work.” There are also related limitations, such as language.

A locally elected official expressed frustration with how difficult it can be to engage people on some topics. This person described public meetings for a referendum related to a tax increase: “So attendance was very poor. I was very surprised. Our first meeting, we had only one resident. Our second meeting, we had three. And our last meeting, the third meeting, we only had two people.”

As this report has noted previously in the United States, certain community members may be harder to reach who are low income, senior citizens or in certain ethnic groups, as this official also said. “Sometimes we might have to do that extra to get them engaged and see why it is important that they participate, and also make them realize that we do not want something from them,” said this person. “We want to engage them and educate them on what is going on in their community and in other surrounding communities.”

Parents also can be hard to reach, the locally elected official said. “Unless it is a hot topic, it is very few parents that come out. Even our PTO groups are not as large as they once have been at one time. This was before prior to me getting on the board.” To engage parents, this official would “inundate parents, inundate them with articles, with emails, with fliers, making them sign something regarding their child's homework, to get them involved. And then for the parents, that one -- maybe on that side that just, you know barely out of school for themselves, I would want to engage them and have some kind of education piece where we are helping them, educate them, rather than just giving them GED or just basic comprehension.”

A local administrator offered a more hopeful perspective, stating that “opportunities are always there” to engage people. This interviewee also noted the use of alternative tactics for hard-to-reach individuals, such as going “to the grocery store and hang out there for a while, asking people about a project with a display and things like that.” However, “I think it is easy to access our processes, but you have to be pretty dedicated and have a strong desire to do so.”

An NGO leader voiced challenges with reaching youth and adults in our increasingly technological society, stating that “my fear is that a lot of youth and a lot of adults are increasingly hooked up to machines.” Moreover, “we do not often talk about are what are the behaviors within yourself that promote public participation. You have to have an incredible amount of patience, right?You really have to have fortitude and perseverance; you have to be generous with your time, with your commitment to the community, sometimes with your money, with your resources.”

To overcome the challenges of reaching people, this leader said, “we really work hard to just make our setting as down-to-earth as possible and as inviting as possible and to go where people already are.” In addition, “our youth have a key role in the things that we do; youth are often co-facilitators or readers. They are running the movie. They are involved according to ways they name. Same with elders.”

Another NGO leader spoke about the difficulties of engaging low-literacy adults. “Yes, well I have a real passion for the less educated and coming out of the literacy field and still working closely with that field, we talked a lot in the public engagement world about having diversity among our participants and I agree. I think that is critical, but I think -- but let’s be realistic, the adult literacy students, unless they are, well, even if they are ESL, adult literacy students who have spent a lifetime hiding the fact that they do not read well and avoiding situations where they might be embarrassed, starting out may not feel comfortable participating in a community program so in the program that I was running, we layered all kinds of other programming on top of our public forums.”

Finally, a public participation practitioner described how meeting structure can make it more difficult for some to participate. In this community, “there is immigrant group here that is afraid of government, like the Slavic community. They do not want government people to come out there. Or formal meeting stuff does not work for them. Or they are - - it is a culture where the men make all the decisions.” This interviewee also provided an example of how understanding cultural differences can be vital. “So here, if you are doing outreach and talking to Vietnamese women, we have been told, ‘Forget that because whatever you agree with the woman, the man will make sure that does not happen because you have now -- he has lost face because you have done this.’ So, it is just having some sense of the context.”

Sometimes people develop and implement their own participatory processes outside of government.

For example, “when there is an effort going on and some people say, ‘What can I do?’ typically, is write letters to the editor. If they want to do more, they can join a committee and help volunteer effort, if the group is very advanced, they may come up with a media event or have an angle for a story for a reporter. And if they are very, very sophisticated, I help them maybe set up a meeting with the editorial board, if their view of the issues are developed enough to be of sufficient interest for an editorial board of a newspaper to meet with them....And then at that level, they could do a briefing on the issue area....So they could have a briefing on environmental bills, or a briefing on senior citizen bills, or a briefing on transportation bills, and so forth, that legislators can come to or even the media can come to. And so sometimes for these packages or bills that our citizen, or citizen type, they may announce a package of bills that they are pushing, and then they have a press conference inviting the media to report, to be briefed and possibly write a story announcing that environmental groups are pushing a certain set of bills and different groups are pushing their group of bills.”

However, as this report has noted, there can be challenges with gaining momentum in such efforts. “There appears to be enough sentiment in the community outside the walls of the legislature. There appears to be enough individual sentiment and individuals who hold an ongoing and sustainable desire to change things,” said the state elected official, who noted the “meager” state of public participation in the legislature. “And while they may not have a clear grasp of how to do that and it’s tinged with frustration and not knowing what to do, reservation perhaps sometimes, anger, et cetera. The fact

that there are enough of that sentiment out there to me has revealed an opportunity to coalesce the network. It is an unorganized, un-networked group where you have thousands and thousands of people but they are not connected yet.”

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.

American interviewees identified several types of outcomes that result from participatory or deliberative processes. This includes:

- **Identifying and defining critical issues, taking responsibility.** “I think a big component for me of public participation is public participation not only in defining what the critical issues are and beginning to craft a way in which to talk about them and find ways of working together but also I have taken responsibility for implementing the solutions and taking responsibilities for the consequences of those solutions so to me, public participation is not simply I had a voice and I told you what to do to fix the problem and went away. It is far more collaborative and inclusive and we all have some kind of a role or responsibility in implementing those solutions,” said an NGO leader.
- **Respect.** “I tell you, you participate in a few deliberative forms and you learn how to listen, and learn how to think about what people are saying and what is behind it, and learn how to value them even though they hold a different opinion, you are a much better cashier,” an NGO leader said.
- **Awareness of participatory efforts.** “I think we are starting to see some public involvement at the state and local level and starting to see some elected officials who get it,” an NGO leader said.
- **‘Rich or workable and productive’ answers.** Engagement outcomes can include “...not individual answers -- individual points of view coming up with the answer but somehow in the ethos of those individual answers you might come up with something rich or workable and productive,” said an NGO leader.
- **“...better understanding and better, stronger commitment to the outcomes,”** said an NGO leader. “So that we as a group may not be making a decision that says, “This is how we are going change funding of our schools,” but we as a group are coming to a better understanding. I think it does affect people's behavior and individual's decision making process. I mean, I have participated in so many forums on healthcare and heard so many stories about people's experiences with healthcare that it is clear to me that my decisions, even though it may not immediately be evident that my individual decisions have an impact on healthcare that can contribute to that. So, I make personal decisions, different decisions that I might have if I had not participated in those conversations.” Moreover, “once you worked with a group of people and they

have come maybe not made the decision per se, but come to a better understanding of an issue and an understanding of how their behavior or the issue affects other people, it allows them to affect them.”

- A state administrator concurred, citing “a bottle bill, deposit bill.” “Beverage containers, and it was pretty, somewhat unpopular -- I mean -- it was mixed reviews. It had a lot of implementation problems. The executive... the legislature supported it, the executive branch was opposed to it but the implementation was not done very well, and the environmental groups that pushed it kept the pressure up to make it work and so a controversial bill that was passed and implementation mixed, ineffectual or hit-and-miss type of implementation that caused problems, I think, it was critical for the original supporters, citizen groups, their support sustained it because otherwise it may have been repealed.
- Another “example is campaign reform advocates got the legislature or the legislature essentially limited corporations from their donation, their contributions to \$1,000... throughout an election, so it could -- a corporation can give 10 candidates \$100 each or one candidate \$1,000 but cannot participate more than \$1,000 at all in an election....And the legislature tried to repeal it this past session. The groups that were in support of that rule, really had to battle it to sustain their success. And another example would be where we have a mass transit, a light rail proposal, several billion dollars. The legislature authorized the counties to raise our general excise tax and it was done in a way that did not have widespread buy-in from the public....And still there is lingering, much lingering opposition. And so where there is a controversial issue that people felt excluded, they, in a way -- that exclusion comes back to bite the advocates.”
- **Changes to how processes are conducted.** “I have heard from the deputy director of that organization that the staff has gone through our training that they have completely changed the way that they run meetings,” said an NGO leader, “and that is just a big difference. And so they have all their citizen committees that they are organized around specific issues.”
- **Testimony.** A state elected official said, “public participation to me would include testifying on legislation. So one would be to submit testimony and show up and actually give testimony, number one. Number two would be to weigh in beyond just giving their opinions in testimony but actually talking to legislators and promoting various viewpoints regarding legislation through the media or through talking to legislators; and three, the citizens who participate in the legislative process encouraging other citizens to weigh in and get involved.”
- **Accountability.** “My experience as a legislator is that legislators tend to make up their minds with some awareness of where the citizen groups are at, but because citizens groups, their opinions, if they are very different than what legislators’ views are, citizen groups’ views can be, not necessarily disregarded, but not heeded as much as lobbyists views,” said a state elected official. “And my opinion about that is the reason is there are no consequences. Well, very little consequences because when it comes to election time, citizen groups do not hold their legislators accountable, whereas lobbyists and moneyed interest groups have the capacity, through funding, to hold legislators accountable for killing or supporting the bills that funded interests have. And so during the

legislative process, the legislators tend to pay more attention to the opinions of those persons and groups who are more likely to hold them accountable to whether they pay heed to those opinions.” In addition, this person said, “I guess I’m introducing the notion that there is a connection between elections and law-making and the connection is elections are really the time of holding legislators accountable. Another time of holding legislators accountable is after the legislative session. There is a citizen group, which includes environmental groups, citizens-based groups, community-based groups -- like for example, environmental groups may issue an environmental rating that may grade legislators based on their support or opposition to environmental issues. So there is a certain degree of accountability after legislative session, and while these citizen groups may not spend a lot of money or weigh in heavily during election time, their ratings are often used during election time to cite how a candidate is pro-environment or anti-environment, et cetera.”

- **Symbiotic relationships.** “In [state], there are a lot of environmentalists, obviously, and people have concerns but they are not organized, so Sierra club is a major organizing element. Human services, where you have from homeless, to those who need some public assistance and to health, consumers, the regular consumer of health services, to consumer products, consumers of products and other services,” said a state elected official. “Basically it would be the issue areas that a regular citizen could relate to. And I think those areas, I think there is -- legislators are more open to the extent that they are aware that citizen types may weigh in and citizen – community based, citizen-based type interests or lobbying is different from paid lobbyists, because paid lobbyists’ interests are more predictable, and you can negotiate with them and they get paid, and so most of them have more than one client, and so there is more negotiation, and I think there is more compatible community almost with legislators and lobbyists because that lobbyist helps legislators in various ways and vice versa. So, that is more of a symbiotic relationship.”
- **Antagonism.** A state elected official said for “citizen groups, they tend to be a little bit more antagonistic and they tend to not negotiate. There is less quid pro quo because citizens have less to offer. They cannot give campaign donations. It is harder for them to negotiate in other -- they have less to negotiate with.”
- **One-time and sustained action.** A state elected official described ‘spot involvement’ or one-time campaigns and ‘sustained involvement’ efforts that have resulted in a media partnership, public awareness of an issue, public pressure “and really a wave of public support” for an initiative.
- **Faltering involvement.** Sometimes “there is not yet a strong-enough effort, ongoing effort that people feel confident that if they participate in it, it could build something. It is always sliding, it is Sisyphus [indiscernible]. You start chairing a boulder up but you keep getting -- it is so heavy, you keep getting pushed back,” said a state elected official. According to this person, “the reality of not making a difference is a significant damper on citizen spirit to sustain a desire to participate.”
- **Generating public awareness.** A state elected official said, “...when there is an effort going on and some people say, ‘What can I do?’ typically, is write letters to

the editor. If they want to do more, they can join a committee and help volunteer effort, if the group is very advanced, they may come up with a media event or have an angle for a story for a reporter. And if they are very, very sophisticated, I help them maybe set up a meeting with the editorial board, if their view of the issues are developed enough to be of sufficient interest for an editorial board of a newspaper to meet with them....And then at that level, they could do a briefing on the issue area....So they could have a briefing on environmental bills, or a briefing on senior citizen bills, or a briefing on transportation bills, and so forth, that legislators can come to or even the media can come to. And so sometimes for these packages or bills that our citizen, or citizen type, they may announce a package of bills that they are pushing, and then they have a press conference inviting the media to report, to be briefed and possibly write a story announcing that environmental groups are pushing a certain set of bills and different groups are pushing their group of bills.”

- **Bills being defeated.** “I could probably point to a number of bills that have been defeated and there was a bill to -- and so there are several bills, a handful of high-profile, media-covered bills each session that are defeated by citizen action,” said a state elected official. “Most of them are either environmental bills, or open government bills or campaign reform bills. The legislature tries to do something that is unpopular and the citizen groups have to really get organized and really mobilize an effort to defeat.”
- For example, this person cited “a bill to allow a landfill to be constructed over a drinking water aquifer.” In this case, “the concern was that there will be seepage into that and it could contaminate the drinking water. The owner of the landfill was a major campaign donor to the Senate president. And so they strong-armed to move the bill and the environmental groups came out in force, and I was involved, and a lot of media, and through much controversy, forced the legislature to back down.”
- A second example involved a bill during “the last session would have allowed a major development on agricultural zoned lands for high-priced millionaire mansions, and it was a land-use zoning issue. Some of the major leaders, legislative leaders, were pushing it and a number of citizen groups, a lot of citizen groups, the [stakeholder name] groups came out, opposed and through much effort, got the legislature to defeat it.” Other examples include “bills to exempt the city councils from the sunshine law, our open meetings law,” which “drew out major protests and the bills were defeated.”
- **More constraints.** “The more citizens get involved, then you have more constraints,” said a state elected official. “You cannot make deals as much. And the other where you want to... power sharing, kind of empowering others model, you view -- it is having the skill set to collaborate, so it is a different kind of skill set, skill sets of collaborating, of generating consensus, of including people, of fostering understanding of different views rather than wedge-issues type, who is right and who is wrong. It’s a different skill set, different paradigm and that second paradigm, I think, is the paradigm within the power-holding societies, cultures, or clubs that can hold some promise for enabling and empowering and

encouraging citizen participation as we have defined it in our conversation today.”

- **Expressing needs.** A federal administrator described how the Freedom of Information Act is used “in terms of engaging themselves when they feel they are not having their needs met in some way.”
- **Transparency.** At the federal level, “most times you cannot sway on things that are pre-decisional [indiscernible] we are in a process,” said a federal administrator. “After the decision is made, I’m going to say most of the time you are going to have access to most of the documents that are part of that decision process, so you will be able to track that. But it is not available until the actual decision is made.”
- **Understanding attitudes or viewpoints.** A federal administrator said, “I was in a process for the [community name] River [subject] in the 1980s, which is a [number]-square-mile [subject] with a lot of first, second order streams in the upper part of the basin and then got to some major tributaries in the lower part of the basin. And [state] -- the [state cabinet-level department], who did not know any better at the time, decided they needed a [subject] plan for this entire basin. And there was like a master committee and a whole bunch of sub-committees. So sub-basins had committees, and there was an education and outreach committee. And that education and outreach committee pretty much directed, made the sound case for understanding the social context of the folks who lived along the river and used the river in order to do a good plan. So, that was the first social science survey done in the United States for user attitudes along the water body.”
- **Documented approaches.** As a result of a process, “now we have a whole bunch of documentation about how you do public involvement and how things should be done,” said a federal administrator. “But I think that process, because it was longer than anticipated, which is true in almost any big group process, they never did it again....So, they focused on smaller [subject]s, more manageable-sized groups. So they could actually get their [subject] planning done.”
- **Diverse involvement.** A federal administrator described a process for a project that drew diverse involvement. “There was obviously very strong interest on the part of the folks, the residents in the [subject]s, because it was different sets of problems and different-sized communities. So upper rural, and then it suburbanized and then it urbanized and every component was contributing different kinds of problems and had different kinds of actors, people who were both interested in the problem and interested in the solutions and getting solutions on the table.”
- **Focus on consensus.** “The public is not always going to get their decision their way; even different people in a public process will have a different idea about what an eventual outcome or decision point should be,” said a federal administrator. “But all of this tends to be a collaborative process and we encourage consensus.” This means that decisions are informed by the public’s participation, even though the public is not the party making the decision.
- **Recommendations and referenda.** A locally elected official gave an example of a project that necessitated a public meeting. “Since I was the school board

member on that committee along with the other people I will make a presentation to the board, a recommendation on what this group decided.” Following that presentation, “then the Board has to make a decision on - I want to see it by February 15th – on to what percentage that they are going to increase. You have to do at least, by state law, a percentage starting at one percent. Once the school board makes their recommendation or commits to it, then that will be sent up to [community name] because it has to go on a referendum for the next election for the residents to vote. If the residents elect to vote yes, then we will be able to raise it at whatever percentage we agree to. If the residents elect no, then we have to continue running our school the way we are running right now at the current budget.”

- **Personal relationships.** “I interact with the State Representative [name],” said a locally elected official. “I have interacted with [name], who just lost the election this go-round. I interview with a lot of them. I make it a point to try to know who everyone is, and I make it a point to let everyone know who I am as an individual and not as a group.”
- **Collaborative problem-solving.** Citing a specific example about the potential for gang-related activity at a graduation ceremony, a locally elected official said, “together, we came and just really hashed out what opportunities that we had. How can we make this work so that everyone came out a winner in that our residents, our students, our family and everyone felt safe, and when they left there, everyone was safe and protected?”
- **Increased participation.** For example, more teachers expressing their views, according to a locally elected official. This person also commented, “Yes, I would say yes, because depending on what the subject is, and rather it is good or bad, you seem to take more of an interest when we have more of the public coming out and speaking on it.” Moreover, “I would say it would have an impact, whether it is good or bad. Again, just getting them to come out and participate, and understand their passion for something.” In such instances, it’s not as important whether attendees supported or were against a school board position, “but it does make the board become more aware.”
- **Public opinion.** “Just two months ago, we had a vacancy spot on the school board and we had already decided pretty much what we were going to put in,” said a locally elected official. “But the public, we did not put it out for public interviews. We were just going to the old list that we had had from a year ago....And when the public found out, we set a public meeting and they were pretty much in an outrage, and they were like, ‘No, you should go out and interview people again.’ So we did do that not only because the public -- they came for us and they stated what they wanted....They wanted us to interview -- to allow other people... to open it up for other people to submit their résumé to fill the vacancy.”
- **Lack of focus on effectiveness.** A local administrator described evaluative measures for public processes as “a really great best practice” but also “something that often just totally falls by the wayside in terms of measuring the effectiveness.” This might include “Counting how many people attended your meeting, how many response forms; if you are seeking input, how many

response forms you received. Ideally, for every meeting you do, you would have a feedback form from a participant evaluating the meeting. How did the meeting go? Was it held in a good location? Did you feel listened to? Did you blah, blah, blah, blah, on and on and on. I think it is something that often gets overlooked for a couple of reasons.”

- **Grassroots orientation.** “At some level or another, the way that policy, programs, projects happen is not just because the government thinks it is a good idea,” said a local administrator. “Particularly in [state], I mean, from a planning perspective we have such a hierarchy of how - just on an infrastructure standpoint – of a project gets developed. It is very grassroots. A community identifies a problem then it would go to the city. The city then puts that on an agenda like, here, we have identified this street needs traffic to be slowed down on it, and eventually that works its way into a city plan. The plan gets adapted. Now, that is in a plan, you can work on it.”
- **Training that builds capacity.** An NGO leader said, “we do organizing training. We do moderator training of local folks. We do not bring in experts to run these things. And we really try to develop processes that are easily transferable and that is why the work goes on when we leave, essentially.”
- **Personal accountability.** “I feel accountable to local leaders in the sense that I really represent what I’m trying to do very clearly,” said an NGO leader. “I’m doing the best possible job to do it well, but that is distinct from making them happy all the time. That is distinct from them getting the answers that they were hoping for, and, in essence, I almost do not feel like with local leaders that I’m working with, whether it is a superintendent or a mayor or whomever, that unless they get a little bit nervous, I almost feel like I’m not doing my job.”
- **Citizen attitudes and efficacy.** An NGO leader said, “the impacts that flow from public engagement are many and varied, and understanding what those are is one of the things the field needs to do a better job of, one of the things that we are going to be working on through the new [program name] here at [organization]. There are very important impacts on citizen efficacy, that kind of a notion of citizen attitude and efficacy and the attitude the citizens have towards change and their ability to affect things. Things like that.”
- **Formal decisions, additional resources.** “In the statewide work in [state], the public engagement work has been really closely tied to formal decisions that have been made by the State Board of Education in the [community name] School District where we did a lot of work,” said an NGO leader. “Graduation requirements were raised as a result of the work.” In addition, “the practice of the school district was changed as the result of the work because they created a public engagement officer who did not exist before, and they have been practicing community forums and surveys on a yearly basis ever since; this was since [year].”
- **Nebulous outcomes.** “In the case of some statewide work on property tax and tax reform in [state], it is really hard to tease apart exactly the decision impact of the work that was done by an organization called [organization] that was born to engage the public around these issues,” said an NGO leader. “But it is part of the mix of what is happening in that state on this issue.”

- **Transfer of expertise to the community.** An NGO leader said, “we are doing everything possible to transfer the expertise to the local site, local community. Training -- organize a training for facilitators, providing materials and so forth. And we are helping them think strategically for the long-term about how this relates to other processes and how it is going to play out in the future. Part of the post-forum survey we do is we ask the participants how they think -- how they want to follow up and how they think it should be followed up. And that is information that they as individuals can act on but also the local organizers can act on.” In addition, “we certainly encourage and support and work with them as much as we can to continue the work. At the very least, they are obligated -- we tell them very strongly to close the loop with participants in terms of what happened as a result of their participation and to try to get some concrete response from leadership in relationship to their participation.”
- **Enhanced confidence on the part of the convenor.** An NGO leader said that “one of the major outcomes was that those of us who were native left that dialogue process really strong and intact, and it was from there that we thought, ‘Let us just do this our way.’”
- **Readiness for action.** An NGO leader said the group “would really probe” an issue “until we felt we were done and ready to take action.”
- **Positive feedback and enhanced strength.** “It’s been good to hear back from them [participants], just small things like [inaudible] this is a good thing,” said an NGO leader. “....And I think what I have realized through this is that just as we see this desire to strengthen our own children and how they interact, and this desire to strengthen ourselves, that we really need to strengthen our elders by bringing them together to talk. And that will make us stronger in this effort to bring people together in a good way.” Through these efforts, this leader feels “like we are building capacity for deliberation.”
- **Unsure if decisions consider input.** A public participation practitioner said, “whether the engagement actually affects decision making, that has been the missing link.”
- **Cynicism and frustration.** “I think that is what you see all over the country where people say, ‘Our people are not voting, they are not engaging. What is the matter with them? They are lazy. They are apathetic.’ But over and over what you hear from the community is, ‘I engaged in a process. I was on this committee,’ or ‘I gave my input,’” said a public participation practitioner. “First, nobody got back to me to tell me what happened with it, and then I saw that they pretty much just disregarded what I did anyway. So why in my busy life would I ever participate in another one of those processes again?” And so I think [community name] really does a lot better than most places at having process, but I think there is a tremendous amount of frustration.”
- **Emphasis on common values.** A public participation practitioner said, “I have seen this over and over, where I can see something where you have two polarized groups or starting to head in that direction. And just that simple thing of getting everybody together -- forget the positions, but let’s talk about your deeper interest. What are your interests here? What are the values that you care about? And that is the one thing that anybody in the public can talk about.”

- **Practical skills and new skills.** “I think public participation practitioners are a vital piece of making society work,” said a public participation practitioner. “The more we can get people out there with those skills, I think the better functioning and less conflicted we will be as a community.” This person also noted how de Tocqueville said, “if people were put in charge -- most people, if they are given governance responsibilities, they will govern badly. But over time if they are given these experiences working with -- whether it is the Lions Club, or the street lighting club, or this club, or that club where you try to accomplish things in the community, you start to develop these skills and a whole different way of thinking about what is the process by which things get done.”
- **Learning.** As a result of participating, “people started to learn what it is like to work together in groups and suddenly it softens you, your more extreme views, because you start to hear from other people, said a public participation practitioner. “You learn that a lot of it is about working together and coming up to some sort of an agreed-upon position.”
- **Responsiveness.** A state administrator said, “...we commission a study, we spend hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars of our resources on studies that are commissioned by our state and local and legislative people, all of whom are elected people in some sense, or appointed by elected people in fairly senior positions in state government. So we are clearly responding to their needs and desires at a point in time, but once those publications come out, the [organization] preserves its independence to publish notwithstanding how government officials may or may not like the findings that are coming out of the studies that they asked for.”
- **Active committee participation.** “I am pleased to say that many years later now, we have kept a very high level of engagement amongst these principals,” said a state administrator. “They actually show up, they do vote, they get very engaged, they have sometimes fairly passionate debates. It is very interesting to observe. So I think that has made a difference in terms of the focus of the group, because these are decision-makers.”
- **Feedback.** “You are only as good as the last thing you do, but we mostly get very good – I would say very good feedback on the whole from these organizations. And partly because we always consult with them, we always say that ‘we are going to do a presentation, would you like to have this? You don’t have to have it, only if you want it.’ So they tend to say yes. We sort of have the standing invitation when we think there is something worthwhile to bring it to them. And that has taken us awhile to get well established, but it’s been that way now for a number of years, so I think that is working fairly well.”

Finally, an NGO leader commented, “I think that there can be important effects on communities and the political culture within communities in the ways of which issues are looked at and managed and communicated about in a general sense, as opposed to just strictly around decision points. But I also -- very specific decisions and concrete results should and can flow from the work. So, again, it is pretty contextual. It is very different in different places, depending on the nature of the beast.”

There is also citizen disappointment as a result of *not* being engaged. According to a state elected official, my belief or my perception as a legislator is that other legislators do not believe that public testimony and involvement, that that is part of the deliberative process. Legislators deliberate among themselves. They do not consider -- it is like representative democracy. So legislators are elected and we deliberate among ourselves and we have no obligation to deliberate with the public....The public gives us their opinions but the legislators deliberate among themselves, whereas the public... or to some extent and this is not widespread, but there is a line of thinking or belief or expectation or hope amongst citizen participants that the hope that the legislators would deliberate with them....And include them in the deliberation, and they are almost always disappointed.”

Impact on Decisions

Interviewees were queried about the potential for impact or influence by participatory or deliberative processes.

Influences may be community-wide. An NGO leader noted a specific project in a community that sought “to change the conversation and the way in which the public and the press are talking to potential mayoral candidates, so the press is involved and the public is involved right from the very beginning.” This interviewee also described a second project with community impact. “Another project engages the public in a discussion about the development of the waterfront. And so, the city council member who represents the district that encompasses that waterfront has made the commitment that nothing will be done until this public engagement process is completed. So that is done upfront. I think we are starting to see some public involvement at the state and local level and starting to see some elected officials who get it.”

This NGO leader also made an even broader observation, “I think that there are a number of things a-brew in this country that make it right for citizens to begin to have a stronger voice. I think we are seeing it in some of our presidential and potential presidential candidates and the fact that we have got a presidential election coming up. I think that the public is tired of divisiveness and that that the story that is being told about us is -- a divided red-blue country is not an accurate story, and I think the public knows that.”

Some interviewees have their own goals for increasing the level of influence that people exert. A state elected official explained an effort to get people testify on proposed legislation and “to weigh in beyond just giving their opinions in testimony but actually talking to legislators and promoting various viewpoints regarding legislation through the media or through talking to legislators; and three, the citizens who participate in the legislative process encouraging other citizens to weigh in and get involved.”

This person also said, “My experience as a legislator is that legislators tend to make up their minds with some awareness of where the citizen groups are at, but because citizens groups, their opinions, if they are very different than what legislators’ views are,

citizen groups' views can be, not necessarily disregarded, but not heeded as much as lobbyists views. And my opinion about that is the reason is there are no consequences. Well, very little consequences because when it comes to election time, citizen groups do not hold their legislators accountable, whereas lobbyists and moneyed interest groups have the capacity, through funding, to hold legislators accountable for killing or supporting the bills that funded interests have. And so during the legislative process, the legislators tend to pay more attention to the opinions of those persons and groups who are more likely to hold them accountable to whether they pay heed to those opinions."

Moreover, this elected official said, "I think there is a general consensus that legislators will do what they want to do, and the best citizens can do is try to persuade, and where it may not be in alignment with the citizens' views, that the best citizens can do is to try to impact and try to cajole or pressure or lobby legislators to do, to take positions or take actions that are more in alignment with citizen views. Fundamentally, there are like two cultures. One is the political insider elite, political politician legislative culture or club....And then there is the citizenry who are basically, for the most part, not too hopeful and cynical and some are resigned and some are determined to try to change it, and so in answer to your question, why do we participate? Why do citizens participate, and I kind of put myself in the citizen role. My views are more in line with the citizen views and I'm kind of like -- I happened to be -- indeed, to play the inside role for citizen groups, so I'm kind of like one of their - few, or if not only kind of link to inside the walls of the legislation, inside the closed doors."

The state elected official did see a level of influence already existing. "I guess I'm introducing the notion that there is a connection between elections and law-making and the connection is elections are really the time of holding legislators accountable. Another time of holding legislators accountable is after the legislative session. There is a citizen group, which includes environmental groups, citizens-based groups, community-based groups -- like for example, environmental groups may issue an environmental rating that may grade legislators based on their support or opposition to environmental issues. So there is a certain degree of accountability after legislative session, and while these citizen groups may not spend a lot of money or weigh in heavily during election time, their ratings are often used during election time to cite how a candidate is pro-environment or anti-environment, et cetera."

"I have run a lot of pilot-type projects over the years, from electronic bulletin boards to televised town meetings to working with media on, well, community media organizations that put out, sponsor events to interest the public, and basically these are activities that are open to the public, so anyone reading the newspaper articles could, if they are interested, could just show up. So, to basically have open entry points to someone who is moved enough to get involved," said the state elected official. "But those have all been somewhat of limited success because the general public -- I mean -- there are, from time to time, small numbers of people who come out but the collective public essentially are -- they just will watch what is going on, but my sense is there is really not a path with... there is not a sense that their participation would make a difference."

“In order for the regular citizen to make a difference, they have to kind of expand a little bit more energy than they -- there is not a program that makes it easy for them to make a difference, they have to get involved and they have to carry, they have to pull the cart,” the state elected official said.

An NGO leader observed, “one of things that model is useful for and talks about is how, on some issues, the public has not even reached a level of being aware of them; you know, this is not on the radar screen.” This person also noted that “public deliberation is hard work” and that feedback is essential: “if decisions are made as a result -- or if something is changed or decisions are made as a result of the public deliberation process, they need to know about it.”

“And if decisions are not made, they should know why; so some way of closing the loop in relationship to around the participation is the very, very least that is required of local leadership that takes on this process,” said the NGO leader. “But beyond that, how do you embed it and how do you continue with it? And that is part of the challenge of the field.” Likewise, citizens’ own attitudes “towards change and their ability to affect things” is critical.

Sometimes success is varied. “And in terms of our success stories, those are some of the things we are proud of, is the places that we worked and years later, we go back and there are all sorts of continued activity that has rolled out from the original work,” said an NGO leader. “Obviously, we have lots of places where that did not happen. But the places where it has, like [state] and [community name] and [state] and a number of other places, we are heartened by and proud of being associated with them.”

How Feedback is Provided

Several examples of feedback mechanisms were provided.

Federal Level: Freedom of Information Act

The use of the Freedom of Information Act at the federal level, as cited before, was one example. Impact statements are another example used by federal agencies.

State Level: Public Requests and Finding Reports

A state administrator said this particular agency publicly disseminates “any publications that come out of the research we fund.” In this way, “we are clearly responding to their needs and desires at a point in time, but once those publications come out, the [organization] preserves its independence to publish notwithstanding how government officials may or may not like the findings that are coming out of the studies that they asked for.”

This administrator also gathers feedback from participants. “We always ask anybody who attends our forums to do on the spot evaluations at the end. We collect those forms and I religiously toed up the scores to see how we are doing. So with the counties , we are sort of a solid B plus. We never quite score an A with these guys

because of the bimodal response to anything that has got the word 'research' in it." This person later noted, "You are only as good as the last thing you do, but we mostly get very good – I would say very good feedback on the whole from these organizations."

The state administrator also pays attention to requests and views them as feedback. "The number of requests that we get from – again, it's a small circle, of these state and local people who call us up and say 'can you find anything like this in your database?' Or, 'gee, we are looking for help with this, can you help us do that?' The fact that they are calling us instead of people in the state departments to get the answer is a sign to me that they see us as a useful resource and tool, who actually can get them information rather quickly." This agency mails hard copies of its reports and policy briefs, and provides email notices as well.

In addition, this administrator described an extensive study of counties in a particular state that demonstrates how this agency views feedback:

One of the counties in question, when they read the report that we brought out, sent a letter unsolicited to us. "Dear [organization]" – now you had to read between the lines, because we knew that this was one of the two counties that had blown it. The director of the county wrote this letter to us saying that as a consequence of this report, they were reevaluating their policies and would be making changes as appropriate. Now we knew very specifically what this was about. The guy who wrote the letter knew very specifically what it was about. It might not have been apparent to the outside casual observer, but we just loved that letter, because it was so clearly one of those rare occurrences where in the middle of a study, with the first report coming out, where you actually found something wrong, was able to bring it to the attention of state and local officials. And by God, they took action to correct it. That doesn't happen very often. So we took a great deal of happiness and pride in that. Every once in awhile, we get unsolicited letters from state and local officials. We often get little thank-you emails from them for our help, but it's rather unusual for somebody to take the time to put a formal letter on letterhead and get their principals to sign it and send it to us.

Sometimes the agency receives other types of unsolicited external feedback as well. "We had one from the Senate Office of Research praising our database as being this extraordinary resource. And so yes, every once in awhile we say – 'oh, look, the study we did or the analysis we produced or the forum we put together really struck a chord with somebody in government and they say they are going to run with it.' Sometimes we can actually see evidence of where they – like with this county, going back and fixing their mistaken policies so that they don't continue to do wrong, whatever they were doing wrong."

Local Level: Information Community Discussions

At the local level, sometimes feedback is more informal. "A lot of times if it is a hot topic, we will let the community discuss that item and then we will tell them how we are either going to resolve it or what our next steps are," said a locally elected official. Public

meetings are another opportunity for feedback from officials. The community also may provide feedback in turn to officials. "They can leave a phone number and tell me what their complaint is or -- it does not always have to be a complaint. It can be a positive compliment that they want to give us and then I respond back to them."

This official said that "once the board has made decision, they are always public. Our votes are always public." This means that "at any time anyone can go and pick up a meeting and see who voted which way." For example, meeting minutes. The board has "a secretary that is there, and it is also recorded. So, anyone can come and see how many times I voted yes or how many times I voted no or how many times I abstained or did not attend the meeting."

By contrast, a local administrator said that feedback mechanisms are generally not used in this particular community. "It is not a malicious thing. I think a lot of this is just -- it is a time and energy thing. I do not think it is a malicious thing. I just think it is just resource. You put out one fire and you go on to the next one."

Other:

Open-Source Technology - Information Sharing

An NGO leader spoke about developing "open source technology" to better facilitate disseminating information resulting from community processes and is also using a virtual room ("where there is text, PowerPoint and audio"). Virtual reality is also an exciting possible future option to this interviewee. "I do not have a Second Life space and I do not have a Second Life identity but I mean I just think that the potential is, besides the fantasy component which I think is very interesting and important, I also think that, like you are saying, that it has this incredible potential to bringing people together who might not already -- who might not come together otherwise or might do a conference call which can be very limited. That is all. I just think it has tremendous potential."

This NGO leader also noted the use of written reports as feedback mechanisms. In one case, "I organized the report author and publicized it through the network of people who had been convening these forums that we would have a synchronous log in and have a conversation with the report writer and find out what was happening, what people said in other communities and compare and contrast what happened in your community."

Feedback Loop

A public participation practitioner commented that a lack of a feedback loop was a major challenge in the field of public participation. According to this interviewee, people "participate in a process and then there is no feedback to them. What happened with that? What did you do with that process? Like we had a meeting yesterday. It was the -- every month the seven coalitions, the chairs and directors get together and meet. Just recently, the mayor's office had this big meeting where they invited all of the neighborhood leaders, the presidents of all [number] neighborhood associations and the coalition leaders to come together for this day-long discussion about the community engagement system and all this other stuff. And people were saying at that thing -- we

did all these breakout groups and we had stuff on flip charts, and people said, 'We want to see that information. We want to see that.' And again, yesterday that was the real emphasis. People were saying, 'We put all that work into it and we are never going to do it again if you do not get that information back to us so that we know what was said, and there is a sense of how will this help us all move forward.' So, I guess that piece is a big piece, just the feedback loop."

Moreover, this person also said, "the idea that, one, your involvement, you have to hear back how it is being used. You have to see that it affected the outcome. And then there needs to be an actual implementation that is true to what people said that they wanted. Or if there is a change, they need to go back out again with something, and I think that is what people do not get. That is why people get -- stop participating because they see you do not really care; you have already made the decision." This is why it's important to provide feedback; in this way, "We can say that, 'Look you said back here, this. And this is how we have led that forward.'"

Efforts to Balance Opinions

Efforts to balance competing opinions also were highlighted by American interviewees, albeit it can be problematic. "The public is not always going to get their decision their way; even different people in a public process will have a different idea about what an eventual outcome or decision point should be. But all of this tends to be a collaborative process and we encourage consensus."

Committee Composition

A locally elected official explained how diverse representation on committees (in this instance) or other groups can be valuable for this purpose. "There are business people; there are retirees; there are singles, family; there are a family of a two-parent household; there are grandparents that are taking care of grandchildren. It is a wide representation of everyone." These individuals "were selected because they had more of a broad knowledge of doing the tax study and what we were looking for. We took two senior citizens because we wanted to make sure that we got everyone's perspective as much as we could." This interviewee, who serves on the school board, also noted the use of majority voting for decision-making purposes. This practice may not in fact balance opinions. "If the residents elect to vote yes, then we will be able to raise it at whatever percentage we agree to. If the residents elect no, then we have to continue running our school the way we are running right now at the current budget."

Public Processes Develop Consensus

The locally elected official said, "So I think it is always important to have the public, their involvement, because a lot of times you can really, really find out what is going on by just who is talking and what is being said. If you have a situation where they are saying the same things then you are like, 'Okay, this is like a consensus.' But if you have a situation where you have 10 people saying the same thing and 30 people saying something and five people in the middle, then you know you have to do little bit more research."

Alternatively, “And I do not want to sugarcoat your question but I cannot say that if a group of people came out and my decision on something was totally different, that it would change my mind. But I cannot say it wouldn’t change my mind depending on what it is. I like to gather all the information I possibly can before making that decision,” this same elected official stated. “And again, there is going to be winners and losers but as long as you can face your own personal decision that you have made, I think that is what you need to stand on.”

Actively Educate the Public

An NGO leader described ‘meaningful public engagement’ in this way: “The kind of public engagement that I think is meaningful is deliberative public engagement where people are given -- you are creating the conditions that help citizens and allow them to understand the various sides of issues and to weigh different possibilities and relationships to issues. And not simply doing sort of quick-hit superficial overnight polls, or something like that.” This interviewee explained that they worked as a liaison of sorts between local officials and specific communities. Creating balance between these two entities can be challenging, particularly without “endangering the integrity of the deliberative, participatory process”. This NGO leader explained that to some extent, their role was to “protect the officials and their agenda and their needs and their positions a little bit as well so that — I do not want them to do anything stupid. I do not want them to go out and have another negative experience with public participation. I am not going to shield them from things they do not want to hear; they are going to hear what they are going to hear. But I want to try to do it as skillfully and effectively as I can and get their expectations in the right place so they are, in a sense, they do not get burned; they do not have a bad experience, because that is how they [name] continue to promote this work.” This NGO leader also sees deliberation and dialogue as offering solutions in some instances. The interviewee said, “often times the situation [name] be is that there is a deadlock; there is a paralysis. And what I [name] suggest is that public dialogue and deliberation process is one of the things that can help you get past the paralysis.”

Welcoming Diverse Opinions

A public participation practitioner emphasized the value that can arise from diverse opinions. “But what needs to happen is people in the community need to talk about it - neighborhood interest, immigrant groups, business groups, schools, churches, whatever because they all have slightly different views of an issue.”

This interviewee also said, “I think that usually most people, if you really can sit and talk with them about the interests and values, that really helps get at that. But lots of times, there are some people who really just are not... if they are not really interested in solving the problem, they are interested in fighting. Those people can be very disruptive and that is hard to deal with.” Having a facilitator or process leader that is knowledgeable can be important. The public participation practitioner said, “...the key thing that I think public participation practitioners do is to show the safe path. It is like the fog separates and you see the path out of this thing.”

Without a good leader and a good process design to help balance opinions, this person said, there can be conflict: "...usually, what people are really shouting about is they just want to see their value or their concern somewhere captured. And then they may calm down dramatically. But if that does not happen, then they just keep -- because they keep bringing it up over and over and over until someone captures it and says: 'It sounds like what you really care about is the historical value of this, or this tranquility of this place that people want to develop, that this is important to you.' So I think that is a big part of how to deal with it, is just I think that is where most of the conflict comes from, is that sense of people's feeling that they have an interest or a value that somehow is being not heard or actively violated or threatened. And so just getting it on the table and honoring it, to begin with. Then, first of all, it allows everybody in the group to see, 'Aha! That person is not insane. They have actually got an issue. This is why they are getting so upset, is because of this. Whereas before we just thought they were disruptive and...'. So, again, that is a big part of it. And then having a process that says, "Okay, now that we have got this, let's talk about the problem. Why are we all here? What is the need that this proposed action or policy would solve? And then are there different ways to get at that, given what these values are?" Then people say, "Aha! It is not a done deal. Maybe there is some opportunity to have my concerns and interests..." and then everybody calms down and has some trust in the process."

Establishing Community Expectations

Establishing expectations can also be valuable for balancing opinions. An NGO leader said, "Well, I think first off, setting the tone for what the engagement is going to be about, setting the expectations whether you explicitly march out the chart and say 'Okay, we are in the third column, guys.' I think establishing the conditions for how the conversation is going to take place and getting buy-in and acceptance for that. I think that people will rise to the highest level of expectation and so, I think maintaining expectations that we can do this, and we can do this work and we can do it together, and we can do it civilly, which is not that tough because I think that is where people want to be."

This leader also observed, "Movements do not happen because you get everybody in the room and everybody agrees on the agenda and the work plan and the vision and all that other stuff. Sometimes, it just gains momentum in other ways and people jump on and they ride for a while and -- but it is not -- we are not going to get -- I do not want to get mired down in the bureaucracy of trying to get everybody to agree on everything and have this one big national project."

Expectations

Expectations for public participation or deliberation reflected a range of philosophies and perspectives – from organizational to personal to community-based.

Assurance of Change/Impact

An NGO leader said, “I think that for many people, they want some assurance that something is going to happen and something is going to change. And the something that they want changed often is really huge, really huge, and it is hard to recognize those incremental steps that we are taking. So I think that is one thing. I think it is trust and I do not think that our media and popular culture and politicians necessarily do us a whole lot of favors in the trust area because too often, we see groups painted as the ‘other.’”

Legislative Accountability

A state elected official said that for decision makers – other legislators – there is not much expectation that the general public will influence them, unless there is accountability. “My experience as a legislator is that legislators tend to make up their minds with some awareness of where the citizen groups are at, but because citizens groups, their opinions, if they are very different than what legislators’ views are, citizen groups’ views can be, not necessarily disregarded, but not heeded as much as lobbyists views. And my opinion about that is the reason is there are no consequences. Well, very little consequences because when it comes to election time, citizen groups do not hold their legislators accountable, whereas lobbyists and moneyed interest groups have the capacity, through funding, to hold legislators accountable for killing or supporting the bills that funded interests have. And so during the legislative process, the legislators tend to pay more attention to the opinions of those persons and groups who are more likely to hold them accountable to whether they pay heed to those opinions.”

Issue based Expectation

There is also an issues-based expectation for involvement. “In [state], there are a lot of environmentalists, obviously, and people have concerns but they are not organized, so Sierra club is a major organizing element. Human services, where you have from homeless, to those who need some public assistance and to health, consumers, the regular consumer of health services, to consumer products, consumers of products and other services. Basically it would be the issue areas that a regular citizen could relate to. And I think those areas, I think there is -- legislators are more open to the extent that they are aware that citizen types may weigh in and citizen – community based, citizen-based type interests or lobbying is different from paid lobbyists, because paid lobbyists’ interests are more predictable, and you can negotiate with them and they get paid, and so most of them have more than one client, and so there is more negotiation, and I think there is more compatible community almost with legislators and lobbyists because that lobbyist helps legislators in various ways and vice versa. So, that is more of a symbiotic relationship.”

There is also an expectation that citizen participation is a threat to power on the part of legislators, the state elected official said. “I see these two paradigms of power and the traditional paradigm of amassing power, wielding power, domination or submission-type power, is the kind of power, in my view, the paradigm that excludes citizen participation and views citizen participation as a threat to the freedom to wield power....The more citizens get involved, then you have more constraints. You cannot make deals as much.

And the other where you want to... power sharing, kind of empowering others model, you view -- it is having the skill set to collaborate, so it is a different kind of skill set, skill sets of collaborating, of generating consensus, of including people, of fostering understanding of different views rather than wedge-issues type, who is right and who is wrong. It's a different skill set, different paradigm and that second paradigm, I think, is the paradigm within the power-holding societies, cultures, or clubs that can hold some promise for enabling and empowering and encouraging citizen participation as we have defined it in our conversation today."

A federal administrator said that "almost never" are the expectations people bring to the table similar. Rather, "I found almost universally it is something personal in their own backgrounds or some experience they have had," said this person. "And I think you saw in my CV, I have a Masters in [degree name], so this is sort of an area of interest to me that different experiences, even if you get the same demographic -- you know, Hispanic 25-year-old on census blocks, you know, 37 on the southside of [community name]. You get two of those people from that same census track because their personal experiences are different. They may come with different motivations. So if one's mom has asthma and the other one has been on field trips with the boy scouts, their understanding of the problem is going to just be very different."

A second federal administrator shared an agency perspective. "So we may have sort of a corporate strategy where we would want to figure out, well, who are the important elements of the corporate community in [community name] that we wanted to incorporate into this process and provide a deep sense of understanding and commitment to the park?" This person also said, "So that is one of our more selfish objectives, but I think at the basic level, we just feel like the American people and the community should care about what is happening and we have got to find avenues to make that easier for them."

A locally elected official offered the perspective of the school board. "This current board has decided that that is not how we want our board to run and our schools to run," the official said. "We want people to be given a fair chance and we want qualified people to be given a fair chance. So we have run into some opposition by not playing by that political game, which, personally, I'm okay with." This interviewee also shared a personal perspective: "Public participation to me would mean the fact that we have the public engaged in whatever our topic is, that their voices are heard, their concerns are heard. Now rather we go wherever you like us to go. That is always going to be up for debate but I think that is very, very important, to have the public involved." In fact, this person later said, "I would make it [public participation] more formal, just more structure of how questions were being asked. So in that way, I can get more of what their expectations were."

This locally elected official also expressed a view that it can be challenging dealing with differing expectations. "Because we can have a situation going on and, again, it can be from one group perspective and you do not always get the facts when something is coming to you or you are getting that phone call," this person said. "So I think it is

always important to have the public, their involvement, because a lot of times you can really, really find out what is going on by just who is talking and what is being said. If you have a situation where they are saying the same things then you are like, 'Okay, this is like a consensus.' But if you have a situation where you have 10 people saying the same thing and 30 people saying something and five people in the middle, then you know you have to do little bit more research."

A local administrator explained that clarity is essential. This involves "establishing clear roles and responsibilities for those advisory committees and having a clear purpose for them to come together, being clear about how their input will be used, and being clear about who the ultimate decision maker is just in order to manage expectations."

An NGO leader expressed an expectation that "the work goes on" after this particular organization has conducted moderator training with local people. This leader also shared an personal expectation of personal responsibility: "I feel accountable to local leaders in the sense that I really represent what I'm trying to do very clearly. I'm doing the best possible job to do it well, but that is distinct from making them happy all the time. That is distinct from them getting the answers that they were hoping for, and, in essence, I almost do not feel like with local leaders that I'm working with, whether it is a superintendent or a mayor or whomever, that unless they get a little bit nervous, I almost feel like I'm not doing my job." As part of this, the interviewee seeks to "get their expectations [of local people] in the right place so they are, in a sense, they do not get burned; they do not have a bad experience, because that is how they [name] continue to promote this work."

Building Capacity

Finally, interviewees were queried on the potential effects on capacity resulting from deliberative or participatory processes.

A state elected official said that ratings of legislators can develop capacity. "There is a citizen group, which includes environmental groups, citizens-based groups, community-based groups -- like for example, environmental groups may issue an environmental rating that may grade legislators based on their support or opposition to environmental issues. So there is a certain degree of accountability after legislative session, and while these citizen groups may not spend a lot of money or weigh in heavily during election time, their ratings are often used during election time to cite how a candidate is pro-environment or anti-environment, et cetera."

However, developing capacity still can be challenging. The state elected official said:
"...without casting aspersions on the legislature, it appears that the design of the legislative process is such that there is -- citizens have an uphill climb to even be taken seriously in the deliberations of the legislature, and so one would be to have a public program. So to announce, to share, to just talk up that there is a program - and I'm using the League of Women Voters but we are going to connect various other organizations as well - to empower citizens to weigh in on legislative decision-making by acting as a collective, by increasing the numbers

in a network, number one. And number two, that they are entry points through the League of Women Voters and other organizations who are prepared to educate, provide orientation, and assist citizens to -- basically, most people who start have to get over their cynicism and frustration and anger and blaming and so forth, to kind of own up to that is their government....And then thirdly, to then develop a collective action program. Identifying a certain number of bills and getting on an e-mail list and action alerts and when to come in and testify, when to send e-mails or postcards to legislators and so forth, so a kind of a collective action agenda....And then the fourth item would be then to have an evaluation after the legislative session. It is almost like a citizen's scorecard, legislation that are more citizen-oriented or consumer-oriented or public-oriented, and issue a scorecard that has a semblance of, reflects an intent for accountability.....Oh so, my role in all of this as I can see it, and it is not only my role but there are, I think, a few others, is I hold, like, the torch because I have gotten over a lot of -- kids, they grow up. We get upset at the world, and at some point you grow up to say okay, the world is the way it is. Politics is the way it is, fine. Get over it. And once you get over it, it is okay now...it is possible to make a difference, to have an impact and so my job is -- one, is to support people in getting over it but more importantly to hold open the possibility that real and authentic and fundamental changes can occur, and my vision horizon is like 20 years.

In terms of developing capacity, this interviewee said, "There is not already effort so they can just jump up on bandwagon. If they jump on, they find out that they have to pull the bandwagon.....And so, at this point because, I think the turning point is to activate a cadre of people who will lead and generate and sustain ongoing citizen efforts, so basically, it is the organizational infrastructure and capacity to coordinate projects that others can assist in -- ...Join in, as opposed to an empty frame that you invite people to join in but they have to build it.....So, that is where we are at, and that's actually the current effort is to recruit all the engineers and all the architects and the builders, and then you can open it up to say "jump on board" because you can pick up a hammer and start nailing, but the core infrastructure of the project is sound, and all we need are numbers."

An NGO leader pointed to skill development as evidence of capacity building. A federal administrator said, "we are moving to focus meetings, smaller meetings, meetings that we talk to the community organizations. This is a lot more intense, labor-intensive but much more effective we found out in the long run."

At the state level, capacity also has grown. A state administrator observed, "It was to take good data and good information and make it accessible to audiences that may not have these research chops themselves and can't read Greek. So that was an interesting process for us to go through, because to me, it came naturally, having worked in Washington all those years and working with my academic brethren -- it was not so easy to bring them along. But most of them were good sports and we eventually got through it."

This interviewee noted another productive effort to build capacity. “And, of course, if we do a well designed experiment that is well executed here in the State of California, especially if we can do it at any level of scale where we have at least three, maybe four sites, that will be of national interest. Because if something can be shown to work here with our wild and crazy and diverse set of labor and economic and population groups, then chances are pretty good you could make it work somewhere else, too.”

Informational meetings have been influential for a local administrator. This interviewee said, “it just became abundantly clear at the end of the hour that, boy, in order for people to truly participate and understand what the heck is going to go on with this project, we need to have some basic information meetings.” These meetings “would be something that could be -- people could access at any point, in which they happen to come into a project. Whether it is something that gets taped and put on the internet that you can download, or if you can hook people up with mentors, so-and-so came to this meeting; go to them as a resource to find out more, just hooking people up with basic technical information, I think, is important.”

There was also an effect seen based on topic. A locally elected official said that, “...depending on what the subject is, and rather it is good or bad, you seem to take more of an interest when we have more of the public coming out and speaking on it.” In addition, this official saw a “huge” connection between the role public participation would play in election campaigning, based on political affiliation.

Efforts to engage the public by a locally elected official and her colleagues also have had an effect. “I think that people have now have... more of when they see me, it is always like ‘hi, either Ms. [last name] or [first name]’, and they will come up to me and engage me or tell me things that is going on. It is rather just to get my opinion about something, or to let me know something is going on. I think people see me enough in the public that that barrier has been put down between us.”

An NGO leader detailed a multi-year project training people as moderators, organizers and recorders, etc. in 10 different communities that represents “statewide or regional engagement work” that has had an effect on capacity. This organization’s “philosophy, again, is that [organization] does not really go into communities and sponsor forums as [organization]. We would not draw -- and it would not be a part of our sort of general philosophy of building local capacity for this org [sic]. It is not really about [organization]. We do not name the things ‘[organization].’ All our technology, all our techniques and methods are purposefully easily transferable, low tech kinds of things that anybody can easily learn how to do.”

“And in each community we trained local moderators, trained local organizers, provided them with some organizing guides, moderating guides, recorder guides, et cetera, et cetera, different kinds of discussion starter materials that we tested. And that you know serve a menu of different things that they could improvise on and use for different settings. And then the next year we did -- and this was partially organized by the in-state organizers where... the State League of Women Voters and some other statewide

organizations that they pulled to the table. And they started working this every year. So, next year, we trained another eight communities, and then we trained the League of Women Voters to do the trainings. So, again, we made ourselves sort of obsolete. So the League of Women Voters started to provide the technical assistance that [organization] originally did.”

In this way, the NGO seeks to work with communities to build “the capacity and that bring together the general public, including people that do not voluntarily typically see themselves in this role and do not typically come out to public meetings.” It also involves educating the public: “Educating the public or having a dialogue with the public about the importance of an issue and seeing if they agree. Before you can talk to the public about [th]e solutions in the true sense of deliberation, deliberating different possibilities of different paths, you may have to have a dialogue about whether or not this is an important issue.”

This NGO leader “take[s] hope in the growing movement around deliberative democracy and public engagement and dialogue, which, I think, is growing in a healthy direction. I think we are beginning to see more of interplay between researchers and theoreticians and practitioners than has ever been the case; I think that is very promising.” This person also said, “So, the growing practice and growing capacity and expertise of the field of deliberative public engagement on the one hand and the growing dissatisfaction and unease and mistrust of *status quo* and the way things are done now amongst the general public, those things can work together. And, hopefully, we [name] not completely screw things up until [cross-talking].”

Technical assistance is another example of enhanced capacity at the local level. “I’m also the chair of [program name] right now, which is one of the [number] coalition offices in [community name], part of our neighborhood system,” said a public participation practitioner. “So we are the coalition office that provides assistance to [number] neighborhoods in inner southeast [community name]. So a lot of our focus there is what kind of technical assistance -- it is again building that capacity in the community. It is easy to say that we want people to engage, but you need engagement capacity both on the government side, that they know how to do it and that they are willing to listen to it and know what to do with the information. But, also, you need to have people in the community organized enough to be able to know what their interests and concerns are, to be able to talk to each other about that, and then to be able to engage with government from a position more of strength of knowing their interests and concerns.”

In this community with a particular program, “there is an ongoing process just to try to build capacity in the community; leadership capacity, strategic thinking capacity, knowledge of tools in engagement and outreach groups that have not traditionally been well-represented. That is a big push right now to do that,” said the practitioner. This effort is based on a desire for “an ability for people in the community to have sort of an ongoing engagement with each other. They start to build more trust. There is a better sense of who they are.”

Summary

United States	
Common Terms For P2	<p>Common terms for public participation/deliberation used by interviewees included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public dialogue, citizen dialogue (local elected official) • Civic dialogue (federal administrator) • Outreach (local elected official) • Civic engagement (public participation practitioner, two federal administrators) • Public involvement (local administrator, two federal administrators, state elected official) • Stakeholder involvement-(federal administrator) • Public outreach (local administrator) • Community engagement process (federal administrator) • Stakeholder engagement (federal administrator) • Public information (public participation practitioner) • Public input (federal administrator, state elected official) • Strong democracy (public participation practitioner) • Participatory democracy (public participation practitioner) • Citizen choice work (NGO leader) • Community and also, Involve your community (federal administrator) • Public participation (state elected official) • Citizen lobbyist (state elected official) • Public testimony (state elected official)
Conceptual Definition For P2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation as partnership. • Educating citizens. • Collaborating with citizens. • Engaging or inserting citizen views into legislative process. • A means of changing power paradigms. • Civic problem-solving. • Public responsibility. • Listening and being non-judgmental. • Opinion research that is nonpartisan, according to an NGO leader. • Electoral process and elected officials' response. • Civic engagement, where "the community owns the vision." • Mutual consideration.
Select Barriers To	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of organizational resources.

Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interest on the part of legislators. • Elite culture vs. citizen culture. • Power, need for a paradigm shift. • Attitudes such as combativeness and labeling of others, according to an NGO leader. • Difficulty initially engaging people. • Lack of understanding of problems and possible outcomes. • Lack of representation due to lack of engagement. Apathy, according to a locally elected official. • More emphasis on compliance. • Decisions made in advance. • Serving the public interest versus own interests. • Political factors, including "...dissatisfaction and distrust that currently exists in the relationship between citizens and the current political system," according to an NGO leader. • Racial and ethnic tension that "can get in the way of good decision-making," said an NGO leader. • Difficulty for average citizens in accessing institutional procedures. • Balancing advocacy with 'good engagement.' • 'Bad' process design, history. • Need for governance skills. • Lack of ethical embrace of governance. • Lack of incentives for staff.
Select Examples Of Best Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory committees with clear purposes, roles and responsibilities • "Working with partners who have trust in the community." • Working through existing networks or structures. • Citizen journalism • Training of local moderators that allowed for improvisation in different settings • Efforts that focus on "individual and collective relationship building," paying attention to spiritual needs ("sometimes, we forget about how our spirits can be settled just by paying attention to natural rhythms"), compassion and listening skills.
Select Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and defining critical issues, taking responsibility. • "...better understanding and better, stronger commitment to the outcomes," said an NGO leader. • Changes to how processes are conducted. • Accountability.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Antagonism.• One-time and sustained action.• Diverse involvement.• Focus on consensus.• Collaborative problem-solving.• Training that builds capacity.• Citizen attitudes and efficacy.• Formal decisions, additional resources.• Nebulous outcomes.• Transfer of expertise to the community.• Enhanced confidence on the part of the convenor• Unsure if decisions consider input.• Cynicism and frustration.• Emphasis on common values.• Practical skills and new skills.• Learning.• Responsiveness.
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