



Citizens' Assembly

Description

Citizens' Assembly?

Citizens' Assembly? is a structured, usually local municipal event that informs the interested public about a measure and invites to publicly discuss it.?

Level of participation

Information
Consultation

Duration of participation process

Preparation: 2-3 months for invitation of the participants etc.

Implementation: 2-4 hours

Follow-up: 1-2 days for analysis and documentation

Target group size

15-30 people
30-100 people

Costs

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Resources for a conference

Human resources needed

At least two persons for preparation, moderation and documentation

The method: what is it, when to use it and what outcome to expect

Citizens' Assemblies (CA's) are mini-publics and carried out differently in different states. This card represents the process in German-speaking countries where CA's are carried out as formal information events for a public matter initiated by a municipality that offer citizens who are affected by or interested in this matter the possibility to voice with their opinion in public and towards political stakeholders.?

CA's are useful when a municipal public or political project or measure is planned and it is still uncertain to an extent how it will be implemented. Or also to regularly discuss different topics of citizen's interest on municipal level.?

CA's produce an educated vote through the informative process and strengthen the relationship between (local) government and citizens.?

The process: how to conduct it in an in-person setting or online using a PC/laptop with video option

The method follows three steps:?

- 1. Preparation:** Booking of venue, technical and moderation equipment, catering, moderator. Long-term invitation to prospective participants (max. 50). Invite respective topic experts and politicians. Setting of the venue, usually in a frontal arrangement with a podium and rows of chairs. For a virtual setting, be sure to conduct a technical dry run upfront and hire skilled professionals who can moderate the remote process and help the remote audience (e.g. with technical issues).?
- 2. Information:** Formal opening of the event by organizers and moderation. Organizers, experts or other respective speakers inform the present citizens about the (planned) project or measure. In a virtual setting, be sure the information is coming across well – you might also want to chose a tool that offers subtitles. ?
- 3. Discussion:** Participants share their opinion, needs and ideas on the topic. In virtual, allow a designated moderator to bring in the comments of remote citizens on their behalf. After the deliberation, usually a secret non-binding voting is run to achieve a conclusion.?

Blended participation

It is recommended to embed this method in a broader participation strategy. You can, for instance, combine it with the methods Online Debate, Online Idea Competition or even Online Text review. ?

Digital communication

Ensure targeted communication to local multipliers (e.g. associations, civil society) to have influential voices in the community on board. Use digital communication tools to share the results of the discussions.?

Good to know

- Has similarities with and sometimes is alike with Wisdom Council, Citizen Jury, and other mini-publics, depending on nation of origin and context
- Consider needs of the prospective audience:
 - Schedule at a time of convenience
 - Provide child care, shuttle-service, translators
 - An alternative, more communicative setting: Chairs facing each other, small round tables etc.
- Ensure citizens' share of statements and questions is at least equal to inputs of expert speakers
- Read further:

<https://gut-beteiligt.de/über-ipg/diskursive-bürgerversammlung/> (German)

<https://participedia.net/method/4258>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizens%27_assembly

<https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/methods/citizens-assembly>

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