



Public Dialogue and Other Tools for Citizen Engagement

CCARH CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

Vancouver

March 12, 2004

Mary Pat MacKinnon, Director



Outline

- CPRN and the Public Involvement Network
- Citizen engagement- what is it and why bother?
- Making citizen engagement meaningful
- Tools and models
- CPRN's experience and learnings
- Citizen engagement challenges
- Small group exercise
- Sharing our experience



Canadian Policy Research Networks

- Non-profit national policy think tank (1995)
- Mission: create knowledge and lead public debate/dialogue on social and economic issues important to Canadians
- Create a more just, prosperous and caring society
- 4 Networks: Family, Work, Health, Public Involvement



Defining Citizen Engagement in Policy

- OECD Definition (2001)

“Active participation recognizes the capacity of citizens to discuss and generate policy options independently. It requires governments to share in agenda-setting and to ensure that policy proposals generated jointly will be taken into account in reaching a final decision.”



Defining Citizen Engagement

- “interactive and iterative processes of deliberation among citizens (and sometimes organizations) and between citizens and government officials with the purpose of contributing meaningfully to specific public policy decisions in a transparent and accountable way” (Phillips and Orsini, 2002)



Continuum

- Public participation ...to citizen engagement
- CE involves information and power sharing, mutual respect and reciprocity between governors and citizens
- Abelson defines CE's accountability dimensions (CPRN, forthcoming, 2004) to be:
 1. Relationship building
 2. Answerability
 3. Sanction



Why Engage Citizens in Public Discourse?

- Disconnect between citizens and governments/public institutions
- “Unorganized” citizens have contributions to make to public discourse/services
- Citizens’ input needed – along with policy and technical experts
- Legitimacy and sustainability of policy/programs depend on fit with citizens’ values



Sampling of CE Tools and Models

- CPRN Citizen Dialogues
- Viewpoint Learning ChoiceWork Dialogues
- Citizens' Assemblies
- Deliberative polling® (Fishkin)
- 21st Century Town Hall -America Speaks
- Citizen Jury Process
- National Issues Forums



Tools and Models cont'd

Health Sector

- UK Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health

Patient and Public Involvement Forums

- New network of independent complaints/advocacy services
- Legislative mandate
- Members drawn from local publics (open application)
- Roles include: recommendations on day to day health care services; influence the design of/access to NHS services; advice and information to patients and carers; monitoring



Tools and Models cont'd

Health sector

- Danish Board of Technology
 - Pioneer in citizen engagement (consensus conference, scenario workshop)
 - Used for health-related topics: infertility, electronic patient journal, alternative medicine, gene therapy
- Community based advisory boards
 - Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Quebec legislative mandates to provide citizen input into regional health system decision making



CPRN's Check List

When to Engage Citizens in Dialogue

- On cross-cutting issues of national/regional/local importance
- Opportunity to influence the outcome
 - Not to validate a decision already taken
- Where there is a need to determine direction, make trade offs or find consensus
- Across the policy process continuum
 - Issue identification through to evaluation of results



Making Citizen Engagement Meaningful (1)

- Governments/institutions must commit to:
 - Relationship building (citizens with citizens, citizens to government and government to citizen)
 - Clear expectations and feedback (transparency)
 - Opportunities for learning and contribution
 - Resources and realistic timeframes
 - Sharing power



Making Citizen Engagement Meaningful (2)

- Citizens must commit to:
 - Public interest perspective
 - Respect roles and responsibilities
 - Investment of time and energy
 - Deliberate on tough trade offs and choices
 - Reach beyond usual circle of colleagues/friends



CPRN's Experience with Public Dialogues (1)

Recent Experience

- Citizens' Dialogue on the Ontario Budget Strategy (2004)
- Citizens' Dialogue on the Long Term Management of Nuclear Waste (2004)
- Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future (2002-03)
- Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Health Care in Canada (Romanow Commission 2002)



CPRN's Experience with Public Dialogues (2)

- Citizens' Report Card on Quality of Life Indicators (1999-2002)
- The Society that We Want (1996- 1999)
- Public Dialogue on Exploring Canadian Values (1995)



CPRN Citizen Dialogues coming soon....

- Understanding Canadians' Attitudes and Expectations re: Privacy, Access to Data and Health Research)
- Dialogue with Canadian Youth (planning stages CPRN 10th Anniversary 2005)



CPRN Dialogue Methodology (1)

- Partnership with funders/Steering Committee
- Background research papers/peer review
 - Public opinion survey analysis
- Deliberative dialogue
 - Professionally facilitated in plenary, self-facilitated in small groups
- Visioning, priority setting and making choices
- Qualitative and quantitative instruments/analysis



Methodology (2)

- National dialogues, multiple sessions, in English & French, in urban and rural locations
- Random selection recruited by professional polling firm
 - Representative of Canadian population (18 to 80)
- Research- based participant workbook
- Pre and post dialogue questionnaires
- Trained facilitators and note takers
- Looking for common ground



Dialogue Analysis

- Questionnaire results
 - option of adding conditions to post dialogue questionnaire
- Participants' opening and closing statements
- Small group reports, plenary consensus points and differences
- Priority setting and trade offs/choices
- Video and audio tapes/transcripts



Dissemination & Expected Outcomes

- Broad dissemination of report to citizens, policy makers, decision-makers, media and public
 - Reports and Workbooks available on Web site
 - Follow up survey of participants
- Direction to guide decision makers
 - Citizens' expectations, trade offs/choices, and conditions
 - Citizens' values and principles



Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Health Care in Canada's - Results

- Status quo rejected
- Preserve and protect the best of Medicare; make it sustainable
- Make changes: citizens ahead of politicians
- Fix the system- waste and efficiency
- Respect values – social, political, and economic...need, fairness, efficiency
- Involve citizens more in reform process



Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future – Results

Revised Social Contract

- Restatement of the roles and responsibilities of governments, business, communities and citizens
- Four actors linked together in mutual responsibility to serve the public interest
- Government is repositioned (plus and minus)
- Roles for business, communities and citizens are all enhanced



Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future - Results (2)

Moral Compass

- Quest for a 'moral compass' to guide expectations and behavior of Canadians
 - Based on the list of core values
 - The values form a positive statement of what it is to be a Canadian
- This led the groups to imagine Canada as a 'shared community'
 - Values are a foundation for sustaining a different society, north of the 49th parallel



Core Canadian Values

- Shared community – based on our values
- Equality and justice
- Respect for diversity
- Mutual responsibility – giving and getting
- Accountability – taking responsibility for actions
- Democracy – citizen centered government
- This list is a good start but more Canadians need to be involved



Learnings (1)

- Canadians are more demanding of their governments/public institutions
 - Higher standard for governance
 - They **want** to be more involved and more informed
- Only citizens can integrate economic, social and political values
- Citizens are open to change and they are impatient: they want action



Learnings (2)

- Citizens, stakeholders and experts all have roles to play
 - Citizens provide the values base, set priorities
 - Experts provide technical advice
- Legitimacy and sustainability of policy decisions dependent on congruence with citizens' values



Citizen Engagement Challenges

- Institutional scepticism about the value and benefits of engaging citizens in public discourse
- Citizens' scepticism about whether their voices will be heard and acted upon
- Fear of outcomes/giving up control/making change



Citizen Engagement Challenges (2)

- Cost, time and skills required for engagement
- Research/evaluation of process and outcomes at early stages
- Institutional reform needed to effect systemic change



A Participant's View

"...a lot of us have lost faith in our government for many, many different reasons but I think that the one thing that I have taken back from this is that in order to get that faith back, I think that we need to get involved."

2002 Dialogue participant- Moncton



Sources (1)

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- Deliberative Democracy Consortium, www.deliberative-democracy.org





For additional information:

<http://www.cprn.org>

e-mail: publicinvolvement@cprn.org

mmackinnon@cprn.org

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