

Citizen participation in constitution-making

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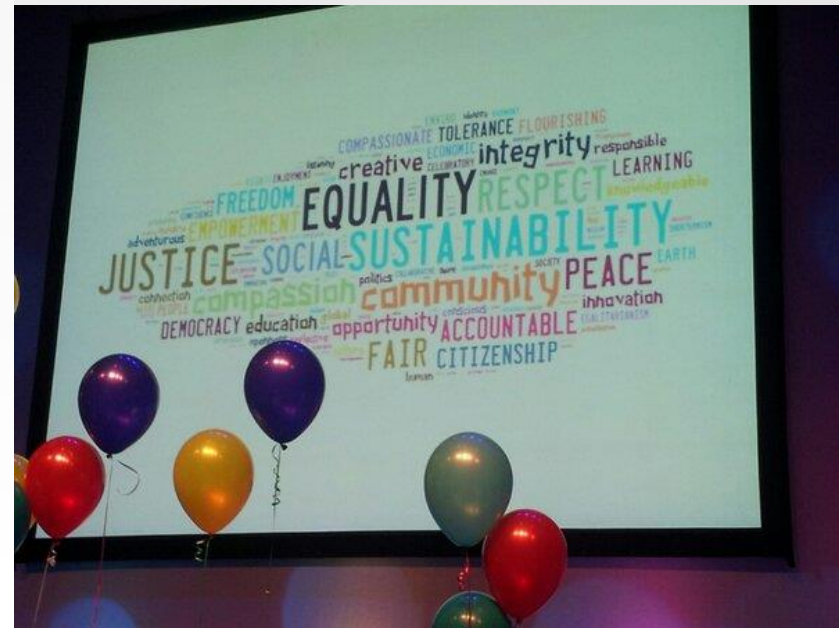
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presentation

- Democratic innovations
- Deliberative mini-publics
- The British Columbia and Icelandic Citizens' Assemblies
- Key questions
- Groundwork in Scotland



Democratic innovations around the world



Democratic innovations: Mini-publics

- Citizen Juries, Planning Cells, Consensus Conferences, Citizen Assemblies, Deliberative Polls
- Key features:
 - **Selection:** participants are randomly selected
 - **Facilitation:** fostering deliberative dynamics and dialogic communication
 - **Learning phase:** participants call in ‘witnesses’ to present testimonies and evidence: experts, activists, politicians, third sector representatives, business, etc
 - **Deliberative phase:** participants deliberate in the light of evidence, testimonies, stories
 - **Decision-making phase:** reasoned conclusions or recommendations are made after considered judgement



Types of mini-publics

	Citizen Jury	Consensus Conference	Planning Cells	Deliberative Poll	Citizens Assembly
Participants and length	12-15	10-25	100-500 (in cells of 25)	130-500	100-160
	2-6 days	6-8 days	4 days	1-2 days	20-30 days
Task	Learn, deliberate and find consensus	Learn, deliberate, and find consensus	Learn, deliberate, record individual preferences	Learn, deliberate and fill survey	Learn, deliberate, agree proposal and vote
Output	Collective recommendation; consensus	Collective report; consensus	Prefs. aggregated in report approved by selected participants	Survey results and analysis of preferences change	Detailed recommendations
Cost	16-30K	35-100K	90-120K	200K	300K+

Examples of mini-publics in Canada and Iceland



British Columbia Citizens Assembly



Icelandic Constitutional Citizens Assembly



2008-2009 Crash/Kitchenware Revolution/Government change



Parliament appoints Constitutional Committee (evidence/proposals)



2010 Parliament convenes National Assembly: 1,000 citizens



Election of Constitutional Council: 25 reps (523 candidates)



Parallel online platform for input from broader public



2011 Proposals debated / all articles approved by majority consensus



2011 Bill delivered to Parliament



Resistances: opposition parties, MPs, and influential interest groups



Prime Minister promises referendum (delayed); poll=75% want to vote



2012 referendum: 49% turnout; 67% Yes

BUT party-political drama ensued, new Constitution on ice...



**National
Assembly**



**Constitutional
Council**

Key factors

- Political and economic crash
- 2009 Government change
- Vision generated by the Citizens' Assembly
- Work by 25 elected Constitutional Councillors
 - professors, nurses, lawyers, priests, artists, journalists, doctors, minorities activists, a farmer, a trade union leader, former MPs...
- 95% of population uses internet
- Combination of invited and invented participation

Key questions in Scotland

- Would deliberative citizen participation be desirable?
- Would it be politically feasible?
- Would citizens want to participate?
- Are they capable of doing so?
- How? Inventing a Scottish way
 - Combination of invited and invented spaces
 - A deep/wide strategy



Electoral Reform Society, Scotland: The 2012 **People's Gathering**



Thoughts?





Thank you

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