

Making a good use of citizens in policy making and evaluation

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Oecd-Mena conference
Rabat, 24th March 2010



Preliminary remarks

- Focus on the “citizens’ side”, not on the governments’
- Content reflecting European and in general Northern countries’ situations
- Active citizenship: autonomous citizens’ organizations engaged in public policy making with the aim of protecting rights, caring for common goods and empowering weak people, differing from political parties, trade unions and private-purpose associations
- For example: voluntary orgs, consumer and environmental movements, self-help groups, international cooperation NGOs, local and community-based groups, etc.
- In the EU territory: about 1 million orgs.
- Active citizenship organizations do exist and act autonomously
- In some cases they interact with governments
- They always have specific know-how (civic competence) on the issues they are engaged in



Active citizens in policy making

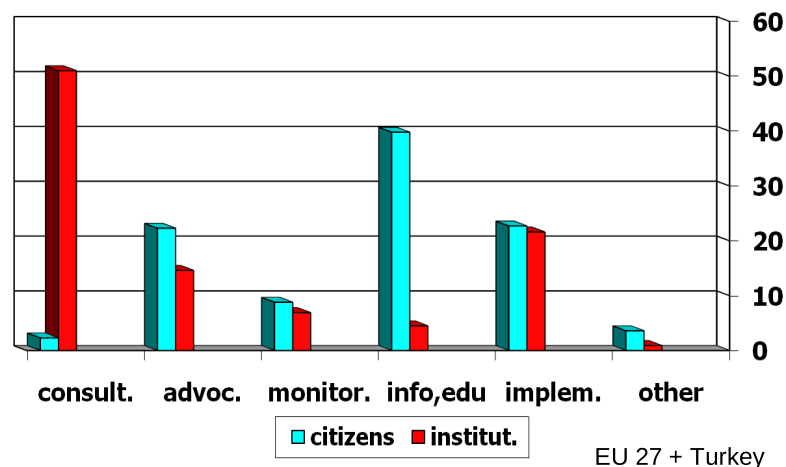


Citizens in the policy making cycle

	ROLE OF CITIZENS	OBSTACLES	PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNANCE
AGENDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify problems - Define priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inaccessibility of people who decide - Lack of attention to citizens' points of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bilateral communication
PLANNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying obstacles - Identifying solutions - Testing tools and components of policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of recognition of citizens' competence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation with feedback
DECISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obsolete criteria of representativeness - Fear of citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing (not agreeing) decisions
IMPLEMENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating services, monitoring situations, mobilizing resources, collecting good practices, .. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of coordination and/or competition between citizens and governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership (equality and full responsibility)
EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social/civic auditing - Stakeholder dialogue - Use of the results of projects & actions as sources of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results of citizens' actions not taken into account - Citizens considered able only to give opinions, not information - Evaluating outputs and not outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common evaluation and re-engineering of policies



Divergent visions and practices (civic organizations' actions and institutions' expectations)



What happens when they are involved? (Key-persons of EU 27 + Turkey)

- Lack of public **funds** – 51,4%
- Lack of **recognition** of civic organizations as relevant actors – 40,9%
- **Difficult identification and access to public officials** – 37,1%
- **Distrust**, reluctance, lack of equality in relations – 33,3%
- **Insufficient** and incomplete **regulation** – 23,8%
- Governments' attempt to “organize” and **control civic organizations** – 20%
- **Poor communication and coordination** – 20%
- **Fear of civic organizations** as trouble makers and influencing elections – 19%
- **Lack of transparency and information** on laws, programs and public decisions – 18,1%
- **Consultations take place when decisions are already taken**, organizations' opinions are not taken into consideration, joint decisions are not implemented, **the government ignores the answers to its questions** – 18,1%

Some remarks

- To relate with citizens' organizations is a complex matter for public administrations
- Common wisdom is not sufficient
- A good interaction/cooperation with citizens' organizations is a matter of effectiveness and public trust for governments
- Usually if citizens are not managed as a resource become a problem

The Civic Evaluation Italian project

What is Civic Evaluation



Background

- 2001: Amendment to the Italian Constitution introducing the principle of “circular” subsidiarity: *public institutions favor the autonomous initiatives of citizens, as individuals and organizations, aimed at caring for general interests*
- At the core of the amendment:
 - Recognition of the constitutional rank of citizens' autonomous initiative in the public realm
 - Giving value to the citizens' action and not to their form, legal status etc.
 - Cooperation between them and public institutions on an equal footing, going beyond traditional, institution-centered, practices
- 2006: Partnership agreement between the Ministry of Public Administration and Cittadinanzattiva movement
- Aim: using the experience of Civic Audit to set up and promote a methodology for Civic Evaluation, broader and of easier feasibility



The Civic Audit

- Set up and started in 2001 by Cittadinanzattiva.
- A methodology based on the ability of citizens to produce information on relevant issues (*civic information*)
- Groups of citizens, in agreement with public administrations use a shared set of parameters and indicators to verify quality factors through direct observation and interviews with key-persons
- Corrective actions are the outputs of the process and their implementation is verified afterwards.
- Implemented in about 170 local health agencies and recognized as an official evaluation tool by the Ministry of Health and several Regions.
- 65% of proposed improvement actions implemented or ongoing
- Used to monitor the state of Patients' Rights in Europe (2004-2007) by Active Citizenship Network



The essentials

- *Civic Evaluation*: a comparative action-research implemented by the citizens to assert their rights through motivated judgements on general interest situations/services etc.
- Main features:
 - Citizens gather first- or second-degree **data**, through direct observation, interviews with key-persons and other sources
 - Produce **information** from data and consultation of existing databases, official documents etc.
 - Issue a **judgement** on the situation and propose **improvement actions**
- It can be promoted by a citizens' organization or by a public administration or by both; but is managed by the citizens' organization
- Individual citizens are engaged in deliberation and monitoring



The process

- *Starting* → Citizens'org and/or Public administration
- *Choosing the topic/place etc.* → Citizens' deliberative process
- *Recruiting and training "monitor" citizens* → Citizens' organization
- *Gathering of data* → Monitor citizens with the support of citizens' organization
- *Setting up & reporting and scoring information* → Monitor citizens & Citizens' organization
- *Evaluating & proposing improvement measures* → Citizens' deliberative process
- *Using results* → Public administration
- *Veryfing the implementation of suggested measures* → Citizens



The Urban quality monitoring and evaluation



The experiment

- It is ongoing in 16 towns of 4 Southern Regions
- Topic chosen: *urban quality* (public transportation, road maintenance, public spaces such as gardens and squares, safety etc.). The topic reflects citizens' point of view and not administrative competences
- A central working group identified a common set of indicators in order to assure the comparability of results (the indicators are prioritized and enriched by the affected citizens at local level)
- Local branches of Cittadinanzattiva manage and facilitate the process in cooperation with town administrations



The structure

10 Components
(safety, connectivity, public maintenance, waste management, ...)

27 Dimensions
(e.g. for Connectivity: Availability of public transportations, Private vehicle traffic; Access to pedestrians)

39 Indicators



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