Public Participation in the Deprived Neighbourhoods
Obtaining insights from European experiences

Policy Lab France
1st of December 2014
This EUKN policy lab takes place in the period of designing and implementation of the “contrats de ville” and the “conseils citoyens” which are the most important element brought by the “Loi de programmation pour la ville et la cohésion urbaine”. This policy lab should contribute to understand their role in the preliminary context of the new law’s implementation.

During this policy lab which will take the form of a seminar, we would like to think together about:

1. The articulation between the implementation of the conseils citoyens and the existing participative approach in the concerned territories.

2. The evolution of the governance paths and technical resources (expertise, tools, teams, etc.) dedicated to the existing participation initiative.

The morning plenary session, with practitioners-researchers, will help us define the theoretical and practical milestones through comparative analysis between France and others countries. In particular, we would like to define the possible goals of the participative actions and strategies in the different countries, and how to value them.

Based on the morning’s reflections, the workshops of the afternoon will be organized around four topics; three topics related to the three main components of the “contrat de ville” and a fourth topic on culture. These workshops will allow us to explore the theme of public participation in depth and build on the exchanges that will be initiated during each workshop’s presentation, which will contain a French example and an example from another European country which help us put the question into perspective.
1. Introduction

Currently, public or citizen participation is the core focus of many European democracies. The belief that elections are not the only occasion that enables people to influence their government became embedded in the concept of participation. This change of paradigms, led to a shift from government to governance, which impacts on the legal and organisational framework of government bodies. Citizen participation is not solely regarded as an essential factor for success in developing and sustaining policy implementation anymore, more and more European governments turn towards their citizens to take over public service delivery in times of economic recession. Examples of citizen participation can therefore be found in numerous policy areas, for example: in the social field, in maintaining public spaces (playgrounds), in managing public facilities (such as swimming pools or community centres) but even in providing health or elderly care.

This EUKN Policy Lab in France focuses predominantly on the role of public participation in creating urban cohesion through the empowerment of its citizens to create urban regeneration and social cohesion. This is of great importance as the legislative framework formulates conditions for local government to establish mechanisms and structures for public and community participation. The manner in which participation is institutionalised depends on the legal context of a country. The UK, for example, does not have a written constitution and thus has few formal obstacles to embed participatory processes. It has been able to use national legislation to promote participation at local level. On the other hand, in Germany, the constitution does not allow the use of participatory methods on the federal level. For example, it is not allowed to hold a referendum on a contested issue. In the Länder, however, regulations have been adopted which make the use of participatory procedures much easier than before.

In addition, it is also important to note that in many countries ICT and social media play more and more an important role in structuring participatory processes. This is sometimes a challenge in relation to legal frameworks as most of the legal framework for citizen participation predates the rise of social media and other online technologies. In fact, most of the laws governing public engagement at the local, state, and federal levels are several decades old, and do not reflect recent innovations. This has created some confusion about what legal public engagement is supposed to look like.

The aim of the Policy Lab in France is to examine various models of citizen participation in Europe, with the intent of informing on the upcoming development of citizen councils in underprivileged neighbourhoods in France. The policy lab will draw upon the experiences of European countries and European organizations and initiatives, as well as other international examples. The creation of these new citizen councils is critical to promote the integration of traditionally deprived areas in cities and strengthen overall urban and social cohesion.

This factsheet provides a broader overview of the way citizen participation is organised in different countries. Firstly, it outlines the notion of public participation in general, before going more in-depth into the way participation processes are organised in different EU countries. Different case studies, tools and relevant research studies on public participation in the development process are included.
1. What is public participation?
Public participation can be both a principle or right and a practice of involving those that are potentially affected by or interested in a decision or policy. As a practice it can be viewed as a continuum of interaction between government and the public, ranging from informing and listening at one end, to implementing jointly agreed solutions at the other; and in between there is dialogue, debate and analysis. Public participation can be described as a deliberative process by which interested or affected citizens, civil society organisations, and government actors are involved in various policy-making decisions before a political decision is taken. However, citizens or stakeholders may as well be involved in the implementation of a policy. The European Institute for Public Participation argues that a core component of genuine participation is the possibility for involved actors or stakeholders to change their mind and to come to a shared understanding of issues and solutions.

2. Different levels of participation
Public participation can be experienced at different levels, one of the most famous models for public participation is ‘the ladder of Arnstein’, which ranges from non-participation to citizen control, whereby power and responsibility is delegated to citizens.

International documents and country specific regulation recognize the following levels of participation: (1) access to information, (2) consultation and (3) active engagement through dialogue and partnership. The following is a summary of how these levels are described in different documents.

(1) Access to information is the first, basic and important right which is underlying the whole process of participation. Whilst it means that the government informs the public about its plans and the types of documents it wants to adopt at the beginning of the process, it also highlights the right of the public to have access to all information (e.g., drafts, comments and reasoning) throughout the process. The access to information is regulated in specific laws. While at this level there is no need for intensive interaction between the government and the public, the government should not apply measures which would prevent the public from receiving the information crucial for the process.

(2) Consultation is a form of participation where the government invites the public to provide its opinion, comments, views and feedback on a specific document. Whilst the issues on which the public is consulted are defined by the government, this process should also allow for the public to express opinion on other issues contained in the draft. Consultation can be organized with a broader group of participants from the public. It is a reactive way of participation – the public becomes involved because the government requests this. However, this is not to say that the public cannot request to be consulted. Indeed, citizens can pro-actively engage and remind the governmental bodies about the need to be asked to comment on laws which will affect them.
(3) Active involvement (partnership) means collaboration and jointly undertaken responsibilities at all stages of the decision-making process (agenda setting, issue identification, drafting, decision and implementation). It is the highest form of participation; it may be described as a situation where the representatives of the public share a seat at the table with the government representatives. The initiative can come from both sides. Whilst there should be an agreement about the common goals of the process, those involved from the public should be able to retain their independence, and to advocate and campaign for the solutions which they want to see adopted.

3. **Added value of public participation**

The added value of public participation depends on the form of participation opted for and other conditions. Possible added values or departing points of public participation are (See: IAP2, [Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation](https://iap2.org/core-values-for-the-practice-of-public-participation/)):

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- It includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- It promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- It seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- It seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- It provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- It communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

More specifically, involvement of the local community in the governance of public services or urban and neighbourhood regeneration processes is often promoted for the following reasons ([Skidmore & al. 2006](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137426531.ch1)):

- It leads to better and more responsive services, that are able to tailor their services to best meet the needs of the local population;
- It tackles people’s disengagement from politics and the democratic process: it may support civil renewal and strengthen the legitimacy of the institutions of government
- It builds social capital by increasing the confidence and capacity of citizens to get involved in activities that improve their quality of life and build mutually supportive relationships that enhance social cohesion of communities

4. **Challenges of public participation**

Public participation in decision making itself will not automatically produce the above mentioned advantages. There are a number of challenges that have to be taken into account:

- Participatory practices can be costly in time and money and may be perceived as inefficient
- There is a knowledge gap to be bridged between citizens and government officials in complex decision-making processes (especially when using specific technical applications)
• Participatory arrangements are sometimes criticised as lacking representativeness by disproportionately involving the wealthy, well-educated citizens: having some social capital makes it easier for people to create more. How to make participatory arrangements more inclusive?

• The lower on the social ladder, the lower the level of participation. Those experiencing social deprivation tend to be among the most politically excluded. Social exclusion can impede people’s ability to engage in political activities. They lack the skills to engage and participate and democratic processes often seem very remote and irrelevant to them, while they think that their concerns and voices will not be listened to.

• There is a culture gap between government officials and citizens; there is a danger of elitism (middle-class model) inhibiting the involvement of those lower on the social ladder. Exclusion often is the result of very concrete facts, such as the timing of meetings, the language used, the meeting place (not in the neighbourhood).

• The way government organisations function is not always aligned to participatory processes. For example, formal decision-making procedures are often lengthy in nature, which does not correspond to the expectations of the involved citizens, who expect quick decisions and results.

• Institutional dependency: institutions get in the habit of recruiting existing participants who are known to be trustworthy and who already understand the procedures, rather than invest time and resources in attracting new blood (Skidmore et al., 2006). As a result, often the same middle class and middle aged people participate. Involving young people may require arranging participation processes differently.

• Especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, public participation processes should be designed to support community capacity building (training in voicing opinions in public arena, citizens’ expertise).

• How to include all relevant interest groups/citizens in the public participation process? For instance with regard to public participation in an infrastructure project that takes place in a particular neighbourhood but is of importance for the whole city: how to weigh the interests of the residents of the neighbourhood to those of the entire city? Is it desirable and possible to organise political participation so that it results in shifting people’s position from advocating community interests to advocating general interests?

• What is the most adequate level for participation? When is the neighbourhood the most appropriate level for taking certain decisions? If the decision-making level for the problem is above neighbourhood level, it often creates more frustration than solutions (Skidmore et al. 2006)

There are a number of paradoxes in public participation. The first paradox concerns bottom-up versus top-down participation. Bottom-up participation is often the outcome of conflicts; it can however be more productive. Authorities tend to favour public participation for opportunistic reasons: having been part of the process, participants also share responsibility for its results. Citizens often are suspicious of top-down participation, because they suspect hidden interests in the outcome of the process. The second paradox is that local authorities often are sincerely trying to engage their citizens, but that few
residents are willing or able to participate. The fact that participation models have often a strong middle-class bias (including a civic culture that lower class people don’t recognize) contributes to the lack of participation by other groups. The third paradox is that the underlying philosophy is usually the promotion of cohesion; therefore the positive role of conflicts is not recognized. When conflicts are about concrete issues, it may help bring problems into the open field and better manage them. (EUKN 2014)

2. French policy and the objective of the Policy Lab

1. Historical background
The French “politique de la ville” policy was adopted in order to bring an answer to the socio-economic and territorial difficulties of deprived neighbourhoods. Public participation\(^1\) is an important component of this policy and is reinforced by a series of laws adopted during the last 1990s and the 2000s:

- Law “Barnier” of 1995 which creates the national commission of public debate. If a project’s cost is above a defined threshold, public debate becomes obligatory. If not, this commission decides if a debate has to be launch or not.

- Law “Solidarité et Renouvellement Urbain” (SRU) in 2000 which reinforce the citizen participation by making obligatory the consultation of inhabitants during the elaboration of urban planning documents (as urbanism local plan...)

- Law “Vaillant” of 2002 towards participative democracy which created the neighbourhood councils (« conseils de quartier ») for more than 80,000 inhabitant cities.

- Law “GRENELLE 1 et 2” (2009-2010) about public consultation during planning projects.

The creation of the “citizen councils” within the “Loi de programmation pour la ville et la cohésion urbaine” of February 2014 follows on previous participative actions undertaken within the framework of the French urban policy in favour of deprived neighbourhoods. This law aims to put inhabitants at the centre of this policy thanks to these councils, which will be implemented in 1,300 priority neighbourhoods. These councils allow the strengthening of existing citizen dynamics, provide the necessary conditions for citizen’s mobilization through facilitating expertise sharing and place residents at

\(^1\) One of the first mentions of citizen participation in France was in the 60’s through the creation of “groupes d’actions municipaux” (GAM) (group of municipal action) in several suburbs. The most famous group was the GAM of Grenoble (Whul 2008). These organized groups of citizens wanted to play a new role in the public politic decisions. During the 1980s, Dubedout, previous mayor of Grenoble and president of the “national commission for the social development of deprived neighbourhoods” published a report in January 1983 in which the democratization of the citizen participation takes an important role in the city management. By encouraging an active presence of residents and associations in cities, the report became a reference for citizen participation in these neighbourhoods.
the heart of steering committees creating a space for propositions and initiatives emerging from residents’ needs.

2. Citizen Councils

The implementation of Citizen Councils will make residents and local stakeholders full partners of the elaboration and monitoring processes of the “Contrat de ville”, by participating to all steering committees. Through Citizen Councils, residents and local stakeholders will be able to contribute, in collaboration with the national government, local authorities and associations, to the identification of the most relevant actions addressing their neighbourhood’s needs. The Citizen Councils’ actions should not however be isolated; they should complement existing efforts and initiatives supporting public participation and valorise them. It is then necessary to identify and analyse existing public participation practices.

A diagnosis phase was already initiated under the supervision of the contract’s partners (Préfet, Mayor and President of the agglomeration) in preparation of the official creation of the Citizens Council. Its objective is to foresee the representation of residents and local actors to insure their involvement during the elaboration of the “Contrats de ville” and the creation of the council.

In addition to Citizen Councils, several “maisons du projet” will involve residents in urban renewal projects development within the framework of the new National Programme for urban renewal allowing a co-construction process to take place.

The phase of diagnosis is a first step towards the implementation of Citizen Councils and an opportunity to work with residents, associations and local stakeholders who will integrate the future councils.

The policy lab will address this point within the framework of the three points defined by “La loi de programmation pour la ville et la cohésion urbaine du 21 février 2014”, in addition to the topics of social cohesion, urban renewal, economic development and employment.

3. EU policies and projects in the field of cooperative development

The first and most important document that has addressed public participation is the Aarhus Convention. The convention requires from its signatory parties to guarantee rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. It sets minimum requirements for public participation in various categories of environmental decision-making, and also envisons the development of compliance mechanisms to ensure the implementation of its provisions. Aarhus convention rules and regulations became effective in 2001.

The participatory approach at EU level and member states is enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. Specifically, article 10 prescribes that: “Every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union. Decisions shall be taken as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen.” Further, article 11 provides that:
1. “The institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to publicly express and exchange their views in all areas of the Union action. The institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representatives of associations and of the civil society.

2. The European Commission shall carry out broad consultations with parties concerned in order to ensure that the Union’s actions are coherent and transparent.

3. Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.”

Even before this Treaty was adopted, the European Commission (EC) launched action to improve participation in policy and law making processes at the EU level. In 2001, it developed the White Paper on European Governance which, among others, aimed to reinforce the culture of consultation and dialogue at the EU level and thus increase the legitimacy of the decisions.

In an effort to promote the dialogue with civil society as prescribed by the Lisbon Treaty and according to the EC Principles and Minimum standards, the European Parliament adopted in 2009 a resolution on the perspectives of Developing Civil Dialogue under the Treaty of Lisbon. An active Dialogue platform was also created to increase the trust of the European citizens in the European Union. www.euractiv.com

Many European programs have also addressed the topic of public participation in connexion to urban issues, with a special focus on deprived neighbourhoods, for instance Urban community initiatives 2000-2006, and some URBACT programmes: CONET - Social Cohesion and Cities of Tomorrow: Supporting Urban Youth through Social Innovation.

On intergovernmental level, the ministers in charge of urban development underlined in various declarations during EU Presidencies (for instance the Leipzig Charter of 2007 and the Toledo Declaration of 2010) the importance of social and public participation in integrated strategies of urban development.

4. Public Participation in urban development in EU countries

One way of ensuring lasting and successful community participation is through establishing structured and institutionalised frameworks for participatory local governance. Structured and institutionalised models of participation generally work best when citizens see them as legitimate and credible, where there is political commitment to their implementation and they have a legal status. Below are examples from different European countries:

1. United Kingdom
The United Kingdom has devolved an assorted range of responsibilities to assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Among these is the ability to determine means of decision-making within these countries. Policy of the UK Government gives citizens a stronger voice in decision-making and even,
where appropriate, allows transferring control of assets to citizen groups. The White Paper “Communities in control: Real people, real power” and the Local Government, Economic Development and Construction Bill require local authorities to promote democracy and facilitate petitions. This last bill places the duty of involving the public in governance on public authorities. Practicing participatory budgeting is expected to become a reality within the next three years in all 400 local authorities instead of only 20 currently.

2. Germany

Publications identify a high level of civic engagement in the country. The significance of participation, however, depends on the addressed issue. In urban planning, participatory structures have been in place for the last thirty years. In some areas, citizen participation is legally enshrined as in the German building law of 1976 which states that the public must be consulted on development projects. There have been citizen consultations on energy policy, environmental policy and recently on health issues. Most official activities to engage citizens are however restricted to the local and municipal level whereas referenda, for instance, are constitutionally prohibited at the federal level. At the federal level the possibility of using e-Participation has only recently been examined, but there is now support for the development of tools to foster participatory practices online.

With these constitutional constraints, participation at the federal level is focused on consultation and information. Innovative citizen participation processes are applied at the local level with the active participation of the private sector. These processes focus mainly on urban planning, infrastructure development and, partly, on investment decisions. Two institutions have published reports whose understanding of citizen engagement is likely to determine German policy and the constitutional framework for public participation: The Civic Engagement Committee in the German Bundestag, which exclusively deals with citizen participation; and the special commission (Enquete-Kommission) on citizen engagement.

While the federal level is not able to initiate and pursue public participation processes new opportunities of citizen engagement have been explored and adopted in local laws in the last two decades. This has allowed citizens to participate more widely in local policymaking by initiating referenda and citizens’ consultations. The citizens of Berlin, for instance, initiated several referenda on urban development and economic policy.

3. Belgium

Belgium has come a long way when it comes to participation in governance and especially in urban planning. The post-war modernistic planning was basically determined by the experts and authorities, and strongly influenced by economic imperatives. Currently, great emphasis is put on making information available and accessible, despite a gap between experts and the broad audience. For example, the terminology and techniques used in spatial and urban planning (such as GIS systems) are still often difficult to be communicated. To make the plans and regulations more ‘readable’, specific low threshold planning gatherings, information sessions for planners and non-planners, informative evenings from municipalities, brochures and information on the Internet are organized. To insure public participation a legal frame was developed and minimum requirements for participation were also defined by law. Public Hearings for regional plans in Brussels Capital Region for instance lasted 3 periods of respectively 60 days
to give the general audience, specific associations and the Regional Development Commission the chance to react.

Some aspects of participation to planning processes are defined by law (the different legal settings for the three regions, with slight variations). The most important tools are public hearing and consultative commissions. Public Hearings procedures remain almost unchanged since their creation in the 1970s. They are held on both supra-local and local level, for the presentations of Regional Development and Land Use Plans, of provincial and of municipal plans. It has been also recently used for the approval of local interventions such as the neighbourhood contracts in Brussels Capital Region for which a variety of local actors and authorities were gathered in the ‘Local Commission for Integrated Development’.

5. Case studies

1. Duisburg 2027 – long term planning - Germany
The German city of Duisburg, a shrinking city with an outdated land use plan, facing decreasing public finance and increasing ecological demands has developed an original way of dealing with these challenges. The Duisburg 2027 project combines the formal procedure of creating a new land use plan, with the informal process of developing an urban development strategy. While creating a land use plan is mandatory by law, the city-wide process of developing an urban strategy by creating local forums, and having local businesses and stakeholders pondering on questions as “How do we want to work and live in Duisburg in the future?”, is a rather alternative way of informing the land use planning process.

To approach all the future issues Duisburg chose the method: “Future Management”, in which five questions are highlighted:

- How do we create our future? (Strategy)
- What is the probable future? (Assumptions)
- How could the future surprise us? (Discontinuity)
- How do we want our future to look like? (Vision)
- What is the possible and creatable future? (Opportunities)

There were seven kick-off events in all districts of the city to start local forums, which are now self-organized and managed. These forums were set up to have the inhabitants deciding the future aims and priorities for the neighbourhoods. Technical support is provided by the city. The result produced by the forums constitute the Duisburg Ideas and will be discussed in the city departments and feed the ongoing process of developing the urban strategy. However, the city found it difficult to motivate young people and migrants to participate in these meetings, and has developed ways to target them in different settings.

2. Do not Plan, Play the City – the Netherlands
There is a recent trend of using engagement games as a way of facilitating public participation in urban planning. An example in the Netherlands is the Play the City organization, whose motto is “Do not plan,
Play the City. Play the City integrates city gaming, digital public polls, interactive learning and social networks with traditional architecture and urban design. Working with cities, housing corporations, and cultural organizations, Play the City helps to generate interactive and collaborative plans with multiple stakeholders. The process usually includes creating a small model of the city area in question, inviting the stakeholders involved and defining the different roles and rules of the game. The game is played analogically and online, and the different steps are reported in the website.

Using engagement games in urban planning can be useful in many aspects: role playing can make someone aware of the particularities of the reality of a person whom they would have difficulties relating to (an elderly woman, a child, an immigrant, etc.); it can free people from the constrains of their mindset at work and ease the process of envisioning their desirable future for the city/neighbourhood; it can bring together in each participant their dual roles, as professionals (planners, city official, shop owner, etc.) and citizens, which can contribute to a different discussion and deliberation process, than it would be in the usual procedure of urban development.

3. FPH, Nord-Pas-de-Calais - France
The FPH is a system set up by the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region in partnership with the Town or the Inter-community. It aims at effectively involving the locals in the public activities. Combining straightforwardness of its set up and efficiency of its outcome, it acknowledges the right to organise, as well as decide on the operation and management of their participation fund in their selection of projects.

The partaking of residents is a way and a target to meet the challenges to which the priority areas are confronted, and make metropolitan policy a success. Designed to promote complete and full citizen involvement, the FPH allows funding small, local projects supported by the residents. The target is to facilitate the residents’ initiative and self-organisation with regards to limited projects contributing to local activities and enhancement of social links.

Hence, the FPH meets diverse requirements that give sense to a social development approach:
- To encourage initiative and public speaking, enabling residents to partake in debates within the framework of a public area, the institutional partners benefiting therefore from a genuine citizen expertise from the locals;
- To allow the establishment of new relationships between the individuals, associations, elected officials and professionals;
- To enhance citizenship attitude and the acquisition by all the citizens of those values that best define the better living together and democracy.

The system allows backing initiatives such as area fêtes, family outings, cultural or sporting events, volunteer and resident training, an associative life forum, and actions on neighbourhood urban management. The FPH is indeed very much adapted to this sort of limited projects, which require a flexible, quick funding process, and to which the traditional approaches are unsuitable. It hence contributes to the development of local activities, the reinforcement of links between residents and the existing associations, and boosts associative life.
4. Participatory budgeting – Brazil, UK, Germany

Participatory budgeting can be broadly defined as a way of including the citizens in the decision making process of the city budget. It can imply, in some cities, the existence of a whole administrative structure feeding on grassroots democracy, which defines budget priorities for the local neighbourhood or district. In other cases the city allocates part of the budget to projects which are decided by the citizens: the citizens can suggest projects, and then they can vote in their favourite ones (e.g. Lisbon Participatory Budget).

In the late 80s a participatory budget was created in Porto Alegre, Brazil as a result of a conjunction of both top-down and bottom-up processes. Three principles support the set-up and functioning of Porto Alegre’s Participatory Budget: 1) grassroots democracy is carried through citizens’ assemblies in every district of the city, where local priorities are defined 2) the principle of social justice ensures, through and allocation formula, that districts with less infrastructure receive more funds; and 3) the principle of citizen control, realized by boards, which oversee and ensure that the local priorities defined are taken up in the drafting of the budget.

In the UK, the Secretary for Communities and Local Government made in 2008 an enthusiastic appraisal of participatory budgeting, and although projects have started in communities throughout the country, some critics say that the budgets allocated are too small to produce meaningful change. There is also a risk of communities thwarting the process as it happened in one case where rival community groups voted against each other.

In Germany, as in many countries, participatory budgets are adopted by many cities such as in Cologne Freiburg and Berlin. A recent research project at the Humboldt University Berlin provides an overview of these participatory processes in which citizens decide about local public investments.

6. Use of ICT and Social Media

There are more and more cities experimenting with instruments of e-governance for their local democracy. Sites of e-petitioning allow citizens to create petitions on issues that they wish to change in the city. In some cities, like Reykjavik, Iceland, the most voted petitions on the month are then included for discussion in the agenda of the local council. In other cities, if a petition reaches a certain number of votes the city commits to officially consider the petition and to issue a reply. In other systems it is also possible to vote against a petition, and in that way triggering deliberation. The success factor seems to lie in creating a platform in which citizens can post their questions, concerns, suggestions, to which the municipal authorities are attentive and reply. The key seems to be to engage not only the citizens but also the municipal actors in joint online spaces of dialogue.

Another type of initiative is the creation of online forums for citizens. In 2004, the city of Gothenburg, Sweden launched an online forum in relation to a large redevelopment project as part of an innovative
effort to break with traditional structures for policy-making and planning. The contributions on the forum focused on city life, housing, transport, the environment and the participation process. In addition, the forum has features such as “question and opinion of the week” and “advice to the editors”. Many contributions were direct proposals and opinions about how the new city space ought to be used. The discussion in the forum was vibrant and included heated debates on a multitude of issues. The experiment was, however, characterized by an absence of formal decision-makers. The informal citizen participation process became disconnected from the formal decision-making arenas, and potentially worthwhile interactions between these arenas were lost. The decision-makers were unable to communicate important considerations for enabling the formulation of “realistic proposals” and the citizens could not relate to the decision-makers’ preferences and priorities.

Two other projects, Pep-Net and Demo-net focus on e-Participation. They address the question of participation methods less directly, but focus more on research and best practice exchange with e-Participation initiatives and practitioners. Pep-Net is an EU-supported network with the goal of encouraging best practice exchange among actors who organise e-Participation. Demo-net is an EU-funded research project that focuses on better interconnection and on knowledge exchange in e-Participation research across Europe.
Bibliography and Web References

EUKN (2014), The Inclusive City: Approaches to combat urban poverty and social exclusion in Europe.


- http://www.bundestag.de/ausschuesse/a13/buerger_eng/index.html
- www.buergerhaushalt.org
- https://www.academia.edu/4157619/Case_studies_on_e-participation_policy_Sweden_Estonia_and_Iceland
- www.pep-net.eu
- www.demo-net.org
- http://www.iap2.org/?page=A4
Relevant other publications

The growing use of participation in Europe has spurred the development of tools for organisers of participatory processes. They are designed to make the organisation of public participation processes faster, ensure that the methods used are suitable and that the organisers are aware of the limitations of a particular method. This is necessary as there is a vast array of participatory methods that allow citizens to deliberate about collective problems. Below a number of interesting handbooks and toolkits are listed.

Building Bridges

UN Habitat developed a toolkit for local governments, who aim to participatory develop an integrated long-range development plan, or an action plan to address more immediate problems within the local community. The toolkit contains planning tools to increase collaboration and participation within local governments, NGOs, CBOs, leaders, staff, and citizen constituents. Part I includes the participatory planning process as it has evolved over time and provides strategies for implementing the process. Part II is more manual, addressing practical tools and methods.

1) Building Bridges through Participatory Planning - Part 1 (more strategic/conceptual)
2) Building Bridges through Participatory Planning - Part 2 (practical tools and methods)

http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=1371

Citizens as Partners

This OECD handbook ‘seeks to clarify the key issues and decisions faced by government officials’ when they set out to use public participation in any form in their work.

European Handbook on Participation

This URBACT handbook compiles experiences with participation from all over Europe, but with a focus on public participation in urban development. The focus lies on when in a political process participation can most help to solve issues of various kinds. The authors point out the democratic potential of public participation, through its inclusion of underrepresented points of view and to empower disadvantaged groups. It is emphasised that to realise this democratic potential, public participation must take place within a contractual framework, which clarifies the scope and impact of participation. The book is illustrated with examples from all over Europe.
A City’s Guide to Social Media
A City’s Guide to Social Media instructions and advise on how to introduce a city to social media.
http://thesocialcity.org/

The Toolkit Citizen Participation
Is a handbook that does not attempt to categorise methods. Instead it presents experiences from different countries with a structured description of each process. In particular, it presents successful practice and examples where participation did not work.
www.toolkitparticipation.nl

Citizen participation: paving the way to new city politics
A publication that presents current research trends and experiences in the field of participatory democracy to introduce the theme of the 2012 EUROCITIES conference.
http://www.eurocities2012.eu/

E-lettre EUKN France sur la participation des habitants (mars 2012)
http://www.eukn.org/France/fr_fr/E_lettre_Dossiers/Archives_e_lettre_EUKN_France/Participation_des_habitants_et_démocratie_locale_E_lettre_EUKN_France_n°_6_mars_2012

H. Dudebout report (January 1983)

Please visit www.eukn.org/Policy_Labs for all relevant research documents, handbooks and other background information related to the Policy Lab
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Policy Lab France

1st of December 2014

Guiding questions grid for the workshops
Workshops’ exchanges will be organized around the following guiding questions, with the useful adaptations according to the different topics and examples covered:

1. The articulation between the implementation of the conseils citoyens and the existing participative approach.

1.1 Current situation
- What actions and strategies, supporting the public participation of deprived neighbourhoods residents, exist in your territories prior to the implementation of the new Contrat de ville in France?
  - Provide a description of how they are operated and how they were developed.
  - Which action or strategy was the most relevant/effective in your opinion? Why?
  - Which territorial authorities did you work with for the implementation of these strategies? What was the implementation timeline?
  - What are the goals and objectives of the described strategies? Which methodologies were used? And in which context were they introduced?
  - What are the principal achievements of the described strategies? What is the key element that contributed to the strategies success?
  - Were there any obstacles? How were they overcome?

1.2 Connection to the conseils citoyens
- How are the conseils citoyens implemented in your territory?
  - How are the actions or strategies described above taken or will be taken into consideration in the preparation of the conseils citoyens?
  - How do you envision connecting these strategies to the future activity of these councils? Did you identify any difficulties or positive elements?

2. Governance and capacity (expertise, tools, human teams...) in relation to the implemented public participation actions.

2.1 Current situation

A. Governance
- Which structures offer a place for dialog and exchanges with residents or civic society on the concerned territory?
- Are they empowered to take decisions? In which areas?
- How are they connected to the local authorities (municipal council, communal council...)?

**B. The means**
- Which resources are mobilized by the territory (intern or extern) to identify community needs and answer their questions?
  - How are residents involved in the development of new projects in your territory?
    - Through residents’ initiatives and associations?
    - Through partnerships?
    - Through dedicated human resources within each project?
  - What are you doing to sustain them?
  - What are the principal achievements? What was the main key parameter of success?
  - Were there any difficulties? How did you face them?

**2.2. the connection to the new conseils citoyens**
- Do you think that the implementation of the “conseils citoyens” will create a new form of governance within the concerned territory? Is it going to create a new form of use of the available resources?
  - How do you envision the new relationships between local elected peoples and local representatives of the national government?
  - How do you consider using/linking your existing capacity and resources (engineering, relationships with governance, formation of professionals...) to the new “conseils citoyens”? Do you think that adjustments are necessary?
    - If not, why?
    - If yes, how do you think that they can be implemented?
  - At this stage, did you identify any difficulties and/or positives elements?