



mosaicLAB^s

DELIBERATION DICTIONARY



Edition 1 | 2022



A

ASSEMBLY

A group of citizens/residents of an area that come together to deliberate on a given question/topic and provide a set of recommendations, options, principles or criteria.



C

COGNITIVE OR BRAIN BIAS

The ‘edge’ of brain processing where it ‘short cuts’ or overly simplifies what it is seeing in order to make sense of the world. These biases can often limit the extent to which a person understands a situation, problem or topic based on past experiences, preferences and expectations. Some biases are related to memory (the way you remember an event) and others are related to attention (or the limited amount of attention a person can give to a problem or issue). Both these bias types can limit the way problems are perceived and therefore can affect the way decisions are made.

CITIZENS

Formally, ‘citizens’ refers to the people who are legally recognised as belonging to a country or place. In deliberative processes, when used with the word ‘jury’ or ‘assembly’ (i.e. citizens’ jury), citizens more appropriately refers to those people with ‘lived experience’ with the topic being discussed. This means it does not matter if they are not legally recognised as citizens; if they live with the issue, they are a legitimate member of the group.

CITIZENS’ INITIATIVE REVIEW

The Citizens’ Initiative Review is a participatory democratic innovation that has been adopted and adapted by several governing bodies such as, most famously, the State of Oregon and, more recently, in the states of Colorado and Massachusetts. Generally speaking, a Citizens’ Initiative Review involves the evaluation of one or more ballot measures by a panel of randomly-selected, demographically-representative sample of citizens. The conclusions of the panel are published as a “Citizens’ Statement” to give voters a clear, trustworthy resource with which to inform their decisions on the ballot issue. This sort of activity is often used to inform referenda. It is derived from the ‘citizens’ jury’ method.

CITIZENS JURY

The Citizens' Jury was developed in the United States by Ned Crosby at the Jefferson Centre in 1971. Distinctive characteristics of the Crosby method are that they are between 12 to 24 people and they typically run three to six days consecutively. ([OECD Catching the Deliberative Wave](#))

This approach has been replicated and adapted in many other countries. Groups can be of any size though 30 – 60 people is more common in Australia. Consistent elements are that the group is selected using a random stratified method, they meet for three to six days, are highly informed and write their own recommendations.

CONSENSUS CONFERENCE (TWO SOURCES)

A consensus conference - related to but different from a consensus forum - can be defined as, "a chaired public hearing with an audience from the public and with active participation of 10-15 people, referred to as the jury or panel, and a corresponding number of different experts." (cefic).

<https://participedia.net/method/163>

The Consensus Conference was developed in Denmark in 1987 by the Danish Board of Technology.

The model of Consensus Conferences tends to bring together, on average, 16 randomly selected citizens for four days, usually Friday to Monday. The learning stage happens during a preparatory weekend. Participants dive deeper into the policy question and identify a range of questions they would like to ask the expert panel – comprised of scientists, practitioners, and policy makers. During the first day of the conference, the expert panel presents their perspectives, and citizens question the panel's positions (The Danish Board of Technology, 2006).

This is followed by citizen deliberation and writing recommendations during the next half day. Consensus Conferences are specific as citizens usually have to reach a consensus on the recommendations they have produced, indicating the points for which 100% consensus was reached. During the final day, citizens present their recommendations to the panel of experts and politicians.

([OCED Catching the Deliberative Wave](#))

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is an objective analysis and evaluation of an issue or information in order to form a judgement.

Some critics of deliberation believe that everyday people are incapable of understanding or evaluating expert evidence. Hence this concern can be addressed by spending some time during the deliberation to improve the group's critical thinking skills.

It is also a key skill for deliberating groups to overcome brain biases, enabling them to interrogate data, expert evidence and each other.



D

DECISION MAKING RULES OR CONSENSUS

Consensus means unanimous or 100% support (not just the majority). Consensus usually takes a longer period of time to achieve and all members of the group must be able to be heard, listen to others' discussions and cast their vote (either publicly or anonymously). Consensus is reached if 100% of the group agree. If it is not reached, the idea/proposal might need to be modified and re-tested. Or the group might be happy with a supermajority (80% support) or simple majority (51%) decision. These alternatives would need to be decided on at the outset of any process.

DELIBERATION DESIGN – MACRO DESIGN

A public deliberation requires comprehensive planning and design. Macro-design covers the key elements of a deliberation including the remit (topic), the promise being made by the sponsoring organisation, the number of sitting days, the information being provided and the size and demographics of the deliberating group (jury/panel).

DELIBERATION DESIGN – MICRO DESIGN

Micro-design covers the design of how the deliberating group will move through the deliberation stages from purpose, relationship building, information, dialogue and deliberation, decision making and presentation of the final report. The facilitators undertake detailed planning to decide on the best facilitation method for each stage of the process and how long it will take and produce detailed run sheets for each day.

DEBATE

A formal discussion on a particular matter in a public meeting or legislative assembly, in which opposing arguments are put forward. It usually involves argument, seeking to persuade others, and feels competitive. It usually ends with a vote as in a parliamentary process.

DELIBERATION

Deliberation is a long and careful consideration or discussion. A public deliberation involves a group of everyday people brought together by a governing body (e.g. state or local government) to consider information and provide advice/recommendations to the governing body to solve a complex public issue. The deliberating group is selected using a random stratified selection process so that they match the demographics of the affected community. See [mini-public](#). Public deliberation is a form of ‘high influence’ community engagement.

Deliberation usually involved working together to learn about the topic, weigh up options, make compromises and make choices based on seeking common ground.

DELIBERATIVE POLLING

Is a deliberative method developed by James Fishkin in the US in 1988. It does not require the deliberating group to come to agreement on a final set of recommendations. Rather the group is polled (asked their opinion) on the topic, then they are provided with information and time to discuss the information after which they are polled again to see if their views have changed now they are more informed.

<https://participedia.net/method/147>

DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

An engagement process where a randomly selected group of people that are descriptively representative of those affected by the decision considers and issue in depth. The group is given the time, information and facilitation support they need to grapple with a remit (core question) that is put before them. Together, they weigh up the issues, consider a wider range of information inputs and come to agreement. The group writes their own report and presents it directly to decision makers.

For more information go to: <https://www.mosaiclab.com.au/what-is-deliberative-democracy/>

DEMOCRACY

The word democracy comes from the Greek words “demos”, meaning people, and “kratos” meaning power; so democracy can be thought of as “power of the people”: a way of governing which depends on the will of the people.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/democracy>

DIALOGUE

Dialogue Is the taking part in a conversation or discussion. It is an exchange of information that seeks to build understanding between people. It does not require a conclusion or recommendation.



FACILITATION

Facilitators are used to lead a wide variety of workshops and meetings (team-building, strategic planning, public policy, decision making). Their role is to manage the process of the meeting, that is, plan the meeting to achieve the purpose of the group, to lead the group through a range of activities and intervene as needed to enable the group to resolve any problems and seek to ensure the group achieves its purpose within the allotted timeframe. They are usually expected to be independent and neutral and have no interest or stake in the topic. They do not contribute to the discussion and they have no decision making authority.

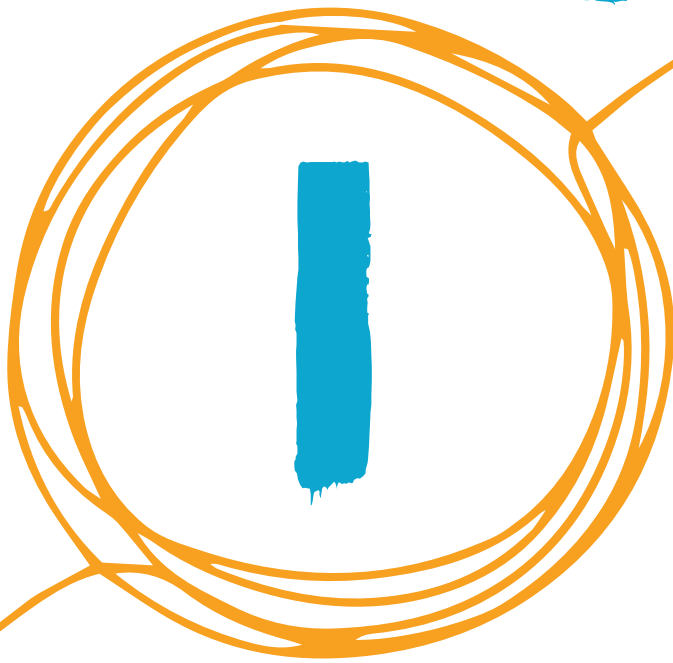


G

G1000

G1000 is a Belgian organisation promoting democratic innovation. They develop, support and promote new forms of deliberation that reinforce democracy from local to national level. They advocate for deliberation, develop policy, run summer schools and provide consultation services. In 2019 they designed the Ostbelgien model of a permanent deliberative assembly.

Previously in 2011 they organised a close to 704 person citizens' summit followed by a 32 person citizens panel on the topic of revitalising democracy in Europe.



INTEGRITY OVERSIGHT

An integrity overseer or probity specialist may be appointed to observe the whole deliberation process to ensure that the principles of deliberation are upheld and report on how fair the process has been.

INTEREST GROUPS

Interest groups form around most public issues with the purpose of advocating for changes to that matter in the political system. Many of these groups are highly influential with a high level of access to decision-makers at every level of government. One of the core purposes of deliberation is to move a difficult issue away from powerful lobbyists and interest group to find out how everyday, well informed, citizens would resolve a situation. However, interest groups can be involved in a deliberation in several ways – as speakers to the group, through written submissions and observing the process.



J

JURY

A randomly selected group of people who are called upon to make a judgement, usually in the justice system. In the field of deliberative democracy, the selected group is expected to match the demographics of their local/affected community (be a mini-public) and provide recommendations to a governing body on how to solve a complex public issue. Jurors may also be referred to as panel members, assembly members or a deliberating group.



M

MINI PUBLIC

Mini-publics are smaller versions of the broader community at large. This means they are made up of randomly-selected citizens that function as a 'proxy' for the relevant population affected by an issue. It is a description given to a deliberating group.

MINORITY REPORT

In most deliberations a 'majority' report is prepared by the full group containing recommendations supported by the majority of participants. There will be rules about what constitutes a majority (MosaicLab use a 80% super majority voting in favour). A 'minority' report is a separate report (though it may be included as an attachment to the majority report) that is prepared by a small number of group/jury/panel members if they wish to provide a different recommendation to that which is included in the majority report.



OBSERVERS

It is important that deliberations are open public events so that any person can observe what is happening. These observers may be everyday members of the community, people with an interest of the topic or formal interest (stakeholder) groups. It is hoped that observation will lead to an increase in the community acceptance of a deliberation's outcomes.



P

PANEL

A randomly selected group of everyday people who are called upon to provide recommendations to a governing body on how to solve a complex public issue. A panel may also be referred to as jury, assembly members or a deliberating group. In the field of deliberative democracy, the selected group is expected to match the demographics of their local/affected community (be a mini-public).

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Participatory budgeting is a decision-making process where everyday citizens decide how to allocate at least part of a budget (generally a public budget). This is a technique for allowing the community decide how certain public funds should/could be spent.

Groups will identify projects for the use of the money, these are often presented at a public forum and then everyone who is involved with vote on the allocation of the funds in a public setting.

<https://participedia.net/method/146>

PLANNING CELL

Peter Dienel developed the Planungszelle or planning cell method in Germany in 1970 as one of the early deliberative processes. In a planning cell, 25 randomly selected people work together to develop a set of solutions to a problem delegated to the participants by a sponsoring organisation. The group is provided with information and then divides into five groups of five members each and develops recommendations. These are brought back to the full group, voted on and a final report prepared by the moderators (facilitators). This is presented to the commissioning body as a “Citizen’s Report.”

<https://participedia.net/method/160>



POLARISATION

Polarisation is when different members of the community hold the ‘polar’ opposite (sharply contrasting) views on a topic. There might be two or more ‘opposite views’ on the topic – it is not limited to two views. If people strongly hold their viewpoint, they may find it difficult to work with others in a deliberation to compromise and come to a recommendation supported by a supermajority.



R

RANDOM SELECTION

The process of selecting the participants for a deliberation (citizens jury or panel or assembly) by choosing people randomly or 'by lot' or lottery – that is names 'pulled out of hat' though these days it is usually chosen randomly by a computer program. Also known as sortition.

RECRUITER

The sponsoring organisation usually outsources the recruitment of a deliberating group (jury, panel) to a third party provider. This ensures there can be no perception that the organisation has 'hand-picked' the deliberating group to meet a specific agenda or position

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment of the deliberating group (jury, panel) is to issue invitations to a group of randomly selected community members (say 10,000 people), receive the expressions of interest (hopefully several hundred) and to use random stratification methods to select a group that is descriptively representative of the community.

REMIT

A problem or dilemma that a sponsoring organisation has set for a deliberation. It is usually framed as a question and should be less than 20 words. Sometimes a remit includes a framing statement or paragraph which is then followed by the core question. It needs to make sense to anyone who reads it and it must go to the core of the issue at hand. The remit is the platform for open discussion about the trade-offs involved in this dilemma.

REPORT

In all deliberations a 'majority' report is prepared by the full group containing the recommendations to the sponsoring organisation supported by the majority of participants. There will be rules about what constitutes a majority (MosaicLab uses a 80% supermajority voting in favour). MosaicLab works on the principle of a 'blank page' report where the group writes its own report as part of the deliberative process.

In other examples, the sponsoring organisation or an independent steering committee develops the recommendations that the group votes on, developing them either prior to the deliberation or during the process.

REPRESENTATIVE

The deliberating group is expected to be 'descriptively representative' of the affected community/population according to a number of factors (filters) such as age, gender, geographic and education. See stratification.

The purpose is to ensure that the deliberating group will hold a wide range of views on the topic.



S

SPEAKER

A person with expertise on the topic being considered who provides verbal information to the deliberative group (citizens jury/assembly). Several speakers are usually provided who represent all aspects of the topic (both for and against). In some cases the deliberating group also are given the opportunity to choose their own speakers (people who they trust to advise them on the topic).

SORTITION

The process of selecting the participants for a deliberation (citizens' jury or panel or assembly) by choosing people randomly or 'by lot' or lottery – that is names 'pulled out of hat' though these days it is usually chosen randomly by a computer program.

SPONSORING ORGANISATION

The organisation that initiates a deliberation and has the authority to implement the deliberating group's recommendations.

STEERING COMMITTEE (GOVERNANCE GROUP)

The Steering Committee's purpose relates to governance and is to ensure the integrity of a deliberation. They can take on other roles such as advising on the remit, developing or selecting the information being provided to the deliberating group and even writing the recommendations on which the group will vote (the latter being unusual in Australia where deliberating groups write their own recommendations).

STRATIFICATION

Is the process of selecting participants (everyday people) for a deliberation to ensure they are 'descriptively representative' of the affected community/population according to a number of factors (filters) such as age, gender, geographic and education. Any number of filters can be used and might extend beyond demographic factors to include a person's attitude to the problem being considered or whether they are users/non users of the system (eg pedestrians, bike riders or car drivers).

SUPERMAJORITY

In all deliberations a report is prepared by the full group containing the recommendations to the sponsoring organisation. There will be rules about what constitutes a majority support for the inclusion of the recommendation in the report. MosaicLab uses a 80% super majority voting in favour of a recommendation. That is 80% of the deliberating group need to support the recommendation for it to be included in the group's report.