



PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND INTERSECTORAL DIALOGUE

WHAT ARE PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND INTERSECTORAL DIALOGUE?

Intersectoral dialogue between civil society organisations (a foundation of participatory democracy) refers to working with more than one nonprofit or social sector to take action in a shared area of interest to achieve better results. Its main aim is motivating stakeholders like volunteers, members, partners, donors, local/national/regional authorities, to increase participatory democracy.

Participatory democracy represents a type of democracy where citizens are provided with the power to make political decisions. It ensures that citizens are afforded opportunities to directly participate, or otherwise become involved in influencing decisions that affect their lives. Activities in this field aim to encourage more active citizenry on one side and transparency and accountability of local authorities on the other. They are focused on the development of modern democratic society. Many people today are involved in public policy making, e.g. adopting policies when developing urban areas or adopting policies concerning climate change impacts on a local level. Communal engagement is the key to participatory democracy and it does not stop at the local level. Issues in the local community that affect everyone's lives, such as effect of climate change, have urged people to push for their voices to be heard on a global scale as well.

WHY IS INCREASING INTERSECTORAL DIALOGUE AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY NECESSARY?

Strong intersectoral dialogue is important in different aspects and parts of the society as it helps to tackle the topics of migration, civil society organisations and it also increases participatory democracy. The latter is important as it leads to people gaining greater power to influence political decisions or, for example, to emphasize and explore topics such as climate change and migration in communities.

The main benefits of increased participatory democracy are development of a participatory culture and a sense of active citizenship. It helps rebuild trust between citizens and the local government and encourages citizens to co-create solutions (ideas, plans, agendas, actions) together with their local governments. It also facilitates dialogue between elected officials and citizens, makes it easier to collect citizens' opinions and views on public matters or actions, and it increases the number of citizens taking an active part in urban planning projects and decision-making. The inter-sectoral dialogue between civil society organisations and relevant stakeholders, leading to an increase of participatory democracy, can be useful to organisations from very diverse fields. It leads to a more proactive and sustainable society in the long-term.



HOW CAN ORGANISATIONS IMPLEMENT THE PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY?

Decision-making processes are available to every citizen and their involvement shouldn't be disregarded.

SOME OF THE SMALL AND EASIER STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION ARE:

- "Listening and understanding sessions" or training courses.
- Dissemination events, such as conferences, roundtable discussions, seminars and focus groups.
- Creating and offering common venues for open dialogue.

ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME BIGGER AND MORE SYSTEMIC WAYS OF IMPLEMENTING PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY ARE:

- Educating on different social groups' rights.
- Discussing community's future in the local and global context.
- Creating free and widely accessible info points for the younger population as well as for graduate and post graduate students.
- Encouraging and creating thematic radio and TV shows on different topics, such as social inclusion, protection of human rights, environment and youth employability as a means of mobilizing and starting the process of democratization of the communities.

Increased participatory democracy is of great relevance in networking between civil society organisations and other stakeholders, as it aims to create close cooperation when planning a better future for all.

SOME CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF PRACTICING PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY WITHIN SOCIETY FOR BOTH ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS:

- Suggest implementing participatory budgeting in your town or city.
- Write to members of the parliament and/or the state during decision-making times, especially if it concerns topics that are important to you.
- Collect suggestions for the government on a website if such a website exists in your country – if not, consider creating one yourself.
- Visit cabinets and offices of decision makers during "open hours" and make use of the time that is dedicated to intersectoral dialogue.
- Launch European Citizens' Initiative ([ECI](#)) that allows citizens to suggest concrete legal changes in any field where the European Commission has the power to propose legislation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Elect Mostar](#)
- [IMPACT – Inclusion Matters! Using Performing Arts towards Cohesion and Tolerance](#)
- [Snapshots from the Borders - Small towns facing the global challenges of Agenda 2030](#)
- [URGENT – Urban Re-Generation: European Network of Towns](#)
- [URGENT - Urban Re-Generation infographic](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION



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