

Participation.....where to
start...where will it end...

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Participation

In What

**Democracy
and Democratic
Institutions**

**Civic Life / Civil
Society**

Participation – In What

Democracy and
democratic systems

Representation

Direct / active
participation

Individually /
part of a group

Civic Life / Civil Society

An intermediate realm situated **between state and household**, populated by **organised groups or associations** which are **separate from the state**, enjoy **some autonomy in relations** with the state and are **formed voluntarily by members** of society to **protect or extend their interests, values or identities**'
(Manor et al., 1999:3-4)

Participation – Why

Democracy and democratic systems

Representation

Scale

Voice

Power

Control

Aggregative

Direct / active participation

Accountability

Influencing representatives

Integrative

Civic Life / Civil Society

Transformation

Mutual co-operation

Action on shared issues

Resistance

Defence of interests

Liberation

Control

Contribute to the greater good

Participation – Where

Democracy and
democratic systems

National

European

Local

Neighbourhood

Civic Life / Civil
Society

National

European

Local

Neighbourhood

Global

Participation – Challenges

Democracy and democratic systems

Representation

Do all voices count equally

Different voices - the influence of Bureaucracy

The reality of accountability

Scale

Representational quality - The contradiction of democracy

Direct / active participation

Different voices - the influence of Capital

Mutual Capacity

Institutional resistance

Discriminatory institutions

State control

Citizen disinterest

'The challenge of involving the individual citizen'

**Participation –
Challenges**

Civic Life / Civil Society

Capacity

**Sense of powerlessness /
empowerment**

State capture / co-option

Knowledge/ confidence

Power differentials

Sense of Civic duty or lack of

**'The challenge of involving the
individual citizen'**

Democracy undermined?

- Weakness of Civics / citizenship programmes
- Closure of participatory fora (NESF; Comhar)
- Closure of facilitating organisations e.g. Combat Poverty Agency, NCCRI, local civil society groups)
- Dilution of advocacy capacity (CDPs; National Networks)
- Largely dysfunctional local fora e.g. SPCs
- Lack of political interest in participation...

So, for advocacy organisations

- Where do you choose to focus your interest / energy around participation
- Why?
- Are there any particular challenges you think might need to be addressed / could be addressed
- Is there a need for a push for participation – what about a participation observatory?
- Is there energy / interest