



International Parliament
Engagement Network

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Introduction

Public engagement with parliament is central to democracy: getting the public actively involved in parliamentary work to affect positive change.

This toolkit is designed to help you and your colleagues improve public engagement efforts within parliament.

It was co-designed by 60 officials, third sector representatives and academics from over 30 countries, at the International Parliament Engagement Network Conference on 26th March 2021, using visual thinking methods to draw out key themes.*



What public engagement is



What good public engagement looks like



Key steps and enablers to public engagement



Evaluating public engagement work



International Parliament
Engagement Network

*For an overview of the co-production session, please visit: <http://bit.ly/IPENconf21>

Toolkit on a page

1. What is public engagement?

Public engagement is actively engaging diverse members of the public in the process and work of parliament. It has three key elements:



Communications



Community



Connections

2. Good public engagement is...

3. What are the key steps to successful public engagement?



PREPARATION



INFORMATION



PARTICIPATION



CONSULTATION



EVALUATION

ENABLERS



Resources



Trust



Community



Endorsement



Inclusive



Open



Collaborative



Meaningful



Flexible



Empowering

4. How do we evaluate engagement?



Meaningful numbers



Qualitative feedback



Impact

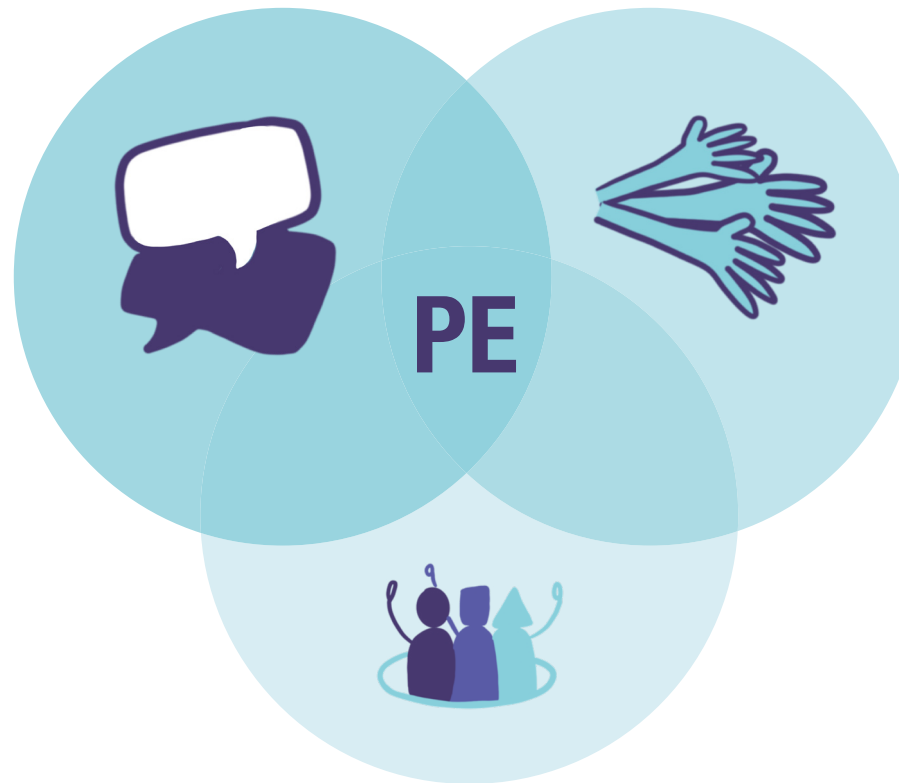
What is public engagement?

Public engagement is actively engaging diverse members of the public in the process and work of parliament.

It has three key elements:

COMMUNICATIONS

- Giving the public a voice
- Mechanisms for education and feedback
- Clear, plain language, and accessible



CONNECTIONS

- Relationships built on listening and trust
- Agendas shaped together: parliament and public collaborating to reach a common goal

COMMUNITY

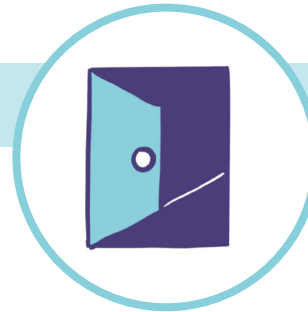
- Inclusive - 'with the people, for the people'
- Reaches out to diverse groups

What does good public engagement look like?



INCLUSIVE

- Citizen centred
- Focused on enhancing trust
- Actively seeks to engage the 'disengaged'
- Provides safe spaces for engagement: 'goes to the public, not getting the public to come to us.'



OPEN & TRANSPARENT

- Clear communication of processes and results
- Timely and visible communication and feedback
- Using digital media to widen reach



COLLABORATION

- Co-created agendas and recommendations
- Clear feedback loops with accountability
- Buy in from both the public and parliamentary representatives



EMPOWERING

- Empowering for both sides
- The public feel like they have been heard and can influence change
- Parliament deepens understanding of public issues and has the knowledge to act accordingly



FLEXIBLE

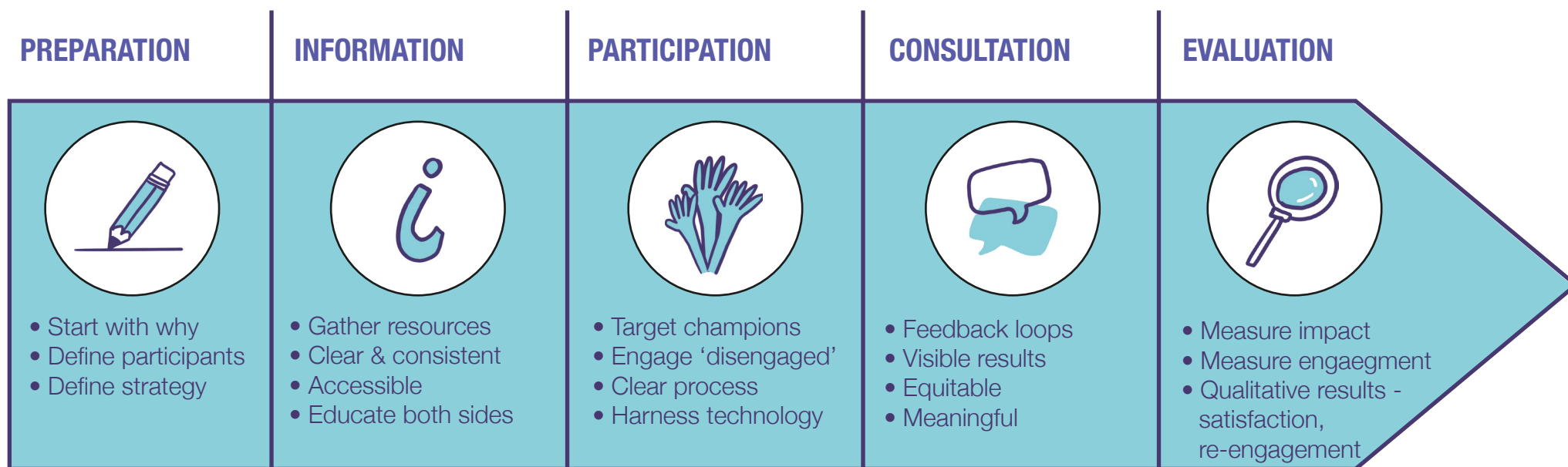
- Responsive, flexible and adaptable processes of engagement
- Engagement format meets the needs of the target audience



MEANINGFUL

- Visible, relevant activity within communities
- Embedded within policy and process making sure public feedback is acted upon
- Not tokenistic - has real impact and has potential to change the minds of decision makers

Steps to successful public engagement



ENABLERS



Resources

- Time and money
- Expertise
- Technology
- Media coverage



Trust

- Relationship building
- Transparency
- Two-way conversation
- Doing what you say



Community

- Support of community champions
- Diverse and engaged
- Accessible



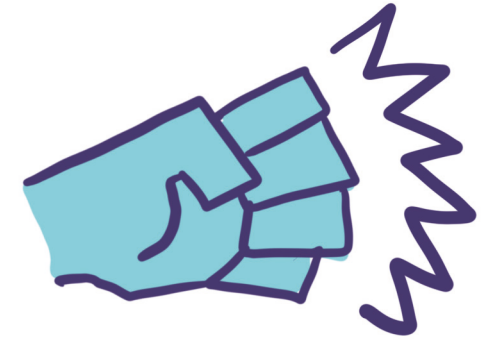
Endorsement

- Support of Parliamentary officials/MPs
- Support of community leaders

How do we evaluate public engagement?

Relate all of your efforts back to your original 'why'.

Here are three key areas to examine:



MEANINGFUL NUMBERS

- Engagement numbers
- Diversity of population
- Response rate to invitation
- Engagement from hard to engage groups

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

- Public satisfaction
- Investigating who isn't engaging and why
- Awareness levels
- Feelings of trust
- Desire to re-engage

IMPACT

- User journey tracking
- Engagement led to policy or process change?
- Comparison to past engagement initiatives

The key challenge is to measure medium to long term impact of engagement work, and assess its influence on process or policy

What next?

1

Share this with your team/organisation

How can you apply these principles to your own engagement work? How can you share best practice? What could you add?

2

Join the International Parliament Engagement Network

If you aren't a member already, join IPEN to network and collaborate with researchers and practitioners in this space. Email: [LINK](#)

3

Check out the online interactive version of this toolkit!

We're experimenting with new ways to engage audiences. Visit the link bit.ly/pe-toolkit-interact to view the online, interactive version.



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