



# No democracy without participation

Workshop outline by the Y Vote Project - [info@yvote.eu](mailto:info@yvote.eu)

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## Introduction

This workshop aims to familiarize participants with participation in practice and the conflicts of interests that can arise when trying to find a compromise among a diverse amount of interest groups.

Type: Workshop

Time: 90 minutes

Number of participants: 25-30

## Pre-knowledge

- None

## Aims

- Participants know how to participate in society in order to stand for themselves and be pioneers when change is needed. Participants understand why participation is important for a democratic system.
- Participants know at least 3 different levels of how to participate in a society.



## Materials

- Printed cards with the roles for the simulation game (attached)
- Ballot box
- At least one flipchart and several A4 papers
- Flipchart markers and pens

## Preparation

- write the definitions of democracy on four large papers and hang them in different parts of the workshop room
- print out the material for the second part and cut it into separate pieces (role cards, newspaper articles etc.)
- room setting?? maybe push all chairs and tables to the side of the room for the first part?

## Session

### Intro & topic definitions (20 mins)

- Explain the content/ aims of the workshop
- Ask the participants why participation in a democracy is important.
- Let participants come up with a definition or parts of democracy. They can either write it together on a big flipchart or on little post its and put it together afterwards.
- Add aspects missed from a [definition of democracy](#). We can think of democracy as a system of government with four key elements:
  1. A political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections.
  2. A rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.
  3. Protection of the human rights of all citizens.
  4. The active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life.
- Giving examples

Activity: Divide the participants in two equally-sized groups; form an inner and outer circle, inner circle facing outer circle; have them talk for 1 min each about the following questions. After one minute tell one circle to turn, so participants face a new partner and ask the next question.

- In what ways have you participated in society so far?
- What topics are you most passionate about and why?
- Could you imagine increasing your participation, if so, in what ways?
- Could you imagine getting active in your city / city council?

After all questions have been asked, get back together and let participants tell about the ways they participated in society or want to participate. Ask about different levels: city, regional, national and EU-wide. Write it on a flipchart to keep it in mind for later.

Explain, that the next activity is an example for a citizens roundtable in a city. Add it to the flipchart if it has not been named yet.



## Practical part (50 mins)

### Topic: Should Diesel Cars be banned in Cities?

#### Introduction

1. the trainer describes what is going to happen in the next part of the workshop

#### Description of the workshop

##### *Handing out and Reading time: 10 mins*

1. The trainer assigns roles with the relative description sheets, which can be found in the attachments (every pax will be a citizen or a member of the local parties).
2. Every citizen will be given a "[newspaper sheet](#)" and a "character sheet".
3. Every party member will be given a "newspaper sheet" and a "party description sheet."

##### *Introduction to topic and roles: 5 min*

4. The trainer should answer questions about the question to the participants.
5. She/he should ask participants to name their assigned roles, so everyone knows who is participating and people with the same role can form groups.
6. Divide the participants in citizens and party members. They should then divide themselves again in pro and con. So there will be four groups in total. Instruct the mayor to choose a side.

##### *Get to know each other round: 15 min*

7. Each of the four groups gets a table, paper and pens. They should explain their position to each other and form arguments to be presented later in the discussion.

##### *Discussion round: 20 mins*

8. The city council has its meeting and citizens are invited. The mayor chairs the meeting and the trainer can assist also by watching the time. The chairs are placed in a half-circle.
9. First, the two party are allowed to present their opinion in 2 mins each. Forming arguments and presenting them in front of the other group of people is the equivalent of participating in the society.
10. Next, representatives of citizens come in front and explain their arguments as well in 2 mins each
11. Then, the discussion takes place for 7 minutes. Participants can debate with each other, ask questions to the parties. The mayor moderates
12. Last, it is voting time. The mayor distributes papers. Every participant vote by writing down In favour / Against on a paper and placing their votes in a ballot box. The mayor can also vote. Then she/he counts the votes and tells the results.
13. The aim of the simulation game is to show participants how they can participate in society, not just as political parties, but also as individuals.

#### Roles: [Parties and Citizens](#)

**Aim:** make a democratic decision in the city forum

#### Debriefing and feedbacks (20 min)

Tell the participants that now the roleplay is over and everyone is themselves again. Make this more clear, by e.g. changing the room setting (coming into a chair circle is best for debriefing). They are now talking about what happened from an outsider's perspective - their role took part in the role play, they are in the debriefing.



- To close it, go back to the main topic of the workshop:
  - why was participation important in this case?
  - how would the process would have gone without the participation of the different interest groups?
  - Can the different groups better understand the reasoning for decisions when they were involved in the process?
- What have you learned from the session?
- Is there anything that you feel interested in/keen on learning or understanding about participation?
- How did you feel being in this role?
- How difficult was it for you to come up with a statement?
- How did you experience the lobbying exercise?
- Were you surprised by the results?

### [Debriefing Technique](#)

Then go back to the ways to participate you wrote down in the beginning. Let each participant choose one of it silently which she/he wants to do in the next 3 month. When they choose one, let them stand up. When everyone is standing, let them leave with a positive feeling, like a group hug or a short game or laughter.