

# 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 pioneer 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 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 (10 mins)

- Explain the content/ aims of the workshop
- Ask the participants why participation in a democracy is important.
- Giving 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 move to a new partner and ask the next question.
  - In what ways have you participated in society yet?
  - What topics are you most passionate about?
  - Could you imagine increasing your participation, if so, in what ways?
  - Could you imagine getting active in your city / city council?

## **Practical part (40 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**

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." (Reading time: 5 mins)
4. The trainer should introduce the question to the participants. She/he should ask participants to read their assigned roles and then form groups. Each table should have at least one party member of the Greens and of the Traditionalist, and the number of the groups should be equalized.
5. During the first discussion round participants should group up in tables of 4-5, each table should have a representative from each party (1st discussion round)
6. After the first group discussion, citizens and parties will do the second round of the discussions, where parties get their own tables, and the rest of the participants will be grouped in 2 tables: Agree or Disagree (on banning diesels out of the city centre), they have to form common arguments which will be presented at the City Council. Forming arguments and presenting them in front of other group of people is the equivalent of participating in the society. (2nd discussion round: 10 mins)
7. Before voting, both the Agree and Disagree citizen's table and Against table should present their arguments, and so does the parties (5 mins)
8. Every participant vote by writing down In favour / Against on a paper and placing their votes in a ballot box
9. The Mayor count the votes and present the result
10. 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

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](#)