Public Participation Manual
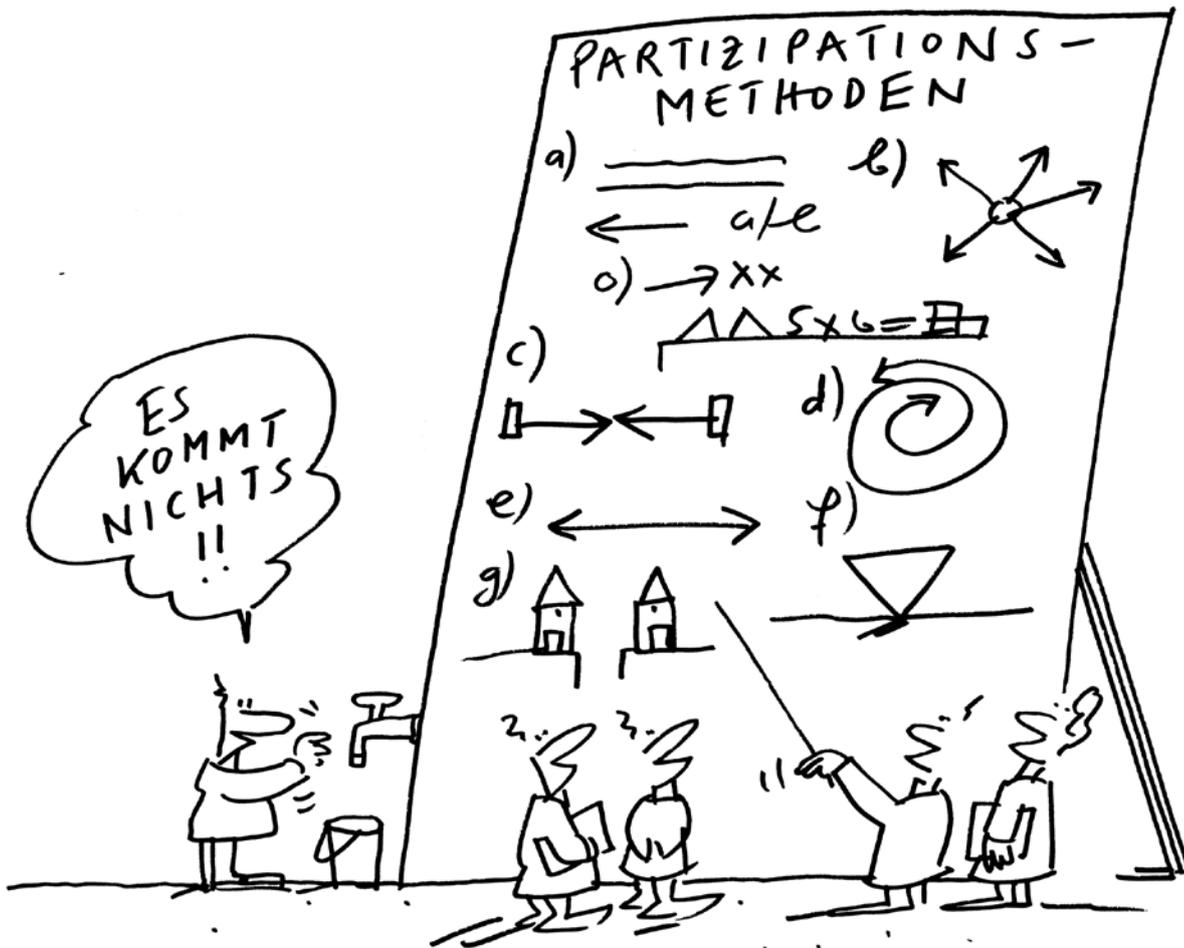
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0. Introduction

Within the framework of the Demochange project, the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, School of Social Work, and Interface – Institute for Policy Studies Research, was responsible for the "Adaption Process Utilities" work package. Two regions in Central Switzerland (canton Nidwalden and Seetal in canton Lucerne) served as pilot regions for implementing the project. The experience gained, as well as the approaches, methods and materials applied in structuring a participatory project, were all made available to other project partners.

Austria | Regional Government of Salzburg, Department of Spatial Planning and the University of Salzburg, Department of Geography and Geology

Germany | District Oberallgäu/district Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Munich University of Applied Sciences, Department of Tourism

Italy | UNCEM – National Union of Mountain Municipalities, Communities and Authorities – Piemonte Delegation, Aosta Valley Autonomous Region, economic and social observatory and the Free University of Bolzano, School of Economics and Management

Slovenia | UPIRS Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia and RAGOR Regional Development Agency for Upper Gorenjska together with the observer municipality Kranjska Gora

Switzerland | Interface – Policy Studies Research Consulting and Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, School of Social Work; Conference Swiss Central Cantons Luzern, Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden, Zug und Nidwalden

France | Règion Rhône-Alpes as observer

Provisions were also made to take transnational experiences into account and incorporate them into this manual. We hypothesized that substantial differences would be obvious among the participatory projects implemented in the various nations, each of which exhibit diverse levels of development and forms of democratic traditions and cultures. While the formal political system in Switzerland is characterised by forms of direct democracy at all levels, project partners in other countries have a representative democracy which, to some extent, is calling for more direct democracy. Presumably, the reasons for the respective differences in the experience are less attributable to the diversity of traditions and cultures than to local conditions and approaches. These experiences have also been integrated into this manual.

By addressing the "demand for participation," the Demochange project has incorporated a concern which has been articulated more and more for the past two decades. This call for increased civilian participation in policy-making decisions can be justified instrumentally-pragmatically as well as normatively.

The pragmatic-instrumental reasoning as to why participation is advisable, meaningful or even necessary settles for viewing participation as a means to an end as well as a method. A method which enables, for example, a broader spectrum of persons concerned to be included in planning processes, thereby leading to better outcomes, a decrease in expected opposition or effectively dealing with opposition. Normative participation concepts extend the definition of participation as "taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies" (Parry, Moyser, Day 1992, p. 16). And a normative viewpoint always understands participation as an improvement and expansion of democratic decision-making processes. It departs from this context of justification and serves as an "active process" for society as a whole, involving citizens in (a) the political decision-making process…, (b) the contribution to development efforts, and (c) the fair distribution of produced goods" (UN 1976, quoted from Nohlen 6 1994, p. 556).

And finally, the matter of participation is also interrelated with the overall developments of society: with the increased demand for self-fulfilment due to individualisation; and the necessity to continually renegotiate values because a consensus on values has become rare due to increasing diversity and distinctive lifestyles (cf. also Peter 2008)."

1. Participation

"A participatory approach advocates actively involving 'the public' in decision-making processes, whereby the relevant 'public' depends upon the topic being addressed. The public can be average citizens, the stakeholders of a particular project or policy, experts and even members of government and private industry. In general, policy processes can be seen as a three-step cycle of planning, implementation and evaluation, whereby a participatory approach may be used in some or all of these steps." (Steyaert, Lisoir, Nentwich 2006, p. 3)

1.1. Waves of participation

The first wave of discussions and demands concerning participation is closely connected to the terms **democratisation and co-determination**. In its most consistent form, it calls for democratisation not only in the political system but in all areas of society (Vilmar 1973, p. 23). When Willy Brandt was elected Federal Chancellor in the former Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1969, he formed a social-liberal coalition and challenged the citizens to "dare more democracy." The aim was to expand and redefine the democratic conditions, and it became a major impetus for a new culture of mutual determination and mutual responsibility: „Wir wollen die demokratische Gesellschaft, zu der alle mit ihren Gedanken zu einer erweiterten Mitverantwortung und Mitbestimmung beitragen sollen. Wir suchen keine Bewunderer, wir brauchen Menschen, die kritisch mitdenken, mitentscheiden und mit verantworten" (Kumpf in Beck, Ziekow 2011, p. 15).

Since the 1990s, urban planning projects have led to markedly expanded and differentiated possibilities for participation. They often begin with a public meeting, either requested by the inhabitants living in the district or scheduled by administrators, to provide information about upcoming projects. It is then decided after such a public meeting „ob ein freiwilliges Mitwirkungsverfahren sinnvoll ist, und ob auf beiden Seiten die entsprechenden Ressourcen vorhanden sind" (Leitfaden 2007).

Talk of a "participatory revolution" has already been heard in the new millennium. (cf. also Peter 2008). This refers to involving a broader spectrum of persons concerned in order to utilise endogenous potential and local knowledge. No one would consider dispensing with any of this in today's planning projects. However, all this can be best achieved when the possibilities for participation and co-determination are integrated as a very early stage in planning processes or when developing and carrying out projects.

Since the 1990s, participation has also gained impetus within the context of sustainability, amongst other things as a means for initiating a learning process or defining goals for complex social or political issues. At United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the concept of **sustainable development** became the international community's mission statement for the 21st century. The development of society (global, national and local) must align itself with the principle objective of meeting the needs of all human beings (now and in the future). At the same time, social, economic and environmental concerns should be in a balanced relationship. Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 specifically addresses local authorities. As the level of government closest to the people, local authorities play a vital role in educating and mobilizing the public with respect to sustainable development and are thus called upon to draw up a "local Agenda 21" for the community. Finally, the Aalborg +10 conference in 2004 refers to participation as a cornerstone of the sustainability strategy. Creating a number of forms for participation and conflict resolution outside the realm of parliament and government can set the process of sustainable development in motion and maintain it much easier than a representative democratic system would ever be able to achieve.

In other words, sustainable development concepts utilise social and political solidarity to encourage "**good governance**." The principles of good governance generally comprise decision-making processes that are transparent and accountable, responsive, equitable and inclusive, effective and respect the rule of law. In December 1993 the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (DAC) approved the "Orientations for participatory development and good governance." A great deal of value is attached here to good governance, respect for human rights and democratisation in relation to sustainable advances in development. In this case, sustainability is defined as a future-oriented process of searching, learning and shaping within the society. The focus is on how social learning processes can be organised and objectives can be developed. Mentioned as well is the increase of social competence and knowledge due to the discussions required in participatory processes.

For well over 10 years the use of the term **civil society and civic society** has attempted to reinforce the possibilities of co-determination and participation. „Bürgergesellschaft steht damit für die Idee von Selbstbestimmung, Teilhabe und gesellschaftlicher Verantwortungsübernahme" (Beck, Ziekow 2011, p. 9).

The starting point and, so to speak, turning point was the final report published by the Enquete Commission in Germany in 2002, "The future of civil society engagement," underlying the vision of a new social contract as a guiding principle. In this new social contract the state, civil society and economy are each given a leading part. In recent years, the concept of "vitalising democracy through participation" is coupled with the increase in civic engagement.

1.2. Formal and informal participation

Nowadays a distinction is generally drawn between formal (constituted) and informal (unconstituted) participation.

Formal participation encompasses all forms of legal and usual possibilities of influence and decision-making. They differ depending on current forms of democracy. Within direct democracy (as for instance in Switzerland) the possibilities of influence through formal participation are well developed. In a direct as well as in a representative democracy participation is linked to the voting right, so that some groups like children, teenagers and migrants are excluded from the formal participation. In most cases procedures in the formal system are regulated by law. Several cities in Switzerland (Zürich, Basel, St. Gallen) have broken new ground with approaches more in line with an informal participation by, amongst other things, giving the inhabitants a say in concerns and issues that affect them.

Informal participation permits and allows for the inclusion, on certain issues, of groups who cannot (e.g. migrants) or are not yet able (e.g. children and teenagers) to formally take part in decision-making processes. Informal participation also enables interest groups or persons concerned to contribute, depending on the issue or problem.

The realm of informal participation can also be viewed as a laboratory for participation, for this is also where new approaches and methods are often implemented. Despite new approaches and despite low-threshold and easier access, representation with informal participatory practices is not always attainable and does not always succeed in addressing or activating all of the desired target groups.

Informal participation can be seen as an extension or a rivalry to the formal participation. Since the first criticism on the political system arose in the sixties, which examined democracy as too far removed from the citizens, too concentrated on the political parties and generally too formalistic, it has become stronger and has not decreased since. Participation always means the existence of the right or at least the possibility to take part and to do so. If people should take part and use their participatory possibilities, they should be enabled and facilitated.

1.2.1. Top down and bottom up

Participation can be initiated, approached, offered or demanded from various "directions"; from top to bottom or from bottom to top. Top-down participation is "granted", or rather "prescribed" as it were, by political and administrative departments from the top, or also as a reaction to demands from the bottom.

Success of participation initiated in this manner is ultimately measured by which target groups (and in what intensity) and which results can be obtained for cooperation and co-determination, for example, within the scope of a project. The maxim of transforming bystanders to participants also applies here. Top-down participation is indeed faced with the question as to how an extrinsic topic can be transported to a diverse number of target groups, how the necessary awareness of and activation for the problem can be generated.

Bottom-up participation is in many cases carved out from the bottom and does not necessarily have a direct link to policy-makers' agenda setting. The topic is determined by individual and collective concernment and is often expressed as "opposition." Bottom-up participation is also often associated with grassroots movements or citizens' groups. In principle, both top down and bottom up denote the direction of the impact.

	Top down	Bottom up
Initiative	Begins with administration/policy; often involves issues which should be solved efficiently and broadly supported	Begins with civil society organisations or committed individuals.
Target group	Defined by the topic Potential interest is a prerequisite	Forms and organises itself.
Topic	Set through policy planning or pro-grammes	Evolves from everyday life
Concernment	Must be developed based on the topic	Exists and is the main motive.
Awareness	Must be developed with relevant information and awareness campaigns.	Developed by experience and by working on the topic or issue
Motivation	More efficiency, less opposition, better legitimacy	Social contacts and wishes for a changement
Direction of impact	Seeks activity and engagement from the "top"	Seeks to achieve from the bottom changes in policy and administration ("top").
Forms of activity	Planned by administration; often with external moderation.	Originates from the process; often by applying well-known methods.

Source: Own depicion

### 1.2.2. Difference between top down and bottom up

In the Demochange project the processes in the various countries were situated between top down and bottom up. The point of departure was a topic developed and set in national or international program committees outside the realm of regional or local authorities. Supporters and organisers responsible for the project are – as is frequently the case – private companies or universities.

Implementation poses the first challenge of having to win over the important (and proper) local or regional persons in charge many times over: they must be won over to cooperate on a topic which they themselves have neither chosen nor planned and to back a project which is predetermined. Furthermore, a number of other factors must be considered: who should participate in the project – on the one hand, from the political and administrative system and, on the other hand, from civil society; whether interest in the topic already exists; and how the different conditions relating to potential participation should be best taken into account.

The fact that professionals and volunteers will have different roles in these projects must also be considered. Moreover, factors such as differing qualifications and the unequal distribution of resources must be taken into account as well.

1.2.3 Typologies of participation

Since the debate in the 1960s, Sherry Arnstein's model has reappeared time and again (Arnstein 1969). Different rungs on a ladder illustrate a grouping of what is 'good' and what is 'bad' participation.
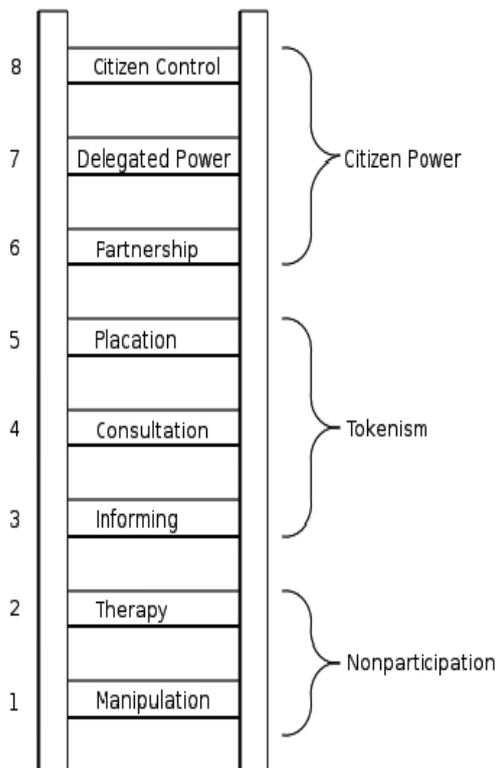
Although this perspective still enables a critical review, it focuses unilaterally only on the motives of those who initiated participation: "Typologies are a useful starting point for differentiating degrees and kinds of participation. Providing a series of ideal types along which forms of participation may be ranged, most typologies carry with them implicit normative assumptions which place these forms of participation along an axis of 'good' to 'bad'. Many of the typologies and 'ladders' of participation that have been produced focus on the intentionality, and associated approach, of those who initiate participation" (Cornwall 2008, p. 270).

While Arnstein's ladder of participation classifies above all from the perspective of the "recipient," more recent models attempt to differentiate utilising the viewpoint of interests. More focus is thus given to why groups or individuals make use of – or do not make use of – the respective offers concerning participation. However, the fact that using offers on the part of the "recipient" is voluntary must always be taken into account.

Source: Arnstein 1969, p. 2

The following questions are key, according to Cornwall (2008, p. 273):
– "What 'participation' means to the implementing agency?
– What 'participation' means for those on the receiving end?
– What is 'participation' for?"

The model by Lüttringhaus (2000) provides for consolidating these levels and placing them in relation to one another, thereby rendering it a good orientation for structuring participatory projects.
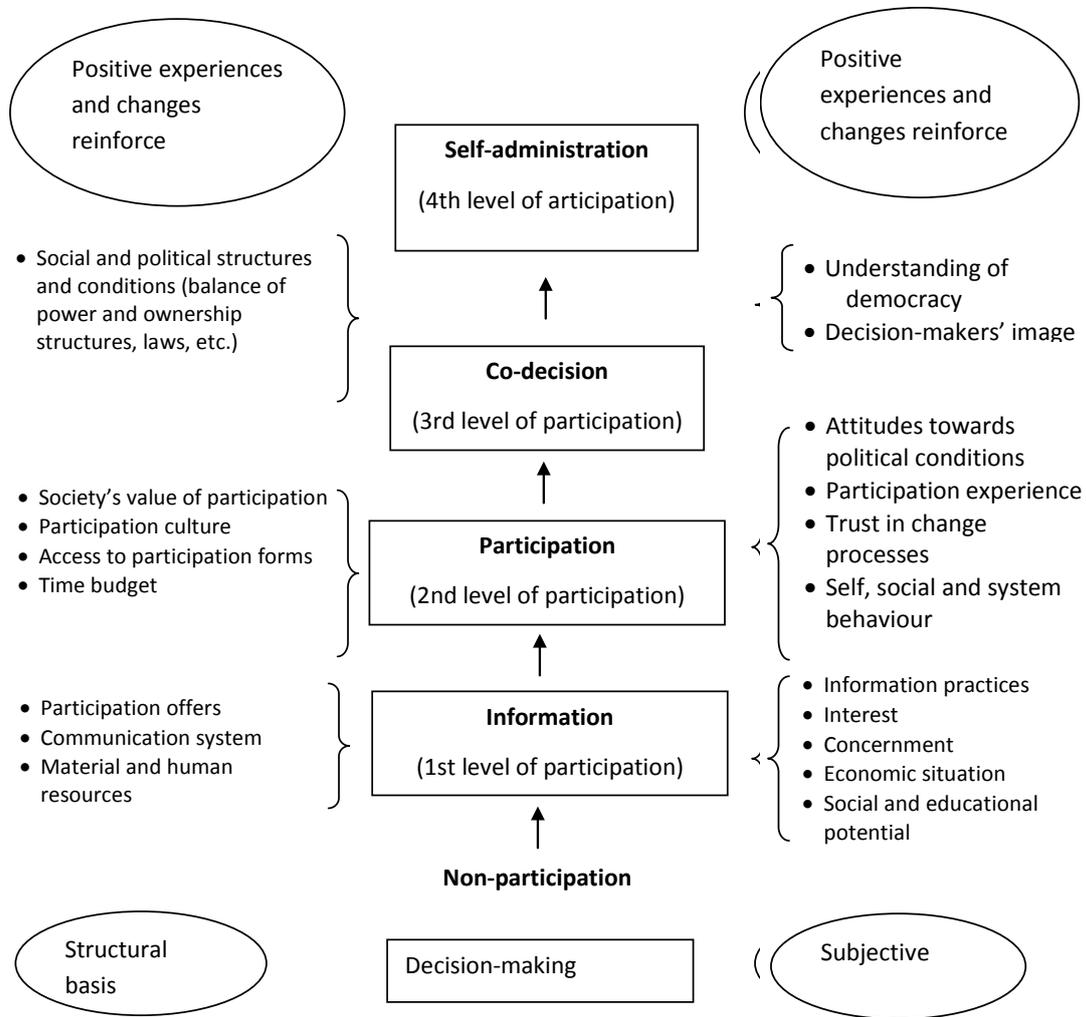1. Information/consultation
2. Participation: voice and cooperation
3. Co-decision
4. Self-organisation and self-administration

At the first level, civilians are informed. Crucial at this stage, according to Lüttringhaus, is providing information openly in a cooperative approach. Relaying information plays an important role in the political participatory process, because it is the first step in opening further possibilities for active participation. Lüttringhaus emphasises that merely consuming participation, for example, that which is obtained from the media (newspapers, radio, information meetings, etc.) constitutes an active and by no means a self-evident act of participation and can lead to discussions in smaller or larger groups. At the second level, policy-makers and administrators open the dialogue to civilians, including more active forms of participation, such as public meetings and statements. As a general rule, participation means to have influence the process prior to the decision, and not on the decision itself. The level of co-decision entails a decision-making process among stakeholders acting as partners. Levels four and five enable self-administration irrespective of participation granted by the state.

A further distinction is made in this model between sharing and participation: sharing pertains to how the political-administrative system approaches civil society, how it encourages participation and grants influence. Participation on the part of civil society begins, as described above, with consuming observations and increases to the level of co-decision. In practice, the degree of participation is determined from the relationship of the two interdependent elements of granting or encouraging participation and civil society participation.

A great deal of importance is also attached here to previous experience in participatory processes: Knowing that positive experience made by actors in government and administration as well as those made by civil society engagement have a reinforcing effect results in the demand and necessity for well thought-out and planned procedures with intended participatory processes. The scope of action must be clearly defined and clearly declared in order to prevent frustration and misunderstandings among the participants. Wehrli (1983) points out that the question as to how to legitimise the participation of the respective individuals must be clarified when expanding participation involves differentiated cooperation. The challenge often lies in the fact that formal decision-making levels frequently do not cover the concernment subjectively felt by persons who may potentially participate. Wehrli (1983, p. 8) further explains: „Es ist davon auszugehen, dass ein enger Zusammenhang besteht zwischen dem Grad an subjektiv empfundener Betroffenheit und dem Bedürfnis, selber am Entscheidungsprozess mitwirken zu können". When the degree of concernment is high, but the possibility for participation is minimal, this can lead to a feeling of powerlessness, which often expresses itself in resignation, retreat, disappointment or even protest.

Levels of participation

Positive experiences and changes reinforce

Positive experiences and changes reinforce

Self-administration

(4th level of articipation)

- Social and political structures and conditions (balance of power and ownership structures, laws, etc.)

- Understanding of democracy
- Decision-makers' image

Co-decision

(3rd level of participation)

- Society's value of participation
- Participation culture
- Access to participation forms
- Time budget

- Attitudes towards political conditions
- Participation experience
- Trust in change processes
- Self, social and system behaviour

Participation

(2nd level of participation)

- Participation offers
- Communication system
- Material and human resources

- Information practices
- Interest
- Concernment
- Economic situation
- Social and educational potential

Information

(1st level of participation)

Non-participation

Structural basis

Decision-making

Subjective

Source: Own depiction modified after Lüttringhaus 2000, p. 72

Whereas older models classify information under "tokenism", great priority is given today to information on all levels in participatory processes. Arbter (2008, p. 21) clearly illustrates the various lines of communication between administrators and citizens (public sphere) at the first three levels of participation:

Information   **Participation**   **Co-decision**
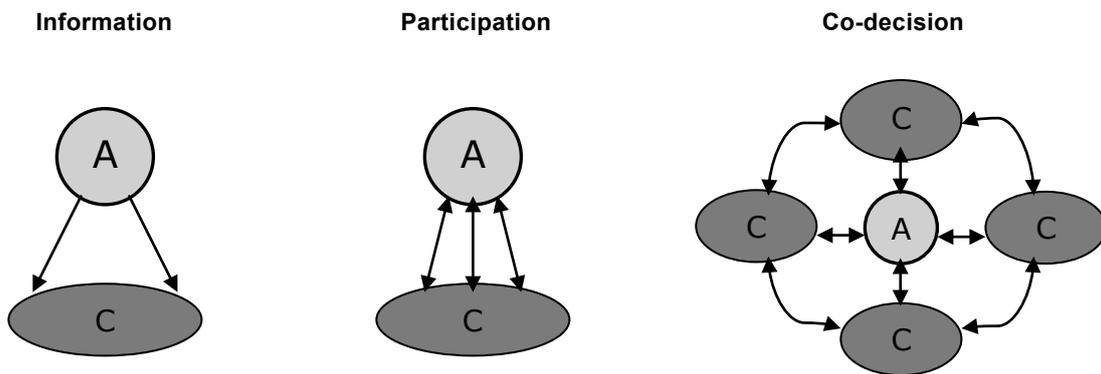
Lines of communication between different levels of participation

(A = administrators, C = citizens (public sphere)

Source: Arbter 2008, p. 21

Goals for participation as perceived by different actors
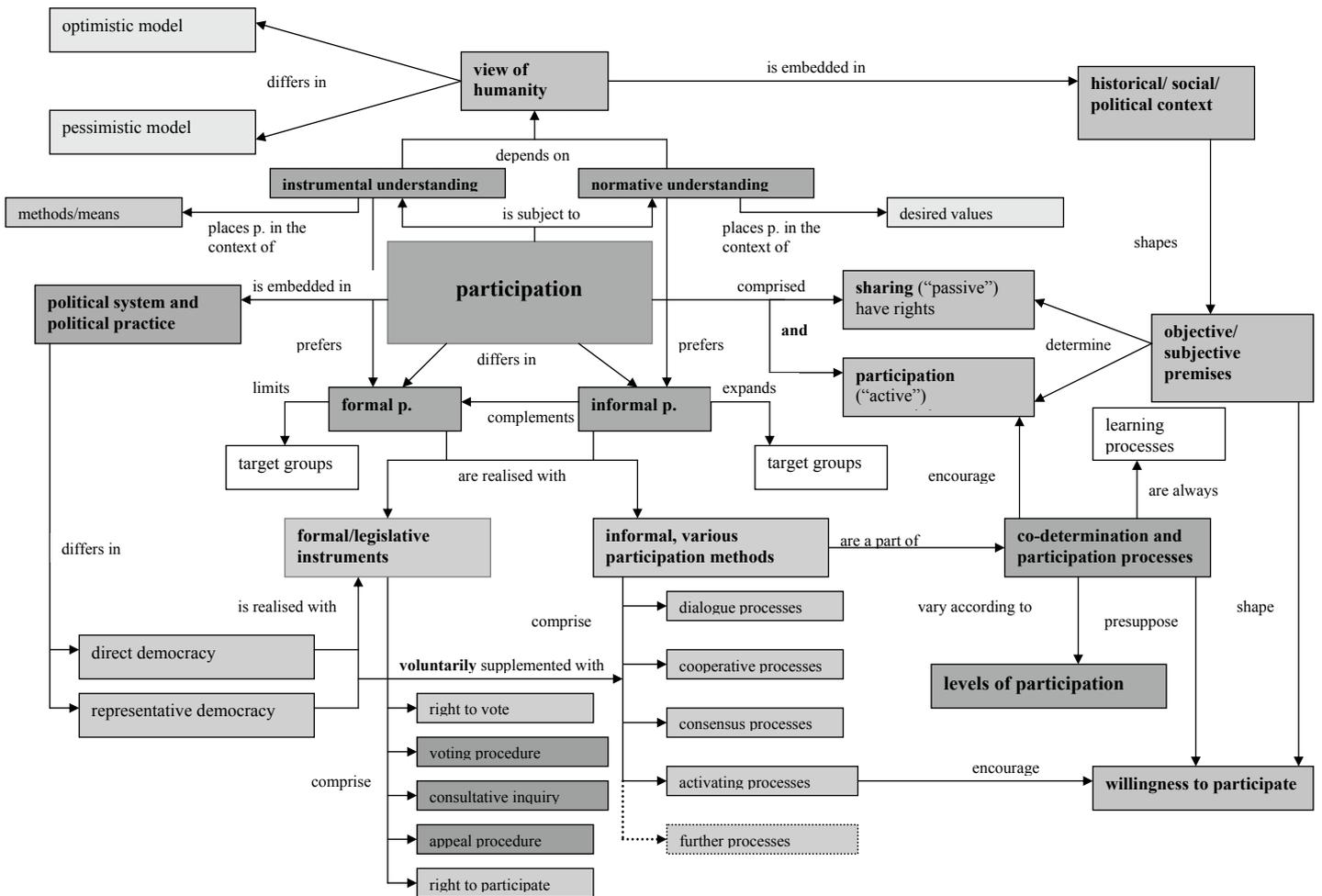
The most called-for objectives of participation are:
– to create ownership
– to create legitimacy and identification
– to facilitate transformation and implementation
– to give decisions a new quality

In his illustration, Zschocke (2007, p. 52) classifies the benefits expected from law, planning, policy-making/administration and civil society according to three different goal aspects which are not always clearly delineated and whose classification is not always distinctly possible.

		Legitimacy	Economy of procedures	Identification/ self-responsibility
PARTICIPATION	Law		Legal protection Assessment	
	Planning		Information procurement Early warning system Conflict prevention and resolution Acceleration of processes Coping with complexity	Activation Identification Satisfaction
	Policy	Democracy Legitimacy Acceptance Consensus-building		Easing the burden on the state
	Civilians		Own benefit Conflict prevention Articulating a call for action	Self-determination Emancipation Self-responsibility Collective action

Source: Zschoke 2007, p. 52

1.2.4. A general view of participation

optimistic model

pessimistic model

differs in

view of humanity — is embedded in → historical/ social/ political context

depends on

instrumental understanding — is subject to — normative understanding

methods/means ← places p. in the context of

participation

places p. in the context of → desired values

shapes

is embedded in

comprised → sharing ("passive") have rights

and

participation ("active")

determine

objective/ subjective premises

political system and political practice

prefers

differs in

prefers

limits

formal p. ← complements — informal p. — expands

target groups

target groups

learning processes

encourage

are always

is embedded in

differs in

are realised with

formal/legislative instruments

informal, various participation methods — are a part of → co-determination and participation processes

is realised with

comprise

dialogue processes

vary according to

presuppose

shape

direct democracy

voluntarily supplemented with

cooperative processes

representative democracy

right to vote

consensus processes

levels of participation

voting procedure

consultative inquiry

activating processes — encourage → willingness to participate

comprise

appeal procedure

further processes

right to participate

Source: Own depiction (Peter and Müller)

1.3 Methods

Today a vast repertoire of methods is available for organising, moderating and managing participatory processes. Before we refer to such methods, however, several criteria for decisions are listed here. Methods which are appropriate for participatory processes should:
– have an encouraging and activating effect
– foster, enable and support participants' self-activity
– establish transparency with clear goals, programmes and written results
– combine information with discussion and make time available for it
– foster decision-making processes
– facilitate groups to work independently

Methods should be combined in a useful manner and planned by means of "process architecture" (Königswieser/Hillebrand 2007). Just as architecture in the common sense of the word creates the spatial structure for various functions, process architecture should be utilised to pre-structure the general framework, in terms of time and content, for participatory processes – whenever possible together with those concerned (Peter 2008).

There are many different methods for the three levels of participation as regards information, participation and co-decision. Different methods are frequently combined for use in the first three levels of participation in a participatory process. The number and diversity of participation methods has rapidly increased in recent years. They are not always clearly delineated, tend to overlap and have been further developed and augmented with new elements.

In the realm of informal participation, a distinction is made between direct and indirect processes. **Direct processes** include public meetings for inhabitants of a district, as well as city and citizens' forums open to all interested parties. In contrast, indirect processes are particularly characterised by representative proceedings such as advocacy planning, citizens' jury, etc. and cooperative processes (e.g. round table discussions). In this case, citizens are represented by selected persons (depending on the method, selected according to specific criteria or randomly). Experience shows that the participation method does not exist. The trick is to find the right combination of methods which have been adapted to the specific local conditions and situation (Peter 2008, p. 6).

Project-related forms and open forms of participation can be further differentiated. Project-related forms involve straightforward presentations of a problem or concrete planning projects. They are of limited duration and usually demonstrate tangible results. Integrating them into everyday life or into further decision-making processes is, however, often difficult. Open forms are characterised by a focus on target groups being able to express their opinions.
In principle, the selected methods must meet the specific needs of the target groups involved and adapted to the situation. There is a distinction between:
– simple methods geared towards a partial aspect of participation, e.g. methods for generating new ideas or solutions to problems.
– complex methods which are implemented either in their entirety or in combination with single techniques, for example, in future workshops, etc.
– methods structured according to project content which are implemented to support individual project phases, e.g. presentation techniques, visualisation methods.
– Interventions/games whose effect develops when widespread in small or large groups, phase- or situation-related or embedded in an overall concept.

Normally, the choice of methods depends on the expected number of participants, how much time is available and depth of participation (information, participation or co-determination) of the participatory process.

The Bertelsmann Foundation compared different participatory processes and attempted to systematically classify them. The comparison criteria included: objectives, typical topics, typical contractee, average number of participants and average duration. The results are presented in a table (Bertelsmann Foundation 2010, p. 48/49).

However, it must be emphasised that: each of these methods has its advantages and disadvantages. The participation method does not exist.

M1   Overview of the individual participatory processes and methods

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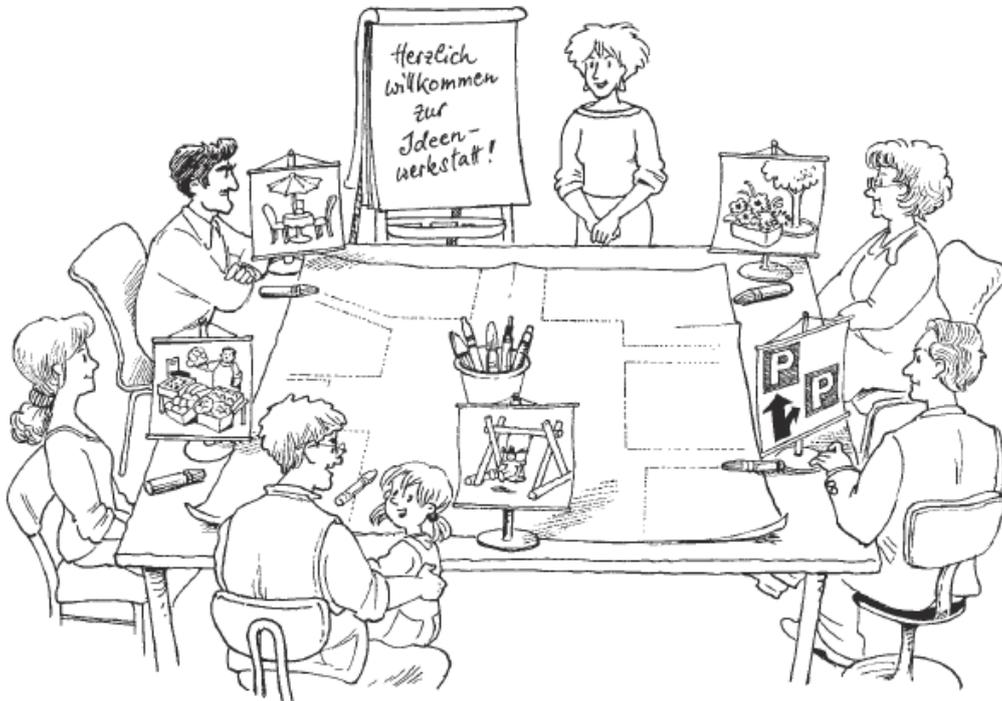
Source: Arbter et. al 2005, p. 16

1.4. Why do we use a participatory approach in project management?

Demographic change is a way of looking at a problem which should proceed throughout the Demochange project when relaying of information, creating awareness of the problem and developing and implementing measures. In the process, one is aimed at based on a partnership in which citizens, stakeholders, experts and politicians are involved; the intensity of participation may vary, depending on the point of departure.

If the project is to initiate participation, a participatory approach is logical also with respect to project management because participatory project management supports
– the promotion of knowledge (local and experienced knowledge)
– the creation of innovation by combining new and different knowledge
– a better solution for problems which is closer to the local or regional reality
– the legitimacy and implementation of measures
– the engagement of associations and members of the civil society as a cost-saving method, as well as for expanding engagement

The design and structure of such a project has to take into account the changing concerns and needs within the various categories, as well as the different qualifications and needs of those involved in the project.

Hence, there are two "basic laws" to consider:
– In terms of content, a participatory project must be open and unbiased.
– In terms of structure, a participatory project must be an open process.

Above all, the project structures should enable and encourage the engagement of persons at all times. Actually, you might say here that: structure complies with the process! In Nidwalden for instance, it was only during the project that a committee (4 members) was formed from the members of the advisory group (15 members); the committee could convene more quickly for a meeting and make operative decisions. However, transparency is important when such changes and extensions to the structures are undertaken. Responsibilities must also be defined and decided on.

1.5. Cooperation between formal and informal systems

In a participatory project people from different contexts work together in different roles. It is possible that the following person come together in a project:
– decision-makers
– stakeholders
– experts
– persons responsible for the process
– project managers
– moderators

Two systems with a differing functional logic and varying qualifications also come together when actors from civil society participate in informal processes. The distinction made by Münkler (2011) between "active citizenship" and "civic engagement" is worth considering. While "active citizen-ship" has the formal political system at its disposal and elected politicians function "as continual designers of the political community" on various levels, civic engagement can select the location, time and topic for voluntary engagement based on personal preferences. The following (structural) differences must be taken into account:

– Representatives of the formal political system have been elected by the public and gained their legitimacy through this election.
– As a representative, the legitimacy of power is clarified.
– Normally representatives have no problems with formal participation because it belongs to the same political system.
– Representatives of the formal system must be involved in informal participatory processes. This is the only way to ensure that results from participatory projects for which civil society engagement is important also reach the formal system.
– It gives importance to the participants in a positive manner and demands reflections of both positions to avoid role conflicts.

It must be considered that not only do professionals and volunteers play different roles in these projects, their qualifications also differ and the resources are unequally distributed.

Differing qualifications	
Professional (administrator, policy-maker)	**Volunteer/voluntary professionals**
Facilitating participation is part of the professional work, but is not necessarily part of the professional competence	Facilitating a participatory process is civil society engagement. Previous experience is an important resource.
Facilitating a participatory process is paid for with a salary. However, it often entails an additional workload.	Voluntary and unpaid. Non pecuniary; common forms of compensation (e.g. attendance fees) are possible.
Employees involved in participatory processes are not necessarily professionals in participation.	Volunteers in participatory processes also bring a high level of know-how with them (e.g. architects, lawyers). Could compete with professionals on the specialist level.

Source: Own depiction

The motivation to participate can be interest, concernment or other reasons. It is helpful when the motivation of the participants is clarified at the beginning of the project.

Tip!
Free does not have to mean free of charge: While officials and politicians often attend meetings for the Demochange project during working hours, for participants from civil society it means working for free. This is why a fee is paid for attending meetings in Nidwalden (common for political commissions in Switzerland as well).

1.6. Cooperation between experts and laymen: encouraging local knowledge
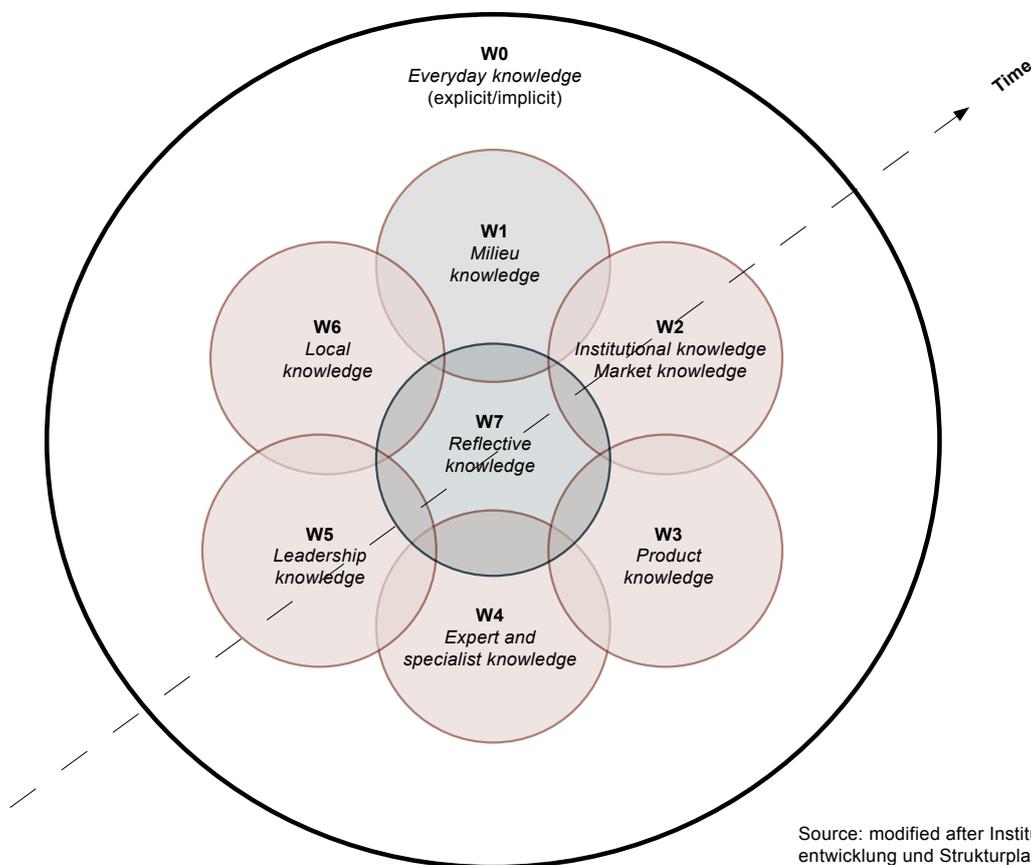
The knowledge provided by experts in the Demochange project is extremely important. Given the complexity of the topic of demographic change, knowledge and support from experts must be accessible. Communicating this knowledge must be commensurate with the need to understand among the other project partners.

It is of vital importance, however, that other forms of knowledge and fields of knowledge are also considered and integrated. A great deal of importance is attached to local knowledge in the context of areal development processes. Although the term is used extensively, its definition is still very diverse and complex.

Four main points are crucial when attempting to understand local knowledge:
– Local knowledge is context-linked; it originates from a specific local context and only there is the meaning relevant. Local knowledge cannot be separated from the culture in which it exists.
– Local knowledge is problem-oriented and empirical, not "theoretical" in the conventional sense.
It is produced to solve or explain each specific problem, not derived from an existing theory.

- Local knowledge is everyday knowledge. It is not set against to other types of knowledge (e.g. "science"). "Local knowledge is a universal form of knowledge common to all human beings. This is diametrically opposed to a supposed dichotomy between knowledge `of a different kind´ or `non-Western knowledge´, and `Western´ or `scientific´ knowledge." (Antweiler 1998, p. 477)
- Local knowledge is practical knowledge, not simply information (cf. Antweiler 1998, p. 477). It often deals more with the practical "how" that with an objective "what."

W0
Everyday knowledge
(explicit/implicit)

Time

W1
Milieu knowledge

W6
Local knowledge

W2
Institutional knowledge Market knowledge

W7
Reflective knowledge

W5
Leadership knowledge

W3
Product knowledge

W4
Expert and specialist knowledge

Source: modified after Institut für Regional-entwicklung und Strukturplanung 2003, p.9

In summary, it can be said that:
- Problem solving, development and implementation of measures requires various forms of knowledge.
- The knowledge of experts is an important requirement for the development of solutions and measures.
- Expertise has to be transferred into transdisciplinary knowledge.
- Local knowledge is important and has to be integrated.
- Awareness of the difference between experts and laymen is necessary, also if the limits in-between are often fluid.
- Different forms of knowledge should be included in the process. This integration leads to a common perception and description of the problem.
- Local knowledge needs encouragement, as well as experts who evaluate this knowledge.
- The articulation of local knowledge requires time and corresponding methods.

2. Participation in planning: problem recognition

As a rule, problem recognition is the first step, the actual start of project planning. Therefore, the following questions are essential:
– What is the problem?
– Who is affected by the problem?
– Who can become involved in dealing with the problem?
– Apart from policy-makers and administrators, are actors and organisations from civil society also interested in the problem and can they be activated to participate?
– How complex is the problem? How can it be communicated?
– Has the problem already been defined? How and to what extent can it be modified and expanded?

This phase consists of discussions for recognising and delimiting the problem, as well initial considerations as to how to the problem can be approached and what project organisation is optimal for dealing with the problem. In particular, the extent and scope should be defined and thereby clarified for the design of projects that originate from programmes (national or EU) and have come to policy-makers and administrators from external project initiators (private enterprises, universities, etc.).

Ample time and sufficient care must be taken with projects that involve and depend on cooperation with local and regional project partnerships for developing a mutual problem definition and mutual approach. The initial "door opener" for developing a common perception of the problem for the topic can vary: it may deviate or can be extended. This process of ensuring common perception of the problem often goes hand in hand with the phase of seeking local and regional partners who also find the given issue important for their region. They demonstrate the willingness to handle the problem either by means of their own, newly forged project or dealing with it as a new problem within the context of existing projects.

2.1. Systematic identification of stakeholders and cooperation with stakeholders

Stakeholders are specific interest groups and include individual persons, as well as organisations and institutions. Relevant persons should be identified in the stakeholder analysis in order to utilise existing potential for support and also settle questions and possible objections to the project. At the beginning of the project, only part of those involved may be well known, some will be unknown, and the number of persons or organisations involved will not yet be clear.
After selecting a project region and depending on the possibilities, a regional partner can be identified based on existing contacts from previous projects or similar collaborations. This regional partner, also referred to as the main stakeholder(s), can be involved in the political system i.e. representing administrators or political authorities from the region or one or several communities. It is extremely important to make sure the main stakeholder(s) also inform the relevant local and regional committees and actors about the project as soon as possible and obtain their commitment for the project.

Tip!
There is an advantage when the main stakeholder(s) have a relatively high position in the hierarchy. At least gaining political anchorage and acceptance is easier and quicker with it. In addition, it is worth taking the time to determine the committees and actors and rank them according to their importance as to who must be informed as soon as possible about the project. The best way to do this is via local stakeholders. Time and content of information must be agreed upon; be sure to record who is to be informed of which results.

M 2   Procedure for a systematic identification of main stakeholder(s)

The initial contact with the main stakeholder or main stakeholders involves presenting the approach to the problem, as well as explaining the overall significance of the problem (e.g. demographic change). The intended project objectives, financing and structures should also be introduced at this time.

Thereafter, the possible action fields should be discussed together with the initial ideas and visions of both partners (will be reviewed and further developed later in the situation analysis). The regional partner's existing ties should be utilised to establish contact with further stakeholders in a later project stage.

2.2. Expanding the number of stakeholders

This second step involves finding other potential partners who are also interested in solving the problem, i.e. expanding the core group. This being the case, the core group is responsible for getting important regional actors interested and involved in specific measures or the project. By the end of this phase the mutual goals regarding the measures or project should also be clearly defined. There is an advantage in being able to expand this circle of participants during the project. Hence, it necessary to ensure flexible project structures. Ranking the participants when expanding the circle can also be undertaken: Who could serve as additional participants? Are they more likely to be actors from civil society?

The initial rough outline of the project progression and milestones is determined together.
The next step involves anchoring the project firmly on a political level and thereby legitimising it (cf. contracting).

2.3. Focus groups

The focus groups constitute a special way of expanding the number of participants or rather expanding the possibility of approaching the topic of demographic change "in doses." Focus groups are a research method and are
1. formed based on specific criteria;
2. prompted to discuss a specific topic due to information input;
3. and supervised by a moderator.

Basically, focus groups can be implemented
a) as research-oriented or
b) as a possibility for creating a "snowball effect" for a topic among the public, initiating and generating awareness of the problem.

Variation a) views the participants as a group which can supply relevant information for the problem viewpoint and Variation b) also involves determining whether the group is relevant for the further development of the project. In both forms it must be ensured that the participants in focus groups bring with them a sufficient amount of interest and involvement in the topic. Selecting the participants of the focus groups can be carried out by members of the monitoring group.

The three most important points for organisation and design must be taken into account with both types of selection processes.

The appraisal of the focus groups used in Nidwalden revealed the following points, which should be taken into account.

Organisation
– People could often be brought together within a short time; e.g. directly after a meeting already planned
– Because private individuals invited them, the participants came more openly
– Providing snacks was very positive
– Private, familiar places proved to have a positive effect on conducting the discussions

Content/group dynamics
– Small groups proved to be successful (finding a meeting date is also more complicated with larger groups)
– External moderation as a service was very important and generated discussions rapidly
– Positive response in homogenous groups; able to discuss the topic in familiar company
– Homogenous groups do not necessarily lead to tunnel vision; an opportunity to relate to a new topic within a given field
– Recruiting people also requires perseverance in persuading them, staying on the ball

3. Participation in implementation: planning, contracting

After the stakeholders have been identified and the mutual approach defined, the next step involves establishing groups that will play a role as the project progresses. It definitely proved to be successful to establish a broadly based advisory group and initiate the project with it. A course of action must be planned and discussed. Flexibility is also very important here. Most often, the projects require more time to develop, but by the same token an initial blueprint and timetable for the project is indispensible – and is already a part of contracting.

3.1. Contracting

Contracting entails determining the most important parameters of the project together with the main stakeholder – when identical with the contractee. A contract can encompass

– project planning and scheduling
– assigning roles and areas of responsibility
– conditions for further cooperation
– amount of time and expense
– obligation to inform the relevant committees
– creating commitment between partners
– dealing with possible changes regarding human resources.

Such changes are always possible in political structures (officials change their department or resign, but should be considered, for example, when dealing with several signatures).

In some cases, numerous discussions are necessary between the initiating institution and main stakeholder.

Contract does not mean regulating every minute detail in writing. Much is agreed upon verbally and with a "handshake." It is advisable to summarise and record the crucial points in the minutes of the meeting, a letter of intent or a short written agreement.

M 4   Cooperation agreement
M 5   Ideal Cycle

3.2 Situation analysis

In the situation analysis the point of departure is systematically examined in relation to the individual components. The aim is to create the basis for the project objective and implementation strategy.

In this phase all presuppositions (subjective) and existing information should be reviewed and objectivised. In this respect, the situation analysis constitutes a research process in which data, facts, materials and advice are collected, discussions are conducted, correlations are thoroughly examined and initial assumptions are questioned in order to get a clear picture of the situation. The scope, methods and instruments of this work step must be selected very individually. This work step should prevent the project from taking a wrong course, as well as facilitating planning and serving to legitimatise the content of the project. All data should be prepared in such a manner that it is accessible to and comprehensible for all interested persons.

4. Participation and evaluation

Projects must be guided, and the best way to anchor project management is by creating and positioning local or regional steering committees. They can be referred to as either a steering committee or an advisory group. Bear in mind, however, that the committee is of temporary nature and formed to steer the project by offering advice. The steering committee is comprised of the project's decision-makers and leaders. Their main tasks include

– establishing the project goal (in cooperation with the project manager),
– controlling and approving the project planning,
– reviewing and approving the interim results of the project,
– reviewing and approving reports prepared by the project manager,
– supporting the project manager with any problems that may arise,
– establishing contact with organisations/project ambassadors, circulating the project among the citizens
– making decisions which exceed the project manager's competence and
– mediating any problems that arise between project participants.

In order to fulfil these tasks, the steering committee should meet at regular intervals, and also be prepared to meet on short notice for extraordinary meetings. The members must attend the meetings themselves at all times, for responsibility cannot be transferred to third parties. A rough outline of project progression and decisions within the committee must be approved unanimously.

The Demochange project and basic issues concerning demographic change must be pointed out at the first meeting. Thereafter, it is necessary to discuss problem areas and fields of action based on the data, as well as personal experiences.

M 3   Organigram – project management

4.1. Resources and resource analysis

All of the project regions revealed a situation where stakeholders and partners had already reached their limits regarding their workload with existing projects. An analysis of resources should help to point out the existing workload, but the opportunities should also be identified to find the optimal solution.

With the analysis of resources those existing resources should be externalized, which are especially important for our topic in the model region. First of all the present resources of the as-is state should be described, and could include:

– existing awareness of the problem
– existing knowledge or experience concerning the topic or related topics
– potential (human beings, institutions, organizations)
– available and mobilized funds
– upcoming, current or completed projects

Then the resources should be classified:
– Are the people or projects based in the public or private sphere?
– Are the examined problems perceived subjectively or objectively?
– Are the problems formally examined, or informally distributed?
– Do existing projects rival the planned project, or is there a willingness to cooperate?
– Does this have a positive, negative or neutral impact on the planned project?
– Can synergistic effects be used?

Mobilization and utilization of existing resources:
– How can existing resources be mobilized and used?
– How can cooperation be created?
– How can synergistic effects be used, without overstraining single partners?

4.2. Planning and performance of meetings, workshops and conferences

A few basic "rules" must be observed when planning meetings and workshops. Most often the participants already have time constraints. Consequently, meetings should not be too long, set the times and select appropriate meeting rooms (be sure for to inspect the venues for larger events in advance).

The following points must be considered when conducting meetings:
– ensure strict moderation (without forfeiting the chance for discussions)
– maintain clear structures and invitations
– use a script to prepare in advance
– brief important representatives
– send the minutes of the meeting to all participants as soon as possible

5. Gender mainstreaming and diversity management

Since the treaty of Amsterdam 1999, the European Union distinguishes between Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunities on the one hand and Equal Opportunities between women and men on the other hand. Non-discrimination includes, apart from the gender aspects, six further facets, such as age, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation. In general, non-discrimination is linked to diversity policies, and equality between women and men to gender mainstreaming strategies. All member states have agreed and transferred these principles into national and regional laws. Based on this, all European-funded programmes and projects have to follow these principles of non-discrimination and gender equality "during the various stages of implementation of the Funds":

Article 16
The Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of implementation of the Funds.

The Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the various stages of implementation of the Funds and, in particular, with respect to access to them. In particular, accessibility for disabled persons shall be one of the criteria to be observed in defining operations co-financed by the Funds and to be taken into account during the various stages of implementation.

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 – laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.

For our Demochange project it means that the focus of our interest is on age, sex and ethnic background (migration), all three are issues for equality policies and non-discrimination. As everyone knows, the strategy for assessing the impact of projects, strategies, measures and decisions on women and men is the gender mainstreaming strategy. As a brief reminder, here is a short definition of gender mainstreaming:
Gender mainstreaming is the integration of the gender perspective into every stage of policy processes – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men. It means assessing what impact the policies have on the lives and positions of both women and men – and taking responsibility to re-address them if necessary. This is the way to make gender equality a concrete reality in the lives of women and men – creating space for everyone within organizations as well as in communities – to contribute to the process of articulating a shared vision of sustainable human development and translating it into reality.

The four levels of diversity

The chart below provides an overview of the different aspects of diversity, including the gender aspect, as well as age, etc. But also it regards external dimensions such as religion, income, educational background and further the organisational level (which position a person has within an enterprise or institution). The diversity approach supports the implementation of the needs of minority groups in all aspects of planning, etc. to gain input and benefit from diverse ideas and point of views, but also to increase job satisfaction and the stability of the working team.
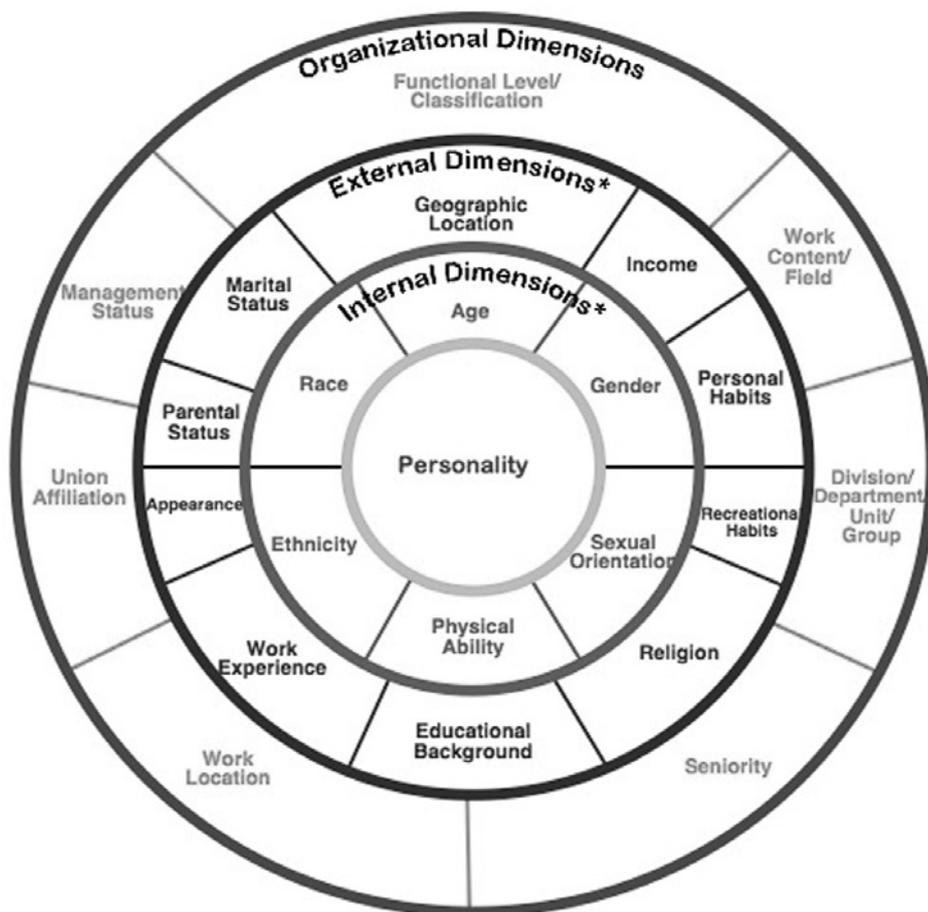
Source: http://www.gwi-boell.de/downloads/Gendertoolbox_Materialien_Diversity.pdf

The Demochange project team shall give an example of the diversity of team members:
– Partners come from different geographical location, have different gender, age, ethnicity and religion
– Partners have different work experience and different incomes

6.   Transnational Experiences

	CH Seetal	**CH Nidwalden**	**SLO Upper Gorenjska**	**IT South Tirol**	**IT Aosta Valley**
Definition of the model region	Existing contacts	Expression of interest by the main stakeholder	Existing contacts from former projects	Open invitation to all of the communities	Whole region
Definition of the topics for projects	Focused on one topic (housing)	Not fixed	Not fixed	Not fixed	Not fixed
Type of participation	Mainly top-down, little bottom-up	Mainly bottom-up, little top-down	Mix between bottom-up and top-down	Bottom-up	
Political Anchorage	Mayor is main stakeholder	Cantonal government gives backing	Mayors are included in the steering group	Regional government authority gives backing (not active) Some members of the steering group are political representatives	President of Aosta Valley Region gives backing
Official partner in the project region	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Members of the steering group	approx. 12 participants	approx. 12 participants	approx. 18 participants	approx. 10 participants	Kickoff 150 participants
Diversity Management	No	No	No	No	No

	IT Piemond	**AT Salzburger Land**	**GER Allgäu**	**GER Garmisch**
Definition of the model region	Whole region	Fixed at the beginning by the project partner	Regional specific aspects	Regional specific aspects
Definition of the topics for projects	Not fixed	Based on existing project ideas	Not fixed	Not fixed
Type of participation		Top-down	Mix between bottom-up and top-down	Mix between bottom-up and top-down
Political Anchorage	Local authorities	Province of Salzburg is Demochange project partner itself District Administrator gives backing	Anchored on the level of district administrator	Administrative district of Garmisch is the Demochange project partner itself
Official partner in the project region	Yes	No ?	Yes	Yes
Members of the steering group	approx. 15 participants	Kickoff approx. 70 participants approx. 25 participants steering group	Kickoff approx. 50 3 working groups of approx. 10 participants	Kickoff approx.30 3 working groups of approx. 10 participants
Diversity Management	No	Yes	No	No

Model region Seetal, Switzerland

The main stakeholder was selected during the preparation phase of the project. The first contact therefore was made through an explorative interview with the mayor of Hochdorf. Hochdorf is a very active commune in the Seetal, where personal contacts already existed. At the same time, an explorative interview with the leader of the project "development of the town centre of Hochdorf" was taking place. The mayor and the project leader agreed on integrating the Demochange project into the project group for "development of the town centre of Hochdorf." From then on, this group figured as the main stakeholder. The members of the project group represented a diverse number of relevant stakeholders representing the commune, but also the canton and other experts. In addition to the work in the project group, a participatory process with the communes and other actors of the area was organised.

Model region Nidwalden, Switzerland

The first contact in the model region was to a representative of the "Volkswirtschaftsdirektion Nidwalden" (economic authority of Nidwalden), which is the main stakeholder for the project. During the first meeting the canton signaled interest in the topic and expressed the importance of the topic agriculture and demographic change. Together with the main stakeholder, a list was also compiled of possible members of the steering group. The steering group has approx. 13 members now, and even though the focus lies on agriculture, there are also members from the fields of tourism, economic and social issues. Thus social and economic aspects also came up during the discussion. Already in the first meeting of the steering group the idea of focus groups was presented and 8 members of the group agreed to organize (with the support for moderation from the project partner) a focus group with their colleagues or friends.

Model region Upper Gorenjska, Slovenia

The model region in Slovenia has been defined due to the other Slovenian project partner, which isThe model region in Slovenia has been defined due to the other Slovenian project partner based in the region. But also existing contacts from former projects (e.g. RegAlp) could have been mobilized. As the main stakeholders, the mayors of the 4 included municipalities were contacted; and now they also give political anchorage to the project. Another municipality took over the role as an observer. Some meetings with the mayors were held in advance, where also some people for establishing the steering group were appointed. For the first steering group meeting the members were contacted via telephone and mail and now it consists of 18 persons who represent the fields of agriculture, forestry, local tourism and students. Gender aspects have not been regarded, though there are more female participants in the group than male. With the installation of the Demochange project the topic was already focused on the field of tourism, but during the process it also included thematic aspects such as public service and quality of life. During the meeting the possible members for the focus groups were suggested and have been carried out with the tourism provider, service provider and planner, elderly people and younger people.

Model region South Tyrol, Italy

The project partner of South Tyrol defined their model region by sending a letter to all municipalities of South Tyrol. The feedback from the letters was weak, though five municipalities could be found which represent the model region today. The main stakeholder is the mayor of one of the municipalities (because he was also responsible for mobilizing the municipalities). Politically, the project is anchored with the backing of the regional government authority, though they do not act actively in the project. The steering group consists of 10 persons, 2 representatives of each municipality. The topic of tourism was given by the project partner, but during the discussion within the steering group also issues of migration and elderly came up. Those topics coming from the local actors have been incorporated into the project process. As a result four topics have been fixed for the implementation of thematic focus groups. During the process one municipality decided to leave the project, because a lack of interest in local responsibilities was evident. Now this municipality acts as an observer of the project.

Model region Aosta Valley, Italy

The Demochange project partner is located directly in the model region and has decided to take the whole Aosta Valley as the model region, because the territory is not that big. With the backing and presence of the Aosta Valley President during the first meeting, the project is politically anchored. As main stakeholders several persons from the public service (connection to integration or migration) and representatives of the municipalities were contacted. After several informal meetings a formal steering group (which consists in fact of the same persons as the main stakeholders) was created with an official letter. The main topic of the Demochange project in the model region was selected by the project partner as there are recent tensions in the field of integration of immigrants, but was open to encompass other topics. During a first meeting of the steering group ideas of a pilot action were already presented to the participants.

Model region Piemond, Italy

The main stakeholders of the Italian model region Piedmont include the president of the mountain community and several mayors of communities involved in the Demochange project. Contacts had already existed because relationships are quite close in such a rural area. The members of the steering group were selected in order to guarantee the coverage of the territory, of all economic sectors, education, sanitation, social issues and political stakeholders. Before the official kickoff meeting in December 2010, the members of the steering group attended a meeting divided into the following categories: 1. Political Sector 2. Economic Sector and 3. Cultural, Social and Voluntary Sector. Because the members of the steering group vary, the topics of the focus for implemented projects are also diverse.

Model region Salzburg / Inner Gebirg, Austria

The main stakeholder "Land Salzburg" (province of Salzburg) itself is also a project partner in the Demochange project and directly ensures a high political anchorage. Therefore the model region Inner-Gebirg was already fixed by the partner. Also the backing of a "Landesrat" (member of the provincial government) and the inclusion of mayors provide political anchorage. With an interview guideline several local persons have been queried as to the demographic change. These persons were also invited to the kickoff event for the Demochange project in the region. During this meeting members (mayors, regional managers, official representatives) for the steering group were suggested. During the first meeting with the steering group, ideas already fully developed were proposed by single members and, with those ideas, the topics for the Demochange project were fixed.

Model region Allgäu, Germany

The main stakeholder of the German model region Allgäu is the "Landkreis" Oberallgäu (administrative district). The Allgäu GmbH is responsible for the operational implementation of the Demochange project in the region. Politically the project is anchored on the level of district administrator. The broad kickoff meeting, in which approx. 50 persons took part, was combined with an event of Allgäu GmbH. During the kickoff persons interested in the project could enlist for further work in the steering groups, which were divided into three groups. Within the small steering groups, workshops were carried out where topics were clarified. The members of the steering groups were defined to include experts for the stated focal topics from administration and economics, as well to guarantee territorial coverage; obviously the availability was crucial.

Model region Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany

The main- takeholder of the German model region Garmisch Partenkirchen is the "Landratsamt" (district office), which also represents the project partner in the Demochange project and ensures the political anchorage of the project in the region. The scientific work of the project within the model region, as well as the organization of the workshops, is supported by the "Alpenforschungsinstitut" which is based in the town of Garmisch. For a broad kickoff meeting, which took place in the town of Garmisch Partenkirchen for 3 hours in the morning, 180 key actors from the fields of politics, economics, social and cultural issues, had been invited, whereupon only approx. 30 showed up. From several proposed topics for the detailed work within the Demochange project, two were fixed: care & social issues and economics & tourism. Members for those "Arbeitsgruppen"(steering groups) were enlisted during the kickoff meeting. Persons unable to attend and other representatives were invited afterwards.

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