PARTICIPATION AT 45°

techniques for citizen-led change

Compiled by Colin Miler

Compass

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Many of the ideas in this pamphlet originated in discussions of an ad hoc group consisting of the authors of the sections and others including Brendan O'Donovan and Richard Davis. Thanks to Neal Lawson for inspiration and encouragement.

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About Compass

Compass is the pressure group for a good society, a world that is much more equal, sustainable and democratic. We build alliances of ideas, parties and movements to help make systemic change happen. Our strategic focus, through the Common Platform, is to understand, build, support and accelerate new forms of democratic practice and collaborative action that are taking place in civil society and the economy, and to link that up with top-down/state reforms and policy. The question we are trying to help solve, which we explore in the recent document 45 Degree Change, is not just what sort of society we want, but, increasingly, how to make it happen?

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Foreword

Steve Reed MP

Trust in politics is broken because our political system is broken. It has failed to respond to the great forces reshaping our world. Climate change, automation, globalisation and the digital revolution have each contributed to the growth of grotesque inequality where a clutch of individuals are wealthier than entire continents and too many communities feel held back. These forces are creating change that people fear because they can't control it, and that's shaken their confidence in the future.

Across the world we see a move away from the post-war liberal democratic settlement towards forms of populist nationalism. We know from the last century what dark places that leads to. Yet none of these forces are acts of nature beyond human control – we can choose to contain and harness them for the benefit of humanity if we want to.

The answer to right-wing populism is not to abandon democracy but to double down on it, to fully democratise our society and economy in ways more radical than we've attempted before. The challenge is how we give people back the sense of control they need to have hope in the future.

Trust is a two-way street. Politicians will not win back trust from the people until they first demonstrate that they trust the people. That means letting go of power from the centre so it can be shared more widely in a new settlement between citizens and the state. We must tackle the inequalities of power that hold people back so we can tackle the ingrained inequality so visible in squalid and overcrowded housing, closed down factories, abandoned high streets, isolated older people, surging knife crime and people sleeping rough on our streets.

Putting a cross on a ballot paper once every few years is not enough. Radical democracy demands direct responsiveness to people all the time, whenever they want to be heard and on their terms. A voice for workers in the workplace to ensure the proceeds of growth are more fairly shared, a voice for residents in their communities so they work for everyone, a voice for service users to focus public services on the real issues in their lives. Leadership from the bottom supported by leadership from the top.

We must explore new forms of shared ownership that take us beyond the stale dichotomy between statism and privatisation. We must strengthen community institutions that allow people to collaborate and participate. Instead of atomising people as problems to be managed, we must design services that recognise and cherish the potential in every individual and respect the family and community ties that give our lives meaning. Analogue politics no longer works in a digital age where we can build community and access information in ways never before possible.

This new politics is all around us. It's in movements like Extinction Rebellion, solar energy co-ops, community wealth-building, community organising, social care mutuals, tenant-led housing, and community-run shops and pubs. All power ultimately derives from the people; it's time for the people to really take back control.

Overview and implications[1]

A vital aspect of democratic reform

We face a crisis in our democratic system. Many people blame Brexit, but the problems have been long in the making. Too many people and communities feel that they have little power over decisions that affect them. The political system and culture does not actively encourage, educate and support people to engage in the decision-making process.

There need to be more ways in which people's voices can be heard and have influence not only via occasional elections but in relation to the cascade of continuous decision making that takes place in society, whether at local, regional, national or international level. This pamphlet, produced by an informal group attached to Compass, reviews some of the main kinds of participation techniques available and their significance for democratic reform.

45° change

45° change is a concept adopted by Compass to bisect the conventional image of top-down power and bottom-up disempowerment by focusing on the way that positive change can be driven by convergence of progressive forces amongst both citizens and institutions. This is the route out of the trap of tribalist allegiances which drive people to one-sided factions and result in dysfunctional government[2]. Direct citizen participation makes for better decisions, better understanding of those decisions, and is itself a fulfilling and health-giving experience.

Participation is particularly characteristic of independent civil society organisations, including small community groups. Government and national organisations need to facilitate and work with participative organisations as equal partners, not just auxiliary service providers. For the whole population to be – and feel - involved in our democracy requires new norms of state support for, and responsiveness to, forms of participation such as community development, community organising and deliberative dialogue. Government should therefore do all it can to ensure strong, resilient, resourceful, powerful and tolerant citizens, families, social networks and communities, and strong local economies to underpin all this.

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1. This section is based on Making Participation Count, a policy proposal for all political parties from the following members of the Compass Group on Participatory Techniques: Nick Beddow, Gabriel Chanan, Brian Fisher, Nick Gardham, Helena Kettleborough, Colin Miller, Bob Rhodes, Matt Scott, Henry Tam, Diane Warburton. Please get in touch if you wish to comment or are interested in helping to take these ideas further. Contact: colin@compassonline.org.uk

2. See here, Neal Lawson's *45° Change: Transforming Society from Below and Above*, Compass, 2019

A triangle of reform

A flourishing democratic society needs a combination of good government, effective public services and a powerful role for citizens and communities – a positive triangle of reform. These three aspects of society cannot substitute for each other – they are mutually reinforcing. Residents are the primary players at community level, forming the basis for health, wellbeing, prosperity and harmony between different groups and cultures. But in many places people need skilled enablers to support them in building community organisations and networks and taking greater control over their local and personal conditions, to the benefit of their health, safety, local conditions and other factors.

We need to incorporate participatory and deliberative forms of influence and decision-making into all levels of governance. These mechanisms are complementary to existing systems of representative democracy. They deepen our democracy by creating new public spaces where difficult issues can be explored through community action or cooperative deliberation without 'tribal' political affiliations. Community action is productive in itself and can also exert constructive influence on public and private bodies. Citizens' assemblies and other forms of deliberation can work alongside and/or make reports or recommendations to elected democratic bodies.

Three major forms of intervention which we focus on in this pamphlet are:

- community development
- community organising and
- deliberative approaches to decision-making.

Community development

Community development is action to raise the long-term level of resilience, cohesion or health and wellbeing in a community, helping local people to strengthen their own action on things that are important to them. It can take the form of independent action by residents but in many places it needs to be supported by skilled community development workers.

When the statutory sector ignores community action, the process and the people are undermined. We therefore need legislation that requires local authorities, the NHS, housing associations, other public bodies and equally private sector bodies to respond to demands and recommendations from local communities. In parallel, community action should be free of any controlling political affiliation which could lead to a conflict of interest.

We would like to see, across the country, the following systematic

changes:

- A unified and effective community development presence and strategy in every local authority, linked with housing associations and the NHS.
- Legislation that requires local authorities, the NHS and housing associations to respond to demands and recommendations from local communities.
- Each local authority should bring together an inter-agency and inter-business budget for community development
- Support for community action in terms of workers, grants, spaces to meet, learning and policy.
- A national debate on the relationship between community action and the formal democratic processes.

Community organising

This approach emphasises relational power as distinct from dominant power - 'power with' rather than 'power over'. Leadership is seen as distributed amongst people rather than over people. Relational power is built through multiple one-to-one dialogue which identifies common and divergent interests. Anger is understood to be an expression of grief, based on love for a world as it might be rather than as it currently is.

Different versions of community organising are promoted by government and independent bodies. For civil society to be able to counter-balance the excesses of the state and market it has to build its own form of power, be it by campaigning for affordable housing, cleaner air, better services, combating climate change or any number of concerns. When engaging power holders, campaigns such as the living wage typically deploy rigorous research and planning. The successful use of resident charters to secure community land trusts on the Olympic Park is one example of this approach.

Deliberative approaches

Deliberation involves bringing together groups of people who are representative of the demographics of the relevant population in terms of gender, age and ethnicity to deliberate on an issue over a sustained period of time. Groups may range from 12-15 people on a citizens' jury to citizens' summits of over 1,000 people. The process draws on the wisdom and knowledge of citizens to overcome conflict, identify consensus and differences, and find ways forward. It can operate at local, national and international levels and range from consultation to joint decision-making. The best-known forms of deliberation are citizens' juries, citizens' assemblies, participatory budgeting and community conferences. It has been used successfully on some highly complex and controversial issues including abortion and same sex marriage in Ireland, constitutional reform in Iceland and Canada and

– in the UK – on nuclear power, Brexit and social care. At local level it has been used to create neighbourhood plans, resolve neighbourhood disputes and establish restorative justice in schools. Many more examples are given in our pamphlet.

Deliberation is a carefully structured discussion between the participants who take on new information and have the time, space and support to explore issues on the basis of learning from each other and from specialists, share views and values, and then come to conclusions. Deliberative events need to be linked to formal decision-making processes, so that all those involved know how and when the results of the deliberation will be used to make decisions.

We would like to see:

- The development of roles and relationships between elected representatives and citizens at local and national levels, based on the use of deliberative methods to enable politicians to hear from and understand citizens' views more deeply and effectively, and to build new ways of working and deciding together.
- The development of a national strategy to build citizen deliberation into all major constitutional and controversial policy design and decision-making.
- The provision of resources at local and national levels to support citizen deliberation to share learning, improve practice and increase visibility.

Other issues

Other factors, treated in separate sections, include:

National government. Government needs to play its crucial role in supporting the development of participation in democratic decision-making, not by telling people and organisations what to do, but by researching, resourcing and facilitating effective participatory practices, raising awareness of their efficacy, and promoting quality standards for their application.

Local authorities. LAs have suffered great depletion of resources during 'austerity' , but through 'new municipalism', exemplified by Fearless Cities and Cooperative Councils, some local authorities have made a commitment to creating more participative forms of local governance. Evaluation of these and other participatory schemes is needed to see what this means in practice, how far it achieves its aims, what works and what gets in the way.

Digital technology. To create a more democratic and equitable society, the models we develop must embrace digital technology while ensuring it is used for social benefit. Like much else, learning has to be bottom-up and across different discipline and sectors.

Participatory budgeting has been an early and growing form of practical participation, linking public authorities and substantial direct citizen involvement in decision-making. “If it feels like we have decided, it’s participatory budgeting. If it feels like they have decided, its not…” (Brazilian resident).

Healthcare and wellbeing. Bringing people together and supporting them in taking more control over their lives and their areas has a very positive impact on their health, their resilience and on overcoming health inequalities. The limiting factor is the reluctance and fear of organisations to share power and control with the citizens they serve.

Climate change and social justice. In order to respond to the climate and ecological emergency alongside social justice, people need to work with nature through citizen participation at all levels, and this requires community development support and resources for both types of issue.

Constitutional change. A national attempt to create a deeper democracy will require constitutional change, particularly in England. How do we begin to square the circle of bringing representative and participative forms of democracy together into a functioning partnership for planning and decision-making?

International perspective. 45° change is not limited to local and national levels of action or issues. Organisations working on international issues are built on networks of dispersed support as well as dialogue with governments and local authorities. Notably, some European Union programmes foster links between participants in local social programmes in different member states and between European organisations and external countries.

Ensuring a positive political climate

How can such progressive, constructive practices be instituted in the present divisive political and social climate? There is a need for support and protection for genuine debate and deliberation. Antagonistic forces, whether in social media, the press or other arenas must be exposed and defused, without violating freedom of speech. Government should bring in legislation that will:

> (i) Establish standards for the reporting and dissemination of information, and ensure that there are swift and affordable means for all citizens to seek adjudication in cases where dubious claims are made to sway public opinion irrationally. Standards should incorporate expertise and impartiality in a similar manner to that for the communication of advice and assessment in, for example, medicine, engineering, and advertising, with an independent mechanism to investigate

and if necessary rule against claims that are untrue, unsubstantiated, harmfully misleading, or unfairly presented. This should apply to both conventional and online media.

(ii) Set up an Office for Democratic Integrity to:

(a) scrutinise all plans for public consultation exercises, referenda and electoral practice, to ensure that they optimise the participation of all relevant groups and are prepared with sufficient fair information to enable people to come to meaningful conclusions.
(b) examine evidence in relation to current participatory arrangements to identify ways to improve upon them, especially in terms of ensuring that all people affected can have a meaningful say and that the results are seriously considered.
(c) Give the Crown Prosecution Service the duty and power to investigate and prosecute alleged breaches of standards of democratic practices.

Introduction

Ever since the 2016 referendum on Brexit, the UK has faced a perfect storm of political and democratic challenge. It would be easy to assume the cause of the storm is Brexit, but this crisis has been long in the making, the product of deep shortcomings in the way our politics and democratic systems work. The Compass Common Platform programme urges us to think beyond the Brexit arguments, whether we were for leave or remain.

The turmoil surrounding Brexit has been used by regressive interests to try to undermine social justice, equality, fairness, compassion and accountability in our society and politics. At the same time, there is cause for optimism. There are challenges to the hateful rhetoric that gets so much media coverage. Protests around climate change, innovations in running local services, experiments that bring citizens into national and local decision making, openings for new community and political action are all stirring in pockets around the UK.

Compass' Common Platform is a call for these diverse creative and political initiatives to collaborate around their progressive common ground.

This pamphlet brings together contributions from a small group of people who have been involved in different forms of participatory practice for many years. We have variously worked in neighbourhoods, on national issues, in campaigning, collaboration, dialogue and action. We believe that the experience of some thousands of people who have worked in these ways can inform the processes and policies needed for the kind of radical change envisaged in the Common Platform. Our 12 short papers are not statements of what needs to be done but indications of what is possible. We hope they will encourage greater engagement between progressive forces and the world of participative practice.

We take our bearings from Neal Lawson's pamphlet 45° Change: Transforming society from below and above. This argues that government and people should be seen as if meeting and interacting along a diagonal line combining input from both 'top-down' and 'bottom up' forces in society (see Figure 2 below). It is an image that suggests that not all power is held at 'the top', though there is a great deal of disempowerment at 'the bottom' but that ways of confronting society's problems can be more inclusive and fluid.

There are already many examples of this mixed change process taking place. And whilst it is to some extent spontaneous, there are specific techniques that can stimulate or amplify it. We focus on three: community development, community organising and deliberative public dialogue. Overall, these kinds of technique can be called participatory

practice. They are used particularly (but not only) by civil society organisations. We draw on the varied traditions in this field to illuminate ways of driving 45° change. We first describe some of the main methods and then some of the areas of national life in which they have been used. Of course, not all such exercises are successful. Each field has its own evaluative literature, but we have not reviewed those, other than indicating links and references which include evidence of outcomes.

Participatory practice supports citizens, communities and their organisations, also working with government organisations and services at all levels to encourage deliberative dialogue, co-production through partnerships and organisational change. Government needs to learn from and work with the vast array of civil organisations. And we would argue this must include the smaller community organisations as well as the bigger and relatively more powerful. The kinds of change explored here cannot come about through 'bottom up' pressure alone. Neal's pamphlet argues that successful long-term change tends to come about when the 'bottom up' meets the 'top down', in the 45° 'meeting space'.

Imbalance of power

There is already a powerful momentum in participatory change:

- The increasing number of government institutions, at national and local levels, seeking to involve citizens in discussing complex issues (for example abortion and constitutional change), and local authorities across the planet who want to devolve power and involve citizens and communities in planning and decision-making
- The experience of movements that are based on participative and deliberative systems of decision making, such as Occupy and movement on the climate crisis
- A deepening understanding by many politicians that we face a crisis in democracy that requires radical solutions
- The extensive, hard-won and ongoing development of participatory practice.

Whilst the pressure for progressive change has never been greater, there are also powerful forces that oppose it. There is an imbalance of power which takes many forms, not just political, but economic, structural, cultural and social (in relation to class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality amongst other social divisions). Any strategy for change aimed at including rather than excluding citizens must confront and plan around these issues.

Some hard questions

'We respond to the crisis in democracy with more democracy, new forms that deepen democracy'[1]

There remain many questions:

- How do we create a deeper democracy?
- How do we square the circle of bringing together our long-established representative system with a much looser process of deliberation and participation?
- How successful are participatory initiatives in achieving their goals?
- Do participants feel there has been real change?
- Do they feel more involved?
- How do elected representatives see these processes?
- What works and why and what gets in the way?
- And above all: what is the distinctive contribution that participatory practice can make to achieving the 45°changes envisaged by the Compass common platform?

Of necessity a short pamphlet such as this must skim over some important viewpoints and issues, in our case the role of participatory practice with communities of identity such as minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, and LBGTQ communities. These must be addressed in the future, and we hope for collaboration and mutual learning. Another important element that is rarely discussed is the role of the many thousands of council officers and civil servants who work for government institutions. These people play a central role in developing and implementing policy and they are also citizens and members of communities.

1. Gaventa, J, 'Democracy in crisis? Democratic innovations and the future of politics' Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts University of Sussex, 12 June 2019

Putting participation into 45˚ change

The big picture, positive and negative

British democracy is undergoing one of the of the deepest crises it has ever faced. Brexit has opened fractures in our political and democratic system that have been developing for many years. Neo-liberal economics and globalisation have weakened the nation state's scope for decision-making so that it is now barely able to deal with fundamental problems such as the housing crisis, social care and the climate crisis. There are increasing levels of inequality and poverty, and long term and increasing polarisation between rich/powerful and poor/powerless. These factors are aggravated by the sense that large sections of the population have little voice or influence.

Our democratic system is in danger of breaking down at local and national levels. Loss of trust in the capacity and willingness of government to deliver equitably for the whole population, and the actions of extremist politicians who exacerbate this divide, are undermining trust. There is a loss of confidence that opposing sides will respect other points of view, and bullying, discrimination and divisiveness is rife, online and offline.

The consumer/market model of society has permeated policy thinking to an unwarranted degree. The Thatcher revolution that began the transformation of the state as the deliverer of residual services rather than creating a fairer and more sustainable society continues. People are seen solely as individual consumers rather than citizens acting together for the greater good.

At the same time much of our social commons, the public spaces and services that play a key role in our quality of life and wellbeing, have been privatised and sold off. Such spaces and services are no longer accountable to us or available for the public good and our cities and towns are dominated by examples of extreme private wealth and public squalor.

We are witnessing the fragmentation and destruction of civil society. The loss of funding and respect has weakened the voluntary sector. Voluntary organisations are transformed into contractual/service delivery bodies rather than autonomous organisations with a campaigning voice and independent action. The traditional trade unions are a shadow of their former selves. They are weak and slow to respond to the new labour market conditions.

The loss of empathy for others and trust is very dangerous. We are tending to lose the values that are the foundation of a redistributive welfare state with universally accessible services. Over the last few years we have seen the spread of punitive attitudes, and the othering

of the outsider and 'scrounger'. The comfortably-off and aspirational do not see themselves as beneficiaries of public services, and tax avoidance and demonisation of those who use those services follows. Much of the state has become dominated by corporations and business culture and many of the wealthiest 1% are unwilling to pay the taxes that are core to a sustainable society.

However, to paraphrase Marx, the existing system already contains the seeds of its own replacement:

- There is a growing interest in developing deeper and richer forms of democracy.
- A growing number of organisations including some parts of local and national government are seeking ways of involving citizens in their planning and decision-making processes.
- There is increasingly successful use of deliberative systems over contentious national issues.
- Across the world there are a growing number of governmental institutions implementing radical strategies for citizen participation and deliberation.
- A body of theory and practice on participatory and deliberative action has been developed over the last 50 years.

Participatory practice

The image of 45° change is important for those of us engaged in participative practice. Much of our work can be seen as taking place along the 45° interface between official bodies and civil society (see Figure 1). Many place-based and identity-based communities need support to realise their own collective power in order that they be heard, to make changes and to participate as equals.

Participatory practice takes many forms (see Figure 2 on page 17) and is active in many spheres, from small neighbourhoods and groups through to assemblies and networks on national and international issues. It works both horizontally (across society) and vertically (at different levels of society). Each approach seeks ways of enabling citizens to participate as equals through, for example:

- Supporting and developing autonomous civil organisations
- Encouraging co-productive working between civil organisations and government institutions
- Encouraging organisational change
- Creating platforms for participative and deliberative planning, policy making and decision making.

Figure 1 on page 16 outlines differences and similarities between the three most common forms of participative practice. The horizontal rows outline the different forms of activity each type of participatory practice is engaged in:

Community organising works with citizens and civil organisations to campaign for change at a local, regional and national level. Notable examples in the UK include the campaign for a living wage, improved housing and trade union organising (particularly the 'new unions').

Community development tends to work at a neighbourhood level or with communities of identity with a focus on supporting resident-led change through the development of community organisations such as residents' associations, youth groups and community centres. Community development also supports residents' collaboration (co-production) with public bodies often in the form of neighbourhood fora.

Deliberative public dialogue is concerned with creating processes that bring citizens together to plan, discuss contentious issues and identify common ground, and come to conclusions to inform debate and policy at local and national levels. The form might include citizens' assemblies and juries, participative budgeting or forms of participative neighbourhood planning.

The differences between the three forms of practice may not be as distinct as the table implies. For example, community development often gets involved in campaigns whilst community organising will often support community organisations, and each will employ some of the approaches used in deliberative dialogue.

The vertical columns describe how these activities fit within the different institutional and social environments:

Neighbourhoods. More than 60% of voluntary and community groups are based in a particular neighbourhood or equivalent rural area[1]. Most of these groups are self-organised and receive little support from government institutions. Neighbourhoods tend to be where institutions and citizens come into direct contact, sometimes in conflict, sometimes in partnerships. Neighbourhoods are also where many of our most important public services are based, such as GP surgeries and schools. Inequalities show up starkly in contrasts between neighbourhoods in most local authorities, for example by differences of ten years or more in life expectancy between neighbourhoods in the same city. This shows how very localised poverty and disadvantage can be.

Campaigns take many forms, such as preventing school closures, housing issues, the living wage, tackling climate change.

Transformational self-help. This is about how people experiment and create new forms of collaborative working to challenge mainstream attitudes and gain more control of their lives. It is a way in which communities of identity often organise themselves. For example, the LGBTQ movement and the women's movement have not only played a

1. Source: https://www.ncvo.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/briefings/1721-fast-facts-about-the-charity-sector

central role in transforming attitudes and the law, but have developed major resources to tackle AIDS, and to create women's refuges. Similarly, environmental campaigns are not only about changing the political debate and demanding that we transform the ways we live our lives as individuals but also modelling what we can do.

Local government is the fundamental tier of representative democracy and continues to play an indispensable role in the life of all citizens despite massive budget cuts and steady privatisation of services.

National government. In addition to voting, participative practice at this level includes citizens' juries and assemblies and other forms of deliberative dialogue, usually focussing on complex issues such as constitutional reform or contentious issues such as abortion, GM crops or equal marriage.

The international arena. Whilst the international arena is in one sense 'beyond' the national, there are still ways in which citizens can directly participate, whether as EU citizens or by other means. International campaigning organisations for peace, combating climate change, helping refugees and any number of other causes are usually open to membership by individuals and local support groups anywhere. Some organise educational and friendship exchanges between citizens of different countries and continents, and contribute to consultation by the various branches of the UN and other international governance bodies.

How does change take place? The 45° model

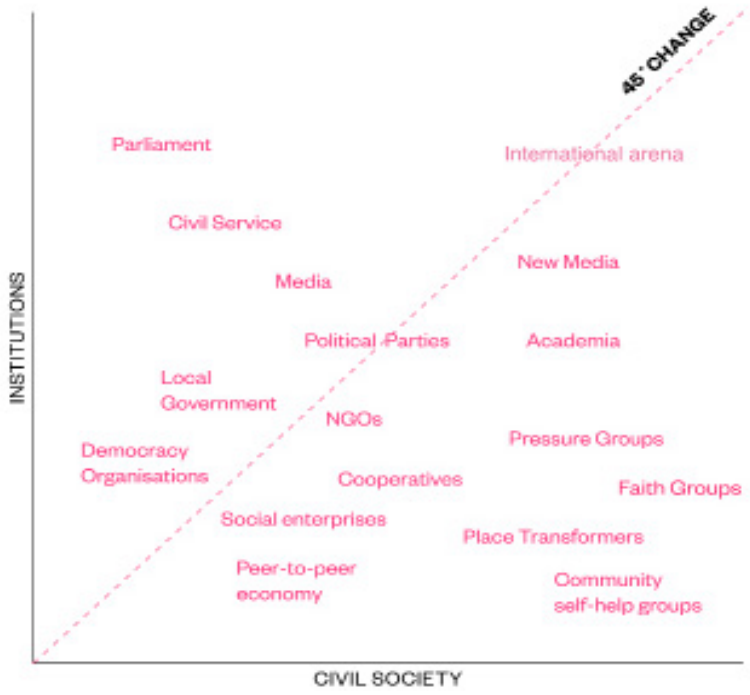


Figure 1: The process of change at 45°

Figure 2: Examples of the scope of participatory practice

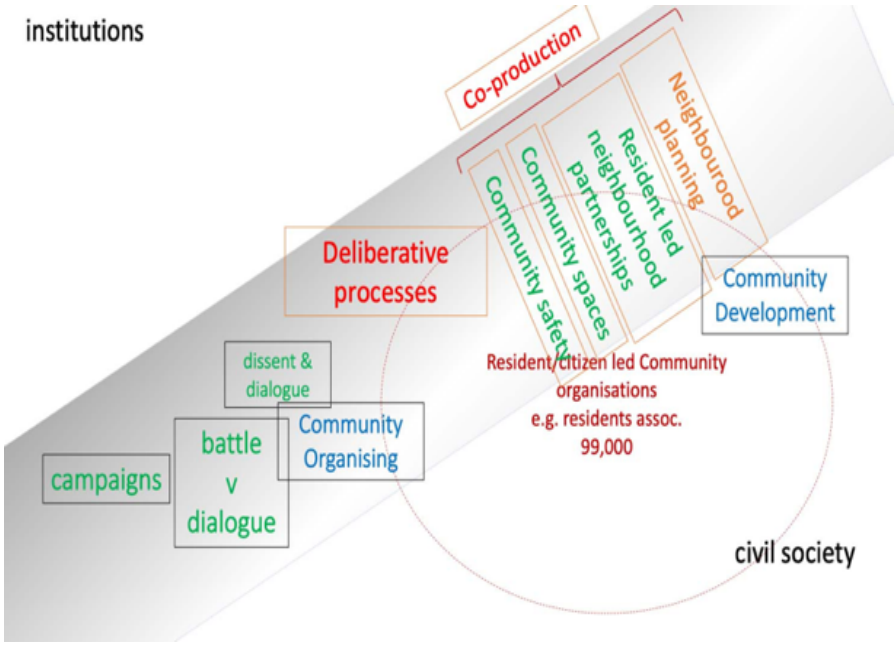
	Neighbourhood or ward level, including villages / rural areas	Campaigns	Transformative/Self help	Local Government	National Government and beyond
Community Development	Working with residents to: • Identify issues & create action plans • Develop groups • Develop activities • Environmental action • Develop community resources	Working with residents & communities of identity on campaigns e.g. • School closures • Local housing issues • Anti-cuts • Supplementary education • Traffic calming	Working with community to share resources Co-housing, Tool sharing, Food Banks, Community Gardens, befriending & good neighbour schemes Working with communities of identity	Working with residents & services providers: • Create resident led partnerships • Encourage organisational change (e.g. GP practice, school etc)	• Networking across Europe • Links with international campaigning organisations
Community Organising	Working with residents & local organisations creating alliances for campaigns	Campaigns for change: • Improved housing • Living wage	Showing how and why public services could be different Housing co-ops, car share schemes, claimants' unions, plastic free towns/transition towns, women's aid, free legal aid schemes, rape crisis schemes, school governors (some)…	Lobbying or negotiating with local councils	• Living wage campaign • Violence against women • housing
Deliberative Public Dialogue	Working with local citizens in the community: • conflict resolution • planning processes • creating neighbourhood plans • participatory budgeting	Consideration of issues: • building new schools • energy issues • agriculture	Working with local citizens in an open-ended method of resolving difficult and wicked problems and creating solutions. Appreciative inquiries	• Participatory budgeting • Local authority working with residents	Working with large groups of citizens broadly representative of the general public to discuss and make recommendations on contentious national issues. Examples: Ireland: abortion, equal marriage, blasphemy law UK: GM Nation, Nuclear Power, Health and Social Care, Constitutional Reform in Ireland, British Columbia, Iceland

Government institutions are not neutral playing fields where simple or complex structural tweaks will enable a deeper democracy to evolve. Rather they are self-reinforcing power structures that need to be, at the very least, recognised and planned around.

Neal Lawson argues that change tends to happen when civil society, in the form of a complexity of organisations and movements, interacts with governmental institutions, hence the 45° line shown in Figure 1.

Participatory practice enabled people to share in power through collective action and organisation. Community organising does this through supporting campaigns and formulating demands, community development through supporting the development of neighbourhood bases and community-run groups and organisations, and deliberative public dialogue through the creation of safe and neutral spaces that enable open dialogue and decision-making to take place.

We would add that the 45° line should be seen not as a boundary but as the core site of interaction. The change process takes place 'within' the line, which can be looked at as if through a microscope (Figure 3). It is the area where civil society and government institutions interact, fight, negotiate, invent, collaborate and argue. This is the area where participatory practice tends to take place, supporting citizens to engage and participate to formulate fair demands, co-produce and work in partnerships. But if citizens are not properly supported and government organisations are not responsive, change will be, at best, stuck within the 45° space. If successful, it spreads into other areas both of government and civil society.



Figuure 3: Inside the 45˚ line

Ethos and challenges

We are guided by the core idea that we are not just individual consumers but citizens of a wider society. We act as much collectively as we do as individuals. In participatory practice, we articulate the positive value of public provision and space and take a stand against narrow private or corporate interests. And we see a need to develop and test ways for the state to become more accountable, responsive, transparent and supportive of civil society.

Local and national government and other public bodies need to be transformed into actively supporting and encouraging an ecosystem of independent social movements, NGOs and community groups that represent local interests, advocate for change and engage with local and national governance bodies as equals.

Alongside our role in supporting change and the development of citizen-led organisations there is growing evidence of the impact of participatory practice on the physical and mental health and socially beneficial effects of friendship, networks, a sense of agency and belonging, access to a social life, ability to influence. Community development builds those assets. We see all people as citizens with strengths, knowledge and experience which contribute to the public good. We respect different kinds of knowledge: professional expertise as well as the tacit knowledge that comes from experience.

We need to understand and support the systemic change in local and national government, in public services including the NHS, that will be required if those services are to respond to new voices, new methods and new values. It is important that transparency and accountability are embedded in the design and review of systems and organisations. New municipalism potentially offers some of the most exciting initiatives in forms of local governance. New Unionism's demands for improved wage and working conditions, as well as for better living conditions are being adopted in local communities and work-spaces, offering hope to people trapped in precarious and exploitative work, and insecure housing.

But these innovative projects need to be critically evaluated to understand what works and what needs to be done differently. We are aware of gaps in our knowledge and we need to reach out internationally to places where thinking and practice is more developed. What can UK local authorities learn from innovations elsewhere in the world and vice versa?

The absence of political and community education and knowledge is a barrier to informed popular involvement in democratic decision making. There is a need for a radical overhaul of social and other media and education at all ages.

This is a massive project and there are many questions and challenges that we must leave open to further debate:

- Participatory methods are designed to encourage multiple and often conflicting voices and interests to inform public policy. How can these interact most effectively with existing formal decision-making processes?
- There are many barriers to creating more participatory and democratic processes. Organisational changes will be required. How do we create more responsive systems?
- How do we balance the democratically legitimate and necessary mission of a government institution with providing opportunities for meaningful participation? How do we manage the relationship between representative and participatory democracy?
- How do we overcome the limitation that the democratic impulse to decentralise and make more local decisions can leave powerful global players even less accountable?
- Finally, how do we overcome some of the flaws and weaknesses that have been encountered in participatory practice itself?

Methods

Making 45° change happen with maps, apps, stories and self-organising

David Wilcox

Summary

Achieving a Good Society that is more equal, sustainable and democratic will depend on combining learning from participatory practice and community development with more recent advances in network thinking and the use of digital tools and systems by citizens and community groups.

The Compass pamphlet 45° Change: Transforming Society from Below and Above cites a wide range of digitally-powered examples of small-scale, self-organising innovations. The challenge is how to combine these different areas of older and new expertise, and then to scale and support change at three levels: locally, among communities and networks of interest, and nationally. That will involve a lot of learning, organisational change, and key roles for community and network connectors.

Networked vision

Introducing *45° Change: Transforming Society from Below and Above* Neal Lawson wrote in the Guardian: "In communities across the country, people aren't waiting for politicians to pronounce: they know politics is broken. So they are getting on and doing things for themselves – mostly together and often boosted by the incredible power of social media. Caring, sharing, building, making and organising are happening at unprecedented rates because the demand is there and it is now easier than ever to do. A simple hashtag puts you in touch with everyone, locally, nationally and globally, who wants to decide things and do things like you, and with you."

Neal's assertion was based on research for the Compass Common Platform inquiry, in support of a good society that is much more equal, sustainable and democratic. Compass aims to achieve that through a clear vision, new models and a programme to build progressive alliances. The core idea is that of 45° Change.

"The Common Platform will develop a theory called 45° Change in which civil society on the X (horizontal) axis combines with the state and other big institutions on the Y (vertical) axis. Transformation occurs at the diagonal meeting point where bottom-up change meets top- down support; the energy and inventiveness of civil society being encouraged and sustained by the state. The Common Platform will work at this 45° intersection; the fault line along which a new society will be created." (See Figure 1 in the previous section).

The pamphlet doesn't just argue for more participation, support for community action, and greater use of digital tools. It says that we a new model, citing Richard Buckminster Fuller, a 20th-century inventor and visionary who wrote, "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

Neal's call to action will resonate with those, like me, who have been inspired by the potential of digital technology for social change at local level ever since FreeNets and community networks emerged in North America 25 years ago.

The Compass pamphlet lists a wide range of Networked Society initiatives and declares "a new society is already here". I think that's true - but would frame it like William Gibson "The future is already here - it's just not evenly distributed".

The challenge in moving from inspiring examples to the sort of systemic change envisaged by Compass goes beyond closing the digital divide. These days over 80% of the UK population has a smartphone, and through that the ability to publish on social media.

As Neal says, we can find affinities through social media hashtags - and that, combined with more private peer-to-peer conversations using systems like WhatsApp or Telegram can provide powerful tools for organising. The BBC explained recently How apps power Hong Kong's 'leaderless' protests, leading to the suspension of an extradition bill.

However, apps are not enough - they are enablers, like any other communication tool. What's also needed are skills to use them for organising, whether in campaigns or collaborations on projects; facilitators and connectors; ways to visualise and manage networks; structures for decision-making; and good content. We need maps, apps, stories and self-organising methods.

Digitally-enabled innovation for collaborative action also requires people who are prepared to experiment and learn, and change the culture of their groups and organisation in the process. If someone in a gatekeeper role says they don't do digital, should the group do around them, or default back to basic communications?

I think that the 45° Change pamphlet and the Compass Common Platform process can be particularly helpful in designing new models if, for example, there were some collaboration with the group now exploring the idea of a People Powered Grid, which developed from the Civil Society Futures report.

In order to identify the possible components of new models, I have

drawn out 10 propositions from the 45° Change pamphlet, summarised below.

1. We need a new operating model for society based on an understanding of ecosystems, networks and digital technologies.
2. Change is coming bottom up from active citizens. We need to start small, provide support from the state, and develop new participatory models.
3. There is great potential for change through sharing and collaboration.
4. Change is sporadic and isolated. It needs orchestration with new models of support across traditional boundaries.
5. Networks, social media, digital technologies are the vehicles of change.
6. A good society will only be achieved through active participation of citizens. We need to learn how to organise in a flatter networked society aided by the internet and social media.
7. Bottom-up collective organising will become the dominant means of deciding and doing through emergent structures.
8. Active and connected citizens will change the world - but to do so they must look beyond local organising towards political organising.
9. We need to learn how to share knowledge and learn in new ways, combining bottom-up and specialist expertise.
10. The state must both regulate monopolistic forces and support emerging participatory forces.

Three levels of organising

From an analysis of the pamphlet, discussions about People Powered Grid, and my own experience in the field, I think we need to develop the idea of Common Platforms at three levels: neighbourhood or town; communities of interest; and national. In each instance we need ways to connect up different communication apps; facilitation from community connectors and network weavers; datasets and network maps; and support for projects and other activities.

However, digital methods and network building won't work on their own - they need to be allied with participatory practice and community development approaches which are featured in other contributions to this pamphlet.

Bringing together these different fields is difficult, and theoretical attempts to do so will have little influence unless they are accessible to the agents of change, whether community activists or people with positions of influence in organisations who are prepared to move towards 45° Change. People need to be in the same room and develop a shared mental model.

In order to help achieve that my colleague Drew Mackie and I have

developed a number of Living Lab games and simulations, that allow people to play through scenarios at different levels. There's more explanation here on how that works.

In one version of the Lab game we invite people to become characters in the fictitious town of Slipham, and then to choose and use a range of methods to organise actions to address the social and economic challenges they face.

We could construct a 45° Change version of the game, drawing on the Compass research and our experience, and invite key people in civil society futures to join with those already pioneering digitally enabled social action. Then the way to invent the future is to convene, connect, converse - and have some fun.

War games are used to plan aggression and defence. Civil society games can help us plan cooperation and collaboration.

Community development (CD)

Matt Scott and Nick Beddow

Introduction

The diverse world of CD occupies a position in society which makes it uniquely placed to foster 45° change: as a boundary profession, sandwiched between the state and civil society, CD is both a broker of change and a change agent, working closely with communities to transform their world, one conversation and encounter at a time. This day-to-day focus on engaging people in formal and informal democratic processes has slipped below everyone else's radar for too long. It is CD which has been developing new community networks, face-to-face and digitally. It is CD which has championed the potential of communities and challenged the deficit thinking which labels communities as problems to be managed. The transformational role that CD has played in promoting formal and informal democratic processes has been underplayed in the current national debate, partly to justify huge cuts in state funding for community development and partly because community development voices have been marginalised by a hostile government who perceive CD as a left-wing cause.

Defining community development

CD has been contested throughout its history; there is no single model or definition which has held sway over competing approaches. The attempt to unify CD within a framework of National Occupational Standards could not reconcile the competing models which diverge in three different directions: 'Consensus CD' has avoided conflict with power holders and pursued collaboration as if all players are equal and 'all in it together'; 'Pluralist CD' has acknowledged power inequalities but not challenged them decisively, focusing pragmatically on making deals and developing wider partnerships; 'Radical CD' contends that social change has to be fought for, and can only be achieved through conflict with power holders who would not otherwise cede power to the disempowered. "Community development has long contained within itself a tension between the goals of the state and the aspirations of the 'target' community, with no guarantee that they would necessarily be aligned" (Alison Gilchrist).

Accordingly, there are a number of definitions widely used in the UK. These include:

- The National Occupational Standards definition
- The Community Development Exchange definition
- The Budapest Declaration, 2004
- Asset Based Community Development.

The reader is invited to examine these four definitions to understand the underlying tensions in the CD field; power and empowerment are serious, nuanced issues and a unified approach is not easy to achieve. Nevertheless, The Community Development Challenge report of 2006 underlined the importance of bringing all of these definitions into consideration: "Policymakers and practitioners alike should commit to a consistent, concrete and rounded definition of CD and its outcomes".

Community development in practice

Underlying the struggle to define CD is the sheer breadth of activities practitioners are engaged in. The huge range of groups and organisations supported by CD is vast (as varied as the 600,000 small community groups that are estimated to exist in the UK).

A defining value in community development is the commitment to collective action by communities, extending beyond the traditional neighbourhood focus on community associations and tenants' groups to working alongside many communities of identity (including race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexuality, ability, etc) and communities of interest (such as arts, hobbies, etc) : the concept of a community has itself become more diverse, fluid and complex, recognising that people may belong to multiple communities. Much of this community development work has been all about collective power and democratic action.

At the same time community development will also be frequently involved in service creation, supporting self-help initiatives such as youth activity groups, groups catering for older people such as lunch clubs and supplementary education initiatives such as Black History projects, Madrassas and homework clubs.

The key is that these initiatives are based on what local people want; it is they who set the agenda for the continuing support of existing groups and the development of new ones.

Changes in institutions

An often unrecognised aspect of community development is its role in helping to promote organisational and cultural change in local public services (such as schools, health, policing, and community safety). This is a key element of the profession's work within the 45° nexus. It is also, perhaps, one of the most challenging aspects of the work because community interests and agencies' interests seldom align from the outset. It is an aspect of work that can take many forms, such as helping residents and services to co-produce a policy and/or project, to developing neighbourhood-based community/services partnerships.

Community development practitioners have also been regularly involved in helping develop community-wide, resident-led community planning

exercises, which can sometimes be on a very wide scale, as in the example below.

Case study: Thames Ward Community Project - Building People Power (Matt Scott, Director of Community Engagement, TWCP[1])

Thames Ward is the site of the largest housing development in London and its population will double over the next four years. Yet poverty levels are high with half of the children in the ward living in poverty. Thames Ward Community Project (TWCP) is a response to this upheaval and the very real divisions (physical, economic and social) that may be exacerbated without a community-led response that brings people together across the entire area. Acting on this challenge, in 2015 Margaret Hodge MP initiated a feasibility study which concluded that the need for investment in the people as well as the housing of Thames Ward was vital and recognised as a priority across the whole community and its stakeholders. This led to the search for funding for the TWCP and the identification of Riverside School as host to the project.

'Power to Change' community organising 2016. In June 2016, a six-month programme of community organising was initiated from a 'Power to Change' grant to do outreach and develop support for a longer term three-year programme of work. 'Power to Change' identified Thames Ward as a 'cold spot' that had traditionally lacked the forms of community infrastructure other areas can access, the kind of place that PtC was keen to support. Over 75 residents indicated a willingness to be directly involved and a further 300 agreed to be on a database of contacts. A Citizens Action Group (CAG) of Year 10 students at Riverside School led on further outreach work and undertook a number of environmental and local history activities.

The 'Power to Change' work highlighted five themes:

- A divide between the older estates and new developments
- Services under pressure as the population expanded
- A lack of communication and little information about existing activities
- A lack of activities for young people
- Tensions between different groups as they struggle to promote their activities.

It was concluded that the following things were needed:

- A community organising approach
- An honest broker
- Resources
- Working with young people
- Working with partners (council, developers, etc.)

1. Contact: 07827 258411

- Generating community business.

Big Lottery (Reaching Communities) 2017. Funding from the Big Lottery was awarded in July 2017 for a project manager and community organiser based at the school for three years. The project now works to fill the following gaps:

- Environmental neglect
- Overstretched services for families
- Low levels of participation
- Lack of community wide voice
- Fragmented community; isolation and fear
- Fragile community groups
- Lack of community enterprise.

The project is a catalyst to unleash resources within the community. Thus the project is about specific projects including gardening, volunteering, resident voice, but also a more strategic longer term focus that seeks to build community businesses and assets that will enhance entrepreneurship and community control of resources and decision making. A parallel aim is to ensure sustainability of the project beyond the initial three year period of Lottery funding, including the creation of a Community Development Trust (CDT). Establishing the CDT will mean a permanent community-driven unit to ensure that residents are better organised to grasp new opportunities emerging from local development and able to access new training and job opportunities; that community enterprises are supported; to generate additional income for a sustainable future, and provide a strong community voice in relation to the 'development juggernaut' that could so easily ride rough-shod over this community. We aim to shift real power and resources into the hands of local people.

Community organising

Nick Gardham

"Community organising is the work of bringing people together to take action around their common concerns and overcome social injustice. Community organisers reach out and listen, connect and motivate people to build their collective power." (Taken from http://www.corganisers.org.uk)

There are different versions of this practice, some promoted by government, some separate. What all approaches share is the belief that if you want change, you need power. Power, in the context of community organising is built through the organisation of people; whether that be through institutions or through working with people in neighbourhoods. This work places an emphasis on the importance of relational power as distinct from dominant power (which uses force or violence to gets its way through coercion). Hence the model is about 'power with' rather than 'power over'.

Using a power analysis is crucial. Typically, power is seen to reside in three areas: the market which has money power, the state which has organisational power, and civil society, which has the potential to build people power. The market and state have the advantages of organised people and money and are able to use this relative power to secure their objectives (and gain 'power over' communities). For civil society to be able to counter-balance the excesses of the state and market it has to build its own brand of power in order to secure its objectives, be it by campaigning for affordable housing, cleaner air or any number of concerns.

Citizens UK, who have been active for over 20 years in the UK, typically seek to build people power through civil society organisations such as faith groups or schools, since these groups already have organised people and a degree of organised money. Building power via disorganised groups and indivduals is much harder (though not precluded). Relational power is built through one-to-one dialogue which seeks to identify community self-interest. Self-interest is seen as vital to counter burn-out and create a genuine connection. Typically the question asked is 'what makes you angry?'. Any anger that can be focused is seen as vital and understood to be an expression of grief, based on love for a world as it might be rather than as it currently is. The approach thus stresses people rather than programme and defines leadership as distributed amongst people rather than over people.

The building of campaigns such as the living wage typically deploys rigorously targeted research and planning when engaging power holders. The use of resident charters to secure community land trusts

on the Olympic Park are one example of this approach.

Building the Big Society – the expansion of community organising in England

In 2011, then Prime Minister David Cameron set out his blueprint for a 'Big Society'. At the heart of this was Cameron's ambition 'to transfer power from the state to individuals, neighbourhoods or the lowest possible tier of Government, in that priority', and perhaps, what is most interesting for those involved in community organising, he stated that 'what remains of state power will be used galvanising, catalysing, prompting, encouraging and agitating for community engagement and social renewal'.

To achieve this vision Cameron called for a 'new generation of community organisers', and in 2011 the coalition government delivered on this promise by awarding Locality a contract to train 500 community organisers across England. This ambitious project, operating at significant scale, was both welcomed and treated with disdain equally. Whether it was intentional in its timing or not, it couldn't help but be interwoven with cuts to the public sector, austerity and a desire for communities to step up and do more as public services retreated.

The Government investment in community organising in 2011 shone a spotlight on practice that had already been developing in England and across the UK. It brought attention to work that was already happening through organisations such as Citizens UK in London, Church Action on Poverty in Teesside and Manchester, Action to Regenerate Community Trust in parts of the UK and Together Creating Communities in Wales, and through Nurture Development's work promoting Asset-Based Community Development approaches - which bridged the gap between community organising and community development.

This created a flurry of activity from organisations and funders seeking to understand what community organising was, and how it applied to their existent practice. It paved the way for new community organising organisations such as ACORN, and for many individuals and organisations to start exploring how community organising could help them meet their goals, including trades unions, political parties, charities and protest groups. Inevitably this has led to both growth and competition - as investment from government always will.

Whilst many positives can be drawn from breathing life into the community organising sector, its rapid emergence and associated investment was perhaps most damaging to well established community development organisations that had operated in England for some time as funding was drawn away from these organisations. This damage is perhaps most notable in the decision from the Board of Trustees to close the Community Development Foundation (CDF) in 2015, which had

served as a leading policy and practice body for those working with and within communities for a number of decades.

The closure of CDF and other organisations such as the Community Development Exchange (closed 2013) and Federation for Community Development Learning (closed 2017) left a space for the emergence of new prevailing narratives in the sector around practice models and approaches. As new models and approaches developed, a few funders began to invest in organising, whilst organisations such as the Young Foundation started to look at the 'market' for community organising and the potential for scaling up. The language of creating a market and competition over funding was perhaps a contributing factor to the divisions which quickly developed between organisations and practitioners of community development, community organising, Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), and the many protest groups that use organising methods to build their power and effectiveness.

Other causes of competition can also be seen in debates over 'purity' and what 'real' community organising is or isn't, questions as to whether it is right to take government investment, and the need of each of the organisations to build a brand and identity in order to recruit members and practitioners and to attract funding from whatever source.

In 2015, Community Organisers was established as the independent legacy body from the national, Government-funded, Community Organisers Programme which had trained 500 Community Organisers. Since 2015 Community Organisers has trained over 2000 people in community organising and developed a membership of over 1000 individuals. In 2019, Community Organisers launched the National Academy of Community Organising to support the development and growth of community organising at a neighbourhood level. The Academy is made up of 22 neighbourhood organisations that are locally rooted and accountable to local people.

Not many would claim that the growth of new practitioners of citizen centred and grassroots community work is anything other than positive. However, the divisions that have emerged could be considered damaging to the people we aim to serve. In 2016, Community Organisers and Nurture Development (led by Cormac Russell who had been a key driver for the widespread development and growth of ABCD in England) co-authored a series of blogs highlighting what there was in common, rather than what was different between the respective approaches. This was our first attempt to bridge one of the divides that has emerged and is hindering progress on the ground.

Having said this, whilst communities and practitioners were sharing stories of division, there are also stories of local collaboration that highlight how people and organisations are working jointly for the common good. In 2019, Community Organisers is now seeking to reach

out to further practitioners to explore what ‘collaboration’ rather than ‘competition’ in the community organising field could look like, with the overarching question: could a national alliance for community organising and community building be established and what would it do?

Examples and resources:

- https://www.corganisers.org.uk/what-is-community-organising/stories/learning-journey-for-brixton-community-organisers/
- https://www.corganisers.org.uk/what-is-community-organising/stories/young-leaders-bring-new-skate-park-to-gloucester/
- https://www.corganisers.org.uk/training/learning-resources/

Deliberative dialogue

Diane Warburton

Context

The current popularity of deliberative forms of public participation (particularly, in 2019, citizens' assemblies) is best understood as a response to the failures of the adversarial nature of our democratic systems – deliberation is an approach to overcoming conflict, identifying where there is consensus and where there remain differences of views and values, and finding ways forward.

Citizens' assemblies, in 2019 the most well-known deliberative public participation mechanism, have been being proposed by everyone from Extinction Rebellion to former Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Deliberation can be demanding of time and money so it is often used in major complex and highly controversial issues – from abortion and same sex marriage in Ireland, constitutional reform in Iceland and Canada and Brexit, social care, nuclear power and climate change in the UK. It can also be used in tackling local planning issues (e.g. Planning for Real), participatory budgeting (to prioritise neighbourhood spending), community conferences to resolve neighbourhood disputes and restorative justice in schools.

Governments and other public bodies have recognised that policy changes and developments can only proceed when they go with the grain of public opinion. However, deliberative dialogue goes far beyond opinion polls, which are increasingly recognised as limited:

"National opinion research tests have limitations, however, reflecting the impulsive reflexes of a cohort affected by contemporary media coverage. In order to understand the broader sets of concerns that underlie survey responses, public engagement needs to be deliberative."[1]

Deliberation allows policies to be designed and implemented drawing on the wisdom of citizens. The failures deliberation address are partly political – disempowerment of much of the population, lack of transparency and accountability in the decisions that affect citizens, and partly practical – excluding a whole range of knowledges that can help improve the design and implementation of policy changes, including mobilising support and managing opposition[2]. For some public bodies, deliberation has been seen increasingly as a key tool in risk

1. Report of the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee inquiry into 'Engaging the public in national strategy', June 2013
2. Hallsworth, M. and Rutter, J, Making Policy Better. Improving Whitehall's Core Business. Institute for Government, April 2011

management, not least because it is seen as a cost efficient tool that helps to anticipate problems and identify flaws, thus saving money.

Wikipedia defines citizens' assemblies as follows:

"a body formed from the citizens of a state to deliberate on an issue or issues of national importance. The membership of a citizens assembly is randomly selected … to employ a cross-section of the public to study the options available to the state on certain questions and to propose answers to these questions through rational and reasoned discussion and the use of various methods of inquiry such as directly questioning experts."

This definition covers the key characteristics of deliberation but misses the significant use of deliberation by local authorities and other public, civil society and private bodies as well as national government.

Involve, the participation charity, defines deliberation as follows:

"Deliberation is an approach to decision-making that allows participants to consider relevant information from multiple points of view. Deliberation allows participants to discuss the issues and options and develop their thinking before coming to a view, taking into account the values that inform people's opinions."[3]

Governments, public, private and civil society bodies have routinely engaged with experts and stakeholders to inform their thinking but this has been recognised for some years as necessary but not sufficient.

As a result, in the UK, deliberation is being increasingly used to improve public policy development and decision-making, by providing effective and well-tested ways to bring the public voice directly into the governance process to tackle complex and controversial issues, and to overcome logjams created by posturing and fixed views and positions. There has been a slow but powerful movement away from the conventional public policy making approach of Decide – Announce – Defend (DAD) towards Engage – Deliberate – Decide (EDD)[4].

What is it?

Essentially deliberation is a process of carefully structured discussion between the participants who take on new information and have the time, space and support to explore issues on the basis of learning from existing and new knowledge from each other and from specialists, sharing views and values, and then coming to conclusions which are

3. Source: https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/knowledge-base/what/deliberative-public-engagement

4. See, for example, Jeff Bishop's The Craft of Collaborative Planning. People working together to shape creative and sustainable places and Ed Straw's 'New Public Service Management: From DAD to EDD'

reported to decision makers[5].

Groups of people are brought together to deliberate in face-to-face meetings, often for no less than two meetings. These may last from a few hours to several days. Online elements are often included. It is recognised as good practice to ensure that deliberative events are explicitly part of wider decision-making processes, so that all those involved know how and when the results of the deliberation will be used – including as a prelude to a referendum, feeding into a formal parliamentary inquiry, or informing a local plan.

The citizens participating in deliberative events are usually recruited and randomly selected to provide a diverse group broadly representative of the broader population (nationally or locally depending on the specific purpose of the process) in terms of gender, ethnicity and age[6]. The size of the group, and the number and locations of groups addressing a particular issue, depends on the purpose and context. They may range from relatively small groups of around 12-15 people up to citizens' summits with around 1,000 citizens in the room. Each of these different scales of deliberative processes may be called different names – mini-publics, citizens' assemblies, citizens' juries[7], citizen summits etc.

Deliberation usually focuses on influencing a specific decision, policy, service, project or programme. The goal of deliberation is to make informed and reasoned judgements – to reach conclusions and report, make recommendations, shape policy or decide how to spend a budget[8].

There is a difference between deliberation and debate. Debates are about winning – both individual debating points and the overall debate. Deliberation is about opening up and exploring issues through listening to and learning from each other, thinking about personal initial views and working out where it is possible to compromise on values, preferences and aspirations where these clash with others. It involves considering information and evidence from different points of view, building understanding and identifying common ground and areas of continuing disagreement, and coming to conclusions that feed into and inform formal public policy decision making. Deliberation is about reasoning rather than bargaining.

Deliberation is a relatively new participatory approach. The methods

5. Escobar, O., Gibb, K, Kandlik Eltanani, M, & Weakley, S, Community Planning Officials Survey: Understanding the everyday work of local participatory governance in Scotland, What Works Scotland, 2018, and Roberts, J & Escobar, O, Involving communities in deliberation: A study of 3 citizens' juries on onshore wind farms in Scotland, ClimateXChange, 2015
6. Source: https://www.involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/Deliberative-public-engagement-nine-principles.pdf
7. Such as the Citizens' Jury for NHS Citizen, England 2015, run by Involve. See Nesta's Alliance for Useful Evidence report Evidence vs Democracy case studies, 2019
8. Escobar, O, Public Dialogue and Deliberation. A communication perspective for public engagement practitioners. University of Edinburgh Beltane Beacon for Public Engagement, 2011

used draw on techniques from practice and theory in consensus building, conflict resolution, social science research and market research. In recent decades, it has become one of the most respected and trusted approaches to public participation used by governments and others as it has been shown increasingly to provide a reliable and effective way to bring citizens into policy and decision making in a whole range of institutions and contexts.

Common criticisms

Deliberative public participation takes time – time to design, implement and report. There is no one size fits all method, so skills, expertise and experience are needed to create the appropriate processes for the specific purpose, and that politicians and other decision makers (as well as participants) will be prepared to take seriously and see as legitimate. Deliberation can therefore sometimes require significant investment of time and money, especially on highly contentious issues – which are also those that could result in the most costly mistakes if not guided by deliberative input.

Deliberation requires that all those involved – citizens as well as politicians and decision makers who want to use the results – are willing and able to change their minds, and consider new ideas from unexpected sources. For professionals in all fields (including civil servants), this can appear to undermine their professional status and knowledge, so it needs confidence, humility and openness from all involved.

The quality and effectiveness of deliberative public participation are hard to measure and demonstrate. Formal guidance has been produced over the past five years[9], but in many cases the credibility of deliberative initiatives depends on getting buy-in from key decision makers and politicians early in any specific process, and designing the process so that it has that credibility with all participants.

The impacts and outcomes of deliberation are even more difficult to measure and demonstrate, especially where final outcomes can be months (sometimes years) after deliberative events. Sciencewise devised a range of evaluation approaches to address this, including using qualitative impacts process tracing to show specific changes in policy based on evidence identified over time[10]. Independent evaluations of all Sciencewise deliberative projects, undertaken alongside project design and delivery, demonstrated impacts on public participants and others involved, as well as initial organisational and policy impacts. However, efforts are still required to provide robust evidence of policy

9. For example, see https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20180103170552/http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/quality-in-public-dialogue-a-framework-for-assessing-the-quality-of-public-dialogue

10. Source: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20180103170419/http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/impact-summaries/

and organisational change resulting directly from deliberation that will further satisfy citizens, politicians and policy makers of the value of this approach.

Deliberative processes will never directly involve all citizens. In order to bring a cross-section of citizens into deliberative discussions, there is recruitment, selection and often payment to participants (random selection to begin with and then selection to ensure groups are diverse and broadly representative). Even so, not everyone will want to take part so there is always an element of self-selection. Wider understanding and support can be generated by ensuring that those not directly involved are made aware of the deliberative activities and communicating the value of the process and the results as widely as possible.

In spite of these criticisms, there is a growing view that deliberation in general, and citizens' assemblies in particular "can be one of the most effective ways to bring evidence and democracy together."[11]

Examples

Examples outside the UK include the Citizens' Assembly on allowing abortion in Ireland (followed by a referendum) and the Irish Constitutional Convention (citizens and politicians) on women in politics, same sex marriage, the offence of blasphemy, and electoral reform; the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly and assembly in Iceland on constitutional issues; and many more[12].

There is much less recognition of the use of deliberation within the UK, even though it has been undertaken by UK national governments for decades. One of the first major initiatives was GM Nation?, which was launched in 2003 and included deliberative events in Swansea, Harrogate, Taunton, Glasgow and Belfast attended by over 1,000 people. In 2005 the then Secretary of State for Health, Patricia Hewitt, ran the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say public participation initiative on health and social care which had 1,240 people attending deliberative events in Gateshead, Leicester, London, Plymouth and Birmingham. In 2007, the UK Government ran an engagement initiative on the future of civil nuclear power in the UK with nine deliberative public events around the UK with 956 participants[13]. These three initiatives all directly influenced UK government decision making on these highly controversial topics.

Since 2004 and to date, the UK Government has supported the Sciencewise programme, which has supported deliberative public

11. See Nesta's Alliance for Useful Evidence report Evidence vs Democracy main report, p26 2019

12. For lots of examples see Nesta's Alliance for Useful Evidence reports on Evidence vs Democracy, 2019

13. Source: http://www.sharedpractice.org.uk/Downloads/Nuclear_report.pdf

dialogue on policy issues involving science and technology. In 2019 the programme continues to have around £1 million per year to spend on deliberative dialogue projects. To date, the Sciencewise programme has funded, supported, evaluated and reported on over 50 national public deliberative dialogue projects including:

- UK government department deliberative projects on the use and regulation of drones; data ethics; fracking and shale gas; disposal of high level radioactive waste; automated vehicles; bovine TB and badgers; nanotechnology, climate change and the big energy shift to a low carbon economy[14].
- Projects by other public, professional and quasi-governmental bodies including the Environment Agency, Research Councils, Academy of Medical Sciences, Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), Sustainable Development Commission, Technology Strategy Board (now Innovation UK), Health Research Authority and the Climate Change Committee.

These projects have resulted not only in ensuring that citizens have a voice in some of the most complex and controversial scientific issues facing society, but that professional staff in all these organisations have seen first hand how positive and valuable public participation can be.

Over recent years new bodies have started to use deliberative public participation methods to inform their thinking and decision making, including:

- The Bank of England has set up regional deliberative citizens panels in 2019 to feed into their policy development[15].
- Parliamentary Select Committee Citizens' Assembly on Funding Adult Social Care in 2018.
- The NHS developed NHS Citizen which ran from 2013, which developed a range of new deliberative approaches including the NHS Board meeting directly with citizens[16].
- University College London (UCL) Constitution Unit, with Involve, ran a Citizens' Assembly on Brexit (in 2017 - post-referendum) which has been a major prompt for numerous further attempts to use a similar mechanism before any further referendum on Brexit.
- In 2018, the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) ran a Citizens' Economic Council (which led to the Bank of England citizens' panels).

At local levels, land use planning has extensive and long standing experience in deliberative working with local residents and businesses,

14. For the full collection of Sciencewise materials see https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20171014182631tf_/http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/
15. Source: https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/outreach/citizens-panels
16. Source: https://www.involve.org.uk/search/node/NHS%2520citizen

with some planning authorities using deliberative workshops to feed into formal land use planning as well as creating community-based neighbourhood plans. The opportunities for such activities have declined with severely limited resources as a result of austerity-led budget cuts, but the culture of public participation in planning that goes beyond formal consultation is well-embedded in the planning profession (from the Skeffington Report on Public Participation in Planning in 1969 and into current practice[17]).

Participatory budgeting is another area where deliberative methods are extensively used, as described in the separate section by Jez Hall. PB complements and extends other deliberative and participatory democracy approaches.

Evaluation evidence shows that deliberative methods often inspire the participants to want to participate more, and provide confidence to professionals and other public servants that it is possible to work positively and effectively directly with citizens. At local level, the process nearly always produces a group of enthusiastic motivated residents interested in taking action. Such positive impacts largely depend on the positive and productive use of the results of deliberation; simply running the process without using the results can fuel disillusionment.

17. See, for example, work by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)

Participatory budgeting

Jez Hall

Participatory budgeting (PB) enables citizens to directly decide on public investments. Generally, that is the budget of a local authority, but also could be housing association, police, health and social care, or even school budgets. This is done through face-to-face and online engagement, and includes projects being developed by citizens, and then public voting within open processes. It is therefore a form of direct or participatory democracy. Ideally steering groups made up of residents enable local design of the way it is going to be delivered.

PB has been rapidly growing worldwide[1] and operates at many different scales, from very small budgets within villages or neighbourhoods, to multi-million pound citywide and even national[2] processes. For example, in 2018 in Dundee 11,000+ residents voted how to spend £1.2 million on community infrastructure, such as parks, playgrounds and transport routes. Whilst not new in the UK, with examples stretching back 15 years, the last 4 years (e.g. 2015 onwards) have seen it really take off in Scotland[3], and all of the 32 local authorities in Scotland have committed[4] to spending 1% of their central government allocated budgets through PB. That equates to at least £100m per year across Scotland or an average of £3m per council, and this could grow significantly as PB starts to influence other funds.

A considerable body of expertise has developed on how to do PB over the last 30 years since it emerged in Brazil[5], and there is a vibrant international academic and activist network sharing often very different approaches. There is no one defined model, as PB must always be contextualised to the local conditions, but a set common principles have been developing. Defining characteristics[6] of a well functioning PB process can be boiled down to:

- Citizens direct public investments
- Participation has a measurable impact (it is not a consultation)
- Citizens shape the rules governing the process
- The process includes spaces for deliberation
- PB redistributes resource based on need
- The process enables citizens to monitor public spending
- The process is repeated (e.g. on an annual basis).

1. Source: https://www.oficina.org.pt/hopefordemocracy.html
2. Source: https://opp.gov.pt/english
3. Source: https://pbscotland.scot/map
4. Source: https://news.gov.scot/news/more-choice-for-communities
5. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_budgeting#History
6. Source: https://democracyspot.net/2012/09/12/participatory-budgeting-seven-defining-characteristics/

It complements and extends other deliberative and participatory democracy approaches, and also has a growing element of civic tech[7]. That is, democratic engagement through online portals or by leveraging social media, such as in Barcelona[8]. Yet at its heart it is still fundamentally concerned with creating strong social capital and common purpose through connecting people, and then ensuring they have influence over what happens with a proportion of the public funding within their area or community.

In the UK the growth of PB has been spearheaded by PB Partners, a project coordinated by Shared Future CIC, who provide facilitation to public bodies and community led organisations. They have produced a number of free practical handbooks that have been published on the UK PB network web.

Regarding evidence of outcomes there are international reports available such as these:

- https://www.demsoc.org/2012/11/27/benefits-of-citizen-engagement-a-brief-review-of-the-evidence/
- https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31713/WPS8855.pdf
- And https://participedia.net/ offers a lot of case study material and identifies challenges.

7. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civic_technology
8. Source: https://blog.p2pfoundation.net/barcelonas-decidim-offers-open-source-platform-for-participatory-democracy-projects/2017/11/18

Sectors

The true first sector

Bob Rhodes

Institutions of Government use the term Third Sector to describe and regulate the naturally occurring associations and functional interdependencies that citizens have always formed. This is arrogant. This is the core economy and it has always been the First Sector.

Initially (this can change), communities of interest and/or place are drawn, by their very nature, to be participative, deliberative and democratic. Involvement is voluntary – people collaborate because they have common goals and loyalties; their process is contribution, cooperation and consensus; and their currency is relationship. 'Associations' are about 'doing' – the core economy runs on natural reciprocity, interdependence, and mutual self-interest. It is the fount from which our most fundamental needs are primarily served – loving relationships, belonging, social capital, security, valued roles, etc. A good society is alert to its central importance and prioritises its sustenance. This is a hugely complex area but, very simply, it is important that we are clear that the core economy comprises active citizens while the statutory model assumes largely passive customers.

The UK is peppered with participative, empowering and truly democratic peoples' associations and movements that find themselves working against the grain, complaining bitterly that neither they nor our great welfare state can do their jobs if the foundations of our society are eroded and the core economy is inappropriately commoditised, and then outsourced.

One such (of many) is Grapevine (Coventry & Warwickshire) which enjoys a creative and mutually respectful working relationship with many of its statutory partners who share Grapevine's, "vision of people and communities in Coventry and Warwickshire with the energy and confidence to tackle challenges and take opportunities". Grapevine "helps all kinds of people experiencing isolation, poverty and disadvantage to build better lives". Grapevine employs a holistic and strategic approach, helping people assume control of their lives and building their collective power to tackle problems, sparking and sustaining movements for change - melding the best that the 'core economy'/local community has to offer appropriately with the gifts and talents of statutorily commissioned services.

It is a demonstration of participative democracy in action. It might be described as real co-production (not the anaemic exercise in service 'consultation' that has kidnapped the term). From this flows the imperative to engage in system change and the energy required to action-research possible solutions. Deliberative dialogue, involving all the stakeholders in an issue, is at the core of all its activities.

Another example is the nationally-acclaimed WomenCentre in Calderdale and Kirklees, founded in 1985 by local women. It addresses the tremendous difficulties facing the lives of many women and children in modern Britain:

- Poverty and the many traps built into the welfare system
- The complacency and limited focus of many public services
- The failure of government to address on-going issues of equality and power.

Thus it is helping women tackle these problems through personalised support and collective community action.

While Government rhetoric sometimes suggests there might be real interest in local communities, a positive role for civil society, and respect for social innovations, the reality is usually the reverse. Despite its status as a world leader, WomenCentre operates on a shoestring, is resented by some statutory services, and has seen its miserable public funding cut time and again. Its story chronicles the way in which the strength of local communities is being undermined – not necessarily by local government but by centralised systems that are insensitive to the needs and values of local citizens and immersed in their own importance.

If we are to restore participative democracy and reciprocal care in our communities, we need to recognise that our public institutions are necessarily very different – hierarchical; rules and systems bound; and organised for control, consistency, sustainability and reliability. Their market-influenced processes focus on needs, customers and services and their currency is the contract.

Institutions of the State implicitly assume primacy over the citizens and communities they aspire to serve. They thoughtlessly impose their modus vivendi on associations that 'speak a quite different language'. The system instinctively strives to convert peoples' associations into institutions. The system requires citizens to defer to its need to:

- Know what problem you have
- Be the solution to your problem
- Assume you can't understand the problem or the solution
- Decide whether the solution has dealt with your problem
- And have you respect its satisfaction with its own work.

Government can begin to restore the implicit care and democracy in our communities by accepting that a fundamental task for our institutions resides in strengthening citizens and their associations. It's not so hard to start by bringing together people from services, systems and communities who want to make changes as equals in

formal and less formal citizens' assemblies, ideas and innovation 'factories', community circles, 'walks and talks' and other fun events. The key resides in starting by finding out what people really care about (not promoting what the institution thinks best for them) and bringing people face-to-face.

National government programmes: enabling communities to take action

Henry Tam

There are at least four ways government at the national level can act to promote participatory democracy.

First, it can establish and support a high-level policy team with a cross-government remit to encourage, advise on, and review the deployment of citizen engagement by all government departments and public sector bodies. The state sector is far from uniform in its grasp of participatory democracy. Politicians and public officials have very different views. It takes a dedicated unit to ensure there is a sustained focus on promoting the real benefits and appropriate techniques to empowering citizens to shape public policies. The Civil Renewal Unit performed this function in government in the 2000s, and was involved in helping Secretaries of State make the case to their ministerial colleagues in other departments, developing programmes with officials across Whitehall, and putting forward policies to facilitate community empowerment in health, policing, environment, local government, housing, scientific innovation, etc.

Secondly, it can support research and evaluation into different citizen engagement approaches, review what works and what does not, and disseminate the findings. This approach has already a proven track record, during the 2000s, the UK Government invested in systematic research and publicised the results widely both to counter scepticism about the value of deliberative participation, and to issue guidance on how to avoid flawed attempts at engagement, which risk exacerbating public disillusionment. The government's role is to bring together the findings of independent academics and thinktanks, and commission work to address any gaps in knowledge. Given the lack of understanding amongst many statutory bodies regarding how public engagement should be conducted to enhance effectiveness, trust, and satisfaction, the government can raise the appreciation and application of participatory approaches considerably.

Thirdly, it can invest in the development of community engagement infrastructure, particularly in the form of umbrella groups, and maintain close liaison with these groups to ascertain what would help them in expanding the skills, confidence and opportunities for diverse members of communities to give an informed input into shaping public policies and services. During the 2000s, with consistent government support, organisations such as the Community Development Foundation, Community Matters, the Community Sector Coalition, People Can (previously Scarman Trust), the Urban Forum, and others helped many other groups adopt and adapt engagement practices to make communities better informed about and more influential in

getting their views across in relation to matters of concern to them. After the change of government in 2010, it is notable that the ending of financial support led to the closure of all these organisations, and many community groups have had to push engagement work to one side as they seek funding to secure their own survival.

Fourthly, a government can actively facilitate action learning by setting up networks for knowledge exchange. Peer-to-peer sharing of ideas and practices has been found to be much more effective in winning over hearts and minds in the development of engagement processes. Successful examples from the 2000s would include the Guide Neighbourhood initiative that enabled resident groups to learn from other neighbourhoods around the country that have achieved positive results from engagement with public bodies; the Civic Pioneer programme that encouraged learning amongst local authorities and their community partners in relation to both innovative approaches and tried-and-tested ones; the Take Part initiative that brought public service providers, academics, volunteers, service users and others, together to learn how to improve deliberative participation and service provision; and the Regional Empowerment Partnerships which built intra and inter regional learning mechanisms to speed up the learning and adoption of effective practices.

All the above elements were taken forward through the government's Together We Can programme. Its abandonment after the change of government in 2010 and the subsequent neglect of deliberative participation at all levels show how the lack of support from the national government can seriously impede the development of democratic engagement.

More details on Together We Can and effective approaches to engender participatory democracy can be found in the recently published Whose Government is it? the renewal of state-citizen cooperation.

Local government and new muncipalism

Colin Miller

> "Greater local democracy can also improve democracy at a global level. Given that cities and local governments are becoming key actors in the political context we live in, making them more democratic has great potential to give ordinary people a voice in how to deal with global problems."[1]

Despite numerous obstacles there has been something of a quiet revolution taking place in many local authorities across the UK and worldwide, a revolution that seems to be gathering pace. In the UK there are more than 20 large and small cities and towns (including Edinburgh, Preston and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham) that belong to the Cooperative Council Innovation Network. The Network is committed to developing:

"a new model for local government built on civic leadership, with councils working in equal partnership with local people to shape and strengthen communities. This means a new role for local authorities that replaces traditional models of top down governance and service delivery with local leadership, genuine co-operation, and a new approach built on the founding traditions of the co-operative movement: collective action, co-operation, empowerment and enterprise."[2]

There is also a parallel movement of smaller towns. 15 to 20 town councils, inspired by the example of Frome in Somerset and 'Flat Pack Democracy' are seeking to reinvent the way power works at a local level and to develop a 'non-confrontational way of working and a participatory approach to democracy'[3] .

These movements are part of a worldwide trend. With more than 50 city and town affiliates, including Barcelona, Madrid and Portland (USA), the 'Fearless Cities' movement is the flag-bearer of a radical form of 'new municipalism'. The movement is founded on the following principles[4]:

- Cities must seek to empower citizens:
- Competencies and resources must be transferred to local areas
- Community-level decision making must be made via participative approaches

1. (ed) Barcelona En Comu et al, Fearless Cities: A Guide to the Global Municipalist Movement, New Internationalist, 2019
2. Source: https://www.councils.coop
3. John Harris, 'How to take over your town: the inside story of a local revolution', the Guardian, 12 June 2019
4. Laura Roth, 'Which municipalism? Let's be choosy', OpenDemocracy, 2019

- Digital platforms should be developed for easy access to decision making
- Politics should be 'feminised' through:
    - ensuring gender parity in all spaces, acts and roles
    - 'horizontalising' decision-making,
    - discouraging confrontational approaches,
    - embracing diversity.

In June 2019 the Labour Party published 'From Paternalism to Participation' which stated "We want to deepen democracy and transfer real power to the people of this country so they can take control of the decisions that affect them"[5]. The strategy strongly endorsed the work of London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and Preston City Council as exemplars of what the party would like to see.

Examples

Three examples of different kinds are given below. Each in its own way has:

- Developed ambitious and systematic approaches to trying to do things in new ways
- Received a lot of attention and is considered to be an exemplar of what could take place
- Stated that it is committed to empowering its residents but has a different view on what this might mean in practice
- Employed different forms of participatory practice to help take their strategy forward.

As often with innovative methods, the descriptions of what is taking place can at times be incomplete, and solid evaluation is not yet available, so these descriptions do not claim to be full or objective assessments. But we can at least compare and contrast how some of them have gone about addressing the challenge and begin to ask hard questions on how successful these and other local authorities have been in incorporating participatory and deliberative decision-making into their operational processes.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

The Borough has a population of 211,998[6] and is the poorest borough in the city. It also has one of the biggest house-building/regeneration programmes in Europe[7].

In 2006 the far-right BNP came close to capturing control of the

5. Steve Reed, 'From Paternalism to Participation: putting civil society at the heart of national renewal', Labour Party, June 2019
6. 2018 mid-year estimate, personal email from Rhys Clyne LBB&D.
7. See Matt Scott's case study Case Study Thames Ward Community Project - Building People Power above

council but were electorally wiped out in 2010. Since then, in common with other local authorities, the borough has seen its budget slashed by a massive proportion as part of national 'austerity' budgets and estimates that it will be half of what it was by 2020.

In response to these challenges the council leadership decided to rethink its role: 'All policy must at its core seek to improve civic engagement and democratic participation in the widest sense, enabling citizens to challenge and grapple with the local instruments of power…a new kind of council with a focus on people over process and foster a new approach to citizenship that is rooted in civic duty, inclusion and a balance between rights and responsibilities'[8].

The new model is built on 'three pillars':

- A New Local Economy
- Empowering Public Services
- Citizenship and Participation.

New Local Economy

Includes:

- Founding a new, council-owned regeneration company
- Creating a new form of council-owned affordable landlord offering private rented properties at rates based on the income of the renter
- Developing a council-owned green energy company so that new developments have access to affordable, sustainable energy.

Empowering Public Services

Transforming traditional bureaucratic, paternalistic and siloed delivery of services by integrating them, superseding traditional council department boundaries; and introducing a co-production and consultation model with parents and carers, children and young people, youth groups, teachers and social workers to develop services that meet their needs.

Citizenship and Participation

Create a shared understanding of citizenship based on rights and responsibilities, productive participation and cultural inclusion. The aim is:

"To create the conditions in which every resident recognises and exercises the agency they have over their own lives, has a real stake in the community and the opportunity to influence and participate in our

8. Jon Cruddas and Darren Rodwell, 'Civic Socialism in East London: a radical approach to local government', Labour List, 21 February 2019

public services and democracy".

One part of this strategy includes the 'Every One Every Day' (EOED) programme which the council claims to be the country's largest and most ambitious community participation programme. The aim of the programme is to build social bridges and bonds in the community and forge a new politics of identity and belonging[9].

EOED employs a team of 25 participatory practitioners whose role is to work with residents and others to develop hundreds of collaborative community initiatives and businesses. Initiatives include new arrivals programmes, community cooking and food exchange, new landscaping, sports and arts projects, after-school clubs and play and learning centres.

Creating a deeper democracy in Barking and Dagenham?

The strategy is underpinned by positive rhetoric such as: 'all policy must at its core seek to improve civic engagement and democratic participation in the widest sense, enabling citizens to challenge and grapple with the local instruments of power',

A question of interest to us is to what extent is the strategy aimed at embedding participatory and deliberative decision making into the way the council plans and makes decisions? And what has been the role of participatory practice in helping take forward the strategy? Is the council seeking to go about systemic change by democratising its functions or is it mostly concerned with what takes place within the lower part of the 45° line, that is communities and civil society?

The Barking and Dagenham programme is ambitious, but the development of deliberative and participative systems in the heart of decision making within the council seems, as yet, largely absent. The emphasis seems mostly focussed on the creation of community organisations rather than empowering citizens. The co-productive relationships that have been developed seem to be focussed on the way some services are delivered. However, it is early days and there does seem to be a political appetite to create a very different kind of council.

Madrid

"All roads lead to Spanish cities, where they are experimenting with citizen empowerment like nowhere else in the world."[10]

The roots of Madrid's and other Spanish cities' experiments in citizen empowerment lie in the Indignados/15m movement that erupted in 2011 in response to the attempt by the then government to impose a severe austerity programme in response to the banking crises. In 2015

9. Source: https://www.weareeveryone.org/every-one-every-day
10. Source: https://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-12-22/madrid-as-a-democracy-lab/

what has been termed the ‘citizen confluences’ of popular movements and new parties began to take power in many of Spain’s main cities. The balance of parties elected to represent the Spanish government, regions and cities will no doubt continue to shift at each election but the municipal participatory experiments launched in 2015 have laid down considerable roots.

Spain’s capital city has a population of 3.3m. Until recently the city had been a stronghold of the right-of-centre People's Party. In 2015 a coalition, Ahora Madrid, and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) took control of the council. Manuela Carmena (from AM) became the mayor.

The administration then developed a radical strategy to create a dual form of devolved decision making based on direct democracy and deliberation. The strategy is based on the concept of ‘disintermediation’, that is ‘removing intermediaries from representative politics’ so that citizens are better able to make their own decisions.

Digital decision making

At its core the strategy seeks to integrate council decision-making, traditional face to face forms of local decision making, such as neighbourhood meetings and deliberative processes, with an ambitious digital platform (Decide Madrid). The platform is open source and was developed by a group of ‘hacktivists’, programmers and ‘participatory process facilitators’.

A key aim of Decide Madrid is to enable ‘bottom up’, direct democracy where decisions that ultimately gain mass approval are binding. For example, the council have introduced a €100m participatory budgeting scheme. The money is allocated according to proposals suggested by citizens, which are listed on the platform. If the proposal is supported by 1% of citizens (27,064 people), it progresses eventually to a final voting stage. It is estimated that as many as 93.9% of Madrid’s voters have participated in the final votes to decide the allocation of the funds.

Madrid Decides is also used in consultation on urban planning issues.

Face-to-face deliberation

A series of ‘face-to-face deliberation spaces’ have also been established. The aim is to promote collective decision making and foster proposals from below. A parallel system has been developed to enable children and young people to participate. Citizens involved in the deliberative groups are selected on the basis of a representative sample of the population. The aim is to match the plurality of the population within the groups.

This element of the council’s strategy is based on the concept of

'distributed democracy', where decision-making takes place via a series of decentralised nodes, ultimately verified and endorsed by the elected city council. By October 2018 only two new proposals had gone through all stages of voting and verification and been adopted, one on making Madrid 100% environmentally sustainable and one on unifying the transport ticketing system. But around these and other proposals an enormous amount of debate, involvement and learning has taken place[11].

Madrid is experiencing one of the most ambitious programmes of the new municipalism we have seen. The marrying of direct decision-making via a digital platform with more traditional participatory and deliberative processes has already influenced experiments in scores of other cities across dozens of countries, and its unfolding effects will be watched with interest across the world. However, after the local elections in May 2019 a coalition between the Popular Party and the far right Vox party took over the council and Manuela Carmena was replaced as mayor. Madrid's exciting experiment in creating a radical participatory democracy lies in the balance.

Frome

Frome is a small town in Somerset. With a population of about 22,000, it is governed by a parish council of 17 councillors. Parish councils are lowest layer of directly elected government in Britain, universal in rural areas and also present in some urban areas. They do not run mainstream services and have very small budgets compared with the main councils. One of the ironies in this lowly status is that, unlike other kinds of local authority, parish councils are pretty free to do whatever they want within the law. Their only legal requirement is the provision of allotments. Being small, they can also be close to local communities. But by the same token, they may not have much leverage over mainstream services.

In 2017 a group called Independence for Frome (IfF) completely replaced the then Tory and Liberal Democrat councillors. IfF argued that party politics has no place in a town council because political parties are more concerned with point scoring and party tribalism prevents open listening and collaboration. Political parties are a form of 'gatekeeping' that discourages public participation in local politics.

Since taking power IfF has changed the way council meetings are organised:

- They have changed the language used in council minutes, documents and agendas
- Opened up all agenda items for public comment
- Organised council meetings 'in the round' where members of the public can participate in the discussions.

11. Source: https://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-12-22/madrid-as-a-democracy-lab/

A key concept is that the council and residents of Frome share responsibility for resolving issues and taking things forward, ‘You can’t come to a meeting and demand ‘what are you going to do about some problem or other’, but rather what can we do together about the problem’.

The council organises regular public meetings on particular issues. These are organised on an open deliberation model bringing together residents, experts and councillors. Skilled independent facilitators are appointed to run the meetings and avoid the domination of council representatives. There is a commitment that whenever possible the council will implement the recommendation made at these meetings.

The council also employs a participatory budgeting approach “which means that councillors encourage and enable other local people to decide what... to spend money on. We make no apology to those who believe that councillors are elected to make decisions and don't need to work with the rest of the community”.

Health and wellbeing

Brian Fisher

The health system both in the UK and elsewhere has been struggling for several decades with how to maximise people's involvement. The medical culture is wedded mainly to treatment of individuals and to cure rather than prevention. This tradition has been tremendously successful in its own terms, and the public has come to expect constant improvement in clinical diagnoses and treatments. But persistent inequalities in health, linked with poor social conditions, show that there are also many other factors affecting outcomes. A long-gathering movement for greater community involvement, along with treatment of the whole person rather than just specific conditions, has been making headway in recent years.

A Long Term Plan produced by the NHS in January 2019[1] requires GPs to be grouped into local networks addressing the health needs of the population as a whole. Each network will have help from auxiliaries, including 'social prescribing link workers' who will guide people to opportunities for community participation. And an ethos of 'personalisation' intends to give people greater control over their treatment. This is hopefully just the beginning of wider changes and links across local public services, which are recognised as being 'social determinants' of health as well as services in their own spheres. The direction of travel suggests potential for a combined community engagement and development strategy across local public services[2].

The New NHS Alliance, an independent association representing a wide constituency of GPs, nurses and other NHS workers, sees the key to improvement as being the principle of 'health creation'[3]. This emphasises three linked elements:

- Control over the circumstances of our own lives
- Contact with other people that is meaningful and constructive
- Confidence to see ourselves as an asset, to be in a position to take actions and responsibility and to have a positive impact on those around us.

Contact

Social networks protect and improve physical and mental health. Social networks are a simple concept: it means the connections one has with other people – friends, relations, acquaintances. Social networks and social participation appear to act as a protective factor against

1. Source: www.longtermplan.nhs.uk
2. See the HELP paper 'From Patients to Populations', 2019
3. Source: https://www.nhsalliance.org/health-creation/

dementia or cognitive decline over the age of 65, and social networks are consistently and positively associated with reduced morbidity and mortality[4]. Low levels of social integration, and loneliness, significantly increase mortality[5]. Social networks may be weaker in more deprived areas.

The most significant difference between people with and without mental ill-health problems is social participation[6]. Time banks improve mental health through their social networking[7]. There is strong evidence that social relationships can also reduce the risk of depression[8].

A 2010 meta-analysis of data across 308,849 individuals, followed for an average of 7.5 years showed a 50% increased likelihood of survival for people with stronger social relationships[9]. This is comparable with risks such as smoking, alcohol, BMI and physical activity. It is consistent across age, sex, and cause of death.

A community development public health intervention in Lewisham with strong links with general practice showed improvements in health behaviour of citizens compared to parts of the borough without the intervention:

- 62% increase in stopping smoking
- 22% increased consumption of fruit & veg
- 33% increased levels of physical activity
- Weight loss.

And changes in GP behaviour, too:

- Increased uptake of & improvements in services
- Big increase in recording of BP for people with high blood pressure
- 4x increase in people expressing concern or referred with suspected cancer symptoms
- 3x number of cancer referrals per month

4. Fabrigoule C, Letenneur L, Dartigues J et al Social and leisure activities and risk of dementia: A prospective longitudinal study. Journal of American Geriatric Society 43: 485-90, 1995. Bassuk S, Glass T and Berkman L, Social disengagement and incident cognitive decline in community-dwelling elderly persons. Annals of Internal Medicine 131: 165-73, 1999. Berkman LF and Kawachi I, 'A historical framework for social epidemiology' in Berkman LF and Kawachi I (Eds.) Social Epidemiology. Oxford University Press, 2000
5. Bennett K. M, Low level social engagement as a precursor of mortality among people in later life. Age and Ageing 31: 165-168, 2002
6. Jenkins, R., Meltzer, H., Jones, P., Brugha, T. and Bebbington, P, 'Mental Health and Ill Health Challenge.' London:Foresight, 2008
7. Lasker, J., Baldasari, L., Bealer, T., Kramer, E., Kratzer, Z., Mandeville, R., Niclaus, E., Schulman, J., Suchow, D. and Young, J, 'Building Community Ties and Individual Well Being: A Case Study of the Community Exchange Organization.' Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University, 2006
8. Morgan E and Swann C, Social capital for health: Issues of definition, measurement and links to health. London: Health Development Agency, 2004
9. Holt-Lunstadt, J, Smith, T, Bradley Layton, J, Social relationships and mortality risk: a meta-analytic review in PLOS Medicine, Vol 7, Issue 7, July 2010

- Improved management of chronic problems like diabetes & back pain.

And improvements in mental health:

- 13% increase in those 'Feel very/quite happy with life in general'
- Increased confidence, self-esteem
- 24% increase in 'those not feeling anxious or depressed'.

Contact and confidence

Increasing social networks also improves trust, confidence and the ability to find work. Improving links between people has other beneficial outcomes too. Those areas with stronger social networks experience less crime[10] and less delinquency[11]. Social networks influence employment and employability[12].

The Healthy Communities Collaborative showed a 12% increase in people's perception of the area being a good place to live; a 12% increase in people's perception of whether individuals show concern for each other; a 48% increase among participants in the proportion who thought they could change and improve things in their communities[13].

Social cohesion and informal social control predict a community's ability to come together and act in its own best interests, deriving, at least in part, from participation in local associations or organisations[14].

Contact, confidence and control

Effective community development builds social networks and helps people take more control and care over their environment and helps tackle health inequalities. Here are some highly relevant findings:

Minkler is clear that CD builds social networks, communities and improves health[15].

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10. Skogan, W, "Fear of Crime and Neighborhood Change,", p216, 1986, quoted in Community Change: Theories, Practice, and Evidence edited by Karen Fulbright-Anderson and Patricia Auspos
11. Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime", 1997. See also Sampson and Groves, "Community Structure and Crime", p774–802, 1989, quoted in Community Change: Theories, Practice, and Evidence edited by Karen Fulbright-Anderson and Patricia Auspos
12. Peggy Clark and Steven L. Dawson, Jobs and the Urban Poor, Washington, D.C.: Aspen Institute, 1995
13. Engaging communities for health improvement. A scoping study for the Health Foundation Angela Coulter, PhD Health Foundation, 2009
14. Karen Fulbright-Anderson and Patricia Auspos (ed), Community Change: Theories, Practice, and Evidence, The Aspen Institute, p45, 2006
15. Minkler, M (ed). Community Organizing and Community Building for Health. Rutgers University Press, 2002

CD work on the Beacon estate in Cornwall showed significant sustained changes defined and designed by the community. Once the community worked together and saw that they could make a difference, confidence rose and improvements in housing education, health and crime resulted.

Lower-grade civil servants in an extensive study experienced a much higher incidence of cardiovascular disease compared to those in charge, because they did not feel they had control over their working lives[16].

The "Linkage plus" programme developed and deepened social networks for older people while redesigning services with their help. Significant improvements in health and independence resulted[17].

Prof Marmot recommends that a key approach to tackling health inequalities is by reducing social isolation by building strong communities[18].

Wigan Council's New Deal has shifted investment to CD-type activities. The 2017 Indexed Key Public Health Indicators from their Joint Intelligence Unit showed that healthy life expectancy had improved relative to the UK and Wigan's comparator areas, and deaths from cancer had decreased faster than comparator areas. Also:

- Alcohol-related hospital admissions have reduce faster than comparator areas
- Smoking prevalence has declined further in Wigan than comparator areas
- Suicide rate has reduced faster than in England
- Larger increase of physically active adults.

It is likely that the CD activity contributed to the improvements.

Control

Increasing control over one's environment enables a new relationship with agencies which results in better more responsive local statutory services and helps tackle health inequalities.

Councils find community engagement and empowerment, in good and difficult times, saves time and money, creating more satisfied communities[19]. Once people in an area take charge of their destiny, they can negotiate new relationships with statutory agencies which can then, in turn, develop new, improved and appropriate forms of

16. Marmot M. Work and other factors influencing coronary health and sickness absence. Work & Stress, 8:191-201, 1994
17. Daly, G, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No 554, LinkAge Plus: Benefits for older people, 2009
18. Fair Society, Healthy Lives Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010, The Marmot Review, p139, February 2010
19. Integrating community engagement and service delivery – pointers to good practice, Local Government Improvement and Development, September 2010

service delivery[20]. Making resources available to address the association between poor health and poor social networks and break the cycle of deprivation can also decrease costs of health care[21].

The quality of public service responses maintains resilience and capability in the face of economic and other adversities[22]. Marmot makes it clear that the state and its services are critical to enabling control and independence. The best combination appears to be local activity in a national context[23].

Linkage plus combined self-help and independence; peer support; social inclusion; taking part in meaningful activities; advocacy and support; and support that is responsive, personalised and dependable. Small simple interventions, designed by local people had significant beneficial effects.

The Lewisham project mentioned above found a 9% increase in people saying that they can influence local decisions.

Estimating cost-benefit

An analysis by HELP[24] suggests about £80K a year per neighbourhood would be needed to build up community involvement where it is sparse. Two years' work should leave a self-renewing resident group, supported by existing front-line workers. The analysis suggested an NHS saving of £558,714 across three neighbourhoods over three years, based on cautious but evidence-based estimates of improvements in health factors by 5% annually as a result of increased community activity and social networks: a return of 3.8:1 on a £145,000 investment in CD, with additional savings through reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour of £96,448 a year per neighbourhood. These calculations are difficult and open to criticism. However, the results are similar to estimates obtained by others[25].

C2 Connecting Communities is a network of connected communities with an academic hub at Exeter University's Medical School, that has repeatedly demonstrated how small investments in health creating approaches deliver a big return not just in physical and mental health improvement but also in educational attainment and reduced crime. Their earliest success, the Beacon Project in Cornwall, completed a

20. Source: https://www.local.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=16639522
21. Wilkinson, R. G, The impact of inequality: How to make sick societies healthier. Abington: Routledge, 2005
22. Bartley, M (ed), Capability and Resistance: Beating the Odds, UCL Department of Epidemiology and Public Health on behalf of the ESRC Priority Network on Capability and Resilience, 2003-2007
23. Fair Society, Healthy Lives Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010, The Marmot Review, p139, February 2010
24. Source: http://www.healthempowerment.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/DH_report_Nov_2011.pdf
25. Catalysts for Community Action and Investment: A Social Return on Investment analysis of community development work based on a common outcomes framework, NEF, October 2010

retrospective external evaluation in 2016 "Lighting the Way"[26] is an independent cost benefit analysis charting the remarkable turnaround of the then-troubled Beacon and Old Hill estate in Cornwall that occurred between 1995 and 2001.

Over a period of five years, the community came together and formed a partnership with local agencies to generate a social & economic net benefit of £3.9m. Violent crime and unemployment were substantially reduced. Boys' school attainment and mothers' mental health also improved remarkably. The social return on investment is estimated as 1.8.

Evidence is beginning to emerge from larger scale regeneration projects in East London and in the north of England. Internationally, the US-based Creating Health Collaborative is gathering evidence from over 50 members.

Reductions in NHS service use

Supporting social networks for people with CHD and diabetes can lead to significant reductions in NHS service use[27]. The POPP project with older people showed:

- Overnight hospital stays reduced by 47%
- Use of A&E Departments by 29%
- Phone calls to GPs fell by 28% and appointments by 10%
- Every £1 spent on POPP services generated £1.20 in savings on emergency beds.

NESTA summarises the impact of these kinds of interventions[28]:

- Savings of 7% for CCGs: £21m per CCG
- £4.4 billion across England
- Reductions in A&E attendance, planned and unplanned hospital admissions, and outpatient attendance.

Conclusion

In summary, therefore, we can see that bringing people together and supporting them in taking more control over their lives and their areas has a very positive impact on their health, their resilience and on health inequalities.

As always, the rate-limiting factor to making this approach business as usual across the statutory sector is the reluctance and fear of

26. Source: https://www.c2connectingcommunities.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/C2_LightingTheWay_FINAL.pdf
27. Source: http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0098340 and https://www.pssru.ac.uk/pub/rs053.pdf
28. Source: https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/the-business-case-for-people-powered-health/

organisations to share power and control with the citizens they serve.

Environmental action and the arts[1]

Helena Kettleborough

Extinction Rebellion, the Youth Strike for Climate movement, scientific and UN Reports are all calling for immediate action to tackle the climate emergency, to save and restore biodiversity and ecosystems and tackle social justice. In terms of their three main demands, Extinction Rebellion is advocating participatory democracy by calling for citizens' assemblies to address the issues, chiming with the work of Compass. Here, I argue for the essential role of community development with its track record in the field of environmental action and systemic understanding that issues need to be tackled together to achieve lasting change. As such, communities and community development need to be seen as essential parts of the way forward. Furthermore, when using the word community, alongside the human community we need to start including the more-than-human community, as equal partners. Given the 'wicked' and intractable nature of the challenges facing us, I suggest the role of the arts in community development in opening up wider ways of knowing[2].

The history of community development over the past forty years reveals individuals and communities working together for both the environment and social justice[3]. Examples can be found at different geographical scales and I illustrate from the North West of England. At its most simple, local communities have planted trees, organised litter picks, worked to improve the local environment and spark pride in their area[4]. At a town or city level, NGOs such as Groundwork worked to revitalise areas and use the environment as a focus for regenerating communities[5]. At a regional level, North West Together We Can, a collaborative partnership, supported the learning from environmental

1. Ideas delivered as an oral presentation at the International Association of Community Development (IACD) Conference in Dundee 2019 and being developed into a paper. The author welcomes further correspondence

2. Heron, J, Co-operative Inquiry, Research into the Human Condition. London: Sage, 1996

3. To understand how community development supports communities including through workers, buildings, grants, learning, policy, partnerships and collaboration, see the extensive literature. For example Friere,P. (trans. M. Ramos) Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Penguin Edition) London: Penguin Books, 1970/1996; Gilchrist, A. The Well-Connected Community, a networking approach to community development. Bristol: Policy Press, 2004; (CLG) Communities and Local Government, The Community Development Challenge Report. London: CLG, 2006; Ledwith, M. Community Development, a critical approach. Birmingham: Venture Press, 2009; McIntosh, A. Rekindling Community, Connecting People, Environment and Spirituality. Bristol: Green Books, 2008; and Chanan, G. and Miller, C. Rethinking Community Practice, Developing Transformative Neighbourhoods. Bristol: Policy Press, 2013

4. See Keep Britain Tidy for community clean ups and the community forests for tree planting, https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/plant-a-tree/

5. Barton, P., Handley, J., Wilmers, P., Sharland, R. & Menzies, W, 'Partnerships in Environmental Regeneration in North West England 1980 – 2010: a Practitioner Perspective'. Paper presented to the Regional Studies Association Conference at Manchester Metropolitan University, 23/24th October, 2018

projects such as food growing and alternative forms of transport to encourage community empowerment[6].

Globally, communities are central to supporting the environment. Through the Transition[7] and Ecovillages movements[8], where streets, towns and cities work towards a more socially just and greener future. In Kenya, Nobel Prize winner Professor Wangari Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement, which planted trees and empowered women at the same time[9]. In India, local communities fight for the right to keep their own seeds and for them not to be owned by multinational corporations[10]. The work of indigenous people to protect their homelands as in the Amazon rain forest in Brazil[11] and the rainforests in Indonesia is crucial[12].

As well as practical action on the ground, clear messages emerge from reports from NGOs, governments and United Nations bodies identifying that communities are essential in the fight to save the biodiversity of the planet and halt the emissions of carbon dioxide. The 1992 Rio Summit led to the Agenda 21 initiative, initiating local work in communities for the environment[13]. The Egan Review in 2004 commissioned by the UK Government created the image of a holistic wheel to describe sustainable communities, of which one spoke was the environment[14]. The Blue Planet Laureates in 2012 called for communities to be integral to the work to save ecosystems[15]. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) 2030 highlight the importance of local communities in taking action for both ecological and social justice[16]. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Eco System services (IPBES) calls upon communities and indigenous people to be central to the efforts to save the ecosystems on which humanity depends[17]. These reports - and many others alongside them - highlight that the challenges are global as well as local, that the planet is an interconnected whole so that the solutions need to be systemic and that environmental and social justice are two halves of the same coin. Indeed the IPBES report warns that if we do not tackle the ecosystem crisis, we will go backwards on many of the UN SDGs.

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6. Examples of the work supported by North West Together We Can is found in the 2010 and 2011 NW Regional Community Empowerment Awards and a description of NWTWC in Henry Tam's (ed), Whose Government is it Anyway? Bristol: Bristol University Press, p221-3, 2019
7. Hopkins, R, The Transition Handbook: from oil dependency to local resilience. Cambridge: UIT Cambridge, 2008/14
8. Litfin, K, Ecovillages, Lessons for Sustainable Community. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014
9. Source: http://www.greenbeltmovement.org
10. Shiva, V, Earth Democracy, Justice, Sustainability and Peace. London: Zed Books, 2005
11. Source: https://www.channel4.com/news/the-amazon-tribe-battling-to-save-the-rainforest
12. Source: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/apr/04/how-to-stop-deforestation-indigenous-people-are-the-best-park-rangers
13. Source: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/outcomedocuments/agenda21
14. Egan, J, Skills for sustainable communities, London: ODPM, 2004
15. For the full document: https://www.af-info.or.jp/en/bpplaureates/doc/2012jp_fp_en.pdf
16. Source: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300
17. Source: https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment-report-biodiversity-ecosystem-services

Finally, as Extinction Rebellion warn us, it is important to understand that we are in the midst of a climate emergency. As Greta Thunberg reminded the European Parliament, if your house is on fire, you do not sit around debating the correct action; you work to put the fire out[18]. In terms of the climate emergency, the IPPC 2017 report on keeping the rise in temperatures to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels recommends unprecedented cuts in carbon dioxide emissions by 2030[19]. The Millennium Eco System report in 2005 sounded the alarm, finding that all ecosystems of the planet were in decline[20], whilst the IPBES report fifteen years later warns that over a million species are facing extinction.

In the face of such an emergency, the current drive in the UK for increased participatory democracy of which this Compass Pamphlet is part, offers a crucial step forward for communities and community development. Citizens' assemblies can debate the best way forward to tackle the climate emergency village by village, town by town, city by city. No two local communities are the same. The model of an appreciative inquiry, which asks communities to dream the future they would like and build on what gives life in their community can be used to preserve and restore biodiversity: Imagine a World Teeming with Life[21]. Shared Futures, a comminity interest company, working in the field of participatory democracy, has already linked the climate emergency with communities identifying how budgets should be spent to tackle the issue[22]. Scotland by aiming to allocate 1% of budgets to participatory budgeting offers a model for giving communities funding to restore biodiversity and take action on the climate[23].

In arguing for the importance of community development for both humans and the more-than-human communities in achieving substantial change immediately and not fifty years into the future, concrete practice exists on the ground[24]. Communities in Orkney are pioneering the way forward, where a low carbon renewable future is already happening, and 'turning the energy of the winds into a reliable source of power'[25]. Now producing 120% of their energy needs, they are exploring turning their excess energy into another fuel, hydrogen, and storing it. Such surplus energy can also pay for resources for communities. In achieving the planting of 51 million trees, the Green Belt Movement points the way to planting a trillion trees to combat the climate

18. Thunberg, G, No-one is too small to make a difference. London: Penguin, 2019
19. International Panel on Climate Change, 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5o Centigrade', (SR15), 2017 http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session44/l2_adopted_outline_sr15.pdf
20. Source: https://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.html
21. A wide range of resources is available at: https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu
22. Source: https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/category/sfcic-blogs/
23. Scottish Government Minister Aileen Campbell speaking at the IACD Conference, 24th June 2019
24. The Centre for Alternative Technologies in Wales has produced a blueprint for a Zero Carbon Britain by 2030
25. McKie, R, 'The Northern Powerhouse', the Observer, 20th January 2019

emergency[26]. There is the bravery and courage of indigenous and local communities around the world, who are protecting forests and animals from poachers, raiders and developers, standing between them and the animals, sometimes at the personal cost of their lives[27].

Another area where community development can help communities tackle environmental issues is that of art and culture. Taking action for the environment can produce feelings of despair, and our present consumer-driven culture which is addicted to infinite progress on a finite planet is hard to tackle. Michael Sandel refers to the monetarisation of our culture[28], where everything is for sale, whilst Benjamin Barber sees the spread of the McWorld globally[29]. One remedy can be found through the arts which can help communities understand what is happening and take action.

In illustrating the contribution of the arts, I use two examples from my local street. Communities can use story to create shared futures. In the book Stories of a Manchester Street residents tell how they came to live on their street and how people from diverse communities live together in harmony[30]. Knitting, weaving and sewing can illustrate what is happening to the planet in a way which is helpful and not prescriptive. A yarn bombing project by a diverse group of local women, created an art installation to portray the rise of sea levels and the effects of climate change to marine life[31]. The Centre for Alternative Technology details how art has been used in Wales to help address some of the cultural, economic and psychological barriers associated with taking up sustainable futures[32]. In *Playing for Time, Making Art as if the World Matters*, Lucy Neal illustrates the myriad way artists engage communities, for example to think about climate change, encourage radical acts of kindness and redesign food systems[33]. In the visual arts, the use of image and picture can help people understand complex issues; Stephan Bohle calls for the spread of Sustainability Communication, which needs to be activated now for the huge changes required[34]. Music offers us the opportunity to learn to sing a new paradigm for planet earth from our musical traditions[35], drawing on

26. Damien Carrington reports on research from the ETH Zurich University advocating planting billions of trees, the Guardian, 5th July 2019
27. Source: http://globalconservation.org/news/over-one-thousand-park-rangers-die-10-years-protecting-our-parks/
28. Sandal, M, What money can't buy, the moral limits of markets. London: Penguin, 2012
29. Barber, B, Jihad vs McWorld. London: Random House, 2011
30. Barton, P. and Bishop, E, Stories of a Manchester Street. Manchester: History Press, 2019
31. Still installed on local trees (summer 2019) the photographs were on display at the Whitworth Art Gallery launch of Stories of a Manchester Street, May 23rd 2019
32. See the report Culture Shift: how artists are responding to sustainability in Wales
33. Neal, L, Playing for time, making art as if the world mattered. London: Oberon, 2015. The research for the book was inspired by the Transition movement.
34. Bohle, S, Cause and Effect, Visualising Sustainability, Berlin: Gestalten, 2012
35. Kettleborough, H, 'Music and Spirituality within Planet and Cosmos – exploring the contribution of music to sharing the ideas of Thomas Berry' in Boyce-Tillman, J. and Roberts, S. Enlivening Faith: Music, Spirituality and Christian Theology. Oxford: Peter Laing Books, 2019

the spiritual and healing properties of music[36]. Indeed, a number of theorists suggest that art can act as a bridge between where we are now and where we need to go, from a linear straight line society to a holistic, interconnected one[37].

In terms of the future of community development, participatory democracy can help explore wider ways forward. Instead of seeing ourselves and nature as different, through dialogue we can start to see ourselves as part of nature, building on the work of the Egan Review in terms of communities, so that the word 'community' includes the rocks, species and nature of the planet as well as human beings. One expression of this vision is found in the Earth Charter, which came out of the Earth Summit of 1992. Another is to see our way forward as building Earth as Community: both the human and more-than-human parts of the planet altogether[38]. Working together participatively, we might start to care about the animals and insects as much as we care for our own human families and children. We might speak more of the sense of loss of the insects or the daddy long legs, the swallows and the mackerel in our own lives and the lives of our communities[39]. We might think of Earth as the first astronauts coming round the far side of the moon saw her: beautiful and alive in the immensity of space, yet looking so fragile[40].

The challenges to tackling the 'wicked problems' the world faces cannot be underestimated. What is without a doubt is that communities are essential both to saving the species of the planet and to limiting the rise in carbon dioxide emissions. Communities require and deserve resources for this work and it needs to be central to any vision of how we get to a low carbon, socially just future that communities receive support[41]. The visionary Satish Kumar suggests that we are all artists: all makers, all creators and that what is needed is simply that we get on and realise the artist in us to create new futures in communities, taking urgent action now[42].

Five potential steps in relation to participatory democracy might be:

1. To welcome moves for a more participatory democracy and to urgently seek to join together work for the human and more-

36. Boyce-Tillman, J, Experiencing Music: Restoring the Spiritual, Music as Well Being. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2016
37. Bateson, G, Steps to an Ecology of the Mind. London: University of Chicago, 1972
38. See the work of Thomas Berry: the Dream of the Earth (1988) and the Great Work, 1999
39. See Kettleborough, H, Gaia's Graveyards – a first person inquiry, in Action Research Journal, 2019
40. Source: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/dec/22/behold-blue-plant-photograph-earthrise
41. Communities in England, UK faced fierce cuts in resources following the Tory-Liberal Alliance in 2011 and subsequent austerity measures. See Chanan, G, and Miller C., Rethinking Community Practice: developing transformative neighbourhoods. Bristol: Policy Press, 2013
42. Kumar, S, 'Soil, Soul and Society – towards sustainable cities', in Kettleborough, H. and Barton, P. (ed) 'Green Spirituality in the Community', GreenSpirit Magazine, London: GreenSpirit, p6, 2017

than-human communities in such initiatives. To encourage the bottom up development of citizens' assemblies in every location to explore these ideas.
2. To see communities as made up of the human and more-than-human and that both communities need resources and in arguing for resources for one, we should be arguing for both communities.
3. To recognise that human communities need resources to participate fully in participatory democracy, be it workers, learning, buildings or grants and to argue for such funding and support from a range of sources: government, universities, the health service, trusts, businesses and so on. To recognise that the more-than-human communities need resources for example, for marine reserves, to protect specific species, to plant trees and join up fragmented woodlands and ecosystems. Through local participatory democracy, to urgently work out together what resources we think the human and more-than-human communities need and how by working collectively, across boundaries, organisations and egos, we might identify the resources now.
4. To recognise, honour and support the contribution of indigenous and local communities all over the world who are fighting to save biodiversity, the forests and species from corporations, governments and greed. To seek to join through creative participatory democracy and community development, the work of communities locally and globally in order to understand the systemic nature of the challenges – and the solutions.
5. Through community development, to unleash the artist in us all and in communities, in order to find the energy and creativity to take action now and sustain them into the future.

Citizen participation and the EU

Gabriel Chanan

Irrespective of Brexit, it is important to recognise that the EU is also an important player in relation to citizen participation, though much of this has been obscured by poor promotion and communication. The EU role in participation is an instructive example of the possibility of crossing the 45° line not only at the direct interface where national institutions meet local or other communities but from a more remote position – so long as there is enough pressure from below.

National governments have often used the EU as an excuse for not developing more participative mechanisms ('We can't do it because of EU rules') but this is obfuscation. In practice the EU is capable of being influenced on how to engage with citizens, not least because of its awareness that it needs ways of ameliorating its democratic deficit. The system will continue to affect our neighbour countries even if not ourselves and is an important model across the world. It is also a system which Britain had a strong hand in developing. Local and global issues are intertwined through trade, migration, environment, health, security, human rights, political climate and the work of international NGOs. Commitment to participation at home needs to be paralleled by concern with participation everywhere.

In the EU system, one of the main possible routes of influence are the so-called structural funds. These were designed as a way of redistributing economic support from better-off to poorer areas. The allocation of funds is based on a comparative map not of countries but of regions within countries. Britain, for example, was divided into nine regions. Regions across all member states were compared on levels of prosperity and disadvantage, and funds allocated to the less prosperous. Thus, even a country like Britain, which was better off than most, had some regions, such as the south west or north east, which qualified for assistance. There was also a fund for smaller pockets of disadvantage anywhere. Contrary to the deliberately misleading notion that Britain simply paid money into the EU, we also got hundreds of millions of euros back in the form of regional and local assistance – something which many politicians either didn't understand or weren't willing to explain.

The European Commission negotiates a plan with each country for development of its selected regions and pockets. The opportunities - and obstacles – regarding citizen participation fall within the details of these plans. The overarching concept is macroeconomic, and the big money often goes to large physical infrastructure projects like motorways, bridges and airports. However, intervention by politicians and officials, both national and EU, who have a better understanding of the citizen role, and who are responsive to influence from civil

society organisations, leads to variant programmes which require local or sub-regional partnerships of government, local government and local community and voluntary sectors. When unwilling politicians or officials try to block participation with 'But the EU won't let us do it', advocates are able to reply 'Au contraire, mon ami, in this particular programme the EU requires us to do it'. In Northern Ireland, as one poignant example, a swathe of community-based projects were a vital contribution to the peace process.

The EU also facilitates conferences and research to compare local development across its member states, thus helping to foster lateral networks of people with experience of participative methods. Important experience includes not only how to involve people in the locality but how to negotiate with power-holders and administrators at regional, national and EU levels to support and respond to participative methods.

A good deal of experience from Britain's own increasingly imaginative regeneration programmes from the mid 80s up to 2008 (those were the days!) was transmitted to other countries via EU mechanisms. This was particularly important to countries coming into the EU from monolithic regimes whether of the right (Spain, Portugal) or left (Eastern Europe), which had been equally resistant to ground-up participation. EU requirements included freedom of association, and most countries entering the EU experienced an upsurge of voluntary and community activity on accession.

There were and are of course numerous obstacles, including sometimes the unwillingness of voluntary and community organisations themselves to share their hard-won knowledge of how to access EU funding. But the significance of the bigger picture is that a large top-down system can play a part in fostering genuine participation. However, it is extremely unlikely to do so without pressure from below. Civil society organisations need to locate the democratic pressure points, policy hooks and allies at varies levels within the system to open it up to the voice and influence of those to whom it should ultimately be responsible.

Whether we are in or out of the EU by the time you are reading this, the types of participation used by our neighbour countries will always be relevant to us and part of the international democratic climate on which we ultimately depend.

A note on constitutional change

Colin Miller

Constitutional change and development in the UK is a slow, piecemeal and contradictory process. For example, whilst forms of proportional representation (PR) are already widespread in the UK, its introduction into parliamentary elections remains strongly opposed by the Labour and Conservatives leaderships. Whilst there has been a radical devolution of powers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, England remains highly centralised. Constitutional expert Andrew Blick holds that 'It is hard to find any democratic country where there is less territorial dispersal of political power (than in the UK).'[1]

The structure of the UK is deeply asymmetrical. England comprises around 85% of the total population, coupled with an overwhelming economic power. Despite the devolution of power to the other nations, England continues to dominate the UK economically and politically. Paradoxically, this is because, unlike the other UK nations, England does not have its own assembly. Given the overwhelming dominance of England, the Westminster parliament also is effectively the English assembly.

Some argue that what is required is a separate English assembly with devolved powers. But this would not answer the issue of the dominance of English power in terms of population and economics (largely based in London and the South East). One option would be to replace the House of Lords with a House of Nations and Regions. This would require the creation of a network of English regional assemblies with extensive devolved powers. Whilst there seemed little popular appetite for regional assemblies when New Labour briefly experimented with the idea in the 2000s, this could change if the new RAs were linked into a second national chamber.

Deliberative Public Dialogue in the form of citizens' assemblies and juries has been widely used to consider issues relating to constitutional reform (see section by Diane Warburton). Along with organisations such as the Electoral Reform Society, some of the leading political parties also support these ideas. In the aftermath of the Scottish referendum in 2014 the Labour Party, Liberal Democrats and Greens called for them. Since then the Labour Party has pledged itself to constitutional reform via a citizen's assembly and other means in their 2015 and 2017 election manifestos.

- Labour's proposed convention was to be wide-ranging and 'extend democracy locally, regionally and nationally, considering the option of a more federalised country.'

1. Blick, A, 'Unlock Democracy: Devolution in England a New Approach', in The Federal Trust for Education & Research, 2014

- The Liberal Democrats favoured setting up a convention composed of politicians, academics, civil society representatives and members of the public with the aim of creating a codified constitution within two years.
- The Greens called for a 'Constitutional Convention led by citizens' in 2015, but made no reference to a convention in their 2017 manifesto.

If a future government is led by Labour or some form of progressive alliance, there may be a good chance that we would see a process of radical constitutional reform via a process of deliberative public dialogue, and that such a government would seek to spread participatory and deliberative methods throughout the political system.

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