

NAME OF THE PRACTICE PARTICIPOLOGY



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Short summary of the practice: Participology is a set of online open-source resources designed to make participatory exercises more engaging, fun and effective. It revolves around the use of a board game format where players encounter questions/challenges as determined by the roll of the dice. The board, questions and game rules can be designed from scratch or existing templates can be adapted to your specific needs.

Goal of the practice: The participology exercise is designed to learn about and/or engage in public participation processes related to environmental and urban planning decision-making. Players take on different stakeholder roles and navigate through challenges and opportunities to reach a decision together.

Target group: Young people, adults, school children

Number of participants: 6 – 15 persons

Age of participants: From 12 years old

Materials:

Paper or cards or flip charts to flip-charts for recording answers

Questions from a design phase. Ideally, one question per card/page

Tables – the number of tables is based upon the people present. Ideally, one table should be for 5 people to maximize interaction

Boards – one per table

Dice – one per table

Facilitators – one per group to write group answers and encourage discussion

Duration of the practice: 120 - 150 min depending on the group size

Preparation:

Preparation for the game is critical and can take time. There are a few steps to consider:

1. Read the good practice participatory principles; PARTICIPOLOGY is not an end in itself
2. Plan it well: poorly planned exercises may do more harm than good
3. Read the guidance and case studies and understand how the exercise might work for you
4. Agree the outcomes you want and how you'll measure them
5. Select or design your game board, question sets and roles
6. Decide whether you need a trained facilitator or can supply your own
7. Decide what information to capture and how the discussions and outcomes will be recorded
8. Set a date, select and invite your participants

Step-by-step guide:

The guidance needs to be evaluated within your own resources and timetables.

1. It's recommended that sessions last no longer than 2.5-3 hours at any one time.
2. It's recommended to prepare 4-5 questions at most, with entrance and exit tasks used as appropriate.
3. It may be helpful to plan who sits at which table to ensure that a range of different interests or viewpoints are present.
4. Dice should be used to move around the board; the throw of the dice determines the question to be answered and discussed.
5. Each table usually plays their own separate game to enable cross-table comparisons and discussions afterwards, although nothing stops everyone playing the same game if that is what is desired.
6. One player reads out the question (from the separate question folder) which is then followed by a table discussion, usually of around 10 minutes.
7. The way answers are recorded will depend on the type of game being played. However, in general, it is important that a facilitator ensures that after group discussion: individual answers are logged including a justification; or one group answer or decision is logged, with justification. It's recommended to prepare 4-5 questions at most, with entrance and exit tasks used as appropriate.
8. The entrance/exit impact may lead to further discussions according to the goals

and time resources of your exercise.

9. There should be a feedback session ('debrief') across the tables and a report capturing the key outcomes.
10. Submit your evaluation to the PARTICIPOLOGY website

Expected output: Participatory planning ideally involves all stakeholders in local development from the outset. In this way, stakeholders can learn about any conflicting views at an early stage. It can also be practised by simulating stakeholders, for example by students who have researched the interests of stakeholders.

DOs, DONTs and ethical considerations of the method:

DOs of the method:

Think about the purpose, goal and desired outcome

Adapt the game to meet the objectives

Plan well who you will invite to each stage of the game: to design, to play, to evaluate

Create a safe environment for discussion

DONTs of the method:

Do not avoid topics with polarised opinions if necessary and if you can manage a discussion without it becoming a heated conflict.

Change the method brings to the communities: The exercise provides insights into the real regional or local spatial challenges, stakeholder views and dynamics, as well as experience of the value of using games as a format for informing real-world planning or as an educational tool. The greatest value is gained when real stakeholders are involved in the game, getting to know each other's views as well as the stakeholder in person.

Adaptation/Application of the method:

The practice has been used in a variety of settings. It can be used as

a planning tool to help establish the basis for plans, policies and programmes.

a human resource development tool to help agencies and their staff adapt to changing circumstances.

an educational tool to help understand land use conflicts and processes.

a collaborative management tool to discuss area initiatives.

a conflict management tool to help people deal with a range of controversial issues in their area, work or environment.

Credit, References, and Resources:

<http://www.participology.com/index.php>

<http://www.participology.com/case-studies.php#>

Robinson, G. M., Hardman, M., & Matley, R. J. (2021). Using games in geographical and planning-related teaching: Serious games, edutainment, board games and role-play. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 4(1), 100208.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100208>