The Book of Methods

July 2025

Let's start →

Empower-Citizens

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The Empower-Citizens project will develop and test a solution for using **feedback and lessons learnt,** acquired by citizens, during disasters, exercises and simulations, in **preparedness plans**.

The first-hand experience, tacit knowledge and skills gained by **citizens** during these events are significant. They can offer feedback and knowledge that are **complementary to official professional actors**, representing an important asset for the management of future events.

This project will seek **two main outcomes**:
i) integrate experience into the existing process of drafting and revising preparedness plans; and
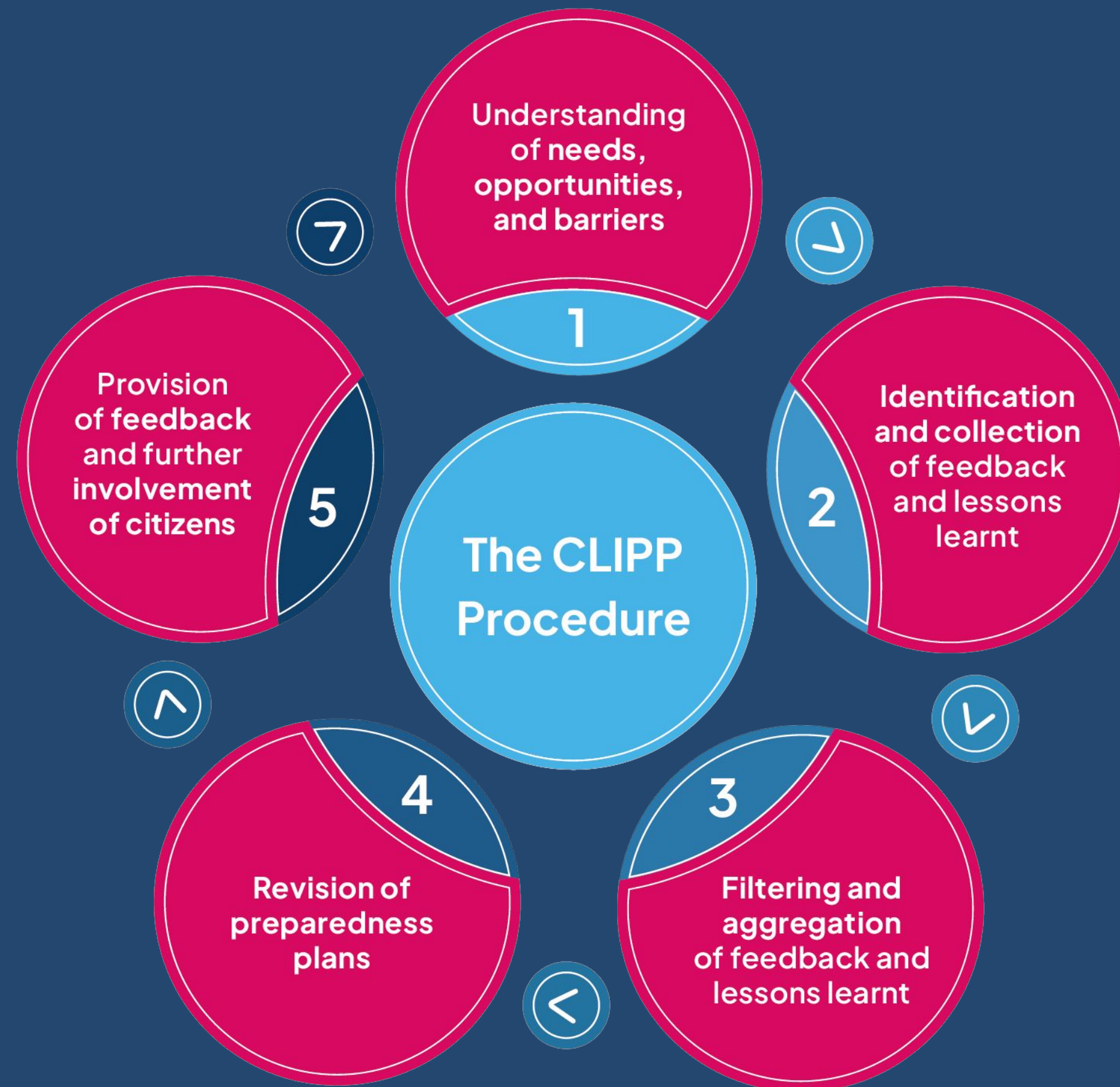**ii)** actively involve the public in preparedness activities.

The
Empower-Citizens
Project

The CLIPP Procedure

The project will revise, adapt, and integrate existing practices for **eliciting, selecting, filtering** and **aggregating** experience and feedback from citizens, their communities and civil society organisations.

These practices will be merged into a procedure for revising and improving preparedness plans, called "***Citizen & authority Learning and Improving Preparedness Plans***" (CLIPP)*. The procedure will be evaluated in the revision of two real preparedness plans in Italy and Norway.

Please note that the evaluation of the CLIPP procedure may lead to some changes to the procedure described here. If this is the case, the Book of Methods will be updated accordingly at the end of the project (January 2027).

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The CLIPP Procedure

1. Understanding of needs, opportunities, and barriers

2. Identification and collection of feedback and lessons learnt

3. Filtering and aggregation of feedback and lessons learnt

4. Revision of preparedness plans

5. Provision of feedback and further involvement of citizens

By systematically mapping and analysing existing initiatives and relevant participatory methods, the Empower-Citizens project produced this booklet to **support stakeholders in adopting the CLIPP procedure** and **enhancing preparedness planning** in collaboration with both citizens and authorities.

This booklet presents a **selection of methods aligned with the different phases of the CLIPP procedure**. The described methods and practices emerged from a combined approach that included desk research, literature review, and an analysis of methodologies and results from EU projects.

The collection was set up through a **multi-disciplinary participatory process** involving all partners of the Empower-Citizens project, taking advantage of their diverse professional backgrounds.

Introduction to the Book of Methods

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How to read the cards

Through this booklet you can select the methods for effectively applying the CLIPP procedure to your **local context**.

Each selected method was labelled with the CLIPP procedural phase that it was considered most useful for, namely: **(1) Understanding** of needs, opportunities and barriers; **(2)** Identification and collection of **feedback and lessons learnt**; **(3) Filtering** and aggregation of feedback and lessons learnt; **(4) Revision** of preparedness plans; **(5)** Provision of feedback and **further involvement** of citizens. As certain methods can be used for multiple steps of the procedure, the corresponding phases can be identified in the upper right corner with a tag.

Each card includes a title of the method, its description, application, implementation time, materials and number of participants.

List of Methods

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Methods	1. Understanding	2. Feedback	3. Filtering	4. Integration	5. Follow-up
1. Stakeholder Mapping	✔				
2. Interviews	✔				
3. Surveys	✔	✔			
4. World Café		✔			
5. Storytelling		✔			
6. Focus Group		✔		✔	✔
7. Photo elicitation	✔	✔			
8. Field visits		✔			
9. Nominal Group Technique		✔		✔	
10. Public Dialogue		✔			✔
11. Participatory Workshop			✔	✔	
12. Multiple Confirmation			✔		
13. Prioritize Suggestions			✔		
14. Categorization of Feedback			✔		
15. Round Table					✔

1 Understanding of needs, opportunities, and barriers.
2 Identification and collection of feedback and lessons learnt.
3 Filtering and aggregation of feedback and lessons learnt.
4 Revision of preparedness plans.
5 Provision of feedback and further involvement of citizens.

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1. Stakeholder Mapping

Description: Stakeholder Mapping helps teams understand who to involve, inform, or monitor and facilitates tailored strategies to address stakeholder needs and concerns.

Application: Initial mapping sessions may involve brainstorming and data gathering, followed by analysis and validation with the project team or stakeholders. Updates and refinements are often made as projects evolve.

Implementation time: 2 hours - 5 days

Number of participants: N/A

Type of participants: Local authorities, First responders, Associations, Other stakeholders

Materials needed:
- Flip charts
- Markers, pens
- Booklets or paper
- Post-its

References:
1. BetterEvaluation. (n.d.). Stakeholder mapping and analysis.

2. Interviews

1 Understanding of needs, opportunities, and barriers.
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Description: The Interviews Method is a qualitative data collection technique that involves direct, one-on-one conversations between a researcher and a participant. The method enables deep exploration of individuals' experiences, opinions, motivations, and attitudes, providing rich, detailed data that may not emerge through surveys or other quantitative methods.

Application: Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, depending on the level of flexibility desired. They can be conducted face-to-face, over the phone, or via video calls, making them adaptable to various contexts and populations.

Implementation time: 30 min – 2 hours

Number of participants: 1:1, 5–10 individuals

Type of participants: Local authorities, First responders, Associations, Other stakeholders

Materials needed:
- An interview guide or a questionnaire
- Audio or video recording devices
- Consent forms
- Note-taking tools
- Transcription software or services (to convert recordings into text for analysis)
- Reliable internet connection and online meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom, Skype) – if conducted online.

References:
1. TRANSCEND Project (2025). Unlocking Voices: Practical Methods to Engage Citizens in Safety and Security Innovation. Appendix O.
2. Engage2020 Project. (n.d.). Interview. In ActionCatalogue.

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3. Surveys

Description: Surveys are systematic tools used to collect data from a defined group of respondents through a set of structured questions. Surveys aim to gather quantitative or qualitative information on opinions, behaviors, attitudes, or factual details.

Application: Surveys can be administered in various formats such as paper questionnaires, online forms, or face-to-face interviews.

Implementation time: 2 - 6 weeks

Number of participants: 30 - 500

Type of participants: Local authorities, First responders, Associations, Other stakeholders, Citizens, CSOs

Materials needed:
- A questionnaire or an interview guide
- Data collection devices such as computers, tablets, or printed forms
- Tools for recording and storing data
- Informed consent forms
- Software for data analysis
- Reliable internet access and survey platforms (e.g., Google Forms, SurveyMonkey) – if administered online

References:
1. Bird, D. K., (2009), The use of questionnaires for acquiring information on public perception of natural hazards and risk mitigation – a review of current knowledge and practice. Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences, 9(4), 1307–1325.
2. Engage2020 Project. (n.d.). Needs Survey among CSOs. In ActionCatalogue.

1	Understanding of needs, opportunities, and barriers.
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4. World Café

Description: A World Café involves a relatively large and diverse group in meaningful conversations. It is based on the idea that people have the capacity to work together and propel actions forward, exploring diverse perspectives and ideas.

Application: The method involves discussions in small groups of 4–6 people led by a facilitator. Every 20 minutes, the small groups move to a new table to discuss a new question with the help of that table's facilitator. They build on insights from previous conversations.

Implementation time: 2 – 4 hours

Number of participants: 4 – 6 participants for each subgroup

Type of participants: Citizens, CSOs

Materials needed:
- Flip charts
- Pens, markers
- Booklets or paper
- Ballpoint pens

References:
1. TRANSCEND Project (2025). Unlocking Voices: Practical Methods to Engage Citizens in Safety and Security Innovation. Appendix G.
2. Engage2020 Project. (n.d.). World Café. In ActionCatalogue.

5. Storytelling

Description: Storytelling generates qualitative data in the form of individual and collective stories and recorded discussions, commonly related to local level topics/problems.

Application: Participants write individual stories based on story spine, then tell their stories. Groups discuss commonalities and differences and identify shared challenges. Action points/take-home messages are identified.

Implementation time: 1 day

Number of participants: 4 - 6

Type of participants: Citizens, CSOs

Materials needed:
- Physical space with enough rooms
- Equipment (tables, chairs, papers with story spine, pens, voice recorder)
- Catering for workshop(s)

References:
1. Heidenreich, S., & Rohse, M. (2023). Storytelling: Engagement methods for climate, energy and mobility transitions (Infosheet No. 11). SSH CENTRE.

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6. Focus Group

Description: The Focus Group method is a qualitative research technique that involves guided group discussions to explore participants' perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about a specific topic.

Application: Facilitated by a moderator, focus groups encourage open interaction among participants, which often leads to deeper insights than individual interviews.

Implementation time: 2 hours

Number of participants: 6–12

Type of participants: Local authorities, First Responders, Associations,Citizens, CSOs and other stakeholders

Materials needed:
- A discussion guide or set of questions prepared by the researcher
- Audio or video recording devices to capture the conversation
- Note-taking supplies
- A comfortable venue for the session
- Online meeting platforms with recording capabilities (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) – if conducted online
- Incentives to encourage participation (optional)

References:
1. TRANSCEND Project (2025). Unlocking Voices: Practical Methods to Engage Citizens in Safety and Security Innovation. Appendix N.
2. European Commission (2023). Corporate Guidance on citizen engagement.
3. Engage2020 Project. (n.d.). Focus Groups. In ActionCatalogue.

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7. Photo Elicitation

Description: Photo elicitation is a research method that uses photographs or other visual materials to facilitate in-depth interviews and explore participants' experiences, perspectives, and emotions.

Application: In the method, images are used to prompt and guide in-depth interviews and to evoke reactions from the interview participant. The types of images used include photographs, video, paintings, cartoons, graffiti, and advertising, among others. Either the interviewer or the subject may provide the images.

Implementation time: 2–3 hours

Number of participants: 1–5

Type of participants: Citizens, CSOs

Materials needed:
- Photos
- Audio/Video recording devices
- Note taking supplies

References:
1. Gill S. L. (2024). About Research - Qualitative Data Collection: Photo Elicitation. Journal of human lactation : official journal of International Lactation Consultant Association, 40(4), 503–505.
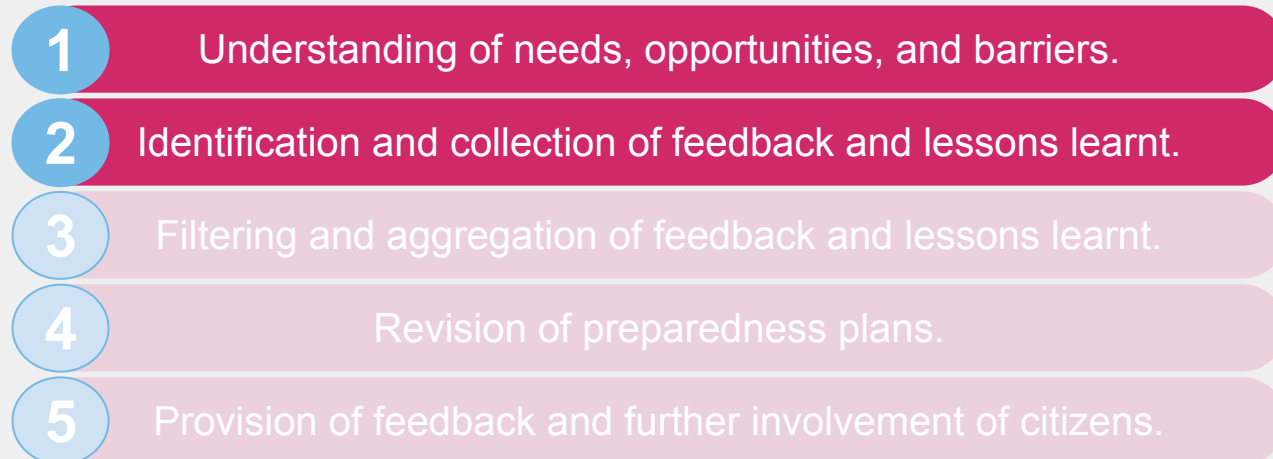
8. Field Visits

Description: One or more neighbourhood walks, in which small groups of residents lead professionals or officials on a tour of the area. The walk is also an opportunity to address passers-by, making them curious and inviting them to express information or opinions and possibly to join the walk.

Application: As the group walks, observations, questions, appreciations, wishes are exchanged in a free and relaxed manner, and impressions, snippets of neighbourhood history, problems, experiences, memories are collected.

Implementation time: 2–3 hours

Number of participants: 10–30

Type of participants: Citizens, CSOs

Materials needed:
- Paper and pens
- Cameras or phones
- Digital mapping tools

References:
1. Bobbio, L. (2004). A più voci. Amministrazioni pubbliche, imprese, associazioni e cittadini nei processi decisionali inclusivi (pp. 0–0). Esi.
2. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. (2008). *Transect walk*. In *EVCA Toolbox.*

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9. Nominal Group Technique

Description: The Nominal Group Technique helps teams identify problems and create solutions as a group. Although the technique is similar to brainstorming, it's not the same thing. Unlike a brainstorming session, the NGT has a key focus on making sure every group member contributes to the solution.

Application: The structure of the NGT typically has five stages: i) Introduction; ii) Idea generation; iii) Sharing ideas; iv) Group discussion; v) Voting.

Implementation time: 2 hours - half day

Number of participants: 4–10

Type of participants: Citizens, CSOs, Local authorities, First responders

Materials needed:
- Flip charts
- Pens
- Booklets or paper
- Post-its

References:
1. How to use the nominal group technique to reach consensus as a team, Blog Article, Miro.

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10. Public Dialogue

Description: Public dialogues are a historical instrument of participatory democracy and consist of gatherings of citizens involved in exploring, discussing and deliberating on specific issues, public policies and decisions relating to the common good.

Application: The typical structure of a public dialogue is divided into five steps:
1. Announcement
2. Setting the agenda
3. Preparing the documentation
4. Conducting the meeting
5. Sharing the results

Implementation time: 3-4 hours

Number of participants: 40-60

Type of participants: Citizens, CSOs, Local authorities, First responders

Materials needed:
- Flip charts
- Pens
- Booklets or paper

References:
1. Everyday Democracy (2008), A Guide for Training Public Dialogue Facilitators, 3rd edition.
2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). Public participation guide: Public meetings.

11. Participatory Workshop

Description: A Participatory Workshop is a group discussion that enables participants to delve deeper into an issue, share perceptions and experiences, and develop views and arguments to reach an informed position.

Application: (i) Articulate a central question; (ii) start with presentations from experts to provide basic knowledge; (iii) allocate most of the time for discussions amongst participants; (iv) conclude with a plenary session to summarise results, allowing participants to discuss and validate the main conclusions.

Implementation time: 2–3 hours

Number of participants: 15–25

Type of participants: Citizens, CSOs, Local authorities, First responders

Materials needed:
- Flip charts
- Pens
- Booklets or paper

References:
1. International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2001). A Facilitators' Guide to Participatory Workshops with NGOs/CBOs Responding to HIV/AIDS.
2. Teacher Education Guidance Notes: Running an effective participatory interactive workshop, Teacher Education through School-based Support in India (TESS).

12. Multiple Confirmation

Description: The Multiple Confirmation method involves using several different data sources, methods, investigators, or theoretical perspectives to confirm the validity and reliability of findings. This ti approach helps reduce bias and increases confidence in the results by cross-verifying evidence from diverse angles.

Application: A researcher might combine interviews, surveys, and observation data or compare findings from different researchers analyzing the same data set. Multiple Confirmation is commonly used in evaluation studies, case research, and participatory action research to confirm insights and enhance the robustness of conclusions.

Implementation time: 2 hours – 5 days

Number of participants: N/A

Type of participants: Local Authorities

Materials needed:
- Analytical software like NVivo or ATLAS.ti may be used to manage and cross-analyze qualitative data.

References:
1. ECDC (2018). Best practice recommendations for conducting after-action reviews to enhance public health preparedness. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 9–12.

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13. Prioritize Suggestions

Description: The Prioritize Suggestions method is a participatory decision-making technique used to rank or select ideas, options, or proposals based on their perceived importance or feasibility. This method helps groups focus on the most relevant or impactful actions, ensuring that resources and efforts are directed efficiently.

Application: Participants evaluate a list of suggestions and collectively decide which should receive the highest priority. It is used during workshops, meetings, or focus groups to gather and organize community or team feedback, helping decision-makers identify key priorities.

Implementation time: 1–3 hours

Number of participants: 10–30

Type of participants: Local Authorities

Materials needed:
- A prepared list of suggestions
- Voting tools such as sticky notes, dots, or digital polling software
- Recording sheets or flip charts to track results.
- In virtual settings, online collaboration platforms with ranking or polling features can substitute physical materials.

References:
1. Saaty, T. L. (2008). Decision making with the analytic hierarchy process. International journal of services sciences, 1(1), 83–98.

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14. Categorization of Feedback

Description: The Categorization of Feedback helps in simplifying complex or voluminous feedback by grouping similar responses, which makes analysis clearer and more actionable. By categorizing feedback, organizations can identify key strengths, weaknesses, and emerging trends.

Application: This method involves systematically organizing qualitative or quantitative feedback into meaningful groups or categories based on common themes, topics, or issues.

Implementation time: 2 hours – 5 days

Number of participants: N/A

Type of participants: Local Authorities

Materials needed:
- Analytical software like NVivo or ATLAS.ti may be used to manage and cross-analyze qualitative data.

References:
1. Kuckartz, U. (2014). Qualitative text analysis: A guide to methods, practice and using software. Sage.

15. Round Table

Description: Roundtables employ two-way communication in a structured environment. Ideas are not taught, they are facilitated. During a roundtable, a designated person leads but all participants share from their experience.

Application: The facilitator plays a very important role in the roundtable process. A facilitator can be defined as someone who encourages people to share and enables them to learn and grow by their personal example.

Implementation time: 2 hours

Number of participants: 10–15

Type of participants: CSOs, Local Authorities

Materials needed:
- Flip charts
- Pental markers
- Booklets or paper
- Ballpoint pens

References:
1. ILEAD (n.d). Roundtable Methodology

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RO

- Strategia pentruguvernare deschisă în România 2025-2030
- Ghidulpentru abordarea inovativă a implicării cetățenilor în procesul decizional
- Studiucomparativ privind participarea cetățenilor la luarea deciziilor publice
- Manualde bune practici pentru promovarea abordării pro-active a principiilorguvernării transparente, deschise și participative
- Democrațiaparticipativă în 5 puncte
- Deciziapublică în secolul XXI - Ghid practic de implicare a cetățeanului în procesulde luare a deciziei publice
- Liniidirectoare pentru participarea civilă la procesul de luare a deciziilorpolitice
- Cartaeuropeană a democrației participative în procesele de planificare spațială
- E-democrațiaîn Uniunea Europeană: potențial și provocări - Rezoluția Parlamentului Europeandin 16 martie 2017 referitoare lae-democrația în Uniunea Europeană: potențialși provocări (2016/2008(INI))
- Societateparticipativă, societate activă și noile forme de constructe sociale
- Cetățeniica parteneri - Manualul OECD privind informarea, consultarea și participarea înprocesul de elaborare a politicilorpublice
- Ghidulinstituțiilor administrației publice pentru îmbunătățirea procesuluipoliticilor publice la nivel local
- Ghiduldigitalizării - Repere informative ale transformării digitale a serviciilorpublice
- Transparențadecizională în administrația publică

ITA

- "Mappare la comunità" (Università degli Studi di Trieste - Moodle@Units)
- Mappe di comunità - DoRS
- "L'intervista narrativa" di Robert Atkinson
- A più voci. Amministrazioni pubbliche, imprese, associazioni e cittadini nei processi decisionali inclusivi
- PartecipAzioni: sostantivo plurale. Guida metodologica per la gestione di processi di partecipazione integrata
- La partecipazione dei cittadini: un manuale. Metodi partecipativi, protagonisti, opportunità e limiti

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Empowering Citizens by Considering
their Feedback in Preparedness Plans

Are you interested in citizen engagement in emergency preparedness actions?

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Acknowledgements