



# HECSOs

community engagement

## Policy Recommendation

to promote the active participation of local communities within the decision-making process and advocate for the values of participatory democracy.

Spain, July 5th 2024



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## Partners



## Results from local multi-stakeholder policy workshops that took place in Spain, Madrid July 5th 2024

Within the framework of the HECSOs project, two multi-stakeholder policy workshops were held for each national context in order to solicit public debate and gather suggestions on how to advocate for the active participation of local communities in decision-making processes and to uphold the values of participatory democracy. The purpose of the local workshops was to gather - through consultation processes, focus-groups and roundtables - recommendations to be submitted to local authorities in each local context and from which to elaborate a policy recommendation paper to be submitted to European institutions. Below you can find the main results collected.

### Policy Workshop Part 1: CE for Migrant assimilation

	Civil Society Organizations	University (Administration)	University (Professors)	Local Communities	Local/National Government
<b><u>Definition</u></b>	<p>Building support networks for active participation</p> <p>Community participation as an educational, voluntary, effort-intensive process</p>	<p>Part of the formation of the student body that works for the creation of a responsible global citizenship. University linked to the environment: prerequisite for the above.</p>	<p>Training, transfer, active learning, service</p> <p>Training process</p>	<p>Management of finding a match between the needs of local citizens with your ability and willingness to help your</p> <p>community in a certain way.</p>	

<b>Purpose</b>	Reaching out to people through good communication	That students leave the university as responsible citizens with agency in their environment. Active citizenship.	Solidarity Training for future profession	Raising public awareness of the importance of their role in the community	Stakeholder interaction with committed leaders
<b>Scope of application</b>		Creation, integration of the university with its local environment, territory, society.	Local volunteers promoted by universities.		Citizen participation in the district at the democratic level.
<b>Results and impacts</b>	<p>Skill building, information and training through these networks. The objective is to actively participate. Take into account the fact that they arrive in a new country, language barriers...</p> <p>Managing frustration</p>	Building a critical and active citizenship; relationship with the environment, building stronger and more democratic institutions.	<p>Positive feedback, university-civil society (the problem is that both parties do not always know the problems and needs of the other party, they do not know that they can help each other, therefore, participation generates a positive feedback). Inclusive terminology is needed, more communication.</p> <p>Self-realization</p>		Integration of vulnerable people with little voice in society.



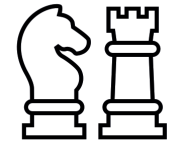
## STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFITS

	Civil Society Organizations	University (Administration)	University (Professors)	Local Communities	Local/National Government
<b><u>Individual Benefit</u></b>	<p>Benefit of alliance: Achieve objectives without using own resources, allows specializations.</p> <p>Plurality Legitimacy Representation</p>		<p>Benefit of alliance: Achieve objectives without using own resources, allows specializations. In particular, students are given training that they could not otherwise have, meaningful and purposeful application (development of civic, social and ethical competencies). Instead of working on a fictitious case, they solve real cases of real people; the commitment with their learning and with the community is intensified. It generates a very nice dynamic that is not well communicated. Benefits that are not quantitative but qualitative.</p> <p>Recognition (credits) Learning (research).</p> <p>Prestige and quality of the university</p>	Identify problems and solutions	
<b><u>Social Benefits</u></b>	It generates networks and community, transformation, because it aligns objectives.		It generates networks and community, transformation, because it aligns objectives.	Cohesive and involved societies	Improved economic growth

<b><u>Instruments and resources</u></b>	<p>Activism, activists. Lack of structure, human resources, lack of funds. They have a center run by the municipality of Madrid.</p> <p>Funding Subsidies (necessary for all)</p>		<p>Small number of teachers, lawyers who do probono, more teachers and formal administrative support needed.</p> <p>Communication</p>		
<b><u>Communication</u></b>	<p>Social networks. It is mentioned that the entities need a technical person to manage the information of all the activities of the entity.</p> <p>Communication among stakeholders?</p>	<p>Examples: Forms in different languages Educating officials on how to communicate with migrants Facilitation in public services</p>	<p>With the city council, they have a direct channel. Yet, uncoordinated communications, no institutional synergies are generated.</p> <p>Lack of internal communication plan.</p>	<p>Almost inexistent.</p> <p>Example: In Spain, complaints to the government must be made in Spanish, so foreigners have to ask for help in order to do so</p>	
	<p>Personally, lack of integral communication plan and coordination of plans. Lack of strategic communication plan.</p> <p>Difficulties in attracting people Very important the language used in communication: inclusive, global, in different languages and through the appropriate channels.</p>		<p>Communication is focused on publishing results, but that is not communication. If the publication of results is present, the person in charge would be a person within the project, not an administrative person.</p> <p>There is a lack of an integral internal communication plan and specific human resources.</p> <p>Sustainability of communication is needed.</p> <p>Researchers send research results to the University and the University decides what is published and what is not.</p>		

			<p>Publication of results in web pages.</p> <p>Example: In Spain, the public services of education and health are managed by the autonomous communities and each one puts more or less obstacles to migrants. In Alicante, there were many problems with the arrival of Ukrainians.</p>		
<b><u>Human resources competencies</u></b>	<p>Lack of structure, human resources, lack of funds.</p> <p>Competencies strongly linked to personal motivation.</p> <p>Erratic</p>		<p>Lack of human resources, both lack of teachers and administrative support. There are formal institutional structures but they are very hollow, i.e. few staff, few personnel. More technical staff is requested.</p> <p>Low student engagement</p>		
<b><u>Community perception</u></b>	<p>More positive perception of civil organizations than of the government.</p> <p>Very well perceived, referent and vanguard.</p>		<p>Citizens love to be told things by students (the university through the students give talks and inform about x topics)</p> <p>Lack of knowledge</p>		<p>Negative perception towards governments and vice versa, negative perception of governments towards migrants</p>

<b><u>Degree of Representation</u></b>	Highly representative. The beneficiaries do feel highly represented. They are called upon by the ministry to draft laws on labor, etc. consultations, social rights.	The level of representation depends on the analysis tools that each community has and these tools depend on the funding and resources available.	Beneficiaries have no way to feel represented, there is no channel. If there is no direct communication, they cannot be adequately represented.		
	Very dependent on funding and other instruments. If a focus group is done, there is more representation. If not, use representatives who may have different interests.				
<b><u>Degree of involvement</u></b>	Depending on the degree of representation and the quality of communication (content, language).  If people feel represented, community involvement increases (legitimization).		Depending on the degree of representation and the quality of communication (content, language) (content, language)		
<b><u>Existence of a clear stakeholder map</u></b>	Lack of a strategic communication plan among stakeholders.  Lack of human resources for better communication among stakeholders.	Competitiveness among stakeholders	Communication with city councils, foundations, other universities.		More conservative governments. For example, the Red Cross pulls volunteers when it is financing projects.

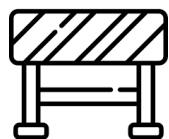


## TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

	Civil Society Organizations	University (Administration)	University (Professors)	Local Communities	Local/National Government
<u>Effective strategies</u>			strategy to increase participation: be seen, hold fairs, go to the field, immediacy. Visibilize -> go to the street and connect with people. Communication!		

<b><u>Resources/tools required</u></b>	More public funding.		That it be included among the functions of the civil servant or teacher to promote this. That it not be based on activism, volunteering.		
<b><u>Training</u></b>	Training in the treatment of ethnic, racial and gender diversity. To be recognized (with ects credits, courses that give points in competitive examinations, salary complements ....)	Training in communication as an integral part of your job, in dealing with ethnically diverse staff, is very necessary.	Communication skills, which should be part of the professional's training process.		
<b><u>Feedbacks</u></b>	Need for dialogue between the civil organization and the administration, as the former are		Need for a more corporate character of the third sector.		The structure of the administration is so rigid that it does not allow for the personalized treatment that migrant

	more accustomed to dealing with beneficiaries at first hand.				communities need.
<b><u>Concrete actions</u></b>	Much more communication about the benefits of citizen participation is needed.				



## BARRIERS

	Civil Society Organizations	University (Administration)	University (Professors)	Local Communities	Local/National Government
<b><u>Main challenges and obstacles</u></b>	There is a big problem of identification of concepts (term, research, funds, citizen participation projects).				Inter-institutional work is too normative, i.e., it is very difficult to carry out projects due to the differences between the legal

	A solution could be found from the university foundations in collaboration with the autonomous communities and provinces through development agencies.				regulations of each institution. E.g.: if you do projects with European funds it is much easier than when you try to do a project with local funds, because there are so many differences at the legal level. The university and the local government have a close relationship, as they share research and funds, but there is a big legal problem, in terms of invoices, bureaucracy and different regulations.
<b><u>Absence of a political framework and where</u></b>	Lack of an effective communication agent (human resources)				
<b><u>Lack of trust</u></b>	Highly contextual Citizen participation is never given enough importance. Participation is a cultural thing. It should be educated	There is a lack of community belonging in the youth. First you take into account basic rights and then you start to think about other things.	Explain the impact of participation to people, what you have contributed to the project. Recognize what you do (e.g. European Civic Star).		

## Other Observations

### Guiding principles:

Civil society: The parties must be listened to in order to make decisions, active listening in order to build the principles. If the community that will be affected by the law is not listened to, there will be conflict. Decision-making processes: listening

- Equal Participation
- Dialogue, giving everyone a voice in decision-making.
- Transparency and communication
- Representativeness
- Guarantee of Basic Rights

### Guarantee diversity in the communities:

Civil Org and university: co-creation of the strategy and validation. Joint construction of normative instruments, etc.

Respectful Practices in Cultural Diversity

- Institutional representativeness
- Support from Universities (e.g., help from universities in the homologation of degrees for migrants).

### Inclusion and Effectiveness

Inclusion and Effectiveness in Decision-Making

- Moderate meetings and conferences so that everyone has equal time to express their ideas and no one overshadows the others.
- Involvement of the university community in decision making.
- Need for spaces for reflection between similar institutions to find common solutions.

## What can guarantee inclusion?

Participation is the instrument, inclusion is the objective.

Citizen participation as an arena where actors interact with each other generating change. From there, each collective chooses which instruments benefit them the most (?). If my collective is PASS (administrative), there will be an instrument x, for example the university legal clinic (there is a social need and a university instrument co-created with the society (city council, uni, society etc) gives an answer to it. Each one has a different objective that converge in an instrument.

Civil society: White paper created with the Ministry of Equality regarding paid and unpaid caregivers. University reports, contributions from civil society, through this co-created white paper, different related laws are created and modified.

University (administration): there must be unity of gender and diversity and inclusion (disabled, dissident gender, ethnic, religious diversity, very broad). There is talk of an UNHCR study that said that in the university there is a lot of diversity even if it is not visible to the naked eye (religious, gender, etc.).

### Regulatory issues that impede co-creation?

There are many limiting frameworks, each entity has a framework. You have to be aware of the frameworks. Problems to guarantee the principles of inclusion is the change of the framework, or its extension. Another problem: inclusion is a vague principle, groups may be excluded. In order to generate participation rights, the different groups must be defined and objectified to be effective.

### At the university level:

- Relations with the outside world require commercial links. Rigidity of the administrative regime (bureaucracy) makes it difficult to make collaboration agreements.
- Universities depend on the project, some communication does not reach the final recipient, the beneficiary, but the intermediary. If the intermediary does not have a communication plan, it reduces its effectiveness.
- If the needs are not correctly identified with the final beneficiary.
- Target student and target community. The university reaches the students (they may know their needs...); on the other hand, the target community is only reached through the intermediary, which makes the service not entirely useful.
- The strategy to increase participation: be seen, hold fairs, go to the field, immediacy. Visibilize -> go out to the street and connect with the people

### Civil society:

- Regarding the regulatory issue: the associations depend on subsidies that are regulated according to what the administration and city councils decide. Dependence on budgets, delay of time without being able to investigate. At the moment in the place where the representative comes from, only the following issues are being financed: families and elderly people.
- If funding is taken out of the private sector, what validation does that have? The best is public funding, it is the most valid, with it you can create valid documents to elaborate policies, if, on the other hand, the funding were private, the validation would not be good. In order to conduct research that brings reality and is applicable to public policy, it must be funded by the state. Public funding for research goes to universities or research centers. If there were collaboration agreements between civil society and universities for more efficiency. With private funding, they make "best practice reports". These instruments are very superficial, they do not go into depth; this is because if something bad comes out of the research, the company that has paid will not want it to be known. Conflict of interest problems.
- If CSOs reach the beneficiaries, the difficulty is the structure (you reach people but you can't always give them what they need). The lack of structure makes communication more flexible. In contrast, at the university there is more bureaucracy and it is more rigid.

## **Equity and Social Justice in Participation**

Need for citizen lobbying. Need for citizen participation at the level of denunciation in the face of the need for spaces of participation (demand for tools of social equity).

The institutional forums that were created in Spain at national and local level were not convened, so they are quite useless. There is a need for much more defined and committed decision-making spaces.

At the university level, there is a need to facilitate studying while working. More flexible hours, fees or scholarships could help the barriers that exist for migrants to access university and pay for everything that comes with accessing it.

## POLICY WORKSHOP Part2: Areas of policy intervention and proposals.

	<b>Organización Sociedad Civil</b>	<b>Universidad (Administración )</b>	<b>Universidad (Profesores)</b>	<b>Comunidades locales</b>	<b>Gobierno local/nacional</b>
Participation strategies	Find the match between citizens willing to participate and the projects that may interest them.	Awareness raising and education for greater participation	Self-managed Student Associations are an example of participation in universities with large audiences.		Institutionalization of a citizen participation website (need for political commitment and funding).
Tools and resources		Labelling - recognition of the university with a seal of citizen participation.	Recognition of credits or merits  Diplomas		
Capacity building	Educate children in citizen participation from an early age, to achieve changes in the long term.	Identify good practices in schools and education. Create a European framework for citizen participation from which states can develop their projects.	Importance of academic references. E.g. Having students to guide new students in the first days of university.		

Evaluation and follow-up	Accountability to citizens who have participated in participation projects.	Need for fluid and continuous communication throughout the project, especially if it is a long project. This should be defined in the initial strategic plan	Feedback mechanisms in the evaluation of the project.		
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**ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS:**

- POLITICAL COMMITMENT AS A BASIS FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROJECTS.
- NEED FOR SUSTAINABILITY OVER TIME OF PE PROJECTS AS AN UMBRELLA FOR THE 4 AREAS.

Participation strategies:  
 Mapping/ Identifying best practices  
 commitment to sustainability, regardless of political ideology or personal sensitivity  
 Awareness  
 Representation  
 Institutionalization of a citizen participation website (need for political commitment and funding).

Tools and resources:  
 Visibility: create a digital site where to publish all initiatives by neighborhoods and user preferences. In other words, institutionalization  
  
 Encourage citizen participation movements: local forums (more ideological tools).  
  
 Create effective communication and transparency tools  
  
 Create a European pact on citizen participation, so that each country can then translate it into its local work (Harmonization at European level).

Capacity building:  
  
 Educating to participation in all its forms (social, political, etc.)  
  
 Encourage a sense of belonging to a community, where everyone will be called upon to participate and fight hyper-individualism

### Evaluation and follow-up:

Demanding more transparency and accountability (i.e., more fluent reporting and communication).

These requirements need to be an integral part of a strategic plan of any EC project, where several moments of project evaluation (i.e., progress of achievement) and feedback mechanism are identified, to ensure a continuous evaluation.

Avoid or reduce passive participation, but push for active participation where each person becomes an agent of change or cooperation: for example, self-management spaces that work as agents of change and participation (such as student associations).



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