CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
What is CIVICUS?

**Mission:**
To strengthen global citizen action and civil society.

**Vision:**
A global community of active, engaged citizens committed to building a more just and equitable world.

**Office:**
Moved the headquarters to the global South -- Johannesburg -- in 2003 to better represent our primary constituency.
CIVICUS
A Global Alliance

• A global membership alliance of 110 countries consisting of about 450 members.

• CSOs; national /regional /international associations & networks across all sectors.
CIVICUS’ 3 E’s

(1) **Exist:** Defend citizens’ rights to organise and act collectively for the public good.

(2) **Express:** Amplify the voice of citizens and civil society.

(3) **Engage:** Enhance citizens’ influence in decisions that affect their lives.
World Assembly
18-21 June 2008

- A global convening point for CS key stakeholders
- Overarching Theme: Acting Together for a Just World
- Focused Theme: People, Participation, and Power
- Location rotates every 3 years - Glasgow, Scotland from 2006 to 2008. Hosted by SCVO.
Participatory Governance

Aims to enhance the capacity of southern civil society and government actors to promote and practise participatory governance at national and local levels.
How Can We Build Political Will for Participatory Governance?

- “Crisis” of representative democracy - increasing attention to Participatory Governance (PG)

- “Lack of political will” identified as key obstacle by PG practitioners.

- Much uncharted territory and undocumented experience
Key objectives of the PG conference (17-18 June, Glasgow) were to identify:

1. Reasons for “political won’t”
   For example:
   * Fear “loss of power”
   * Unconvinced of benefits of PG
   * Lack “how to” skills and mechanisms

2. Strategies for building political will
   Both “persuading” strategies & “forcing” strategies
   * Concrete benefits
   * Create incentives
   * Build trust/collaboration
   * Public pressure
   * Create sanctions
   * Understand & exploit power dynamics
Some underlying assumptions...not to be assumed!

- Can we build political will for PG?
- Should we build political will for PG?
- Whose political will are we trying to build?
Key Concepts: What do we mean by “participatory governance”? 

PG is about empowering citizens to influence and share control in processes of public decision-making that affect their lives.
“Levels” of participation

Information-sharing → Consultation → Joint deliberation → Joint decision-making

Experience shows less political will for deeper participation.

External oversight & social accountability
Examples of participatory governance practices

| Local <------------------------> National |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| **Public policies/plans**              | **Public consultations, referenda, policy advocacy** |
| Participatory municipal planning, citizen advisory boards | Public consultations, referenda, policy advocacy |
| **Public finances**                   | Revenue monitoring, independent budget analysis |
| Participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking | Revenue monitoring, independent budget analysis |
| **Public services**                   | Citizen/CSO M&E of public services (e.g. citizen report cards, social audits) |
| Participatory M&E of local services (e.g. community scorecards) | Citizen/CSO M&E of public services (e.g. citizen report cards, social audits) |
| **Public oversight**                  | “Watchdog” activities (elections, government actions, rights, etc.) |
| Citizen oversight committees, citizen seats on public boards | “Watchdog” activities (elections, government actions, rights, etc.) |
Key Concepts
Political will....

- Defined as “credible intent to act”
- Dynamics between individual v. institutional will
- Link between “willing” and “able”
- Large number of influencing factors
Key Concepts—Some key elements influencing “political will”

Willing & Able

1. Values
2. Knowledge
3. Incentives
4. Relationships
5. Skills
6. Agency
7. Opportunity/support
Political will

Individual will

Institutional will

Individual abilities

Institutional abilities

Values
Knowledge
Incentives
Relationships
Skills
Agency
Opportunity
Join CIVICUS!  
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