Making a good use of citizens in policy making and evaluation

Giovanni Moro
Oecd-Mena conference
Rabat, 24th March 2010
Preliminary remarks

- Focus on the “citizens’ side”, not on the governments’
- Content reflecting European and in general Northern countries’ situations
- Active citizenship: autonomous citizens’ organizations engaged in public policy making with the aim of protecting rights, caring for common goods and empowering weak people, differing from political parties, trade unions and private-purpose associations
- For example: voluntary orgs, consumer and environmental movements, self-help groups, international cooperation NGOs, local and community-based groups, etc.
- In the EU territory: about 1 million orgs.
- Active citizenship organizations do exist and act autonomously
- In some cases they interact with governments
- They always have specific know-how (civic competence) on the issues they are engaged in
Active citizens in policy making
## Citizens in the policy making cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE OF CITIZENS</th>
<th>OBSTACLES</th>
<th>PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **AGENDA**       | - Identify problems  
- Define priorities | - Inaccessibility of people who decide  
- Lack of attention to citizens’ points of view | - Bilateral communication |
| **PLANNING**     | - Identifying obstacles  
- Identifying solutions 
- Testing tools and components of policies | - Lack of recognition of citizens’ competence | - Consultation with feedback |
| **DECISION**     | - Building consensus | - Obsolete criteria of representativeness  
- Fear of citizens | - Sharing (not agreeing) decisions |
| **IMPLEMENTATION** | - Creating services, monitoring situations, mobilizing resources, collecting good practices, .. | - Lack of coordination and/or competition between citizens and governments | - Partnership (equality and full responsibility) |
| **EVALUATION**   | - Social/civic auditing  
- Stakeholder dialogue  
- Use of the results of projects & actions as sources of information | - Results of citizens’ actions not taken into account  
- Citizens considered able only to give opinions, not information  
- Evaluating outputs and not outcomes | - Common evaluation and re-engineering of policies |
Divergent visions and practices
(civic organizations’ actions and institutions’ expectations)

EU 27 + Turkey
What happens when they are involved?
(Key-persons of EU 27 + Turkey)

- Lack of public **funds** – 51.4%
- Lack of **recognition** of civic organizations as relevant actors – 40.9%
- **Difficult identification and access to public officials** – 37.1%
- **Distrust**, reluctance, lack of equality in relations – 33.3%
- **Insufficient** and incomplete **regulation** – 23.8%
- Governments’ attempt to “organize” and **control civic organizations** – 20%
- **Poor communication and coordination** – 20%
- **Fear of civic organizations** as trouble makers and influencing elections – 19%
- **Lack of transparency and information** on laws, programs and public decisions – 18.1%
- **Consultations take place when decisions are already taken**, organizations’ opinions are not taken into consideration, joint decisions are not implemented, **the government ignores the answers to its questions** – 18.1%
Some remarks

• To relate with citizens’ organizations is a complex matter for public administrations
• Common wisdom is not sufficient
• A good interaction/cooperation with citizens’ organizations is a matter of effectiveness and public trust for governments
• Usually if citizens are not managed as a resource become a problem
The Civic Evaluation
Italian project
What is Civic Evaluation
Background

• 2001: Amendment to the Italian Constitution introducing the principle of “circular” subsidiarity: *public institutions favor the autonomous initiatives of citizens, as individuals and organizations, aimed at caring for general interests*

• At the core of the amendment:
  – Recognition of the constitutional rank of citizens' autonomous initiative in the public realm
  – Giving value to the citizens' action and not to their form, legal status etc.
  – Cooperation between them and public institutions on an equal footing, going beyond traditional, institution-centered, practices

• 2006: Partnership agreement between the Ministry of Public Administration and Cittadinanzattiva movement

• Aim: using the experience of Civic Audit to set up and promote a methodology for Civic Evaluation, broader and of easier feasibility
The Civic Audit

• Set up and started in 2001 by Cittadinanzattiva.
• A methodology based on the ability of citizens to produce information on relevant issues (civic information)
• Groups of citizens, in agreement with public administrations use a shared set of parameters and indicators to verify quality factors through direct observation and interviews with key-persons
• Corrective actions are the outputs of the process and their implementation is verified afterwards.
• Implemented in about 170 local health agencies and recognized as an official evaluation tool by the Ministry of Health and several Regions.
• 65% of proposed improvement actions implemented or ongoing
• Used to monitor the state of Patients' Rights in Europe (2004-2007) by Active Citizenship Network
The essentials

• **Civic Evaluation**: a comparative action-research implemented by the citizens to assert their rights through motivated judgements on general interest situations/services etc.

• **Main features:**
  – Citizens gather first- or second-degree **data**, through direct observation, interviews with key-persons and other sources
  – Produce **information** from data and consultation of existing databases, official documents etc.
  – Issue a **judgement** on the situation and propose **improvement actions**

• It can be promoted by a citizens’ organization or by a public administration or by both; but is managed by the citizens’ organization

• Individual citizens are engaged in deliberation and monitoring
The process

- **Starting** → Citizens’org and/or Public administration
- **Choosing the topic/place etc.** → Citizens’ deliberative process
- **Recruiting and training “monitor” citizens** → Citizens’ organization
- **Gathering of data** → Monitor citizens with the support of citizens’ organization
- **Setting up & reporting and scoring information** → Monitor citizens & Citizens’ organization
- **Evaluating & proposing improvement measures** → Citizens’ deliberative process
- **Using results** → Public administration
- **Verifying the implementation of suggested measures** → Citizens
The Urban quality monitoring and evaluation
The experiment

- It is ongoing in 16 towns of 4 Southern Regions
- Topic chosen: *urban quality* (public transportation, road maintenance, public spaces such as gardens and squares, safety etc.). The topic reflects citizens' point of view and not administrative competences
- A central working group identified a common set of indicators in order to assure the comparability of results (the indicators are prioritized and enriched by the affected citizens at local level)
- Local branches of Cittadinanzattiva manage and facilitate the process in cooperation with town administrations
The structure

10 Components
(safety, connectivity, public maintenance, waste management, …)

27 Dimensions
(e.g. for Connectivity: Availability of public transportations, Private vehicle traffic; Access to pedestrians)

39 Indicators
The choice of the monitoring space
Innovative elements of Civic Evaluation

• Beyond customer satisfaction (expressing opinions vs. producing information and delivering judgements)
• Beyond ordinary consultation procedures (decision on local priorities; opportunity of volunteering for the auditing process; delivery of judgements and recommendations that local authorities are engaged in taking into account)
• Strengthening the evaluation phase of policy making
• Leading role of citizens in the process
• Inclusion both of individuals and organizations with different but consistent roles
• A real partnership between public administrations and active citizenship (sharing resources and risks to reach an objective that no one could reach by alone)
• For public administrations: a good use of citizens
For further information and contact

- g.moro@fondaca.org
- www.fondaca.org
- www.giovannimoro.info