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## **18 Evaluating citizens' assemblies: Criteria, methods and tools**

**Abstract:** Citizens' assemblies (CAs) have been heralded as a potential antidote to the alleged crisis of democratic legitimacy and effectiveness. However, CAs are used in a variety of designs, on a variety of topics, and in a variety of political and institutional contexts. As the experience with CAs deepens and competing designs proliferate, demands for concrete evaluation standards and tools have risen. This chapter aims to offer a comprehensive account of central evaluation criteria for CAs, both in the input, throughput, and output phases, and it gives an overview of potential methods for evaluating CAs. Moreover, the chapter also outlines a new operational evaluation tool, the CA Evaluation Survey (CAES), which taps into the different dimensions.

**Keywords:** citizens' assemblies, deliberative democracy, legitimacy, evaluation, institutional designs, methods, input, throughput, output, CA Evaluation Survey (CAES)

## **Appendix: An evaluative tool for CAs: The Citizens' Assembly Evaluation Survey (CAES)**

Dimension	Criterion	CAES items (Likert scale answering categories)
Input	Representativeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The participants in the CA were broadly representative of the wider population.</li> <li>- A broad range of perspectives on [the issue under discussion] was present in the participant group.</li> <li>- The opinions of the other participants on [the issue under discussion] did not fundamentally differ from my own.</li> <li>- As a consequence of my participation in the CA, I have come to understand different viewpoints on [the issue under discussion].</li> </ul>
	Openness of the agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I feel like I had a genuine say in which issues could be discussed.</li> <li>- Even though the CA dealt with [the issue under discussion], I felt we could discuss adjacent issues.</li> <li>- The organizers did not allow us to broaden the discussion to other relevant issues.</li> <li>- The moderators did not allow us to broaden the discussion to other relevant issues.</li> </ul>
	Epistemic completeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The information materials presented balanced views on the issue under discussion.</li> <li>- The experts offered balanced views on the issue under discussion.</li> <li>- The information materials presented diverse arguments for and against [the issue under discussion].</li> <li>- The experts presented diverse arguments for and against [the issue under discussion].</li> <li>- The experts during the CA were well chosen.</li> <li>- Did you look up information yourself on [the issue under discussion] before or during your participation in the CA?</li> <li>- As a consequence of my participation in the CA, my knowledge on [the issue under discussion] has improved.</li> <li>- As a consequence of my participation in the CA, I have come to understand other perspectives on [the issue under discussion].</li> <li>- The experts helped me to better understand the challenges involved in [the issue under discussion].</li> <li>- The experts used clear and understandable language.</li> <li>- I learned a lot about [the issue under discussion] from my participation in the CA.</li> <li>- I had sufficient information about [the issue under discussion] to engage in a meaningful discussion with the other participants.</li> </ul>

- During the discussion, many people just stated positions without justifying them. (inversely coded)
- I feel that I was needlessly interrupted during the discussion. (inversely coded)
- No matter how hard I tried, the other participants seemed unwilling to listen to what I had to say. (inversely coded)
- Most participants seemed to care only about their own well-being. (inversely coded)
- I think most of the participants in the discussion tried hard to make a compelling case for their viewpoints.
- We did not have sufficient time to discuss all issues.
- I was able to present my opinion on [the issue under discussion] in a nuanced manner within the timeframe of the CA.
- The moderators did not manage to eliminate all inequalities between the participants.
- Some topics that I thought were important were not covered during the discussions.
- We were offered sufficient time to discuss [the issue under discussion].
- We were offered sufficient time to interview the experts.
- We were offered sufficient time to write down the final recommendations.
- It was clear from the start what was expected of me.
- It was clear from the start what will happen with the recommendations we formulated.

my views.  
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Throughput

Quality of decision making

- I feel like the final recommendations reflect all of the participants' ideas.
- Even though there was a vote in the end, I do feel that our group discussions are reflected in the final recommendations.
- My own ideas about [the issue under discussion] are sufficiently reflected in the final recommendations.

Contextual independence

- I feel that I was pressured into agreeing with recommendations I do not fully endorse.
- I did not present my own views on [the issue under discussion] because I thought it was expected by politicians.
- I did not present my own views on [the issue under discussion] because I thought it was expected by the media.

Output

Public endorsement

- I discussed [the issue under discussion] with others outside of the CA (e.g. friends, family, colleagues).
  - I shared the recommendations of the CA via mail or social media.
  - I am convinced that a large part of the citizens can endorse the recommendations of the CA.
  - I am convinced that a large part of the politicians can endorse the recommendations of the CA.
  - I am convinced that a large part of the policy makers can endorse the recommendations of the CA.
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Political uptake

- It was clear from the start what was going to happen with the recommendations of the CA.
  - I am convinced that politicians will take into account the CA's recommendations.
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Policy implementation

- I am convinced that we will find my ideas in tomorrow's policies.
  - I am convinced that we will find the CA's recommendations in tomorrow's policies.
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**Et vous,  
comment faites-  
vous ?**