

Parallel Session 25: Proposals and initiatives for "public dialogue".

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION FORUMS DEALING WITH SCIENTIFIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES. PROPOSAL OF A FORUM MODEL AND OF A METHOD AND TOOLS OF ANALYSIS. THE CASE OF THE FIRST PUBLIC FORUM OF THE CATALAN ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION.

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Abstract

Scientific and environmental communication are facing new challenges, which demand participation in order to promote new attitudes for a democratic society. To achieve this goal, new methods and tools are a must. The participation forum, where different experts meet to discuss and contribute to the progress of science, is one of them. However, the participation model used is not enough to guarantee the true participation of society in the environmental sciences arena. This is why this study presents not only a new participation model of forum, but also an evaluation model built upon the same participation principles. The system of analysis presented is based on the ASI-TIE method. The Participation Evaluation Panel is the tool designed to ensure dialogue and participation throughout the evaluation process. From the forum design and implementation, as well as from its analysis and evaluation of the analysis, strengths and weaknesses are determined, which will be taken into account in future forum participation evaluations.

Key words

Participative forum: open participation process in which different people and/or experts meet to make specific proposals on a particular subject.

Evaluation / Participative evaluation: type of evaluation that collects the opinion of all parties involved in the process that is being evaluated and gives them the opportunity to share and discuss their different points of view.

Text

Context

Analysis is made of The First Public Forum on the Catalan Strategy for Environmental Education (ECEA). It is promoted by the Department of the Environment of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia [Generalitat de Catalunya].

The objective of the forum was to decide and prioritise activities to improve on the short- and mid-term education on the environment in Catalonia. A series of informational sessions and working groups were programmed.

Objective

The purpose of the design of the participative forum, and the analysis of it, is to establish a model of participative analysis of forums and to prepare recommendations for future participative forums.

The purpose of the evaluation of the system of analysis is to prepare recommendations for future analyses of participative forums. To do so, evaluation is made of the attainment of certain objectives for the analysis system.

Methods

System of analysis of the forum

The ASI-TIE method, is proposed. It consists of: concretion of what one wants to analyse in Aspects - concretion of the aspects in Sub-aspects / Indicators – choice of the Techniques of analysis of the certain aspects – design of the Tools - determination of the Evaluators.

Intra-method triangulation methodology is performed in this investigation, as well as the application of various techniques and evaluators to analyse some of the aspects.

Quantitative and qualitative tools are combined (questionnaires, recording of observations, analysis cards of documents, audio recording of the conference, a script of the evaluation meeting with the Technical Commission of the ECEA) and participative elements (Participative Evaluation Mural, PEM. See Figure 1).

Application procedure of the PEM

Firstly, the items to be evaluated are read out loud and participants and facilitators put up the four different coloured stickers in accordance with their level of agreement or disagreement with the items proposed. Then, the assessments made are commented on out loud and opinions and proposals are collected by using Post-it notes.

System for evaluating the system of analysis of a participative forum

The OASI-TIE method is applied, which corresponds to the ASI-TIE method. Prior to this, the Objectives of the analysis that will be evaluated are defined.

Collection of data

The analysis tools were applied at various times in the Forum. The analysis of documents was done afterwards.

Results

Data handling

Statistical treatment was performed (Excel) on the quantitative data, and the speeches given by the participants were transcribed.

Conclusions

With regard to carrying out participative forums, the proposals are: in the first place, times of training, discussion and proposals (with the appropriate dynamic tools) should be alternated to achieve total participation. Secondly, those in attendance must feel like protagonists debating and proposing, as the interchange and debates between heterogeneous participants is the most positively valued part. Thirdly, to make the participation and operability compatible is one of the main challenges. Finally, to establish commitments and ensure that the work done has importance even beyond the Forum is fundamental to maintain the confidence and motivation of the participants.

With regard to the system of analysis of participative forums, the proposals are: to incorporate participation as a fundamental aspect; to analyse the operation and the participation of the forum; to be consistent with the process that is analyzed; that the results represent opinions and proposals of the participants; that it is perceived positively; to prepare novel and participative tools that facilitate dialogue and joint reflection and that are engaging and enjoyable; to facilitate the understanding of the results by displaying them in visual form. The system of analysis, the ASI-TIE method and the Participative Evaluation Mural (PEM), in this investigation, are valued positively and are presented as a model of analysis of participative forums.

References

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Figures and tables

Figure 1. Participative Evaluation Mural (PEM) of the intersectorial working session (completed)



