

SEARCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE ACTIVE CIVIL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

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Abstract. *The purpose of this article is to introduce two items.*

1) *The Civil Participation Tool, developed by the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise for Good Governance (2020) for the purposes of: selecting, evaluating, and classifying civil actors (stakeholders) into groups; selecting the most appropriate forms of participation in decision-making processes; providing accurate information for classified civil actors (stakeholders); developing the most appropriate strategies to activate the processes of participation for different civil actors (stakeholders) based on the assessment of their potential to engage; and enhancing the level of participation.*

2) *The results of educational pilot projects implemented in 6 Lithuanian municipalities in 2020. These projects confirmed the scientific hypothesis of this article: that more active civil participation in decision-making processes can be expected when the objective differences of local civil actors (stakeholders) are recognized. According to this, different forms of civil participation should be provided as well as different strategies for improving skills and increasing civil engagement in decision-making processes.*

Keywords: *civil society, civil participation, decision-making process, civil participation in decision making processes, stakeholder.*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: *pilietinė visuomenė, sprendimų priėmimo procesas, piliečių dalyvavimas priimant sprendimus, suinteresuotoji šalis.*

Introduction

According to the scientific literature and various research reports, the authors of this article reasonably state that various methods of involvement/participation of civil society in decision-making processes in Lithuania and all over the world still do not produce the desired results: a

significant increase in the engagement of civil society in decision-making processes. For example, in Lithuania, despite the fact that very well-known legal conditions to practically apply all forms of direct participatory democracy exist – such as local surveys, public deliberation, consultations, meetings, participation in special commissions and working groups, activities through elected community representatives or non-governmental organizations, petitions, etc. – the values of the civil power index increase by only a few percentage points every few years (Civil Society Institute 2021, 60), and less than 5–7% of municipal citizens are involved in decision-making in local affairs. Therefore, scientists and practitioners see the need to continue research into the real reasons for such a low level of involvement/participation of local citizens in decision-making processes and look for new opportunities and/or incentives to increase citizen's engagement and involvement/participation. The authors of this article hypothesize that the different characteristics of civil actors (stakeholders) are not sufficiently recognized and considered when applying the forms of involvement/participation of civil actors (stakeholders) in decision-making processes and providing necessary information. Positive changes in involvement/participation in decision-making processes can be expected by objectively acknowledging the differences between civil actors (stakeholders). This depends on the different forms of involvement/participation that can be used when involving civil actors in decision-making processes, and concerns applying different forms of involvement/participation in decision-making processes as well as different strategies for improving skills and increasing civil actors' interest (motivation) to become involved/participate in decision-making.

The authors found a way to verify their hypothesis during involvement/participation in educational pilot projects implemented in six Lithuanian municipalities in 2020. At the time of these educational pilot projects, the techniques and recommendations on civil participation in political decision-making processes (hereinafter referred to as the Civil Participation Tool) developed by the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise for Good Governance (2020) were applied: 1) to select, evaluate and classify civil actors (stakeholders) into four groups; 2) to select the most appropriate forms of involvement/participation in decision-making processes and provide information for classified civil actors (stakeholders); and 3) to develop the most appropriate strategies to activate the processes of involvement/participation for different civil actors (stakeholders) based on the assessment of their potential to engage, and then to enhance the level of involvement/participation.

The results of the pilot projects confirm the scientific hypothesis and allow the authors to state reasonably that more active involvement/participation in decision-making processes can be expected when the differences of local civil actors (stakeholders) are recognized. According to this, different forms of involvement/participation should be provided as well as different strategies for improving skills and increasing engagement in participating in decision-making processes.

The objectives of this article are as follows.

1) To provide a brief overview of the scientific literature in the field of civil involvement/participation in decision-making processes and various forms of civil participation engagement.

2) To present the methodological basis of the educational pilot projects implemented in Lithuania in 2020. This mainly involved the Civil Participation Tool (techniques and recommendations), which was used in order to select, evaluate, and classify local stakeholders in civil participation in political decision-making processes into four groups based on two sets of criteria. Furthermore, recommendations are provided as to how strategies for the implementation and enhancement of civil participation should be developed.

3) To present the results of educational pilot projects implemented in Lithuania in 2020

which obtained strategies of participation enhancement using the above-mentioned Civil Participation Tool for grouping local stakeholders.

Literature review

According to the scientific literature, civil involvement/participation in decision-making processes is defined as a process during which members of the public that were not formally elected or appointed, together with officials, take part in setting the political agenda and/or in taking decisions on issues of public interest or public policy which affect their interests (Rowe and Frewer 2005, 251–290). During civil participation processes, the goal is to present, gather, and transfer the opinions of citizens directly or through civil society organizations, and to exchange factual and evidence-based information and views that ensure that real societal needs are met. According to scientists, the involvement/participation of citizens in decision-making processes is a very important element of effective public governance, and its advantages include: 1) increasing the quality of public policy and decision-making processes (the government is provided with opportunities to use information resources, perspectives, and potential solutions); 2) improving the interaction between government institutions and citizens; and 3) increasing the openness, accountability, and transparency of civil society (Bovaird and Loffler 2003, 255).

The following factors that have an influence on successful civil involvement/participation are identified in scientific work: 1) activity of citizenship; 2) trust in public authorities; 3) culture and level of public information; and 4) reflection of the declared legal basis of the real conditions of civil involvement/participation in decision-making processes (Bernotienė 2010, 238–253).

J. V. Denhardt and R. B. Denhardt (2003, 63–77) note that modern civil society is more likely to participate in a non-electoral context by choosing other forms of civil participation, such as neighborhood/community-based movements, working groups, and associations. Other scientists identify the following methods of citizens' involvement/participation in decision-making processes: 1) traditional methods/mechanisms (citizens' committees, public debates, focus group discussions, etc.); 2) sociological surveys of citizens and feedback on services (questionnaires can be completed in libraries, communities, etc.); 3) methods/mechanisms using various technologies to spread information (online information and opinions on the work of institutions, etc.); and 4) the use of administrative databases (Ho 2007, 107–117).

Various kinds of scientific studies show that citizens' involvement/participation in decision-making processes is not an easy task, and there are a number of different obstacles. One group of obstacles is raised as a result of insufficient opportunities to participate in or be engaged in the decision-making processes of public and/or political organizations (or the issues of their concerns). All of this may be raised because of lack of information about the meaning of citizens' involvement/participation in decision-making processes and the role that citizens, including politicians, can play in the democratic life of a community. The lack of necessary knowledge or information assumes that civil society cannot actively integrate and participate in local daily discussions and debates (Šilinskytė and Smalskys 2016).

Another group of obstacles are related to the willingness of civil actors/stakeholders to participate in decision-making processes and their engagement with solving issues that concern them. It should be noted that those civil actors/stakeholders who have a legitimate interest in a particular decision are usually more actively engaged in decision-making processes than others. A special definition of stakeholders (or interest groups) in the business management field refers to

such civil actors. According to R. E. Freeman, any individual or group who may affect or be influenced to achieve the goals of an organization can be considered a stakeholder(s) for civil participation (Schlossberg and Shuford 2005, 15–26). The influence of interest groups in the formation of public policy has been analyzed by a considerable number of researchers, and such groups are frequently divided into different types.

Scientists also point out that different ways/mechanisms of civil involvement/participation in decision-making processes can be used at different stages of public administration, from information (press releases, dissemination of information publications, application of social marketing, etc.) and consultation measures (public debates, teleconferences, surveys, etc.) to the direct involvement of the public/local community (e.g. citizens' jury, think tanks, stakeholder councils, conferences, etc.). In general, different methods of civil involvement/participation may create appropriate public participation in decision-making processes, depending on their objectives. In any case, two conditions are required for successful and more effective civil involvement/participation in decision-making processes.

1) Willingness to participate. This is due to internal motives and the engagement and motivation of civil actors/stakeholders. A lack of willingness can occur due to low trust in civil participation processes or due to low self-involvement or preparation for direct participation processes.

2) Possibility to participate. This is due to external reasons; this opportunity depends on the attitude and actions of the public authorities in creating the necessary preconditions for participation in decision-making processes.

In order to achieve successful and more active civil involvement/participation in decision-making processes, public authorities must know their civil actors/stakeholders and must be aware of existent differences in their willingness and interest to participate in decision-making processes. They must also recognize those differences to apply differentiated forms of civil involvement/participation entities (Arnstein 1969, 216–224). According to the authors of this article, there remains too little attention paid to this.

Methodology

As was mentioned above, the methodological basis of the educational pilot projects implemented in 2020 at six local Lithuanian municipalities consisted of:

1) the Civil Participation Tool framework, which allows researchers to select, evaluate, and classify civil actors/local stakeholders according to certain selected criteria and actions;

2) the Civil Participation Tool guidelines on how to develop the most appropriate strategies to activate the processes of civil involvement/participation for different civil actors/local stakeholders.

The technique for selecting, evaluating, and classifying civil actors/stakeholders in decision-making processes

The Civil Participation Tool can be used for selecting, evaluating, and classifying/categorizing civil participation entities into four groups which are ready, able, and have an interest in participating in decision-making or implementing decisions that are important to the local community. There are three steps that must be performed to use this tool (Figure 1). The quality of selection, evaluation, and classification/categorization of civil participation entities depends highly on the knowledge, experience, and skills of individuals who perform these three consecutive steps.

In the case of educational pilot projects implemented in six Lithuanian local municipalities in 2020, a group of experts consisting of municipality managers, municipal politicians, civil servants, and interest groups was involved. Only a responsibly formed group of such experts and the competence of its members can guarantee that the results they obtain (i.e., the selected civil actors/local stakeholders and their evaluation, classification, and categorization) are reliable.

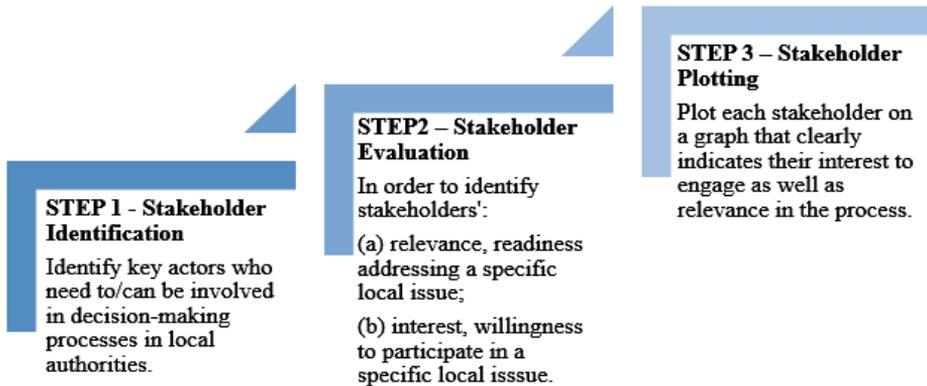


Figure 1. The three steps of the Civil Participation Tool
(source: Training material on the Civil Participation Tool).

The **first step** of the action establishes an optimal list of civil actors/stakeholders: natural or legal persons relevant to civil participation/decision-making in a given situation. These individuals must be selected from three categories of entities: a) institutional entities – e.g., governmental institutions (e.g., territorial labor exchanges) that can have a significant influence on the decision-making process; b) civil society actors – e.g., non-governmental organizations, national minority organizations, etc., that can have a significant influence on decision-making; and c) private sector actors – e.g., business associations, regional chambers of commerce, commerce and crafts, etc., which may have a significant influence on the decision-making process. When compiling the optimal list of such subjects of civil participation, it is recommended: a) to select representatives with reference to the degree of influence that they can have on decision-making processes in the management of a specific local matter; b) to select representatives from a maximum of 10–15 such entities; and c) to give priority to those entities representing the common interests of the persons/organizations in the group.

The **second step** of the action assesses all civil actors/stakeholders selected in the first step according to two aspects: (a) their relevance and readiness to address a specific local issue; and b) their interest and willingness to participate in a specific decision-making process. The assessment of each of the above-mentioned aspects is carried out using 20 criteria which are divided into four groups: a) social capital; b) economic capital; c) human capital; and d) political capital. For each variable, the evaluators using the tool are asked to identify the potential interest and relevance (very positively, positively, negatively, or very negatively) of each civil actor/stakeholder by co-decision.

The significance of the evaluation of the first list of criteria shows how important it is for the local authority to have the civil actor/stakeholder on board based on the importance, readiness, and ability of a specific selected civil actor/stakeholder.

The significance of the evaluation of the second list of criteria shows how important it is for the local authority to have civil actors/stakeholders on board based on their interest and willingness to participate in solving a specific local issue.

As the Civil Participation Tool was created and developed using mathematical models (or mathematical formulas) and information technology (applying EXCEL and other programs), this means that assigning one of the five possible values to the criteria (factors) in both lists automatically calculates, quantifies (producing a number from 0 to 1), and expresses the influence of each of the two lists of criteria on a particular selected civil actor/stakeholder. This determines their: a) relevance and readiness to address a specific local issue; and b) interest and willingness to participate in a specific decision-making processes of local affairs. The higher the value (from 0 to 1) calculated by the formula for each list of criteria, the higher the influence of the list of factors on either the relevance and readiness of a stakeholder in solving a specific local issue or their interest and willingness to participate in a specific local matter.

In the **third step** of the action, all selected civil actors/stakeholders are divided into four groups according to the results of evaluation in the second step. Each group represents a different level of potential involvement of the civil actor/stakeholder: a) information group; b) advisory group; c) dialogue group; and d) partnership group (see Figure 2).

The civil actors/stakeholders falling into the information group are characterized by a perceived low readiness, ability, and interest in dealing with local affairs on the topic at hand (with numerical evaluation values from 0 to 0.5 in both aspects). The civil actors/stakeholders falling into the consultation group are characterized by a perceived high interest (0 to 0.5), but a low level of relevance and readiness on the topic at hand (0.5 to 1). The dialogue group includes those civil actors/stakeholders who are characterized by a perceived low interest (0 to 0.5) but a high level of relevance and readiness on the topic at hand (0.5 to 1). Civil actors/stakeholders falling into the partnership group are characterized by a perceived high interest as well as relevance for the topic at hand (over 0.5 in both aspects – see Figure 3).

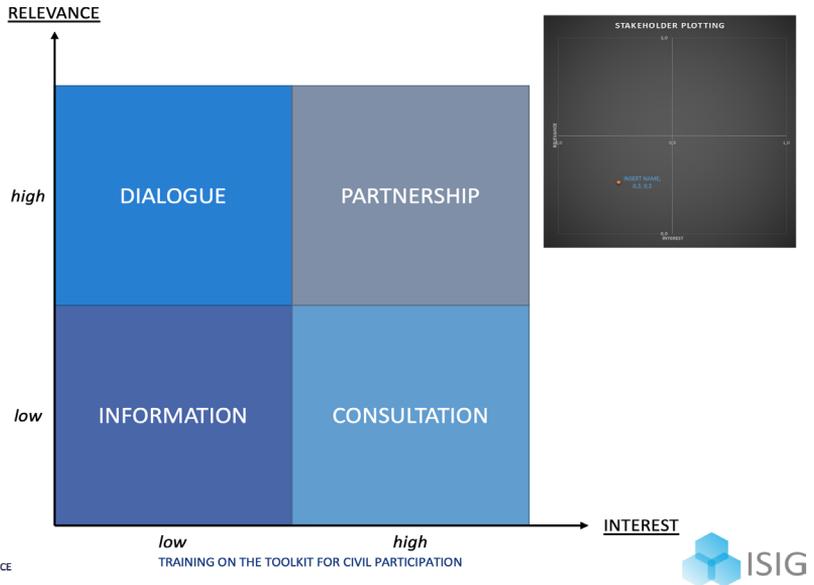


Figure 2. Classification of stakeholders into four groups according to two aspects of evaluation – the “Map of Civil Participation Stakeholders” (source: Training material on the Civil Participation Tool).

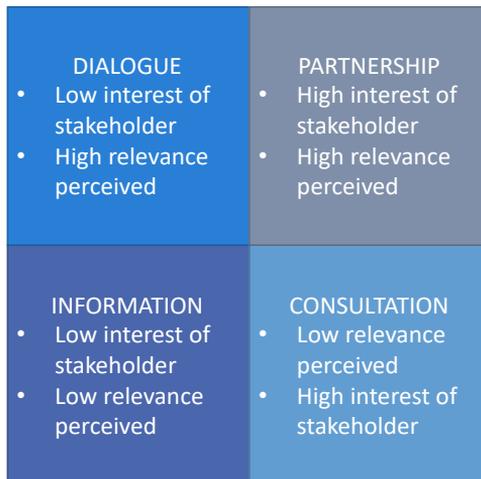


Figure 3. The graph of civil participation entities classified into four groups according to the two aspects of evaluation: degree of perceived actor’s interest and degree of functionality perceived by the public authority of the stakeholders (source: Training material on Tool for Civil Participation).

It is important to mention that stakeholders are not simply divided into four groups, but are also graphically represented in the above figure: each selected and evaluated civil actor/stakeholder is placed into one of the four quadrants. Such a graph (or taxonomy) is called the Map of Civil Participation Stakeholders (Figure 2).

Recommendations on how to develop strategies for implementing and strengthening civil participation

The Civil Participation Tool also provides recommendations on the most appropriate forms of engagement and information provision for civil actors/stakeholders in decision-making processes according to the information provided in the graph of four quadrants.

The forms and methods of civil involvement/participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes directly depend on the group (quadrant) to which a particular stakeholder belongs. For example, in order to involve civil actors/stakeholders who belong to the information group (the information quadrant in the Map of Civic Participants) in decision-making processes, actions might include opening meetings, publishing agendas or reports, producing brochures and posters, etc. It is recommended that information should be provided for specific stakeholders through special newsletters, invitations to public presentations, etc. (see Figure 4).

To involve other groups of civil actors/stakeholders that fall into the partnership, consultation, or dialogue quadrants in decision-making processes, it is recommended to use other forms, methods, actions, or channels that are most suitable for them.

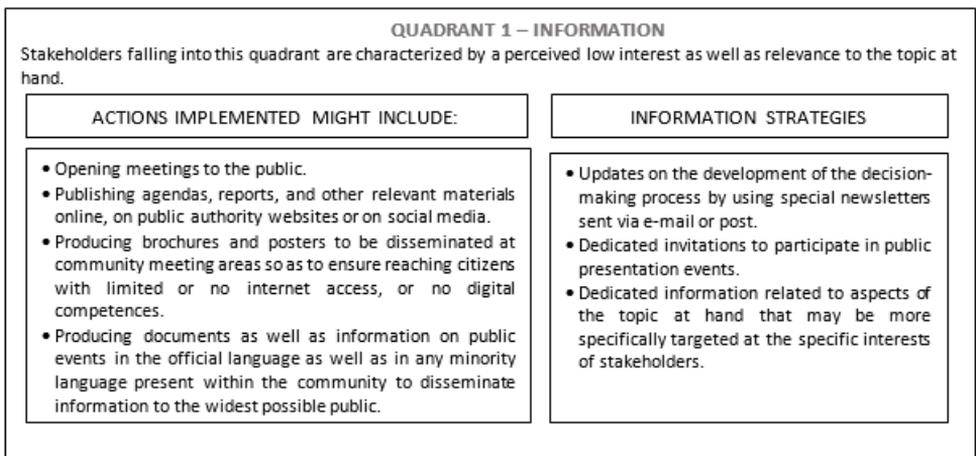


Figure 4. Forms and methods of involving and providing information to civil actors/stakeholders from the information group quadrant
(source: Training material on the Civil Participation Tool).

There are two types of strategies suggested: 1) strategies for the implementation of civil participation; and 2) participation enhancement strategies. In order to make the actions of civil actors/stakeholders more targeted and effective, it is recommended to develop and implement

strategies for the implementation of civil participation. These strategies are prepared on the basis of the Civil Participation Tool plots where each civil actor/stakeholder is located on the graph (i.e., in one of the 4 quadrants) by institutions organizing activities for stakeholders (leaders of administration and politicians, in the case of municipalities). They consist of various potential tasks to obtain necessary information in a specific local manner, with deadlines and actors responsible for those tasks. Participation enhancement strategies are designed in order to direct actions towards raising the awareness of civil actors/stakeholders by: a) transforming them from passive stakeholders to groups of civil actors more engaged and willing to participate in local affairs; b) improving their relevance (raising the level of knowledge and skills) in a certain field, enabling them to participate in the decision-making process more prepared and more knowledgeable than before; and c) enabling them to become actors of civil participation that local authorities can trust, empowering some of them to deal with and act independently in local affairs (Figure 5).

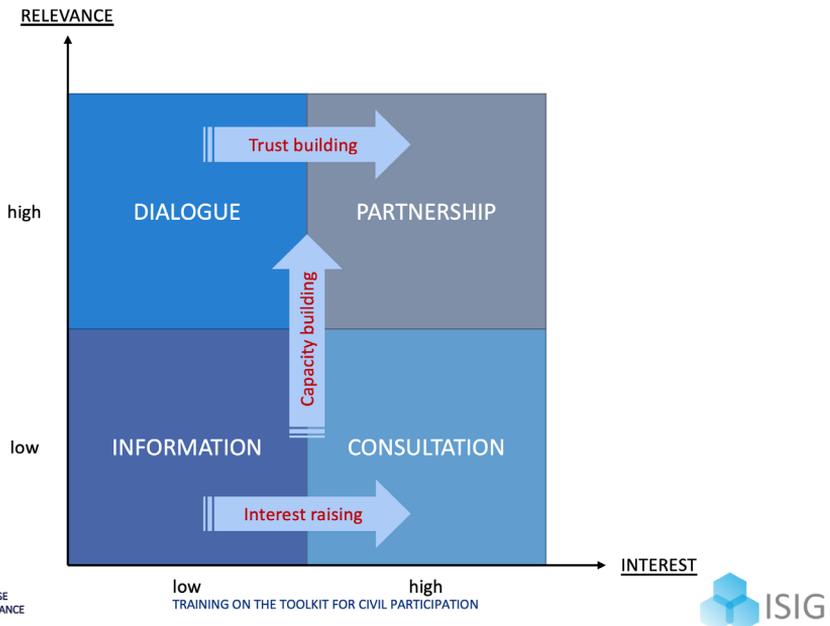


Figure 5. The developers of the Tool for Civil Participation propose participation enhancement strategies by organizing three or four transfers in the map of civil participation stakeholders

(source: Training material on the Civil Participation Tool).

The Civil Participation Tool shows the possibility for civil actors/stakeholders located in one quadrant to move to the next if their level of relevance (thus competences/expertise) or interest increases. For example, movement from the information section to the consultation section is possible when stakeholders willingly become entities with higher interest and higher willingness

to participate in other decisions in local affairs after the targeted influence of local authorities. The developers of the Civil Participation Tool propose participation enhancement strategies that enable three to four transfers from one square in the map of civil participation stakeholders to another (Figure 5). The list of targeted influence measures and certain tasks designed by local authorities intended for stakeholder enhancement is called the participation enhancement strategy.

Results

Educational pilot projects took place in six local municipalities of Lithuania in October–November 2020. Using the Civil Participation Tool, maps of civil participation and both participation implementation and participation enhancement strategies were prepared as a result of these projects. These maps and strategies were developed not only to acquire the necessary administrative capacity but also to apply it in practice. This article presents the results of a training pilot project implemented by only one of the six Lithuanian municipalities – the Tauragė district municipality. It is important to mention that the results obtained in other Lithuanian municipalities are analogous, and only the cases (the specific local issues) differed. It is in this context that the maps of civil participation and strategies for the implementation of civil participation and participation enhancement were prepared.

When implementing the training pilot project in the Tauragė district municipality, the following decisions were made.

1) The case of civil participation in decision-making in local affairs chosen was the reconstruction and potential renovation of a market in Tauragė city center, next to residential houses, to make it more attractive so that it might serve not only as a trading place but also as a space for cultural events. This case study was called “Change in the functionality of the market: from trade to culture”.

2) In order to achieve the set of goals (to find ways and methods to reconstruct the market in the center of Tauragė and to change the functionality of the market), it was decided to involve civil actors/local stakeholders in the reconstruction of the legal entities in the market. This included residents of the surrounding territories, non-governmental cultural organizations and interest groups, market traders, and owners and users of property in this area.

2.1) The group of institutional entities included: a) Tauragė County State Food and Veterinary Service; and b) the market administrator.

2.2) The group of local community stakeholders included: a) residents of the surrounding housing association; and b) NGOs whose main activity is the organization of cultural events.

2.3) The group of private sector entities included: a) market traders (or representatives of their interests); b) buyers of market goods (or persons representing their interests); and c) other markets in Tauragė city (or business partners);

3) The local group of experts was formed from municipal politicians and civil servants, including: the Deputy Mayor of the Municipality; the Director of the Municipal Administration; and the Head of the Strategic Planning and Investment Division of the Municipal Administration. This group was responsible for the selection, evaluation, and classification of stakeholders, as well as for the preparation of the map of stakeholders and strategies.

4) Following the list of local stakeholders constructed by the Civil Participation Tool, the local group of experts evaluated 7 selected stakeholders (two aspects were evaluated according to 20 criteria) and prepared the Map of civil participation (see Figure 6).

5) As can be seen from the Map of civil participation, local stakeholders fell into two

quadrants:

5.1) The information quadrant and the information group, which was comprised of stakeholders with a numerical value of 0 to 0.5 in both aspects; i.e., those with low readiness, low ability to deal with local affairs, and low relevance to participate in decision-making processes at hand. This constituted 5 out of 7 evaluated civic participation subjects: a) Tauragė County State Food and Veterinary Service; b) residents of the surrounding housing association; c) market traders (or representatives of their interests); d) buyers of market goods (or representatives of their interests); and e) other markets in Tauragė city (or business partners);

5.2) The partnership quadrant and the partnership group, which was comprised of stakeholders with a numerical value of 0.5 to 1 in both aspects; i.e., those with high relevance in dealing with local issues and high interest and willingness to participate in local affairs. This constituted 2 out of 7 selected stakeholders: a) market administrators; and b) NGOs whose main activity is the organization of cultural events.

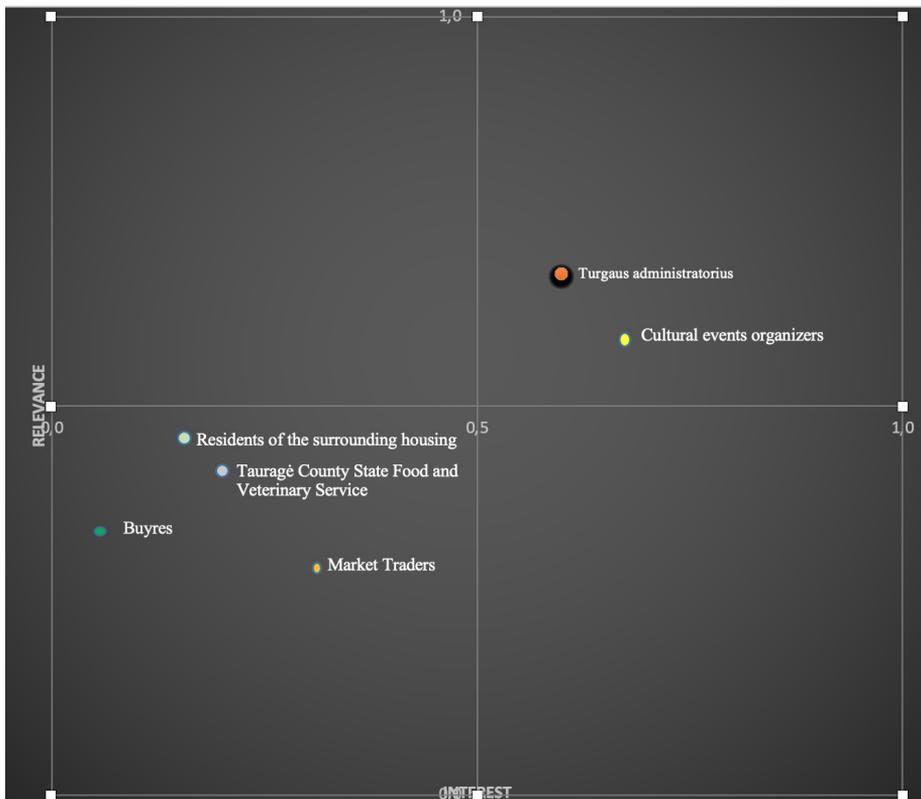


Figure 6. The distribution of stakeholders in quadrants in the “Market functional adaptation: from trade to cultural events” project.

6) In accordance with the recommendations provided by the Civil Participation Tool, strategies for the implementation and enhancement of participation were also prepared:

6.1) It is planned to invite stakeholders from both the information and partnership groups to participate directly in the presentation event of the participation implementation strategy involving the reconstruction of the market in the center of Tauragė City. The following tools will be used for sending invitations: announcements in the local press; providing information on the municipality's website; creating a cultural event for market traders and NGOs; providing information for managers and members (by e-mail); and providing invitations to the chairpersons of surrounding housing associations on multi-apartment information boards. After the presentation event, it is planned to assess the level of interest of all stakeholders in the reconstruction of the market (and the change of functionality) and make an appropriate decision: either to prepare a technical project for the reconstruction of the market in Tauragė city center, or to abandon the idea. According to the information received during the presentation event, the decision made by the group of local experts on reconstruction/non-reconstruction of the market will be published on the municipal website and at a press conference of municipal leaders;

6.2) The local group of experts prepared a participation enhancement strategy which will enhance stakeholder participation in decision-making processes in the change of functionality of the Tauragė market – from the presentation event to technical project preparation and implementation. It is planned to involve stakeholders in working groups and the commission of works contracts to create conditions for visiting similar objects in Lithuania and even in other countries.

As has already been mentioned, the educational pilot project in Tauragė district municipality was not only designed to strengthen administrative capacity, but also to have practical benefits. Using the maps of civil participation and the strategies for the implementation and enhancement of civil participation, the technical project of the Tauragė market was prepared, a tender for construction work is going to be announced, and reconstruction will begin in 2021. "Tauragė city market will change beyond recognition. The new attractive shopping places and the green zone will not only become a convenient shopping place for entrepreneurs and visitors, but will also change the central face of the city," Tauragė District Municipality announced in its 2020 report.

Conclusions

1. The analysis of various scientific literature sources allows us to reasonably state that various methods of enhancing the participation of civil society actors in decision-making processes in Lithuania and other countries still do not produce the desired effect: a significant increase in the activity and quality of the participation of civil society actors in decision-making. Therefore, for researchers and practitioners there remains a need to explore and uncover the real reasons for the relatively low participation of civil actors in decision-making processes and to look for new opportunities and/or incentives to increase the activity of civil society actors.

2. One of the reasons for the relatively low participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes might be that differences among the objects of civil participation are not sufficiently recognized and taken into account when applying forms of the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes and providing necessary information. The situation of civil participation in political decision-making processes might be different if differentiated forms of stakeholder enhancement in decision-making processes and information were applied to different stakeholders. Furthermore, the development and implementation of different strategies for improving their skills and increasing their interest in participating in decision-making processes would be of ben-

efit.

3. The Civil Participation Tool, developed by the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise for Good Governance, provides a framework and recommendations for: 1) selecting, evaluating, and classifying stakeholders into four groups; 2) selecting the most appropriate forms of participation in decision-making processes and providing information to classified stakeholders; and 3) developing the most appropriate strategies to activate the processes of participation for different stakeholders based on the assessment of their potential to engage, and enhancing the level of participation.

4. Educational pilot projects took place in six local municipalities in Lithuania in October–November 2020. During these projects, while applying the Civil Participation Tool and recommendations prepared by the Council of Europe's Center of Expertise for Good Governance (selecting, evaluating, and grouping stakeholders), maps of civil participation and strategies of participation implementation and participation enhancement were prepared. The results of the educational pilot projects allow us to reasonably state that more active civil participation in decision-making processes can be expected when the objective differences of local stakeholders are recognized. According to this, different forms of information and different strategies for improving skills and increasing engagement in participating in decision-making processes should be provided.

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Aktyvesnis pilietinis dalyvavimas priimant sprendimus: galimybių paieškos

Anotacija

Mokslinės literatūros šaltinių, įvairių mokslinių tyrimų ataskaitų analizė leidžia pagrįstai teigti, kad tiek Lietuvoje, tiek ir kitose pasaulio šalyse taikomi įvairūs pilietinės visuomenės subjektų dalyvavimo priimant sprendimus skatinimo (didinimo) būdai iki šiol vis dar neduoda norimo (laukiamo) efekto – reikšmingesnio pilietinės visuomenės subjektų dalyvavimo aktyvumo. Todėl mokslininkams ir praktikams ir toliau išlieka poreikis ieškoti ir rasti tikrąsias priežastis, kodėl toks santykinai žemas gyventojų dalyvavimas priimant sprendimus. Taip pat jiems reikia toliau ieškoti naujų galimybių ir (ar) paskatų pilietinės visuomenės subjektų aktyvumui padidinti. Viena iš tokių santykinai žemo gyventojų dalyvavimo priimant sprendimus priežasčių galimai yra tai, kad yra nepakankamai pripažįstami objektyviai tarp pilietinio dalyvavimo subjektų egzistuojantys skirtumai ir į tai nepakankamai atsižvelgiama, kai pilietinės visuomenės subjektams taikomos dalyvavimo priimant sprendimus formos ir suteikiama jiems reikalinga informacija. Situacija galimai būtų kitokia, jeigu būtų taikoma diferencijuota prieiga prie pilietinio dalyvavimo subjektų (t. y. jeigu būtų taikomos skirtingos jų įtraukimo į sprendimų priėmimą ir informacijos suteikimo jiems formos/kanalai, taip pat kuriamos ir įgyvendinamos skirtingos jų gebėjimų tobulinimo ir suinteresuotumo (motyvacijos) dalyvauti priimant sprendimus didinimo strategijos). Europos Tarybos Gerojo valdymo ekspertizės centro sukurtoje Pilietinio dalyvavimo priimant sprendimus priemonėje naudojama technika ir rekomendacijos skirtos: 1) atrinkti, įvertinti ir suklasifikuoti pilietinio dalyvavimo subjektus į keturias grupes; 2) suklasifikuotiems subjektams parinkti tinkamiausias dalyvavimo priimant sprendimus ir informacijos suteikimo formas; 3) parengti tinkamiausias jų gebėjimų šioje srityje tobulinimo ir suinteresuotumo (motyvacijos) įsitraukti į sprendimų priėmimą, tvarkant vietos reikalus, didinimo strategijas – puikiai tinka patikrinti diferencijuotos prieigos prie pilietinio dalyvavimo subjektų veiksmingumą. 2020 metais Lietuvoje (šešiose Lietuvos vietos savivaldybėse) buvo įgyvendinami mokojo pobūdžio pilotiniai projektai, kurių metu buvo pritaikyta Europos Tarybos Gerojo valdymo ekspertizės centro sukurtoje Pilietinio dalyvavimo priimant sprendimus priemonėje naudojama technika ir rekomendacijos dėl pilietinio dalyvavimo subjektų atrankos, vertinimo ir grupavimo, taip pat dėl pilietinio dalyvavimo įgyvendinimo ir stiprinimo strategijų rengimo. Gauti pilotinių projektų rezultatai leidžia pagrįstai teigti, kad aktyvesnio pilietinio dalyvavimo priimant sprendimus galima sulaukti pripažinus objektyviai tarp pilietinio dalyvavimo subjektų egzistuojančius skirtumus ir, atsižvelgus į tai, taikant diferencijuotą prieigą prie jų.

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