

## A N N E X O N E

### GLOSSARY

**Accountability.** The ways in which elected and appointed officials are evaluated by their citizens. Accountability relates to politicians keeping their promises, appropriately administering funds and the public trust, and not being able to act without oversight by the people.

**Apathy.** When the people do not care or are not really interested in politics. Often apathy results when people do not believe that their voice is being heard or that their views will be taken into account. Or, maybe they do not believe the issues directly affect their lives.

**Autonomy.** Political space given to minorities. Autonomy is the principle that people deserve the right to make decisions over those issues that affect them most directly. Often used as a means of providing for cultural expression, education, and language.

**Capacity.** The ability to get things done. Elected officials may be free to make decisions in the public good, but good decisions are worthless if they cannot be implemented. Capacity refers to resources, but also to the government's relationship with society. If the society rejects government remedies, the government lacks capacity to address problems.

**Citizen juries.** Processes of decision-making or a series of exploratory hearings in which citizens take testimony and decide or make recommendations on specific issues.

**Citizenship.** Citizenship has a legal meaning as well as one that applies to participation. As a legal issue, it refers to who is entitled to membership in the political community and the benefits (and obligations) it entails (citizenship as legal standing). The other meaning of the term is active involvement and devotion to civic duty, or contributing to the life of the community.

**Civic engagement.** People forming organizations and being involved in the issues that affect them most. Civic engagement suggests that local interest groups are organized, have a developed agenda, and seek to advocate their interests. When people are involved in social groups, social trust is built up, laying a basis for democratic tolerance.

**Civil society.** The means of organization by which people come together to form groups in society and define the values, goals, and solutions for social issues.

Civil society generally means non-profit, advocacy, or charitable organizations, including religious groups and private sector interests.

**Citizen initiatives.** Efforts by citizens to change a law through gathering signatures or other indications of support, in order to put decisions to the people in an election or a referendum.

**Collaborative policy-making.** Getting together and deciding difficult issues as a group, in a search for common solutions. These processes ideally feature all major interests at the table, and a good faith effort to come up with a solution that every interest finds satisfactory.

**Community.** Community is the feeling of location and place, and of relationships that bind people together; it contributes to a feeling of identity and belonging. It can also refer to a recognized group of people who consider themselves a community.

**Community-based organizations (CBOs).** Associations at the very local level, in neighbourhoods, through which people come together to provide services to their community. Self-help organizations fit this category.

**Community budgeting.** A process by which the budget – which allocates spending, and therefore social values – is shared with the people in community meetings and decisions are made together on the tax and spending questions before the municipality.

**Community visioning.** A process by which a group of citizens and elected officials, together with experts, try to envisage how they would like their community to look in the future. This technique also helps define community values.

**Consensus.** Decision-making that attempts to get an agreement everyone can be satisfied with.

**Co-operative governance.** Patterns of interaction and co-ordination among various levels of government, for example between provincial and local levels, or across political boundaries.

**Decentralization.** Shifting authority to levels of decision-making closer to those who are most effected by the decisions. Some decisions can be made at the local level, but some require co-ordination by national governments.

**Decision rules.** The rules of the game, which determine what level of agreement is necessary for a decision to be made that is binding on the entire political community.

**Deliberative democracy.** A method of determining the popular will through discussion, dialogue, and give-and-take. This may be seen as a supplement or as a replacement for electoral democracy.

**Democracy.** A system of governance in which popular preferences guide official representation and action (rule by the people). Practically, democracy involves elections, political rights, and opportunities for direct participation in decision-making.

**Devolution.** Shifting authority to the lowest possible level. Devolved powers, once granted, are less easily revoked than are delegated powers.

**Direct democracy.** Direct citizen involvement in decision-making, by assessing through discussion or election the general will of the people. The views of the majority tend to bind those opposed to the decision as well.

**Electoral systems.** The rules by which elections are held. The rules influence how the election game is played, and the purpose of the competition itself.

**Fiscal decentralization.** Devolving authority for taxing and spending to the most local level of government possible.

**Local.** The arena of public decision-making that is closest to the people.

**Mega-cities.** Cities with more than ten million inhabitants.

**Participation, traditional.** Traditional participation occurs through standing for office, voting for candidates, and being involved in the debate over issues decided at the ballot box.

**Participation, enhanced.** Enhanced participation occurs in discussion, dialogue, debate, and problem-solving in formal or informal processes of policy evaluation and formation.

**Peace commissions.** Local-level bodies, such as committees or neighbourhood representatives, who seek to ameliorate disputes among contending social groups. Often used as a technique in post-war situations or in cases of ongoing ethnic violence.

**Performance evaluation.** Methods to measure whether the goals of the community, or of an organization or individual, are being reached.

**Plurality.** The candidate receiving the largest number of votes (not necessarily a majority) wins the seat.

**Proportional representation.** An electoral system that tries to directly reflect the proportion of votes won in the number of council or parliamentary seats awarded.

**Referendum.** An election in which voters are asked to accept or reject a specific proposition. The rules can stipulate how much is needed for the referendum to pass, but the term is used most in situations where more than 50 per cent carries the day.

**Representative democracy.** Democracy in which voters choose representatives to advocate on their behalf in decision-making bodies.

**Stakeholders.** Stakeholders are those whose interests are most directly affected by the issue at hand. It is never easy to be sure that all the legitimate stakeholders are at the table, and whether those at the table are in fact legitimate stakeholders.

**Subsidiarity.** The principle that says decisions should be taken at the level closest to the people, as long as it is feasible and does not require broader national or regional co-ordination. In practice, it means that local communities are empowered to make decisions on issues such as education, language, economic development, and environmental management consistent with national or regional principles.

**Transparency.** Being able to see inside government and know that the processes of decision-making and the decisions made are fair, consistent with the law, and free of corrupt influences.

**Turnout.** How many people vote in elections as compared to the total number eligible to vote. Turnout is usually lowest in local elections.

**Urbanization.** Urbanization is the movement of people from the rural areas to city life, changing the ways in which they earn a living, consume, participate in the economy, and add to the social mosaic of a city.

**Virtual democracy.** Democracy over the Internet, in which people may express their opinions through e-mail to local authorities, or browse local civic announcements online, or participate in an online election, or watch a council meeting in action. Some see virtual democracy as a way to encourage direct citizen participation in an age of big cities.

**Ward-based systems.** City administration or electoral districting that divides the city up into sub-zones. Often these areas form their own distinct communities, each with its own identity and characteristics. These systems usually feature decentralization of authority within a large city.

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