

# Building Healthy Participation into OGP Action Plans and Beyond

*A Webinar for Members of the  
Open Government Partnership*

**February 22, 2012**



GLOBAL VOICES | Strengthening Governance  
Through Participation

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**AMERICASPEAKS**  
Engaging Citizens in Governance



Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer  
Founder & President



David Stern  
Director of Online Engagement

# Global Voices' & America*Speaks*' Vision



Engage citizens  
in the most  
important public  
decisions that  
impact their lives

## **Global Voices' History**

- Over 15 years of large-scale citizen engagement experience
- 165,000 + participants to date
- Projects in all 50 states and 15 countries
- Linking public will and political will for significant change



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# Webinar Outline

- Introductions
- Stakeholder vs. citizen engagement
- Core principles and strategies
- Case Study: Our Budget, Our Economy
- Discussion 1
- Interactive technologies and processes
- Considering new programs
- Discussion 2

# Introductions

- Name and title
- Country
- What you want to get out of this webinar (in 15 seconds or less)

## **Key Distinction:**

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Citizen Engagement



# **High Quality Public Engagement**

# Core Principles & Strategies for Public Engagement

## 1. Link to decision makers

- Gain commitment early
- Necessary to be credible to the public
- Hold accountable for outcomes

## 2. Achieve diverse participation

- Set specific targets
- Multi-layered outreach strategy: Media/  
Organizations/Community Organizers
- Extra Effort for Marginalized Groups



# Core Principles & Strategies for Public Engagement

## 3. Create safe public space

- Physical/Online
- Psychological

## 4. Facilitated discussion

- Experienced process facilitators/moderators
- Set norms for participation & monitor
- Ensure all voices are heard & respected

## **Core Principles & Strategies for Public Engagement**

5. Inform participants and ask clear, actionable questions
  - Information must be: accurate/neutral/accessible
  - Use mixed media to present
  - Outcome will only be as good as the questions asked
  
6. Discover shared priorities
  - Sequence and content of agenda
  - Design of the Process enables participants to discover

## **Core Principles & Strategies for Public Engagement**

### **7. Close the loop with participants**

- Essential to validate participation
- Timely/ongoing

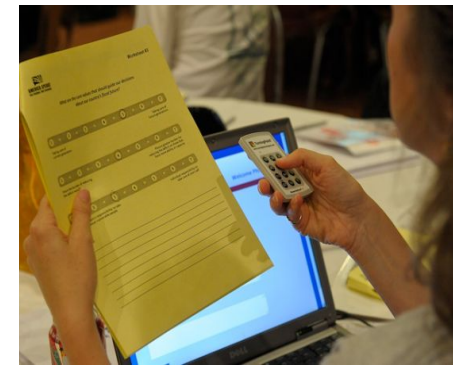
### **8. Sustain engagement over time**

- Connect participants to existing networks
- Increase the opportunities for engaging
- Create organizational mechanisms: key indicators/  
reward systems/transparency

## Case Study

# Our Budget, Our Economy National Town Meeting (I)

**AMERICA SPEAKS**  
Our Budget, Our Economy

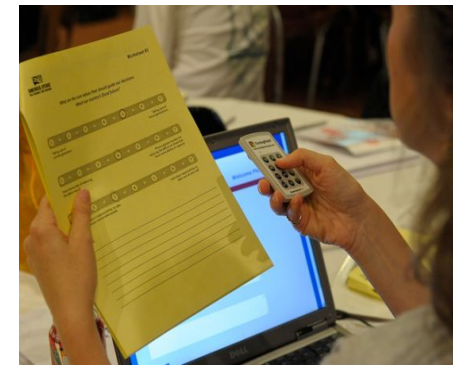


- 3,500 people in 57 cities linked by live video and interactive technologies
  - 19 Major Sites
  - 38 Community Conversation Sites
  - Online webcast and chat during event
- Extensive social media outreach

## Case Study

# Our Budget, Our Economy National Town Meeting (II)

**AMERICA SPEAKS**  
Our Budget, Our Economy



- People were given task of cutting \$1.2 trillion from US deficit by 2025 – 80% succeeded
- Liberals, Conservatives, and Moderates shifted their views
- 91% of participants said they would like to see similar forums on other issues

**Q & A**

**Round 1**



# **Interactive Technologies to Enable Public Participation**



# Online Participation Tools are Basically Surveys/Polls

The differences are in:

- Information conveyed before & after
- Decision constraints
- Social interaction & learning
- Moderation & filtering
- Platform
- Context
- Graphic design

# Case Study: Survey

Good surveys are

- Educational
- Entertaining
- Shareable



# Case Study: e-Petitions

We The People (US)

DirectGov e-petitions (UK)

Key components:

- Meaningful responses
- Threshold for response
- Activist entry point → learning and dialogue



# Ideation

Online brainstorming where users:

- Submit ideas to address a particular question
- Vote on others' ideas to identify the most popular

Keys:

- Ask specific questions
- Avoid pure popularity contests
- Be creative, e.g. pro/con lists
- Create permanent community?

# Case Study: One City Ideas

What are your ideas for making the District of Columbia truly “One City?”

Enter your idea

Hot **Top Ideas** New

My feedback ▾

654  
votes

Vote

## Make One City possible by creating real opportunities for people of all income levels to live and work in DC

Use the City Budget process to:

- restore funding to preserve or build decent housing that people can afford
- increase support for adult literacy, job training and child care
- provide sufficient shelters and stable housing for homeless families and youth
- help low-income families and residents with disabilities to meet their basic needs
- restore funding for crime victims' and domestic violence services
- maintain health insurance for DC residents
- protect food assistance for seniors.

pursue options to increase revenue if needed to preserve or restore funding to critical services

13 comments · Admin →

204  
votes

Vote

## Designate a day each year for "Guitars Not Guns" day music festival.

Designate a day each year for "Guitars Not Guns Day" music festival. GnG is a non profit children's music charity providing guitars and lessons to foster care and at-risk youth in the city. The students have an anthem song they play and sing called "Set Me Free". If we create a day to celebrate their achievements, encourage other youth to join, have food and concert can bond all race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ward or neighborhood through music. [www.gngnca.org](http://www.gngnca.org)

48 comments · Admin →

169  
votes

Vote

## Create more transitional living for disconnected youth

The DC Alliance of Youth Advocates found that the District's rising homeless youth population are coming from failed systems of care with no stable place to live. We must invest in youth throughout their entire development- not stopping at 12, 16, 18, or 20. Let's prove their value in our community by designating affordable housing for homeless and at-risk youth.

2 comments · Admin →

# Participatory Budgeting

- Users allocate money and make informed decisions based on real tradeoffs
- Challenge: balancing simplicity and accuracy
- Opportunity: integrating with face-to-face engagement
- Case: New York Times Budget Puzzle



Published: November 13, 2010

## Budget Puzzle: You Fix the Budget

Today, you're in charge of the nation's finances. Some of your options have more short-term savings and some have more long-term savings. When you have closed the budget gaps for both 2015 and 2030, you are done. Make your own plan, then share it online.

[Related Article](#) | [Behind The Times's Deficit Project](#) | [Printable PDF Version](#) | [Follow-Up: 7,000 Ways to Fix the Deficit](#) | [Room for Debate](#)

Projected 2015 shortfall: \$418 billion



Billions 150 300

Projected 2030 shortfall: \$1,345 billion



Billions 150 300 450 600 750 900 1,050 1,200

Each box represents \$1 billion

0%

Savings from tax increases

0%

Savings from spending cuts

### DOMESTIC PROGRAMS AND FOREIGN AID

Projected Savings to Deficit in:  
2015 2030

	2015	2030
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cut foreign aid in half</b> At a time when the United States is facing large deficits, some budget analysts argue that the country should significantly reduce the money it spends helping other countries. Others say that foreign aid already represents a smaller share of the budget here than in other rich countries and that it expands American influence.	\$17 billion	\$17 billion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Eliminate earmarks</b> Earmarks are lawmaker-directed spending items, often to finance local projects favored by a member of Congress.	\$14 billion	\$14 billion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Eliminate farm subsidies</b> Many economists argue that farm subsidies distort the workings of the market and largely flow to big agricultural businesses. As the Congressional Budget Office has noted, advocates of reducing the subsidies argue that doing so "could help small farms indirectly, slowing the rate" of consolidation. Supporters argue that the subsidies help preserve the American agriculture industry.	\$14 billion	\$14 billion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cut pay of civilian federal workers by 5 percent</b> "During the Great Recession, most private-sector employees have seen their wages frozen, and some have even watched wages decline," the chairmen of the deficit panel wrote. "In contrast, federal workers have seen their wages increase." This option would be a one-time 5 percent cut in federal civilian workers' pay; the chairmen called for a three-year freeze on pay, which would have a similar effect.	\$14 billion	\$17 billion




CHECK THIS BOX



# Social Media

- Social media = Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+ (varies by country)
- Mainly valuable as an outreach tool
- Reach people where they already spend time
- Manage large volumes of input with Hootsuite, Tweetdeck, Seesmic, ThinkUp...

# Case Study: White House + ThinkUp



in order to reduce the deficit, what costs would you cut and what investments would you keep - bo

Jul 6, 2011 9:07 AM from Washington, DC USA  
via Web ↶ ↷ ★ ↘

## 1,915

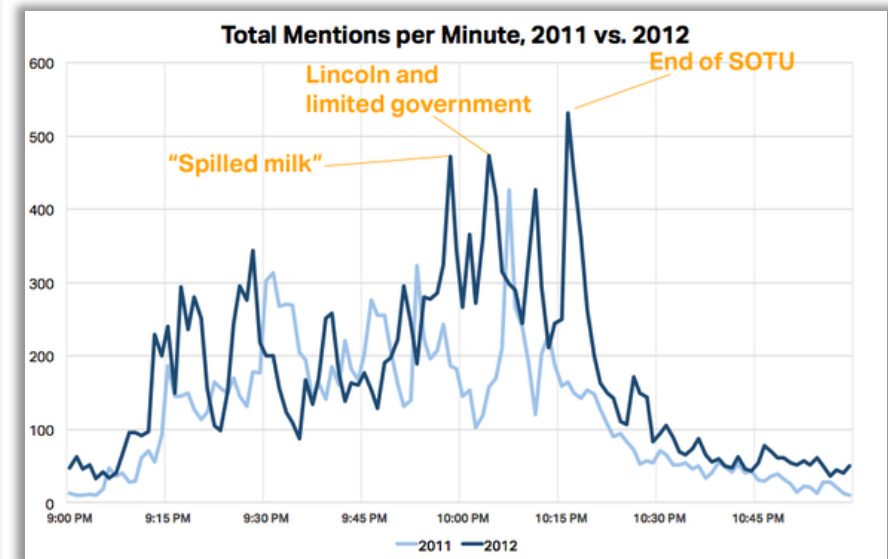
replies in 8 months

[Tweet](#) [+1](#)

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**Most Popular Reply Keywords**

cut   168	investments   90	tax   86	education   66	costs   42	war   39
spend   39	reduce   38	defense   31	#askobama   29	military   26	pay   22
subsidies   25	jobs   21	social   21	raise   21	energy   20	programs   19
infrastructure   19	oil   18				



# Promising Areas for Experimentation

- Using text messaging and mobile apps to gather place-based input
- Working with television to engage huge numbers in televised town meetings
- Large-scale video conferencing (consumer tech not ready)

## **Adding Participatory Elements to OGP Action Plans (I)**

Tempting to start by choosing a tool – but don't. Ask yourselves:

- What are the major policy questions we will face in the next 1-2 years?
- Is the public interested in weighing in on the issue?
- How to manage political risks of engaging given benefits?
- What's the budget for an initiative?

## **Adding Participatory Elements to OGP Action Plans (II)**

After you identify the right policy issue, then you decide on:

- Outreach channels
- Technological tools
- Target participants
- Face to face vs. online vs. both
- Permanent infrastructure or one-off project
- Etc.

**Q & A**

**Round 2**

# Thank you!

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**AMERICASPEAKS**

Engaging Citizens in Governance

# DOT & Cornell e-Rulemaking Initiative

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://regulationroom.org/>. The page title is "Regulation Room". The navigation menu includes "Home", "Learn More", "About", and "FAQ". The main content area is titled "CURRENT RULE" and features a section for "AIR TRAVEL ACCESSIBILITY" with a wheelchair icon. The text describes a proposal from the Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding accessibility for air travel websites and kiosks. Below the text, there is a section titled "The issues:" with the instruction "Click on what interests you most." This section contains five clickable items, each with a dropdown arrow and a comment count:

Category	Issue	Comments
Kiosks:	Accessibility standards	(14 comments)
	Benefits & costs of accessibility	(7 comments)
	Which? When?	(1 comment)
Websites:	Accessibility standards	(7 comments)
	Benefits & costs of accessibility	(3 comments)

At the bottom of the page, there is a section titled "WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW" with three buttons: "ANNOUNCEMENTS", "RECOMMENDED", and "RECENT COMMENTS". To the right, there is a "LEARN" section with a button labeled "How c".