

October 2018

YOUTH-CENTERED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION(THE CASE OF SAIDA)STRATEGIC TOOLS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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Recommended Citation

AL HARIRI, MOHAMMAD ¹Policy Research Assistan (2018) "YOUTH-CENTERED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION(THE CASE OF SAIDA)STRATEGIC TOOLS AND LESSONS LEARNT," *BAU Journal - Health and Wellbeing*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 3 , Article 65.

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Abstract

Governance entities that have tackled public participation for decades are now approaching more participatory democracies, throughout which citizens are directly involved in influencing decisions that matter to them. In Lebanon, young people's disengagement from the sociopolitical realm demands a framework for youth dialogue on policy matters. In 2017, the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development designed, initiated and managed a youth-centered public participation approach in Saida, Lebanon, engaging young citizens in local research and development and empowering them to multiply their influences at the regional and national scales. This approach has been recognized on all levels as an effective methodology for urban youth participation and has been given attention for replication among other urban contexts. This paper takes an in-depth look into the literature of public participation. Onward, it outlines the theoretical and practical keystones of Saida's case study, breaking it down into its chronological milestones and classifying tangible results into strategies. Intersections are derived to associate the local process with the five components of the Public Participation Spectrum, an existing context-relevant scientific model. Finally, lessons learnt are developed from empirically based practice as reference measures for mainstreaming youth-centered public participation elsewhere. The author argues that effective and sustainable youth engagement methods must be adaptive to the responsiveness of the youth engaged and the governance systems and communities for which they are designed.

Keywords

Public Participation, Youth Engagement, Governance Approach, Local Development, Policy

YOUTH-CENTERED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (THE CASE OF SAIDA)

STRATEGIC TOOLS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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ABSTRACT: *Governance entities that have tackled public participation for decades are now approaching more participatory democracies, throughout which citizens are directly involved in influencing decisions that matter to them. In Lebanon, young people's disengagement from the sociopolitical realm demands a framework for youth dialogue on policy matters. In 2017, the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development designed, initiated and managed a youth-centered public participation approach in Saida, Lebanon, engaging young citizens in local research and development and empowering them to multiply their influences at the regional and national scales. This approach has been recognized on all levels as an effective methodology for urban youth participation and has been given attention for replication among other urban contexts. This paper takes an in-depth look into the literature of public participation. Onward, it outlines the theoretical and practical keystones of Saida's case study, breaking it down into its chronological milestones and classifying tangible results into strategies. Intersections are derived to associate the local process with the five components of the Public Participation Spectrum, an existing context-relevant scientific model. Finally, lessons learnt are developed from empirically-based practice as reference measures for mainstreaming youth-centered public participation elsewhere. The author argues that effective and sustainable youth engagement methods must be adaptive to the responsiveness of the youth engaged and the governance systems and communities for which they are designed.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Lebanese youth are regarded as politically disengaged, preferring occasional public demonstration to other forms of political involvement. According to a 2015 UNDP study, Lebanese citizens expressing their opinions to public officials reached degrees as low as 6.7%. Citizens' participation in national and local elections could be matched with the MENA average at rates lower than those of other middle-income states (Chaaban & el Houry, 2015, p. 49).

This paper gives particular focus on this matter to the Saida region. The city of Saida, comprising of 7.45 km² in municipal area, is the capital of the governorate of Southern Lebanon (Hallaj, Debs, Guadagnoli, & Ghalia, 2014, p. 1). However, the city is affiliated to a larger, surrounding region for which it is the main center. This growing urbanized community was home to over 241,017 registered Lebanese residents in 2016 (5.33% of Lebanon total population), disregarding Palestinians and Syrian refugees. The latest annual Statistical Bulletin published by the Lebanese Ministry of Health in 2016 indicates that youth from 15 to 29 years old comprise 27.6% of Saida residents (Ministry of Health, 2016, p. 10).

Governance in Saida features a set of players and decision makers, each intervening in a given direction under the limited approval and support of the municipality (Chaaban, Hamade, & Srour, 2004, p. 2). Since 2012, the Municipality of Saida has adopted the concept of public participation in its governance approach, collaborating with local citizens throughout the development process of its Urban Sustainable Development Strategy, the USUDS, through interactive workshops and public sessions. The municipality also held random workshops or contests with Lebanese and international universities, inviting students to contribute to the local development plans. However, uncoordinated planning has created cases of repetitiveness and redundancy of interventions (Chaaban, Hamade, & Srour, 2004, p. 4). The USUDS strategic framework recommends that an agenda for dialogue among local stakeholders is established to ensure that implemented measures would not be interrupted in varying political conditions (Al-Harthy, et al., 2015, p. 28).

Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development (HFSHD) has contributed to multiple youth programs in Saida aimed at understanding and simulating regional and international governance methods such as the Model United Nations, Model European Union, and the Model Arab League. Youth empowerment programs also indulged Saida's youth in discrete capacity building trainings, sports, arts and technology contests, as well as exhibitions and public sessions where youth could present their works and achievements.

In 2017, HFSHD set forth a structured program aimed at sustaining public participation in local development and mainstreaming youth engagement in the local governance approach. In collaboration with the Municipality of Saida and under the patronage of national and regional stakeholders such as the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, HFSHD designed, initiated and managed a Saida-specific public engagement process. This approach, also referred to as the "Saida Youth Experience" has engaged participants 17 to 29 years old in local, regional, and national events and programs, establishing youth-centered dialogue with local and national stakeholders.

The Saida Youth Experience has been designed for adaptability to varying urban contexts and political changes and has been equipped with professional support to guarantee building youth capacities and grant interested participants access to new fields of knowledge as well as the opportunity to contribute to local policies and interventions. The experience has been recognized locally, nationally, and internationally as a successful scientific methodology for youth participation in the Lebanese context and is looked into for replication among other urban contexts with its adaptive approach and public responsiveness.

My professional experience in urban development and local governance motivated me to give particular scientific focus to this case study. As a crosscutting member of the core youth team to be tackled later in the study and of the specialized design and management team running the youth engagement process at HFSHD, and throughout every stage of the process, I have assessed the methodology's effectiveness and replicability among similar urban contexts.

This paper offers an in-depth look into Saida's case study in association with existing scientific models of public participation. Section 2 introduces the theoretical framework of public participation and discusses relevant scientific models, giving particular focus to the Public Participation Spectrum, resembling the most context-relevant scientific model upon which the process was based. Section 3 breaks down the case study into its chronological milestones and vision programs in rather a storytelling approach. In Section 4, the process is analyzed in affiliation with the five components of the earlier-explained spectrum. Resulting outcomes are then associated with the relevant milestones for assessing the diversity of the approach. Section 5 offers the lessons learnt through earlier analysis, and recommendations are offered for mainstreaming and strategizing youth engagement in varying Lebanese contexts.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section takes an in-depth look into theoretical definitions of public participation, tackling theories on relevant participation models discussed and criticized among the international scientific community. The section sheds light particularly on two related models introduced by separate entities based on the concept of gradually increasing the level of citizens' involvement and influence.

2.1 Public Participation

"Without the consent of citizens, democracy cannot be legitimate. In order to guarantee that public consent is granted, a set of traditional formal rules and principles are placed at the foundations of creating representative democracy alongside ongoing interactions among governments and citizens" (Gramberger, 2001, p. 15). In developed countries, "increasing the participation of youth in societal and institutional decision-making is becoming a trend. The challenge is to reach genuine youth influence and eradicate the illusion of participation" (Bulling, Carson, DeKraai, Garcia, & Raisio, 2013, p. 409).

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) defines public participation as "the involvement of those affected by a decision in the decision-making process. It is comprised of all related activities from informing citizens about governmental activities to assigning decision-making to the public" (Greaves, 2017, p. 1). According to Gretschel et al, "an active citizen is someone who is well informed and empowered to engage in decision-making and dialogue with decision makers or authorities in power and is in full awareness of his or her rights" (Gretschel, et al., 2014, p. 20). Therefore, there is a need to stress that children, who constitute the most significant and highly influenced part of the populace, "should have their views recognized because they may add relevant perspectives and experience and should thus be considered in the processes of decision-making, policymaking, and preparation of laws as well as their evaluation. Allowing children to fully participate in this manner exercises their right to be heard from the beginning till the end of any intense exchange between children and adults regarding the development of policies, programs, and measures in all relevant frameworks of their lives" (United

Nations, 2009, p. 5). In order for this to be possible, successful relationships between youth and adults must be available. Thus “guidance on the fundamental factors for developing positive relationships with youth are required. These factors include **mutual trust and respect** in order to enable a relationship of mutuality. Without this shared respect they are unlikely to engage openly with adults. Second, proper **dialogue** which enables them to play an active role in their relationships with adults by keeping in mind that both have something to offer and learn from one another other. **Action and feedback** that ensures their views and experiences influence change where change is suggested. Fourth, **reducing power imbalances** so that to maintain equitable relationships with youth in more flexible environments in which they feel safe to express themselves without the barriers that symbolize power differentiation. Last but not least, **providing appropriate choices** by respecting the youth’s competency to make decisions” (Kirby, Lanyon, Cronin, & Sinclair, 2003, p. 41).

2.2 Scientific Models of Public Participation

“Since 1989, during the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), numerous professionals have critically examined participation frameworks in an attempt to address and break down hierarchies between children and/or adults within these structures” (Gretschel, et al., 2014, p. 21). For this reason, several designs for participation models were proposed, assuming that “a success-oriented participation model needs youth-oriented methods of work and communication” (Golombek, 2002, p. 45).

Several factors determine whether they should have greater decision-making power such as including the purpose of their involvement, the status of their evolving capacities, the best interests of the youth, and their preferences with respect to time availability. “On the side of programming and services, youth development agendas are focusing on valuing young people for their potentials, and crafting interventions to specify core skills that work on their social, moral, emotional, physical, and cognitive competencies in which they will need to participate successfully” (Golombek, 2002, p. 6).

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, citizens can exert influence on policy-makers to allow active participation in the decision making process as principles of democracy have always assured. Yet, democracy developments encourage citizens to demand more openness and to which governments respond by increasingly seeking to strengthen these interactions” (Gramberger, 2001, p. 16).

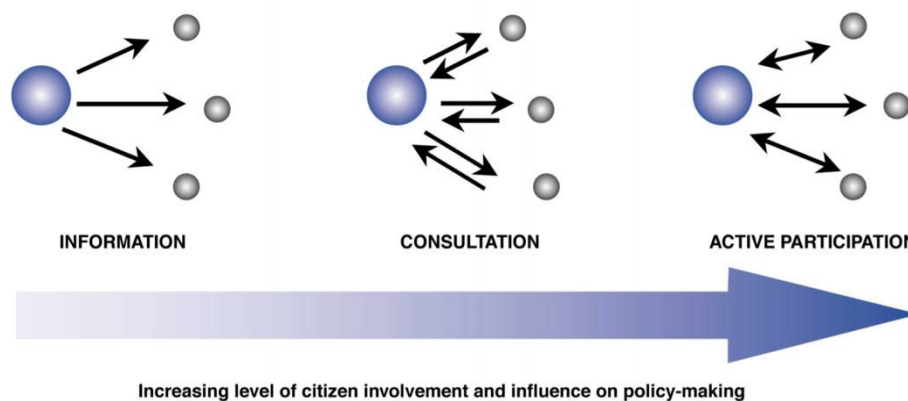


Fig. 1 Diagram of the OECD Model of Public Participation
 Reference: Citizens as Partners - Information, Consultation and Public Participation
 in Policy-Making, (2001) p. 23.

In its model on public participation (as shown in Fig.1), OECD suggests that “increasing the level of citizen involvement and influence on policy-making depends on the three relationships: Information, Consultation, and Active Participation. The first relationship is between governments and citizens where it disseminates information on policy-making on its own initiative, or citizens access information upon their demand in a one-way relationship. The second relationship is a two-way limited relationship between governments and citizens where the former asks for and receives the latter’s feedback on policymaking. The final one is based on the principle of partnership where citizens take a role in the exchange on policy-making, for instance, by proposing policy-options” (Gramberger, 2001, pp. 15-16).

2.3 The Public Participation Spectrum

With the public participation definition by (Greaves, 2017) in mind, a spectrum is designed as an attempt to understand the fundamental levels that need to be considered for an efficient public participation program (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2017). Figure 2 “demonstrates how the spectrum identifies the various levels of public participation that include: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower. The legitimacy of these levels is proved by how the matrix regards goals, time frames, resources, and importance levels in the decision-making process. Each level is selected based on the specificity of the goal of the project and the promise being made to the public” (International Association for Public Participation, 2012, p. 25). The opposite ends of the spectrum frame the levels of public influence starting from having no opportunity to influence to having total influence over the outcome. At the inform level, public participation is only there as a reminder that sometimes providing good information to the public is only the beginning. At the empowerment level, the amount influence provided to the public is spotlighted. Still, some agencies cannot perform this effectively and require a dense program of public information and capacity building. Thus, it is in the middle three levels where most public participation occurs: consult, involve, and collaborate (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2017).

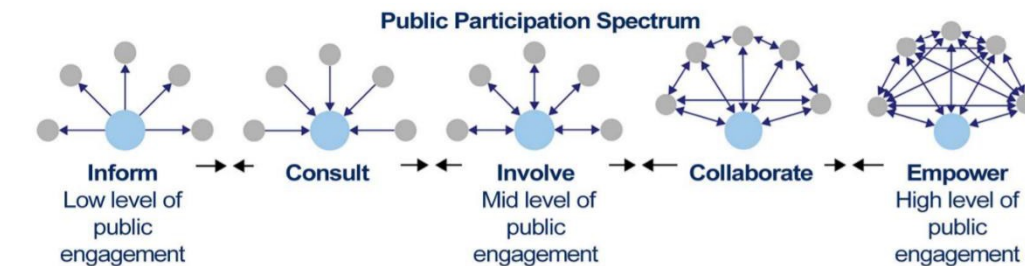


Fig. 2 Diagram of the Public Participation Spectrum by VAGO
Reference: VAGO, based on the International Association for Public Participation’s
Public Participation Spectrum (2003)

Referring to governance entities as ‘agencies,’ IAP2 explains that the **Inform** level of public participation provides the public with the information they need to understand the agency decision-making process. The **Consult** level (Ask) provides the basic minimal opportunity for public input in a decision. The agency merely asks the public for their opinions and considers the input it receives as it makes the decision. At the **Involve** level (Include) the public is invited into the process, from the beginning, and is provided with opportunities for input as the decision-making develops. The agency is still the decision-maker. The **Collaborate** level (Work Together) includes all the elements of involve. At this level, the public is engaged directly in the decision-making particularly to find consensus solutions. Still, the agency is the ultimate decision-maker. Finally, at the **Empower** level, the public is given the opportunity to make decisions for themselves. Agencies are not permitted to enjoin their decision authority to the public, thus creating a fair, legitimate, and inclusive process for empowerment beyond basic voting (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2017).

The matrix presented below (Table 1) is a “continuum where each level can be considered both a standing complete process or part of a process to further develop youth engagement. As the participation level moves up, it is accompanied by increasing levels of commitment, ownership, and responsibility on the part of the youth” (Curtis, Lawrence, & Hoffmann, 2012, p. 16).

The strength of the Spectrum is in the processes of engagement which are designed to have manageable and clear anticipations which is very important for building the trust of young people (Curtis, Lawrence, & Hoffmann, 2012, p. 15). “It is also important to understand that a single project can be operating at four different levels of public participation with different stakeholders at each level. Also, the potential influence varies from one project to another depending on the planning done to understand the dynamics of the project, the desired and likely nature of public input, and the opportunities to address public concerns, desires, and interests (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2017)

Table 1: IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum
Reference: International Association for Public Participation's Public Participation Spectrum (2003)

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC		We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

3. CASE STUDY – SAIDA'S EXPERIENCE

This section tells the story of Saida's youth-centered public participation experience up to the date of this study. As mentioned earlier, public participation in Saida had been common specifically through discrete youth-specific activities initiated by local stakeholders or the municipality.

Sustained public participation came to focus with the current municipal board's electoral campaign in 2016. Awareness material was publicly disseminated, and town hall events introduced the public to the USUDS as well as the municipal board's earlier achievements and its vision for the upcoming six years. This activity has contributed to an informative urban medium, in which access to consistent information on local development strategies and interventions is attainable.

The focused youth engagement process led by HFSHD was initiated in March 2017. The experience, presented herein, is divided into eight milestones, identified by the process design team as consecutive events or periods, each in which the youth were engaged differently. Two visions have been developed in accordance to youth-originated outcomes or officials' promises at the conclusion of earlier milestones.

3.1 Milestone 1 – The Youth Council

In preparation for the Lebanese Council of Minister's (CM) governorate-specific program; and as part of the planning for the CM's foreseen session at the Governorate of Southern Lebanon, a local program featuring a council of active, local youth was established to study the region's needs and propose cross-sectoral projects for the development of Saida.

The Model Council of Ministers program launched in March 2017 with a series of intense capacity-building sessions in the local municipal council meeting hall. Youth participants were trained on national governance and government-level policymaking methods as well as equipped with necessary skills on proposal writing and inter-personal communication. 25 admitted members received their individual ministerial positions and individually designed research-based project proposals under the mentorship of the trainers. Their proposals were then discussed in two consecutive simulations at the governorate center, where the CM would later convene. The simulations were up to the standards of the real government's sessions; young ministers pitched their proposals, conversed, and voted for each project in a timely and structured manner. The youth council also discussed the projects and budgets that the local municipality would later propose to the CM and voted accordingly.

3.2 Milestone 2 – Structured Dialogue I – National & Regional

Following the conclusion of the simulations, the youth participants underwent a three-month experience of structured dialogue with local and national policymakers. Shortly after the simulations, the council convened with Bahia El Hariri, member of the Lebanese Parliament (MP) and president of HFSHD, with whom they discussed their proposals in a formal setup and by whom they were promised a joint developmental experience. The youth then reconvened with MP Bahia El Hariri at the earlier simulation venue at the governorate center, only this time to propose their projects to the governor of Southern Lebanon and the mayor of Saida.

Under the mentorship of the group's trainers, the group then conducted a joint survey for local citizens to collect feedback on urban conditions and needs. For three months, they were given the opportunity to meet and converse with three ministers during their visits to the city.

In May 2017, the youth were invited to the Lebanese Grand Serail, where they attended the Southern Lebanon's governorate-specific preparatory session, throughout which the governor and mayors pitched their proposals to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and relevant ministry representatives. The youth later met with Prime Minister Saad Hariri to whom they presented their urban studies and pitched their proposals. The PM motivated the group to sustain its developmental activity and to propose youth-based urban interventions for the city of Saida.

3.3 Milestone 3 – Participatory Research

Shortly after their visit to the PM, the youth were invited to attend a stakeholders meeting with MP Bahia El Hariri concerning local environmental challenges and possible solutions for the municipal solid waste treatment in Saida and its vicinity. The meeting reached the assignment of the youth to propose research-based, tangible, long-term and short-term solutions for sorting municipal solid waste at the source in Saida and the region.

The group was equipped with the necessary tools skills and equipped for thinking creatively throughout their research. Daily workshops among the team and their mentors brought members to a common ground and unified members' interest in the environmental sector. The team developed a full proposal of 7 projects and 2 policy propositions as well as a list of crucial infrastructural recommendations for the tangibility and sustainability of the process. The team presented the proposal to MP Bahia Hariri and the mayor of Saida, who approved of its contents and asked the youth to prepare an action plan for implementation.

3.4 Milestone 4 – Youth-led Trainings & Deliberative Polling

In November 2017, the growing team launched a training of trainers (ToT) program for local high school students and mentored them as they gave presentations on methods of development at local high schools and contributed, with their peers, to the regional youth creative, academic, and occupational mapping.

The team convened with students from different regional high schools and vocational schools at the Municipality of Saida, inviting them to register in their upcoming in-depth training of trainer (ToT) program. The ToT was delivered to over 80 students over 4 sessions, featuring a new concept entitled the "Culture of Questioning" (Differences among Information-based and Strategic questions) as well as team-building, communication, and negotiation skills. The program also prepared trainees to share their knowledge with their high school peers. For 3 consecutive weeks, the youth team mentored trainees in their presentations, held at 23 regional schools. The school sessions involved students in a deliberative poll prepared by the team. 3,050 surveyed high school students contributed to mapping the regional youth outlooks for creativity, academia and occupation. Mapping outcomes were later formulated by the team and shared with local policymakers and the public.

3.5 Milestone 5 – Youth-led Workshops

In February 2018, on the occasion of Rafic Hariri's 13th assassination anniversary, the team conducted a workshop in Beirut with a group of university students and fresh graduates from different Lebanese regions. The team delivered 2 peer-to-peer training sessions to the participating youth at the Outreach and Leadership Academy (OLA), introducing the concepts of strategic planning as well as a new concept entitled the "Culture of Numbers" (Using statistic studies and proof in national and local policy research and development).

Later, the team facilitated participants' discussions on different sustainable development sectors as part of a World Café session held in a café in Downtown Beirut. The closing session, featuring media coverage and interviews with the youth, was aimed to encourage the use of developmental language when

tackling multi-sectoral national and local development. National policymakers visited the session, endorsing the team's approach and adding value to the discussions, which developed proposals on national reform per sector.

3.6 Milestone 6 – Participatory Decision-Making

In March 2018, MP Bahia Hariri entrusted the team to lead her political campaign from a developmental perspective through engaging the citizens of Saida to conjointly determine the city's priorities and necessary policies.

A highly-equipped, open working space was established for the youth at the policymaker's residence. The latter would converse daily with the team on day-to-day issues and updates. For 7 continuous weeks, the growing team convened with Saida's youth and experts and worked closely with participants to develop and produce an electoral pledge program. Invitation-based team membership was open to the youth upon commitment to the space and running agenda.

The team conducted a research on local achieved, ongoing, and planned interventions as well as on local urban conditions. Scientific outcomes, along with the USUDS, were then used as materials in consultative workshops with local youth, discussing the community's needs and multi-sectoral urban challenges. The team also convened with experts, introducing the researched interventions and communicating to reach sector-specific challenges. After mapping the results and classifying them under six sectoral pillars, 6 sector-based teams were established, and every team elaborated on adherent objectives and projects. Every team then established a pillar-specific workshop with relevant experts and interested youth to enhance, amend, or elaborate on the projects. The process reached out to 260 active youth and 757 sector representatives in the city over the course of 2 months.

Approaching the elections, the team produced a well-structured electoral pledge program comprising of the reached projects and delivered it live at a local public conference featuring media coverage and hosting over 1,000 youth, expert, and public participants. The conference also announced the institutionalization of the program management and evaluation involving youth and experts. Later, PM Saad Hariri convened with the team and youth participants at their designated working space, and the team briefed him on their participatory approach and its scientific outcomes.

3.7 Milestone 7 – Structured Dialogue II - Municipal

In July 2018, following the successful elections process and results, the team convened with the local municipal council and chief staff headed by the mayor along with MP Bahia Hariri on a weekly basis. Four formal sessions induced structured dialogue on urban matters and projects earlier researched by the team. Discussions brought everyone in the room to a common ground on ongoing or planned urban interventions as well as the budget flow in the city. Ever since, the team was recognized as a designated research team with the municipality and involved in urban projects or studies.

Since the beginning of this involvement, project boards were assigned for leading or indulging in individual interventions, and team members, according to their interests and expertise, were offered various opportunities to engage in local, national, or international workshops and conferences on governance approach or sustainable human development.

3.8 Milestone 8 – The Youth-Led Convention

In August 2018, the team was entrusted to organize the annual conference for the National Initiative for the Centennial of Great Lebanon. The national conference hosted youth representing different NGO's and groups from different Lebanese regions. Participants discussed new concepts and laid the cornerstone for the following youth engagement process leading to the centennial in 2020.

On 1 September 2018, a youth-organized convention involved over 200 participants of local and national youth and experts and introduced national concepts such as balanced development and the future of Lebanon's oil and gas sector. The conference introduced new technologies and dialogue methodologies in various, carefully chosen and designed venues, Saida's Municipal Public Hall, the Zeereh Island of Saida, and Khan El Franj, a local heritage site announced to become Lebanon's first youth-designated civic center.

By the end of the conference, the organizers had shared their developmental language with participating youth, and a vision for the centennial's celebrations and national youth engagement process had been established. An artificial intelligence model managed by the team aided the reporting and analysis of the discussions, and results were announced to the participants, marking the beginning of a long-term proliferation of the Saida youth engagement process.

3.9 Vision 1 – Local Advisory Committees (The Montada's)

As announced with the delivery of the electoral pledge program for MP Bahia Hariri, the youth and experts engaged in the participatory decision-making process (Milestone 6) as well as those applying and accepted based on competence will be leading six local sector-based advisory committees, also referred to as the specialized forums (montada's), to manage the execution of the program's projects. Khan El Franj has been recognized as the center for the operation of the committees and their seminars, featuring youth-based dialogue with key local, national, and international experts on the issue. After the specialized forums are activated, an annual convention, the Permanent Development Convention, will bring all 6 committees together with the public entities to evaluate their working progress through mapping the preceding year's achievements and setting forth the following year's vision.

3.10 Vision 2 – National Youth Engagement Program

As announced at the youth-led convention (Milestone 8), the preparations for the celebration of Great Lebanon's centennial will be featuring youth empowerment across different Lebanese regions. Participating youth from different Lebanese regions, recognized as the Youth of Lebanon 2020, will be leading the process with relevant stakeholders in order to engage their local communities in the national dialogue and stimulate public participation in envisioning Lebanon's development beyond 2020. In 2017, Khan El Franj will be utilized for the central management of the long-term process.

4. ANALYSIS

Saida's case study was originally designed and gradually adapted to conform to context-relevant models such as the Public Participation Spectrum offered by IAP2 with some clear contextual alterations. In this section, the process is rationalized based on observations and acknowledgements. The first part tackles the advancement of the youth's anticipations throughout the different stages; the second part then classifies resulting outcomes of the process as strategies under the five components of the IAP2 model as a step further into analyzing to what degree the process conforms to the model in the third part.

4.1 General Analysis

While the youth engaged in Saida's case come from various walks of life and with differing concerns regarding their city, region, and country, the process has been tailored to tackle a wide range of developmental sectors and challenge the varying youth concerns throughout its stages. Tangible results may be deduced from every period or milestone. Milestones are classified by either or both a product-based approach, in which a specific foreseen product is delivered by the time of its conclusion, or a process-based approach, in which the process itself and its aimed youth activities and resulting anticipations are reached within its allocated period of time.

- a. Prior to the youth engagement process, the **informative municipal approach** gave the youth little information on local interventions, correcting misinterpretations or false insights on different aspects of local governance and motivating random youth to converse on consistent city matters.
- b. Participants of the product-based **youth council** experience were intrigued by its unconventional factors including the introduction to new scopes of knowledge and formal environments. Individual ownership to proposals and youth-centered discussions were key to the simulations' success as well as the youth's interest in policy research and contribution to policymaking.
- c. During the process-based **structured dialogue** following the simulations, youth participants found themselves in the heart of the policy-making realm. The youth anticipations were yet again challenged as individual outcomes were celebrated amidst continuous youth-centered dialogue in diverse formal environments.
- d. The product-based **participatory research** captivated the group and aided the council's transformation into a resilient team whose members had to converse on a unified developmental concern, working conjointly to successfully appeal to their officially delegated accountability.
- e. After scientifically appealing to the policymakers' request, the team earned their trust and deemed ready to **lead trainings** of their own in a process-based opportunity to share their attained knowledge with other youth, thus multiplying their capabilities. The product-based **polling** aided the youth's contributing to the local governance approach in participatory democracy.
- f. Through a short period of time, the team could shift its focus from local matters to national development as the process-based **youth-led workshops** sustained youth-centered discussions.
- g. The **participatory decision-making methodology**, both a process-based and product-based approach, was a transformative phase for the team, who was for the first time held publicly accountable for setting

- forth a structured mechanism to produce a tangible, integrative, multi-sectoral policy plan that is representative of the local community. The youth were granted full access to managing the process and building bridges with and between local youth and experts in a short period of time and amidst a challenging political context. The proficiency of the innovative process and the tangibility and inclusiveness of its product earned the youth societal authenticity as policy researchers and developers.
- h. By the second process-based, **structured dialogue** period, applied skills and knowledge made it possible for the team to discuss with the municipal council and to accept the challenge to engage in local interventions with guaranteed success of participation.
 - i. Organizing the first public encounter after the electoral program delivery, the team easily managed to engage other youth throughout the product-based national **youth-led convention**, and individual members easily coped with assigned or adopted tasks. This time, it was the role of the youth to plan the upcoming course of their experience, in which their influence multiplies and their experience spreading to other urban contexts in Lebanon.

4.2 Components Analysis and Adherent Strategies

The resulting outcomes discussed above may be classified into crosscutting strategies directly associated with one or more chronological milestones of the case study. Below, these strategies are grouped under the five components of the Public Participation Spectrum developed by IAP2, assuming this scientific model is the most context-relevant model upon which the youth-centered public participation methodology was originally based. An in-depth analysis is also performed for specific strategies found key to the case study's effectiveness and sustainability.

4.2.1 Component 1 - Inform

Informing the youth was central to the public participation process. The youth were at all times challenged with new concepts and methods introduced by the design team or involved experts. The youth were also equipped with the necessary information and resources as well as necessary skills that aided their personal development and their team development progress. Following are the strategies associated with the Inform component of the process:

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Triggering Character Development | e. Sharing National Governance Methods |
| b. Disseminating Local Governance Visions | f. Sharing National Development Methods |
| c. Promoting Local Urban Interventions | g. Introducing Challenging Concepts |
| d. Sharing Urban Development Methods | h. Promoting Miscellaneous Venues |

4.2.1.1 In-depth Analysis of Promoting Miscellaneous Venues

As aforementioned, the diversity of venues introduced or utilized at different stages of the process has continuously challenged the youth's anticipations and kept them captivated in the experience. The youth were introduced to different civic, formal, and informal venues where meetings, workshops, or events were held continuously or discretely. (See Appendix)

Figure 3 is a graphic illustration of venue-local occurrences throughout the first 18 month(s) of the youth experience. The X axis comprises the 18 months of the process in chronological order, and the Y axis indicates the number of occurrences per month. The core team automatically created a trend of meeting at local cafés and residences that are not indicated in the graph. However, HFSHD has made two of its centers constantly available for teamwork and public events. As indicated, OLA, the Outreach and Leadership Academy, established by HFSHD in partnership with the Lebanese American University in 2015, was home to most of the team's focused conventions and workshops. The team also used Khan El Franj (Khan) throughout different stages of the process in preparation to activate the venue for future vision programs. The municipal building has become the third most used venue for youth activities.

The diversity of venues introduced throughout May and June 2017 kept the team captivated and intrigued to move forward and accept future challenges. The big bulk emerging from March to May 2018 is the official's residence, where the temporary youth center was established for running the entire participatory decision making process. The venue was the only youth reference for two months, as the youth focused their activity in one place. The following team's pursuit involved OLA, Khan, the municipal building and official's residence as reference points for regular team activity.

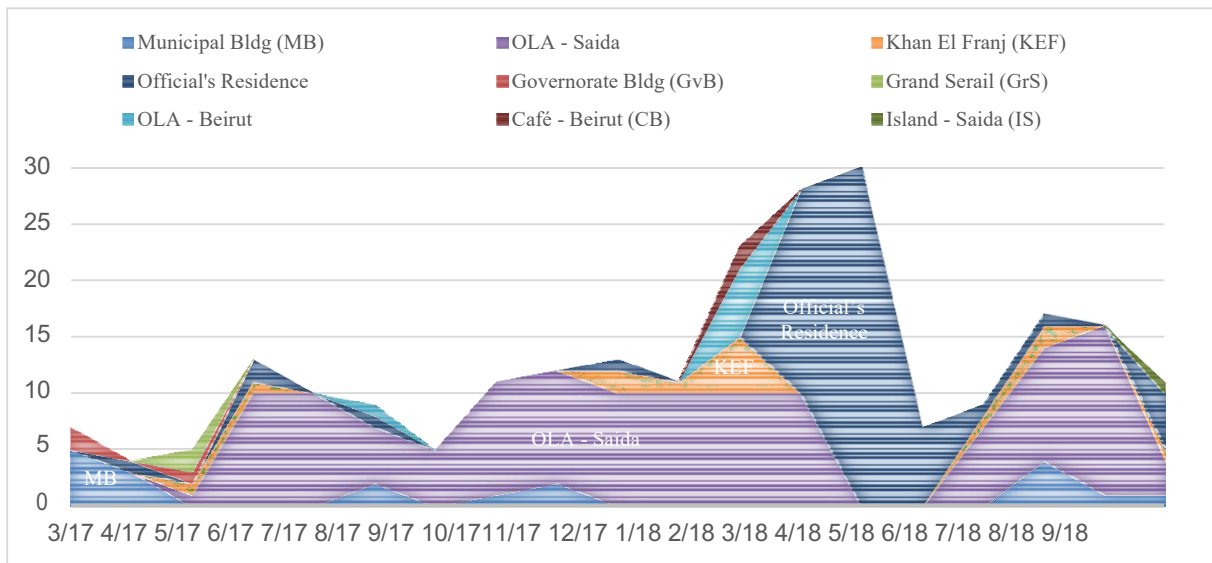


Fig. 3 Frequency of Occurrences at Process-specific Miscellaneous Venues

4.2.2 Component 2 - Consult

Consulting with the youth promised them a long-term participation, stimulating every individual's relating to the process and a team accountability in future encounters with the stakeholders, with whom they were continuously expected to share their feedback. This kept the youth looking forward. Following are the strategies associated with the Consult component of the process:

- a. Valuing the Individual
- b. Establishing Youth-centered Dialogue
- c. Triggering Local Policy Research
- d. Triggering Deliberative Polling

4.2.3 Component 3 - Involve

Widening and sustaining youth involvement throughout the process required that a core team be established and identified to contribute to the establishment of youth networks, with whom they would engage and share their attained knowledge. Following are the strategies associated with the Involve component of the process:

- a. Establishing a Team
- b. Establishing a Local Network
- c. Establishing a National Network
- d. Easing Peer-to-peer Knowledge-Sharing
- e. Triggering Local Mapping & Engagement

4.2.4 Component 4 - Collaborate

Collaborating with the youth in local research and development required that the policymaker would officially and publicly delegate a task to them, holding them accountable for their actions and outcomes yet keeping decisions conditional to the satisfactory delivery of results. Following are the strategies associated with the Collaborate component of the process:

- a. Inducing Deliberative Consultation with Experts
- b. Triggering Inclusive Urban Development
- c. Promoting Consulting with Local Officials
- d. Triggering Inclusive National Planning

4.2.4.1 In-depth Analysis of Youth-Expert Participation

Integrating various local and national groups of youth and experts throughout the different stages of the process was key to stakeholders' buy-in and sustained insights. Figure 4 illustrates the development of youth admission and engagement rates into the

process as well as the direct contact between the youth and experts among all eight milestones. The X Axis comprises the 8 milestones (MS) of the process, and the Y axis comprises the number of participants directly engaged during a milestone. The youth rates assessed in this study include those of the core youth team.

To sustain the youth activity, a beginning group of 25 members was mentored and trained by the process design team and other experts. Introducing multiple players to consult with the youth throughout the structured dialogue kept the youth spirit and anticipations high. Youth-led events guaranteed that vast bulks of youth are targeted, only a few of which are recruited to the progressively growing core team. Youth rates and youth-expert engagement rates reached their peak throughout the participatory decision making stage, as various bulks of youth were directly involved and experts were invited to collaborate for developing the urban plan. The following, immense fall of rates between MS6 and MS7 indicates that the youth activity retreated with the realization of a bigger core team involving recently recruited members as well as a higher interest of collaboration by local stakeholders/experts. Though this decrease may seem to indicate an error in the public outreach, this phase was designed to involve only the core youth team, otherwise referred to as the 'organizing team' to set up for the envisioned local advisory committees, which would engage the youth and experts involved in the participatory decision making process, only in a more sustained context (See Section 3.9). The latest convention (MS8) also featured a local bulk of youth with whom the team has interacted recurrently, yet a more diverse national bulk was introduced to the process in preparation for national replications and for the envisioned national youth engagement program (See Section 3.10).

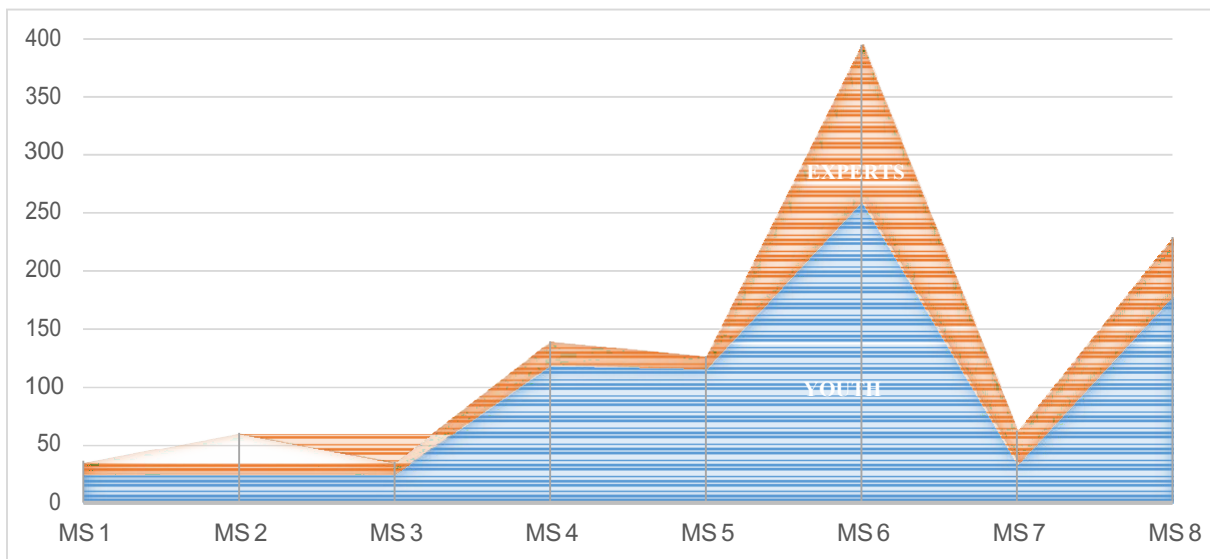


Fig. 4 Youth & Expert Participation Rates

4.2.5 Component 5 - Empower

Empowering the youth had been expected but was never reached until the team proved worthy of the delegation of power. The team was entrusted to lead or indulge in local developmental projects after it had earned its societal authenticity among local stakeholders and aligned its activity with the local governance approach. Following are the strategies associated with the Empower component of the process:

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. Adopting Youth-based Urban Planning | d. Entrusting in Urban Interventions |
| b. Promoting the Delivery of Youth Plans | e. Assigning to Organize Conventions |
| c. Integrating in Municipal Interventions | f. Integrating Youth in National Interventions |

4.3 Conformity to the Spectrum

The strategies derived above are crosscutting with several milestones; the approach may thus prove diverse in tackling different components of the spectrum at different stages of the process. Figure 5 is a

graphic intersections illustration aimed at assessing this diversity. The diagram comprises of two spectra on its extremes; The left spectrum is a reconfiguration of the Public Participation Spectrum, enlisted with adherent strategies, and the right spectrum is a timeline of the case study's transformations, milestones and visions. Intermediating intersection lines associate milestones to component-specific strategies.

The illustration indicates how same strategies are introduced at different stages of the process. Some strategies cast over 4 intersections, proving central to the concept of the process. Those, in ascending order of associated milestones, are Promoting Miscellaneous Venues, Easing Peer-to-peer Knowledge-Sharing, Introducing Challenging Concepts and Establishing Youth-centered Dialogue.

It can be noticed that the last three milestones casted more intersections than earlier ones, as more strategies, especially empowerment strategies, were put into those stages and coordinated for their success. Deduced is a diverse approach designed to adapt with the local urban context. Participating youth were always ready to be informed, whatever their impact on the decisions. Once consulted, the youth expect to be involved, though involvement may have come at later stages of a milestone. By the time decision-makers collaborated with the youth, they simultaneously entrusted them with delegated interventions and integrated them in their decisions.

5. LESSONS LEARNT

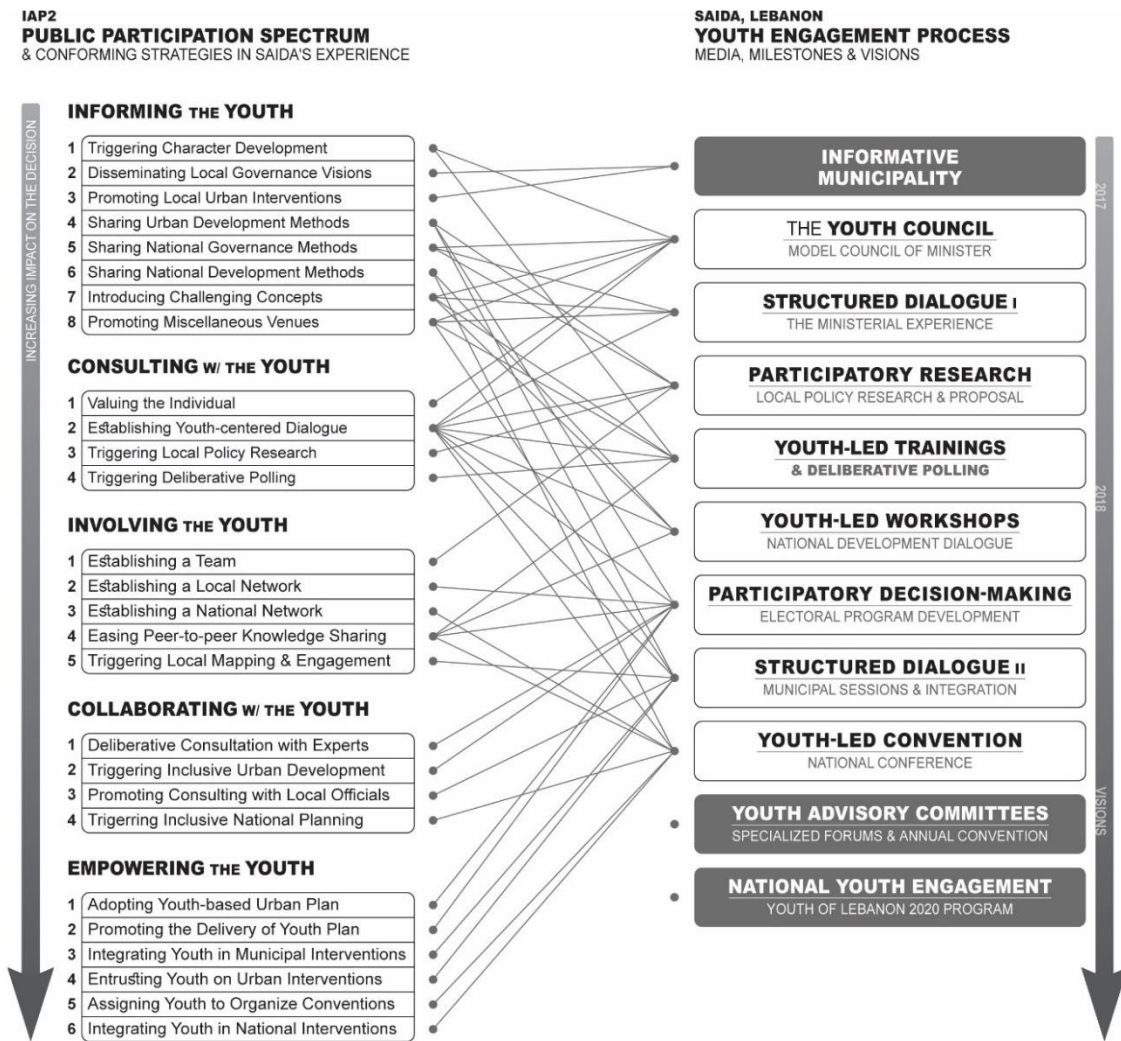


Fig. 5 Intersections of Conformity of Saida's Case Study to the Public Participation Spectrum

In this section, lessons learnt are deduced from Saida's case study and developed according to earlier analysis. One lesson that this study provides is that scientific models of public participation resemble practical aids for the strategizing and planning of participation processes. However, designing an effective youth engagement process for a particular society may not be necessarily based on international standards and general science. While conforming to the concepts provided by existing models, local governance entities may have to tailor public participation and youth engagement to local, preexisting cultures and norms. Whether or not public participation is mainstream in a given urban context, the youth have ready perceptions of the different aspects of local governance. Altering this culture requires that an adaptive, theory-based methodology is designed to withstand responsive interventions essential to the effectiveness and sustainability of the process at its different stages of implementation.

The interventions made throughout the Saida's case study are presented herein as key features of an effective, context-based public participation process. Those features may be adopted as tools for the programming of further, similar public participation methodologies in similar urban contexts.

a. Dissemination

- Disseminating public information on local interventions and governance methods leaves citizens to whom this information reaches intrigued and urged to randomly converse on local matters.
- Establishing an informative culture requires that more people are targeted with concise and consistent forms of information brought to them through different platforms and media.
- Attracting socio-politically disengaged youth into the process requires that their anticipations and perceptions are challenged through the introduction of unconventional concepts and fields of knowledge.
- Equipping the youth with adequate knowledge on governance methods is supplemented with giving the youth a physical sense of how governance runs; this includes bringing them to where decisions are made.
- Preparing youth to be consulted requires that their capacities are developed both on the character level and the scientific level.

b. The Challenge

- Consulting with the youth is dependent on earlier attained capacities; official consultation is perceived as a challenge accepted to build more supplementary skills and dig into further fields of knowledge when necessary.
- The consultation challenge is a captivating factor of youth public participation, as their contribution to the decision creates a sense of ownership to particular topics and to development in general.
- Consulting with the youth must feature youth-centered dialogue at its core, as youth must converse to contribute to a microenvironment in which their efforts are joint and valued by feedback from the different stakeholders, particularly from policymakers.

c. The Identity

- Involving youth in the decision-making may require that interpersonal team dynamics are stimulated; while the involvement mainly features an established team of youth, the team must be ready as an integrative unit to take the responsible step further into the spectrum.
- Officially involving youth may seem as the next opportunity in a series of unforeseen measures; however, youth bodies must learn that this is serious, and participants must be left accountable for their outcomes.
- A core team must be at the heart of the youth experience; the team is publicly introduced as a consistent, accountable body of players in a youth-centered public participation process, and admission to the team is left open upon portrayed commitment and readiness for learning.
- When youth bulks are invited and involved to interact with the core team, it is essential that a network is built to sustain communication for further involvement.
- At this stage, as the youth team starts widening, members may strive for establishing an identity and structure for the team; though such measures may seem essential, it is healthy to reach a definite identity after the team has interacted with different stakeholders amidst diverse contexts. Meanwhile, the team may be crosscutting to diverse, multi-sectoral interventions whose responsiveness will automatically contribute to how the engaged body of youth is perceived and integrated into local governance.

d. The Delegation

- The youth must earn authenticity among their local community in order to collaborate with more counterparts and diverse bodies of stakeholders; the latter's buy-in requires that the team is credited for a success story.

- The youth are empowered when assigned to lead a participatory decision making exercise; however, they must be urged to adopt an inclusive societal approach so that their outcomes are representative of the local society. Having done the exercise up to this standard, the youth must be credited, their outcomes made publicly available.
 - At this stage, the youth may still need mentorship and orientation on their collective efforts to develop policy prepositions until they have attained enough background on how their outcomes comply with local governance approaches and stakeholders' anticipations. This transformation may take some time.
- e. Deserved Entrustment
- Once a team exercise is successfully achieved and welcomed by the local community, the youth may be satisfied by their deliverable, associating it to the conclusion of a participation program; however, sustaining the youth involvement requires that they are captivated by future interventions, especially through their integration in continuous local urban development affairs.
 - The results of collaboration with stakeholders to develop an urban plan must be publicly challenged, particularly when the youth could be held accountable for implementing the plan.
 - The youth must receive merit-based opportunity of integration in events and experiences at all scales to build further capacities and invest in those capacities for the good of their city.
- f. The Continuum
- A public participation process is automatic in its social aspects; however, even though the youth may seem to act on auto-pilot when empowered and integrated, triggering different strategies and introducing the different stages of the process must be managed by the design team who programmed it in the first place.
 - Sustaining the public participation process requires that an adaptive governance approach is maintained; thus earlier visions of the process must be tolerant to major interventions when needed.
 - It is essential to give particular focus to the ever-developing team dynamics so as to avoid dropouts when possible, especially that such a process depends on cumulative participation. However, dropouts may need to be automated for, as the developing stages of the process may not necessarily appeal to everyone.
 - An engaged team of young people should not be limited to select persons from the local society and should rather be ready to involve interested and committed incomers. Newly recruited or admitted members of an identified team must be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge that their older committed peers have already attained.
 - If the experience is central to the youth, it must never drop the youth factor throughout the developing process or its components; this may have negative implications on the targeted participatory democracy.
 - It is highly important to remember that policymaking is not fully detached from politics and that team dynamics and societal approach may be affected by this matter. Anyway, urban plans developed by the youth must be inclusive to all citizens away from any stigmatization.
 - Whether informed, consulted with, involved, collaborated with, or empowered, the youth need to recognize and relate to a public trend involving them amidst an engagement process and should not take the opportunity of entrustment for granted.
 - After a team of youth has proved worthy for entrustment and has adopted specific trends in tackling local development, institutionalizing their activity may be achieved through the establishment of recognized civic and policy-oriented entities and programs in which the youth may openly indulge. Onward, the sustainability and effectiveness of the process require that the engaged youth are held accountable for their inclusive approach, building networks with their local and national counterparts in their developmental pursuits.

Figure 6 offers a concise illustration of how the above lessons learnt may be integrated with the five components of the Public Participation Spectrum. Aforementioned interventions (right) are placed at the most convenient times at which they may be made, relative to the development of the public participation process (left).

The five components of the public participation spectrum, Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower, may not necessarily be referred to as chronologically successive steps towards inclusive public participation. While tackling consecutive components in their chronological order is essential, component-relevant strategies may be tackled simultaneously. The inclusivity of public participation requires that all components are tackled independently or correlatively to adapt to newly engaged individuals or groups.

Rather than laying the five components successively in their ascending order of impacting the decision, the illustration below adopts the same order but rather puts the components in context with the development of the process. Each component, once triggered, would be sustained to crosscut with the following components and feature component-specific strategies and activities in later stages of the process.

The progress of the process development may be associated with the portrayed youth readiness to take a step further into public participation and the local community's responsiveness to the youth-centered process. Based on those factors, the governance entity responsible for the process design and management triggers the new component by introducing or reintroducing the relevant intervention from the set of interventions discussed in the lessons learnt. Continuum is achieved through the institutionalization and sustained empowerment of the engaged youth.

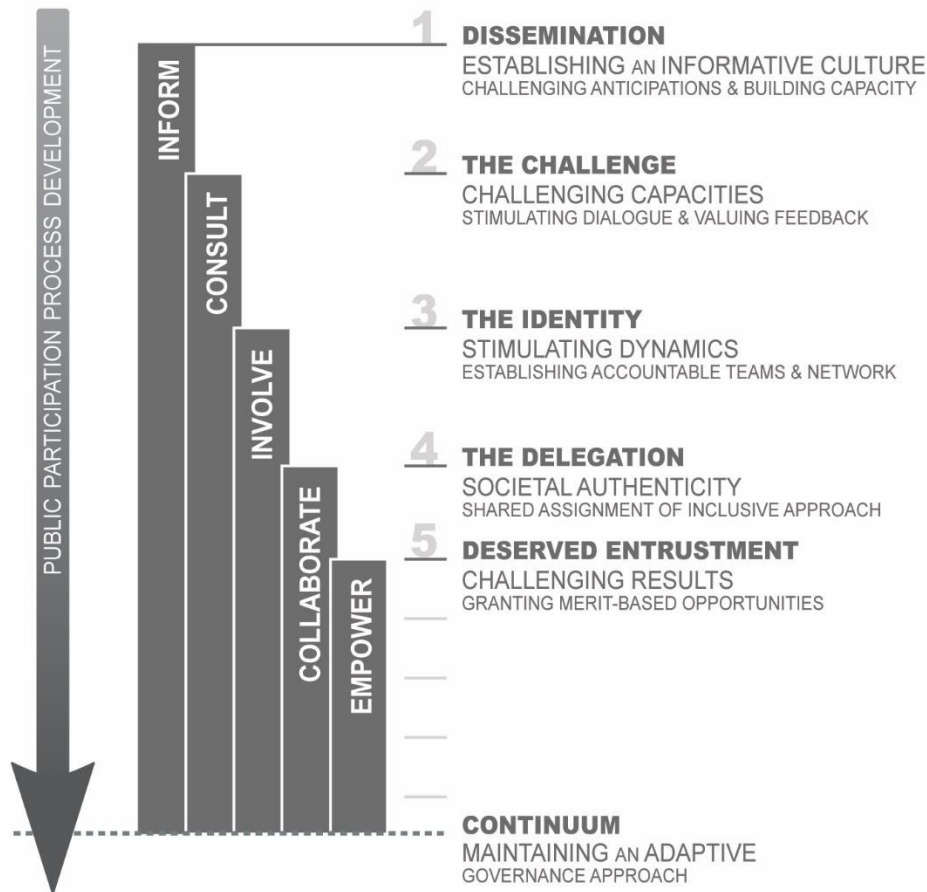


Fig. 6 Youth Participation Spectrum and Lessons Learnt from Saida's Case Study

6. CONCLUSIONS

Various local governance approaches may tackle public participation differently; yet participatory democracies are stronger when citizens are directly involved in influencing decisions that matter to them. The Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development introduced a new concept and experience to the Lebanese sociopolitical realm, for the first time engaging youth in a sustained public participation program that integrated its participants in the local development of Saida.

The 'Saida Youth Experience' has contributed to the establishment of a resilient youth community that is more engaged in local governance. The vision to which this methodology may lead is not yet definite and is deemed adaptive to local interaction and responsiveness to the process. However, the sustainability and effectiveness of the process depends widely on the performance of the engaged youth and their willingness to keep up the pace and the satisfactory quality of their entrusted tasks and received outcomes.

Lessons learnt in this paper show that such a society-responsive approach may not necessarily meet extreme success or extreme failure. It is recommended that designing a youth-centered public participation

process adopts a context-relevant scientific model that may guide on the methodology's fundamental levels and strategic tools. However, the process itself may not necessarily feature a strict action plan or schedule but rather adapt to the responsiveness of the engaged youth and the local community. Accordingly, context-relevant interventions may be designed and introduced when needed and when possible to trigger the components of the reference model.

The youth engagement methodology presented in this paper applies to all crosscutting urban development sectors, including that of public health. Thus, youth-centered public participation must fall as an integrative component of sustainable human development activities.

The case study analysis and lessons learnt may apply to similar urban contexts but may not necessarily be applicable to others; this is because the length limitation of this paper could not allow for adopting scientific attributes, and no relevant indicators or statistics are available that relate to the process and its success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is an opportunity to thank the process design and management team at Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development for conversing on the matters discussed above as a source of inspiration to the paper's methodology and materials. However, it is worth noting that the observations included and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the institution to which the author is affiliated.

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APPENDIX

While some venues are occasionally available for youth-centered events, other venues are constantly available for teamwork and other public activities. Challenging venues or high-level centers are only introduced to the youth process to challenge the youth's anticipations or contribute to their knowledge. Table 2 below introduces the venues and the frequency of venue-local occurrences.

Table 2: Local and National Process-specific Venues and Activity Occurrences

Venue	Functions	Occurrences
Local		
1	OLA* - Saida	Workshops, Public Conventions, Teamwork
2	Khan El Franj	Workshops, Public Conventions, Teamwork
3	Saida Municipal Council Hall	Workshops, Structured Dialogue, Teamwork
4	Saida Municipality Event Hall	Public Sessions, Public Conventions
5	Official's Residence – Public Hall	Structured Dialogue
6	Official's Residence – Youth Center	Workshops, Structured Dialogue, Teamwork
7	Southern Lebanon Governorate Hall	Council Simulations, Structured Dialogue
8	Zeereh Island	Workshop
National		
9	OLA* - Beirut	Workshops, Teamwork
10	Grand Serail	Structured Dialogue
11	Place de L'etoile - Beirut	Workshop

*OLA: In 2015, HFSHD partnered with the Lebanese American University, establishing an Outreach and Leadership Academy (OLA) in Downtown Saida and Downtown Beirut as centers for civic engagement. OLA provides tailored trainings for character and skill development in the form of workshops and programs to different groups, breaking the barriers between citizens of different economic classes or educated backgrounds.