



DELIBERATIVE *Café*

An Easy to Organise Citizens' Assembly



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DELIBERATIVE
Café

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Cover design: Ewelina Rivillo

Center for Blue Democracy

bluedemocracy.pl

March 2023

Introduction

Organising a citizens' assembly is easy if you have the right instructions. Designing everything from scratch is a completely different story. If you are just starting out in deliberative democracy, it is advisable to use a ready-made model of a citizens' assembly that has been prepared beforehand – then you can just press “Play” and you can go through the whole process step by step, using ready instructions, just like you would follow a cookbook recipe to bake a cake.

Deliberative Café is exactly such a ready-made model, which allows you to successfully conduct a simple citizens' assembly to resolve a rather narrow topic – it should be possible to present it in one or, at most, two full-day meetings of the learning phase. The following text provides a practical guide for those interested in organising a Deliberative Café. It is intended both for coordinators and for people from city halls who want to learn about the details of the process.

Deliberative Café is a formula for a citizens' assembly at the local level, and particularly at the city level. In its basic variant, it involves three meetings – one educational and two deliberative meetings, during which the assembly members develop recommendations, that is resolutions on a given topic. A Deliberative Café's assembly is made up of 36 people, who are selected at random, using demographic criteria in order to create the city in miniature.

The aim of Deliberative Café is to propose solutions from the residents' perspective, for better, more accurate decision-making by the city hall. It is, therefore, not a formula by which residents make the final decisions, as in the “full” version of the citizens' assemblies we organise. Here, it is about making recommendations that may or may not be taken into account by the city hall. Deliberative Café is, therefore, a form of public consultation. Ideally, the city hall will state its position on whether or not individual recommendations will be implemented within three months of receiving them. However, they do not have to guarantee that the recommendations they received will be implemented. In my opinion, this aspect is important because it allows to release tension associated with the expectations regarding the implementation of the recommendations. In this case, they may or may not be implemented, and whichever it is – it is OK.

Deliberative Café is by design a simplified version of the citizens' assembly. Nevertheless, it contains a number of features which allow developing high-quality final

recommendations. A characteristic feature of the Deliberative Café formula is the extended time for discussion with experts and representatives of the stakeholders in an informal setting, in small groups. This is to help delve more deeply into what the experts and stakeholders have to share.

As in the “full” version of the assembly, Deliberative Café has its own rulebook, which include detailed procedures and rules for its organisation. The Deliberative Café formula takes into account most of the 24 basic standards for the organisation of citizens' assemblies that we use as the Center for Blue Democracy.

In addition to the rulebook, the schedule of meetings and their programme have also been prepared for Deliberative Café, so you can see right away how it will play out. Knowing the size of the assembly and the programme of meetings in advance, you can also easily calculate a budget. And the costs are not that great. One of the premises when designing a Deliberative Café is that the organisation of a citizens' assembly in this format should be affordable.

When organising a Deliberative Café, you can use either the term “citizens' assembly” or “Deliberative Café” depending on your needs and situation. Deliberative Café is simply a formula for organising a citizens' assembly. An effective and enjoyable one to organise. The whole process was designed in such a way that it can be engaging and rewarding for all participants.

Deliberation, as understood in the Deliberative Café formula, means a conversation in which assembly members share their thoughts, reflections and feelings regarding a particular topic.

First steps

Where should you start? At the very beginning, a decision to organise a Deliberative Café needs to be taken, and it can be done by the mayor or the city council, depending on local regulations. In turn, citizens or NGOs can approach the councillors or the mayor with the idea of organising a Deliberative Café. If citizens' assemblies are new to your city, you could start by organising a short introductory presentation about citizens' assemblies so that the mayor, officials and councillors can familiarise themselves with the concept of deliberative democracy. A presentation about citizens' assemblies can also be organised for residents.

When the mayor or the city council decides they want to organise a Deliberative Café in your city, several things need to be done. The first is to choose a topic for

the citizens' assembly. The next will be to estimate the budget and select the coordinating team. In Deliberative Café, there is also the principle of the independence and impartiality of the coordinating team, which means that the citizens' assembly is organised by people from outside the city hall. This is to ensure the credibility of the process. However, the city hall can be involved as part of the preparation of the Deliberative Café, as will be discussed below.

The selection of the coordinating team is a key issue for the quality of the whole process. To carry out a Deliberative Café at a high level, you will need the right competence. And it is not about knowledge of deliberative democracy, because this can be learned quickly, but about interpersonal competence; a good feel for democracy.

If a citizens' assembly is organised in your city for the first time, it is advisable to invite, as a guiding team, those who have experience with deliberative democracy. They may come from another part of the country or from abroad. The role of the guiding team will be to prepare the overall framework of the process, support the selection of the local coordinating team, provide training for the coordinating team and officials, and ongoing support.

When organising a Deliberative Café, you do not need to transfer the entire budget to the organisation or company that acts as the coordinating team. The city may simply commission two people whose role will be to lead the citizens' assembly in the form of a Deliberative Café. The detailed scope of tasks is included in the rulebook and can be copied from there to the call for tenders. If this is the first citizens' assembly in your city, it is recommended to have the guiding team already present at this stage. Selecting a coordinating team is a bit like selecting players for the national football team – to do it effectively, you have to know the game very well, have a vision of the team and know what qualities to look for. That is why the players for the national football team are selected by a coach with adequate experience.

When choosing persons for the coordinating team, I would look for qualities such as clarity of mind, warmth, friendliness, ease of communication and expression, and organisational skills. Everything else about how to organise a citizens' assembly is to be conveyed during training. So, it is not necessary to have a degree in political science or sociology to successfully run a citizens' assembly. But you do need to be a good organiser and to like people.

Topic selection

A well-chosen topic for a citizens' assembly is the starting point for the success of the entire project. Deliberative democracy works well because the process begins with a learning phase, when participants learn about the issue and possible solutions and then move on to discuss their recommendations in the deliberative phase. All of this requires time. It can be assumed that for many people who are randomly selected to the assembly, the topic will be something new, at least in some aspects. They will therefore need time to collect new information and digest it so that they can have a clear understanding of what to recommend as the most beneficial solutions.

Deliberative Café, in its basic variant, has a one-day learning phase, which can be supplemented by short texts from eight additional experts. Therefore, it is the first thing to consider when choosing a topic – is it possible to present it exhaustively in the time allotted for the learning phase? If the learning phase needs to be extended by a few more presentations, you can add one more day for education. But then, the maximum scope will be reached.

To check whether the topic can be covered in the time allotted for the learning phase, you can write down the elements that make up the topic, as if creating a school curriculum. What needs to be communicated so that the assembly members can learn all the aspects of the issue at hand to make a decision? What threads should be covered?

The scope of the topic is only one of several aspects to consider. It is also important to take into account how relevant and attractive the topic is to the residents. In other words, how likely is it that residents will respond positively to an invitation to participate in the assembly because the proposed topic is of their interest?

In general, the topic of a citizens' assembly can be anything that falls within the competence of the city. The question that may arise here is, but what about issues that are “purely technical”? It depends on what their scope is and what is meant by “purely technical”. After all, sometimes it may be that issues related to technology are precisely what causes controversy in society. This could be, for example, hydraulic fracking for shale gas extraction, genetically modified food or the construction of nuclear power plants. Organising citizens' assemblies on any of these topics is possible, however, given their complexity, a full assembly would be preferable. In fact, the determinant here is not whether the topic is technical but whether it is possible to impart the necessary knowledge to the assembly members during the learning phase. Basically, if exploring

the topic is going to require several years of study, it is a no-go. Or in other words, while designing an aeroplane may be too much for a citizens' assembly, decisions such as whether to buy an aeroplane or whether to build a new airport are ideal topics for citizens' assemblies.

For each topic, it is useful to define precisely what the problem is that needs to be solved. For example, nuclear power plants generate radioactive waste that has to be managed somehow. Hydraulic fracturing, on the other hand, can mean injecting toxic substances underground that can get into drinking water supplies. Although these topics are more suitable for national assemblies, they illustrate the point well.

Issues such as biodiversity, parking spaces or air quality are well suited for citizens' assemblies at the city level. However, also in their case, it is necessary to indicate what the problem is that the assembly members are supposed to address. Is it too much biodiversity or too little of it? It should be made clear whether the topic related to biodiversity involves wild boars walking the city streets and digging in allotment gardens or waterbird breeding sites being at risk of disappearance due to housing construction plans. Is the air quality poor because of pollution from factories, domestic coal heating, or transportation pollution? It is beneficial to specify it precisely, and this is the purpose of defining the problem for Deliberative Café to deal with. We call it a problem statement.

Another consideration is whether the topic can be presented in a closed form, such as, "Should we build a water park in our city?" or should it be an open question? It depends on the situation and what the main issue is. Let's assume that the problem in the city is that there is a shortage of sports entertainment and a proposal has been made to build a water park. There is the space and funding for it, but the city council is wondering whether this will be the best idea after all. Two approaches are possible here. One will be to present to the citizens' assembly the problem of the shortage of facilities for recreation and a wider palette of possible options, such as basketball courts, volleyball courts or even a toboggan run. The other approach could be to focus on the water park alone and decide whether this particular investment would be desirable from the residents' point of view, as the city council considers other proposals as not controversial.

From my perspective, the way to formulate a topic for Deliberative Café, which I would recommend as a default one, is to define a problem statement and then ask an open question. For example: "There is a shortage of land for housing in our city,

and it was suggested to drain the wetlands in the southern part of the city and allocate this land for housing. However, these wetlands are a habitat for greylag goose, lapwing, grey heron and other bird species. What should we do in this situation?" It is then immediately clear what the issue to be discussed is. However, there are also situations where a more general formulation of the topic would be desirable, such as: "New housing is needed in our city. What can we do?". What is worth noting with a topic formulated in this way is that it has a very broad scope that may be better suited to the full version of the citizens' assembly, as there will be more meetings for the learning phase necessary.

For the purposes of the citizens' assembly promotional campaign, some simplification in the wording of the theme is possible. For example, posters could use a more slogan-like phrase, such as "Citizens' Assembly on Wetlands". However, the full wording of the topic should appear in invitations, in the rulebook and on the website of the citizens' assembly.

What is also worth emphasising is that it is best to organise a citizens' assembly at a stage when it is possible to implement the changes and recommendations developed. It is also ideal if the topic relates to an issue on which action is actually planned, as it is then possible to see the results of the process. A workshop can also be organised to select a topic, for example with representatives of the city hall and NGOs, in order to discuss with a wider group what is currently most important to residents.

Determining the ideal composition of the assembly

At Deliberative Café, the size of the assembly is fixed – it is 36 people. This number is due to the fact that a group of this size can be divided into four smaller groups of 9 people each. In Deliberative Café, there are no substitute assembly members, as in the full version of the citizens' assembly. The assumption here is that the number of meetings at Deliberative Café is small enough to enable a full or almost full number of assembly members throughout all meetings, and even if a few assembly members drop out it will not be an issue, as the group will still be sufficiently representative for the purposes of public consultation.

The composition of the assembly is made so that it is a group representative of the city in terms of selected demographic or social criteria. This is to ensure its credibility. Since the citizens' assembly is a "city in miniature", what demographic

criteria are worth considering when forming its composition? I would recommend the following as the starting point:

- 1) gender,
- 2) age (18-24, 25-39, 40-64, 65+),
- 3) level of education,
- 4) district.

Depending on the country or city, other criteria may also be relevant, such as language, ethnic group, occupational group, income level, home ownership or employment status. The assumption is that the assembly should be credible in the eyes of the residents and if a particular criterion is considered important in your city, then it is worth adding it. Personally, I am not in favour of making a division based on income, but I understand that for some people it is important. However, diversity in terms of financial situations can also be achieved by introducing a breakdown by occupational group.

What is worth keeping in mind when creating a list of demographic and social criteria is that a reference point will be necessary for each of them. For example, in order to determine how many people in an assembly will be from a particular district, data on the number of inhabitants in each district is needed. If such data is not available, a constituency or postcode breakdown can be used instead of districts for the geographical criterion. The idea is simply to include people from different parts of the city in the assembly, as this can sometimes give a different perspective on a topic, and residents may feel better represented if people from all districts are included in the assembly.

It may also be important to add a criterion related to the assembly topic itself. For example, if the topic concerns transport issues, then an additional criterion could be how people get around the city on a daily basis – by car, on foot, by bike, or by public transport. An additional criterion may also relate to opinions, such as attitudes to climate change. In this case, it may be necessary to carry out a survey at the level of the city to have a precise point of reference.

Adding a criterion related to the topic also helps to reinforce credibility of the assembly. For example, if the topic of the assembly was parking spaces for cars in the city centre, and the assembly composition included 85 percent cyclists (actually amounting to 12 percent), residents might have doubts about the assembly's recommendation that cars should be completely banned from the city centre.

However, if such a recommendation had been adopted by a citizens' assembly comprising proportionally as many car users as there are among residents, say 60 percent, then the perception of such a recommendation would have been different. This is why we refer to the subject-related criterion as the credibility criterion.

If the districts are of similar size, then the Sainte-Laguë method can be used to determine how many assembly members should come from different districts because it allows for proportional distribution. If, on the other hand, the differences in population are very large and a proportional distribution is not possible, then the Penrose method with a coefficient of 0.9 or 0.7 (the smaller the value of this coefficient, the more spaces it allocates to small districts) and guaranteeing the participation of at least one person from each district is a good solution. A calculator to easily convert the number of residents to the number of assembly members using different methods is available on the Deliberative Café [website](#).

For the age category, it is also useful to add a gender balance. This will ensure that, for example, there will be two women and two men in the 18-24 years old group, rather than four men or four women, which could be the result of a random draw if such a division is not introduced. The gender balance can be precise if the relevant data is available, and if it is not, the assumption can also be made that there will be half women and half men in each age group. Gender balance can also be introduced in other categories, such as the level of education.

Who can become an assembly member?

At the heart of Deliberative Café is the principle “Democracy is for everyone”. In practice, this means that everyone should have the opportunity to be randomly selected to the assembly, and if someone is not drawn, they can contribute to the work of the assembly by sending proposals for recommendations or comments. This principle also implies the participation in the citizens' assembly of stakeholders – organisations or informal groups that have an interest in the topic the assembly is dealing with. In addition to the principle “Democracy is for everyone”, however, there is another one, namely, “The process should be conducted in a credible and fair manner”. This second principle overlaps with the first one, meaning that anyone can be drawn to the assembly as long as this does not compromise the credibility of the assembly or its fairness.

What is needed, then, is a clarification of what “everyone” actually means. The simplest solution is to assume that these are all people who are eligible to vote in

local elections. Can this group be broadened? Yes, but it is then worth keeping in mind that the assembly should be credible in the eyes of the residents.

In addition to this, it will be necessary to define categories of people who cannot be part of the assembly, also for the sake of maintaining its credibility. These are the so-called “exclusions”. In my opinion, the group of assembly members should be characterised by a certain neutrality. For example, if you organised a Deliberative Café on the construction of housing estates in the wetlands and the assembly included 36 real estate developers it would not be a very credible assembly. Why? Because the developers are stakeholders to this issue – they are potentially interested in a certain outcome. The same would be true if there were 36 ornithologists in the assembly. Hence the principle that people who are stakeholders to a topic cannot be part of the assembly but are invited to participate as stakeholders, under different arrangements. What is worth pointing out here is that an organisation is a stakeholder even if it has not volunteered to participate in the assembly. Thus, members of the Wetland Birds Conservation Association, as well as its staff, should not become members of the assembly even if the association does not volunteer to speak at the Deliberative Café.

Who else should be excluded from participation as an assembly member? The city hall and the city council are stakeholders to the citizens' assembly in principle, regardless of the topic. Does this mean that all city hall employees should be excluded? This is something for consideration. Certainly, those who work in a department or departments related to the topic of the assembly should be. In my opinion, also those who hold managerial positions, regardless of department, should be excluded, as they are in some way the faces of the city hall and their participation could affect the perception of the assembly in terms of its credibility. Likewise, those who hold managerial positions in municipal companies. Besides them, active politicians, whether elected at a national or local level, their closest advisors, as well as lobbyists with links to the assembly topic. And, of course, the experts speaking at the Deliberative Café, observers, facilitators and members of the coordinating team.

All of these provisions should be included in the Deliberative Café's rulebook and published on the website before the first random selection is made.

Inviting experts and stakeholders

Long before invitations to the Deliberative Café are sent out, the coordinating team starts to put together the programme for the learning phase and invites experts and stakeholders to attend. It is a good idea to start by identifying the stakeholders – organisations, institutions or informal groups that are interested in the assembly topic and active in this field. The coordinating team can create an initial list of stakeholders themselves and then ask the city hall to supplement it. Then, when contacting the stakeholders, the coordinating team can ask if anyone else should be on the list of stakeholders. In addition, a call for stakeholders should also be posted on the website.

One of the rights of the Deliberative Café stakeholders is the possibility to propose threads to be presented in the learning phase and the experts who will present them. Experts are considered to be persons with knowledge, skills or experience related to the topic of the assembly. They can be either academics, researchers or practitioners. There are four live expert presentations on the agenda, of which one of the experts is appointed by the city hall and may be someone from the civil service. Thus, the coordinating team selects three experts, with the aim of ensuring that the live presentations cover the most important threads and there is a diversity of perspectives if solutions are presented.

Four experts is a very small number, so in addition to them, up to eight further experts may be invited, from whom a written position presentation is commissioned, of up to 5,600 characters with spaces (that is, approximately one and a half pages of text). These written statements can be presented in bullet points, for the sake of clarity, and can include issues worth highlighting in the topic of the assembly as well as proposals for recommendations.

In addition, each expert may also record a presentation for the assembly members or provide a longer text, for example by recommending an article. The primary text that the coordinators order from all the experts should be short, and written in accessible language so that it is easy for the assembly members to read.

The coordinating team can organise a working meeting for both experts and stakeholders to introduce them to the Deliberative Café formula and the role they will play. On top of that, mini guides can also be prepared for both groups to outline their role (which is described in the rulebook).

The Deliberative Café does not have a monitoring team to ensure that the programme is properly laid out. Here, it is presumed that the coordinating team will do it well on their own. The coordinating team's choice of three people from a long list of experts may be controversial to some, which is why additional written statements help to include more experts and perspectives.

What is worth noting here is that the assembly members also have the option to invite experts or stakeholder representatives at the beginning of the second meeting. These are additional speeches, which may be held at the choice of the assembly members. For this reason, the bios of experts and stakeholder representatives who do not have live presentations on the first day are forwarded to the assembly members before the first meeting by email, and, to those who do not use the internet, they are sent in advance in paper form by post. The written statements of the experts and stakeholders are also circulated in the same form.

Now, how are stakeholder representatives selected for the educational meeting? The first assembly meeting is to be attended by four representatives of stakeholders. If only four stakeholder groups apply, then the matter is simple – representatives of all of them attend the meeting. However, what if there are more stakeholders? Then the stakeholders have the opportunity to form coalitions and choose for themselves who will be their representatives at the assembly meeting. Let us assume that twelve NGOs have signed up as stakeholders. They then have the option to form four coalitions of three organisations each, or in another configuration – the organisations decide on this by themselves. The main goal is to form four coalitions.

However, if no coalitions can be formed, then the coordinating team shall conduct a draw to decide which organisations will be invited to present their position in person. The other stakeholders have the option of submitting their position in writing, also in a format of up to 5,600 characters with spaces. They may attach as many additional materials as they wish. In the case that fewer coalitions are formed than there are places, the representatives of the organisations that formed them have the opportunity to present their position in person and a draw is made among the other stakeholders to fill the vacant places.

The city hall has the option of appointing someone from among the civil servants to speak in the part for experts. However, if it does not do so and appoints a person from outside the city hall, then they have the opportunity to speak in the stakeholder part. In such a situation, it has one guaranteed place without having to form a coalition.

Importantly, individual city departments or companies can present their position separately in writing.

Time is also provided for the representatives of the political groups in the city council to talk to the assembly members in small groups at the beginning of the third day. This is the stage where the proposals for recommendations are reviewed and councillors have the opportunity to comment on them before the assembly members vote. Councillors can also put forward their comments and proposals for recommendations in writing at this initial stage on the same basis as the other stakeholders.

The amount of time councillors have for small group discussions is decided by the coordinating team, taking into account the number of political groups in the city council and the overall course of the meeting. If there are four political groups in the city council, then it could be, say, 20 minutes for a discussion in four small groups. If there are eight political groups, then it could be two blocks of 15 minutes each.

To sum up:

- On the first day, there are four experts speaking at the Deliberative Café. Three of them are chosen by the coordinating team and one by the city hall.
- The experts also present their position in short written form – up to 5,600 characters with spaces. In addition, they can provide the assembly members with additional texts or recordings of their presentations.
- The coordinating team may request up to eight short written positions from further experts.
- The stakeholders are identified by the coordinating team, but it is up to the stakeholders to decide which of them will have a live presentation. In the case of a large number of stakeholders, coalitions can be formed. All stakeholders can present a short, written position paper and provide additional educational material to the assembly members.
- The city hall has the option to speak live on the first day, either in the expert or stakeholder part. It is up to the city hall to decide in which of these parts it will speak. City hall departments and municipal companies can present their positions separately, in a short paper, and provide the assembly members with additional educational materials.

- Councillors have the opportunity to speak to the assembly members in small groups during the third meeting. They can also present their position in a short paper and provide the assembly members with additional educational material.

Sending out invitations

There is an excellent comparison that an invitation to a citizens' assembly should look like an invitation to a royal wedding. In other words, it should be attractive and prepared in such a way that the person who receives it will immediately say: "Yes, this is it! I absolutely want to be there!" The invitation should therefore have a nice graphic design, and you can also prepare the logo of the citizens' assembly in your city and print it on the envelope and the letterhead.

What should the letter contain?

- a short explanation of what the citizens' assembly is,
- the topic for the assembly,
- the dates of the meetings and their times,
- information that the assembly members are paid and how much they are paid,
- information that a learning phase is provided for in the programme, so you do not need to be an expert on the topic,
- a website address where you can register to attend,
- the telephone number which you can call to register, and the working hours,
- the deadline by which you can register to participate.

It is also useful to include two more pages with answers to frequently asked questions, such as whether lunch is provided, how to dress and whether you can come with a young child.

Who should sign the letter? The mayor or the city council president, as the case may be. Could it be signed by the head of the department that deals with the topic to be discussed at the Deliberative Café? This is also fine. The point is to make it clear that this is an invitation to a process that is important and that there is political will to act behind it.

I'd like to add a few more words about the stipend (allowance) for assembly members. It can be thought of as a specific amount for attending each of the meetings, as it may happen that someone has attended, for example, two out of three meetings, and then it is clear what the remuneration to be paid to that person is. The amount

of remuneration varies greatly from country to country and is to be determined locally. The starting assumption is that it should look decent. From my perspective, the stipend for the assembly members is basic, as it encourages participation by people outside the group who are interested in the topic or the process, and thus promotes neutrality of the group. In fact, as I have heard from the assembly members themselves, for some of them it is an important motivation to participate. Besides, it is another element that helps to promote the perception of the Deliberative Café as being something of importance.

How many invitations should be sent out, and to whom? It depends on what has been decided regarding who can be an assembly member. If any person who is eligible to vote in a local election can become an assembly member, then the electoral register can be used, as long as data protection laws allow it. From my perspective, sending invitations addressed to a specific person is the basic form of inviting people to participate in a citizens' assembly, which can be supplemented by household visits and direct conversation.

However, if the electoral register is not available for some reason, then a list of households can be used. What is important is that this list should be complete and up-to-date to ensure that all residents have a chance to participate in the citizens' assembly.

Random selection for the Deliberative Café is carried out in two stages. The first is a draw of individuals or households to whom an invitation is sent. Only those who receive an invitation or all those who live at the drawn address can apply to participate in the citizens' assembly. Either 2,000 or 3,000 people or addresses can be drawn, although this number may be higher in large cities. Mailing out invitations is also a very good way of promoting the citizens' assembly. The draw is best made by district or constituency, depending on the geographical criterion adopted for the assembly composition.

The number of invitations per district should be proportional to its population. However, exceptions to this are possible. For example, if the city has a large number of districts, some of which are very small, then an assumption can be made that at least 50 invitations are sent to each district, even if this does not result from a proportional distribution. This is because the aim is to have at least one person from each district in the assembly to ensure a representative composition. This disturbs the equal opportunity to receive an invitation, but here again the principle that the composition

of the assembly should be credible is considered of greater importance. A calculator for the number of invitations by district is available for download from the Deliberative Café [website](#).

How do you carry out the draw? You may use the Random.org website, where a sequence draw tool (Random Sequence Generator) is available. Let's assume that you draw by district. There are 350 households in one district and you want to send 50 invitations there. Set the sequence boundaries from 1 to 350 and click "Get Sequence". The result is a list of numbers from 1 to 350, in which none of the numbers are repeated. The first 50 numbers are your draw result, which you can transfer to Excel. For each district, the draw is carried out separately.

Of course, it is possible to carry out such a draw directly in Excel or another spreadsheet. However, the advantage of the Random.org website is that the draw is not just an algorithm but that it starts with a physical form. It is done in such a way that radio receivers are set up in several locations to record the atmospheric noise at any given time. The atmospheric noise is random and it is converted through a computer programme into numbers. So if someone asks how the people who received an invitation to participate in the Deliberative Café had been selected, the answer is that they were selected at random by the atmospheric noise. It's pretty cool, isn't it?

For effective recruitment to a citizens' assembly, it is advisable to have another random selection from among individuals or households drawn to receive a visit in person. Experience has shown that, for some people, the opportunity to talk directly about what a citizens' assembly is and why it is worth participating is conducive to their decision to register for participation. You can select at random 100, 200 or 300 such additional home visits, depending on how many postal invitations there are. The premise here is that there may be relatively few postal invitations, as this is supplemented by home visits. They are also drawn taking into account the breakdown by district and the number of inhabitants.

By the time the invitations are sent out, there should already be a website with information about the citizens' assembly, how residents can get involved and watch the learning phase. The website is also the place where the rulebook of the Deliberative Café, which outlines the procedures and rules of its organisation is published.

When someone who has received an invitation to participate in the Deliberative Café decides to register their participation – hurray! – he or she should be able to complete the application survey online or over the phone by calling the number

provided in the invitation. That is why the online survey should be prepared in advance and ready when the invitations are sent out. The survey is used to confirm willingness to participate, collect contact details, as well as demographic or social information that is needed to create the ideal assembly composition. It should also include a box to tick consent for the processing of personal data for the purpose of organising the citizens' assembly.

A more advanced version of the survey allows each person who has applied to participate in the Deliberative Café to receive their individual identification code, which allows for greater transparency in the final random selection, as discussed below.

You also have to decide whether access to the survey is to be protected by a password. If so, then you can generate individual passwords for all individuals or households to whom invitations will be sent and then print them, for example, in the letterhead. If you do not use passwords, it remains to be established how to check that the people who have registered have actually been drawn. This can be done, for example, by looking at the list at the end of each day and checking that the household addresses match.

Although it may seem a bit strange, residents do not always know which district they live in – according to the official administrative division. This is especially true if someone lives on the border of two districts or one long street runs through several districts. For this reason, a link to a map with the district division can be provided in the survey, or the person's individual code can be linked to the district in the database. In such a case residents don't need to provide district information in the survey. After logging in to the survey, the system retrieves this information from the database, identifying the person and the district they live in based on the identification code provided.

Also to be decided is how to include gender in the survey. There are three options to choose from: female, male and non-binary/other. As the Deliberative Café only has 36 people in the assembly, it can be assumed that there will not be a separate place for non-binary people in the assembly, which would result from the statistics and the proportional representation. So if someone then ticks the “non-binary person/other” option, they may have three further options to choose from: “I prefer to be added to the men's pool”, “I prefer to be added to the women's pool” and “I prefer to be allocated to the women's or men's pool by a draw”.

How much time should residents have to decide whether to register for the Deliberative Café? In my experience, a good period of time is two weeks. You can add to that the few days it takes to distribute the letters. The registration statistics show that some people decide to participate as soon as they receive the invitation, others do it after a few days, and a big surge in the number of registrations can be expected on the last day.

And how much time should there be between the end of registration and the first meeting? It could be two or three weeks, or it could be a little longer.

What if, however, one of the drawn members drops out before the first meeting? Another person with the same demographic and social characteristics can be drawn in that person's place. It is useful to have a prioritised order of characteristics for this purpose. Which are the most important? If there are only four characteristics in the ideal composition, the order might be as follows: 1) gender, 2) age, 3) level of education, 4) district. If there is no one in the pool who meets all four characteristics of the person being replaced, then the least important characteristic, here the district, can be "excluded". If, after checking the pool, there is still no one, then the next characteristic is excluded – the level of education. And so on. If there is only one person in the pool who meets the characteristics, then he or she will enter the assembly without need for a draw. If there are several, then a draw is made from among them, which can be done by throwing a dice or using the atmospheric noise.

Second random selection

When the registration for the Deliberative Café is over and the pool of willing participants is ready, then it is time for the second draw.

What is the main purpose of the second step in random selection? From my perspective, it is first and foremost to select an assembly that matches as closely as possible the ideal assembly composition across all demographic and social categories. The goal is 100 percent match. Why? Because one of the basic premises of a citizens' assembly is to create a city or state in miniature, or a mini-public. Sometimes it is not possible because, for example, nobody has responded to the invitation from one of the districts or the combination of characteristics of the people who have applied to participate does not allow it. Nevertheless, I would make it a priority at this stage to aim for a full match between the randomly selected composition of the group and the ideal composition. In other words, if the demographics indicate that there should be

20 women and 16 men in the assembly, then the aim of the draw should be to select 20 women and 16 men.

Apart from this, it is also important how this aim is achieved. Do all those who have registered to participate in the Deliberative Café potentially have the opportunity to be drawn to the final group? This is a question of the inclusivity of the method for random selection. Inclusivity is something different from “fairness” in drawing. Inclusiveness means that potentially everyone has a chance of being drawn, whereas fairness means that everyone has the same or very similar chances of being drawn. The question, however, is whether the criterion of fairness applies at all to the second stage of random selection?

Let us look at the following example. Let's assume that an assembly should include one person from the Beleriand district, as it follows from the statistics, and ten people from the Minas Anor district. When the registration is completed, only one person from Beleriand and 50 from Minas Anor have applied to participate. If the draw method is accurate, then the probability of the person from Beleriand getting into the assembly is 100 percent and people from Minas Anor 20 percent. Some say this is unfair, as the odds are unequal. Indeed, the mathematical probability is not equal, but does it actually mean that it is unfair?

The difference in the probability of being selected is not due to the recruitment rules or the way it is carried out but to the individual decisions of people in the different districts who have received an invitation and to the city's demographic structure. According to the approach outlined here, invitations should be sent to both districts in proportion to their population, precisely so that the chances of receiving an invitation are equal (although exceptions to this are also possible). What happens next is in the hands of the residents who receive these invitations.

So what about the probability of being drawn? Equalise it through specially designed algorithms, or not? As far as I am concerned, I would leave it as it is, without additional equalisation. In practice, algorithms only reduce the differences in probability (with all due respect to the ingenuity of their authors) and do not equalise the probability completely, as this is usually mathematically impossible. This means that in most cases inequalities cannot be eliminated altogether but are only reduced to some extent. Moreover, we are talking only about mathematical probabilities regarding whether something might happen, not about the certainty that something will happen. For even if something has only a small probability, it can still happen.

I will give such an example to illustrate my point. A few years ago, I received an email that a person who had previously been an assembly member in Gdańsk, Poland, had been selected for a citizens' assembly in one of the cities in the UK. What does this mean in practice? In Gdansk, we drew invitations for individuals from the full electoral register, which included over 350,000 people. You had to be in the randomly selected group to register for the assembly. Then, getting into the final composition was decided by a throw of the dice among the registered persons. Afterwards, that person had to emigrate to the UK to the city where a citizens' assembly was being held. There, invitations were sent out to the drawn households, so the person had to live in one of them. Then, they had to accept the invitation and be selected in the final electronic draw. What is the mathematical probability of this? Negligible. And yet it did happen.

Inclusivity, on the other hand, is something else. Inclusivity is about whether there is any chance of being drawn for an assembly or no chance at all. It is something to look at when choosing a method for random selection. From my perspective, equality of opportunity should be maintained first and foremost at the stage of sending out invitations while at the next step the priority is creating ideal demographic composition in the assembly and, therefore, equality of opportunity recedes into the background.

My current preferred method for drawing assembly members is simulated annealing. The name of this algorithm comes from a metallurgical process – annealing – which involves heating a metal to a certain temperature and then allowing it to cool down. The use of simulated annealing to draw assembly members was proposed by a mathematician, Nikodem Mrozek, from the University of Gdańsk. He developed the first version of the programme in the R language, which was later extended and improved (the programme uses the GenSA package).

Simulated annealing starts with a completely random selection of the first assembly. Using an evaluation function, the programme checks whether an ideal composition has come out or if there are deviations from it. The subsequent composition is then drawn at random, and the programme compares the results. After many such attempts, the algorithm selects the ideal or best composition it has found. The temperature in simulated annealing indicates how many people are replaced when the subsequent composition is drawn – whether it is a large number of people (the temperature is high) or a small number (the temperature is low). The temperature decreases as the draw progresses, hence the comparison to annealing.

Simulated annealing aims to find the ideal assembly composition. If this is possible, then the situation is clear – job done. But what if, for some reason, the ideal composition does not come out? That's when the fun begins, and simulated annealing is most useful.

To find out how large the deviation from the ideal composition is, you can use a simple evaluation function that works in such a way that the ideal composition gives a result of 0 and a deviation of one place is a shift by 1. So, if the ideal composition was supposed to be 20 women and 16 men, and we came up with 19 women and 17 men, then the evaluation function will give a score of 2 because there is a deviation of two places. It's quite simple! This way you know whether enough good compositions are coming out or whether the deviations from the ideal composition are very large.

However, what is important is not just how big the deviations are but in which demographic categories. The advantage of simulated annealing is that it is possible to indicate which categories are to be prioritised or even that total match is required in certain categories. For example, it can be indicated that, in the gender category, the result is to be exact and that age is to be prioritised. Then, the deviations in the draw results will be greater in the categories of education and districts, age should perform better, and in the gender category, match will be perfect (provided, of course, that enough men and women have applied). In a situation where an ideal composition is impossible to achieve, the aim is to find one that is good enough.

To ensure the draw credibility, it is worth ensuring that this stage is transparent. For this reason, simulated annealing can be carried out six times and then, with the six compositions (panels) already selected, the final one can be drawn by a throw of the dice that is broadcasted live on the internet. For transparency, you can even record what happens on the computer screen during the electronic random selection.

In a more advanced approach, the composition of six panels selected using the simulated annealing is published along with the identification codes of the individuals who signed up. This makes it possible to check whether someone was selected in the electronic draw and, if so, which composition or compositions they were in. It also makes the draw by dice roll more attractive, because you know immediately, live, who got into the final group.

Once the final group has been drawn, all you need to do is call the 36 assembly members to share with them the good news and confirm their participation.

A basic knowledge of the R environment is needed to carry out the draw using simulated annealing. The software used for this purpose is available on an open-source basis. In addition, it is also possible to use a programme developed by the [Sortition Foundation](#), a draw via a website developed by the [Panelot](#) team, and you can even carry out the draw using [Excel](#).

Selection of facilitators

Before the first meeting, it is essential to select the people who will lead it. Facilitation of the meetings is more than just giving the floor for the speakers and moderating the discussion. It is also about creating an atmosphere for the meetings, an environment in which participants can feel comfortable, and supporting the assembly members through well-chosen exercises to help them find out which solutions they really want to see implemented. Hence, the people who run citizens' assembly meetings are facilitators rather than moderators.

How do you choose them? In my experience, there are people who have a talent for facilitation, even though they have not taken any special courses. They simply feel comfortable in this role, and to conduct meetings well, they need to get acquainted with facilitation techniques, which can be learned fairly quickly. The focus here is on internal qualities, in particular whether the person feels comfortable working with a group, can build a friendly atmosphere and can be present. The simplest solution, however, is to hire experienced facilitators, but even then, it is worth paying attention to what kind of energy the person has, or in other words, what kind of atmosphere surrounds him or her. Ideally, he or she would be emanating kindness. The guiding team can also assist in the selection of facilitators.

How many facilitators are needed? One to two main facilitators, plus four people to lead small group discussions. Generally speaking, an experienced person will be able to run the Deliberative Café alone as the main facilitator, but doing it with two people might be a better solution and will simply be more fun. My preference, therefore, is to hire two main facilitators to share the tasks and lead the different parts. Can people from the coordinating team be facilitators at the same time? Yes, if they have adequate skills.

The start of the first meeting

The first meeting of a citizens' assembly is an exciting moment both for the assembly members and the coordinating team, who can finally meet the people who have been drawn and see who they are.

It is a good idea to open the registration of the assembly members at least half an hour before the official start, and offer tea, coffee and some refreshments. The Deliberative Café meeting opens with the main facilitators introducing the coordinating team and the agenda for the day. Next, the facilitators present the conversation guidelines for the citizens' assembly. They can also be sent to the assembly members in advance by email. The basic set of principles is as follows:

- 1) Be respectful,
- 2) Be open to a diversity of perspectives and viewpoints,
- 3) Listen with openness and curiosity,
- 4) Try to speak clearly and in an understandable manner,
- 5) Be present,
- 6) Take care of your own needs,
- 7) Have your phones on silent mode or switched off.

What is important here is that the facilitator presents the conversation guidelines as a proposal. He or she invites the assembly members to consider adopting them because they allow ease in communication among the assembly members. There is no vote, however, to adopt these principles. It is not a contract or an agreement. It is a proposal – an invitation – for individual consideration by the assembly members. The facilitator can clarify and elaborate on particular points so that it is clear what they are about and why they are important.

The next half hour is intended to allow the assembly members to get to know each other and to build a good meeting atmosphere. This can be done in a variety of ways and facilitators usually have their favourite integration activities. Below is an example of how this part can be done.

When entering the room, assembly members can be given a sheet of paper with the numbers of the small groups they will be joining during the day. These numbers need to be prepared in advance, and this can be done in such a way that the people in each group are not duplicated or are at least rarely duplicated, so that you can get to know as many people as possible. Another way to change the group can be to draw

cards with numbers from a basket or bowl. This needs to be done before each change and, to make it happen quickly, four or five bowls at a time can be used.

For the integration part, my choice would be groups of five persons, without a facilitator and changing every 10 minutes. This means three rounds of discussions. A different question could be proposed for each round, for example: What is your favourite place in the city and why? What do you like most about this city? If you were the mayor of this city, what would you do? Of course, to start with, people in a small group are asked to introduce themselves and say what they do for a living. If there is sufficient time, they can also say what motivated them to attend the citizens' assembly (this can be a primary question as well).

All assembly members can receive lanyard badges with their name printed clearly on them. The question of whether to also include the surname is for the coordinating team to decide. Another option is, for example, to write the name on painter's tape and stick it on the clothes, but this is a single-use and less elegant option.

A key element of the Deliberative Café is the emotional analysis of proposals for recommendations. This is very easy to do, but you need to learn and train to become skilled and experienced at it. For this reason, time is set aside at the beginning of the first meeting for the facilitator to introduce this concept.

The emotional analysis simply means checking how you feel when you think about a particular proposal for recommendation? What comes up? Joy, sadness, anger, hope, optimism? The premise of the emotional analysis is that emotions that are pleasant correspond to what you want, and emotions that are unpleasant correspond to what you don't want. You can try this out right now. Think of something you want to happen. It has to be sincere, of course. What feeling arises? Is it a pleasant feeling or rather an unpleasant one? You just need to check whether the feeling is pleasant or unpleasant, without having to name it (satisfaction, joy, ecstasy, bliss, etc.). Now think of something that you don't want to happen. What emotion comes with it? Is it pleasant or unpleasant? You can also try this out with other examples to make sure that this is definitely how it works and that the emotions fall into the same category every time.

The facilitator can also give some examples of recommendations that are not related to the topic of the Deliberative Café and ask the assembly members to check if they produce a pleasant or unpleasant feeling. This exercise, although very simple, may provoke resistance in some people who are used to intellectual analysis and usually do not pay much attention to what they feel. Therefore, the emotional analysis can be done

in an even simpler way, namely by assessing, on a scale of 0 to 10, how much joy you feel about a given proposal for recommendation.

As a little more time may be needed to get used to this approach, assembly members can be given a description of the emotional analysis to practise on their own between meetings as “homework”. During the first meeting, the facilitator merely introduces the topic. It may be useful to add another exercise as homework, namely to check during the decision-making why you are taking a particular decision. Is it because: 1) you want to, 2) you should, or rather 3) you have to? Checking this is also a good indication of whether the particular proposal is really what you want. This is what the assembly members will be asked about when adopting their final recommendations – is it what you want?

The aim here is to give the assembly members at least a month to get used to the emotional analysis before the final vote. It is entirely up to them whether they choose to use it in their decision-making. Facilitators merely present it to them as an option, and this should be highlighted during the meeting.

The learning phase

The learning phase starts with four introductory presentations by persons invited as experts. Each presentation is 12 minutes long and they are given to the whole group. Their purpose is for everyone to get to know the most relevant points that the expert has to make, and it is also a preview of what the small group discussion might be about afterwards. The speeches of the experts and stakeholder representatives should be streamed live on the assembly page and recorded. This can be done with a professional camera as well as a regular smartphone mounted on a tripod.

The assembly members then divide into four small groups. At this point, round tables would be suitable. There is one facilitator for each group. The group numbers can be given to the assembly members on sheets of paper, as during the introductory part. The assembly members have 10 minutes to prepare questions for the expert who has been drawn for their table. After this time, the expert joins them, and they then have half an hour to talk to her or him. The role of the facilitator is to ensure a good atmosphere of the conversation and speaking order. Of course, it is also important to keep the speeches to a length that allows as many people as possible to speak.

The facilitator can ask the assembly members to note down on coloured sticky notes important things that have come up during the discussion that they think are

worth sharing with the rest of the group. These sticky notes will be taped on the wall. Participants can read them during the break, and you can also transcribe them and email them to the assembly members after the meeting. Another option here could be that, at each table, there is a note taker invited additionally.

After half an hour, it is time for another round of talks with the experts. This time, however, the experts remain at the tables where they were sitting, and the assembly members decide who they will join for the next half hour. In this round, the “law of two feet” applies, meaning that the assembly members can change tables during the round if they so choose. They can spend the whole round talking to one expert (it may even be the same person as in the first round), and they can also choose another table after some time to listen to another expert. Facilitators here also make sure the conversation goes well and they are present in each small group.

After the second round it is time for a lunch break. Traditionally, I would suggest a vegan lunch, which will be sufficiently tasty that the assembly members will not pay particular attention to the fact that there is no meat in it.

After lunch, there is a block in the programme for discussions with stakeholder representatives, which have the same structure as with the experts, except that the time allocated for this part is shorter. The stakeholder representatives start with short introductory presentations of 6 minutes each. The assembly members then have 10 minutes to prepare questions for the stakeholder representative drawn for their table. The stakeholder representative joins the table, and the participants can speak to him or her for 20 minutes. At the end of this time, the stakeholder representatives remain at their tables, and the assembly members choose who they will talk to in the second round for a further 20 minutes.

It may happen that when the assembly members are choosing who to join in the second round, some of the experts or stakeholder representatives are particularly popular and others less so. It is a good idea to prepare the experts and stakeholder representatives for such a situation before the meeting so that none of them feels offended.

At the end of the second round of discussions with stakeholder representatives, it is time for a 15-minute break. All experts and stakeholder representatives are then asked to leave the room, as the end of the first meeting is the closed part and the time for the assembly members. This part is no longer broadcast or recorded. The priority

is to ensure that the assembly members feel comfortable and can speak honestly and openly.

Since the assembly members spoke in small groups with only some experts and stakeholder representatives, it is useful to share what went on in the other groups. It will also be beneficial to have time to share reflections from the day in general. There is 50 minutes allocated for this, with all assembly members sitting in the room together. During this part, the facilitator can ask questions such as: What was the most interesting thing you learned today? What surprised you? Was there anything that you felt strong emotions about? Was there anything that made you feel joy? Was there anything that worried you or which you considered a problem? What was an important or new piece of information that you think is worth considering when making decisions? Have you come up with any ideas for recommendations?

The facilitator makes notes of the assembly members' reflections on several flipcharts, which could be titled like this, for example: *New/relevant information*, *Surprising things/joy*, *Problems/worries*, *Proposals for recommendations*, *Miscellaneous*.

After this part comes the end of the first meeting. It remains only to thank the assembly members for the day spent together and announce the next meeting, which will take place two weeks later. In case the assembly members have additional questions for the experts or stakeholders between meetings, they can pass them on to the coordinating team, who contacts the relevant person and passes their answer on to the whole group.

If the chosen topic is broad, you can repeat the formula for the learning phase once more at the next meeting.

The deliberative phase

It is a good idea to start the deliberative meeting with a warm-up, which can be a short conversation in pairs about what good or pleasant has happened to you in the last two weeks. This is how long the minimum interval between these meetings should be.

Then there is time for additional speeches by experts or stakeholder representatives if the assembly members have decided to have them. Therefore, after the first day, you need to take a vote, which can be done online, to decide whether anyone else will be invited as part of the learning phase, and if so, who. Each assembly member can nominate any two people, attaching to each nomination a short bio

of the person they would like to have invited. This could be someone from the group of experts who have been asked to prepare written statements, or someone completely different. It is up to the assembly members to decide. The vote on the selection of additional speeches is carried out using the same method as the final vote. It is described later in this guide and the Deliberative Café rulebook.

The time for these speeches is quite short – 12 minutes for an expert and 6 minutes for a stakeholder representative – corresponding to the length of the introductory speeches in the learning phase. On this day, however, there are no more small group discussions with the guests; instead, there are questions and answers in front of the whole group. At the end of this part, the experts or stakeholder representatives leave the room. This part is optional, and the members may decide that there will be no additional speeches. The agenda for the second meeting is, therefore, more flexible. Nevertheless, it does involve some specific steps.

The deliberative phase begins with the whole group sharing their reflections from the additional speeches and any thoughts they may have had between meetings. This session is conducted using several flipcharts, following the same or similar format as at the end of the first day.

The next step is for the assembly members to reflect individually on what they actually want in relation to the topic they are addressing. What is the ideal outcome they would like to achieve? This could be expressed in general terms. Going back to the example with the wetlands, someone might say that, ideally, it is when wetlands and bird habitats are preserved, while at the same time, new houses for the residents can be provided. This is the ideal outcome. At this stage, there is no need to identify specific solutions or formulate recommendations. This is where the assembly members think about what they want the end result to be. They do this individually, taking notes on a piece of paper. About 10 minutes can be allocated for this. Here it is the role of the facilitators to sense how much time the group needs to reflect on this. Then the assembly members can share their reflections in a small group and listen to how others see it.

Later in the meeting, the assembly members again have time to reflect individually and take notes on a piece of paper. This time the topic is “Why do I want this?”. What is important to me in that ideal vision I wrote down earlier? What is crucial is that this must be a personal perspective. These are exercises for clarifying the picture of what you want to achieve. Once the notes have been taken, they can be shared within

a small group, unless it is something very personal that the assembly members prefer not to reveal it. The facilitator can ask about it in this way: “Is there anything you would like to share with the group, as long as it is not too personal for you?”

Afterwards, there is time to look at solutions to achieve the ideal outcome. What is a good solution to get there? These can be ideas put forward by experts, stakeholders, or residents (in the form of written submissions via the citizens' assembly website), or they can also come from the assembly members themselves. The ideas collected provide inspiration and help the members to formulate their recommendations more easily. Here again, the assembly members start by taking notes individually and then share their reflections with the group. This is still done in a small group, as it makes it easier for some people to speak up.

After this part, it is time to share ideas for solutions with the whole group. This part is like brainstorming – you only collect ideas but do not analyse them yet. Proposals can take the form of slogans. It is important to put them forward courageously, even if they seem unrealistic or unimportant. The time for analysis will come later. At this stage, the facilitator simply collects the ideas on flipcharts. Then comes the time for a lunch break.

After lunch, you can start the next part by checking that all the proposals for recommendations answer the question initially posed to the assembly. In other words, are they in line with the topic? Those that are questionable are put to a vote and can be rejected by a simple majority of votes.

The next step is to formulate ideas for solutions in the form of recommendations. To do this, the assembly members can divide themselves into thematic groups if the proposals for recommendations fall into thematic blocks. The other option is that everyone can refine their proposals individually and then check in the small group if they sound good.

Once the proposals for recommendations are ready, the coordinating team prepares ballots with them for a preliminary vote. It can be conducted on paper or using an electronic form (for example, SurveyMonkey). During this time, the assembly members have a break. By conducting a preliminary vote, you can see where the assembly members' recommendations are heading, which proposals are likely to be adopted and which have little support. This comes in handy during the review phase and allows the assembly members to see what might come out of the Deliberative Café and provide them with food for thought before the final vote.

Once the ballots are ready, the assembly members have time for emotional analysis of the proposals for recommendations presented. Are there any proposals they feel happy about? Are there any proposals that make them feel anxious? Are there any proposals that worry them? After this individual analysis, there is time to share what has emerged with the whole group. Only then do the assembly members take a preliminary vote.

Voting method

The purpose of the voting method we use is to determine whether a proposal for recommendation is what the assembly members really want. If a particular proposal for recommendation fully suits the assembly member, then his or her answer to the question “Is this what I want?” is “This is exactly what I want”. In addition to this, there are several other options to choose from. Voting involves the assembly members rating all the proposals for recommendations using the following scale:

- 1) This is exactly what I want,
- 2) This is what I want,
- 3) This is more or less what I want,
- 4) I have many doubts,
- 5) This is rather not it,
- 6) This is not it at all.

This method is very precise and can also be used to make everyday decisions.

To determine the outcome of a vote in a citizens' assembly, the first three options are scored: “This is exactly what I want” – 3 points, “This is what I want” – 2 points, “This is more or less what I want” – 1 point. The points awarded to a proposal are added up, and if you divide the result by the number of votes cast, you can see the strength of support. The highest possible strength of support is 3. In the Deliberative Café, a proposal for recommendation is deemed to have been accepted if at least 80 percent of the voters chose options 1 to 3 (a positive option) and the strength of support is at least 2.0. Such strength of support in practice means that a part of the group could have chosen the option “This is more or less what I want”, but this was balanced by the votes with the strongest support. The assumption here is that, for a recommendation to be accepted, it is not only important how many people expressed their support for it but also that this support is strong enough.

The option “I have many doubts” does not imply either support or rejection of the proposal. It is rather an internal reflection that the proposal in question raises doubts of the assembly member. It is different from “I don't know” or “I have no opinion”. These options are deliberately not on the ballot paper, as it is assumed that the assembly members have had enough time to familiarise themselves with the proposals for recommendations, and the “I don't know” option may be a way of avoiding making a decision. What is worth noting here is that emotional analysis greatly facilitates taking a position. Just check what comes up when you ask yourself the question: “Is this what I want?”. Which of the options on the ballot paper is closest to how I feel?

By adding the points awarded to each recommendation, you can see which has the most support among assembly members. This is useful, for example, when there is a large number of accepted recommendations. Then the mayor or the city council can consider the level of support in determining the order of actions. This is because the total score for a particular proposal is influenced by how many people supported it and how strong that support was.

This voting method is used for both the preliminary and the final vote. It is also useful for selecting additional experts or stakeholders for the second meeting.

The ballot paper may look as follows:

| Proposal for recommendation | This is exactly what I want | This is what I want | This is more or less what I want | I have many doubts | This is rather not it | This is not it at all |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

The vote can be cast very simply by placing an “X” on the same line as the proposal for recommendation under the option one has chosen. What is important is that you can rate several proposals for recommendations, or even all of them, in the same way. In the case of proposals for recommendations that are mutually exclusive, the one that received the higher number of points is considered to have been adopted by the citizens' assembly.

To ensure the credibility of a vote that has been conducted on paper, those counting the votes (for example, in Excel) can write on the ballot paper in which column in the programme the vote of the ballot paper has been entered. This makes it possible to later check that the votes have been transferred to the computer correctly while the secrecy of the voting is maintained. On a practical note, a good way to count paper votes is to do it in pairs, where one person reads the votes and the other enters them into Excel.

In the case of online voting, the system can send an email confirming which options have been selected for a given proposal for recommendation and, in addition, assembly members can enter their pseudonyms when voting. Then, in addition to the voting results, a table can be published with a summary of how each assembly member voted, of course, giving their pseudonyms. The pseudonyms allow the assembly members to check that their vote in the summary matches how they voted, while at the same time the electronic voting remains secret.

Developing the final recommendations

One of the important stages of the Deliberative Café is to collect comments on the initial proposals for recommendations from the city hall, experts, stakeholders and residents. This both improves the quality of the recommendations and also makes the citizens' assembly open to a larger group of people than just the drawn assembly members. The results of the initial member vote are published on the website and, in fact, anyone can review them and send in their comments and suggestions for change. All collected suggestions should be communicated to the assembly members electronically or on paper before the meeting, well enough in advance so that they have time to review them. Therefore, the interval between meetings should be two weeks or longer. Ideally, the city hall should also give an estimate of the cost of implementation for each proposal for recommendation so that the assembly members can take it into account when voting.

The final Deliberative Café meeting should start with the assembly members talking in pairs to share what good things happened between the meetings. It aims to initiate a good atmosphere for the meeting and is a form of warm-up.

Then come two rounds of talks between assembly members and councillors in small groups. This is an opportunity for councillors to share their thoughts on the assembly members' initial recommendations and to get to know the assembly

members. The amount of time available for a group discussion and with what number of assembly members depends on the number of councillors. The general rule of thumb is that all political groups in the city council should have at least one representative at the meeting with the assembly members.

The next part of the meeting consists of short speeches during which comments on the proposals for recommendations are presented to the whole group. They can be 10 minutes each. The city hall has guaranteed speaking time in this part, as it is the city hall that will receive the recommendations, and it is up to the city hall to implement them. The next two speeches are for persons selected by the assembly members. A vote on this must, of course, be taken much earlier, preferably just after the end of the previous meeting, so there is time to invite the guests in advance. After all the speeches with comments, there is still time for questions and answers with the whole group.

Once this part is over, the assembly members stay alone in the room. Of course, if any of them have a question for an expert or stakeholder, they can still ask it, but in the form of “a phone call to a friend”, which is made by a person from the coordinating team. The conclusions of the phone call are shared with the whole group. After the series of questions and answers is over, it is time for a break.

In the next step, the assembly members share with the whole group their reflections from their conversations with the councillors and what they thought about the comments they heard from the invited guests. The facilitator notes the assembly members' reflections on several flipcharts in the same way as in the previous meetings.

The facilitator then asks the assembly members the question: “Are you happy with the recommendations that have been developed so far? Or would you like to improve or change something? If so, in what way?”. Assembly members have 10 minutes to reflect individually and note down what comes to their minds.

It is advisable to set aside more time, for example, two rounds of 40 minutes each, to refine the proposals for recommendations. After the individual reflection, it will become clear whether this will be necessary, but when preparing the programme it is worth reserving such longer blocks. What is worth emphasising is that at this stage, completely new proposals for recommendations can no longer be made – only what has been proposed earlier can be refined. This is because there is no more time to collect comments on new recommendations – they cannot go through a full cycle. Refining proposals for recommendations can be done in small groups. They can be divided into

thematic blocks if these can be arranged, or in other ways. In the deliberative phase, some flexibility is needed when it comes to preparing the agenda – the details are adjusted according to the needs of the group.

The assembly members may decide to have their recommendations reviewed by a professional editor so that they are linguistically polished. In such a situation, you will need to allocate time for this in the meeting agenda. The choice of language version is approved by the assembly members, and the editor only suggests amendments. After this part, it is time for lunch. During the lunch break, the coordinating team prepares the ballot papers or the e-voting. If online voting is chosen, a printed list of all proposals for recommendations will be useful anyway for the next part of the meeting.

This is because before the assembly members start voting, time is first reserved for emotional analysis. It can be assumed that at this stage, the assembly members already know the proposals for recommendations quite well, although there may be something they still have doubts about. Therefore, they can look at the most important proposals for recommendations or all of them, and ask themselves: “Is this what I want?” and seeing what comes up. They can also check how much joy, on a scale of 0 to 10, they feel about a particular proposal for recommendation. After the emotional analysis, the assembly members share their reflections in the group, and the facilitator collects these reflections on several flipcharts, as before. When the reflection sharing part is over, the assembly members proceed to vote.

If the voting is done on paper, the votes can be counted continuously from the time the members start to hand in their ballots. Counting can be done in several two-person teams. Depending on how many proposals for recommendations there were, a longer break may be needed to count all the votes. If, on the other hand, the voting was done electronically, you can wait until the last person has voted and announce the results by displaying them on the screen.

After the results have been announced, time comes for a closing circle where the assembly members can share what they liked best about the whole citizens' assembly. Only those willing to speak, of course, take the floor. Once everyone has spoken or the time allocated for this part has elapsed, the coordinating team announces the official end of the Deliberative Café, and it is time for cake and celebration.

Ahoy, adventure!

This is the recipe for organising a Deliberative Café. Of course, there is also the presentation of the adopted recommendations by the assembly members and the response of the city hall. Nevertheless, the process ends with the adoption of the recommendations. Ideally, the recommendations are taken into account by the city hall and the city council and their implementation results in a better quality of life in the city. From my perspective, however, it is also important that participation in the Deliberative Café brought joy to the assembly members and that the quality of the process was satisfying for the city hall, councillors, stakeholders, experts and other residents. Of course, this also relates to the coordinating team. This feeling of enjoyment is one of the key indicators of success. The Deliberative Café is a form of deliberative democracy that is only suitable for certain, relatively narrow topics. For broader topics or when the aim is to make binding decisions, it is a good idea to reach for the full version of the citizens' assembly formula. Once you know how citizens' assemblies work, you can consider including them as a permanent element of the political system. At the local level, this could be the establishment of a citizens' senate, whose role, among other things, is to select topics for citizens' assemblies for the coming year, while at the regional or national level, a citizens' chamber could be established whose aim would be to legislate. Also, the full version of the deliberative democracy model, the Waldenia Model, is available.

As far as Deliberative Café is concerned, it is certainly possible to improve this model and discover new solutions. The formula presented in this guide is a starting point. I hope it will inspire you to have wonderful adventures in deliberative democracy.