


ACTIVE DEMOCRACY CARDS



LET'S DESIGN ENGAGEMENT THAT'S AUTHENTIC AND INCLUSIVE



We've developed a prototyping game to help you co-design effective citizen engagement. It's all done through role-playing and experimentation, in a way that's designed to promote active listening, active learning and small group discussions.

Our Active Democracy Cards work by getting you to prototype an engagement project – not solve the problem but immerse yourself deeply in the process of designing good engagement. We get you to do this through a co-designed participatory dialogue in a small group, either with or without a facilitator.

As the game develops, the group gets to explore opinions, resolve issues and answer questions. Solutions emerge but conflicts can too and the game is about how you work through all of these as a group. We're using an engagement model to help you model your future engagement strategies!

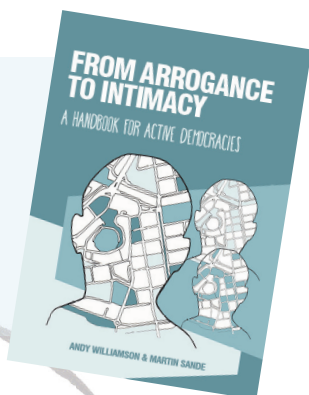
Active Democracy Cards are here to spark your imagination, to encourage you to co-create disruptive spaces, so deep and alternative discourses arise. Use them to imagine new centres of partnership, not power. New places where co-creation can happen and trust can emerge. Try to become more aware of how your presence (and others) affects the process.

WHY ACTIVE DEMOCRACIES MATTER

We designed these cards because we think it's time to start thinking differently about democracy! Society is a network and democratic representation happens in this network, building through mutuality, trust and co-creation. If we're all part of the network, then we become intimate and co-creating. We want you to start creating the intention to shift power so it's used 'with' and not 'against', for the benefit of all not the privilege of the few.

A lot of democratic engagement only seems to reach for the 'low hanging fruit'; the people you know and are [too] familiar with – the usual suspects – or the exercise can be superficial and really doesn't dig down to the heart of the problem (what we call living in the fire). Active democracies are anchored in our communities, embracing diversity and authentic dialogue. Our communities are equal partners, where we privilege a range of advocacy, awareness-building and disruptive practices to create and sustain transformation.

Discover more about active democracy with sample chapters and order Andy Williamson and Martin Sande's book, 'From Arrogance to Intimacy' at **activedemocracies.es**



RUNNING THE ROLE PLAY

The role-play is broken down into four parts. You can work using a facilitator to take the lead or as a group of between three to five people (if you want more, just use the ‘intervention’ cards from a second set of ActiveDemocracy Cards!

If you use a facilitator then this person won’t play an active role in the game but manages the process. They keep it going in a safe and timely way and can make reflexive interventions. Afterwards, they can lead the feedback session.

Another way we use the cards is to split into two groups. The first group of up to five people play the game, the second observe from outside the circle. This is called a ‘fishbowl’ and when the game is over the observers can reflect on what they saw and heard to gain a new and more independent perspective.

PLAN

Start by getting the group to agree on a scenario for the role play.

This can either be one that is suggested by the facilitator or group members can propose a real-world example. Remember that the purpose of the game is to design the engagement process, not solve the problem!

SCOPE

There are different coloured cards in the pack and these will help you to define the scope of the game and keep you focused whilst you're playing. So the next thing to do is to decide the nature and scope of the exercise.

First, the group chooses a **METHOD** card from the deck. These methods are derived from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public of Participation (iap2.org). They are used to determine the nature of the process you are going to role-play.

Normally you would select a single primary mode but life doesn't always work that way, so you might choose to select a primary and secondary card, it's up to you:

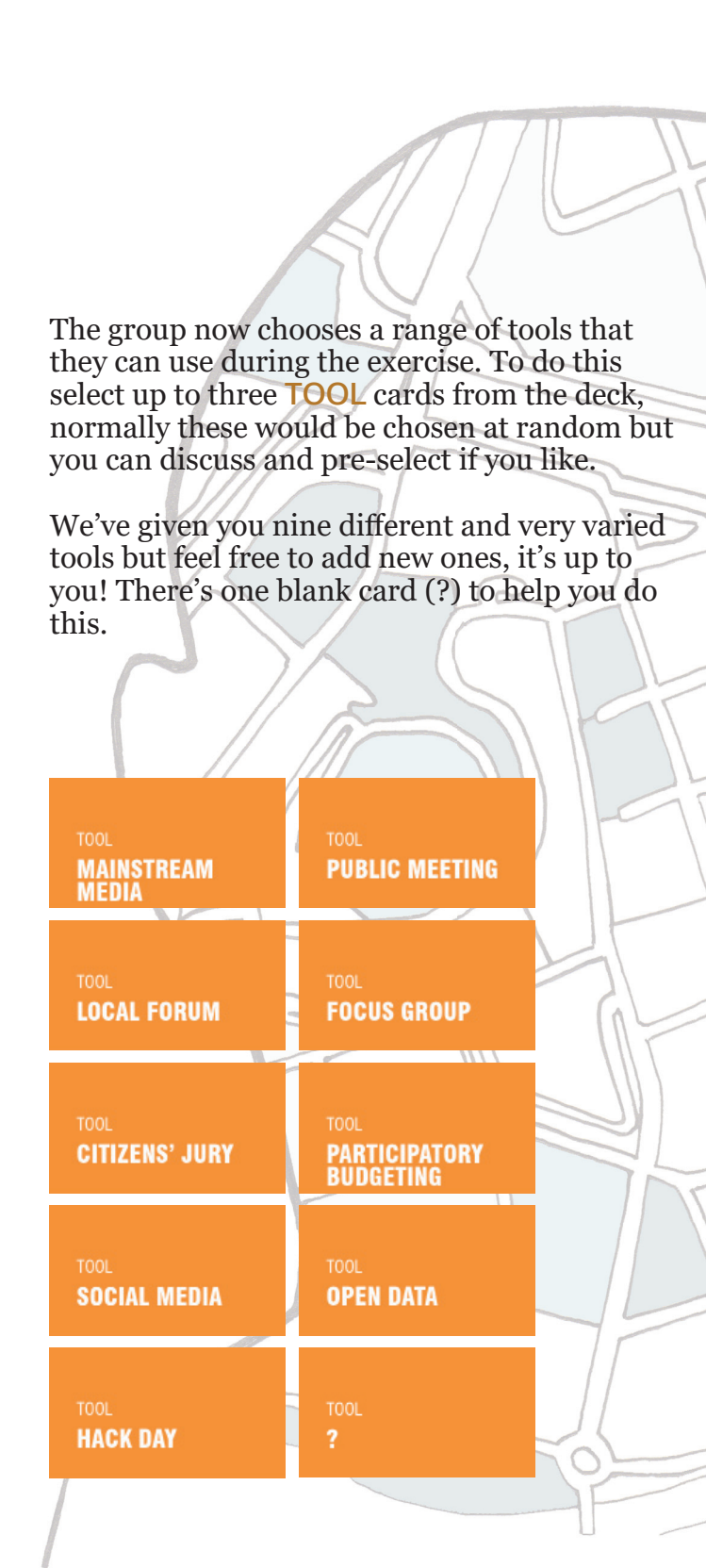
METHOD
INFORMING

METHOD
CONSULTING

METHOD
INVOLVING

METHOD
COLLABORATING

METHOD
EMPOWERING



The group now chooses a range of tools that they can use during the exercise. To do this select up to three **TOOL** cards from the deck, normally these would be chosen at random but you can discuss and pre-select if you like.

We've given you nine different and very varied tools but feel free to add new ones, it's up to you! There's one blank card (?) to help you do this.

TOOL

**MAINSTREAM
MEDIA**

TOOL

PUBLIC MEETING

TOOL

LOCAL FORUM

TOOL

FOCUS GROUP

TOOL

CITIZENS' JURY

TOOL

**PARTICIPATORY
BUDGETING**

TOOL

SOCIAL MEDIA

TOOL


OPEN DATA

TOOL

HACK DAY

TOOL

?



Each player then goes on to draw a **ROLE** card at random. This is the role they will adopt during the exercise and is one of Citizen, Civil Servant, Politician or the neutral Observer.

When you play the game, we'd like you to think and act from the point of view of the role that you've selected. This might mean that you have to think and operate differently: if you're a politician in real life but in the game have to operate with the impartiality of a civil servant, or you're a civil servant who is playing the game as a citizen.

Be creative, use your new identity to explore issues, challenges and opportunities around how engagement can really work.

ROLE

CITIZEN

ROLE

CIVIL SERVANT

ROLE

POLITICIAN

ROLE

OBSERVER

PLAY

Now the exercise has been defined, the group takes turns to explore the scenario and develop a strategy to address it based on the principles of active democracy. To do this, each member of the group takes a turn, acting in the role they have chosen.

Each player holds a set of **INTERVENTION** cards and they play one of these at the beginning of their turn (note there is nothing in the rules to stop them negotiating or even trading cards, but there is a finite supply).

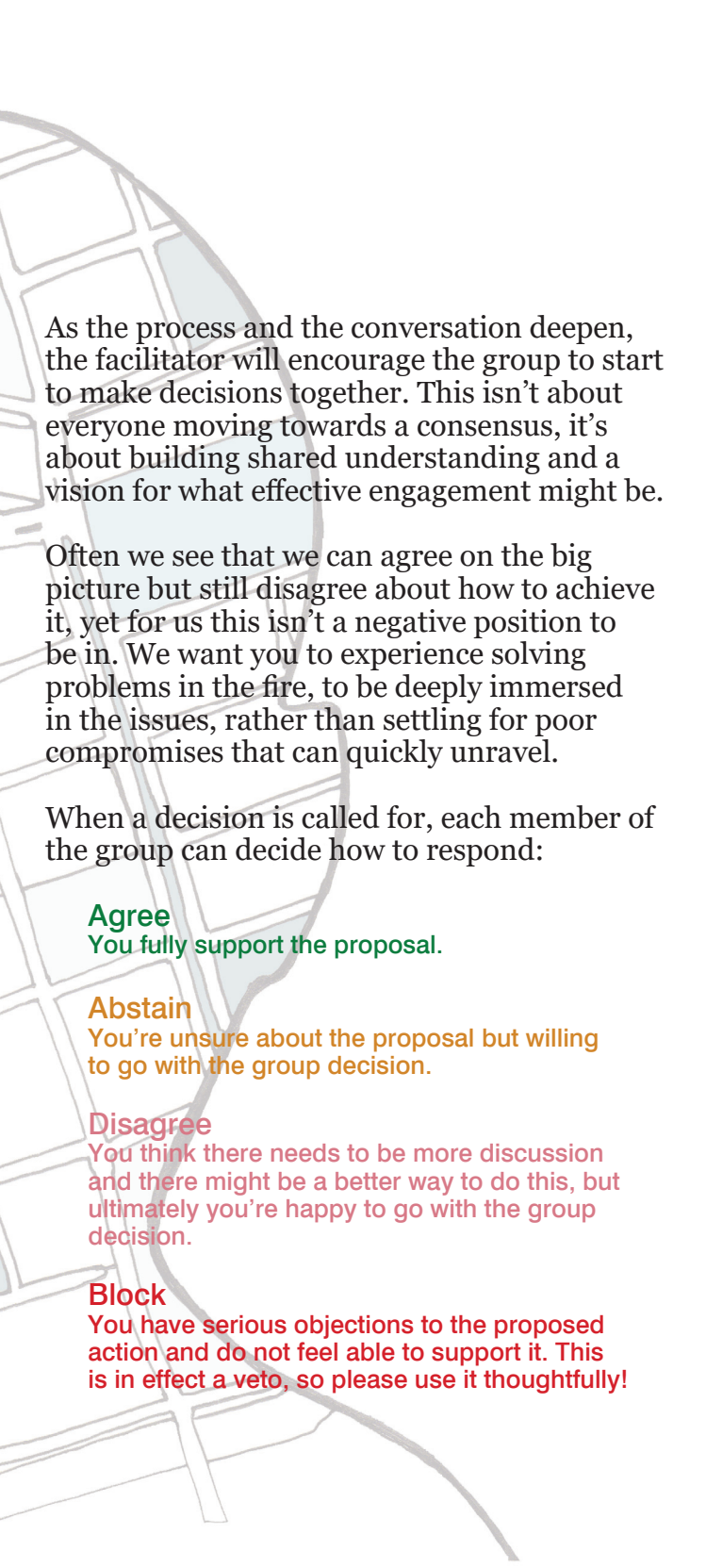
The question and statement cards initiate a new round of dialogue amongst the group. The current player will be asked to frame the statement or the question that will initiate the conversation.

For example, when you play a question card you will follow this with a question to the group. When a player proposes a decision or suggests an action, they must also frame what that action is (as they are proposing they can choose to debate the detail of the action or simply nominate it).

INTERVENTION
QUESTION

INTERVENTION
STATEMENT

INTERVENTION
DECISION



As the process and the conversation deepen, the facilitator will encourage the group to start to make decisions together. This isn't about everyone moving towards a consensus, it's about building shared understanding and a vision for what effective engagement might be.

Often we see that we can agree on the big picture but still disagree about how to achieve it, yet for us this isn't a negative position to be in. We want you to experience solving problems in the fire, to be deeply immersed in the issues, rather than settling for poor compromises that can quickly unravel.

When a decision is called for, each member of the group can decide how to respond:

Agree

You fully support the proposal.

Abstain

You're unsure about the proposal but willing to go with the group decision.

Disagree

You think there needs to be more discussion and there might be a better way to do this, but ultimately you're happy to go with the group decision.

Block

You have serious objections to the proposed action and do not feel able to support it. This is in effect a veto, so please use it thoughtfully!

REFLECT



Agree a time for the game (we recommend no more than one hour) and ensure that the conversation is balanced and that every player has had a turn (if you are using a facilitator then they will do this and lead the reflection).

Once you've finished playing, we really want you to think about the experience in a deeply reflective way. So, this is a time to reflect on what happened (or didn't happen) and to discuss what you learned. Think about how you can implement these lessons in the real world.

1. The facilitator (if there is no facilitator, get one member of the group to start) offers some initial reflections on what they saw.
2. The group can then give open and honest reflections without being challenged.
3. As a group try to identify some key learnings and talk about how these might translate in your real life experiences – what can you take in to the real engagement projects that you are involved with or what additional skills or knowledge do you feel they need.
4. If you used a 'fishbowl' model then start by inviting the observers to reflect and comment on what they saw and heard. Then ask the direct participants to comment.

YOUR NOTES



INSIDE YOUR PACK

Active Democracy Cards are designed for a group of up to five players plus a facilitator, each pack contains:

Method	1 card per method	5 cards
Role	2 x Citizen 2 x Civil Servant 2 x Politician 1 x Observer	7 cards
Tool	1 card per tool	10 cards
Intervention	10 x Question 10 x Statement 5 x Decision	25 cards

**ACTIVE
DEMOCRACY
CARDS**

info@activedemocraci.es / activedemocraci.es
Copyright © Democratise 2015.