



Handbook on Social Participation for UHC

virtual launch session
31 May 2021

Dheepa Rajan
on behalf of the handbook team

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240027794>



Handbook concept

Target audience

Member State
Governments

engage
participate

Engagement modalities

participatory space

directly with
populations

through
communities

through
civil society

for what?



Policy dialogue
National health planning
Policy- and decision-making

Social Participation Technical Network



Chairs:

Mette Kinoti/Githinji Gitahi, AMREF Health Africa

Jean-Francois Delfraissy, National Bioethics Council, France

Justin Koonin, Civil Society Engagement Mechanism, UHC2030

1/3 Civil society and communities

1/3 Member state governments

1/3 Academia/international organizations/others



Evidence generation for the handbook



Country	Region	Focus area
India	SEARO	'Communitization' pillar within National Rural Health Mission
Thailand	SEARO	National Health Assembly process
Burkina Faso	AFRO	Civil society engagement in National Health Financing Strategy development
Madagascar	AFRO	Local community participation and links to national level
Mexico	PAHO	Civil society engagement with national budget processes
Tunisia	EMRO	Post-revolution societal dialogue for health initiative
Iran	EMRO	Evaluation of existing participatory governance mechanisms
Portugal	EURO	Health Council as a participatory governance institution
France	EURO	<i>Democratie sanitaire</i> approach in the health sector



Civil society consultation



uhc2030

English / Français

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|| Moving together for UHC: listening to civil society on how to strengthen social participation in policy and decision-making

21 September 2020

Findings from a consultation on the WHO social participation handbook.

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A recent consultation with civil society organizations (CSOs) has reinforced the importance of practical and flexible guidance for meaningful social participation, communicating the benefits of social participation to decision-makers, and widening access of marginalized groups to national policy and decision-making processes.

Social participation mechanisms are vital for responsive health reforms that leave no one behind in efforts to achieve



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Archive

2020 (27)

2019 (39)

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WEBINAR SERIES: HANDBOOK ON SOCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

Handbook on Social Participation for Universal Health Coverage

<i>Population engagement and decision making</i>	04 March 2020	10:00 CET
<i>Representation</i>	18 March 2020	16:00 CET
<i>Legal frameworks</i>	25 March 2020	10:00 CET
<i>Capacities for mutually beneficial engagement</i>	01 April 2020	16:00 CET



Health Systems
Governance
Collaborative










uhc2030 csem
Civil Society Engagement Mechanism for UHC2030

We are pleased to announce an upcoming webinar series, led by [WHO](#) and in collaboration with the [Health Systems Governance Collaborative](#), [Health Systems Global](#), the [UHC Partnership](#), [UHC2030](#) and the [Civil Society Engagement Mechanism for UHC2030](#), which will present chapter findings of a currently developed WHO guidance document, *the handbook on social participation for universal health coverage*. The handbook will provide best practice guidance to policymakers on how to effectively and meaningfully engage with populations, communities and civil society in national policy, planning and review processes.

The team synthesized available peer reviewed literature and findings from nine

Handbook outline



-  Chapter 1: Participation: a core instrument for **voice, agency and empowerment**
-  Chapter 2: An **enabling environment** for participation
-  Chapter 3: **Representation** in participation
-  Chapter 4: **Capacities** for meaningful government engagement with the population, communities, and civil society
-  Chapter 5: From population engagement to **decision-making**
-  Chapter 6: **Legal frameworks** for participation
-  Chapter 7: **Sustaining participatory engagement over time**





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Chapter 2

An enabling environment for participation

KATJA ROHRER-HEROLD
DHEEPA RAJAN
KIRA KOCH



Power dynamics create unequal conditions for participation

- structural barriers to participation for some
- increasing access to for others

Selected key messages

- enabling environment for participation → evening out the playing field with the aim of empowering those who are weaker and less powerful
- A participatory space → potent tool to minimize power asymmetries **if** designed in a way that counters formal and informal barriers for equal participation.
- Social participation → transformative potential
 - challenges societal conventions of whose **voice** should be heard
 - who should have **agency** over their own health
 - who should be **empowered** to meaningfully contribute to policy-making.

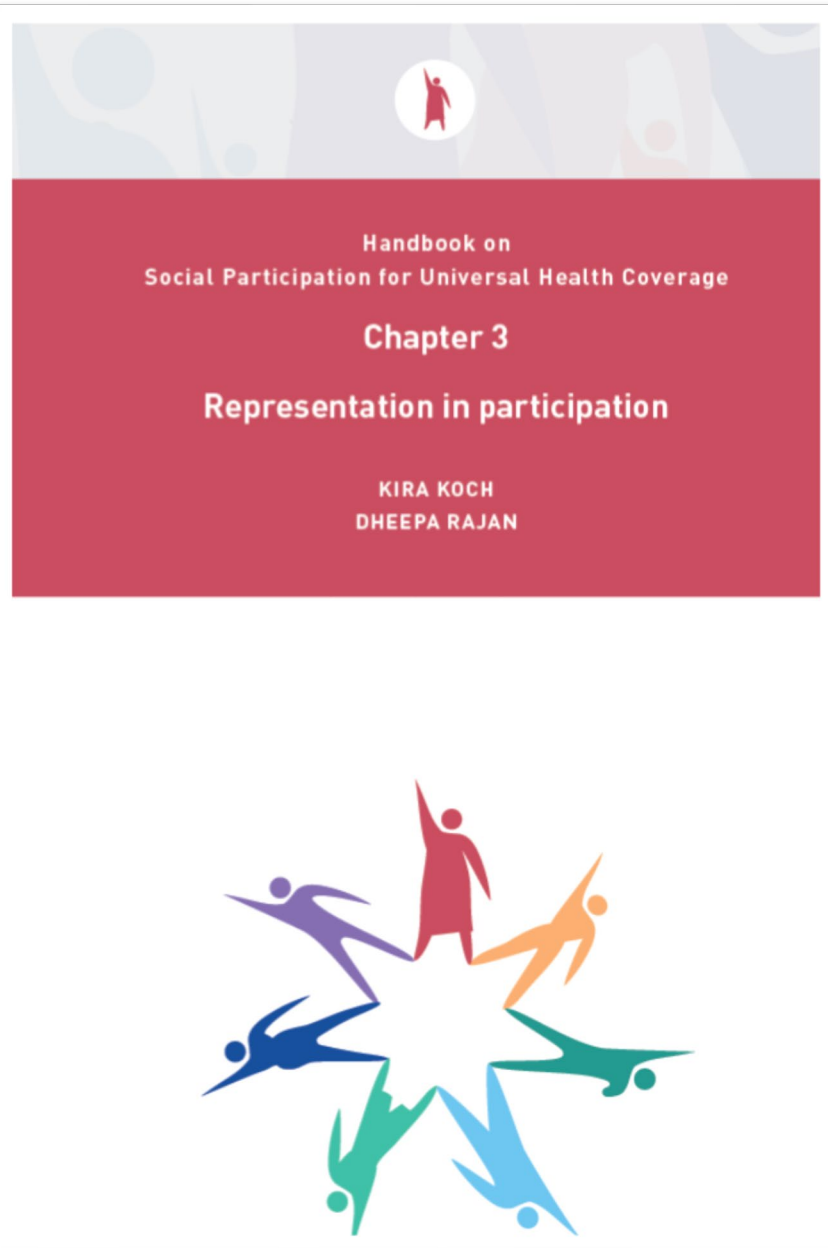


Challenges in finding the 'right' representatives:

- Considered legitimate
- Able to represent a constituency, idea, and/or their own individual experience

Selected key messages

- Format & design of participatory processes influence the ability to effectively take on representation roles
- Balanced and transparent selection strategy
- Format which lends legitimacy to participants
 - Neutral facilitator
 - Homogenous focus groups
 - Meeting location
 - Speaking time
 - Preparatory material
- Statistical vs qualitative representation

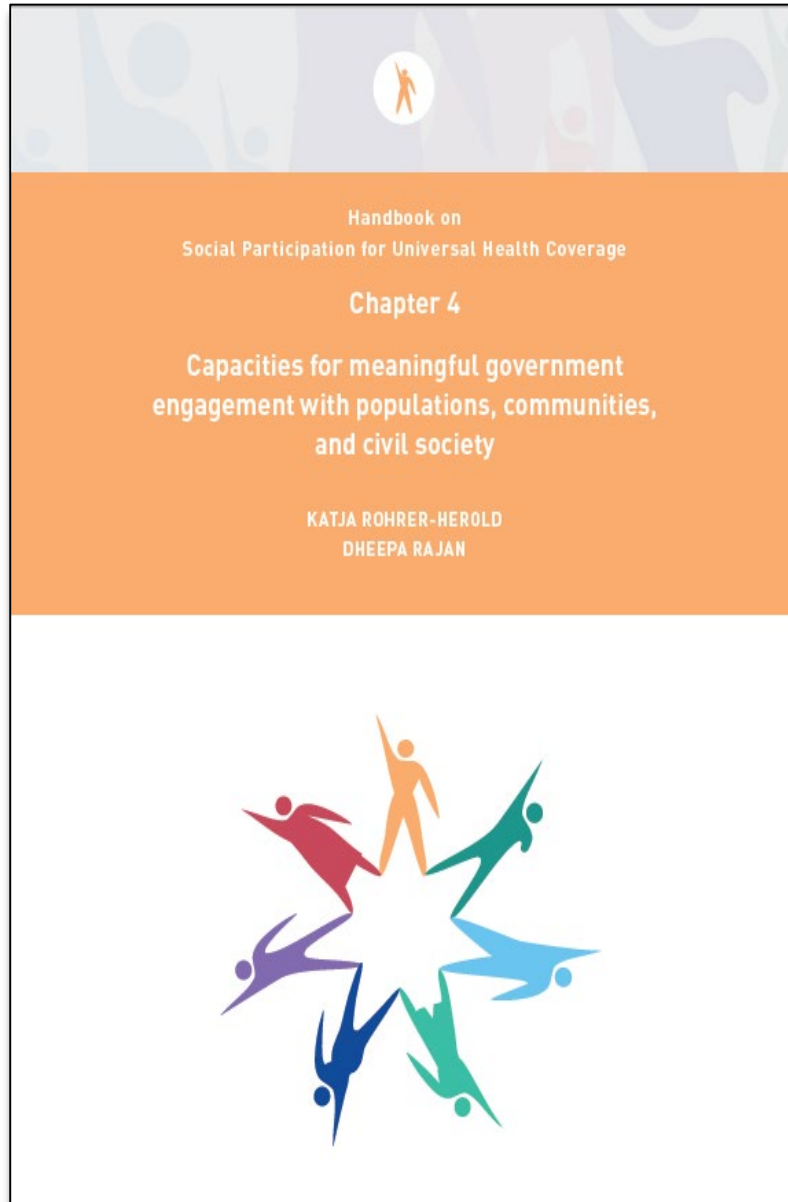




Recalibrating the balance of power which is rooted in expertise, knowledge, and speaking skills

Selected key messages

- Quality of exchanges → determined by the competency and capacities of the participants
- Level playing field →
 - stakeholders/participants on an equal footing
 - more frank and fruitful discussions
 - policy influence
- **Recognition** is the most fundamental dimension of capacities for equal interaction but is the most difficult to build
- **Communication** depends on **exposure to participatory spaces**
- A lack of technical skills impedes the participation process but governments can ensure that **technical skills can be compensated for** if lacking





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Chapter 5

From population engagement
to decision-making

DHEEPA RAJAN



Public participation initiatives have insufficient influence on decision-making

- ‘Deliberation-to-policy gap’

Selected key messages

- Policy uptake is not always the priority in participatory governance processes
- Value-driven argument → participation is a value in and of itself, an intrinsic goal
- 2 complementary approaches to participation: governance vs. service delivery objectives
- Policy uptake → level of government involvement is critical
- Institutionalized government-initiated and/or -supported spaces for participation → higher policy uptake



UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: “...*The right to participate in political and public affairs should be enforceable by law and its denial should be open to judicial challenge...*”

Examples: legal frameworks relevant for participation

- Decentralization legislation
- Right to health laws
- Health Acts
- Freedom of Information laws

Selected key messages

- Participation can and does take place even when legal frameworks do not exist → **BUT** better to have participation embedded in legal framework than not
- Legal frameworks do not guarantee participation per se → just one of several elements needed to ensure participation
- Legally mandated participatory spaces risk being captured by society's elite



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Chapter 6

Legal frameworks for participation

DHEEPA RAJAN
DAVID CLARKE
DÖRTE PETIT





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Chapter 7

Sustaining participatory engagement over time

DHEEPA RAJAN
CSONGOR BAJNOCZKI



Long-term sustainability of participatory spaces → actions required are most effective when reflected on as part of its set-up and operationalization.

- Participation mostly largely voluntary
- Participation as a regular modus operandi in health can only happen if people stay engaged
- Long-term sustainability ↔ culture of participation

Selected key messages

- Formalization and institutionalization of participatory spaces can contribute to long-term sustainability → funding & capacity boost
- Long-term, stable funding for participatory spaces and for civil society
- People and civil society are motivated when their participation leads to results
- Locally respected and trusted community representatives are crucial resources

Thank
you

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THANK YOU

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