THE EXTINCTION REBELLION GUIDE TO CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES

extinction rebellion

"I feel like there is a genuine commitment from members of the community [...] to put our time, energy and thoughts into shaping something, and genuinely caring about what our future is like."

**Member of the Second Citizens' Jury
on nuclear waste, Australia**

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"The Citizens' Assembly showed that if you structure the debate around information, discussion, questions and answers, and allow citizens to really thrash things out with expert advice, very often people will shift their positions."

Sadhbh O Neill, an expert adviser to the Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change, Ireland
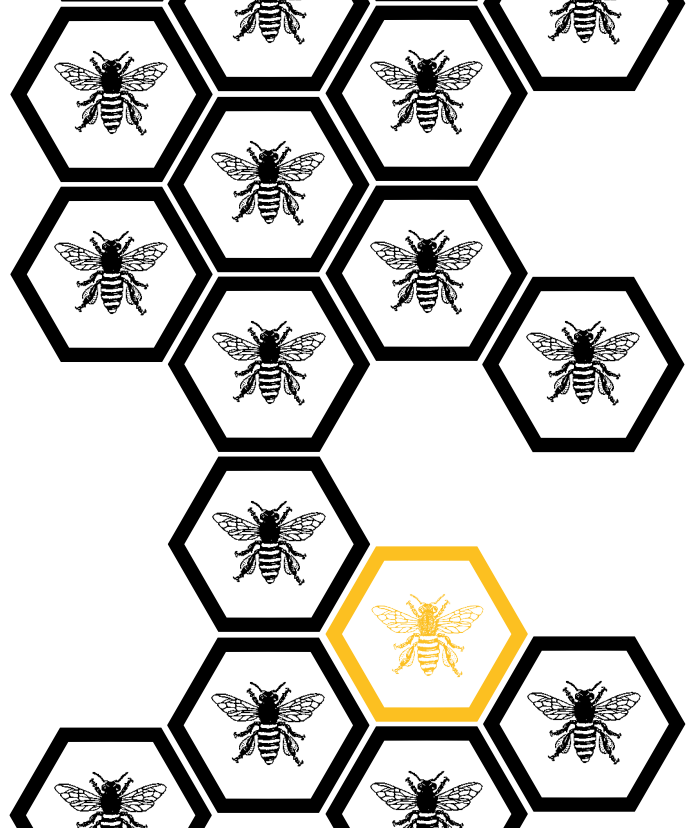
INTRODUCTION

Extinction Rebellion's third demand calls on the government to create and be led by a citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice. This guide provides a general introduction to citizens' assemblies. It explains what one is, how it works and why we need one. It also outlines the key steps in designing and running an assembly and presents some exciting examples of similar processes from around the globe. We will soon publish a more detailed presentation of our demands for the citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice.

Citizens' assemblies are a form of deliberative democracy – a process in which ordinary people make political decisions. Public hearings, ranging from citizens' juries with less than twenty people to citizens' summits of more than seven hundred, have transformed policy-making in Australia, Belgium, Canada, India, Ireland, Poland and the UK. In a citizens' assembly, a group of randomly selected members of the public reflect on an issue of public concern. The aim is to bring together a cross-section of society. Participants hear from experts and stakeholders, ask questions, deliberate on policy options and make recommendations that shape government policy.

Extinction Rebellion believes that the UK public must have the chance to determine how the country responds to the emergency we are facing. If organised properly, a national citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice will enable politicians to address the emergency before it's too late.

"A citizens' assembly provides us, the people, with a way to request radical change. Such a request gives government legitimacy to act and allows for cross-party support. To carry on failing to act is no longer an option. It's time for a citizens' assembly."
Sarah Lunnon, External coordinator of Extinction Rebellion's political circle.[1]

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1 *"Statement from Extinction Rebellion: Philip Hammond's letter to Theresa May,"* Extinction Rebellion, *7 June 2019. https://rebellion.earth/2019/06/07/statement-from-extinction-rebellion-philip-hammonds-letter-to-theresa-may/*
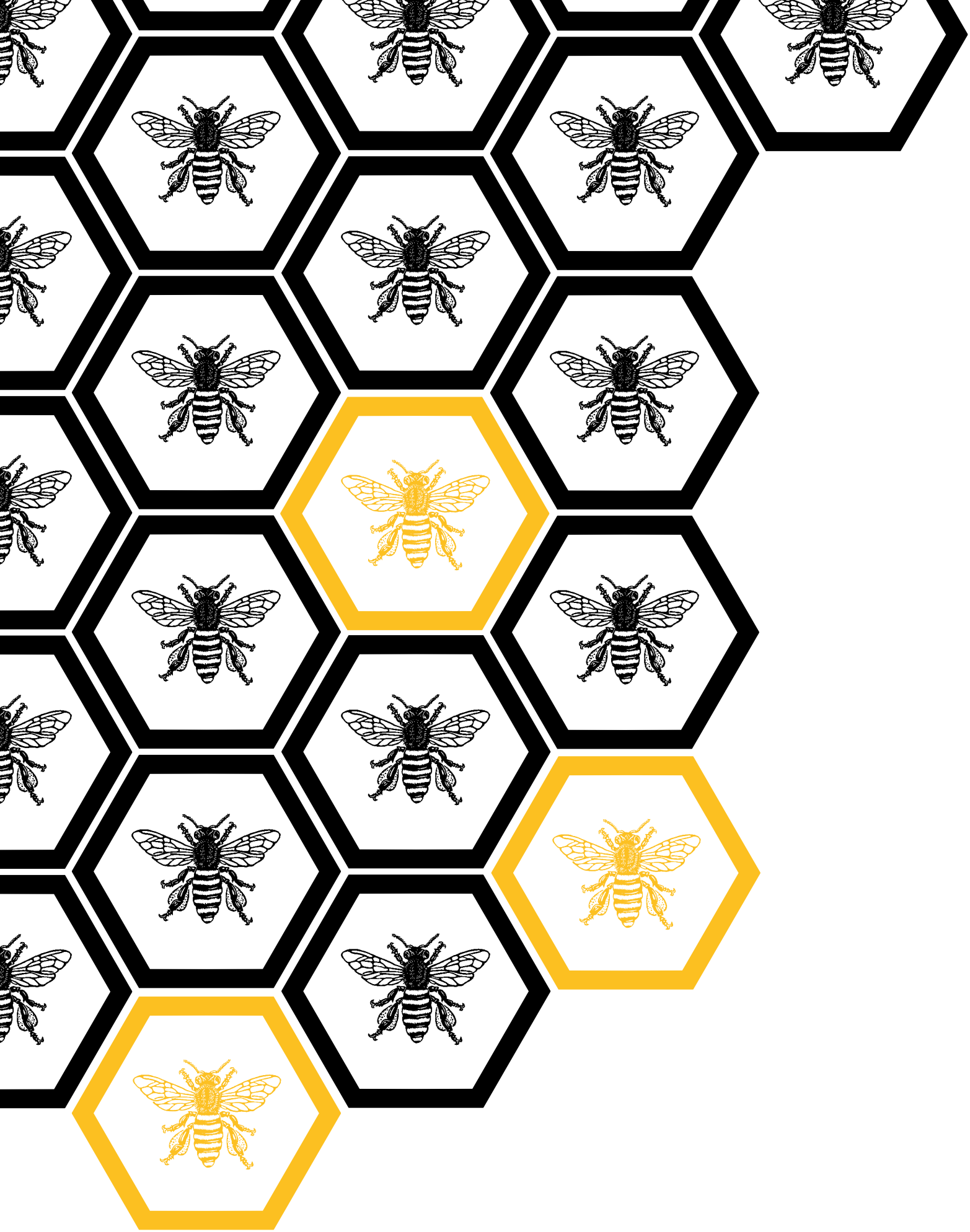
HOW DOES A CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY WORK?

Members of citizens' assemblies are selected at random from the population. This process is similar to how a jury is selected in the legal system of the UK and many other countries. In addition, the assembly organisers use demographic quotas to ensure that it is inclusive in terms of a range of factors; for example, gender, age, ethno-cultural heritage, education level, sexual orientation, disability and geography. Once members have been selected, the process includes four key phases: listening, learning, deliberating and deciding.

Citizens' assemblies can be useful in providing elected politicians with a better understanding of how they should act on climate and ecological justice. Recent research confirms that Members of the UK Parliament do not have a clear sense of the public mandate for climate action.[2] Often opinion polls gather knee-jerk reactions to loaded questions, and they do not inform citizens or enable them to explore the implications of different options with other people. Citizens' assemblies provide an opportunity to explore the views of a broadly representative sample of people in a fair and equitable way.

Citizens' assemblies can also be held at city or local level. However, given the urgency and complexity of the climate emergency, only the national government has the power to tackle the scale and scope of necessary action—that is why Extinction Rebellion is demanding a national citizens' assembly.

Why do we need a citizens' assembly when we already have a House of Commons?

Citizens' assemblies are a form of participatory democracy. They are a vital addition to the system of representative democracy, which in the UK includes our elected Members of Parliament as well as local councillors and members of devolved institutions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Public participation acts as a counterweight to a parliamentary system that prioritises short-term electoral gain over the long-term needs of current and future generations. Deliberative processes, supported by safeguards against bias, lead to more diverse and informed voices in political debates than in a purely elected body, such as the House of Commons. Additionally, assembly members are not chosen to represent political parties and so are free to make decisions solely based on their own informed viewpoints, values and sense of what policies would be for the common good.

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2 Willis, R. *"Building the political mandate for climate action,"* London: Green Alliance, *2018.*
   https://www.green-alliance.org.uk/resources/Building_a_political_mandate_for_climate_action.pdf

ELEMENTS OF A CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

Citizens

Citizens are at the heart of deliberative democracy. A citizens' assembly must reflect the body of people who will be affected by its outcomes, in this case the UK population. Members are selected randomly, through a process known as sortition. The term 'citizen' has its origins in the Athenian democratic systems of Ancient Greece. Here a citizen's duty was to hold those who governed them to account. However, in the original system, slaves and women were not considered citizens and therefore were denied a role in democratic processes. Today, people are still often excluded from politics. The organisers of a citizens' assembly must negate factors that prevent certain groups from taking part in democracy or that discourage them from speaking in participatory events.

Coordinating Group

A citizens' assembly is run by a team of coordinators whose impartiality is essential. Their independence from those funding the process is safeguarded by a series of checks and balances, such as the oversight panel. These coordinators are responsible for conducting the process of random selection and inviting experts, stakeholders and facilitators. This role is normally taken by a professional organisation or a group of such organisations.

Advisory Board

The advisory board develops key criteria for the selection of the expert/stakeholder panel. It also ensures, with the help of the oversight panel, that the background material and evidence presented to a citizens' assembly is balanced. The advisory board may be composed in different ways, for example, in the Irish Citizens' Assembly the board comprised academics and practitioners across a number of specific fields of interest.

Expert/Stakeholder Panel

These are a mixture of experts, stakeholders and rights-holders who brief the assembly on their perspective. They are invited by the coordinating group based on criteria set by the advisory board to ensure fair and broad representation of opinion. Assembly members also have input and are asked whether there are specific questions they would like answered or particular groups or individuals they would like to hear from. They also have the chance to cross-question panel members at the assembly itself. Contributions from experts, stakeholders and rights-holders can be made in the form of a talk in person, a recording, a written briefing, or they can be live streamed.

Facilitation Team

A team of facilitators is appointed by the coordinators. In every session during the citizens' assembly a facilitator sits at each table with assembly members. The role of the facilitation team is to ensure that the deliberation is not dominated by a vocal few and that everyone has a chance to speak. This role should be carried out by experienced practitioners who can ensure that the deliberation environment is respectful. The team should be impartial and sufficiently large to adequately support the number of assembly members. The facilitators will not have the opportunity to voice their own opinion.

Oversight Panel

The oversight panel can be made up of citizens, representatives of government, rights-holders (representatives of those whose rights are under threat, such as grassroots campaigns), technical experts in deliberative processes and other stakeholders such as NGOs and corporations. The role of this body is to monitor the whole process ensuring its compliance with standards.

"The members of the Citizens' Assembly [...] demonstrated how extraordinary ordinary citizens are when given an important task and the resources and independence to do it right."

Jack Blaney, Chair of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform
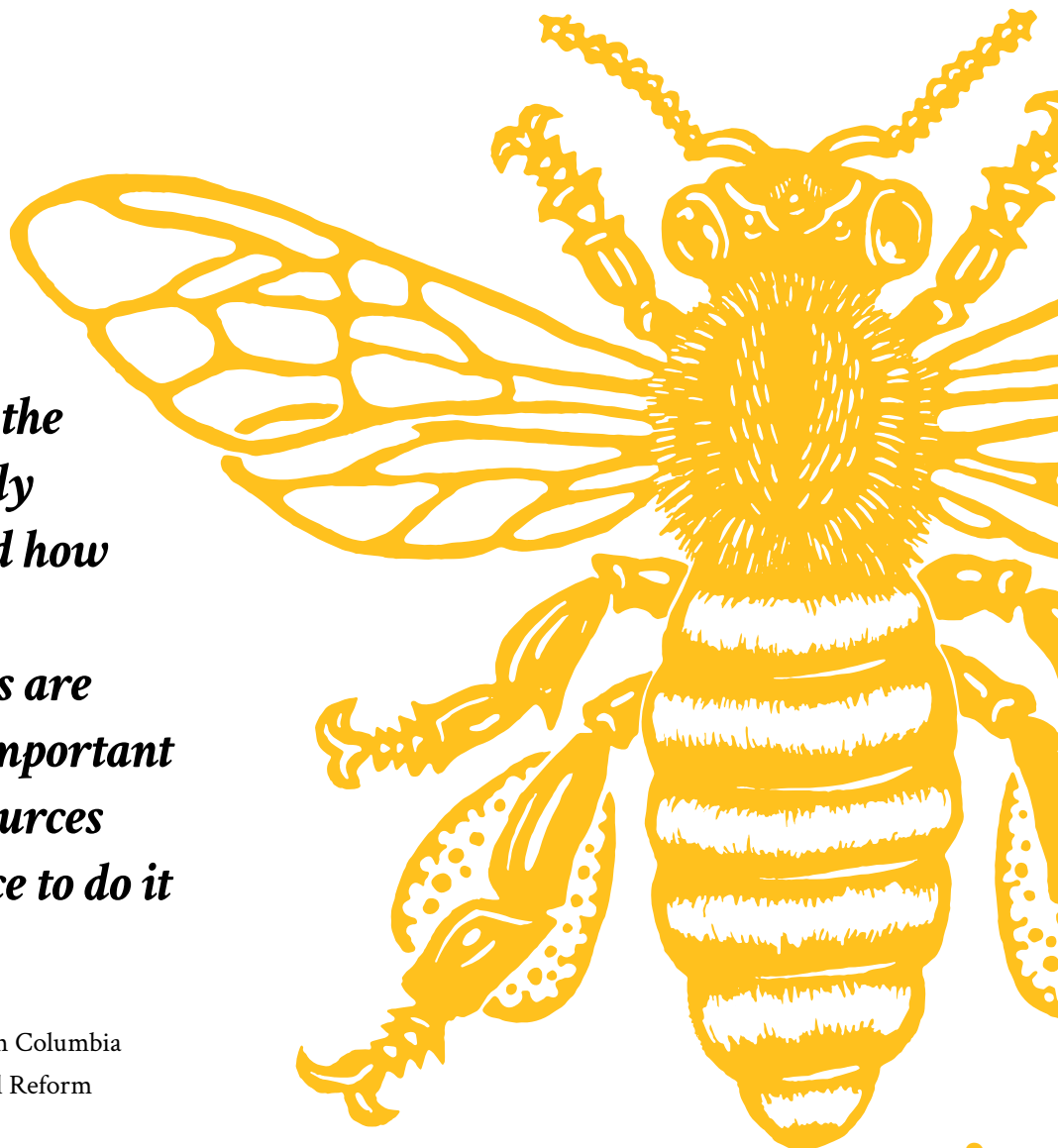
KEY STEPS IN DESIGNING A CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

This section outlines key steps that must be included in a citizens' assembly. This process was developed in conjunction with international citizens' assembly experts and practitioners.

APPOINTMENT OF AN OVERSIGHT PANEL

Step 1. Appointment of an oversight panel. This oversight panel monitors the entire process and the other bodies in order to make sure that the citizens' assembly is balanced and robust and that the principles of its design are followed.

THE TASK

Step 2. The task. The person or group that initiates a citizens' assembly can set the question. In doing this, they must ensure that the question is clearly formulated and adequately addresses the issue at hand.

Assembly members make informed judgements based on expert and stakeholder input, rather than deciding on policy details. In some cases, the specific policy areas to be addressed by the citizens' assembly need clarifying. In a citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice, for instance, certain sectors could be given priority due to their contribution to the climate crisis and the breakdown of ecological life-support systems. Decisions on which policy areas the citizens' assembly is to consider will affect its duration and whether there need to be multiple citizens' assemblies to address these different areas.

APPOINTMENT OF THE COORDINATING GROUP

Step 3. Appointment of the coordinating group. The coordinators must be selected through an open and competitive tendering process. Safeguards must be in place to ensure that powerful stakeholders, such as the government, are not able to influence the selection process by appointing a team of coordinators to act in their interests.

THE EVIDENCE BASE

Step 4. The evidence base. The coordinating group, in contact with the advisory board, work to develop a clear, comprehensive policy framework in order to structure the evidence, deliberation and decisions. In the case of a citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice, this might mean developing feasible alternative policies within specific sectors.

INVITING EXPERTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Step 5. Inviting experts and stakeholders. The coordinating group identifies and contacts experts, stakeholders and rights-holders based on the key criteria outlined by the advisory board.

DESIGNING THE ASSEMBLY PROCESS

Step 6. Designing the assembly process. The coordinating group designs the following phases:

A.   Learning phase – the coordinating group prepares the information that assembly members will need to understand the issues at hand. This includes consideration of the number of presentations that will be needed from different experts, stakeholders and rights-holders. Assembly members will learn about critical thinking and bias detection before hearing balanced and comprehensive information on the issue, including key terms and background science (e.g. about the rate and implications of the climate crisis). Then they'll be presented with a range of opinions and evidence on policy options. Assembly members can invite and 'cross-examine' additional experts.

B.   Consultation phase – in addition to the experts and stakeholders who appear in person, any group or individual in society can make a written submission to the citizens' assembly. This evidence will be publically available online, but also summarised and presented to the assembly members. Members will also have the right to request to hear in person from any of these groups. A wide range of perspectives should be present, including contrary perspectives.

C.   Deliberation phase – assembly members discuss the evidence and opinions they have heard. This is an opportunity for members to reflect on and discuss the issues. The facilitator's job is to ensure that assembly members actively listen to each other and critically assess the different options. This phase takes place through a combination of plenary sessions and facilitated small groups to maximize opportunities to speak and to be heard.

D.   Decisions – assembly members are taken through a step-by-step process in order to draft a report on their recommendations. They may wish to undertake deliberations in private, without facilitators present, similar to a legal jury deciding its verdict. Their report will include key recommendations and the degree of support for each, along with more nuanced descriptions of the points raised during the assembly.

The coordinating group considers how much time will be needed for assembly members to reflect, deliberate and achieve thorough decisions.

CREATION OF BRIEFING MATERIALS
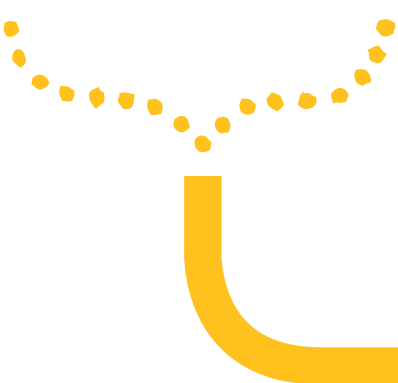
Step 7. Creation of briefing materials. With guidance from the advisory board the expert and stakeholder panel creates accessible and balanced background materials to be presented to the assembly members.

SELECTION OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERS BY SORTITION

Step 8. Selection of assembly members by sortition. First, a large database of UK residents is identified. A certain number of these people are randomly selected from the database and letters of invitation are sent out. The invitation explains the task and provides details about logistics including dates, location, accommodation, available support for travel and honorarium. Interested citizens complete a form either online or via freephone providing basic socio-demographic criteria to the coordinators.

A specific team within the coordinators contacts those selected and provides support in order to ensure their attendance—giving information and reassurance, organising travel, offering support for caring responsibilities, etc. The coordinators select assembly members using a process called stratified random sampling.

RUNNING THE ASSEMBLY

Step 9. Running the assembly. The citizens' assembly takes place in an accessible location with adequate accommodation and catering in order to ensure the comfort of assembly members. To ensure transparency, all presentations during the learning and consultation phases should be live streamed and recorded, and all materials should be made available online. In addition, the coordinating group should produce a report explaining the methodology used in the citizens' assembly to ensure procedural transparency.

IMPACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Step 10. Impact of recommendations. An explanation of how and when the government will respond to the recommendations should be clear before the citizens' assembly begins. Recommendations that receive the support of the citizens' assembly at an agreed threshold could be treated as binding. For example, the government could commit to implementing recommendations that receive the support of 80% of assembly members. Parliament could be required to debate recommendations with less support within a specified time period (e.g. a month) and provide an explanation as to why the proposal has been accepted, modified or rejected.

HOW ARE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS SELECTED?

Assembly members are selected by lot, similarly to the creation of a jury for a legal trial. Ancient Athenians considered random selection (or 'sortition' – see step 8. on p.13 for a description) as essential to fair decision-making and was a central part of their political system. In Ancient Greece, women and slaves were not included in the sortition selection. Even today when setting up and carrying out deliberative processes, issues relating to racism, gender, class and other forms of bias persist. To address this, stratified random sampling can be used to achieve a desired mix of people or to produce a group of citizens' that are reflective of society. In some deliberative processes members of marginalised groups make up a majority of the participants to ensure their voices are not excluded, while others prioritise statistical representativeness.

Stratified Random Sampling

Stratified random sampling ensures that the assembly members broadly represent the population's demographic composition. The public is divided into subpopulations based on, for example, gender, age, ethnicity, education level and geography. The percentage of assembly seats reserved for a subgroup reflects the percentage of that subpopulation. Individuals are then drawn at random from within these subpopulations. Populations tend to have 50% women and 50% men; hence, stratified sampling means that with an assembly of 100 members, 50 seats would be reserved for women and 50 seats for men. This is a simplification by means of example and we recommend that non-binary individuals should be included in gender quotas. Unlike jury service, citizens who receive an invitation can choose whether or not they attend.

Though some identities can be fluid, the idea behind stratified random sampling is that the general public should be able to identify one or more assembly members who are like them – i.e. that they are the same age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, identify as the same gender or that they live in the same region in a rural or urban setting. Based on this, citizens can infer that if they had the same access to experts, stakeholders and rights-holders and time to deliberate, then they would make similar decisions. This is not meant to imply that identity markers have a direct impact on the way that people take decisions, but that stratified random sampling allows for more diverse voices in the decision-making process. It is important for the legitimacy of a citizens' assembly that the general public have faith in this approach, from selection to deliberation, and can see that their perspectives are being represented.

It takes approximately six weeks to carry out the sortition process (including stratification) and create a body of representative, randomly selected citizens ready to make decisions in a way that is legitimate, fair and inclusive.

WHY IS EXTINCTION REBELLION DEMANDING A CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY?

Extinction Rebellion believes that a citizens' assembly would help resolve problems in our current parliamentary democracy that have led to inaction on the climate and ecological emergency:

- Successive UK governments have failed to respond to the growing crisis of climate change since the issue first became a matter of public concern over 30 years ago.

- The five-year electoral cycle discourages governments from attending to long-term issues like climate breakdown.

- Democratic representatives are lobbied by powerful corporations, seek sympathetic media coverage and calculate their policies based on potential media and public reactions, as measured by opinion polls. This means politicians often feel unable to propose the bold changes necessary to address the emergency.

Here is how a citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice will break political deadlock:

- A citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice gives politicians access to public judgements that have been reached in a fair and informed way. This will help politicians commit to a transformative programme of action justified by the mandate they receive from the citizens' assembly, reducing the potential public backlash at the ballot-box.

- Citizens' assemblies are fair and transparent. Assembly members have an equal chance of being heard due to careful facilitation. All of the information and materials given to the assembly members is shared publicly. This produces informed and democratically legitimate judgements.

- Citizens' assemblies can be used when difficult trade-offs are necessary. For example, experts might propose policies on how to meet a 2025 target for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and the assembly would then decide which one they prefer such as mitigating the effects of any changes in economic policies for those in society on low incomes.

HOW DO CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES DIFFER FROM PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLIES?

Extinction Rebellion has held people's assemblies since its foundation, but they are fundamentally different to citizens' assemblies. Both are forms of deliberative democracy where safeguards are put in place to try and ensure that everyone has a chance to speak.

Both citizens' assemblies and people's assemblies aim to increase public participation in decision making in a format that encourages respectful exchange and balanced communication. However, there are key differences between these two approaches. For instance, citizens' assemblies are randomly selected from the population with measures in place to ensure balance between selected members, whereas a people's assembly is self-selecting. Citizens' assemblies are more formal processes that take significant resources, months of organising and can last from a few months to over a year, while people's assemblies are about rapid and responsive deliberation.

People's assemblies are organised discussion forums open to anyone who would like to attend. They aim to be structured processes of dialogue that allow a large number of people to generate ideas, deliberate and make decisions. People's assemblies usually last between one and four hours and can take place anywhere — for example in occupied spaces such as roads and city squares. Under a variety of names, people's assemblies have often been used in many grassroots-led movements, ranging from the Chartists, Suffragettes, the US Civil Rights Movement and more recently Occupy, the Arab Spring and the Gilets Jaunes. People's assemblies were used throughout XR's April Rebellion to discuss a wide range of issues – from innovations in democracy to practical decisions about how to clear up and end the April Rebellion.

EXAMPLES

This section presents previous examples of citizens' assemblies and similar deliberative democratic processes around the globe.

UK

Citizens' juries (i.e. a smaller version of a citizens' assembly) were undertaken in the US in the 1980s and arrived in the UK in 1994[3]. They became prominent in the 2000s, particularly in the government-sponsored consultation on the issue of whether the UK should grow GM crops. Following a series of such processes, the Government agreed to halt the growing of GM crops in the UK, which was later followed by an EU-wide ban that continues to this day. Citizens' assemblies were developed as versions of citizens' juries that had already taken place in Canada, the first in British Colombia in 2004. One of the first citizens' assemblies in the UK focussed on how to fund social care for older and working-age adults in England. It was commissioned by the Health and Social Care Select Committee and the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee. These committees considered recommendations made by the assembly members as part of a wider inquiry on funding reforms. They described the assembly as vital to their work and in helping them to identify solutions which would command broad consensus. However, there was no commitment from government to abide by its conclusions. There are currently three citizens' assemblies being run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government as part of the Innovations in Democracy programme[4].

"I think that citizens' assemblies definitely should be run by parliament on other topics [...] A citizens' assembly can give government a chance to get an in-depth view of how people feel and what they have to say about specific issues."
Don, member of the Citizens' Assembly on Social Care, UK[5]

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3 Kuper, R. *"Deliberating waste: The Hertfordshire Citizens' Jury,"* Local Environment, *2(2), (2007), pp. 139-153.*

4 *"Innovation in Democracy Programme: Expression of Interest (EoI),"* GOV.UK, *accessed 16 June 2019, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/innovation-in-democracy-programme-expression-of-interest-eoi.*

5 *"Share your story,"* Involve, *accessed 29 May 2019, https://www.involve.org.uk/get-involved/share-your-story/don.*
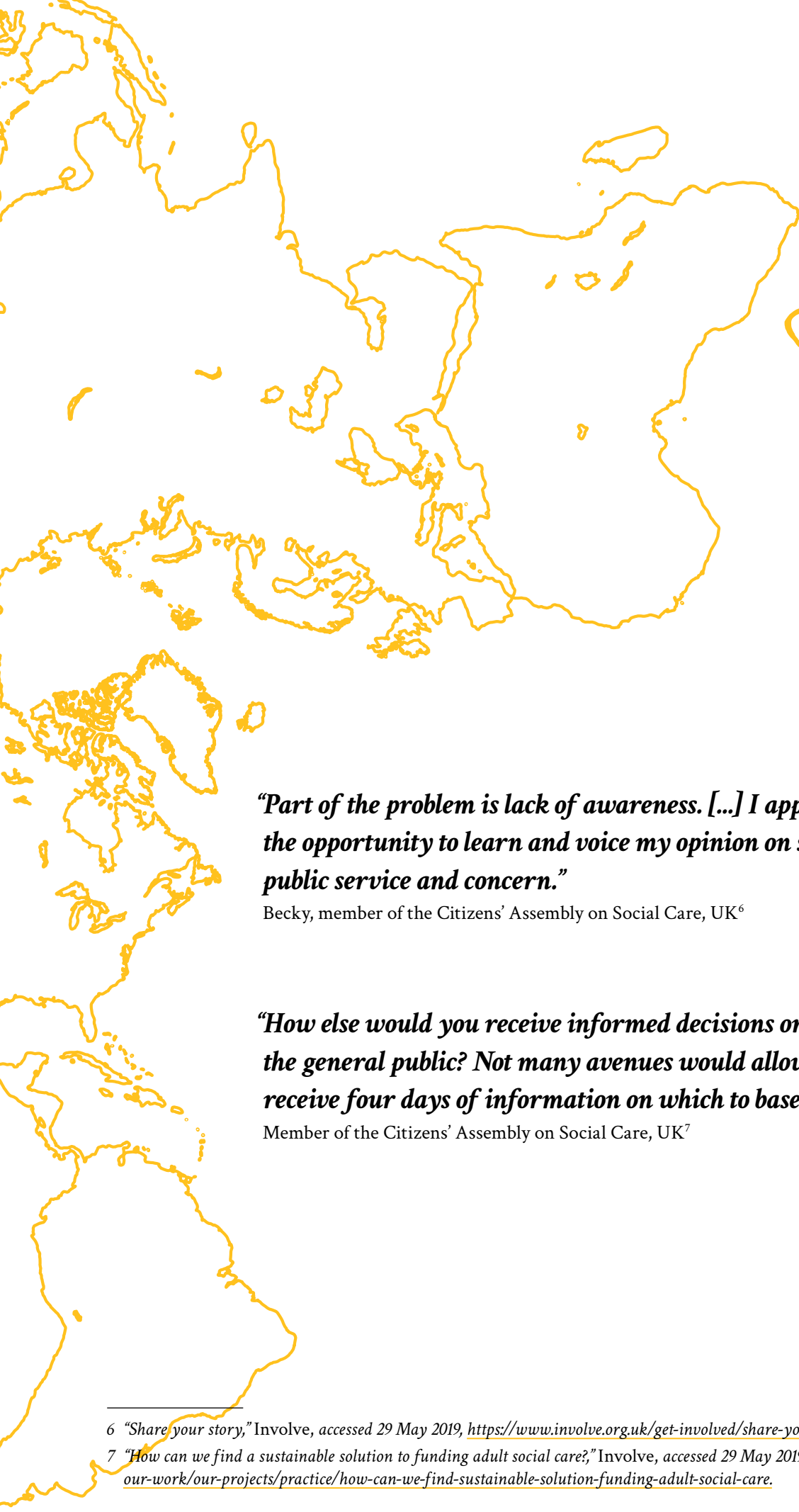
"Part of the problem is lack of awareness. [...] I appreciate having the opportunity to learn and voice my opinion on such a vital public service and concern."

Becky, member of the Citizens' Assembly on Social Care, UK[6]

"How else would you receive informed decisions or views from the general public? Not many avenues would allow people to receive four days of information on which to base their opinions."

Member of the Citizens' Assembly on Social Care, UK[7]

6 *"Share your story,"* Involve, *accessed 29 May 2019, https://www.involve.org.uk/get-involved/share-your-story/becky.*

7 *"How can we find a sustainable solution to funding adult social care?,"* Involve, *accessed 29 May 2019, https://www.involve.org.uk/our-work/our-projects/practice/how-can-we-find-sustainable-solution-funding-adult-social-care.*

Ireland

Since 2012, two Irish citizens' assemblies, deliberating several issues each, have been held to break political deadlock on issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage and climate change. The second, simply known as The Citizens' Assembly, was comprised of a chairperson (previously a supreme court judge) and 99 citizens who were randomly selected in order to reflect the population in terms of age, gender, location and social class. Legislation was passed so that the electoral register could be used to select assembly participants. The assembly was overseen by a steering group on planning and operational issues and by an expert advisory group, which prepared information and advice. Meetings were live streamed. For the citizens' assembly on climate change, the assembly met over two weekends in 2017 and made 13 recommendations by majority vote. In one recommendation, 80% of participants expressed a willingness to pay higher taxes on carbon-intensive activities. The assembly was a key factor in emboldening politicians to step up their response to climate disruption. In 2018, an all-party parliamentary committee was established to consider the assembly's recommendations. The committee's report then directly influenced the Irish Government's Climate Action Plan, published in June 2019, which incorporated many of the assembly's recommendations and undertook to quadruple carbon tax and accelerate the transition to electric vehicles.

"There just seems to be a political disconnect all over the Western World. [Citizens' assemblies are] a new layer of democracy. We probably put a couple of hundred hours of total time into it; [...] we're probably the best informed amateurs in the country on this topic at the moment."
John Long, member of the Citizens' Assembly on Abortion, Ireland[8]
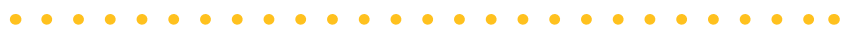
"It's not just a particular type of people that have gone to college. You get to hear what the ordinary people, the people that it affects on the ground, [...] feel about something—what they would like to change about it."
Noreen O'Flynn, member of the Citizens' Assembly on Abortion, Ireland[9]

"If you're cynical about a politician's ability to [...] pass legislation [and] there's an issue that's burning to your society in general — have an assembly."
David Keogh, member of the Citizens' Assembly on Abortion, Ireland[10]

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8 *Chalmers, P. "When Citizens Assemble," Vimeo, accessed 28 May 2019, https://vimeo.com/246689508.*

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*

Poland

In 2016, the Polish city of Gdansk was struck by major flooding, killing two people and causing millions of euros in damage. Experts warned that climate change would only increase the frequency of such extreme rainfall events. In response to the disaster, the mayor agreed to organise a citizens' assembly, bringing together about 60 residents to hear expert testimony and design their own solutions. To promote transparency, the final stage of the random selection process was carried out by a die-roll that was live streamed. The mayor attended the start of the assembly and informed participants that decisions with at least 80% support among its members would be enacted in law. In 2017, the city flooded again, however, the municipality was able to respond effectively, thanks in part to the resolutions passed by the assembly. Further citizens' assemblies followed which addressed pollution, civic engagement and LGBT rights. The 350,000 adults living in Gdansk are able to request a citizens' assembly by collecting 1,000 signatures. If the number of signatures reaches 5,000, the mayor is obliged to run a citizens' assembly on the proposed topic.

"People are really appreciative of this. For their whole lives they have been citizens, but they have never been asked to do anything significant to contribute. This feels important."

Marcin Gerwin, an expert on citizens' assemblies and coordinator of the Gdansk citizens' assemblies[11]

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11 *Gazivoda, T. "Solutions: How the Poles Are Making Democracy Work Again in Gdansk,"* Resilience.org, *22 November 2017, https:// www.resilience.org/stories/2017-11-22/solutions-how-the-poles-are-making-democracy-work-again-in-gdansk/.*

Canada

In 2003, the government of British Columbia commissioned the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. The Assembly, which comprised 160 members, including at least one woman and one man from each of the province's electoral districts and two First Nations representatives, was tasked with investigating changes to British Columbia's first-past-the-post electoral system. It met approximately every other weekend from January to October 2004, with members undergoing a comprehensive learning process including reviewing electoral systems and their effects around the world. Ultimately, 93% of participants supported changing to a single transferable vote system. Based on the assembly's recommendation, the government called a referendum on the matter. While the yes vote received widespread support across the province, it fell just short of the 60% threshold necessary to implement it.

> *"The members of the citizens' assembly [...] demonstrated how extraordinary ordinary citizens are when given an important task and the resources and independence to do it right."*
> Jack Blaney, Chair of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform[12]

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12 Lewis. P. *"Making Every Vote Count — The Final Report of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform,"* British Columbia, *2004, https://citizensassembly.arts.ubc.ca/resources/final_report.pdf.*

Belgium

Following a fragmented election result in June 2010, Belgium spent 18 months without a government. Faced with this unprecedented political impasse, public intellectuals organised a mass exercise in deliberative democracy, the G1000. The project comprised three stages: an online consultation to identify topics – open to all citizens, a one-day citizens' summit of 704 people to discuss the three most popular issues (social security, wealth distribution and immigration), and a smaller 32-person citizens' panel which met over three weekends to refine the propositions of the summit. Both the summit and the panel reflected the population in terms of age, gender, education level, location and first language. The G1000 was characterised by its grassroots organisation and the fact it was not commissioned by a political institution. This—along with the fact that the political crisis came to an end during the course of the initiative—limited the impact of the G1000 on public policy. However, it gave rise to a renewed interest in deliberative democracy at political level and served as a blueprint for local initiatives across Belgium.

One such initiative is the new permanent institution for citizens' assemblies in the German-speaking region of Eastern Belgium. The new body is set to convene its first assembly in early 2020 and is run by a citizens' council. Like the members of the citizens' assemblies themselves, the members of the council are randomly selected from the general population. They serve for a term of 18 months and are responsible for selecting the topics for discussion and monitoring the implementation of recommendations by parliament. Each citizens' assembly meets with members of parliament to discuss its proposals. Parliament must provide an explicit justification for any recommendations it chooses not to implement.

"If we were following the logic of [the reality TV show] Big Brother, we'd gradually eliminate the people who got on our nerves. But here, we don't. We have to stick together and we have to show that you can achieve things when you work together."
Pierre, Member of the Citizens' Panel, Belgium[13]

"I was in parliament the night MPs from all six parties moved past ideological differences to endorse the bill. It was a courageous move, a sign to other politicians— who tend to see their voters as a threat rather than a resource—that citizens should be trusted, not feared, or "spun.""
David Van Reybrouck, Co-organiser of the Belgian Citizens' Panel, Belgium, talking about the new citizens' assemblies in Eastern Belgium[14]

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13 Bell, C. et al. "G1000 Le Rapport Final — L'Innovation Démocratique Mise en Pratique," Belgium: G1000, *2012, p.5,* http://www.g1000.org/documents/G1000_EN_Website.pdf, (own translation).

14 Van Reybrouck, D. "Belgium's democratic experiment," Politico, *25 April 2019,* https://www.politico.eu/article/belgium-democratic-experiment-citizens-assembly/.

India

In 2000, the Chief Minister of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh announced a plan that would displace tens of millions of farmers from their land via a new strategy called Vision 2020. It had been drawn up by a US-based firm of management consultants and had already received funding guarantees from the World Bank and the UK Government. However, there had been only token consultation locally and opposition grew across the state. Grassroots-led organisations in Andhra Pradesh joined with UK researchers and a local facilitation team to convene a citizens' jury, a cross-section of those whose livelihoods were most likely to be affected by Vision 2020. Called Prajateerpu in the local language of Telegu (literally 'people's verdict'), the jury was made up of eighteen people, the majority of whom were women. The selection process ensured that people from Dalit and Indigenous groups also made up a majority of the jury, which met over the course of four days in June 2001. Despite the fact that it was a largely bottom-up initiative funded by a third party (the Dutch overseas aid programme), Prajateerpu influenced policies both nationally and internationally. The jury's rejection of Vision 2020, and particularly their critique of GM crops and the Green Revolution, attracted widespread national and international media coverage.

"What amazed me [...] was that [the citizens' jury] immediately knew whether what was being told to them was nonsense or propaganda or whether it had some meaning. There is [...] this wisdom available amongst them to judge what is useful, what is genuine and what is not."
Member of the Prajateerpu oversight panel[15]

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15 Wakeford, T. and Pimbert, M. *"Prajateerpu, Power and Knowledge: The Politics of Participatory Action Research in Development Part 2. Analysis, Reflections and Implications,"* Action Research 2(1), *(2004), pp. 25-46.* *https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1354839708725520.*

Australia

In South Australia in 2016, two citizens' juries met over five weekends to consider the recommendation of a royal commission to store and dispose of nuclear waste from other countries. The first citizens' jury comprised 50 people and was designed to set the agenda for the second, larger jury of 350 people. Jurors were drawn from a random sample using an Australia Post database and reflected the state's population in terms of age, gender, location and whether or not they owned a property. The second jury produced a report rejecting the commission's proposal and questioning the strength of the economic case it made.

"I feel like there is a genuine commitment from members of the community, including myself, to put our time, energy and thoughts into shaping something, and genuinely caring about what our future is like."
Member of the Second Citizens' Jury on nuclear waste, Australia[16]

"I tried at the beginning to be as open minded as I can and not come down on any position. I have now got a reasonably clear position about what I believe we should do next. We've got 300 or more people who are very well informed and who could potentially act as ambassadors [...] in the broader community."
Member of the Second Citizens' Jury on nuclear waste, Australia[17]

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16 *"Citizens' Jury Two — Thoughts from the Jury on Day 4,"* YourSay Nuclear, *accessed 29 May 2019,* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhBYVzD4-fI.

17 Ibid.

FURTHER READING

Books

- *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* (2010) by Graham Smith

- *Everyday Experts: How People's Knowledge Can Transform the Food System* (2013) by People's Knowledge Editorial Collective

- *Rebooting Democracy: A Citizen's Guide to Reinventing Politics* (2014) by Manuel Arriaga

- *The End of Politicians: Time for a Real Democracy* (2017) by Brett Hennig

Articles

- *A Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change: How Would it Work?* (2019) by Sarah Allan

- *Beyond the Ballot: How Citizens Can Lead the Climate Change Conversation* (2019) by Peter Bryant and Dr Rebecca Willis

- *Citizens' Assemblies, Citizens' Juries and Climate Change* (2019) by Peter Bryant

- *What is Sortition?* (n.d.) by the Sortition Foundation

Reports

- *Citizens' Assemblies: Guide to Democracy that Works* (2018) by Marcin Gerwin

- *Democracy Matters: Lessons from the 2015 Citizens' Assemblies on English Devolution* (2016) by Matthew Flinders, Katie Ghose, Will Jennings, Edward Molloy, Brenton Prosser, Alan Renwick, Graham Smith, Paolo Spada

- *Evidence vs Democracy: How 'Mini-publics' Can Traverse the Gap between Citizens, Experts, and Evidence* (2019) by Jonathan Breckon, Anna Hopkins, Ben Rickey (Alliance for Useful Evidence)

- *Four Brief Analyses of Citizens' Juries and Similar Participatory Processes* (2008) by Tom Wakeford, Bano Murtuja and Peter Bryant

- *The Reference Panel Playbook: Eight Moves for Designing a Deliberative Process* (n.d.) by MASS LBP

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