

# Expanding opportunities for informed participation

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# Potential advantages of informed participation

- New problems, opportunities or issues considered by policy-makers
- Additional options considered by policy-makers
- Additional analytical work
- Increased productivity of policy process
- Increased legitimacy of decisions
- Multi-disciplinary perspectives – opportunities for “information arbitrage”



## Participation “beyond the policy memo”

- Information visualization (e.g. Hans Rosling)
- Easy to use simulations
- Solutions journalism (how are different organizations solving problem X)
- Design and implementation of multi-sector collaborations
- Mediation of stakeholder disputes needed to make progress on policy issues
- Creation of value-added services from open data
- Entrepreneur in Residence



# Public-private partnerships

- Educate to Innovate” (Improve STEM education)
  - Change the Equation
  - 100K in 10 (100,000 STEM teachers)
- Partnership for a Healthier America (Reducing childhood obesity – priority for First Lady)
- Startup America Partnership (Promote high-growth entrepreneurship)
- Joining Forces (Strengthening military families)
- Text4Baby (Free mobile information service for maternal and child health)



## Challenges (1)

- Limited time/attention of policy-makers
- Background information needed to make useful, actionable recommendations
  - Specifics of a particular policy issue
  - General analytical tools (e.g. cost-benefit analysis, market failure analysis, government failure analysis)
  - Understanding of policy process, how policy makers “get things done.”



## Challenges (2)

- Incentives of citizens to participate
  - Will anyone listen?
  - Prizes/public recognition
  - Feedback
- Good ideas/evidence/analysis can influence but do not determine policy outcomes



# How policy-makers do things with words

- Legislation
- Regulation
- Budget
- Executive Orders or Presidential Memoranda
- Authoritative statement of national policy or strategy (e.g. Presidential Study Directives)
- Events/speeches/announcements
- Charter for inter-agency task force
- Requests for Proposals
- Job descriptions for a new position



# Participation – role for policy-makers

- Be more transparent about the questions they are asking themselves
- Identify issues where informed participation could make a difference
  - Important but not urgent
  - Less polarized/contested
  - Policy-maker willing to devote some time responding to new ideas
- Publicize “success stories” and lessons learned to motivate and inform future experiments





## Participation – role for policy schools

- Encourage faculty and students to develop “Open Educational Resources” that would increase the scope and impact of informed participation
  - Make “case studies” available to the public
  - Create tutorials on different policy issues, analytical tools and frameworks , policy instruments
  - Oral history of successful “policy entrepreneurs” to capture the tacit knowledge they have accumulated
  - Create repository of policy documents and templates
- Make second-year projects multidisciplinary and team-based



## Participation – role for funders

- Support development of “intermediaries” such as universities, think tanks, non-profits
  - Interact with policy-makers to identify questions/issues
  - Organize and manage competitions and other mechanisms for informed participation
  - Recruit network of volunteers with specialized skills and knowledge
  - Understand impact of existing legal, policy and regulatory environment (FACA, Paperwork Reduction Act, Administrative Procedures Act) – propose reforms
  - Identify other activities that can help increase the chances that new ideas are seriously considered

