

Participative Balance: The Experience of Municipality of Rome XI & "Bristol" Association

Background & SOCIAL BALANCE 2003-2004

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Prepared for: **Bethlehem 21 Workshop** that was organized by the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ) and Centro Regionale d'Intervento per la Cooperazione (CRIC) in the framework of Bethlehem 21 Project "Environmental Sustainability for a Better Life: An Integrated Approach for Localizing Agenda 21 in the Bethlehem District", funded by the European Commission (LIFE-Third Countries Programme) & the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.²

Bethlehem 21 Workshop: 28 and 29 June 2006

¹ The material was originally prepared in Italian and translated to English.

² The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

1. Background

The Municipality of Rome XI is one of the Italian City Councils experimenting new models of democracy which networks and distributes findings on best practices. Municipality of Rome XI organised the Forum of the new Municipalities which is the first initiative aimed at promoting an organised network of local authorities discussing participative democracy and participative balance as well as networking and exchanging of practices in the field of local governance. Municipality of Rome XI takes part in international cooperation projects and it can facilitate the participation of Italian and European local authorities through the International observatory of Participative democracy (www.oidp.org).

The Municipality of Rome XI is located in the south-eastern zone of the city, around major roadways such as Appia, Ardeatina, Cristoforo Colombo, and Ostiense. The Municipality includes 8 different neighbourhoods. This part of Rome is a large and important archaeological area containing the "Parco dell'Appia Antica" and "Parco della Caffarella". It is composed of two zones established between the two world wars (Garbatella, Tor Marancia) and other more recent constructions (Laurentino 38 & Roma 70). The green areas, including small urban gardens, are numerous and are located within the most populated neighbourhoods.

These typical aspects of the district of Municipality of Rome XI, diversify the socio-environmental contexts and the respective needs of the local community in a considerable way, representing a critical point regarding social issues. Municipality of Rome XI has one of the highest densities of families in the city. In the oldest zones, elderly people often do not have enough income or only a pension income. In the newest zones, families know little of each other and live with a low level of socialisation and integration.

During the last ten years the population has been decreasing. On the 31st of December 2000 the total number of residents was 140,207. This population is not distributed evenly whereby 60% lives in the Garbatella and Tor Marancia zones. The senior citizens (+65 years) represent the 21.6%, while those under the age of 18 are about 28,000 (15,353 are between 0-14 years). The whole territory is short of activities for young people to spend their free time, especially for the youngest people and their families.

2. Attachment no. 1 SOCIAL BALANCE 2003-2004 - Evaluation Fiche

2.1. Area:

- Active Citizenship Policies and International Relations

2.2. General Objectives:

- To develop virtuous processes of democratic accumulation through the broadening of the places of participation, the assumption of the social intelligence as strategic resource for the planning of local policies, the acknowledgement of progressive and democratic values within the social conflict.

- To contribute in the development of a world-wide culture.
- To contribute to the development of “diverse” processes of globalisation in contrast to neo-liberal policies, the protection of the environment and biodiversity, the respect of the fundamental rights and social inclusion, the acknowledgement and affirmation of cultural specificity and the value of community experiences with a “high democratic intensity”.

2.3. *Intervention Guidelines/Actions:*

The diffusion of the neo-liberal democracy model has been a result of the recent assertion of the radical right's neo-imperialistic practices apparent within the ideology of "preemptive war", unilateralism and western cultural superiority. This phenomenon has coincided with a substantial decline in the democratic praxis in Western Countries. This crisis, has manifested into the practice of abstentionism and the nature for citizens to be separated from the historical patterns of political representation, that is active participation within political parties, unions and associations.

Along with this process, in many Western and Southern Countries, diverse experiences of participation come into the political and institutional scene gaining “constituency” functions and claiming the right to enter in the regulation and redistribution of the social wealth.

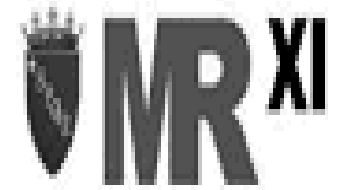
These are experiences of local government or “counter-government” which, dissenting to the neo-liberalistic control of the globe, are providing a fundamental contribution for re-thinking the quality of our democracy. In addition to this they are contributing to the innovation of participative procedures and in the way different social sectors access the political decision-making sphere.

The strategic value of the participation and Participative Balance put our Municipality among those realities which at a national and international level intend to consider the role of the Local Authority as workshop in which to experiment democracy patterns at “high intensity”; as place to develop active citizenship, as part of a broader community daily operating to realise another possible world.

Consistently with this organisation and management of the local government, we aimed at promoting the participation of citizens within the political and administrative life of the Municipality. We also aimed at establishing networks of communication and interchange with communities from Brasil, Nicaragua, Mexico, Chiapas, Palestine that share similar objectives of self-government, social inclusion, socio-environmental and eco-compatible development.

2.4. *Areas of Improvement:*

- To set up the necessary resources for the development of an accomplished participation policy;
- To create steady structures aimed at soliciting participative and diffused practices;
- To attract resources to sustain decentralised cooperation actions and education to the development;
- To increase the interchange initiatives with “diverse” cultures and insurgent communities.



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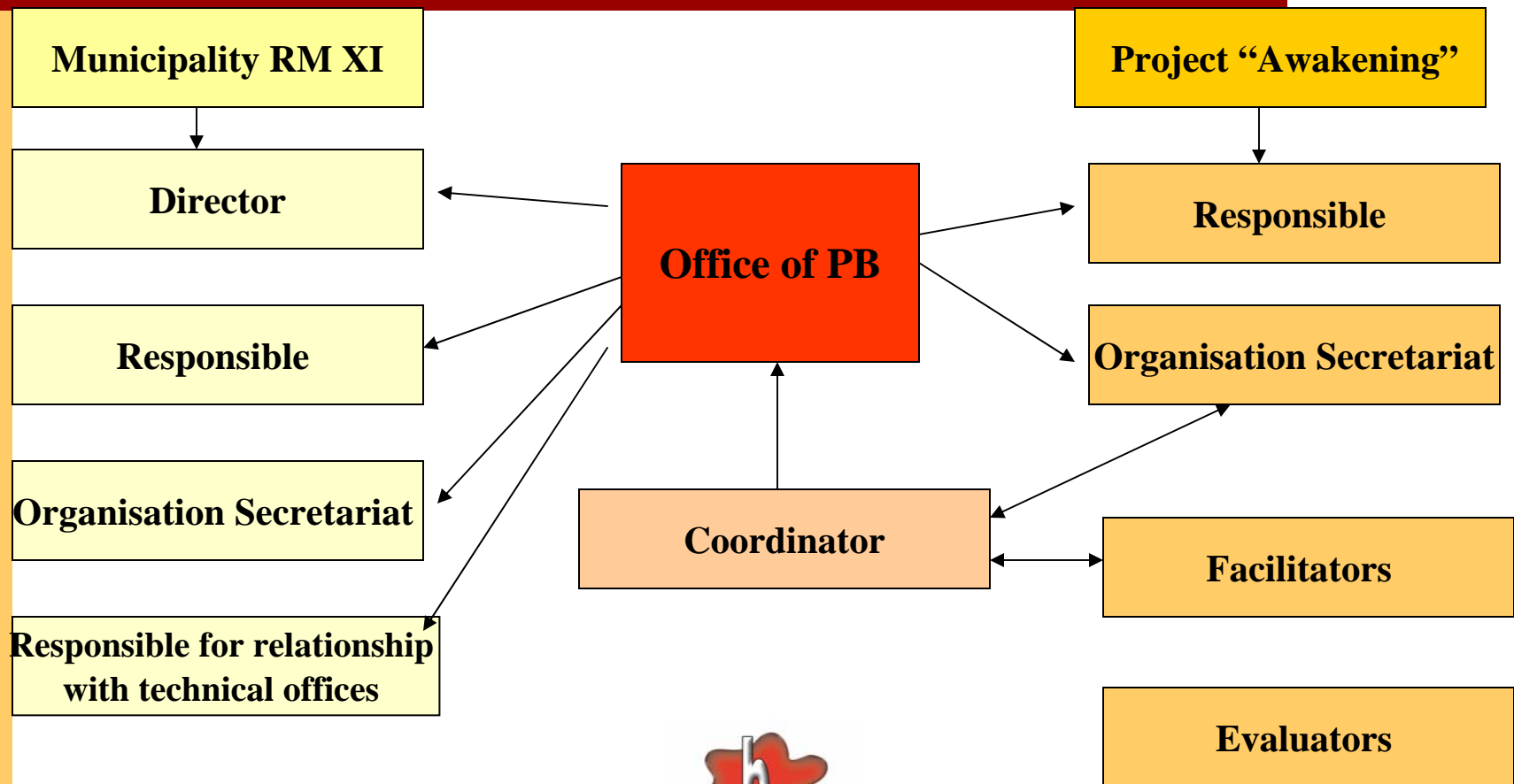
PARTICIPATIVE BALANCE

Participative Balance is a participative democracy process aimed to promote the active citizenship and based on the methodology of territorial consultation on intervention priorities of the Municipality of Rome – XI.



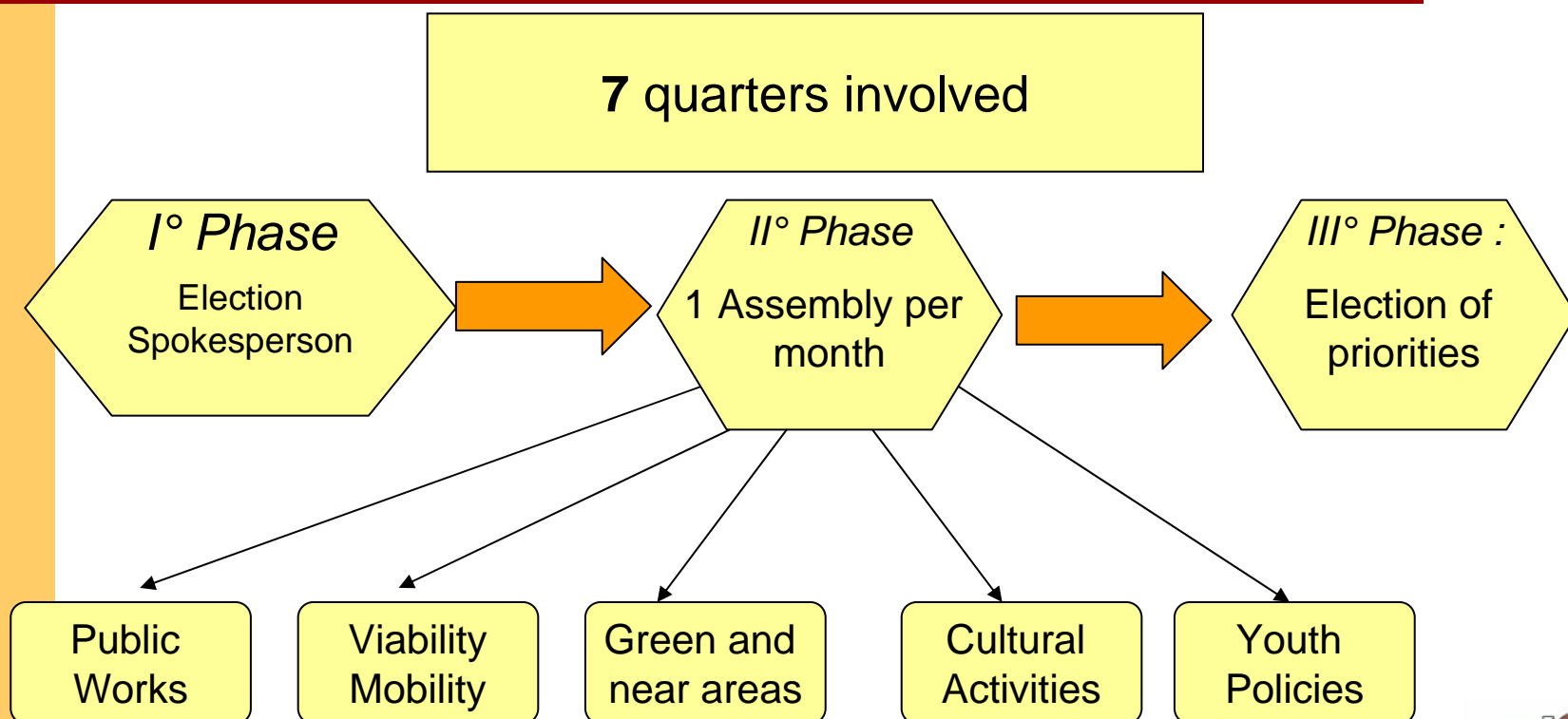
Municipality of Rome - XI

Participative Balance in 2006



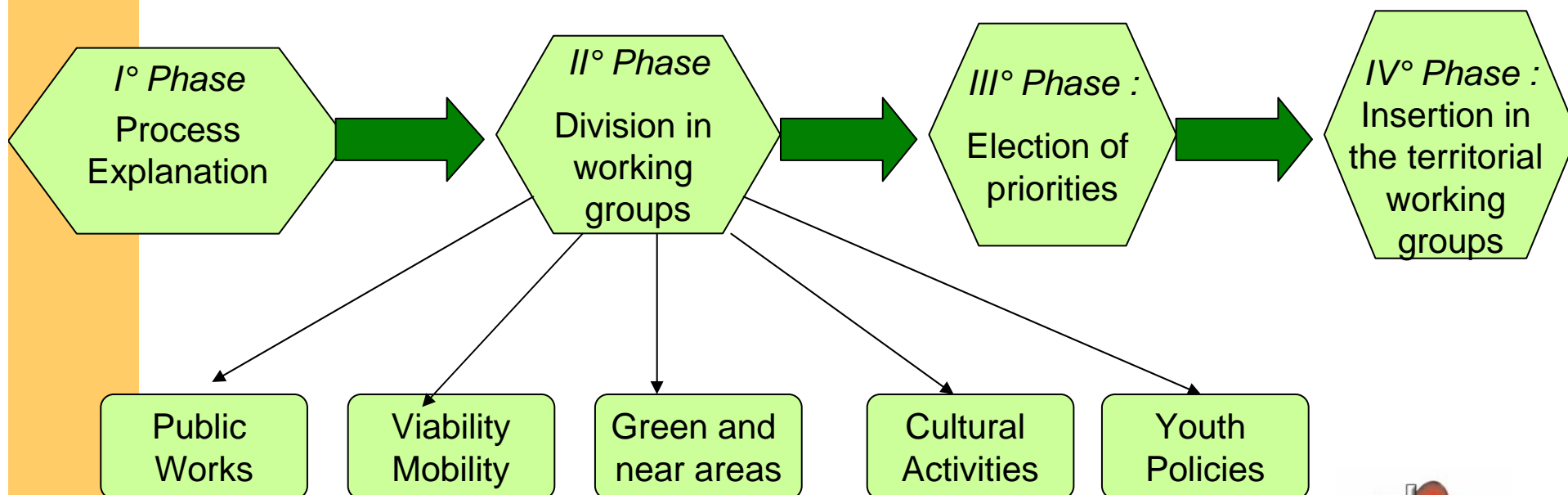
Municipality of Rome - XI

Participative Balance in 2006



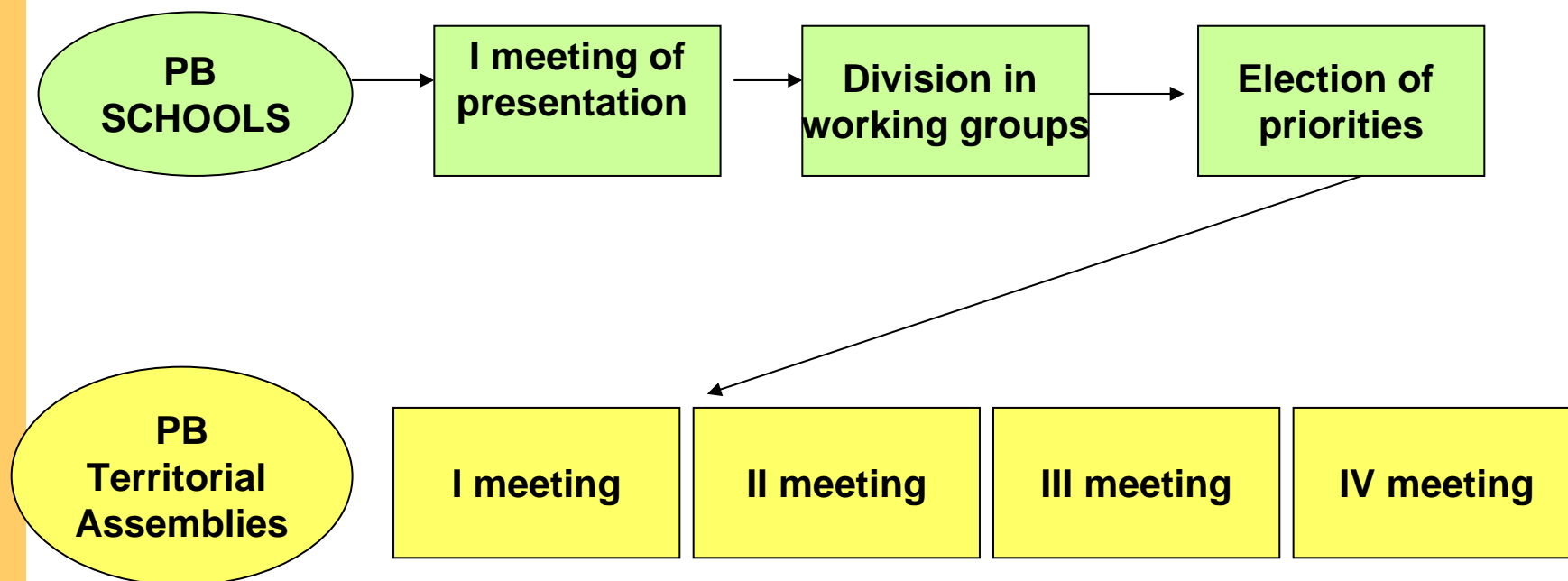
Participative Balance in the Secondary Schools

5 Schools Involved



Municipality of Rome - XI

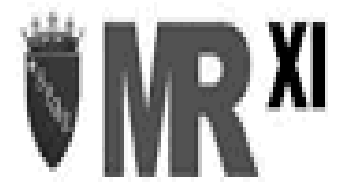
Participative Balance in 2006



Communication

- Invitation letters to the Plenary Assemblies are sent to all citizens
- SMS
- Wall Posters
- Brochures
- Internet website
- Promotion Activities (simulation, participations to meetings....)





THE PROJECT AWAKENING

METHOD OF
FACILITATION OF THE
COMMUNICATION
APPLIED TO THE
PARTICIPATIVE BALANCE



Associazione BRISTOL ONLUS

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To increase citizens participation
- ❖ To increase young people participation
- ❖ To make the sense of active participation enlarged and interiorised
- ❖ To provide a personal development opportunity of citizens through sharing individual knowledge
- ❖ To implement an information exchange among the participants



ACTIVITIES

- Promotion, awareness and information
- Creation and management of the website
- Coordination and animation of the meetings
- Management of the Plenary Assemblies (initial and final)
- Final elaboration of the project with event and publication



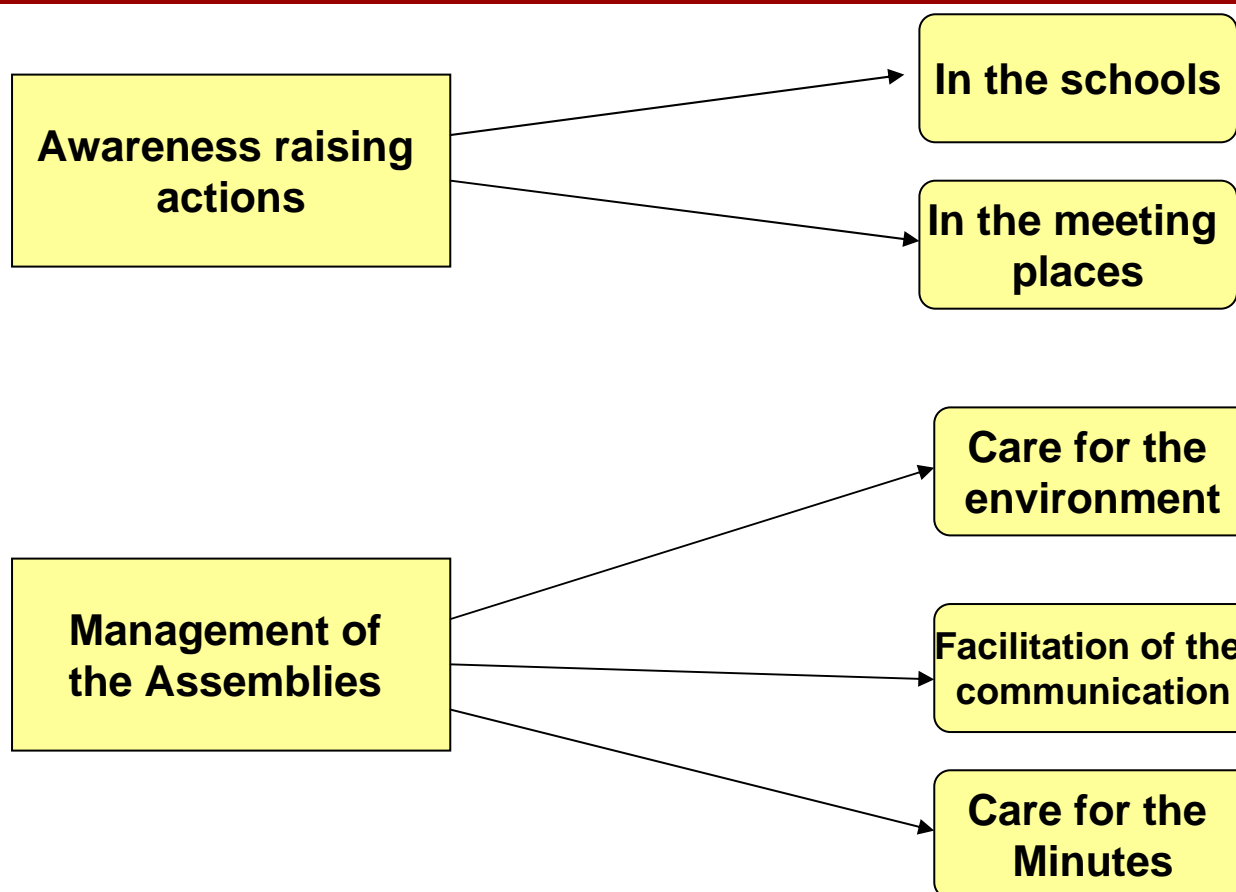
THE FACILITATORS

The communication facilitators
Are technicians trained with the method of
the University of the Citizen.

Their duty is to support active
participation.



THE FACILITATORS



MANAGEMENT OF AN ASSEMBLY

- Welcoming
- Presentation of the process
- Presentation of the participants
- Explanation of the communication rules
- Division in working groups per thematic areas
 - Presentation of the working issue (summary of the previous meetings with delivery of the minutes)
 - Choice of the secretary
 - Choice of a spokesperson
- Sharing of a working group
- Conclusion by the animators



TOOLS USED

- Presence Fiche
- Evaluation Grid
- Diary
- Report Fiche
- Report of the Working Groups
- Report of the Assemblies

Office Participative Balance

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