



Canadian International Development Agency



The Handbook on Democratic Dialogue aims to provide decision-makers, dialogue promoters and practitioners with a practical guide on how to organize, facilitate and assess dialogue processes.

This user-friendly guide aims to help countries and societies answer complex social, economic and political challenges through dialogue. It combines conceptual and practical knowledge, while providing practitioners with an extensive repertoire of relevant tools, experiences and approaches adapted to the issue at stake, the local context and the stakeholders involved.

Democratic dialogue processes participate in the strengthening of democratic institutions by creating new spaces of interaction between the institutions and their citizens, especially citizens that are traditionally not empowered to voice their concern, needs and interests.

More than a compilation of techniques, the Handbook provides the reader with a 'how to' guide to organize a tailor-made dialogue from assessment to evaluation.

Dialogue is a participatory, inclusive process to help solve complex social, economic and political issues that existing institutions and formal channels are not adequately addressing. It fosters understanding among participants and seeks to identify new options and develop shared visions while promoting a culture of participation and democracy.

The first part of the Handbook defines "what" dialogue is and is not. It also clarifies the principles underpinning democratic dialogue and how dialogue can contribute to a strengthened practice of democracy.

The second part answers the 'How to' of dialogue. It provides the reader with essential knowledge on how to assess whether dialogue is the right approach, how to convene it and with whom. It offers options on how to design and implement dialogue on the ground. It also presents guidance for the monitoring and evaluating of these processes and how to best adapt them to specific contexts.

The final chapter offers a variety of case studies, each of them describing and analyzing different types of dialogue experiences and assessing critical lessons learned in these processes.

The Handbook on Democratic Dialogue is the result of a joint effort of four international institutions actively engaged in democratic dialogue: CIDA, International IDEA, OAS and UNDP. These organizations united their effort in systematizing dialogue experiences, distilling best practices and offering new guidelines and options to practitioners.

The Handbook was written by dialogue practitioners for dialogue practitioners with the substantive input of organizations promoting dialogue worldwide. Numerous renowned practitioners also directly contributed to the document.

The Handbook on Democratic Dialogue is meant as a living document to be used by practitioners to develop and sustain the practice of dialogue.