

# Deliberative Democracy & Wise Democracy

By Jim Rough

	Deliberative Democracy	Wise Democracy*	
		Creative Insight Council (CIC) Level 1	Wisdom Council Process (WC) Level 2
<b>Aim</b>	To influence policy on difficult issues by informing elected leaders which option the voters would choose if they could explore an issue in depth with experts and in discussions with others.	To involve mainstream citizens in solving difficult issues where they determine near-unanimous conclusions; and for these “conclusions of the people” to provide leadership to the legislature and civil society.	To institute a structural change establishing an ongoing inclusive public conversation, which evokes “We the People” into being, and where “We” take ultimate responsibility for our system.
<b>What?</b>	Usually involves a gathering of randomly selected citizens (16-600) who are given a specific issue, expert information, and options to examine. They discuss and weigh the options, vote, and present their results to elected officials and the public. (e.g. Citizens Juries, Citizens Assemblies, Planning Cells, Deliberative Polls, etc.)	A gathering of twelve randomly selected citizens who are given an ill-defined issue, plus expert and stakeholder testimony. They reframe the issue and determine a unanimous conclusion. The CIC presents its conclusions to the public in a ceremony where all visit and voice their level of resonance. A series of 3 or 4 CIC’s may be used to address and evolve an issue forward.	Similar to the CIC except the WC chooses the issue it considers; does not hear from experts; and is usually part of an established ongoing series of WC’s. To the extent all citizens pay attention, talk about the results, and resonate with them, the WC Process evokes a new ultimate authority, “We the People.”
<b>Example</b>	153 random citizens in British Columbia met over the course of a year to evaluate different election methods. 146 to 7 they recommended a transferable vote system to the voters. The voters didn’t approve but the project set a precedent how citizens responsibly choose a course of action.	In Bregenz Austria a CIC examined a controversial development project in the city center and unanimously determined a new vision for the project: Connect the city to the lake. The CIC also voiced specific ways the project could be modified to do this. The controversy evaporated as citizens, developers and elected officials supported this new strategy.	Three citizens heard a public radio interview about the Wisdom Council (WC), met one another and organized a WC for the Rogue Valley of Oregon. This one-time experiment empowered citizens and influenced the city charter and elections in Ashland OR.
<b>Who facilitates?</b>	A neutral moderator.	One skilled in Dynamic Facilitation. ( <a href="http://www.DynamicFacilitation.com">www.DynamicFacilitation.com</a> )	
<b>Thinking process</b>	<b>Deliberation</b> ... random people thoughtfully weigh the merits of given options, discuss them and vote. The results of these votes are then communicated to the ultimate decision-makers.	<b>Choice-creating</b> ... random people address a difficult issue creatively and collaboratively, seeking breakthrough answers that work for all. They do not weigh options, but co-create a unanimous framing of the issue and a solution. These are presented to all citizens in a ceremony. Citizens then visit about the issue in a new more open-minded, open-hearted way, seeking what’s best for all.	
<b>Cost?</b>	Citizen deliberative councils cost \$50,000 to \$5 million or more.	Bare bones projects in Vorarlberg, Austria (including CIC’s and WC’s) generally cost around \$8000 each.	
<b>Likely impact</b>	Decision-makers are not usually swayed by the votes of these panels. The losers question the framing of the issue, selection of options, choice of experts, and the neutrality of moderation. The policy impact is low and diminishes with time.	Because the CIC voices its new, different and unanimous perspective directly to the citizens, and because people who attend generally resonate and recognize their unity, a voice of the people on this issue is created. This voice provides leadership to elected officials.	Because the WC Process is a structural change, which facilitates an ongoing “We the People” into being, this strategy can shift the ultimate authority of the system. It’s a shift to “Wise Democracy” that can positively affect all issues.

(\*For more information about Wise Democracy see [www.WiseDemocracy.org](http://www.WiseDemocracy.org). For innovations about deliberative democracy see [www.co-intelligence.org](http://www.co-intelligence.org) 4/19/11 )