

Public Participation in Ghana

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Ghana has come a very long way as a nation determined to make a difference in its sub-region. For her to be described as the gateway to Africa is something to be proud of. Nothing good comes easy as Ghana has traveled through the rough paths of several decades of colonialism to dictatorship. But through all this period of uncertainty and instability the nation has survived and is now one of the peaceful countries in the sub-region. This is because the people of Ghana are peace loving and democratic.

Over the years up to date, the voices of the ordinary person have not been heard. Even if they are heard, they do not carry enough weight to be considered in decision making. The voices of the public do not reach very far.

We live in a part of the world where, if you are not part of the top men, you have less or no role at all to play as part of the body. That is to say your contribution is undesirable. Which this shouldn't be so

The concern for development is not hard to find. Poverty and under development has become acceptable and a normality instead of what it actually is, abnormality. This is due to poor management, because only the few ones at the top decide without listening to those their decisions directly affect. Poverty was earlier considered to be the failure of the individual but that is not the case now. Poverty is the failure of the society. One person does not build a society. Therefore together a society can stand. When the majority of the people prospers, it said the society is prosperous. When our leaders seek out the view of the majority before making their decision, they engage their needs in the decisions they construct, which improve their development.

Whenever our leaders fail to listen to the compact majority of the society before constructing their decision, they finish up making uncompromising decisions for the people. Then they sit back and watch the people suffer as a result of their unkind decisions. What the people need is not for the few to decide for them but to involve them in the decision making process so that together they can make wise policies to the benefit of not only the few, but for all.

Ever since the people of Ghana embraced democracy, they have firmly clung to it and have proven capable of running a democratic system of governance through successful successive election. As democratic as Ghanaians could be, there is the need for an elevation in our democracy, such that the voices of the ordinary Ghanaian will be heard and their view seriously considered in decision making through Public Participation.

In this regard, it was in the good interest of the people of Ghana to be the first African country to have a local chapter of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). Ghana was the first country to attain independence in its sub-region and Africa as

a whole and it not surprising for her to be the first country in Africa to establish a chapter of IAP2. Ghana is championing African excellence.

IAP2 was founded in 1990 as the International Association of Public Participation Practitioners (IAP3) to respond to the rising global interest in public participation. The initial mission was to promote the values and best practices associated with involving decisions which affect their lives.

The core values for the practice of public participation in Ghana are those established by IAP2, briefly:

- For the public to have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives.
- Include the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Promote sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interest of all participants, including decision makers.
- Seek out and assist the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision
- Seek inputs from participants in designing how they participate
- Provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Communicate to participants how their inputs affected the decision.

(Click here to see [IAP2 Core Values Web page](#))

International Association of Public Participation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization in Ghana aimed at ensuring that the public have a say in decisions that affect them directly or indirectly such that their contributions are well thought-out in the decision making process by stake holders and opinion leaders through its enormous programs (events) such as seminars, workshops, conferences and training programs for both the stake holder and the public.

The Chapter founder Patrick L Cruickshank and its entire membership warmly welcomes IAP2 to Ghana and Africa as a whole. We believe the creation of this chapter is a great moment in the history of Ghana and Africa. And we are committed to the success of IAP2 Ghana.

Hurray, IAP2 in Ghana.

Long live IAP2, long live Ghana