

LE COMMISSAIRE À LA SANTÉ ET AU BIEN-ÊTRE

Informing Public Debate and Policy-making in Quebec: The Commissioner's Consultation Forum



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Presentation Outline

1. Who is the Health and Welfare Commissioner?
2. How does the Commissioner work?
3. The Consultation Forum: a work in progress
4. Conclusion



1. Who is the Health and Welfare Commissioner?



Objective

- > To inform public debate and policy-making in the field of health and welfare



Role

- > Assess
- > Consult
- > Inform
- > Recommend



Consultation Forum

- > 27 members:
 - 18 citizens, each coming from a different region of Québec
 - 9 citizens with special expertise in the field of health and social services
- > The Commissioner appoints these members for a three-year term



The 9 members with specific expertise

- > Three health and social services professionals (physician, nurse, social worker)
- > One health and social services manager or administrator
- > One expert in the evaluation of health technologies and medications
- > One ethics expert
- > One health researcher
- > Two from sectors related to health and welfare (such as education, economy, environment, labour)



2. How does the Health and Welfare Commissioner work?

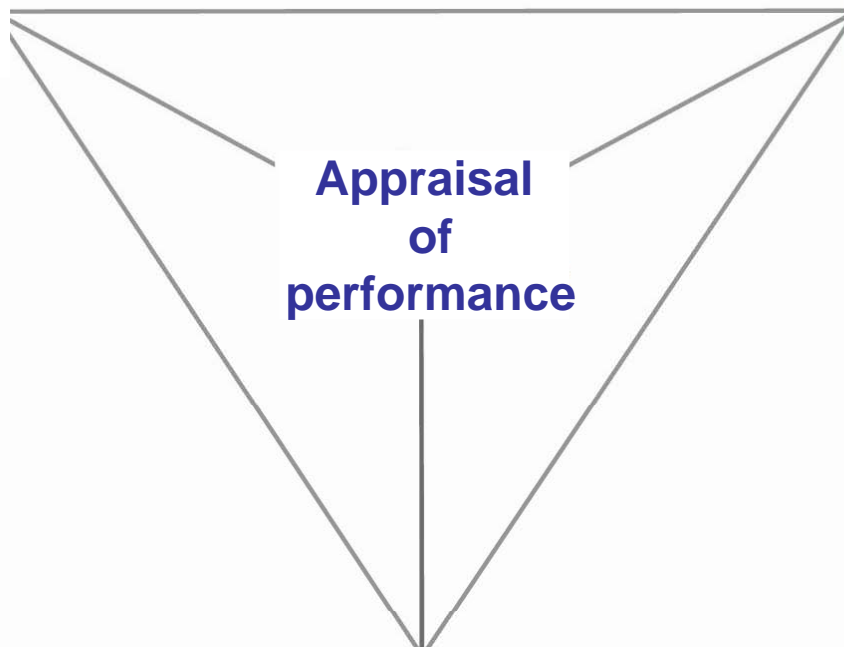


**Democratic
Knowledge**

**Organizational
Knowledge**

**Appraisal
of
performance**

**Scientific
Knowledge**





Consultation of experts (expert seminar)

- > Document objective facts and research results
- > Establish a consensus on domains and priority actions
- > **What to do** to increase the performance of the health and social services system?



Consultation of decision makers (panel)

- > Take into account the clinical and administrative realities of the field (Context)
- > Discuss the **feasibility** of priority actions
- > What **can** we do to increase the performance of the health and social services system?



Consultation Forum

- > Take into account the knowledge, experiences and values of Forum members (Context)
- > What **should** we do to increase the performance of the health and social services system? (what would be acceptable and **why**?)



3. The Consultation Forum : A work in progress

For different objectives, different approaches

Two dossiers : different levels of complexity

- > **Consultation on ethical issues raised by prenatal screening for Down syndrome**
 - >deliberations on ethical dilemmas and values
- > **Appraisal of the performance of the health and social services system : Primary health care**
 - >perceptions on acceptability of recommended actions (ethical implications of recommended actions)



Positive input

- > Complexity and richness of discussions
- > Discussions led by individuals that don't have a particular stake in the topic at hand
- > The challenges of rendering thought processes explicit to assist deliberation help the Commissioner get a grip on the topic and its complexities
- > Active participation of members to Forum activities despite demanding preparation and long meetings
- > Positive feedback from members

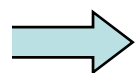


Challenges -1-

- > Sufficient funds to organize sessions and to prepare members for deliberation
- > Sufficient information vs excessive influence
- > Complexity of issues and allotted time for deliberations
- > Meeting minutes: what format and how to review them?
- > Issues associated with procedural transparency

Challenges -2-

- > How to best value the input of participants? Relevance and motivation of members
 - >Should the Commissioner intervene in the deliberations?
 - >Should input of members **be part of** an appraisal or **be set apart**?
 - > Impact on how the information is presented and on motivation of members



Is the Consultation Forum a **means** or an **end** in itself?



Evaluation of the Consultation Forum

- > Innovative process
- > Independent evaluation over 3 years : learning opportunity for the Commissioner and for the field of study on methods for citizen participation to policy-making



Conclusion-1-

- > Deliberation can represent an essential input to policy-making
- > However it is demanding: Creating the appropriate conditions for deliberation and for the integration of the results requires time, energy, funds, flexibility and creativity



Conclusion-2-

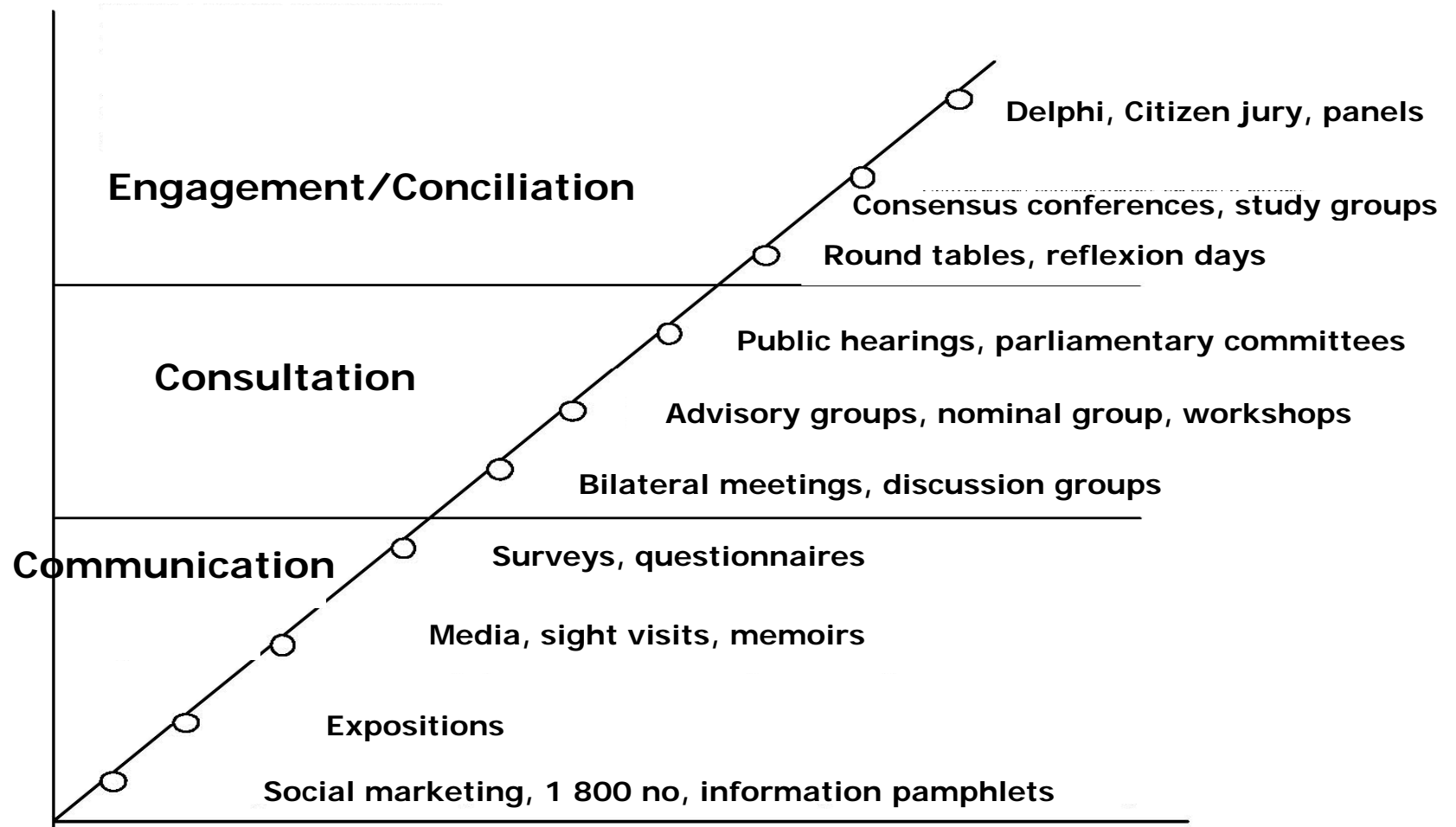
- > Several challenges remain:
 - > Integrating ethical reflection within the appraisal step
 - > Integrating different sources of knowledge (eg: performance indicators and “procedural knowledge”)
 - > How to render the participation of Forum members most effective while promoting their independence? (relevance of participation, transparency of processes, excessive influence)



THANK YOU!

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What methods for public participation?



Adapted from Premont (2003): 'les méthodes de consultations publiques', CSBE (2000)

What methods ?

	Non deliberative methods	Deliberative methods
Objectives	<p>Communication / consultation</p> <p>Learn about opinions or values of citizens</p> <p>Promote an idea</p>	<p>Engagement / conciliation</p> <p>Promote discussion and a genuine debate between different stakeholders</p>

What methods ?

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Non deliberative methods	Enables the participation of a great number of individuals	Weak involvement Punctual engagement
Deliberative methods	More active role to citizens Promotes a better understanding of the stakes at hand	Allows to reach a limited number of individuals Does not represent the opinion of the population in general