INCLUSIVE INNOVATIONS ACROSS PARLIAMENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH
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Westminster Foundation for Democracy
Artillery House, 11/19 Artillery Row
London, SW1P 1RT
www.wfd.org

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INCLUSIVE INNOVATIONS ACROSS PARLIAMENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Victoria Hasson (PhD)
Senior Parliamentary Advisor

Edited by Maya Tikly-Young
Democracy in the 21st century is widely considered to be in crisis. We continue to see growing trends of political alienation, disengagement and distrust with established political institutions amongst the public. This has been accompanied by the rise of populists who prey on this discontent of citizens, by invoking anti-establishment rhetoric. Part of the problem has been the inertia of established democratic institutions of representative democracy to adapt to this climate and deliver meaningful change. People crave a new type of politics; a democracy where they have more opportunities to have a say in the decisions and policies that effect their everyday lives than just getting a periodic vote to select a representative. They demand better performance and behaviour from their politicians too. Expecting them to work together for the common good rather than engaging in Machiavellian strategizing. There is some cause for optimism though. In recent times there has been a considerable increase in attempts to engage citizens in politics in a variety of ways.

In this context, the focus of this report is highly relevant and timely, as it focuses on parliaments, one of the fulcrums of representative democracy. It surveys how legislatures are responding to these challenges of democracy to become more open and inclusive though institutional innovation. This is important, as one of the principal critiques of new approaches to engage the public is that they do not concede power to citizens. Due to the pivotal role parliaments play in representative democracy, democratic innovation in this arena has the potential to give genuine influence to the public.

The approach to analysing the various innovations is based on the principles of deliberative democracy. This is an approach to democracy that has had significant momentum within the study of political science for several decades, but is now gaining traction in political practice. The emphasis is on the public debate that precedes decision-making. It suggests the debate should be reasoned, so that all justify their positions. It should include all relevant positions and we should approach these debates with an open mind and listen to the arguments presented by others sincerely. This approach is seen by many as the solution to the crisis of democracy. However, it is also widely acknowledged to be very hard to achieve in practice. A review of how parliamentary innovations can promote deliberative democracy, which this report provides, is therefore very welcome.

The focus is on Commonwealth legislatures. For those interested in the politics of these countries the report is essential reading. However, the relevance extends beyond this to those interested in parliaments, deliberative democracy and innovation in democracy more generally. It captured my interest because throughout my academic career my focus has been on deliberative democracy, and in particular how it can be promoted in practice. Democratic Innovation is also a central theme of my work, and later this year the Handbook of Democratic Innovation and Governance, that I have co-edited will be published. My research also focuses on Parliament. I am currently undertaking two Parliamentary Fellowships at Westminster and Holyrood on how to promote public deliberative engagement. I’m also co-editor of Representation: Journal of Representative Democracy and legislatures and democracy more generally are a central focus of the papers we publish. There is then a good degree of synergy between this report and my own work.

There are two particular contributions of this report that I would like to highlight. Firstly, it identifies an array of cases of innovations in democracy from Parliaments from all over the Commonwealth that are interesting in their own right. Secondly, these cases are placed within a very useful typology, that aids comparative analysis. In achieving these two goals, the report sets the agenda for further research in the area, by demonstrating the importance of context, but also the need for cultural change if parliaments are to help address the crisis of democracy. The report should therefore be of interest to academics and practitioners.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study brings together examples of inclusive parliamentary innovations across parliaments of the Commonwealth. It forms part of WFD’s Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy initiative that seeks to advance inclusive and accountable societies across the Commonwealth. The aim of the study is to review innovations that strengthen parliamentary debate by making it more inclusive. The study draws on academic research relating to deliberative democracy that discusses how democratic legitimacy can be achieved through inclusive processes of political and representative debate. The paper categorises parliamentary innovations as either: formal, informational, participatory or impulsive. This helps us to review the levers driving these change processes to identify trends in practice, and to develop further points of discussion as well as potential avenues for international assistance.

INTRODUCTION

Our starting point for looking at changes in how parliaments perform their democratic role is a body of literature that examines the centrality of processes of debate to democracy.

A parliament is meant to oversee the work of government and to review and pass legislation, including the budget. It is also meant to represent the views and opinions of citizens in these processes. In combination, a parliament should institutionalize the needs and values of citizens into decisions around how a country is governed. It stands as the interlocutor between the ‘public sphere’ (the world of real living) and state decision-making (the world that influences what this looks like).

For a Parliament to succeed in this role, two things really matter. The first is that it holds deliberative power - the power to capture, express and consider the opinions of those represented. The second is that it generates communicative power - the power to channel these public opinions into state action. How far a parliament has and uses these powers is determined by the formal capacities assigned to it, and how it uses them to engage with the public and capture the attention of government.

A parliament uses its deliberative power to produce an understanding of what we, the public, agree on, so-called ‘public reason’. It then uses its communicative power to advance this understanding to the government. For a democratic state to invoke ‘public reason’ in its subsequent decision increases the legitimacy of both the process of decision-making and the decision itself (Bohman, 1996). It is therefore essential that the deliberative process is inclusive, meaning that it ensures the equal participation of all those potentially affected by the outcome. Deliberative democracy theory holds that if the process is inclusive, so too will be the outcome (Habermas, 1961). Thus, a parliament must establish ‘public reason’ using inclusive processes of debate.

Several political theorists who are proponents of deliberative democracy have set out why inclusion matters and how to achieve it. They take the overall view that democratic legitimacy resides in the right, ability and opportunity of those subject to collective decisions to participate in deliberation about the content of that decision. They are concerned with how to avoid pre-supposing what an effective speech act looks like. They, like us with this study, seek to establish a criteria and examples of ‘authentic deliberation’ (Habermas, 1961). Their criteria for authentic deliberation help us to review the measures parliaments are taking to make their deliberative and communicative power more inclusive.
Habermas (1961), one of the first theorists to write of deliberative democracy, claims that in authentic deliberation, the only force deployed is that of the better argument, by participants who are open to persuasion. This has since been expanded by others. According to Dryzek, deliberation becomes inclusive if it is non-coercive and induces participants to reflect on their own and others’ views, as well as relate their particular interests to more universal principles (2009: 1381). Deliberation can be varied rather than following a conventional format. Dryzek includes rhetoric, testimony and humour as examples. Gutmann and Thompson (2004) add an emphasis on reciprocity, defined as individuals making arguments in terms that others can accept. Tschentscher et al (2009) argue that debates should be representative of broader society, adequately mirroring public discourse and including substantive safeguards of human rights.

The work of these theorists emphasises that Inclusion is guaranteed not by the nature, content or form of the speech act itself, but rather by the procedures of debate. If the procedures are inclusive, without barriers to either entry or performance, all participants (or those represented by them) will at best agree with the outcome, and at worst understand why it has been reached. Indeed, the key to deliberative democracy is achieving this quality of understanding in the democratic process.

In addition to this understanding, there are broader social benefits of inclusive deliberation. Allan (2008) reminds us that inclusion must be defined by the people it concerns, and deliberation helps us reach that point. Cooke (2006) argues that when public deliberation is inclusive it has educative and community-generating power, and contributes to the practical delivery of democratic outcomes. Deliberative democrats call for greater investment in the mechanisms used by Parliaments to host deliberation that is both inclusive and consequential (Dryzek, 2009: 1382).

THE AIM OF THIS STUDY

This study brings together examples of parliamentary innovations that strengthen the quality of parliamentary processes by making them more inclusive. We aim to draw attention to these innovations as a starting point for considering whether and how to support parliamentary innovations that strengthen practices of debate in parliament.

We have established that the mechanisms used by MPs to talk to each other and outside publics matters to a parliament’s effectiveness and legitimacy, on both an institutional and societal level. Yet, parliaments are using practices of debate and procedures developed decades if not centuries ago. They are the ‘dinosaurs of democracy’. Parliaments lacking effective engagement in this way tend to be bypassed not only by their own governments but by key outside actors, including the media, civil society and the international development community. This feeds a cycle of democratic deprivation. Significantly, the IPU’s ‘The Representation of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Parliament: A Global Overview’ report (2010), found that only a very small proportion of countries, out of the 91 that responded to their survey, had special provisions to facilitate the better representation of minority and indigenous groups. Parliaments must rise to the challenge of evidencing their engagement with societal needs and values in open, continuous and impactful ways which align with contemporary social discourse.

Our task has been to look at parliaments who are rising to this challenge, highlighting what is already happening as a springboard for considering how to assist parliaments in doing more. The unique perspective offered by this study is of ‘innovations in context’. It focuses specifically on processes of change and only on those modifications that have enabled greater inclusivity. It seeks to understand what dynamics are at play when parliaments to innovate and update, and what it takes to get these innovations off the ground. This is in support of WFD’s strategic goal of understanding and promoting more inclusive and accountable democracy. Many of the examples included in the study are not what ‘innovation’ connotes - yet, they are creative modifications to the parliamentary process that within the socio-political and economic context of a country represent milestone shifts in how the institution delivers its democratic mandate of representation.
WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION?

Inclusive innovations are those that enable parliamentarians to participate in parliamentary proceedings on a more equal basis. This includes measures that allow a more comprehensive engagement with the views of citizens, and particular measures to counter the structural exclusion of marginalised individuals and groups. An inclusive innovation is one that resists the traditionally narrow understanding of ‘how to do’ deliberation, which privileges certain voices (raised by Bohman, 1996; Young, 2002; and Spary, 2010).

An inclusive innovation is one that helps a parliament to tackle social complexities by offering more people a plausible route of entry into the decision-making process. This can happen directly or, more commonly, through their representative. By plausible, we mean that this route must be achievable also to marginalised individuals and groups. An inclusive innovation will then facilitate people’s effective and meaningful participation in the decision-making process. This participation must be not just equitable, but equal. The innovation must dismantle barriers faced by marginalised individuals and groups through improving procedures of debate, making participation not just equitable but equal. This produces authentic deliberation.

Across the vast range of parliamentary practice, we identified four categories of inclusive innovations:

**Formal innovations** are changes to the formal structures of parliament which facilitate more inclusive procedures of debate. They might be changes to the rules of procedure, or a formal expansion of parliament’s process of deliberation, to provide the framework for that participation.

**Informational innovations** facilitate a more inclusive process of information gathering, so as to ensure that debates on a particular issue are directed by sufficient and high-quality information required to reach a legitimate decision. Our interest in them reflects our understanding that the answers we receive are determined by the questions we ask.

**Participatory innovations** represent initiatives that seek to enable citizens to voice their views. Examining these innovations through the lens provided by experts on inclusion throws up interesting findings as to the conditions under which these innovations can be used to maximum effect.

**Impulsive innovations** are actions driven by individual MPs determined to perform their role differently to better capture their own voice or that of those they represent. There exists an important relationship between impulsive and formal innovations, as their formalisation into rules of procedure or standing orders reflects the norms and values of a parliament shifting in line with the views and ideas of once-revolutionary, now-commonsensical, MPs.

We categorised each innovation to enable us to identify broad trends and create programme recommendations. Yet, we accept that some innovations may fall into more than one category or change from one category to another over time.
OUR APPROACH

Our approach to identifying and reviewing inclusive innovations is informed by WFD’s existing knowledge and network of parliamentarians, practitioners and academics. We recognise that our research has merely scratched the surface of what may be possible to showcase. We also recognise that in order to include multiple examples, we were required to reduce complex, lengthy and multi-issue processes of change to short narrative descriptions. Yet, these findings are drawn from in-depth information gathered and analysed following semi-structured interviews with practitioners across the Commonwealth (see interview schedule p.52). All efforts have been made to provide a spread of examples from across parliaments of the various regions of the Commonwealth, although our close links to British parliaments have influenced these initial findings.

Our initial research led us to review each innovation using six broad criteria that allowed room to explore the varied intentions and nature of each category of innovation:

**Origin:** whether the innovation stems from a thematic issue, broader social norms and values, or an internal shift in political culture, tells us something interesting about the conditions needed to make inclusive politics and representation happen.

**Buy-in:** the degree to which MPs and observers believe in the necessity of the innovation and its potential to bring about more legitimate outcomes, when considered alongside the place of these supporters in power hierarchies within parliament, tells us something about how far innovation will effect change.

**Equality of participation:** an innovation’s value is demonstrated by how far the process and/or outcome of deliberation is changed to improve levels of equal participation of MPs and citizens

**Practice:** the styles and practices of debate that the innovation promote give an indication of the type of deliberation that is needed to achieve authentic inclusion, and its overall effectiveness at achieving this.

**Impact:** whether an innovation impacts a parliament’s ability to generate a plausible interpretation of ‘public reason’, policy decisions or political culture, or tells us something interesting about the types of innovation needed to achieve particular outcomes. This guides us in developing innovations to achieve specific outcomes.

**Sustainability:** this criteria links to the level of buy-in an innovation holds. The political, financial or other resource cost of implementing an innovation will give an indication of how sustainable it is. This can help us to consider ways to overcome potential challenges to the longer-term practice and impact of an innovation.
OUR KEY FINDINGS

• The ambition of more inclusive political processes is one held by parliaments of all sizes, status and wealth.
• Parliamentary innovation can happen at multiple levels of a parliament’s democratic function. Distinguishing between different categories of innovations can help us to identify trends and consider how to support more effective outcomes.
• Inclusive change processes in parliaments are primarily shaped by specific internal contexts, and political will for change is driven by a range of factors which needs to be explored further (specifically through a political party lens).
• Two further factors play a key role in facilitating formal innovations: international standards and the pressure to conform, and direct external assistance.
• Not all innovations require technology or significant financial investment. Some of the most moving examples are those that reflect a parliament’s intention to be more responsive to the needs of vulnerable or marginalised individuals and groups.
• Radical impulsive innovations may be made to become acceptable according to the status quo norms of how things are done - yet, this presents its own challenges.
• There are differences in the degree to which an inclusive innovation is politically driven or administratively driven. Being aware of those differences can help us to make choices as to whether and how we, as outside actors, support parliaments.
• Each category of innovation needs different conditions to be effective. Formal innovations require broad-based political support to have an effect and some credibility with citizens, watching closely to see if they think their parliament is fulfilling its representative function; Impulsive innovations require acute political, populist support within parliament or administrative impetus to take shape; Informational and participatory innovations require some degree of political buy-in yet will heavily rely on staff commitment and expertise if they are avoid superficiality.
• Informational and participatory innovations are the innovations that international actors are most likely to be able to influence, as they are innovations that require significant administrative support and expertise.
ANALYSIS
Through our network and research, we have identified several different formal innovations - changes made to the rules and procedures of a parliament - to showcase in this study. These include:

- **Fiji - including gender scrutiny in Standing Orders:** an innovation that seeks to make MPs review all state action and budget allocation in terms of its differentiated impact on men and women.
- **Australia - permitting breastfeeding in the Chamber:** an innovation that enables women MPs to bring their baby into the Chamber and feed when necessary.
- **India - allowing MPs to request discussing motions that were to be automatically passed:** an innovation that allows MPs to demonstrate their opposition on budget allocations to certain ministries being passed without sufficient debate.
- **India - establishing Committee of Assurances:** an innovation that connects government action with parliamentary debate, seeking to track a legislature’s communicative power.
- **Sri Lanka - revising the Parliamentary Code of Conduct:** changes made to the Code of Conduct to instruct MPs to behave according to principles including accountability, transparency and respect for human rights.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

- **Origin** – Formal innovations tend to have their origins in either a strong individual advocate, ruling party figure or pressure from international norms through institutional advocacy.

- **Buy-in** – Formal innovations require ruling party and Government backing.

- **Equality of Participation** – We are not certain about whether formal innovations truly secure equality of participation, because of the degree to which they conform to existing parliamentary norms.

- **Practice** – Formal innovations are the category of innovation that is most likely to be ceremonial and symbolic, and therefore risk losing impact.
### Impact

- Formal innovations have the potential to significantly break from traditional processes to improve a parliament's inclusivity of process and outcome. However, we are yet to identify a strong example of this.

### Sustainability

- Formal innovations require a high degree of tangible buy-in and participation by government to achieve real significance.

## OUR ANALYSIS

We have seen from the work of political theorists that the procedures of deliberation shape its results. These procedures include both technical rules and communicative norms. Such norms never simply appear, they are always created, and one factor in their production is rule-change. Rules and norms work together to produce specific deliberative outcomes. Powerful institutional norms against the use of threats, for example, dissuade participants from explicitly threatening their opponents in debates, and cause these participants to use warnings instead (Elster, 1998). Such norms influence the content of what is said, and therefore the outcome of the deliberation. This section highlights key findings from our research into how far formal innovations have changed rules and norms to make deliberation more inclusive, with the longer goal of normalising a radically inclusive parliament.

In each case selected, the formal innovation is the result of a majority of parliamentarians agreeing to an intention to change how the institution operates. Although formal innovations therefore have a high degree of institutional legitimacy, the original idea risks being heavily compromised to gain majority backing. Moreover, an innovation that comes from the pressure of international or internal advocacy, but which does not necessarily reflect a shift in the mood of MPs or the public can, despite constituting a technical milestone, fall short of impactful implementation. The UNDP and Open Parliaments under OGP have been active in encouraging innovations and then promoting their success. This showed us formal innovations are the easiest category for other parliaments to replicate. However, the socio-political contexts of certain countries determined the likelihood of their Parliaments responding to 'external' demands. For example, a UK MP was quoted as declaring that allowing breastfeeding in the Houses of Parliament would be impossible, claiming that ‘this would give the tabloid press an opportunity to ridicule us’. The then-Deputy Commons Leader agreed that ‘there is not a big view in the House to make the shift at this time’.\(^1\) Even in Australia, where the innovation was introduced, taking babies in and breastfeeding does not appear to be practiced. This indicates the power of cultural codes of conduct over technical change.

A similar finding was drawn from the Parliament of Fiji. Its inclusion of gender scrutiny into its Standing Orders in 2014 was a declaration that it would actively incorporate an understanding of how men and women experience life differently into its legislative process. This was in response to international pressure, notably from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for greater inclusion of women in political decisions. The innovation was supported by a practical toolkit, developed with the UNDP, for parliamentarians to use.\(^2\) However, it is unclear whether this has led to better-informed and gender sensitized legislation and budgetary decisions in practice.

We found that a shift in the mood of either MPs or the public was often a necessary precursor to a formal innovation having impact, and therefore doing its job of being inclusive. For example, in the Parliament of India, allowing MPs to request to speak on motions that would have otherwise passed without debate began

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\(^2\) The toolkit guides standing committees on how to assess whether they have included gender considerations in their decision-making processes.
with an MP declaring that current practice was unfair. This resonated with others in the House and the innovation was formalised as a result. The formalisation was therefore a reflection of existing interests, in the context of that particular Parliament’s values and opinions. This is an example of the appetite for a formal innovation coming from within Parliament, but it could equally emanate from the public.

We therefore see merit in parliaments making connections between the areas of inclusion already being called for by their publics, and the work they are doing to reform the institution. Formal innovations that are shown to have come from somewhere are more likely to gain momentum. We also recommend that included in the formalisation of an innovation are provisions for its review, in terms of both impact and sustainability.

We also thought it important to consider the average timescale for implementing formal innovations. The various stages of agreement required for formalisation can often be a long and somewhat lacklustre process. Fiji agreed to carry out gender impact assessments on its bills at the UN World Conference on Women in 1995. It was not until 2014 that a review concluded that government agencies in fact lacked the technical know-how required for this standard of gender mainstreaming, and the Standing Orders were changed accordingly. This time lag also demonstrates the high level of institutional buy-in that can be required for the process to reach fruition.³

Overall, our review of various formal innovations reinforces the view that an international ‘copy-and-paste approach’ is not always appropriate or effective. Sharing experiences offers democratic value but is not a substitute for the in-country demand required for an innovation to function beyond a rule-change. A formal innovation without meaningful impact in norms and behaviour may not only undermine itself but, more seriously, risks closing down conversation on the value of parliamentary reform.

Concluding Comments

Where formal innovations sanctify an existing will of the institution - sometimes as a result of the will of the people - they offer a powerful example of a parliament becoming more inclusive, through updating its deliberative practices. Where there is insufficient receptivity to the innovation, it will not be successful, and could even result in exclusionary practices.

We hope that the variety of examples in this study will encourage parliaments to understand how best to practice innovations that have been formalised. We can see a formal innovation as resembling a frame, which has been carefully constructed for a specific painting. It alone does not constitute the full picture - and requires good practice to do so, but it is both a useful and respected support. Significantly, it is something which requires further focus if democracy is to reach the high quality we are aiming for. The work undertaken by the Citizen Engagement Unit in the Parliament of Scotland, for example, to formalise deliberative democracy in specific procedures and practices, will be an important measure of how parliaments can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of formal innovations.

Points for further consideration

- The dynamics of what makes formal innovations effective needs to be explored further.
- We need to look at the difference between ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ formal innovations.
- We must consider the different conditions that would make both types of formal innovations effective.
- We would like to consider compiling a list of inclusive formal innovations that can be identified globally.

³ After being prompted to carry out gender impact assessments in the international forum of the United Nations, the Fijian Parliament worked alongside both the UNDP and the IPU to effect this innovation.
An interesting finding of this study is that there seem to be more informational innovations - innovations that seek to make the process of building knowledge and awareness more inclusive - than any other category. We have responded to the number of innovations by presenting some as text boxes and the following as case studies:

- **Kenya - Introducing biometric registration for attendance in parliament**: an innovation that tracks MPs’ attendance in House debates in an anti-corruption drive to overcome MPs claiming allowances without attending.
- **Wales - Going out to sea to gather information**: an innovation that enabled parliamentary staff to collect primary evidence from hard-to-reach citizen populations to ensure that their views were integrated into the parliamentary process.
- **India - Speaker’s Research Initiative**: an innovation wherein experts offer MPs advice on issues free from subject-specific confines

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

**Origin** – the informational innovations we have identified have a variety of origins, ranging from individual initiative to institutional. All relate to a concern that Parliament is lacking the information it requires to function as it should.

**Buy-in** – the buy-in of informational innovations seems to be initially strongest amongst parliamentary staff who believe in the impact of improving information flow.

**Equality of Participation** – participation in informational innovations is contingent on the policy issue in question and who it affects.

**Practice** - informational innovations support improvements in the quality of parliamentary practice and seem to be one of the most vibrant of our categories of innovation.

**Impact** - certain innovations have been shown to tangibly improve the quality of parliamentary debates.

**Sustainability** – informational innovations seem to be less secure, given that their origins and buy-in often come from the passionate investment of individuals at the political or administrative level.
OUR ANALYSIS

Examples from various parliaments have made clear that MPs are acknowledging that the information they receive is the product of the questions they ask, the procedures they use, and who they are asking. Greater inclusivity can be achieved by expanding the range of individuals and groups whose opinions are asked, as well as by paying close attention to how research procedures can reflect and entrench existing opinions rather than open up new avenues of enquiry. It was our task to investigate the informational innovations seeking to achieve this degree of inclusivity.

INTRODUCTION OF EVIDENCE CHECKS (UK, 2013)

The origins of the UK Evidence Check were calls from within Parliament, supported by high buy-in from academics and professional advisors, to better hold government to account on its use of evidence to formulate policy. It is an online forum where citizens can view the evidence used by the government on a particular issue and give their views on its strengths, as well as on how far it is has been reflected in the government’s approach to that issue. Broad questions relate to the government’s use of evidence in its diagnosis of a situation, plan of action, implementation, value for money and evaluation. Although the aims of this innovation are spot on, we concluded that for it to achieve equality of participation, it needed to include active measures to solicit the opinions of a wide range of people. It was noted that in practice, it was drawing most participation from private interest groups, rather than the general public. Moreover, it does not fulfil deliberative ideals, for participants do not receive responses to their feedback. Until this innovation can be shown to have a great impact, that it might be sustainable is not enough.

Among the wide variety in how parliaments gather evidence, we are yet to see an example of a broad institutional shift toward unpacking the assumptions that MPs and staff carry through the information-gathering process. There are certain voices trying to change this. For example, the 2015 report: ‘Show Your Workings’, by the independent organisation the Institute for Government, was based on an understanding that if the ‘workings’ (the method or route) leading to a particular claim look sound, the claim itself is more likely to be true. Its authors were prompted to ‘restlessly seek to use evidence better’ and pull apart the meaning of ‘good evidence’ itself. Such a logic resonates with our understanding of deliberative democracy - that if the process of deliberation is inclusive and authentic, so too will be the outcomes. It calls for more initiatives like the UK Evidence Check, an innovation we explored in our own research. As pointed out by Peter Riddell, the Director of the Institute for Government, such an innovation is not about ‘advocating for “rule by experts”’. Rather it is concerned with ‘forcing policy makers “to explain why they have taken a decision” (Rutter and Gold, 2015: 21). The report called for more transparency by UK government departments and public servants when forming what should be ‘evidence-based’, rather than ‘evidence-sprayed’, policy (Rutter and Gold, 2015: 4).

Our case studies demonstrate the attempts of various parliaments to make this happen. It was clear that the wealth and development of an institution impacted the nature of the informational innovation. More established, resource-rich parliaments often used technology. Examples of consciously inclusive, technologically-driven, informational innovations were identified in the Welsh Assembly, whose Community Engagement Unit is explicitly focused on maximum inputs from the relevant publics into policy formation and decision-making.

INQUIRY INTO STATE OF THE ROADS BY WELSH TRANSPORT COMMITTEE (Wales, 2018)

The origin of this innovation was the Welsh Transport Committee’s desire to gather information from the public for an inquiry about the state of the roads, without giving the false impression that it was the Committee’s job to fix potholes. In addition to conventional methods of gathering data, they launched a photography competition which invited citizens to send in photographs of their roads. The resulting images, all of which were used in the

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4 The report can be found at: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/4545%20IFG%20-%20Showing%20your%20workings%20v8b.pdf.
Committee report, were impactful both in feeding the inquiry and increasing its visibility. BBC Wales mentioned the public engagement process, and it generated 300 articles, read by 9.5 million people across the UK. This was especially significant as the Welsh Assembly finds it difficult to get UK-wide coverage. However, only 16 MPs practiced the innovation, a significantly lower degree of buy-in than had been hoped and although geographical spread was significant, all photographers were male. This means that the innovation does not rank highly in terms of equality of participation. Its strength comes from its specificity - a context-driven response to that committee's particular need. That enthusiasm to gather information differently is hopefully sustainable even if the innovation itself is not directly replicable.

We also found technology used to facilitate the deliberation of ‘hot topics’ and, even when not overtly for this purpose, could inadvertently support inclusion simply by building the profile of an issue and involving more people in its discussion. However, more concentrated work is needed if social media platforms such as ‘Facebook Live’ are to be used not simply for generating awareness, but for soliciting reason-giving by citizens with a stake in the question.

In less established parliaments, informational innovations more frequently arose out of necessity, when parliament was not functioning as it should be. For example, the Speakers’ Research Initiative in India was an initiative by the Speaker of a sub-national parliament to address limitations of MP knowledge. He introduced a structure whereby experts would come into parliament and provide input, outside of the subject-specific confines of committees. MPs could then take what they learned from to their deliberation, bringing informed positions to create the reasoned arguments that are the cornerstone of deliberative democracy.

Concluding Comments

Parliaments often have existing mechanisms to monitor how information is used in policy decisions. In the UK, parliamentary select committees play an important role in encouraging government departments to disclose what evidence they have used, and why. However, that so many informational innovations have arisen demonstrates that these measures can be insufficient.

Evidently, creating an effective informational innovation is a multi-staged process that requires multiple levels of buy-in. Yet, the degree of buy-in required as a hopeful sign. To acknowledge that change is needed in the information-gathering process represents a radical shift in opinions on which sources of knowledge are worthy of inclusion in parliament. Moreover, a key finding is that not every inclusive innovation requires technological advancement. The best examples relate to changes in mindset, and a consequent willingness by parliaments to invest in the innovation, in time as well as in money.

Mainstreaming inclusive ways of information-gathering risks excluding the people whose voices are not often heard by collecting even more information from the powerful. In this way, strict procedure might be less effective. The work of the Welsh Assembly, which adapts its approach to each case, highlights the value of finding the right balance between organic efforts at making information-gathering more inclusive and formalising these attempts. Once Parliaments recognise the significance of this element of their performance, they can increase inclusivity. We believe informational innovations primarily represent an area of growth and potential, especially because they are an area in which a parliament's administrative staff can lead. This does not add to MPs' commitments, instead constituting an opportunity for capacity-building by other staff. Pilots in this area could assist in developing targeted, autonomous and well-resourced initiatives.

Points for further consideration

- We need to consider what support measures could help a parliament to fortify their information-gathering processes.
- We need to reflect on whether the UK practice of ‘Evidence Checks’ is replicable in emerging parliaments.
- Formalising information-gathering-checks into the parliamentary procedure is worth further consideration.
Participatory innovations - innovations that promote the participation of citizens in formal parliamentary proceedings - are a key way for parliaments to put into practice claims to inclusivity, by bringing in and listening to a broader range of people. Several examples informed our analysis in this section, yet we have selected the following examples to showcase in this initial study:

- **Scotland – Public Committee inquiry**: an innovation that transforms citizens into policy advisors, training them in how to conduct a committee inquiry and putting forward their findings for consideration by parliamentary committees.

- **UK – Parliament-sponsored Citizens’ Assemblies**: an innovation that gathers ‘public reason’ from a group of citizens on a contentious topic with broad impact and presents it for consideration by parliamentary committees.

- **Sierra Leone & Gambia - Collaboratively digitalising Hansard reporting**: an innovation that trains parliamentary staff, through cross-country collaboration, in digitalising Hansard reporting, enabling parliament to improve previously incomplete records of House debates and communicate them transparently to the public.

- **Jamaica - Participatory budgeting through TellYourMpJm**: an innovative use of technology which allows constituents to advise their MP on how to use funds earmarked for community development.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

**Origin** – while MPs publicly back these types of innovations, they typically have their origins in parliamentary staff taking the lead in identifying new ways of engaging the public in parliamentary processes.

**Buy-in** – participatory innovations do not always have MP buy-in from the outset, especially when the shift required is an expectation that they will incorporate interaction with publics into their work. Significant encouragement is required.

**Equality of Participation** – within parliament, participation is limited to relevant committees, subject to staff training where necessary. Whether the innovation can be considered a success relies on the degree of intentional management to enable the equal and fair access of relevant publics outside parliament.

**Practice** – participatory innovations must vary in form, as approaches to engaging with the public must be context-driven. Encouraging the participation of underrepresented groups is its own challenge, which requires more attention than we have seen to date.
**Impact** – several participatory innovations achieved significant impact in directly incorporating ‘public reason’ into parliamentary outcomes (e.g. committee reports and debates) and state responses.

**Sustainability** – to rise to the challenge of being both deliberative and effective, significant investment and experience of what works are required, which makes the sustainability of this innovation dependent on sufficient staff resources and in some cases the expertise and experience of outside organisations.

## OUR ANALYSIS

In reviewing examples of participatory innovations, we realised that in principle all participatory innovations offer the possibility of making parliamentary processes more deliberative, with two crucial exceptions. The first was that in their bias toward those already likely to get involved, participatory innovations further exclude underrepresented and marginalised groups. The second was innovations that fail to ensure barrier-free equality of participation. Our examples demonstrate the importance of interrogating what works and under what conditions, using three lead case studies which all originate from parliaments. We have chosen to highlight these, rather than the more numerous external efforts at participatory deliberation, because their existence demonstrates a significant shift in parliamentary thinking. Parliaments are more used to attempting to represent ‘public reason’ themselves than to opening up the Pandora’s Box of citizens’ views. These examples show that two conditions in particular have a great impact on the success or failure of a participatory innovation. These are resources and expertise in event management.

Each participatory innovation raised the question of who was participating, and who was not. This reflected our concern that these innovations can exclude marginalised groups while allowing parliament to claim that they are being representative, and thus gain legitimacy.\(^5\) This risk relates not simply to who is in the room but to how the room operates. Deliberative theorist Young (2000) has highlighted the potential for ‘internal’ rather than ‘external’ forms of exclusion. Internal exclusion occurs when excluded groups have succeeded in shaming the designers of a political process to the extent that procedures are put into place to bring them into the public. Yet, although they are formally included, Young claims that these people find their claims not taken seriously and their modes of expression discredited. In short, their treatment is not one of equal respect. Young’s explanation for this is that their experiences are ‘so different’ from that of the ‘dominant mood’ that they are discounted (2000: 55). This led us to question how to ensure that participatory innovations do not exclude sections of the population. As in our research into formal innovations, it became clear that procedural change alone would not be sufficient for inclusive participation.

A further consideration, even in an ideal situation where citizens can both enter the institution and participate equally within it, is how to ensure that these contributions represent true deliberative democracy. Fishkin (2011) claims that one of the central problems of democratic design is how to combine inclusion and thoughtfulness. He asks how, in a given system, all relevant perspectives can be represented, and how the results of this representation can be driven by a consideration of the merits of competing arguments, rather than distorted by patterns of domination (Fishkin, 2011: 85). From our research, we would add that numbers make a difference. While it may seem contradictory to the ambition of soliciting opinions from a representative mass of the population, we found that a smaller number of participants meant a higher quality of thought and more reasoned inputs. It produces a balance between inclusion and thoughtfulness.

\(^5\) We know that the risk relates also to non-parliamentary initiatives to improve parliamentary inclusion. For example, the IPU/UN report, ‘The hidden minorities: Representing ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in Cambodia’ (2010), expressed concerns that parliamentary commissions travelling the country were only talking to politicians. The report recommended that commissions more directly consult with minority groups and civil society organisations. The report can be found at [http://archive.ipu.org/splz-e/chiapas10/cambodia.pdf](http://archive.ipu.org/splz-e/chiapas10/cambodia.pdf).
INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT METHODS BY CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE (Wales, 2016)

The brand-new Welsh Assembly Cultural Affairs and Communication Committee decided to reach out to the public to decide the subject of their next inquiry. They ran an online poll to narrow down options, which got 2700 responses, a much more successful practice than expected for a brand-new committee. Their analysis of poll respondents by categories including gender and age demonstrated significant equality of participation. They also used ‘Facebook Live’ to record an informal chat the Committee Chair and a report, in which the Chair expressed what she wanted the public to help with and answered questions from citizens in real time. An online advisory group was created to follow the process, certain recommendations from which made it into the report. The Committee also held a debate at a large event, which brought in people from all sectors. As we have seen in other cases, this innovation was driven by individual buy-in. The Chair was an advocate of public engagement and this was her first time chairing a committee. Her enthusiasm helped in the origins of this innovation and she was keen for it have an impact both in deciding on an inquiry topic and in creating a longer-term public profile for the Committee. Although many MPs were initially hesitant of the risks involved in public engagement, they became more confident once staff emphasised that risks had been mitigated. The innovation demonstrated that MP buy-in ultimately comes from results. If these can be proven, its repetition and sustainability will be secured.

We found that well-established and well-financed parliaments are most likely to have the time and the resources for participatory innovations. For example, the citizens’ assembly that took place in 2018 in the UK, the first to be commissioned by Parliament, was the result of extensive research within and outside of Parliament, which concluded that it would be an effective forum for considering the contentious and long-standing issue of finding sustainable funding for adult social care. The Assembly was well-financed, with participants paid £150 each for the weekend they spent participating. It also benefitted from external experience, having been run by ‘Involve’, a public participation charity with the explicit aim of bringing citizens closer to decision-making. The innovation had significant success, both in engaging members of public and influencing Select Committees. Select Committees referenced the Assembly’s findings throughout their reports and participants on average rated the experience 9.5/10. All 47 agreed that ‘assemblies like this should be used more often to inform government and parliament decision-making’.

Accordingly, a greater number of participatory innovations that represent an inclusive innovation have come from countries with more resources. Those innovations are characterised by a drive to move beyond simply enabling publics to express their view. They seek to manage the participation process to ensure views are tailored, directed and filtered into parliamentary decision-making. They often draw on new technologies and social media platforms. The question is therefore how to implement or support successful participatory innovations in less established Parliaments.

According to Fishkin, participation becomes more difficult under less favourable conditions (2011: 143). Tolerating let alone encouraging citizens’ participation in parliaments whose legitimacy is not secure, whether due to a weak mandate or to the political climate of their country, is a risk. This was observed in our research as we identified a considerable number of initiatives aimed at soliciting public participation that failed the test of ensuring bias-free participation and were often limited to soliciting general participation. These included sectoral parliaments, parliamentary open weeks or road shows. They did not enable focused opinion-giving with a plausible possibility of impacting outcomes. However, participation has another advantage, of increasing public spiritedness. Citizens who discuss problems together can come to place greater value upon the interests of their broader community (Fishkin, 2011: 90). We found that participants find value in expressing and in MPs listening to their views and experiences.

We found that many initiatives undertaken by less established parliaments focused on building awareness of parliament’s role and significance. This is distinct from providing an inclusive measure for giving inputs into the parliamentary process. Yet, we argue that although the challenges to delivering equality of participation

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6 Information from ‘Involve’ on this innovation can be found at https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/blog/project-update/citizens-assembly-social-care-how-it-worked. The subsequent Committees’ report can be found at https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcomloc/768/76802.htm.
are considerable and risks to delivering contrary outcomes are great, participatory innovations in emerging democracies or less resource-rich contexts nevertheless have the potential to further the legitimacy of parliaments by at least seeking to consult the public’s considered judgment. In this way, these innovations ‘compliment’ traditional democracy (Fishkin, 2011: 161). An answer may lie in determining smaller-scale inclusive participatory innovations that resource-poor parliaments can implement to full deliberative effect. An important example is the WFD initiative to outsource and digitalize Hansard reporting in The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

Concluding Comments

Our review of participatory innovations highlights that attempts to incorporate citizens’ views into policy-making is a key challenge shared by parliaments across the Commonwealth. Yet, social complexity and cultural pluralism should not be a barrier trying to make our democratic processes more inclusive (Bohman, 1996). What matters is clarity on the ambition, scope and procedure of the participatory innovation. Practitioners of these innovations must also take concrete steps to ensure that their processes are inclusive or, at the very least, do not promote or further institutionalise the exclusion of certain groups.

Points for further consideration

- We need to consider what alternative forms participatory innovations could take. Specifically, we need to consider whether less labour-intensive innovations could be developed for less resource-rich parliaments to deliver.
- We would like to explore the development of a guide to support the effective running of deliberative participatory innovations.
- We would like to explore what technological solutions could be considered to support for emerging parliaments.
**IMPULSIVE INNOVATIONS**

Impulsive innovations - innovative actions, not always within existing rules, taken by parliaments and MPs to make the parliamentary process more inclusive - is our most radical category of innovation. From several examples that inform our analysis, we have created case studies of the following:

- **Pacific Island – Floating Parliamentary Budget Office:** an innovation that seeks to share parliamentary budget oversight capacity between parliaments of the Pacific.
- **India – ‘Zero Hour’ in the Lok Sabha:** an innovation that gives MPs more time to raise issues than is permitted in formal parliamentary proceedings.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

- **Origin** - Impulsive innovations and stem from a shift in MPs’ expectations of what parliament should do and how it should do it, although they can be supported by outside actors where they relate to limits in a parliament’s technical skills and capacity.

- **Buy-in** - impulsive innovations do not rely on extensive buy-in to take shape and be sustained.

- **Equality of Participation** - impulsive innovations are often founded on a desire to promote more equal participation of MPs - yet, they also risk excluding those with less authority in the parliamentary hierarchy.

- **Practice** – varies depending on the innovation. Impulsive innovations are defined by their flexibility, arising in response to specific and contextual needs.

- **Impact** - these innovations have demonstrated considerable impact, bridging the gap between the expectations and needs of MPs and the rules of formal parliamentary processes.

- **Sustainability** – impulsive innovations are not directly replicable and can be sustained only by the will and investment of those involved. The sustainability and recurrence of these innovations is entirely context driven.
**OUR ANALYSIS**

Impulsive innovations that are characterised by disruption, rule-breaking and norm-questioning initially appear opposed to the principles of authentic deliberation. Behaviours such as parliamentarians interrupting each other ostensibly contradict the deliberative ideals of a willingness to both listen and be listened to (Spary, 2013). Certainly, disruption is fundamentally unjustifiable when it threatens to sustain, rather than eradicate, structures of inequality. Our focus here is on the inequality of entry and capacity to participate in the parliamentary deliberative process. However, different groups will have different opinions on what is justifiable. The extent of a disruption’s justifiability is then highly contingent on the representation claims it seeks to make. Broader research indicates there is a place for unconventional forms of deliberation. Dryzek (2005) argues for an acceptance of ‘agonism’ in deliberation - a permanent place for certain forms of political conflict. Focus should rest on how to channel this positively. This is supported by Young (2002), who sees disruption as disregarding the idea that ‘structurally or culturally differentiated social groups’ must put aside their particular interests for some pre-ordained ‘common good’. In this vein, Spary (2013) argues that acts of disruption in parliamentary debate do not contradict the principles of deliberative democracy if they are used to realise deliberative ideals and are indeed representing the people on whose behalf they are claiming to speak. We argue that whether legislative protest is deemed justifiable depends on the value one places on procedural conformity and civil obedience. Rather than dismiss them as rule-breaking, we look at parliamentary disruptions to debate to gauge how effective a parliament is at shaping its members’ behaviour through rules, and the symbolic significance attached to parliamentary rituals and norms. If Members are not conforming to either rules or norms, and instead putting forward initiatives for updated procedures or revised practices, it is worth interrogating why.

For this reason, we have identified disruptions to debate in the Indian Parliament of Lok Sabha as an impulsive innovation. Such disruptions have been common in this House for years but increase in response to issues that particularly agitate MPs. MPs are only permitted to speak provided they catch the Speaker’s eye. Not only is this difficult, they often find the allotted time to speak insufficient to voice their opinions. Consequently, they frequently transgress the rules through behaviour that include: interrupting other MPs, leaving their seats and going to the well of the House, and exhibiting slogans on placards. Even though these are technically transgressions, parliamentary leaders do not necessarily discipline or punish MPs, and frequently allow disruption to occur. This is for two principal reasons. Firstly, these disruptions are seen as improving the democratic functioning of parliament, by allowing a greater diversity of views to be heard. Secondly, entrenched cultural norms allow for some agitation and fraying of tempers. This impulsive innovation is not only permitted but has been integrated - leading parliamentarians have responded by agreeing on an informal parliamentary mechanism which allows MPs to raise issues during the ‘Zero Hour’ of the session each day. In this hour, which was previously timetabled as a break, MPs can voice concerns - and they do so, consistently using up all the time. Ravindra Garimella, an Officer at the Table of Parliament with 17 years of experience, describes this as a ‘unique example of the innovativeness of the Indian Parliament in meeting the challenge of the clamour for time’.7

A similar instance of disruption emerged in Uganda to demonstrate that traditional parliamentary performance was unequipped to deal with political pluralism. Following Uganda’s 2016 election, many MPs defected from both Ruling and Opposition parties, producing more Independent MPs than Opposition MPs. Some of these new Independents felt themselves unable to take a seat on either the Ruling or Opposition benches. The Speaker, Rebecca Kadaga, made a ruling to allow these MPs to sit in the middle of the floor of the chamber. She was subsequently praised for this innovative behaviour. This example of the formalisation of an impulsive innovation reminds us that they are often necessary to catch up parliamentary procedure with political reality. We also found that disruption can occur to the workings of Parliamentary procedure. In Sierra Leone in

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7 We are aware of other disruptions in debate that are not deliberative. For example, the Economic Freedom Fighters have frequently shut down democratic debate in the Parliament of South Africa at times when they are not satisfied with the government’s response. This form of disruption does not qualify as an impulsive innovation for it limits equality of participation, preventing other MPs and political parties from expressing their views, as House sittings have been adjourned and riot police called in.
2018, the National Grand Coalition leader refused to vote to nominate a Speaker. This was because he was opposed to the practice of both Speaker and Deputy Speaker always coming from the ruling party. He saw this as prohibiting all MPs from participating on equal terms. Following this impulsive act, recommendations have been made for rule changes to allow the position of Deputy Speaker to be held by at least the official Opposition party.

We drew also upon several instances wherein MPs impulsively created a new practice to expand the parliamentary process. For example, in Uganda, MPs are limited by a 3-minute speaking time allotment and rules that allow them to participate in only one Select or Standing Committee respectively. They are pushing back against restrictions by establishing parliamentary forums. These forums meet, unless the Speaker grants them a room, outside Parliament, to discuss thematic issues. They are sourcing external funds in the hope of conducting research and creating outputs such as Private Member Bills. The importance of these bodies to the policy-making process is being recognised, with increasingly frequent invitations to provide evidence at Committee hearings and sometimes even getting more coverage than ordinary Committees. Their next ambition is to bring about a rule change for their formal integration - a desire that tells us that formalisation can sometimes be an asset. Similar outcomes may be achieved with the formalisation of the Floating Budget analysis across parliaments of the Pacific supported by the UNDP.

A key additional observation from our review is that impulsive innovations have the potential to resolve issues of exclusive deliberation. Young’s (2002) aforementioned theory of ‘internal exclusion’ argues that certain individuals and groups, can be marginalised by norms of discussion that favour modes of expression pertaining to privileged social groups. Deliberative norms, such as articulateness and dispassionateness, constitute norms of ‘civilised’ conduct. Other forms of conduct - and the people voicing them - are characterised as disorderly and ‘extreme’. Her solution is disruptive modes of performance. Building on this, we have found impulsive innovations to be a useful technique to question these ‘norms’ and bring about change. For example, in Sierra Leone, some MPs began to represent the needs of their constituents not in speeches, but by story-telling about these people’s lives. Feeling that this method was more appropriate to the content than speech-giving, they used information gathered by spending time hearing about people’s issues. This is a key example of how much procedure can impact outcome, and how crucial it is to consider the appropriate speech act if one is to bring diverse and underrepresented voices into play.

However, what we have yet to identify is an impulsive innovation that does not in some way privilege the loud and the mobile. None of the examples we have identified in this study under this category have been carried out by minority ethnic or language groups, or disabled parliamentarians. The consequences of lack of provision for MPs with specific needs is severe. This was shown in 2017 in the resource-rich UK Parliament. The MP for Battersea and Shadow Disabilities Minister, Marsha de Cordova, who is partially sighted, was obstructed from providing a response to a set of government proposals because the large-print version of the document did not reach her until after the issue had been debated. The sustained inequality faced by minority language groups was demonstrated in October 2018, when a Welsh MP used the Irish language to address the House of Commons. This was the first use of Irish in the Commons since 1901. She was calling on the Northern Ireland Secretary of State to implement an Irish Language Act, saying (here translated) that ‘language rights are human rights and the Irish-speaking community are entitled to equality’. Her expression of the demand in the language concerned demonstrates the importance for inclusion of being able to align content and form. It also speaks to the centrality of language in democracy - a reminder of the value of promoting authentic deliberation as a route to equality and legitimacy.

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**Concluding comments**

Impulsive innovations are borne out of a need for change and are mostly spurred by either passionate MPs or parliamentary staff. Some impulsive innovations are characterised by disruption, which can highlight blind spots or outdated conventions of practice. Others are not necessarily protestations, but rather represent pro-activism in response to endemic procedural inefficiency or inequality. We found it interesting that many relate to a lack of talking time, which in turn risks a lack of deliberative engagement.

Impulsive innovations can evidently be a friend to formal innovations. Some of the examples we identified were subsequently given an official or part-status or are in the process of being formalised. We found these instances especially interesting, for what they could tell us about the relationship of innovations with political culture. It appeared that an impulsive innovation with mass buy-in may be more effective than a formal innovation with little behind it. Innovations that are not overtly obstructive, and which had a lot of buy-in, may readily be formalised into a practice or Standing Order. In this sense, some impulsive innovations are a response to inefficiency in the procedural management of a parliament, and possibly highlight a lack of competence in its political procedural competency.

In general, we have found that impulsive innovations play a pivotal role in the process of parliamentary innovation and inclusion, as an innovation that either significantly modifies to the traditional process or reflects existing tensions around parliamentary participation. This category has the most potential to be truly transformative because these innovations are closest to re-creating parliaments culture. A key question we should be looking to answer is what it would take for parliaments to track MP sentiment to pre-empt the existence of these innovations and begin making these transformations ahead of time. Yet, it may be worth promoting MPs embracing the idea of doing things differently in parliament, to test new norms of practice and behaviours that may emerge to better reflect social norms and values, as well as better enable the articulation of social need.

**Points for further consideration**

- We need to consider whether sharing experiences and examples of impulsive innovations across parliaments globally would encourage MPs to push the boundaries of their parliamentary performance.
- We would also like to consider whether it is possible for parliaments to pre-empt impulsive innovations.
- We need to conduct further research on the potential of impulsive innovations to be exclusive, and to work to avoid this.
CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to focus our attention on the need to, and possibilities of, supporting parliaments to become more authentically deliberative. Specifically, this means supporting parliaments to improve the quality of their debate through introducing measures to make the procedures more inclusive. We see greater inclusivity as leading democratic parliaments to produce a more plausible interpretation of ‘public reason’. Inclusivity is therefore a stepping stone to their greater effectiveness and legitimacy as well as an end goal in itself. Our starting point has been to identify and draw together examples of parliamentary innovations from across the Commonwealth that seek to do this. We distinguished between formal, informational, participatory and impulsive parliamentary innovations that in respective ways seek to promote, enable or secure more inclusive deliberative processes in parliament. Reviewing examples from across the Commonwealth has helped us to make the following observations:

- New measures that parliaments are integrating, trialling or accommodating to make debate more legitimate and effective show us that positive change processes are driven by both the awareness of what makes a process better on the part of MPs and staff, and the resources to put ideas into practice. Where there is existing awareness, but lack of resources, is where the support of international organisations in innovations has been most useful.
- Formal and impulsive innovations are typically driven by parliamentarians and the parliamentary leadership, in line with contemporary social and political demands, as well as international norms or best practices.
- There is a close relationship between impulsive and formal parliamentary innovations as parliaments take measures to normalise new working initiatives or radical shifts within formal parliamentary processes. We have noted the potential for the radical content of impulsive innovations to become diluted and compromised, and we have made recommendations on how to avoid this.
- Informational and participatory innovations require significant staff initiative and support to achieve equal participation and legitimate outcomes. Parliamentary staff, easily overlooked in comparison to MPs, are the engine in effective new forms of information gathering or citizen participation initiatives. This report has documented their motivation to make parliamentary processes achieve better outcomes.
- Making clearer distinctions between informational and participatory innovations (where informational innovations focus on improving the quality of information a parliament obtains and participatory innovations focus on improving the quality of public engagement in support of that goal), and explicitly promoting the distinct value of both, may help parliaments to achieve stronger outcomes in both categories.
- In resource-restricted contexts, examples of truly inclusive informational innovations are limited.
- Participatory innovations can seek to promote general public awareness of parliament’s role rather than soliciting filtered opinions or creating ‘public reason’.

Based on these observations there are three potential avenues for supporting parliaments to become more deliberative and deliver more inclusive representation:

1. Creating an assessment tool that helps to measure a parliament’s deliberative status, as a measure of political inclusion.
2. Supporting more effective practices and processes of debate – the aim of which would be to change parliamentary culture, as it is through how MPs interact with each other on issues facing the country that formal and informal norms of practice emerge. The focus of these initiatives would be political, potentially working at committee level.
3. Providing principles, guides and guidelines for managing legitimate and deliberative participatory and informational innovations – the aim of which would be to enable the various initiatives undertaken by emerging parliaments to take advantage of the lessons learned in other countries and help alleviate risks of hidden biases in process. The focus of these initiatives would be administrative.
4. Facilitating context-driven, integrated cost-effective civic tech initiatives that promote participatory and informational innovations – the aim of which would be to overcome barriers to engagement by using new technology in ways that make sure public inputs are integrated democratically into parliamentary proceedings. The focus of these could be either administrative or political.
CASE STUDIES
CASE STUDY - FORMAL INNOVATION - FIJI

NAME OF INNOVATION: Including Gender Scrutiny in Standing Orders
COUNTRY: Fiji
YEAR: 2014

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Fiji became one of the first countries to include gender scrutiny in its Standing Orders. Committees were instructed to give ‘full consideration...to the principle of gender equality’ when scrutinising legislation or otherwise carrying out their oversight function. This was intended to ensure that all matters were considered with regard to their relational yet diverse impacts on both men and women.

ORIGIN: At the 1995 UN World Conference on Women, Fiji agreed that it would carry out Gender Impact Assessments on bills and decisions before their passage. However, a 2014 review concluded that government agencies lacked the technical know-how to effect this gender mainstreaming. This innovation was formalised to try and bring about a deep and consistent transformation in how parliament collected and utilised evidence and ideas.

BUY-IN: This innovation had significant support by the IPU and the UNDP, who collaborated with the Fijian parliament to produce the Practical Toolkit described below. The degree of internal buy-in was less clear.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: The innovation is not necessarily inclusive within parliament, as not all committees are consistently integrating gender scrutiny. Yet, the logic of the formal innovation is for it to have a ripple effect by mandating that it is considered at the voting stage on bills.

PRACTICE: The Fijian Parliament, with UNDP support, issued a Practical Toolkit to guide MPs on how to mainstream gender equality. The Toolkit calls on Parliamentarians to reflect on the gendered implications of their decisions. It states that ‘women and men experience life in different ways’ and warns that if these differences are not considered, legislation could have ‘negative or unintended effects’. Its recommendations include: using impartial data to formulate policy decisions; drawing on expert analysis; and asking the right questions. Significantly, this could also be considered as an Informational Innovation, for Parliamentarians are encouraged to use the ‘best available evidence’ on gendered experiences, which might mean extra-parliamentary sources.

IMPACT: The intended impact is that by mainstreaming gender into their legislative and oversight functions, Parliaments will better carry out their function of representation. However, the real impact of this innovation is uncertain.

SUSTAINABILITY: Relatively binding because the innovation is contained in the Standing Orders, yet further information needed to ascertain whether the innovation is being realised as intended in practice.
CASE STUDY - FORMAL INNOVATION - AUSTRALIA

NAME OF INNOVATION: Permitting Breastfeeding in the Chamber
COUNTRY: Australia
YEAR: 2016

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: The rules of the Australian House of Representatives were changed in 2016 to allow babies to be brought into the Chamber during debates for the first time in its history. The innovation received international media coverage the following year, when senator Larissa Waters put it into practice, by breastfeeding her daughter while putting forward a motion. Some thought this a positive step in making it easier for MPs who are also parents to do their job. Others called breastfeeding “over the top”, claiming that it undermined the seriousness and credibility of Parliamentary proceedings.9

ORIGIN: Recommendation from a parliamentary committee as part of wider attempts to make parliament more inclusive for women. This suggests that the formalisation came from an internal shift in political culture. It is a significant change considering that in 2003 an MP was removed from Victoria’s State Parliament for breastfeeding her daughter.

BUY-IN: Cross-party agreement, indicating strong base of support.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: The innovation was intended to remove a barrier to entry for parents. This was especially relevant to women’s capacity to participate, considering that they are more likely to have child-caring responsibilities, and are already underrepresented in parliaments across the world.

PRACTICE: Although Waters’ act of breastfeeding was widely covered, it is not known how often parents have taken their children into the Chamber since the innovation was introduced.

IMPACT: The innovation can be seen as having a dual aim. The first was to make it easier for MPs who are parents to participate in debates. This fulfils one of the principles of deliberative democracy, which is equal entry. The second was wider and longer-term - to encourage more women to join Parliament, so as to make it more representative of the population. This was the ambition of Waters. She was surprised by the story making headlines and expressed a wish that the same attention be paid when ‘parliament does things that hurt women’, giving one example as underfunding domestic violence services, and claiming that this would not be the case with more women in Parliament.10

SUSTAINABILITY: The innovation is ‘free of charge’. The cost of the innovation is the difficulty of shifting culture. The sustainability of the innovation is set down in the rules of Australian House of Representatives.

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CASE STUDY - FORMAL INNOVATION - INDIA

NAME OF INNOVATION: Allowing MPs to Request Discussing Motions that were to be Automatically Passed
COUNTRY: India
YEAR: Unknown

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: The effort of one MP resulted in legislators from the Lower House being allowed to move ‘cut motions’ on guillotined budget demands by Ministries.

ORIGIN: It has become convention that the budget demands of individual ministries are not discussed on the floor of the House because these departments face time pressure to have their budgets approved so that money is allocated on time. That they are passed on time is imperative to prevent the shutting down of the state. The result is ‘guillotined’ demands – sets of departmental appropriations being passed all in one, without discussion. The convention has been that MPs do not put in an amendment ‘cut’ motion to a guillotined demand. This changed in 2010, when an MP raised a point of order to declare that his right to scrutinise financial legislation was being impinged. The Speaker agreed and ruled that the right to move a ‘cut motion’ should always exist. This formalisation allowed MPs to express displeasure on the financial demands of a ministry.

BUY-IN: There is buy-in from the government, in that the MP was encouraged to raise the point of order by the Secretary General, even though he is appointed by the ruling party, and in fact advises the Speaker on how to respond to points of order. It was significant that the MP raised this technical matter during plenary of the House, and in the language of the Constitution. It is likely that this legitimised the innovation through framing it in the principles of what good democratic practice looks like.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: This innovation is intended to greatly increase equality of participation, by giving MPs the opportunity to vote against a motion they disagree on. Previously, the convention of guillotined motions restricted their ability to participate.

PRACTICE: The innovation is not intended to vote down or even induce debate on the guillotined demands. The point is that a cut motion can be moved, on the day of the guillotined demands, and the House are given an opportunity to vote. This allows MPs to express their disagreement, which they may then be asked more about by public actors, leading to greater visibility of and debate on this issue.

IMPACT: This innovation’s impact is less about changing in budget allocation and is more about the significance of going against 60 years of convention, in a Parliament steeped in tradition. It shows that the work of MPs and Speakers can bring about change and improve the quality of deliberation in the House.

SUSTAINABILITY: The innovation is more sustainable because it has not been seen by either the Treasury or Opposition as threatening to derail Parliamentary functioning. Both see it as a reasonable measure to protect the rights of individual members while not obstructing business. It follows the mantra, ‘the Opposition will have its say, and the government will have its way’.
CASE STUDY - FORMAL INNOVATION - INDIA

NAME OF INNOVATION: Committee of Assurances established to connect government action with parliamentary debate
COUNTRY: India
YEAR: 2018

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: The Committee on Government Assurances was formed to track government responses (outcomes) to Parliamentary deliberation (outputs). The conventional mechanisms of Parliamentary procedure were identified by the Presiding Officer of the Uttar Pradesh Legislature as insufficient in achieving executive accountability. He voiced concerns that Parliament was acting more like a ‘talking shop’ than a vehicle for action.

ORIGIN: This innovation has come from the Presiding Officer of the Uttar Pradesh legislature, a sub-national Parliament in Lucknow, which has a comparatively small population and is over 200 miles away from the National Parliament of India in New Delhi.

BUY-IN: For a sub-national Parliament to innovate in a way not seen in the national Parliament is very significant. The Committee is chaired by the Presiding Officer, who has held this position for multiple terms, represents the ruling party, and has a long and distinguished record as a journalist. Put simply, he is a powerful figure to advance the innovation, likely to increase its standing and thus its buy-in.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: The Committee comprises 21 cross-party MPs. (the committee’s terms of reference are forthcoming).

PRACTICE: The Committee meets to address the question, ‘how do you connect the outputs of a Parliament to the outcomes of a Government?’ They review the content of debates, not just the resolution, paying close attention to the details of deliberation. Their goal is to track the government’s response to the debate and subsequent actions, to assess what the impact has been.

IMPACT: As the Committee is less than 2 months old, it will take some time to assess its impact. Its purpose is to provide a way for the executive to come back to the legislature as much as possible to update on its activities. It also intended to resolve the designation of topics within subject areas, which currently does not adequately represent debate in the legislature that cuts across multiple issues.

SUSTAINABILITY: It is hard to say at this point how sustainable the innovation is, but its buy-in is certainly significant. The Committee will face the challenge of balancing keeping government on side while being effective.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION: The Parliamentary Code of Conduct establishes standards and principles relating to the behaviour expected of Members of Parliament and sets out the steps required to ensure public confidence in their adherence to these rules. In 2018, the Sri Lankan Parliament voted to revise the Code of Conduct after 24 years. The revised Code includes instructions to MPs to be accountable, transparent, show respect for human rights, and to act so as to merit the respect of the people. It also sets out conditions for inquiry and sanctions following improper behaviour.

ORIGIN: In 2015 a cross-party committee reviewed the Standing Orders and proposed a revised Code of Conduct. Across several meetings, the committee discussed recommendations of previous committees, MPs, local and international scholars and experts. They tabled a draft in Parliament in 2017, and the Code was made operational in April 2018.

BUY-IN: The Speaker Karu Jayasuriya had since his appointment as Speaker pioneered the changes. The fact that MPs from different parties came together increases the level of buy-in.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: This innovation has the potential to increase equality of participation. In requiring Members to act in regard of the public interest, to respect human rights and to provide reasons for their decisions, the Code of Conduct encourages MPs to consider the rights of all citizens when making decisions and nudges towards higher standards of deliberation.

PRACTICE: As the Code of Conduct only came into operation in April 2018, it would be premature to draw meaningful conclusions about practice so far.

IMPACT: The goal of the revised Code of Conduct was expressed by both government and Opposition MPs as empowering parliamentary democracy. Yet, awareness of the Code of Conduct and understanding of its requirements will determine whether MPs conform. There must also be the appropriate application of the mechanisms against its breach.

SUSTAINABILITY: The innovation is sustainable because it was developed over a period of time by a cross-party committee, in consultation with Members of Parliament. It is likely to invoke public confidence, because its aim is to encourage MPs to take greater consideration of public interest, as well as to disclose any conflicts of interest and relevant financial matters.

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CASE STUDY - INFORMATIONAL INNOVATION - KENYA

NAME OF INNOVATION: Biometric registration for attendance in Parliament
COUNTRY: Kenya
YEAR: 2014

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: African Parliamentary Network Against Corruption (APNAC Kenya) is a caucus established to compliment Parliament’s contribution to the fight against corruption. Corruption is recognised as both diverting resources from the electorate and destroying confidence in the integrity of Parliament as an institution. APNAC Kenya resolved to push for administrative integrity in the registration of MPs during Parliamentary committee meetings and plenary. Registration had previously been abused, with a focus on reaping huge allowances, even for meetings not attended. APNAC Kenya’s response was to initiate debate and push for biometric registration. After a year, this came to fruition in February 2014. Biometric registration was intended to: increase attendance and debate in the House, thus increasing the quality of Parliament’s representative function; increase the value of Parliamentary Committee Meetings, where the Kenyan public directly meet the House; and increase the transparency and accountability of the Parliamentary budget.

ORIGIN: Members of APNAC Kenya wanted to implement Article 73 of the Constitution of Kenya, which demands that the authority bestowed upon Parliamentarians is an exercise of public trust. Parliamentarians must therefore show their commitment to uphold these high standards. To do this, they drew on a 2012 study into Parliamentary Integrity by Transparency International Kenya, which recommended digitising registration.

BUY-IN: APNAC Kenya’s commitment was bolstered by the Parliamentary Service Commission, the Powers and Privileges Committee, and the Speakers Office.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: The innovation has increased attendance at Parliamentary Committees, where members of the public can directly engage Parliament. Thus it has led to better direct as well as representative participation. It was recognised that more needed to be done to extend participation to “Bunge Mashinani” (Parliament in the rural side) - regions that cannot reach a Parliamentary sitting in Nairobi.

PRACTICE: The innovation has significantly improved the quality of debate in both the Plenary and Committees. The more the members, the more an issue is canvassed, and the more the public become involved. A wider range of people will therefore be represented. This improves the overall quality of democracy.

IMPACT: Biometric registration received the support of the majority of Parliamentarians. It has so far increased attendance in the House and at Committees. There is also increased accountability for the spending of public funds. It has ‘improved the political culture of representation’.
SUSTAINABILITY: Whether the innovation continues and improves will depend on commitment from Parliamentary leadership. The formalisation of the innovation has meant that it is now a constitutional expectation. However, this is not sufficient. It will require greater political commitment.

KENYA BIOMETRIC REGISTRATION: Africans Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC) Biennial General Meeting, 2018

NAME OF INNOVATION: Going out to sea to gather information
COUNTRY: WALES
YEAR: 2015

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: When conducting an inquiry into the general principles of the Environment Bill, the Environment and Sustainability Committee wanted to hear the opinions of Wales’ fishing industry. However, the inquiry took place over the summer, which is primetime for shellfishing, making it difficult for fishermen to participate. Consequently, members of the Welsh Assembly’s Outreach Team went out to sea with fishermen and filmed semi-structured interviews there. They took this footage back and edited it to group responses by theme. The final film was presented at the Committee’s meeting.

ORIGIN: ‘Organic’ response to an immediate issue of fishermen not being available to give feedback on Environment Bill.

BUY-IN: Real commitment shown by the Outreach Team in going out to sea with fishermen, and funds being invested in the process.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: The goal of the innovation was to ensure that people affected by the decision - fishermen - were included in its formation. If not for this innovation, the fishermen would not have been able to participate.

PRACTICE: The fishermen’s remarks edited into a video shown to Environment and Sustainability Committee. This inclusion of a more representative sample of voices is key to deliberative democracy.

IMPACT: 7/10 of the Committee’s final recommendations were described as ‘partly attributable’ to the contributions of these interviewees. Committee members reported that this form of evidence collection provided insights that they had not got elsewhere. The impact was increased by it being internally reviewed.

SUSTAINABILITY: Committees have used method several more times since. On all occasions, Committees have found that interviews provided ‘valuable additional insights’. This innovation was evidently backed by funding, but it could also be done more cheaply and still be effective. It could demonstrate an effective way of engaging with citizens of a geographically dispersed populace. The most sustainable element
NAME OF INNOVATION: Speaker’s Research Initiative  
COUNTRY: India  
YEAR: 2015

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Speakers’ Research Initiative (SRA) was launched by the Speaker of Lok Sabha to compensate for Parliament’s lack of institutional mechanism to engage with increasingly complex and technical law and policy matter. Its aim is to improve the quality of debate in Parliament, through making available expertise to lawmakers by linking them with the best knowledge resources. It seeks to deepen knowledge sharing through interactive and participatory mechanisms.

ORIGIN: MPs often require in-depth research to help them engage with the nuances of a complex issue, and feel the need to engage with experts beyond the written text of a research note. Yet, in the Indian Parliament, the involvement of external subject matter experts was limited. Technical experts, representing the government, industry, civil society and academia, mostly engaged with parliamentary committees while deposing before them. It was recognised by the Speaker of the House that this formal engagement occurs only when a Committee is examining a certain policy or legislation, and is limited to MPs part of that Committee.

BUY-IN: In 2005, the Speaker of the House wanted to hone the knowledge base of his members so that important issues would be properly reflected upon during parliamentary proceedings. He consulted parliamentary forums on themes like water conservation and management, children, public health and climate change. These informal groups discussed the issues with facilitation by experts. In 2015, to increase focus on issues of strategic and long-term policy significance, the Speaker instituted the Speakers Research Initiative (SRI). Thus, the initial buy-in was deep. Presently, buy-in is more difficult to measure as the number of participants varies depending on the topic being discussed.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: It extends equality of participation as all MPs can come. They can ask questions of experts beyond the constraints of the Committees they sit on - discussion is not even limited to subjects only the government of India is dealing with. The goal is to expose MPs to greater understanding of a wide range of issues. We argue that this is especially important because MPs’ own position within Indian society may mean they might not otherwise have this understanding.

PRACTICE: The SRI sits every week for an hour that Parliament is in session and hosts experts to talk to MPs. As well as being a way to deepen skills and help debate, the SRI also runs a fellowship scheme to deepen academic rigour on all issues related to Parliamentary functioning. This is an important example of the practice of the principles of deliberative democracy, for interaction produces a greater understanding and knowledge exchange.

IMPACT: So far, the SRI has 32 expert discussions, on issues related to agriculture, climate change, taxation, sustainable development goals, and so on.

SUSTAINABILITY: The Speaker’s initial investment seems to have expanded, as the SRI has now been provided with office space and staff. In addition, the Prime Minister attended its recent 3-year celebration. It has financial sustainability to the extent that parliament’s budget does not depend on government sanctions. It currently has buy-in from both the Treasury and the Opposition. External support comes from academic experts who act as advisors, who are likely to continue being keen to participate, as it gives them a platform to shape Parliament’s ideas.
CASE STUDY - PARTICIPATORY INNOVATION - SIERRA LEONE & THE GAMBIA

NAME OF INNOVATION: Collaborative training in Hansard reporting
COUNTRY: SIERRA LEONE & THE GAMBIA
YEAR: 2016/17

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: WFD, in association with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, supported the Hansard team from the Parliament of the Isle of Man in delivering training sessions on the use of Hansard, to the Parliament of Sierra Leone and, the following year, to the Parliament of The Gambia. This participatory innovation focused on improving democracy through accurately and transparently making available records of parliamentary deliberation to government departments and the wider public.

ORIGIN: The Parliament of Sierra Leone and Gambia struggle to produce accurate records of plenary sessions on a timely basis. This is compounded by historical problems - lack of a database, lack of standardised templates, and loss of old archived reports. It is a problem because, as Musa Foullah from the Parliament of Sierra Leone, put it, ‘timely access to information is one of the core pillars of democracy’. WFD’s collaborative programmes trained staff on both how to use digital Hansard equipment and supplied technological equipment to ‘start them off’.

BUY-IN: The Hansard Team from both Sierra Leone and The Gambia welcomed the training sessions. They were viewed as especially important in The Gambia following the transition of power to the New President and Government, and a failure thus far by the National Assembly to communicate its work to the public. Amidst high public expectations, introducing Hansard was viewed as a key way to ‘bring parliament to the people’.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: Training was intended to be interactive and hands-on.

PRACTICE: The Hansard team from Sierra Leone learned how to shift their practice by attending a two-week study visit in the Isle of Man, where skills taught included how to write and edit Hansard, style guide, and digital recording and logging. There was an emphasis on building technological capabilities through learning how to use digital audio recording equipment. In Sierra Leone, the Hansard team passed on this training to colleagues in a one-day workshop. The following year, the Ilse of Man Hansard team visited The Gambia to deliver similar training. This was followed up by a visit by Musa Foullah from the Sierra Leone team. The training included emphasis on the importance of Hansard for such things as capturing reports, planning workflow, and voting in the Chamber.

IMPACT: The aim was to transform the Hansard record into something through which Parliament could reach out to the wider community. Its goal was to increase accuracy and transparency of reportage. Sufficient time has not elapsed to gauge how far this has been achieved, but it is a positive sign that the training was received so well by both teams. Moreover, not only was the innovation participatory in itself, the training delivered emphasised the importance of communication, teamwork and interdepartmental coordination. This was with the intention of improving the functioning of Hansard reporting - problems such as missed deadlines, slow progress in problem solving, and too much time discussing rather than implementing strategies, could be due to a lack of communication.
SUSTAINABILITY: One of the purposes of the project was to ensure systems are put in place so that the Hansard team can proceed without external support. There were also positive signs of internal sustainability - for example, a recommendation that although the Senior Reporter would initially take responsibility for allocating sections of each sitting for team members to transcribe, other team members would slowly learn how the system worked, to ensure resilience during staff absences. The innovation in The Gambia might become more sustainable if the team there were to join the Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association, a network for Hansard colleagues around the world to exchange ideas and advice. Seeing as The Gambia's Commonwealth membership is currently uncertain, whether this is viable remains to be seen.
CASE STUDY - PARTICIPATORY INNOVATION - SCOTLAND

NAME OF INNOVATION: Public Committee Inquiry
COUNTRY: SCOTLAND
YEAR: 2017

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Young Women Lead (YWL) was created out from a need to address the underrepresentation of young women in politics. Working with the Scottish Parliament, YWCA Scotland (The Young Women’s Movement Scotland) designed and delivered a leadership programme for self-identifying young women. 30 participants from a range of communities came together in the Parliament to run their own Committee inquiry. They chose the topic they want: tackling sexual harassment in schools. From getting together as a Committee in November, they received training, had 3 formal committee meetings, launched their report, and finally graduated in June.

ORIGIN: This innovation stemmed partially from the initiative of a single person - Hayley Forester, who had attended a number of civil society events with YWL. YWL put the proposal together, identifying the idea and need and petitioning for it. Their initial request to the Scottish Parliament (SP) to be a referee to the initiative was declined due to a conflict of interest. However, the SP did read their funding application, for participants to pay for travel and food. Hayley then convinced Senior Management of the idea, by demonstrating potential interest.

BUY-IN: Once Parliamentary Staff agreed, Senior Management worked on getting political buy-in through the Deputy Presiding Officer (DPO). The DPO gave immediate and public support to it, to the extent of agreeing to take on the role of chairing the meetings. Her buy-in has been vital to improving the accessibility of the innovation. She wants to be even more involved in next year’s innovation. It was more difficult to determine how to get other MPs involved, and how to broadcast the event. This was made harder by not knowing exactly what the subject focus or recommendations would be. Essentially, it was hard to convince MPs to care without knowing the impact. This shows the important linkages between buy-in and impact. Now that an impact has been shown, communications strategy can be developed, changing perceptions of the innovation from just an event to an official Committee.

A whole team of staffers worked to support the Committee in the same way that an actual Committee would have. Responses to the call for Committee staff to volunteer for this was muted, with those who already knew about the initiative primarily coming forward.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: Significantly, the participants came from a diverse range of backgrounds, across categories of ‘race’, ethnicity, age, disabilities, education level. They were not all middle-class white feminists. Half of the people participating were from third sector partner organisations; the other half were self-nominated selected processes promoted via Twitter. The SP and YWCA did not want participation to be all self-nominated in case this only led to a certain category of women participating. Crucially, it could lead to the inclusion of more confident people, not the key beneficiaries. Despite these attempts, those participants with experience of a platform to lobby did take more air time. Staffers tried their best to manage this. In preparation for this year, they have done significant work on preparing the participants on how to deliberate inclusively, with such key messages as determining “how they want to work together” and “if you get a minute, then give a minute”. Other aspects have been refined this year to promote equality of participation - for example, there will be no self-nominated Co-Convener, as this was seen to limit equality of participation.
PRACTICE: 60 participants began the Committee - by graduation this number had dropped to 35. To overcome this, participants have been told of the time commitment in advance. The innovation drew on technology - a Facebook page was created as a network that is still going now; and Facebook Live used to make meeting public, rather than minutes.

IMPACT: The second year will be larger as they now know what to expect, how to get MPs more involved, and what the process looks-like. The group created a self-sustaining network and are still in contact with one another. It impacted their personal and professional development, and enabled them to grow in confidence. When the report was produced a question was put to a government minister to ask what they would do with the report, who replied saying they would read and take it up. It has since been decided that the recommendations of the report will be taken up by the relevant committees; the participants of the public committee will give evidence and the deputy first minister with then respond to it all on the same day. The formal committee took it up because the subject falls in their remit and work programme. This demonstrates a fluid integration into the parliamentary process. This allows the CEU to tell participants this year that if they choose the right topic and create the right recommendations, they may have that type of impact.

SUSTAINABILITY: The model is still being refined: when it runs again in its second year, the participants will determine their own procedures of inquiry, rather than have it be told to them. Its organisers are not sure how long they can do it in the current format before buy-in waivers. A potential solution is to not only use ‘Young Women Lead’ to lead and get funding, but also to bring in other groups. For this to work it has to be partnership; the parliament cannot do it on its own. Parliamentary staff are doing this on top of their other work, which means that there is a reliance on volunteers and this need buy-in from senior management and politicians to make staff feel like it is worth it. There are roots to making it more sustainable in the future in terms of the HR parliamentary administration. For example, the parliament can set up several groups on diversity and networks for staff in parliament. The CEU plan contains a plan on diversity which will help to sustain and support these types of innovation.
CASE STUDY - PARTICIPATORY INNOVATION - UK

NAME OF INNOVATION: Parliament-sponsored Citizens’ Assemblies
COUNTRY: UK
YEAR: 2018

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: The first UK Citizens’ Assembly run by Parliament invited participants to discuss solutions to a complex issue that has remained unresolved for decades - sustainable funding for adult social care. Teamed with external organisation Involve, it invited a demographically diverse set of participants to debate and form recommendations that were then presented to the relevant Select Committee.

ORIGIN: A Report by the Social Care Select Committee expressed a growing recognition among clerks that Committees needed to expand the way they gathered evidence. The external organisation Involve was brought in to assist.

BUY-IN: It was an internal move, prompted by a recognition that current methods of gathering evidence were not sufficient. It was encouraged by engagement practices used by Ireland’s Citizens’ Assembly and the Welsh Assembly.

EQUITY OF PARTICIPATION: The recruitment process was geared to ensure demographic representation, taking into consideration such factors as age; gender; ethnicity; socio-economic group; region of country; attitude toward government policy. Once somebody expressed an interest in participating, they received calls and emails intended to make them feel welcome. A significant risk was that the Citizens’ Assembly would appear as simply another way for MPs to be involved in the decision-making process. This was avoided by the proceedings being run by an extra-parliamentary actor, Involve, which oversaw MPs soliciting questions and giving evidence, to help guarantee political neutrality.

PRACTICE: The group discussions, run by trained facilitators, were a staged process in which people could form and test their own views. The goal was for participants would start with personal testimony and story-telling, then offer analysis by interrogating their own values and principles , before moving to collective decision-making. It was accepted that this process would be inevitably messy, rather than linear. Natural variation in participants’ language proficiency was also spotted early on by facilitators, who then worked out how to ensure inclusive participation.

IMPACT: The Select Committee drew heavily on the findings of the Citizens’ Assembly, referencing it throughout its subsequent report. Participants found the experience worthwhile, on average rating their time 9.5/10. All agreed that ‘assemblies like this should be used more often to inform government and parliament decision-making’. 
SUSTAINABILITY: There is a danger that, especially considering the time and resource restrictions, Citizens’ Assemblies can become add-ons to the standard Committee process and are not incorporated into decision-making. These processes only work with sufficient buy-in from those involved. Involve was of the opinion that they require a higher budget and awareness-raising. There is also a need to develop skills within Parliament on how to commission a Citizens’ Assembly. Lastly, the success of this innovation may require a change in political culture. Some MPs believe that their representative function makes them the voice of the people, and are unconvinced by broader ideas.
CASE STUDY - PARTICIPATORY INNOVATION - JAMAICA

NAME OF INNOVATION: Participatory budgeting through TellYourMPjm
COUNTRY: Jamaica
YEAR: 2018/19

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is made up of money put aside by the Jamaican government for MPs to fund development projects in their constituency. MPs are required by law to hold CDF consultation meetings in their constituencies to help decide which projects to implement. However, participation levels are typically low. The process lacks resources and usage of digital technologies, as well as a clear strategy for achieving diverse and substantive participation. TellYourMPjm is a pilot initiative in participatory budgeting. A website and app have been introduced to make CDF consultations more accessible, increasing both the quantity and diversity of citizen participation.

ORIGIN: Research in 2016 into Open Budgeting practices in Jamaica highlighted low levels of knowledge, interest and trust in the National Budget among citizens, especially young people. MP Julian Robinson of the South East St. Andrew (SESA) constituency, formerly the Minister of Technology, has long advocated citizen participation. Along with others in the constituency office, he agreed to trial the TellYourPMjm pilot in SESA.

BUY-IN: MP Robinson and the constituency office introduced the innovation at various consultation meetings and facilitated active dialogue and engagement with community-based organisations. MP Robinson has also used his own online platforms to support the social media publicity. Significantly, the innovation is in collaboration with the Caribbean Open Institute (a regional coalition that promotes open government and data) and the SlashRoots Foundation (a NGO which seeks to improve government’s digital interactions with citizens).

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: The project seeks to increase diversity as well as quantity of participation. In particular, it seeks to create new entry points for underrepresented groups such as women’s associations and disabled persons to call for the spending of the community development fund on their needs.

PRACTICE: The technology platform, inspired by the Porte Alegre model, is designed around the three stages of the participatory budgeting process: consultation, voting and monitoring. It is hoped that the pilot will be used to create a toolkit, including online and offline consultation and mobilisation tactics, to support a participatory budgeting model replicable across Jamaica.

IMPACT: As the innovation is still at pilot stage, its impact is difficult to assess. Certainly, since the launch, several MPs have expressed strong interest in their constituencies being considered in future expansion. However, the SESA constituency already has a distinctive history of consistent levels of citizen engagement in the CDF process. It is uncertain, therefore, how far success in this constituency would be replicated elsewhere.
SUSTAINABILITY: To expand into other constituencies, the project will require adoption by the Office of the Prime Minister. MPs must be supported in engaging their constituents, rather than case that technology alone being relied upon to stimulate behavioural change.
CASE STUDY - IMPULSIVE INNOVATION - INDIA

NAME OF INNOVATION: ‘Zero Hour’ in the Lok Sabha
COUNTRY: INDIA
YEAR: UNKNOWN

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: The Indian parliament only meets three times a year and MPs must follow the rules in terms of giving notice for topics for discussion. The innovation of ‘Zero Hour’ allows MPs to put something on the agenda without following the rules for giving notice. MPs can place on a paper the issue that they want to have debated into a box in front of the Speaker’s office that the Speaker reads and decides if it will be debated.

ORIGIN: This innovation has come from MPs who consider the rules of giving notice to be restrictive on urgent matters.

BUY-IN: MPs are incredibly committed to this innovation, as shown by the fact that 80-90% of MPs have raised a ‘Zero Hour’ issue. There have been occasions in the past that Speakers have tried to refuse to allow these issues to be debated.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: ‘Zero Hour’ promotes inclusivity to raise issues that are not political, or which are not clearly either government or non-government business. For backbencher MPs, ‘Zero Hour’ helps the inclusion of backbencher MPs especially. Their participation is limited because time constraints in the Indian Parliament mean that most time is spent on government business, which party MPs speak on. In ‘Zero Hour’ it is an MPs’ individual initiative which leads to their participation, not party political determination or blocking. It is ultimately up to the Speaker to decide on whether the matter is urgent and of national importance.

PRACTICE: ‘Zero Hour’ lasts for an hour every day while Parliament is sitting. It is now so entrenched as to not be unusual.

IMPACT: It directly impacts the participation of MPs in parliamentary proceedings and enables them to have a louder voice in raising issues in the House. It cuts through the regular political processes and allow important political issues to come to parliament, which might otherwise be prevented by political partisanship.
SUSTAINABILITY: Speakers do not always enjoy accommodating this innovation - it is often discussed at their annual conference in terms of how to get rid of it. However, the need for it and demand from MPs is so strong that instead they started to formalise the sanctity of the innovation. The consider whether the issue is important to the entire country or just to a constituency. If it is a national issue then it will get raised in ‘Zero Hour’, between 12h00 and 13h00. If it is a local issue, the Speaker will ask the MP to raise it at the end of the day or in another session. In this way, Speakers are not only refining the innovation and thereby contributing to its effectiveness, they are preserving its original, impulsive, MP-driven, function. The fact that this ‘disruptive’ innovation now benefits from rulings to safeguard its importance indicates its potential for longevity.
NAME OF INNOVATION: Pacific ‘Floating’ Parliamentary Budget Office
COUNTRY: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu
YEAR: 2018

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Small Pacific Parliaments contain few experts equipped to carry out budget oversight. This jeopardises not only effective budget scrutiny but also countries’ eligibility for external assistance, as this is increasingly dependent on solid public financial management systems. The short-term fix of bringing in international expertise does not develop in-country Parliamentary capacity. The ‘floating’ budget office is a collaborative process which delivers budget analysis and build Parliamentary capacity.

ORIGIN: After democracy was restored in Fiji in 2014, its Parliament needed to rapidly rebuild institutional capacity. It requested support from UNDP’s Pacific Parliament Effectiveness Initiative (PPEI). In response, experts from international Parliaments (including Australia, New Zealand and the UK) carried out an intensive budget analysis, under the leadership of the Fiji Parliamentary secretariat. Two years later, it was agreed that this should involve Parliaments within the region, and develop into a mutual learning process. In 2017, a Tongan Parliamentary staff member participated and soon after the innovation was born - through a ‘floating’ budget office, Parliamentary secretariat staff from different islands would replicate the Fiji model of rapid budget analysis.

BUY-IN: Many significant actors were involved - UNDP, international experts, different Pacific Island Parliaments. Significantly, the innovation arose out of Pacific Islands requesting support, rather than it being imposed upon them.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION: The floating budget office’s core goal is to expand the knowledge, and thus the authority, of secretariat staff responsible for budget analysis. Within this has been a specific focus on gender. The floating budget office itself has been approximately gender-equal since inception and Fiji has incorporated a gender impact assessment of the budget into its analysis process [as seen in other case study]. An association of women Parliamentary clerks works specifically to support women’s leadership within the Pacific Island Parliamentary secretariats.

PRACTICE: The first instance of the office outside Fiji was organised in early 2018 to provide rapid analysis of the proposed national budget in the Solomon Islands. It involved secretariat staff from Fiji, Tonga, Australia and New Zealand, led by the Solomon Islands parliamentary secretariat. The international budget office team members were paired with Solomon Islands parliamentary researchers and assigned ministries’ draft budgets to work on. Each team presented detailed but accessible briefing notes to MPs.
IMPACT: Tonga, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu have since held offices, bringing the total so far to five. Working with the office team means that host staff are able to produce far more detailed budget materials. This change in capacity and quality has led to many Pacific Parliaments requesting to participate. It is likely to enhance their eligibility for budget support by donor countries.

SUSTAINABILITY: This innovation has a sustainable learning approach built-in. By participating in the budget analysis process in another country, staff are equipped both to host one in their own Parliaments, and to share their enhanced knowledge at future missions. An evaluation of the UNDP PPEI programme that has funded the process underlined the value added through building capacity through South-South and triangular cooperation. The most significant innovation here is breaking from the traditional North-South development modality, which can result in ‘talking to’ rather than ‘working with’ developing country Parliaments. The innovation also supports the priority that Pacific Island states have given to regional collaboration as a means to effectively fulfil each country’s sovereign responsibilities.
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Tschentscher, A. et al. (2009) ‘Deliberation in Parliaments: Research Objectives and Preliminary Results of the Bern Center for Interdisciplinary Deliberation Studies (BIDS)’, *Legisprudence*


UK Parliament of Westminster (2017) *Innovation for Select Committee Engagement*
APPENDIX
Australia - Changes to rules to allow breastfeeding in Parliament (2016)
Fiji - Inclusion of gender scrutiny in Parliament’s Standing Orders (2014)
Gambia - Digitalisation of Hansard reporting and outsourcing (2018)
India - Disruptions and Zero Motions in the Lok Sabha (ongoing)
India - Speaker’s Research
India - Government Assurances Committee (2018)
Jamaica - Participatory budgeting through TellYourMPjm (2018/19)
Pacific Islands - Floating budget office (2018)
Scotland - Public committee training & inquiry
Sierra Leone - Digitalisation of Hansard reporting and outsourcing (2017)
Sierra Leone - Public outreach (Aug 2018)
Sierra Leone - Story-telling in the house (2018)
Sierra Leone - Speaker election process (2018)
Uganda - Parliamentary Week and Budget Week (forthcoming, 2018)
Uganda - Gathering knowledge for budget oversight (2018)
Uganda - Sitting on the floor of the House (2016)
Uganda - Parliamentary forums as intra-/extra-parliamentary body (2017)
UK - Online evidence check forum (2016)
UK - Citizens’ Assembly on finding a sustainable solution to funding Adult Social Care (2018)
UK - First ever select committee session to be live-streamed from abroad (2018)
Wales - Going out to sea to record semi-structured interviews for the Environment Bill (mid-2015)
Wales - Alcohol substance abuse committee inquiry methods (early 2015)
Wales - Public engagement committee inquiry methods (mid-2016)
Wales - Parenting and employment committee inquiry methods (early-2018)
Wales - State of roads inquiry committee inquiry methods (June 2018)
**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**Origin:** whether the innovation has its origins in a thematic issue; whether it stems from broader social norms and values or is the result of an internal shift in political culture tells us something interesting about the conditions needed to make inclusive politics and representation happen.

- How did the innovation/practice originate?
- Which actors were involved?
- To what extent does the practice stem from MPs demanding this practice?
- To what extent does the practice stem from CSOs/the public demanding this practice?
- To what extent does the evolution of the practice reflect broader social and cultural norms related to parliamentary representation?
- How long did it take for the innovation to get off the ground?
- What were the three key factors that made this innovation necessary?

**Buy-in:** the degree to which MPs and observers believe in the necessity of the innovation and its potential to enable more legitimate outcomes or parliamentary reform tells us something about the degree to which a parliament’s investment in the innovation has the potential to affect change or is a façade.

- How strongly do actors (MPs, citizens, officials, staff) believe the innovation helps MPs to bring about a more inclusive form of representation?
- What would diminish this overall level of buy-in?

**Equality of participation:** a key measure of the value for any inclusive innovation is the degree to which it facilitates overall improvement in levels of equality of participation within parliamentary processes, or those that inform them. An evident relationship between the innovation and the equality of participation of individual MPs is needed to demonstrate its value.

- What considerations were made of hidden or known barriers to participation or engagement?
- What barriers have been consciously removed in order to ensure all MPs or citizens or informants are able to engage on an equal basis?
- What was the impact of these measures?
- What else could be done to achieve this equality of participation/what do you think should be done?

**Practice:** the styles and practices of debate that the innovation promotes gives an indication of the type of deliberation that is needed to achieve authentic inclusion, and its overall effectiveness at achieving this.

- What does the practice of this innovation look like in terms of styles of debate and participation?
- Are these practices representative of the people as a whole, e.g. their different styles of speaking, or manners of participation?
**Impact:** whether an innovation impacts policy decisions, political culture, or a parliament’s ability to generate public reason tells us something interesting about the types of innovation needed to achieve particular outcomes that may enable us to develop innovations to achieve specific outcomes.

- What is the main impact of this innovation? This could be specific, or it can be symbolic. It could relate to parliamentary legitimacy or political culture. It can relate to all three.
- Who are the beneficiaries of this innovation? This could be divided between the different actors involved or referent groups.

**Sustainability:** this criteria links to the level of buy-in an innovation holds. The political, financial or other resource cost of implementing an innovation will give an indication of how sustainable it is, all of which can help us to consider ways to overcome any potential challenges to the longer-term use and impact of an innovation.

- What will it take for this innovation to continue and to improve?
- Does the parliament hold these resources and is there appetite for this?