

CFA Observer Briefing

Deliberative Processes

Deliberative processes such as the Convention of the Future Armenian (CFA) support participants to engage with learning resources and interact with speakers, who provide input to support participants' deliberations. These processes are different to other research methods, like surveys or focus groups. Participants have time to dig deep into a topic, to develop their own thoughts through reflection and discussion, and to deliberate on the evidence and arguments provided by the speakers.

A good deliberative process should be fair, with no in-built bias, and non-confrontational, with no faction or viewpoint allowed to dominate. All participants are treated with respect and enabled to understand and question others' claims and knowledge. They hear views from speakers, witnesses and from fellow Assembly members who can bring their experience and knowledge into the discussions. Participants are given opportunities to question or challenge those they hear from.

About the Convention of the Future Armenian

On March 10-12, 2023, the first Convention of the Future Armenian will be held, based on the "citizens' assembly" model.

200 participants from the Republic of Armenia, Artsakh and diaspora, selected through transparent drawing process, will participate in the Convention, who will ensure the proportion of gender, age, educational level and community area. They will get a chance to openly discuss possible policies and programs and to adopt recommendations for the realization of those goals.

Thereby, the FUTURE ARMENIAN Initiative serves as a platform that unites pan-Armenian knowledge and potential in the process of finding solutions to the problems that the Armenian people face.

The Convention consists of three stages:

- Stage 1: Preparation: Expert committees design possible development scenarios on each goal and, on each of these, offer relevant recommendations with a comprehensive expert justification.
- Stage 2: The Convention: Selected participants will receive reports, scenarios and suggestions prepared by expert committees. All sessions will be facilitated by professional facilitators. All applicants will have the opportunity to participate and initiate discussion threads on the online platform.
- Stage 3: Implementation: The adopted recommendations as a comprehensive package of actions will be presented by The FUTURE ARMENIAN Initiative to the partner network (established in parallel with Stages 1 and 2) which, through joint efforts, will bring to life the recommendations

adopted by the Convention participants. The partner network is expected to consist of: state bodies, private sector and civil society organizations, international partners, charity associations and individuals from across the Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora.

The aim of the FUTURE ARMENIAN Initiative is to promote a pan-Armenian dialogue and unite the national potential for finding sustainable solutions to the problems the Armenian people face. The above-mentioned three-phase model was recommended to achieve this aim. As the first attempt to apply the model, the Artsakh Forum of the Future Armenian was held in May 2022 on the topic “Growing population” in Artsakh.

Our vision is a better future of Armenia, which we are shaping today and together.

This document sets out:

- The value of observing deliberative engagement processes
- Guidance for observers and a note on confidentiality
- Providing observer feedback.

The Value of Observing Deliberative Engagement Processes

Observation can be one of the best ways of learning about deliberative engagement processes. In particular, small group discussions provide insight on the thought processing that forms final outputs, on different ways people think about the technical and complex topics, as well as the positive attitude and enthusiasm that tends to accompany discussions. Observers can also provide valuable feedback on the conclusion of a session, providing insights that may be valuable in further sessions. Finally, observers create additional credibility in the Assembly from the participants' point of view: people spend their time listening and observing the discussions, which indicates their responsible attitude towards the process and the opinions of those who participate in it. **Guidance for Observers**

To realize these benefits, it is crucial that observers understand and follow few simple requirements, so that their presence does not impact the process in ways that might harm the integrity of the project or the robustness of its findings.

When observing plenary sessions, please always remain quiet. The lead facilitator will point to the presence of observers at the start of a session, but you won't be invited to introduce yourself.

If you are observing small group discussions, you will be assigned a specific table to join and should remain there until the ongoing discussion ends.

When observing group discussions, you would be asked to:

- not to take pictures or record the conversations on digital devices,
- to keep in mind that the facilitator has a specific task, and a series of agreed questions, which may be different to the questions you would like to ask,
- not to distract the participants from their discussions,

- not to intervene or contribute to the discussions.

There are a few additional things to bear in mind:

- The participants will not be experts in the topics the Convention is addressing. The Convention's participants will bring their own life experiences to the discussion and integrate that with what they are learning and sharing from the information materials and each other. You may well hear things that you disagree with or that you think are incorrect or misinformed.
- Please do not:
 - attempt to correct participants;
 - be defensive if participants are disparaging about things in which you have an interest or role;
 - echo or support any views expressed by participants.

Safeguarding the Privacy of the Participants

Observers will endeavor to ensure the privacy of the participants. Owing to the diverse cultural, familial, and political environments that Convention's Members will be living in, they have been offered the choice to participate in the Convention on the Future Armenian anonymously.

While participants may choose to publicly proclaim their involvement, speak to the press, and put themselves forward to represent the CFA at events, there is no obligation for them to do so. We, therefore, have a collective responsibility to maintain their right to privacy and the confidentiality of the proceedings.

Video recordings will be made by the CFA's team for external communication purpose and further research. Quotes will only be shared by the CFA's team according to Chatham House Rules. Observers are not permitted to take or share pictures of the CFA proceedings.

By agreeing to observe the CFA, observers obligate to follow the rules defined and to safeguard the privacy of the participants.