



PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience: Program for the Integral Modernization of Neighborhood Centers in the City of Córdoba		
Name of the city/region: Cordoba		
Country: Argentina		
Institution presenting the candidacy: Municipality of Cordoba		
Start date of the experience: March 2021		
End date of the experience: December 2021		
Type of candidacy	Innovation on an existing experience	X
Type of experience	E-government/open government	X
	Citizen initiative	X
Objective of the experience	Community empowerment	X
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy “ecosystem”	X
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X
Territorial area	All the territory	X
Thematic area	Governance	X
	Urban management	X
	Decentralization	X
	Legal regulations	X

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

<p>Main objective of the innovative experience:</p> <p>To provide the Neighborhood Centers (CV: <i>Centros Vecinales</i>) of the city of Córdoba with institutional and management relationship capacity as protagonists of the development of their neighborhoods and promoters of citizen participation in their jurisdiction in order to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of their neighbors.</p>
<p>How have you achieved this objective?</p> <p>The city of Córdoba has 505 neighborhoods and 328 Neighborhood Centers (CV). The current ordinance defines the CVs as non-profit neighborhood associations, with participation in the municipal management, representative of the neighbors of the neighborhood or sector</p>



of its jurisdiction, constituted for the satisfaction of their common needs and the improvement of their quality of life, based on principles of democratic participation, mutual collaboration and neighborhood solidarity. In 2020, Ordinance No. 13,006 was put into effect authorizing the CVs to be hired by the Municipality of Córdoba to perform tasks arising from their adhesion to the Neighborhood Development Self-Management Regime.

Thus, a decentralized system was formalized that starts at the Municipality, goes through the Community Participation Centers, municipal bodies established in the Municipal Charter, and now reaches the CV. In this way, each CV can survey the most pressing needs of its area, and implement public policies in conjunction with the municipality.

In 2021, the Neighborhood Participation Boards and the Neighborhood Participatory Budget, instruments of decentralization established by the Municipal Charter and regulated since 2009, were implemented.

To what extent has this objective been achieved?

- Normalization and implementation of Neighborhood Centers (CV) and Neighborhood Commissions.
- Growing trend in the adhesion of CVs to the Neighborhood Development Self-Management Regime.
- Citizen App that works in pilot format with the CVs. Through this application, neighborhood leaders can report various problems related to the provision of public services in the city, such as lighting, potholes, garbage, among others.
- 13 Neighborhood Participation Boards (JPV) in operation and organized to formulate the Municipal District Plan (PDM), which includes the CVs and other neighborhood organizations.
- Formation of an institutional support network promoted by the Secretariat of Citizen Participation belonging to the Municipality of Córdoba, made up of private and public stakeholders and academia: the National University of Villa María, the Nuestra Córdoba Network, Conectando Córdoba, Siendo Puente, the Professional Council of Economic Sciences and the Bank of the Province of Córdoba.

Dimensions of the experience

Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?

The most innovative element is the deepening of decentralization in the city of Córdoba through the Neighborhood Centers (CV), carrying out actions that contribute to their institutional strengthening. In addition, this objective is complemented with the implementation of other institutions and instruments of citizen participation established in the Municipal Charter.

Another relevant issue is the alignment between the local citizen participation policy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the operation of the Community Participation Centers (CPC), the self-management process of the CVs for neighborhood development and the neighborhood participatory budget are transversal to SDGs 8, 10, 11, 15 and 16.

Within the operation of the CPCs, reference is made to the operational deconcentration and the adaptation of the operation to the COVID-19 protocols (SDGs 10 and 16).



In turn, the self-management of the CVs promotes the participation of other civil society organizations in the city (SDGs 8, 11, 16 and 17).

On the other hand, the neighborhood participatory budget consists of budget workshops to address the demands of neighbors (SDGs 11,15,16).

To what extent is the procedure transferable?

The initiative is transferable, since almost all cities in the world have some kind of internal subdivision (neighborhood centers, communes, etc.), which would allow the deployment of activities aimed at decentralization and citizen participation.

It should be noted that the neighborhood meeting experience is present in different localities and cities around the world, committed to fostering social cohesion and citizen participation in public affairs.

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

This initiative was promoted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led public agencies and civil society to reflect on participation methodologies and the role of Neighborhood Centers, as institutions, lacking the resources to face the new scenario.

In this sense, the municipal government explored new modalities of participation in virtuality and new tools to strengthen the management capacities of formalized participatory institutions to ensure their efficiency and effectiveness of their actions in the neighborhood.

How has the experience been coordinated with other actors and processes?

This initiative was designed contemplating the involvement of the different governmental areas (Secretariats, Undersecretariats and Directorates) to coordinate their actions in the neighborhoods, announce upcoming activities, and articulate new forms of interaction. In particular, efforts were articulated with the areas of environment, modernization, health, and government.

There is also an institutional support network promoted by this municipal administration and made up of the following institutions: Universidad Nacional de Villa María; Red Nuestra Córdoba, Conectando Córdoba and Siendo Puente; Consejo Profesional de Ciencias Económicas de la Provincia de Córdoba; Banco de la Provincia de Córdoba; and Gobierno de la Provincia de Córdoba, through the Dirección de Inspección de Personas Jurídicas.

What has been the level of co-responsibility?

The Neighborhood Centers and the different entities (governmental, academic and social organizations) work together to improve the relationship between the Neighborhood Centers and the Municipality of Córdoba to strengthen the role of the Neighborhood Centers as protagonists of the progress of the neighbors and the development of the neighborhoods in their jurisdiction.

Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

The Citizen Participation area conducted a survey of Neighborhood Centers to diagnose the status of institutional capacities, as well as the demands and obstacles encountered by these entities in their neighborhood activities. The data collected will be used to build the baselines of the measurement indicators that will allow measuring the progress of the initiative's results.

At this moment, the area promoting this initiative is formulating the indicators with their baselines and targets, as well as the different sources of verification.

**Summary of the experience**

The Municipality of Cordoba (Argentina) developed the Municipal Decentralisation and Deconcentration Plan, to achieve proximity to the neighbours of the city. The aim is to provide the Neighbourhood Centres (CV : Centros Vecinales in Spanish) with governance capacity in the new context of complexities and challenges they face.

The following topics of common interest were identified as a result of the joint work of the CV authorities and the Municipality of Cordoba:

- Greater transparency in the electoral processes for new authorities.
- Encouraging the participation of young people over 16 years of age.
- Gender perspective in the Neighbourhood Centres.
- Further extension of mandates to 3 years.
- Incorporation of the Neighbourhood Centres into the *Ciudadano Digital* (CIDI) platform.

The main actions carried out are the following.

Enactment of Ordinance N°13.006/20, which authorises the CVs to be contracted by the Municipality of Cordoba to carry out tasks arising from their adherence to the Neighbourhood Development Self-Management Regime. In this way, the contracting ordinance is modified in order to be able to contract CVs directly from the Municipal State.

A decentralised system has been structured which is crystallised through the Community Participation Centres (CPC): municipal bodies established in the Municipal Charter, completed with the action of the CVs. In this way, each CV will be able to survey the most pressing needs of its area and implement public policies in conjunction with the Municipality of Córdoba.

In 2021, the Neighbourhood Participation Boards and the Neighbourhood Participatory Budget were set up; both instruments of decentralisation have been established in the Municipal Charter and regulated since 2009.

At the same time, there is a set of actions that accompany the initiative to move towards a more dynamic and effective relationship with the CVs as protagonists of the progress of the neighbours in a joint work with the Municipality of Cordoba. These include: agreements with governmental, professional and social institutions; economic aid, among others.

Another mechanism for participation and visibility is the Sowing Citizenship Programme aimed at raising awareness, training and technical assistance to the CVs and social organisations in the city, through alliances with public and private actors in the city.