



PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience: Planning and Transforming Iztapalapa		
Name of the city/region: Iztapalapa, City of Mexico		
Country: Mexico		
Institution presenting the candidacy: Alcaldía de Iztapalapa (Municipality of Iztapalapa)		
Start date of the experience: March 2019		
End date of the experience: Ongoing		
Type of candidacy	Innovation on an existing experience	X
Type of experience	Urban planning	X
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	X
	Other (specify): Participatory Strategic Planning for Local Development	X
Objective of the experience	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion	X
	Community empowerment	X
	To empower non-organised citizens	X
	To increase citizen’s rights in terms of political participation	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
Territorial area	All the territory	X
	Neighbourhood	X
Thematic area	Governance	X
	Urban management	X
	New social movements and associationism	X
	Decentralization	X
	Local development	X
	Training/learning	X
	Social inclusion	X



PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

Main objective of the innovative experience:

“Community empowerment”

Strengthen the culture of citizen participation and community action to democratize the exercise of government through Participatory Planning Processes in the collective construction of Local Community Development Agendas and in the self-management and co-management of strategies, projects and social and urban planning actions that stimulate the democratic and transformative participation of citizens at the neighborhood level.

How have you achieved this objective?

Promoting Participatory Planning Processes by neighborhood, village or housing unit, starting by convening Community Assemblies and integrating Planning Collectives, conducting territorial tours, analyzing and prioritizing local problems, developing a vision for the future and proposing strategies and actions to achieve that vision. The results are integrated into a Local Agenda for Community Development that is fed back and validated through Community Assemblies, incorporating the opinion of the inhabitants as a whole.

The planning process is consolidated through the follow-up of the Planning Collectives in order to concretize the Agendas, incorporating more inhabitants in the management of the projects and actions planned to transform the territory and the life of the community.

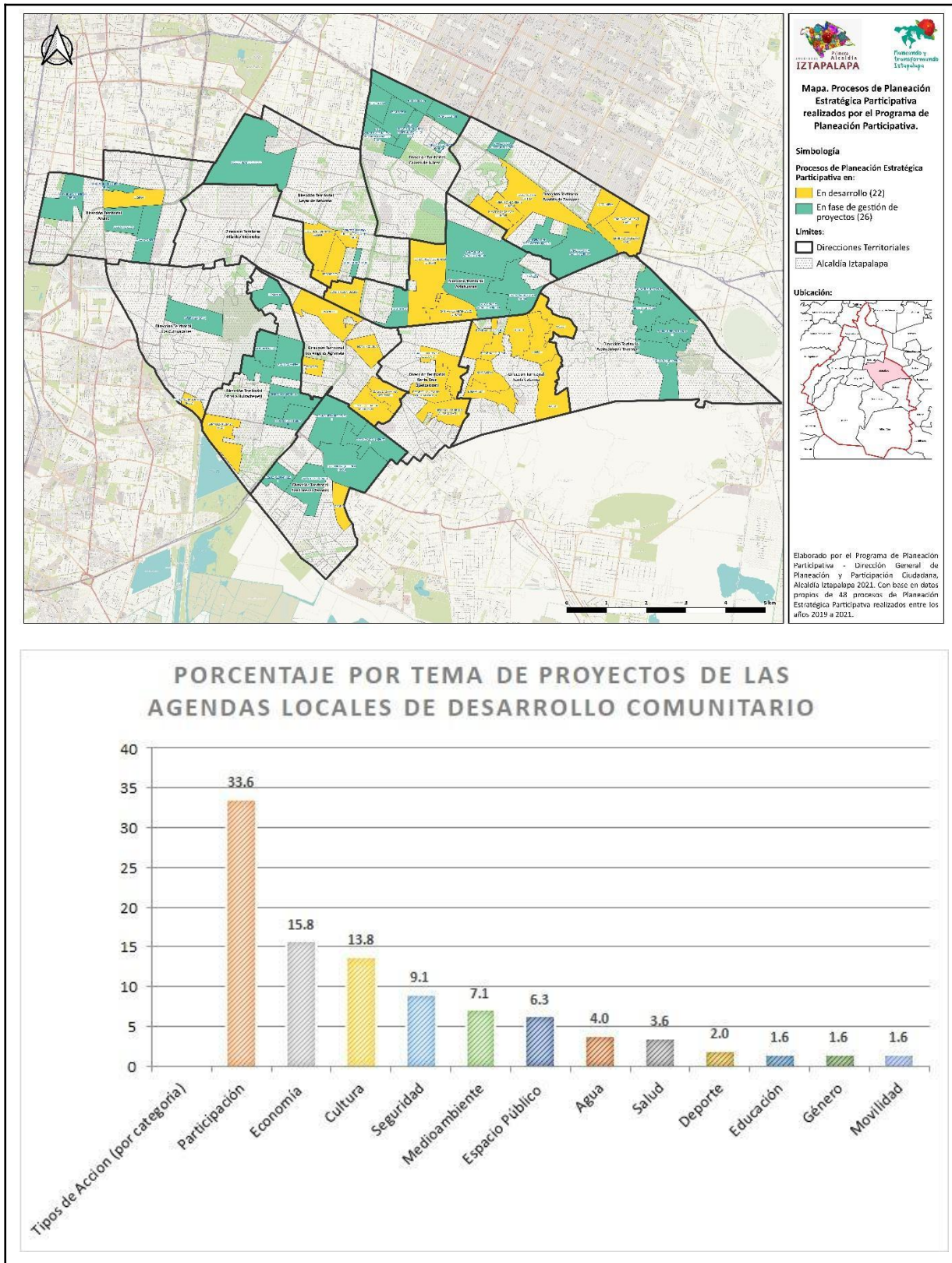
To stimulate community participation and co-creation in the Planning Processes and in the Planning Collectives, other methodological ways have been designed, based on traditions, art and culture: Radio Bocinas, Community Mural Painting, Tequios Workshops, Workshops for Children and Cultural Days of Historical Memory, inviting the community to the Planning Workshops and sharing the results of collective action in the creation of local identity, collective project and in the improvement of life and community spaces.

To what extent has this objective been achieved?

Out of 123 prioritized *colonias* (neighborhoods), given their low level of development and high crime rate, planning processes are being developed in 48 neighborhoods, neighborhoods, towns, housing units, which are in various stages, which means a quantitative progress of almost 40%, covering 384,468 people, i.e. 20.9% of the total inhabitants of the municipality.

The qualitative progress can be positively evaluated in that the planning collectives have proposed 367 community projects and actions in 12 areas: Participation (34%), Economy (16%), Culture (14%), Safety (9%), Environment (7%), Public Space (6%), Water (4%), Health (3%), Gender (2%), Sports (2%), Mobility (2%) and Education (1%), which contribute to the planning of both neighborhood and district development.

In addition, at least 80 actions have already been carried out in collaboration between the Planning Collectives and various government areas of the Mayor's Office that have followed up on the Agendas and have been positively valued by all parties.





Dimensions of the experience

Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?

The processes of Participatory Strategic Planning proposed by the Mayor's Office of Iztapalapa are based on some popular experiences of Participatory Planning "from below" developed by social and civil organizations. Its generalized implementation as a public policy has been a highly innovative element in the exercise of government in Iztapalapa, being the only known experience of this type in Mexico City.

This program has allowed the expansion of the ecosystem of democracy, creating new spaces for the exercise of participatory democracy such as those already mentioned, in all of which popular education and communication are central elements for the formation and construction of active, critical and participatory citizenship.

Another innovative element is the broadening of participation beyond citizenship and formal and traditional representation, since any person takes part regardless of gender, religion, socioeconomic status, place of origin or age. Ultimately, the "Planning and Transforming Iztapalapa" Program has succeeded in fostering a citizen culture of democratic participation and places diversity as a criterion for democratic inclusion.

This experience has been highly stimulating and innovative because it has also represented the enrichment of representative democracy and a profound questioning of the bureaucratic and technocratic culture, through exercises of participatory democracy, deepening the democratization of social relations within the communities, of the government-citizenship relationship and of public decision making.

To what extent is the procedure transferable?

We consider that the experience is fully transferable in all its elements, conceptual, technical, methodological, formative and instrumental, with a good probability of replicability and success, since it has been tested in very diverse social and territorial contexts with positive results in all cases.

Even in the context of the pandemic, it has been possible to move forward with the implementation of the Participatory Strategic Planning processes through virtual means, which means a good capacity for adaptability and transferability through these means. It has been well accepted and trusted by the local population, which has shown the high priority given to the continuity of their participation at the virtual level despite their low access to ICTs.

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

The experience takes place in a favorable political context for its implementation. It has the clear political will of a government determined to take democracy and participation to a deeper level, convinced of strengthening popular protagonism, with the vision of exercising a territorial action with great government-community interaction, of taking the government to the neighborhoods.

The legal, progressive and rights-based framework, expressed in the Constitution of Mexico City, which recognizes the Right to the City, participatory democracy and citizen participation as fundamental axes of the political life of the city, favors the promotion of this experience.

The Program began in neighborhoods with a high incidence of crime as part of a strategy to combat violence based on citizen participation. Given this social and territorial context, the



processes are carried out in visible public spaces that enable a safe dialogue. In order to increase the involvement of people with diverse conditions, inclusive participation was promoted, without any discrimination whatsoever. All this has generated trust and social enthusiasm that has made the development of the processes viable.

It does not require substantial resources to implement the various activities involved in the process, except for a committed, sensitive and empathetic interdisciplinary team, which promotes the development of attitudes, values, skills and citizenship abilities in the participants for their interaction in the public sphere.

The health emergency triggered the need to create ways of participatory planning at the virtual level, adapting the methodologies to make the continuity of the Participatory Strategic Planning processes feasible, with its limits.

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

The experience has linked, at different levels, social movements, cultural and sports collectives, traditional organizations and others present in the communities.

It has collaborated with governmental, academic and autonomous organizations such as the Human Rights Commission of Mexico City, the UACM (Universidad Autónoma Ciudad de México) and various agencies of the Government of Mexico City and the Federal Government. It has also had the support of social and civil organizations such as UPREZ, Asamblea comunitaria Miravalle, Coordinadora El Molino and Copevi, among others, to enhance knowledge and weave collaborative networks that have strengthened the development of the experience.

The Participatory Strategic Planning processes have articulated the different areas, actions and programs of the Municipality on a daily basis, seeking to implement the projects included in the Local Agendas, such as urban gardens, community museums and historical archives, social and solidarity economy, environment, civil protection, citizen security, women's empowerment, recovery of public spaces, neighborhood communication, as well as to manage different services.

The processes have fostered a new form of government-citizen articulation in various areas of government management. The population has strengthened its vision and confidence, leading it to participate more actively in other strategic projects of the Mayor's Office, such as the UTOPIAS (Transformation and Organization Units for Inclusion and Social Harmony). And, the government has learned to work with citizen participation and value its relevance.

What has been the level of co-responsibility?

The Municipality, through the Participatory Planning Unit, promotes, provides technical and methodological guidance, facilitates and accompanies the community planning processes, with the permanent support of the 13 Territorial Directorates and the people's servants and community promoters assigned to each neighborhood, as well as the specific collaboration of 5 central areas of the Municipality linked to the development of projects of the Local Agendas.

The Planning Collectives, as an organized community, actively participate in the construction of their local Agendas, becoming aware as subjects of rights and key actors for the transformation of their communities, promoting the participation of more inhabitants in the feedback and validation of the Agendas and in the implementation of planned actions and projects. They have also been actively involved in other strategic actions promoted by the government, such as the construction of UTOPIAS and Caminos Seguros, and have also



managed multiple services (pruning, removal of clandestine dumps, rehabilitation of spaces, among others).

The coordinated work of the different areas of the Municipality has facilitated the enrichment of the programs or projects emanating from the Agendas as well as their implementation with the participation of the population, adapting the actions to the needs of each community, strengthening the co-responsibility between government and citizens.

Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

Monitoring mechanisms have been implemented by the operational teams throughout the development of the Participatory Strategic Planning Processes session by session to improve the methodological design, work instruments, communication with the community and results, using "rubrics" that evaluate the learning and products achieved.

The "rubrics" and individual and group interviews were also applied as monitoring instruments with the participating communities in at least three moments of the process: self-diagnosis, construction of imaginaries, and planning of projects and actions.

We have not yet carried out an evaluation process at the level of design, process or effects, results and impacts.

Summary of the experience

The "**Planning and Transforming Iztapalapa**" programme seeks to strengthen the organisational capacities of communities to manage their present and future, as well as to contribute to the construction of citizenship and democratic, participatory, supportive and inclusive governance in Iztapalapa. It proposes democratising the exercise of government and building a new government-citizen relationship in decision-making in the public sphere, in the implementation of participatory actions and in the planning of social and urban development hand in hand with the communities. This initiative has had an impact in advancing the mainstreaming of participatory democracy and citizen participation in other areas and actions of government, opening a path that has been little explored in the governmental sphere to stimulate citizen participation in the improvement of living conditions and coexistence in the communities of Iztapalapa and in the full exercise of their rights.

The programme has strengthened citizen capacities for the construction of a critical, active, participatory, democratic and transformative citizenship, through the implementation of planning, training and action processes, with participatory and creative methodologies incorporating traditions, art and culture; processes that favour local community development through horizontal dialogue, reflection, analysis and collective formulation of proposals, consultation, co-management and self-management of strategies and priority projects for the community.

It has managed to promote community organisation and cohesion through the formation of Planning Collectives and the active involvement of Community Assemblies in the construction of Local Agendas for Community Development that contain the community's feelings, imagination, vision, strategies, projects with social and urban impact, priority actions and collective commitments, thus promoting the exercise of the Right to the City in 48 neighbourhoods of Iztapalapa, with a total of nearly 400,000 inhabitants.

It has favoured the culture of citizen participation and the exercise of the right to take part in government decisions by creating new spaces and mechanisms of participatory democracy such as the Planning Collectives, which go beyond formal citizenship and traditional representation, including all people without discrimination in the design of their present and future, as well as in the implementation of transformative projects and actions with short,



medium and long term impacts that can be seen in the number and diversity of projects promoted by the Collectives and carried out with the involvement of the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods.

These projects - 367 so far - now cover 12 thematic areas: economic development (creation of cooperatives and business incubators, censuses of formal and informal economic activities, virtual spaces for the exchange of goods or the promotion of local businesses); social development (women's listening circles, workshops on self-esteem, autonomy and empowerment of women); culture (recovery of historical memory, screening of documentaries, community archives and community museums); communication (neighbourhood media networks and local circulation); urban projects (participatory murals, co-design and recovery of public spaces such as UTOPIAS, ludicalles and squares of indigenous peoples, land-use plans); environment (creation of urban gardens, compost bins, pollination gardens, reforestation, rainwater harvesting). It is worth noting here that the projects proposed to strengthen citizen participation have the highest percentage (34%) and revolve around strengthening citizen information, training, organisation and representation, re-invigorating community assemblies, recovering tequios (mutual aid), improving management, co-management and self-management capacities.

The government has learned to work with citizen participation and to value its relevance, which also represents the enrichment of representative democracy and a profound questioning of the bureaucratic and technocratic culture, through exercises in participatory democracy, deepening the democratisation of social relations within communities, of the government-citizen relationship and of public decision-making.

More informations :

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