



UCLG CONGRESS
**WORLD SUMMIT OF LOCAL
AND REGIONAL LEADERS**

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Valongo for a more Participatory Democracy



Given the increasing alienation of citizens from political life and the concomitant loss of confidence in political institutions that we are witnessing at various levels (local, national, European) and throughout Europe, we are forced to reflect on the values of democracy, to (re)think about the established forms of democratic participation, and to be more innovative and take steps forward so that citizens can fully and actively exercise their democratic rights.

The Municipality of Valongo is committed to forming a more enlightened and participative community, through constant investment in full citizenship. In Valongo, we work every day towards a strong active citizenship, with critical capacity, available to share different ideas, able to participate and to build together a more inclusive and peaceful community.

Today, we present 4 examples of participatory democracy projects implemented in Valongo:

Valongo 4.0
The future built by the
Children and Youngsters of
Valongo

**Children's
Council**

**Youth Participatory
Budget of Valongo**

**Participatory
Budget I'm Part!**



Valongo 4.0

The future built by the Children and Youngsters of Valongo

In our commitment to promoting citizen participation, we recognize that the participation of children is fundamental to building a community that we want to be more enlightened and participatory, not only because the children of today are the adults of tomorrow, but because we know that listening to children and young people is essential to human dignity and healthy development.

THE CHALLENGE

The project was created to respond to the challenge of involving children in reflecting on the future of the territory in which they live, including their voice in a broad participatory and multigenerational dynamic on territorial planning.

THE OBJECTIVES

It was with this challenge that we started this project, with the following goals:

- Listen and know the children's vision of the future for the territory they inhabit;
- Collect and evaluate children's contributions that can be incorporated into the legal instrument;
- Foster creativity, empathy and innovation;
- Develop the spirit of participation and citizenship;
- Raise awareness of the challenges of territorial planning.



Valongo 4.0

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THE PARTICIPANTS

The project will have a dynamic aimed at pre-school children, 1st and 2nd cycles (Group A), and another for 3rd cycle and secondary (Group B).

THE PROCESS

For the younger ones - children in Group A - a Challenge Booklet was distributed, and the children were invited to map their "play spaces", identifying the positive and negative aspects that characterize them and suggesting proposals for improvement. A Map of the Parish was distributed so that they could identify, for themselves, their spaces for meeting and social interaction spaces. Afterwards, the teenagers and young people were invited to a "Hackathon" to elaborate prototypes of experimental actions to improve the identified spaces.

RESULTS

Around 600 contributions made by children and young people were analyzed, which resulted in the mapping of more than 150 places.

Our analysis has allowed us to conclude that, for now, the children's favorite places are very diverse: the gardens; the parks; the playgrounds; the school playground, etc.



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IMPACT

At this moment, the organization of an exhibition of all the work is being prepared;

The contributions collected are being systematized so that those that are appropriate to the objectives, assumptions and legal constraints may be incorporated into the Municipal Master Plan.

For all these reasons, the project is configured as a teaching-learning tool that allows us to exercise oral and written skills and combine the knowledge of various areas, but also encourages us to seek new ways of:

- We protect children's right to participate;
- Informing children about how to participate;
- Create more and more spaces for participation;
- New ways of thinking about public space.

Children's Council

Children from an early age can interpret and express their own needs and contribute to change in their city.

It is crucial to give them a voice, inviting them to participate, ensuring that their ideas are heard and considered.

The "Children's Council" project proposes to change the paradigm by promoting dialogue with children on a basis of mutual respect and consideration for their opinions, considering their age and level of maturity.

Providing adequate information and encouraging children to participate promotes their sense of responsibility, the acquisition of democratic values, a sense of belonging, and allows the strengthening of citizenship.

The project aims to build a culture of participation for children and enable public managers to incorporate their views in decisions and issues that concern them.



Children's Council

The project is developed from two main axes:

A. Promoting children's participation in the Town Hall.

1. Ask a group of children to help the Mayor by expressing their ideas and advice;
2. Share urban planning with children, in which a group of children work with a technician to plan and execute a specific city project.

B. Providing children with autonomy of movement in public spaces.

1. The experience "Let's go to school alone" is an initial experience, created with the intention of restoring the children's autonomy of movement. It is a small experiment in autonomy in which children are invited to go to and return from school with their peers, without the accompanying parents; Playing is a central axis of the project, and for this the city must become playful allowing children to freely use the streets, gardens, parks, etc.



Youth Participatory Budget of Valongo



The Youth Participatory Budgeting of Valongo (OPJV) allows young people from the municipality, aged between 6 and 35, to get involved in a more constructive and participatory way in the community by creating a dynamic and critical thinking about the community they live in, allowing them to present ideas, build them, discuss them and bring them to fruition.

With the OPJV we give young people the opportunity to present their concerns, to learn to debate, to articulate and formulate opinions, developing their critical spirit, contributing to the resolution of the problems of their community, seeking to foster co-creation between different generations, in a process of daily learning, contributing to the construction of a participatory and interested citizenship, based on democratic ideas.

The key condition for a successful participatory budget process lies in the degree of commitment of local decision-makers and their political drive, as well as their degree of transparency, constant dialogue, and proximity.

3 Different Categories



School Category - scope restricted to the internal area of public schools

Generations Category - interaction of two distinct audiences, seniors and children/youth

Out-of-school Category - for all other projects



Youth Participatory Budget of Valongo



Youth Participatory Budget of Valongo is an innovative project from different angles:

- ➔ is **managed independently** of any political intervention, with the participants having all the power within the process;
- ➔ **generations category**, aimed at the creation of innovative activities that integrate the compulsory interaction of two distinct audiences, seniors and children/youth;

The OPJV promotes behaviors and habits of participation from an early age so that young people are participatory, get involved in decisions that affect the community, and develop a sense of belonging, explaining to children and young people that they have the power to make a difference.

All young people between the ages of 6 and 35 have the same opportunities to participate and need to be registered in the Public Municipal Library Network, helping to encourage reading habits.



Participatory Budget

I'M PART! (Eu Conto!)



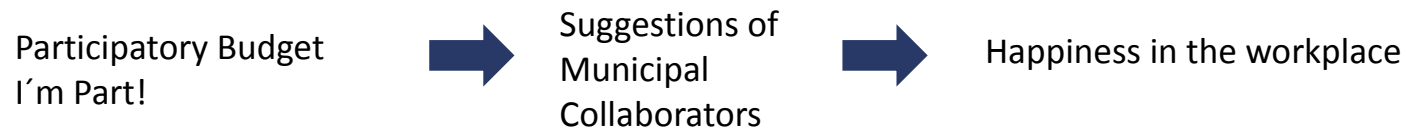
One of the best-known typologies that allow citizens to participate and actively intervene in the life of their communities are the Participatory Budgets.

In Valongo, for more than a decade now, we have been implementing every year the Youth Participatory Budget of Valongo, which was one of the ways we found to fulfill our commitment to participation and accountability to citizens.

After 10 years of experience, we are pleased to know that we have built a consolidated and inclusive process of involving citizens in decision-making processes, making them more participative in local management, and that this process has also contributed to change the way of doing things, broadening the forms of participation and expanding them to other areas and other municipal processes.

The I'm Part! Participatory Budget is an internal participatory budget aimed at all municipal employees.

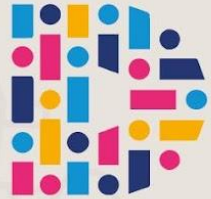
With the Participatory Budget, we wanted the act of participating to be a natural internal dynamic, so that employees could have an active voice, contribute with their proposals, and get involved in the decision-making processes. To this end, with this project, they can propose and deliberate on a portion of the municipal budget to improve their well-being at work.



Obrigado.
Thank you.

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UCLG
DAEJEON
10-14 OCT 2022



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