



PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience: Participation Network for a Sustainable Intervention in the Territory within the framework of the Decentralisation and Deconcentration Plan	
Name of the city/region: City of Córdoba, Córdoba	
Country: Argentina	
Institution presenting the candidacy: Córdoba City Council, Secretariat for Citizen Participation	
Start date of the experience: 2019	
End date of the experience: 2021	
Type of candidacy	New experience
Type of experience	Participatory budgeting
	Urban planning
	Citizen initiative
Objective of the experience	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion
	Community empowerment
	To increase citizen’s rights in terms of political participation
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy “ecosystem”
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy
Territorial area	All the territory
	Neighbourhood
Thematic area	Governance
	Education
	Urban management
	Environment and/or urban agriculture
	Job creation
	Decentralization
	Local development
	Training/learning
	Economy and/or finances



	Social inclusion
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PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

Main objective of the innovative experience:

To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem".

The experience is part of the Cordoba City Decentralisation and Deconcentration Plan, carried out by the Secretariat of Citizen Participation, from the Participatory Budget Department. Deconcentration represents "being in the neighborhood", providing proximity to the neighbor and operating in the territory as a landmark of reference for the municipal institution.

It is from this intention that the project Participation Network for a sustainable intervention in the Territory, which seeks to strengthen neighbourhood participation in the City of Cordoba from the paradigm of sustainable architecture and the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. The intervention in question, is materialised in the construction of the headquarters of the Center Villa General Urquiza neighborhood, through a sustainable construction system MPRA (Self Supporting Reused Plastic Module) which proposes a sustainable development in social, economic and environmental terms. The MPRA system is quick to assemble and low cost, as it uses recycling of bottles of all types and shapes for the composition of the closure shells. Its elaboration is simple and can be appropriated by any person, regardless of gender or age, which stimulates collective work and involves the community in the different instances.

Understanding the importance of strengthening neighborhood community networks and broader sectoral networks is that the Secretariat involves and articulates different actors for the realization of the objective, some of them with a long history of participation in the neighborhood: NGO Quinoa Arquitectura from TRAMA HÁBITAT; chair of Assisted Professional Practice with Orientation in Popular Habitat of the Faculty of Architecture of the National University of Córdoba; Villa General Urquiza Neighborhood Centre and Villa Alberdi Neighborhood Center; Los Carreros de Villa General Urquiza Work Cooperative; Sports Department and the Department of Addictions of the Municipality; ULA (Universidad Libre del Ambiente Centro de Educación Ambiental no formal). Civil Society Organizations from the territory also participate, such as Grupo Scout Villa Urquiza, Colegio Paula Montal.

How have you achieved this objective?

Achieving the objective presupposes the methodological development of two major stages: The process of community articulation, centralising actions from the Secretariat of Citizen Participation (State) and its subsequent development and territorial execution. Both processes are sustained in instances of multi-stakeholder dialogue to define specific objectives, goals, actions linked to the community's feasible time, to the management of the resources available to each one (space, time, knowledge, economic links, etc.) and the design of the global work plan.

To what extent has this objective been achieved?

In this context, the design of the space that will house the neighbourhood centre has already been developed: from the participation of the different actors in assemblies and working tables; the necessary training on the technical team that will develop the work; the organization to implement the work plan together with a role outline for each actor and schedule of goals; the purchase of necessary materials (financed by the municipality); the systematization of the experience to replicate it in other neighborhood centers of the city.



Dimensions of the experience

Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?

The proposal focuses on the process as innovative, positioned in the paradigm of Appropriate Technology as a path to self-determination of communities, recognition of the existence of diverse development models and an economy driven by the resources and values available in their own environment and not by external demand. A new productive, ecological, decentralised model, based on community dynamics and ideas that can be easily learned, modified and transmitted. The proposal develops a social technology of continuous innovation, fostered by participation that stimulates collective creativity. Thus, a new dimension is combined from four axes that give an answer to the identified emerging problems:

1. Employment generation: the construction process of the neighborhood centre allows people to be trained in different trades as labour tools and then generate other livelihoods.
2. Community and Grassroots Organization Strengthening within the framework of broad citizen participation: the entire production/training process was conceived to



be carried out collectively, generating common economic gains, which makes it a tool for community strengthening.

3. Reduction of the housing deficit: it works with a simple, open and low-cost technology (40% cheaper than traditional construction) facilitating the accessibility to people to improve, expand, build housing, or any other space, after having experienced the construction of their own neighborhood center.
4. Reduction of environmental problems: the walls of this system are designed to be solved with plastic waste, transforming a waste into a resource. We emphasise that the construction system can be adapted to the type of waste in each place where it is implemented.

To what extent is the procedure transferable?

In the first instance, the starting point from which the project is designed is transferable, thinking of three dimensions that must structure it integrally: economic, social and environmental sustainability: to formulate projects and interventions together with the territories, which are sustainable for the local communities and the city in general.

On the other hand, specifically the process of materialisation of the Villa General Urquiza Neighborhood Centre, is conceived as a vehicle for the neighbors involved to be trained in jobs that: expand their work possibilities; strengthen the links and community organisation structures of the neighborhood; intervene in the design of the neighborhood and its environment.

The transferability of the procedure is addressed by various elements of the project at different scales:

-The system uses local materials, with a minimum of use of comfort materials, and as a Healthy Building system.

-It is of medium technology, simple and inclusive construction: the whole construction process is based on stages of easy learning and accomplishment, with weights and sizes of the elements that allow the manipulation by any type of person, and it is open to all the improvements that contribute those who are participating in the processes (Collective Completion).

- It has three stages: 1) collection of plastic waste, which is encouraged by tripling the payment, which still keeps its low cost; 2) the production workshop, in which the production of its components is carried out in a systematized way; and 3) assembly and finishing in situ, allowing adaptations to the environment and the cultural, aesthetic and functional requirements of its inhabitants.

- Quick construction times that cannot be obtained with traditional systems. It also provides an immediate solution in possible situations of natural disaster, eradication, migration, or health emergencies, such as coronavirus.



- Collective legitimisation: conceived on the basis of appropriate technologies and collective concretion.
- Generation of skills and tools to expand employment opportunities
- Other living spaces: this technology is also designed for other uses, private as a home or as a workplace, as well as for public or community uses, neighborhood centers in this case, health centers, educational spaces.
- Installation/promotion of a complete Productive Process: it includes a production system and a training system that work in parallel, which makes replication and scalability possible.

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

The project is developed from the grassroots, from the participation of the neighborhood in all its stages validating the process and directly strengthening the economic development of the area, which makes it a project that can be appropriated and therefore feasible to be carried out in the first place. Accompanying this condition is the municipal political will for the sustainable development of public space in neighborhood centres, which in turn strengthens the relationship between the State and social organizations, enhancing the networks that feed the results of the experience.

On the other hand, the economic challenge of the current emergency situation is faced by the recycling and reuse of plastic that impacts on savings being 40% cheaper than traditional construction.

The success of the experience is therefore favoured by the spirit of circular economy that structures the project. By strengthening community and institutional links, it offers new possibilities for knowledge transfer enhanced by the possibility of adapting the system to new problems depending on each territory.

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

The articulation was benefited by the pre-existence of links and projects between the actors involved. Quinoa Arquitectura and Cooperativa de Carreros Villa Urquiza have been working for more than 20 years in community projects linked to construction with innovative materials and technologies; the PPA - HP Chair and Quinoa Arquitectura articulate university practices having shared pedagogical experience. On the other hand, the pre-existing link between the PPA-HP Chair and the Secretary of Citizen Participation, who has neighborhood centres as actors in the territories, facilitated the process of horizontal linkage between actors.

What has been the level of co-responsibility?

NGO Quinoa Arquitectura from TRAMA HÁBITAT are designs and promoters of the MPRA; the Chair of Assisted Professional Practice with Orientation in Popular Habitat of the Faculty of Architecture of the National University of Córdoba articulates and accompanies the territorial insertion of professional practices of 5th-year students; the Villa General Urquiza Neighborhood Center and the Villa Alberdi Neighborhood Centre guarantee the organised participation of the neighborhood's residents, promoting their level of incidence and action; Los Carreros Work Cooperative of Villa General Urquiza contributes with the labour of agents

previously trained in the system; the Sports Department and the Department of Addictions of the Municipality participates through programs that enhance the objective; ULA Universidad Libre del Ambiente Centro de Educación Ambiental no formal participates through programs that promote the objective, disseminates the project, provides physical space for meetings and assemblies and joins the scheme of collection and storage of bottles. Civil Society Organizations in the territory, such as the Villa Urquiza Scout Group, Paula Montal School in instances of dialogue participated in the collaborative design of the project.



Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

- The different training sessions given to the community on the MPRA system during the construction of the Neighborhood Centre can be evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results will be observable both technically in the quality of the infrastructure and in the day-to-day work participation process.
- The evaluation and monitoring of the flow of public funds and resources from the municipality will be developed; therefore, they are subject to the administrative accountability mechanisms requiring that all the documentation submitted comply with the formal and essential requirements demanded by the relevant tax agencies.
- Inspections and certifications of the progress of the work will be carried out by the appropriate municipal agents for such purpose.

Annexes:



[TRAMA HABITAT Youtube channel](#)

[MPRA Brochure](#)

MPRA+ Cooperative of Carreros Villa Urquiza

[Uso de la bastidora en Coop. Los Carreros Va. Urquiza, Córdoba](#)

[Uso de la prensa en Coop. Los Carreros de Va. Urquiza, Córdoba](#)

PPA-HP. National University of Córdoba.

[PPA - Hábitat Popular \(FAUD-UNC\) Práctica en Quinua \(2019 2c\)](#)

[PPA - Hábitat Popular \(FAUD-UNC\) Práctica en Dirección de Presupuesto Participativo \(2019 2c\)](#)