



2021 Work Plan Proposal

International Observatory on Participatory Democracy

Introduction

The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy is a network of local and regional governments, research centers and organizations from civil society that work to defend, impulse and improve local democracy. The IOPD has collaborated with UCLG since 2006 and this work plan aims to reinforce this relationship by framing the action of IOPD more clearly in the domain of the network and aligning their strategies. UCLG is the main global network of cities and local governments, it represents these voices in the global context and its main principles are proximity, decentralization and political leadership.

The year 2020 has been marked by the COVID-19 pandemic that has impacted the world and made implementation of the IOPD 2020 work plan challenging. The Observatory, as well as the world organisation UCLG, adapted their activities to the response of local governments to the pandemic, and in this way the IOPD contributed to weaving the international network of solidarity and support in the response to the pandemic. As a result, much of the 2020 work plan was not fully implemented and remains outstanding for the year 2021.

This work plan aims to define strategic priorities, to detail, not only general objectives, but also actions and concrete tasks that are doable and evaluable and to organize a work agenda. The Work Plan must be implemented by the IOPD presidency, the technical secretary and all the network's members.

The IOPD working plan is divided into four parts:

PART 1. Strategic priorities

PART 2. Thematic priorities and axes of action

PART 3. Tasks to impulse networking

PART 4. Agenda

Part 1. Strategic priorities

Objectives

1. Strengthen IOPD' actions as an observatory
2. To expand the network and improving its utility
3. To frame some IOPD activities in the UCLG network

To achieve these objectives happen, we define the next strategic priorities:

- ❖ **PRIORITY A.** Communication and awareness campaign. Includes, on the one hand, the follow-up and internal IOPD communication, including its organs and its members. Its aim is to improve this kind of communication. On the other hand, it also includes external communication and awareness raising. Here the priority is to make IOPD activities more visible, to raise awareness among the general public about the



importance of participatory democracy and to share the existing participatory experiences.

- ❖ **PRIORITY B. Evaluation of practices.** This kind of action has always been present in the IOPD and some activities have been developed along these lines, such as the Best Practice Awards. This kind of action would now be one of the four IOPD priorities as an observatory. The aim is for it to become not only a repository of experiences and a space for exchange, but also a tool for the promotion of the quality of participatory democracy, through the development of new actions.
- ❖ **PRIORITY C. Strengthening: growing the network.** This priority includes the identification of criteria to widen the network, like e.g. the kind of organisation/institution, the geographical location, etc. In addition, it includes the inclusion of new types of members, like for example social movements and informal platforms. Strengthening the network: to get new promoter members, governments or organizations that would co-leading the network
- ❖ **PRIORITY D. Learning: decentralised cooperation.** It is a priority not only to promote the growth of the network, but also to improve the quality of exchanges between members to incentivise decentralised learning.

Part 2. Thematic priorities and axes of action

Democracy is in crisis in many countries according to a broad consensus with a peak of populist political parties, diminution of electoral participation and according to the trust indicators towards political parties and institutions.

On the other hand, the emergence of new forms of participation and political mobilizations are channeled through communication technologies. These same experts don't agree on the causes or possible solutions to the challenges our societies are facing. Local governments have a key role in developing democratic innovations, in carrying out public policies that strengthen social and community ties and in defending human rights. The IOPD considers this local governments' role and wants to contribute to weaving this network of cities and municipalities that work in promoting, defending and increasing local democracy. [The agenda for local democracy](#) is the IOPD reference guide for local governments to develop democracy.

Regarding the thematic priorities, we must promote a set of actions that we will develop in the 3rd part. To organize seminars or thematic sessions (task 9), commission of a study and make publications (task 12).

Thematic priorities for 2021:

The 2021 General Assembly defined as thematic priorities for the work of the technical secretariat in 2020: "the role of citizen participation in climate change mitigation" and the "gender perspective in citizen participation". In line with the aforementioned, and with the agreement of the coordination committee, these priorities have been extended to 2021.

Other priorities thematic will be:

- Participatory budgeting for the youth, youth citizen participation
- Legal frameworks to institutionalize participatory policies in Local Governments.



- Local democracy mechanisms regarding the diversity of people through sortition,
- Democratic innovations through ICTs.

Part 3. Tasks to impulse networking

PRIORITY A. Communication and awareness campaign	
Internal communication	
Task 1	Diagnose of the existing communication mechanisms with members and proposal of new mechanisms in order to maintain permanent channels of exchange with them.
Task 2	Administration of the email account
Task 3	Update on activities and events, both to members and to the political representatives in the internal IOPD organs
External communication	
Task 4	Repository of experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establishment of new criteria to systematise information about existing experiences, according to topics (currently, they are only classified by country) b. Reflect upon the added value of this repository, compared to others c. Active search of new experiences, activating the network d. Co-production of the description of experiences, jointly with local actors
Task 5	Maintenance and update of the website and social media
Task 6	Publication of reports (related to tasks 10 and 11) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Publication of the annual report (coinciding with the annual conference) b. Publication of special reports
Task 7	Support to the communication of the annual conference
Task 8	Organization of three international events (according to priority contents, task 19)



Task 9	Participation in international events jointly with UCLG
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PRIORITY B. Evaluation of practices	
Task 10	Participation in the CGLU - International IDEA's project about the state of local democracy in the world.
Task 11	Special reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fundraising b. Assignment (in relation to the priority contents) c. Production of the report
Task 12	Best Practice Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review of the criteria and process for the award b. Call for candidacies c. Applications and selection process d. Publication of results e. To look for funds in order to offer a monetary award
Task 13	Coordination of mutual evaluation mechanisms (between members) <u>Josh Lerner:</u> We could support this work through the new People Powered network, which has a focus on research coordination. Other cases may be considered.

PRIORITY C: Strengthen: widening the network	
Task 14	Clean up of the current list of members (previous contact with inactive members)
Task 15	Identification of strategic criteria for the addition of new members
Task 16	Admission of new members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identification of potential members b. Contact and addition of new members c. Ask for information about their needs d. Ask for an authorization to publish their data



	e. Ask for contacts
Task 17	Admission of new promoter members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contact with local governments leaders in participatory democracy b. To improve the new promoter members' role definition

PRIORITY D: Learning: decentralised cooperation and joint actions

Task 18	Study of the collaboration forms (existing forms, incentives, technical resources and new proposals) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assignment of the study b. Production of the study
Task 19	Proposal of new cooperation mechanisms (e.g. workshops, joint evaluation - task 13 -, share virtual offices, etc.)
Task 20	Identification of priority contents (according to the Agenda for Local Democracy)
Task 21	Development of the online platform PARTICIPATE ODP

Part 4: Agenda

January	<i>Preparation materials for the IOPD Award</i> <i>Preparatory work for the 2020 Conference</i>
February	<i>Call for candidacies to the IOPD Award</i>
March	
April	<i>Award Evaluation</i> <i>Call for Conference sessions (TBC)</i>
May	

June	Iberian Get-Together on Democracy and PB (1-3 June)
July	
August	20th IOPD Conference: Cocody (Abidjan, Ivory Coast) - TBC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15th IOPD Award Winners announcement • 2021 General Assembly
September	
October	<i>Work on the 2021 Conference minutes</i>
November	
December	

Other events yet to be scheduled:

- Session on Climate change and participation publication (Q1 2021)
- Gender and participation workshop
- UCLG Executive Bureau (spring 2021)
- UCLG World Council (autumn 2021)
- IDEA-CGLU workshops (execution TBC)
- Participation in GOLD-UCLG's report
- France's Rencontres Nationales de la Participation

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