



PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience: <i>Esplugues Participates: Guaranteeing Inclusiveness</i>)	
Name of the city/region: Esplugues de Llobregat	
Country: Spain	
Institution presenting the candidacy: City Council of Esplugues de Llobregat	
Start date of the experience: November 2017	
End date of the experience: ongoing	
Type of candidacy	Innovation on an existing experience
Type of experience	Participatory budgeting
Objective of the experience	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion
	To empower non-organised citizens
	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
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy
Objective of the experience	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy
Territorial area	All the territory
Thematic area	Governance
	Urban management
	Economy and/or finances
	Social inclusion

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

Main objective of the innovative experience: To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of participatory democracy mechanisms.



How have you achieved this objective?

By changing the methodology of the Participatory Budget process.

In the first editions (2014-2017), citizens participated through working groups that prepared and agreed on proposals (face-to-face) and then presented them to the "Participatory Budgeting Committee". Some sessions were held to gather proposals from other segments of the population (sectoral councils, institutes, etc.), but these were decided upon by the working groups, made up of people who were available to hold regular meetings at specific times. During this period between 68 and 165 people participated.

In the 2018 edition, the process is transformed by diversifying the possibilities of participation, creating a hybrid formula (face-to-face and online) to facilitate the participation of citizens, especially those who may have more difficulties.

From this edition onwards, participants (over 16 years old, registered at Esplugues) can take part in one or more phases of the process:

- Elaboration of proposals: open sessions (in different locations and at different times) and closed sessions, with specific groups (young people, older people, immigrants, people with functional diversity, women, intergenerational activities, etc.) and the possibility of making individual proposals through the online platform.
- Evaluation of the proposals: the municipal technical team participates.
- Prioritisation: online. However, mobile participation points are set up in the main events and spaces of the city to facilitate the prioritization and voting of proposals online. Sessions are also held with specific groups to support the use of the platform.
- Public presentation of the 10 finalist proposals that will be voted on, carried out by those who submitted them.
- Voting: same methodology as in prioritisation. The process ends at an important event in the city, such as the Citizen Entity Fair or the Trade and Service Fair 'Firesplugues'.
- Monitoring and accountability: monitoring the implementation of the winning proposals through the platform. A group is also created to follow up the proposals with the people or groups involved in them.

We have moved from representative democracy to direct democracy, where each person decides when and how to participate.

To what extent has this objective been achieved?

Participation has increased quantitatively (from 165 people in the 2017 edition to 1,440 in 2018, which translates into more proposals to improve the city and support for them) and qualitatively, diversifying the way of participating and, above all, the profiles of participants.

The results of the evaluation by the participants are very positive. 9 out of 10 people surveyed say they would participate again in the next editions and would recommend someone else to participate (2018 data).

Dimensions of the experience



Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?

The most innovative element is the methodology, as it ensures that different population profiles can participate and that the process is inclusive.

FACE-TO-FACE PARTICIPATION:

- Open groups involve people who are already motivated to participate (advertisement in the local media and personal calls and e-mails to people who have participated in previous editions and in other participatory processes). In these spaces, debate and group reflection are encouraged so that the contributions of the different participants are heard and the proposals are jointly constructed. Different people from the municipal technical team participate in order to solve the doubts of the participants.
- Closed groups include people who may not be used to participating. In these sessions, the language and dynamics are adapted to the group in question. Intergenerational activities are relevant to create and prioritise proposals. Throughout the process, contact is maintained with these groups so that they are aware of the evolution of their proposals and can support them in the different phases (prioritisation and final vote).
- Mobile participation locations: in addition to serving to approach citizens in the spaces where "things are going on" (events, strategic places of the city), they also

serve to access the most peripheral or isolated areas of the urban area to make the process known and to facilitate participation. They play a fundamental role in tackling the digital gap, as those responsible for these locations support the development of proposals, prioritisation and online voting. Likewise, participation locations have been established in the city's two youth spaces, to promote participation among young people. This territorial and face-to-face deployment allows not only to increase the number of people who finally participate, but also to make the process known to other people in an exercise of communication and transparency with citizens. Mobile participation locations also provide written information (brochures) both about the process in general and about the proposals that have been presented and that have become finalists.

ONLINE PARTICIPATION:

- Tutorials (on how to register, make proposals, etc.) and support documents (proposals classified with hyperlinks, for example) have been created to facilitate the use of the platform.
- The process is fully transparent and traceable: minutes of the sessions, technical evaluation (the reasons why some proposals are not accepted are published), number of votes, implementation, etc.
- The open source participation platform [Decidim](#) is used, which guarantees the anonymity and data protection of the participants. The platform has become a global tool for participation, since it is also used for other participatory processes in the municipality, and is used by other institutions in Spain and worldwide. This allows a greater standardization of the participation model.

To what extent is the procedure transferable?

All the elements are replicable to other institutions if the resources and will to carry them out are available. Indeed, we have replicated part of the model in other participatory processes, such as in the process for the elaboration of the Municipal Action Plan that is currently being carried out.

As it is an open source platform, it can be easily installed in organizations other City Councils.

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

At the time of the design, the "fatigue" of the previous model of participation was taken into account, as it was noted that it was the same people who were always participating. The aim was to open up participation and allow each person to decide where and when to participate.

The intention was to incorporate online participation but, aware of the digital gap in the city, the above-mentioned measures were taken. We also acknowledged also the difficulty of making the general population aware of the process and how to participate in it. For this reason, the design was thought to reach the spaces where citizens were (both in virtual and physical spaces): sessions in all high schools and posts in social media allowed us to reach the youngsters; sessions and I.T courses in care centres for the elderly; sessions in Catalan courses and other language courses for immigrants; sessions in special work centres for to



people with intellectual disabilities. This allowed us to get closer to all those groups that would otherwise be difficult to approach through online channels only.

Without a doubt, political and technical will was needed. Without the support of the government team and the various technical departments involved, the practice would not have been successful.

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

The change in methodology was presented to and passed by the Council of the City, the highest participatory body of the city (made up of representatives of all political forces, randomly selected citizens, as well as representatives of the different sectoral councils of the city).

The process was disseminated in other participatory bodies and spaces, such as sectoral councils, in the participatory sessions called “The elderly in the neighbourhoods”, etc. The process was also disseminated in other local projects, educational and youth centres (mentioned above). The employees of the Esplugues City Hall were also informed and encouraged to participate, as most of them are citizens of the city as well.

The assessment of this whole articulation has been very positive.

What has been the level of co-responsibility?

At the municipal level, a participatory budget monitoring committee was set up. This body is responsible for evaluating and ensuring the proper functioning of the participatory process. It is currently made up of a municipal political-technical team.

The creation of a driving group was incorporated into the implementation of the winning proposals. In this sense, in order to implement the winning proposal of the 2018 edition (Educational materials for public schools and institutes), several meetings were held with the educational centres to determine which materials were needed and how the purchase and delivery of these would be done.

In the 2019 edition, a session was incorporated to present the 10 finalist proposals, in which the persons or groups that promoted them had more support and presented them in an open session.

On the other hand, adolescents were empowered to explain the process and help older people to develop online proposals, in the framework of an intergenerational project to address the digital gap.

For the development of the closed sessions with specific groups, complicity has been sought with other areas of the City Council and with other organizations.

Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

On-site evaluation took place in the workshops. Once the process was completed, an evaluation questionnaire was sent to everyone registered on the platform.

The results of the process were also returned to the citizens through infographics, publications in local media and through the participatory platform. There is also a follow-up



section in the same platform, in order to be able to check the degree of execution of the winning proposals, as well as to disseminate the implementation in the local media.

Annexes:

[Decidim Esplugues de Llobregat](#)

[10 propostes finalistes](#)

[Comissió seguiment](#)

[Criteris Marc](#)

[Díptic 2020](#)

[Infografia resultats 2019](#)

[Memoria gràfica 2018](#)