

1. INTRODUCTION

The OIDP Project was launched in November 2001, within the scope of the European Commission Decentralised Cooperation Projects. Since then the network of local governments, municipal bodies, research centres and civil entities that make up the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy has increased its membership, creating new places of encounter and placed greater emphasis on reflection, the exchange of know-how and experiences, while also making progress in the work of developing participatory democracy and ensuring the democratic growth of our towns and cities.

The work that we have been doing, the progress achieved and the shared goals have helped us to keep on working in the promotion of innovative local democracy practices, as well as in the construction and dissemination of those initiatives that might provide and improve the governance and management of our towns and cities through participation and the involvement of their citizens in the power structure.

This present report brings together those OIDP activities and projects that have been carried out in 2010, the balance of the current situation while also allowing for the monitoring of the activities and functioning of the network by its members.

2. EVOLUTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NETWORK

The number of new members that have joined the network continues to grow. Since last year, the OIDP has incorporated 43 new members, 21 of which are local governments, along with 22 organisations from civil society, academia, research centres, etc. In short, the OIDP will end 2010 with a total of 500 members, of which 292 are associate members and 208 collaborating members.

Associate members of the OIDP include local governments, supramunicipal bodies and local authorities. Collaborating members are entities, organisations, institutions, and educational and research centres.

It must also be stressed that the OIDP has formally incorporated the Commission for the Social Inclusion of United Towns, Cities and Local Governments as a member of the network (and vice versa) taking yet another step towards rapprochement between the two networks.

With the aim of expanding the geographic distribution of the network (which is mainly concentrated in the European Mediterranean and Latin America) the Technical Secretariat has continued to develop contacts with different local governments in Sweden, through SALAR (the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions). On 3rd, 4th and 6th March we scheduled a study visit that counted on the participation of 13 elected representatives and 11 technicians.

As a result of our participation in the Rio de Janeiro World Social Urban Forum and the 2nd FALP, held in Getafe, the Technical Secretariat has been able once more to involve towns and cities that were already members of the network but were less active (in Spain and France), incorporate others that were new and initiate a series of new contacts with organisations working on participatory budgets in new territories for the OIDP, such as Africa.

3. LAST MEETING OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE.

Below we present a synthesis of the main points that were dealt with and/or agreed to at the Meeting of the Coordinating Committee, held in Rio de Janeiro on 22nd March 2010.

With regard to the **10th Conference**:

- Presentation of the structure and spaces by Alberto Martínez (Secretary of Social Development for the Mexico Federal District Government).
- The highly positive and interesting evaluation of the proposal that came out of the 2009 Internal Session, to incorporate a Plenary Session to reflect on 10 years of the OIDP, within the framework of the 10th Conference.
- Given the coincidence of the dates of the 3rd UCLG World Congress, Mexico City and the Technical Secretariat were urged to work jointly on the call for the two events, to ensure that this simultaneity of dates will be positive for the 10th Conference.
- The collaborative design: The contributions of the members of the Coordinating Committee with regard to possible speakers/experiences of interest were incorporated in the drawing up of the first draft.
- There was consideration of the possibility that tools, such as the “call for papers”, that would allow for new actors (such as doctorate or masters students, researchers, etc.) to incorporate their work to the OIDP in a voluntary way at the present, as well as future, conferences. However it has also been established that, in the case of enabling these kinds of spaces, they would have to be complementary and must not, in any case, substitute the current approach to the designing of the Conferences, which is centred on the presentation and exchange of experiences with regard to specific cases that are of particular interest that are of some use to the network’s towns and cities.

With regard to the **9th Conference**: “Youth, Citizenship and Participatory Democracy” an extremely positive value was placed on the presence of almost a hundred young people, from the network’s towns and cities both by way of the inaugural video and also in attendance over the 3 days of the Conference itself, as were the logistics and the suitability of the spaces provided. On the other hand, the paper presented by Howard Gardner was negatively valued due to the lack of any relationship with Participatory Democracy, as were the translation difficulties in the work groups and the delays experienced at the start of some of the sessions.

5th Best Practices in Citizens’ Participation Distinction:

Given the short period of time that separates the 10th Conference (Mexico, November 2010) from the 11th Conference (Lleida, April 2011), the Technical Secretariat took into consideration the difficulty of mobilising the network and obtaining a satisfactory response with regard to the organisation of two corresponding editions of the Best Practices in Citizens’ Participation Distinction, with a difference of only 5 months between them. The Coordinating Committee finally decided to go ahead with the usual calendar for the process and maintain the award of the 5th Distinction at the Mexico City Conference.

Renovation of the Technical Secretariat for the period 2010-2013 and presentation of candidacies for the elections to the 2012 Presidency.

The city of Barcelona has announced its intention to provide continuity to the Technical Secretariat, should no other city consider a candidacy (if this were the case Barcelona would withdraw in favour of the other city). On the other hand the city of Porto Alegre announced their desire to present a candidacy for the seat of the 2012 OIDP Presidency.

While we await the opening of the official call for these two positions (which will take place, as established by the regulations, two months before the 10th Conference) all of the towns and cities, and in particular those that have stated an explicit interest, are invited to officially present their candidacy to be improved at the annual Internal Session to be held on 17th November 2010.

Other questions dealt with at the Coordinating Committee Meeting included the progress made by the Work Groups, while the 2010 Work Plan, proposed by the Technical Secretariat, was also approved.

The minutes of the Coordinating Committee Meeting, along with the minutes of all other meetings, are available online in the private members area on the OIDP Website.

4. PROCESS OF THE 5th OIDP DISTINCTION FOR BEST PRACTICES IN CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

This year, once again, the Technical Secretariat made a call in April to local government network members to present entries for the Distinction for Best Practices in Citizens' Participation, which on this occasion has reached its 5th Edition. This year 18 local governments, from Portugal, Ecuador, Argentina and Spain have all presented their projects.

At the end of may, having finalised the period for presentations, the Technical Secretariat started to prepare the documentation and establish the virtual space that would allow the International Jury –convoked in April– to examine the documentation and evaluate the different presentations in July and August, so that each member of the Jury could choose a maximum of 3 experiences, awarding them 3, 2 and 1 point as indicated in the voting criteria established by the rules. In this period work also started on the preparation of the CD-Summary, which includes the 18 presentations, in parallel with the work of the Jury.

On 10th September the International Jury made their evaluations and decided to award the 5th Distinction to the Argentine city of Rosario for their Participatory Budget experience. The Jury also decided to award the two Special Mentions to the experiences: Public-Private Citizens' Participation for a Better Life, presented by the Cantonal Unit of Montufar (Ecuador); and IDEAL-EU Integrating the Drivers of E-Participation at Regional Level, presented by the Generalitat of Catalonia (Spain).

After the results had been validated by all of the members of the Jury, on 17th September the award winning entities were informed of the final decision reached and the municipality of Rosario and the Technical Secretariat immediately started work on the CD-publication that is specifically dedicated to the winning experience.

Furthermore, for our part, we would like to stress the voluntary nature of the work undertaken by the Members of the Jury and thank them once more for their dedication and initiative.

In this Edition the Jury was made up of the following members:

Network Presidency: Mexico City Government (Mexico)

Technical Secretariat of the Network: Barcelona City Council (Spain)

Members of the Coordinating Committee:

- Municipality of Reggio Emilia (Italy)
- Lleida City Council (Spain)
- Deputation of Barcelona (Spain)
- Metropolitan Observatory of São Paulo (Brazil)
- Social Studies Centre of the University of Coimbra (Portugal)

Local Governments acknowledged in the 4th Distinction:

- Alcobendas Town Council (Spain)
- Rural Municipality of Ambalavao, Antananarivo (Madagascar)

OIDP Collaborating Members:

- CIMAS (International Observatory of Citizenship and Environmental Sustainability) (Spain).
- DEMA (Department of Current Means Studies (Spain).
- Hispano-American Educational Association (Peru).
- IN LOCO Association (Portugal)
- The Participatory City, Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina).
- Apertura Foundation (Argentina)
- Local Development Initiatives Centre (Venezuela)
- Urban Development Studies Centre (Argentina)
- Social Inclusion of Towns, Cities and Local Governments and Participatory Democracy Commission (international network of towns and cities)

5. PUBLICATIONS

In 2010 the Technical Secretariat also provided continuity to a series of publications, which have been published since the beginning, and that, on the basis of a decision taken by the Coordinating Committee Meeting, held in March 2009 in Reggio Emilia, have been presented in CD format, in two languages (Spanish and English) following the same design, as a way of establishing “an OIDP trademark or image” that can be identified as our own.

As a result, two CD’s have been published, one with the contents of the papers and the results of the work done at the 9th Conference, held in Reggio Emilia. The other is a double CD containing, on the one hand, a compilation of the candidacies presented at the 5th Distinction in Best Practices and, on the other, a specific CD dealing with the winning project, describing the experience in greater depth.

Both CD’s will be available online from the OIDP Website after the 10th Conference, where they were initially distributed among the members and those in attendance.

6. 11th OIDP CONFERENCE: “New Technologies and Civic Participation. Civil Society and Communication Tools”. Lleida, 6th, 7th and 8th April 2011.

Given the proximity between the dates of the 10th Conference (Mexico, November 2010) and the 11th Conference (Lleida, April 2011), along with the need to move ahead with the contents of the two conferences almost simultaneously, the Technical Secretariat has been working on them both, simultaneously, while giving priority to the first conference to be held.

For this reason, following the Coordinating Committee Meeting in Río de Janeiro in March, which mainly dealt with the collaborative design of the 10th Conference, the Technical Secretariat immediately called for the next Coordinating Committee Meeting by e-mail, in order to do the same for the design and contents of the 11th Conference.

In continuation we present a synthesis of the contributions that the Coordinating Committee made to the city of Lleida on the basis of the first document/draft presented through the Secretariat:

- Stressing the innovative and interesting character of the central theme.
- Taking into account the existence of a digital divide, at a worldwide, north-south, level; the importance of dealing with the theme from the social inclusion perspective.

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- Not losing site of the importance of the aspect of attendance in the participation forms. Providing continuity to the discussion on forms of participation and the management of public policies already initiated in previous conferences.
- OIDP Conferences have to be conceived as spaces of exchange for the towns and cities and, as a result, local governments must be given a voice. This being so, their presence is increased during the 3 days that each conference lasts and, as a result, it is necessary to look inside the network and give a voice to the towns and cities of the OIDP, both to those that have developed successful experiences and those that have not managed to do so, insofar as it is also important to be explicit about the limitations that they face in terms of carrying out their projects.
- Complementing theoretic and authoritative references with real, practical cases.
- Within the methodological framework it is important to provide group dynamics that will ensure that these exchanges are not limited to a merely informative or referential terrain, by extending the time set aside for debate.
- Widening the scope of the contents in order that they can be of use to organisations other than public authorities.

In a complementary manner, the Technical Secretariat has also been providing support for the initiative by the city of Lleida to ask UNESCO to declare a Worldwide Participation Day. On the basis of this initiative the Technical Secretariat has been working to bring in the support of both the OIDP Coordinating Committee and the World Secretariat of the UCLG.

7. NEWS

>> ANNUAL BUDGET

Within the framework of the austerity policies of the European administrations, the budgetary adjustments put into place by Barcelona City Council, in order to reduce costs during the present financial year, have resulted in a reduction in the personnel of the Technical Secretariat, since April, from two persons to one. There has also been a reduction in the presence of municipal technicians, both attending the preparatory meetings and at the Conference itself. However, Barcelona City Hall has given priority to the presence of a representative of the city's associative movement.

Despite this situation, the economic provision for the activities programme has been maintained.

Below we present the budgets corresponding to the last two financial years:

2009

ITEM	AMOUNT IN €
Publication of the 8 th Conference (translation into 2 languages, design and production of 700 units)	11,153
4 th Distinction (translation, design and production of double CD -700 units-, trophies and diplomas)	14,207
9 th Conference	24,000
Travel, expenses and accommodation (2 persons, Coordinating Committee + 6 persons, Reggio Emilia Conference)	7,800
Translations	11,500
UCLG agreement (personnel expenses)	88,754
Web and visibility products (cards)	158
TOTAL	157,572

2010

ITEM	AMOUNT IN €
Publication of 9 th Conference (translation into 3 languages, design and production of 700 units)	18,710
5 th Distinction (translation, design and production of double CD -700 units-, trophies and diplomas)	14,347
10 th Conference	24,000
Travel, expenses and accommodation (3 persons, Mexico)	6,518
Translations	6,881
UCLG agreement (Technical secretariat personnel costs, travel and expenses)	80,000
TOTAL	150,456

>> 10 YEARS OF OIDP TABLE

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the OIDP the Technical Secretariat has organised a Work Session, jointly with the towns and cities that are going to participate therein, in order to evaluate the work done by the network over the last 10 years as well as reflecting on both past and present. The aim is also to take an in depth look at exactly where we want to go next.

>> OIDP IN FACEBOOK

With the aim of promoting new channels of communication with members, as well as with individuals or institutions that are not associated with but have an interest in the OIDP, in 2010 we created a profile on the Facebook social network. This new tool for disseminating information and communications with other users has allowed us to transmit and exchange appropriate information, virtually instantaneously, with 170 users throughout the world.

Facebook has been used in a way that is complementary to other information channels, such as periodic electronic bulletins.

8. WORK GROUPS

>> Spatial and Territorial Segregation in Major Urban Centres.

Since the Rio de Janeiro Coordinating Committee Meeting (22nd March) the group has focussed on coordination with the organising team for the 2nd Forum of the FALP (Local Peripheral Authorities), with the aim of attracting new local government members, particularly in Europe, in order to make progress in terms of discussion of and reflection on social segregation and participatory democracy.

Taking up the suggestion made by the FALP, of directing the WG towards a focus in which the metropolis as a whole is examined, rather than the big city, in order that as many towns and cities as possible can feel identified with the theme of the analysis. At the present time this WG is engaged in a process of self-reconceptualisation.

>> Youths and Children: Construction of Citizenship in Participatory Processes.

At the Rio de Janeiro Coordinating Committee Meeting, the Technical Secretariat notified the Coordinating Committee that the WG "Youths and Children: Construction of Citizenship in Participatory Processes" was going to start to work via Facebook, using their own profile, in order to provide a dissemination beyond the OIDP network and to allow each of their members the possibility of creating their own user and enriching their profile with images, videos or any other resources that they consider to be necessary in order to enrich discussion and debate.

From the end of March up until the present the heavy workload of the coordinating city has given rise to a certain difficulty when it comes to enlivening this WG. At the same time, the low level of implication of the other members has also led to difficulties in breathing life into it.

>> Image as a Communicative and Participatory Tool.

In 2009 this WG organised a Public Special Mention, within the framework of the 9th Conference, which allowed for progress to be made in the systemisation of indicators for the evaluation of audiovisual materials and also for the extension of the Mediatheque.

With a view to growth, in 2010 this WG has been working on an initial proposal for the rules or regulations from the convocation of an Audiovisual Competition, complementary to the 10th Conference, which will allow for an in depth examination of the interaction between images and audiovisual productions with processes for providing greater democratic depth and the vindication of rights and citizenship.

Given the difficulties involved in coming up with the funding for a prize, at the present time the WG is reflecting on the future of this proposal.

9. COORDINATION WITH THE CSIPD (UCLG)

Following the meeting with the CSIPD, the OIDP Technical Secretariat informed the Coordinating Committee (at the Rio de Janeiro Meeting on 22nd March) that the different towns and cities that were leading the initiative (Donostia-San Sebastian, Cordoba, Spain, and Ecatepec, Mexico) had, for different reasons, ceased to play an active role in the process and, as a result, this debate has come to a halt. With a view to all of this, Félix Sánchez, on behalf of the Government of Asunción, specifically stated their desire to collaborate in a more active manner in the process, after the elections have taken place in November 2010.

10. OIDP PARTICIPATION IN OTHER ACTIVITIES IN 2010.

- World Urban Social Forum: 22nd to 26th March, Río de Janeiro.
- 2nd Forum of Local Peripheral Authorities (FALP): 10th to 12th June, Getafe.
- 1st Congress of Spanish Social Councils: 20th to 21st October, Vitoria.
- 3rd UCLG World Congress: 16th to 20th November, Mexico City.

11. CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED FOR 2011.

- 3rd Local Authorities Forum for Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy: February 2011, Dakar.
- The next Coordinating Committee Meeting, to be determined within the framework of the 11th Conference (6th, 7th and 8th April 2011).