

1. INTRODUCTION

In November 2001 the OIDP Project was set up, within the scope of the European Commission Decentralised Cooperation Projects. During these nine years the network of governments, municipal bodies, research centres and civil entities that make up the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy has gradually increased, creating new meeting places and putting greater emphasis on reflection, the exchange of know-how and experiences and progressing in the work of developing participatory democracy and the democratic growth of our towns and cities.

The work that we have done, the progress achieved and the goals shared have all helped us to keep on working in the promotion of innovative practices of local democracy and in the construction and dissemination of those members that can provide and improve the government and the management of our towns and cities through participation and involvement of their citizens in the power structure.

The report that we present brings together the OIDP activities and projects that have been carried out in 2009 as well as presenting a balance of the current situation and allowing for the monitoring of those activities and the functioning of the network on the part of its members.

2. EVOLUTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NETWORK

The number of new members joining the network continues to grow, year after year, with the total number of members (associate members and collaborating members) in 2008 being 394, while currently it is 457. There are now 271 town and city associate members (26 more than last year) and the number collaborating network members has increased to 186 (37 more than in 2008). Most of the network associate members are European while the majority of collaborating members are Latin-American.

Taking advantage of the occasion of the 9th Conference in Europe, the Technical Secretariat has been working on contacts with Swedish towns and cities and also organisations from the United Kingdom, in order to extend the geographic scope of network associate members, which in Europe continue to be concentrated in the Mediterranean countries.

3. MEETING OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE (12th March 2009).

The Coordinating Committee met this year on 12th and 13th March, in Reggio Emilia. At this meeting the members of the Coordinating Committee undertook the monitoring of the network's projects and initiatives, offering proposals and suggestions for the effective development and improvement thereof. At the internal session, held in La Paz on 19th November 2008, the voluntary nature of membership of the Coordinating Committee, which would consequently be open to all of the collaborating towns and cities or members that stated an interest in having an active participation in the activities of the OIDP, was approved.

At this meeting work went ahead on the agreements reached at the last Conference, the planning of the activities of the OIDP Work Groups, the collaborative design of the contents, the logistics of the next Conference, coordination with other international networks, the calling of the 4th OIDP Distinction "Best Practices in Citizens' Participation", the presentation of new networking tools, plus a number of other aspects associated with the OIDP Web and the ordinary functioning of the Technical Secretariat.

The minutes of 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 4th OIDP DISTINCTION "BEST PRACTICES IN CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION"

This 4th edition included the participation of 22 experiences from Argentina, Brazil, Spain, France, Madagascar and Mexico. As established in the terms of the call, the jury is international in character and made up annually at the request of the Technical Secretariat, although membership is voluntary. In this edition the jury was made up as follows: the Presidency of the OIDP (represented in this edition by the town of Reggio Emilia), the Technical Secretariat (the city of Barcelona), three member cities from the Coordinating Committee (the city of Cordoba (Spain), the Deputation of Barcelona and the Prefecture of Porto Alegre (Brazil), the city mentioned in the 3rd edition, the Junta of Freguesia de Carnide (Portugal) plus 11 collaborating network members, as follows:

- The Urban Management and Public Policies Centre of the Federal University of Pernambuco (Brazil).
- Transnational Institute -TNI (Holland)
- Sociocultural Municipality and Culture Association (Dominican Republic).
- Department of Current Media Studies (Spain).
- Hispano-American Educational Association (Peru).
- Participatory City, Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina).
- Elige Peru (Peru).
- Catalan Institute of Human Rights (Spain).
- Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy Committee (CISDP) for united cities and local governments (in representation of the world's towns and cities).
- Operational Centre for Housing and Settlement – Copevi (Mexico).
- Participation and Public Policies Observatory of the Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid (Spain).

5. PUBLICATIONS

This year two CD's have been published, one with the contents of the papers and debate sessions, plus the results of the work done at the 8th Conference, held in La Paz. The other is a double CD, on the one hand, containing a compilation of the candidacies presented at the 4th Distinction in Best Practices, and on the other, a specific CD about the winning project, describing the experience in greater depth. Both CD's are available in Spanish and English (in accordance with the decision taken at the last meeting of the above mentioned Coordinating Committee) and will be available online from the OIDP Web after the 9th Conference, where they were initially distributed among the members and those in attendance.

6. NEWS

>> MEDIA LIBRARY

As decided at the internal session of the 8th Conference, in La Paz, during the present year a Media Library, or virtual online library, has been created on the OIDP Website, accompanied following an express request for audiovisual materials contributions from associate members and collaborators. Likewise, the holding of a Special Mention by the public for video and participation also served as a very positive incentive for the contribution of new videos by towns and cities. Currently the OIDP disposes of over 70 audiovisual documents, 12 of which can be watched online at the OIDP Website. As soon as the other audiovisual documents have been classified, into thematic areas, they will also be made available online, along with a Web search engine.

>> **VIRTUAL FORUMS AND A VIRTUAL SPACE RESERVED FOR THE JURY**

Three virtual forums have been set up for the purpose of fostering debate and sharing work. They correspond to the three Work Groups in the private members area. At the present these forums are only accessible to group members, who can upload bibliographies and work documents and publish comments with attached files to be incorporated into the debate.

In 2009, for the purpose of CISDP coordination, another virtual forum was also set up. This is accessible from the websites of both networks. The debate that is taking place in this forum is accessible to all that wants to participate, via the Website home page. However, in order to participate and introduce proposals, make comments, attach reference documents and links of interest with regard to the debate, etc. an OIDP network collaborating member username and password have to be entered.

Another novelty introduced this year is the space set aside for the jury. This space has allowed all of the documents provided by the towns and cities that are candidates for the prize, in order to complete the slip that must be handed over, to be made available by the Technical Secretariat. The novelty in this case is that the jury has access, not only to the file but also to as much additional information as possible (photographs, bibliographies, pamphlets etc.) provided by the towns and cities.

>> **CALL FOR A SPECIAL PUBLIC MENTION FOR VIDEOS**

The call for a "Special Public Mention" at the 9th OIDP International Conference in Reggio Emilia" was directed towards videos associated with citizens' participation experiences. However, and given that the selection had to be limited to a small number of videos, for obvious related to scheduling the viewing sessions, greater attention was paid to participatory experiences involving young people, in line with the central theme of the 9th Conference. The Technical Secretariat has asked each of the town and cities to send both videos and a technical evaluation slip, drawn up by the Audiovisuals Work Group.

>> **VIDEO WITH YOUNG PEOPLE INTERVIEWS FROM DIFFERENT OIDP TOWNS AND CITIES**

The making of an inaugural video, either made by or featuring young people, at the 9th Conference was the result of a proposal made by the members of the Coordinating Committee of the OIDP at the previous meeting, held in Reggio Emilia in March, and was adopted within the framework of an investigation that the young people of Reggio Emilia have been developing, as an activity prior and preparatory to the contents of the Conference. At this meeting an agreement was reached to favour the presence of young people at the encounter and also to tackle the subjects from the perspective of, "not being a point of view that is exclusive to adults but rather a part of the experiences and place occupied by young people in the city". Both in Reggio Emilia and in other OIDP towns and cities many opportunities exist for participation, although adults do not always believe in or know about other ways of participating. The question that was raised was, "Do young people really not participate, or do they participate in a different way?"

To this end a methodology has been developed that, by means of observation, semi-structured interviews, youth discussion groups, video interviews, etc. aims to gather opinions, analyse what people think, find spaces and also proposals for local governments on, "How, When and Where Young People Participate". Within the framework of this investigation the idea of incorporating a video presentation of the Conference was considered in which, on the basis of a script-interview (5 questions) proposed by the young people of Reggio Emilia, and as a result of this investigation, the visions, points of view, differences, etc. from other sources or other towns and cities in the international network could all be incorporated.

In this initiative, addressed to 16 to 25 year-olds, young people from the Junta of Freguesia de Carnide, Nanterre, Aubagne, Sao Bras, Rosario, Sant Boi de Llobregat, Porto Alegre and Reggio Emilia all participated. The young people of San Fernando de Henares not only participated in the interviews they also took charge of the audiovisual editing.

7. REMINDER: NEW OIDP WEB

During 2009 we presented a new design and structure for the contents of the OIDP Website that includes:

- A specific section with the network's own publications.
- Availability of the publications of CD's online with the contents from the 7th Conference and the 3rd Distinction.
- An Annual Calendar
- The MEDIA LIBRARY
- A space for OIDP- CISDP coordination, linked from the home page.

8. SPACE RESERVED FOR MEMBERS

As a member of the network each associate or collaborating member has a personalised username and password that allow them to access the members' area; i.e. they are allowed to access regulations, minutes of meetings and other documents of interest. They are also allowed to upload news items and events into the agenda, or studies and experiences that they want to share with the other members and with everyone else that visits our Website. As a novelty, since 2009, the private area is also the entrance to the virtual forums of the network Work Groups.

To keep the data of network members as up to date as possible, as well as keeping them informed at all times about everything that is going on in the network, we request that all members please verify the data on their member files or directly contact the Technical Secretariat.

9. WORK GROUPS

>> Spatial segregation and territory in major urban centres. Coordinated by Félix Sánchez, Observatory of the Metropolis of São Paulo. This group was set up at the meeting of the Coordinating Committee on 12th February 2008, in Porto Alegre, and was urged to present its first results at the 8th Conference in La Paz. In this setting Félix presented the framework document and work plan to be developed until the 9th Conference: Debate on the forms of social exclusion, the responses of local governments, similarities and differences in the territories; presentation of contributions and the systemisation of information; presentation of the results.

Throughout 2009 Porto Alegre, Mexico City and the Operational Centre for Housing and settlement, coordinated by the Metropolis of São Paulo and with the support of the Technical Secretariat, have all contributed theoretical-academic documents for the creation of a shared conceptual framework. The sum of all of these contributions has given rise to a final document on the relationship between spatial segregation and participatory democracy (*this document can be found in this same folder*). Currently there are no studies that coordinate participatory democracy and segregation, which is why the documents presented represent a starting point. This conceptual framework has been accompanied by a synthesis of different real cases that show how, through participatory democracy, battle can be done against territorial segregation in different settings: Paraguay, Porto Alegre, Mexico City, Montevideo, Cuenca (Ecuador), São Paulo and Santo André. The towns and cities have also contributed other resources, such as a map of exclusion/inclusion in Porto Alegre, and another for Mexico City.

The work methodology of the WG: through the virtual forum, as a space in which documents can be presented and debate encouraged, and also by way of multi-conferences, via Skype, to organise the work and approach the debate in far greater detail.

Challenges for 2010:

- To take a more in depth look into the relationship between spatial segregation, social territorial policies and citizens' participation, in order to boost social inclusion and participatory democracy.
- To incorporate European towns and cities in order to analyse how the question of territorial segregation is dealt with in non-Latin-American contexts.
- To establish a work calendar for the group that coincides with important events in order to introduce the discussion into other international forums, such as the FALP, in Getafe, 10th - 12th June 2010.

>> Children and Youth. Construction of citizenship in participatory processes. This Work Group was started up at the request of the Junta of Freguesia de Carnide (Lisbon), who presented their proposal to the Coordinating Committee at the meeting held in Reggio Emilia on 12th March 2009. Once this had been approved it was established that the overall work plan for the group would be as follows:

- Drafting and discussion of a technical slip with its own registers of the theme of the Group. (OIDP virtual WG forum)
- A bank of participation experiences involving young people and children. Contribution of the contents at the 9th Conference in Reggio Emilia.
- Construction of a conceptual framework (OIDP virtual WG forum). Contribution to the contents of the 9th Conference in Reggio Emilia.

More specifically, the work plan established up to the 9th Conference was as follows: drafting and debate of the work slip/form for the bank of participation experiences, compilation of the experiences and the establishment of the conceptual framework.

Since approved came through in March of this year the WG has worked on the drafting of a slip for the compilation of experiences (*this can be found in the same folder*). This slip has, since June, also been located in the section "Highlights" of the Website, available in all languages of those towns and cities and the organisations that do not form a part of the driving force. Furthermore, in the July Newsletter, a specific call was made for towns and cities that could make contributions to this bank of participation experiences, sending them in by e-mail to the coordinating city and the Technical Secretariat. This virtual forum has also served to bring together some of these contributions. At the present time this Work Group can count on a compilation of 13 experiences.

The towns and cities that joined this Group were: Reggio Emilia, Donostia, Tolima, Tona, Santa Cristina d'Aro and Río das Ostras.

The challenges for 2010 are:

- To extend the database
- To create a space on the OIDP Website in which an experience could be highlighted every week and in which all of the network members would be able to give their opinions on this question, discuss it or enquire about it.
- The creation of an own profile for each experience on the OIDP Website, which could then be used as a resources bank.

<< Image as a communication and participation tool.

This analysis proposal, coordinated by Giovanni Alegretti and Alfredo Ramos, is a result of the cooperation between the Observatory on Participatory Practices (OPP)- POVOS, which in this area has the dynamic support of the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra and the Foundation for Citizens' Studies, associated with the Regional Federation of Neighbourhood Associations of Madrid.

Set up as an OIDP Work Group at the meeting of the Coordinating Committee, held in Porto Alegre on 12th February 2008, it is committed to the creation of a framework for reflection on image and other audiovisual means as useful instruments for citizens' participation practices. From its creation this WG has been very active in the compilation of videos, collaborating on the extension of the OIDP Media Library as well as on the organisation of a specific session on audiovisuals within the framework of each of the international Conferences. Likewise, and since it was set up, the aim has been to establish the bases for the creation of a Best Practices Prize for audiovisual matters related to citizens' participation processes. In this sense work has been going ahead on the construction of criteria and indicators for the evaluation of audiovisual products.

Another proposal that came from this Work Group was the Special Public Mention at the 9th Conference for videos. The call was made by the Technical Secretariat to all of the towns and cities, network collaborating members, with the presentation of a total of 30 videos, from which 9 were selected to be shown within the setting of the audiovisuals workshop at the present Conference, and opting for the said Special Mention. Work will be done on the basis of this selection of videos to consolidate criteria of eligibility for the Best Practices Prize in the audiovisual field for the future.

The towns and cities that joined this Group were: Nanterre, Cardedeu, Cordoba (Spain), Sant Boi de Llobregat and La Paz. The collaborating members were the Hispano-American Educational Association of Peru and ETCS (Cooperative Strategies for Sustainable Community Transformation)

The working methodology of the WG is through the virtual forum, as a deliberative online space, and mainly through the participatory workshops incorporated to each of the audiovisual sessions at each of the Conferences, on the basis of viewing proposals.

The challenges for 2010 are:

- ✓ Drafting and final discussion of the audiovisuals technical evaluation slip.
- ✓ Setting up an Appraisal Committee to monitor the eligibility criteria that will serve as the basis for a future Best Practices in Citizens' Participation Prize, specifically for audiovisual products, expected to be called at the 10th OIDP Conference in Mexico DF in 2010.
- ✓ Extension and thematic classification of the OIDP Media Library.

10. COORDINATION WITH THE CISDP (CGLU)

For several years now an increasing number of towns and cities, members of both networks, have been expressing the need for the work done by both the OIDP and the CISDP to be complemented. Taking up this goal, in 2008, the decision was made to specify this commitment by means of a series of joint activities:

- Invitation to participate in the Jury for the 3rd (2008) and 4th (2009) OIDP Distinction for "Best Practices in Citizens' Participation".
- Participation of the CISDP at the Annual OIDP Members Assembly and a Debating Round Table at the 8th Annual OIDP Conference (La Paz, 19th - 21st December), by way of one of its Vice Presidents, the municipality of Ecatepec de Morelos (Mexico).

- Collaboration in the organisation of the annual meeting of the CISDP within the framework of the 9th OIDP International Conference.
- Start up of a joint reflection with regard to the drafting of a policy position document on matters of participatory democracy.
- Presentation of the proposed drafting of a policy position document at the 9th International Conference, by the cities of Nanterre and Donostia-San Sebastian.
- As a matter of mutual interest both networks also propose the definition of impacts on citizens' participation policies, although at the present time they do not count on any town or city that could coordinate this theme.

Work methodology:

- Virtual forum for coordination between the CISDP and the OIDP. This virtual forum, which is accessible via the websites of both organisations, has been set up for the purpose of encouraging debate and communications between the towns and cities that make up the driving force. The towns and cities in this group also undertake to extend the debate by taking it into their spheres of action. Through this virtual forum Donosti-San Sebastián presented a rough draft of the policy position document, as a starting point on which to base the debate.
- Face to face work meetings: within the scope of Coordinating Committee Meeting a specific meeting was also held for the purpose of reinforcing and getting to know the posture of the members of the Coordinating Committee with regard to coordination with the CISDP.

The towns and cities that joined this group were: Donostia–San Sebastian, Nanterre, Ecatepec de Morelos, Cordoba, (Spain), La Paz (Bolivia), Mexico DF, FEDOMU (Dominican Federation of Municipalities) and the Deputation of Barcelona.

Challenges for 2010:

- To stimulate the debate on the policy position document between the towns and cities of the two international networks.
- Approval of the policy position document within the framework of the 10th OIDP International Conference, in Mexico DF.
- Coordination of the dates and contents, through the CISDP, with the 3rd CGLU World Congress, programmed for 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th November 2010.

11. PARTICIPATION BY THE OIDP IN OTHER ACTIVITIES IN 2009.

- 6th Annual AERYC Conference: Social Cohesion and Democratic Governance: for more inclusive regions, towns and cities. Barcelona, 1st and 2nd December 2008.
- 1st Forum of Peoples, Towns and Cities for Human Rights. Barcelona, 14th May 2009.
- 5th Municipal Social Services Congress: "More quality, more life". Round Table: "Local Voluntary Services: A task shared by local governments and society". ZAMORA, 10th, 11th and 12th June 2009.
- Symposium: "Urbanism and Participation: initiative and future challenges". Barcelona, 2nd July 2009.
- Participatory Budget Training Seminars. Santa Cristina d'Aro, 3rd and 4th July.
- Meeting of Towns and Cities. Participation and Local Government. Las Palmas Grand Canary, 17th and 18th July.
- Workshop for the survey being carried out by the Deputation of Barcelona on young people and participation in different towns and cities in the Province of Barcelona, 22nd September.

12. ACTIVITIES ANTICIPATED IN 2010.

- The next meeting of the Coordinating Committee, yet to be determined.
- International Congress on Participatory Budget Models. 20th and 21st January, in Berlin.
- Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the World Social Forum. 25th January in Porto Alegre.
- Thematic Social Forum, from 29th to 31st January, in Bahía.
- World Urban Social Forum, from 22nd to 26th March in Río de Janeiro.
- 2nd Peripheral – Solidary Metropolis Local Authorities Forum, from 10th to 12th June, in Getafe.
- 3rd CGLU World Congress, from 17th to 20th November, in Mexico City.