Democracy R&D

The Year in Deliberation 2024

Democracy R&D's annual report on key trends and developments in deliberative democracy and the network

Ieva Česnulaitytė, Felipe Rey, and Santiago Niño-Aguilar

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⚙ *Process:*

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About Democracy R&D

With 104 organisational members and 98 individual members across 57 countries and six continents, involving over 300 people, Democracy R&D is the largest global network dedicated to deliberative democracy and democratic innovation. We help decision-makers take hard decisions and build public trust by collaboratively developing, implementing, and promoting ways to improve democracy, from the local to the global level.

104
Organisational members worldwide

98
Individual members in the network

57
Countries represented across six continents

300+
People involved in the network

About This Report

The Year in Deliberation 2024 is Democracy R&D's annual state of the field report, offering a snapshot of key trends, innovations, and challenges in deliberative democracy. Designed for network members and the wider field, it tracks the evolution of deliberative processes and highlights where the field is heading.

A growing global movement, with dozens of new assemblies and juries emerging worldwide, the Democracy R&D network is committed to maintaining an annual record of the field's evolution. This report aims to track how the practice and thinking around deliberative democracy and citizens' assemblies are developing. Rather than providing an exhaustive overview, this report highlights notable cases and key issues that have shaped the past year, offering insights into the field's ongoing transformations. Given the rapid pace of change, staying up to date can be challenging, and we hope this annual report will serve as a valuable resource.

The report begins by highlighting notable *Trends* in the field in 2024. *The Field Advancing Assemblies and Juries* section illustrates these trends through selected case studies of deliberative processes that introduced new methodologies, addressed new types of policy issues, expanded into new countries, and achieved exceptional impact. *The New Publications and Resources* section takes stock of new books, guides, and papers that network members published in 2024. *The Democracy R&D Network in 2024* section provides a summary of how the network has evolved. *What's next?* reflects on what deliberative processes, projects, and challenges await in 2025.

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01 Trends

2024 brought both innovation and continuity. Citizen deliberation expanded in reach, ambition, and impact. Artificial intelligence became an important factor in deliberation, climate assemblies continued to gain momentum, and citizens' assemblies tackled difficult issues like hate speech and disinformation. New assemblies shaped the future of deliberation itself, the movement grew across Central and Eastern Europe and North America, and new efforts advanced the institutionalisation and impact assessment of assemblies.

These developments reflect a lively and growing field that is adapting to global challenges, continuing to innovate methodologies, and striving for systemic change.

The following trends were selected based on their significance, reach, and potential long-term impact. Some, like the use of artificial intelligence in deliberation and the rise of climate assemblies, demonstrate how deliberative methods are evolving to address new technological and environmental challenges. The widened geographic reach across different political contexts signals a growing recognition of citizens' assemblies as valuable elements of democratic governance. Meanwhile, efforts to institutionalise deliberation and refine impact measurement highlight the field's maturation, as assemblies and juries increasingly shift from isolated experiments to embedded democratic mechanisms.

Trend 1 → *Innovating Deliberation: New Methods and Design*

Trend 2 → *Deliberating on Complex Issues: Climate, Disinformation, Hate Speech*

Trend 3 → *Expanding Deliberation: Growth in Regions*

Trend 4 → *Strengthening Deliberation: Institutionalisation and Impact*

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Trend 1

Innovating Deliberation: New Methods and Design

In 2024, the design of citizens' assemblies continued to evolve, shaped by innovations such as the use of AI tools and meta-deliberation. AI is both a tool for enhancing deliberation and a subject of deliberation itself, raising questions about its role in decision-making. At the same time, the concept of meta-deliberation gained traction, allowing citizens to co-design the processes that shape their participation. These advancements highlight a growing emphasis on refining deliberative methods to make them more adaptive, inclusive, and effective.

AI & Deliberation

Aviv Ovadya

/ *AI & Democracy Foundation, US*

There are two clear directions of interaction between AI and the deliberative democracy community: "AI in deliberation" - the potential of using AI to augment deliberative processes; and "deliberation about AI" - the potential of deliberative processes to steer the future of AI.

AI in Deliberation

There are enormous opportunities for using AI to augment deliberation. Deliberative democracy practitioners are already using AI for automating routine tasks, rapid low-cost translation of documents, grouping and summarising large numbers of public comments, and enabling deliberators to quickly query large knowledge bases. Deliberative tools are being developed or augmented to enable micro-process facilitation and mass engagement, often with the same tool being used in different ways (such as Remesh). These also include potentially more revolutionary options for how deliberative processes might work. For example, relying on "AI experts" to instantly model the results of potential policy recommendations, meaning that participants can rapidly explore the potential outcomes of different recommendations in minutes or hours instead of years, learning via fast iteration (similar to how the Michigan Redistricting Commission used software

that immediately showed the impacts of potential redistricting decisions — except generalised over many more policy domains as AI improves). Finally, AI can be used to help support analysis of best practices through recording and analysis of deliberative processes and their impacts and outcomes.

The use of AI in deliberation also poses risks, most concretely that it may lead to humans being pushed out of critical aspects of deliberation, for reasons such as reducing costs. Current sophisticated citizen assembly processes may face increasing competition from AI-based approaches that involve less facilitation, or automated facilitation. While most attempts at "alternatives" may be terrible, a few may provide useful insights, or may act as a valuable "deliberative appetiser" or mass deliberation complement to standard assemblies (e.g., applying ideas from moral graph and chain of alignment approaches may prove interesting). Pressure from AI is also leading to questions around where deep value comes from in deliberative processes—what can and should be removed and what is essential—and those questions are exposing some of the pre-AI diversity across the field. For example, some practitioners are deeply concerned about the dangers of AI breakout facilitators, while other practitioners have long been opposed to breakout facilitators as a source of bias and reduction in participant agency, and instead use smaller groups, keeping deliberations on track with clear templates and (fewer) roving facilitators.

Deliberation about AI

There are several deliberation-oriented organisations exploring what deliberative processes might look like for AI, including my organisation, the AI & Democracy Foundation, Missions Publiques, DemocracyNext, Connected by Data, and ISWE. There have also been a few processes already run, including the Global Deliberative Poll on the use of technology by

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[Stanford Deliberative Democracy Lab](#) with [Meta and BIT](#), as well as the Citizens' panel on AI in [Belgium](#). Outside of the core deliberative democracy ecosystem, other communities are also considering related approaches in the language of public participation, though most of these processes are not quite deliberative (e.g. [in labs](#), [in general](#)). The general approaches taken by these organizations and ecosystems differ dramatically along a number of axes, but especially around jurisdiction, which can range from community, national, global, corporate, and AI system (many options between these, but similar processes apply), and by the [degree of power](#) that is necessary, ranging from consultative to binding constitutional orders.

Meta-Deliberation

Indira Latorre and Felipe Rey
/ *iDeemos, Colombia*

A citizens' assembly begins long before the first day of deliberation. Behind the scenes, an extensive process unfolds to bring it to life: recruitment methods are designed, governance structures are established, experts are selected, and deliberation rules are set. By the time assembly members enter the stage, the stage itself has already been carefully constructed. But what if citizens were the ones setting the stage? What if they took on some—or most—of the decisions that shape the design of a citizens' assembly? What if citizens themselves became the designers?

This is the essence of meta-deliberation ("deliberation about deliberation"). Meta-deliberation involves convening a citizens' assembly for the purpose of designing future citizens' assemblies. Unlike traditional assemblies, meta-deliberative assemblies do not tackle substantive policy issues like climate change, urban planning, or public health. Instead, they focus on shaping the procedures that future assemblies will follow to deliberate and make decisions on those issues.

In this way, meta-deliberative assemblies mirror the role of constitutional bodies in representative democracies. Just as parliaments and executives are designed by constitutional conventions, citizens' assemblies could be designed by meta-deliberative processes.

The most immediate precedents to meta-deliberation are agenda-setting processes, where citizens take charge of selecting the topics that will later be discussed. Meta-deliberation builds on this democratising practice but goes a step further— not just allowing citizens to choose the topic, but giving them a say in other key aspects of a citizens' assembly's design as well.

Meta-deliberation has at least three potential applications within the context of citizens' assemblies:

- **Designing Ad Hoc Citizens' Assemblies:** Meta-deliberative assemblies can serve as a preliminary step to shape the design of specific citizens' assemblies tailored to a particular issue.

- **Sequential Models of Deliberation:** Meta-deliberation can be integrated into multi-phase deliberative processes, such as Bogotá's Itinerant Citizens' Assembly. In this case, deliberation was distributed across multiple stages, with different assembly members addressing agenda setting, weighing trade-offs, selecting preferred options, and later evaluating the outcomes. This structure is ideal for extended policy cycles, where a meta-deliberative assembly could function as the "moment zero," helping to shape the entire sequence before it begins.

- **Institutionalising Citizens' Assemblies:** For jurisdictions considering the permanent establishment of citizens' assemblies, meta-deliberation could play a vital role in drafting legal frameworks. Typically, regulations for citizens' assemblies are crafted by lawmakers or policy experts. Including a meta-deliberative body in this regulatory process would allow citizen input in crafting these frameworks,

Meta-deliberation is not a universal solution for all deliberative processes. While it offers a method for enhancing the legitimacy of citizens' assemblies, it should be used judiciously alongside other strategies. Meta-deliberation often requires significant time and resources, which can be challenging given the constraints many projects face. Commissioners and organisers may reasonably choose to allocate limited budgets and timelines to the main deliberative process rather than an extensive meta-deliberative phase. In their current state of institutional development, citizens' assemblies are often the outcome of intense negotiations, limited resources, and significant political pressures. Given these constraints, incorporating meta-deliberative processes may be challenging under such conditions. Nonetheless, these trade-offs should be carefully evaluated rather than bypassed. Ideally, meta-deliberation is part of a broader, long-term democratic strategy—as was the case in Bogotá, where it was embedded in a four-year democratic innovation plan (see [Section 2 of this report](#)).

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Trend 2

Deliberating on Complex Issues: Climate, Disinformation, Hate Speech

In 2024, citizens' assemblies confronted some of the most challenging issues of our time, including climate change, disinformation, and hate speech. Climate assemblies continued to grow, not only in number but also in ambition. Assemblies addressing disinformation and hate speech explored ways to counter societal divisions, demonstrating how deliberation can foster nuanced discussions on highly polarised topics. These efforts reinforce the role of citizens' assemblies in navigating complexity and shaping responses to urgent global challenges.

Climate Assemblies Across the World

Graham Smith
/ *Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies (KNOCA), UK*

It is five years since the iconic Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat began its work in late 2019. Five years on, and the interest in commissioning climate assemblies continues. Most of the activity is centred in Europe, with a noticeable increase in interest in Central and Eastern Europe. The development of practice in the Global South was highlighted in the significant International [IDEA report Deliberative Democracy and Climate Change: Exploring the Potential of Climate Assemblies in the Global South](#).

One of the striking trends is the extent to which assemblies have been organised at national level. 2024 saw two climate-related national assemblies in Sweden and Norway, with two more – in the Netherlands and again in Norway – preparing to begin their work in 2025.

National level practice embodies another trend: the commissioning of climate assemblies by non-governmental actors. It is a common tendency to think of assemblies as an instrument of government. The first assembly in Norway ([Nasjonalt folkepanel om bærekraftig forbruk](#)) and the [Nationaal Burgerberaad Klimaat](#) in the Netherlands follow this pattern, with their focus on aspects of sustainable consumption. The [Medborgarråd om Klimatet](#) in Sweden and the second Norwegian assembly – [Framtidspanelet](#) – are representative of a shift in assembly practice towards [commissioning by civil society](#) and other non-governmental organisations. Here the ambition is to shape – or reshape – public discourse and political priorities, with both assemblies developing sophisticated and targeted communications strategies to amplify recommendations. The Swedish assembly was organised by the FAIRTRANS research programme to deliberate and agree upon recommendations to decrease Swedish emissions in light of the Paris Agreement (with a focus on transportation) in a context where government commitment has been waning. The Norwegian assembly, commissioned by a coalition of humanitarian and environmental NGOs, is questioning how the country's wealth, in particular its oil fund, should be used to benefit not only Norwegians but also the world and future generations.

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2024 also saw the second year of functioning of the permanent climate assemblies in Brussels and Milan – clearly making the point that these are not simply ad-hoc institutions. Adaptation also appears to be a growing focus of assemblies, with, for example, La Convention Métropolitaine pour le Climat in Lyon tackling the question of the liveability of a city region experiencing increasingly intense heat and Latvia's first climate assembly in Riga focusing on topics such as storm water flood mitigation, urban biodiversity and access to green space.

The Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies (KNOCA) continues to play a critical role in building the capacity of the community of practice through evidence, knowledge exchange and dialogue.

5 Years of Global Growth and Innovation (2019–2024)

› *The Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat in France marks the start of large-scale climate assemblies*

2019

2020-2024

› *Growth of climate assemblies in Europe, with increasing interest in Central and Eastern Europe*

› *The International IDEA report highlights climate assembly potential in the Global South*

› *National Climate Assemblies in Sweden and Norway, focused on emissions reduction and sustainable consumption*

› *First Climate Assemblies in Latvia (Riga) and France (Lyon), addressing urban adaptation challenges*

› *Civil Society-Led Assemblies emerge in Sweden and Norway, influencing public discourse and policies*

› *Permanent Climate Assemblies in Brussels and Milan continue, reinforcing long-term citizen participation*

2024

2025

› *New Climate Assemblies in the Netherlands and Norway, including discussions on Norway's oil wealth*

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Climate Assemblies in Japan

Ayano Takeuchi
/*Japan Mini-Public Research Forum, Japan*

Climate assemblies have been gaining momentum in Japan in recent years**.** 2024 saw a resurgence of climate assemblies and first efforts to institutionalise them. These developments are likely influenced by Japan's 2020 carbon neutrality declaration, which prompted government-led decarbonisation policies and industry-wide shifts. In this context, local governments are increasingly adopting climate assemblies to engage citizens in decarbonisation discussions.

Japan's first climate assembly was held in Sapporo in 2020, and since then, the number of local governments organising climate assemblies has been increasing, particularly in the Kanto region (Greater Tokyo Area). In December 2022, the mayors of five cities in Tokyo Metropolis, including Tama, Setagaya, and Suginami City (which held climate citizens' assemblies 2023 and 2024) established the Local Initiative Network. They declared that they would conduct climate citizens' assemblies co-hosted with local governments and citizens as part of their shared policies, essentially institutionalising climate assemblies.

To date, over 20 local governments have organised climate assemblies. Notably, Sapporo City (Hokkaido) and Matsudo City (Chiba Prefecture), have both held their second assemblies in 2024. These climate assemblies vary in scope, with some focusing on citizen-driven action plans and others developing policy recommendations for local governments. Commissioners and organizers work collaboratively to design the most suitable format for their regions.

Most climate assemblies in Japan are initiated by local governments. A key example is the Suginami City Climate Assembly,

which was established as part of the City mayor's election pledge. In Suginami's case, Democracy R&D member IGES was commissioned as one of the key operators due to its expertise in decarbonisation and climate assemblies. Academics from the Japan Mini-Publics Research Forum, including Naoyuki Mikami, Ayano Takeuchi, and Hiroe Maeda, collaborated with local authorities and operators to provide expert guidance and conduct voluntary evaluations of parts of the process.

In 2022, a mayor with a background in international policy advocacy NGOs was elected in Suginami City, central Tokyo. Her campaign included a pledge to hold a climate assembly, which was subsequently launched under her administration. While the city's Environment Department was the primary organiser, the initiative involved a coordinated effort across all government departments to ensure that recommendations could be effectively integrated into policy. Suginami City plans to hold a symposium in March 2025 to present how these proposals will be incorporated into policy. It will be interesting to observe how these initiatives contribute to embedding climate action within civil society in the future.

In Japan, citizens' assemblies have spread through the Shimin Togikai model, adapted from Germany's Planungszelle, since the mid-2000s, with around 400 cases to date. The first one took place in Chiyoda City, Tokyo, initiated by Junior Chamber International Japan and Professor Emeritus Akinori Shinoto. The model gained traction due to decentralisation policies and efforts to revitalise citizen engagement. As local governments sought broader participation in response to decentralisation reforms from the 1990s to 2000s, the method expanded.

● *Japan*

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Assemblies on Disinformation and Hate Speech

In 2024, assemblies have increasingly been used to address some of the most sensitive and polarising issues, such as disinformation and hate speech. While citizens' assemblies have traditionally focused on policy areas with clearer legislative pathways, such as climate action or urban planning, there is a growing recognition that deliberation can also help societies navigate some of the most highly charged debates. In 2024, two major processes reflected this shift: the European Commission's Panel on Tackling Hate in Society and Germany's Forum against Fakes on disinformation, both of which sought to engage citizens in developing responses to societal divisions and digital threats to democracy. These assemblies highlight an emerging trend—deliberative processes not only informing policy but also shaping public discourse on contentious topics, bridging ideological divides, and fostering greater civic resilience.

● *Germany*

120 *assembly members*
400,000 *online participants*
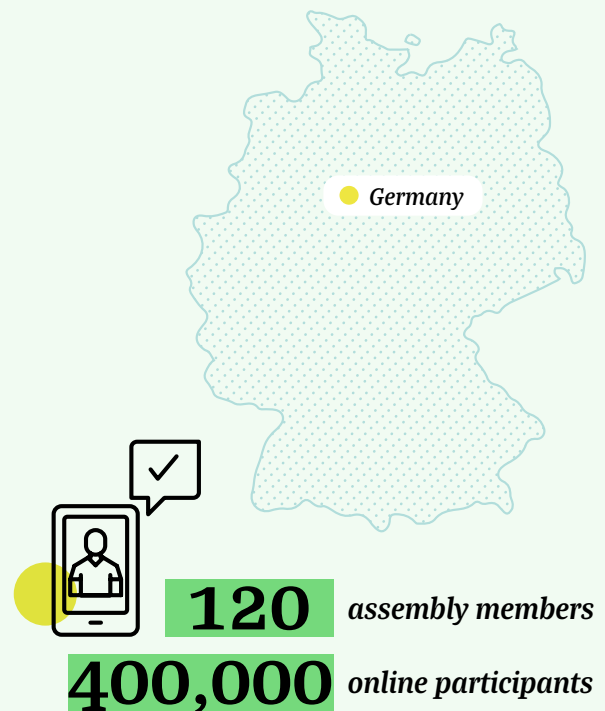
Forum Against Fakes
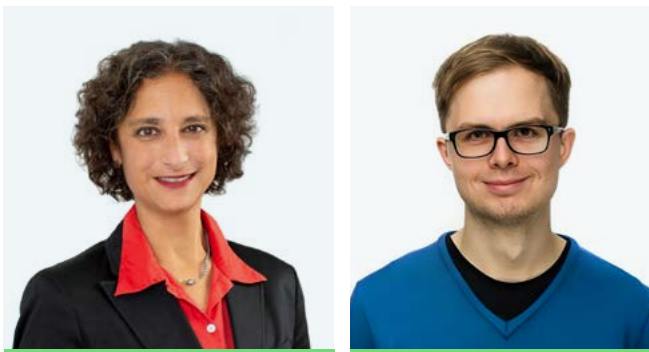
Angela Jain and Stefan Roch
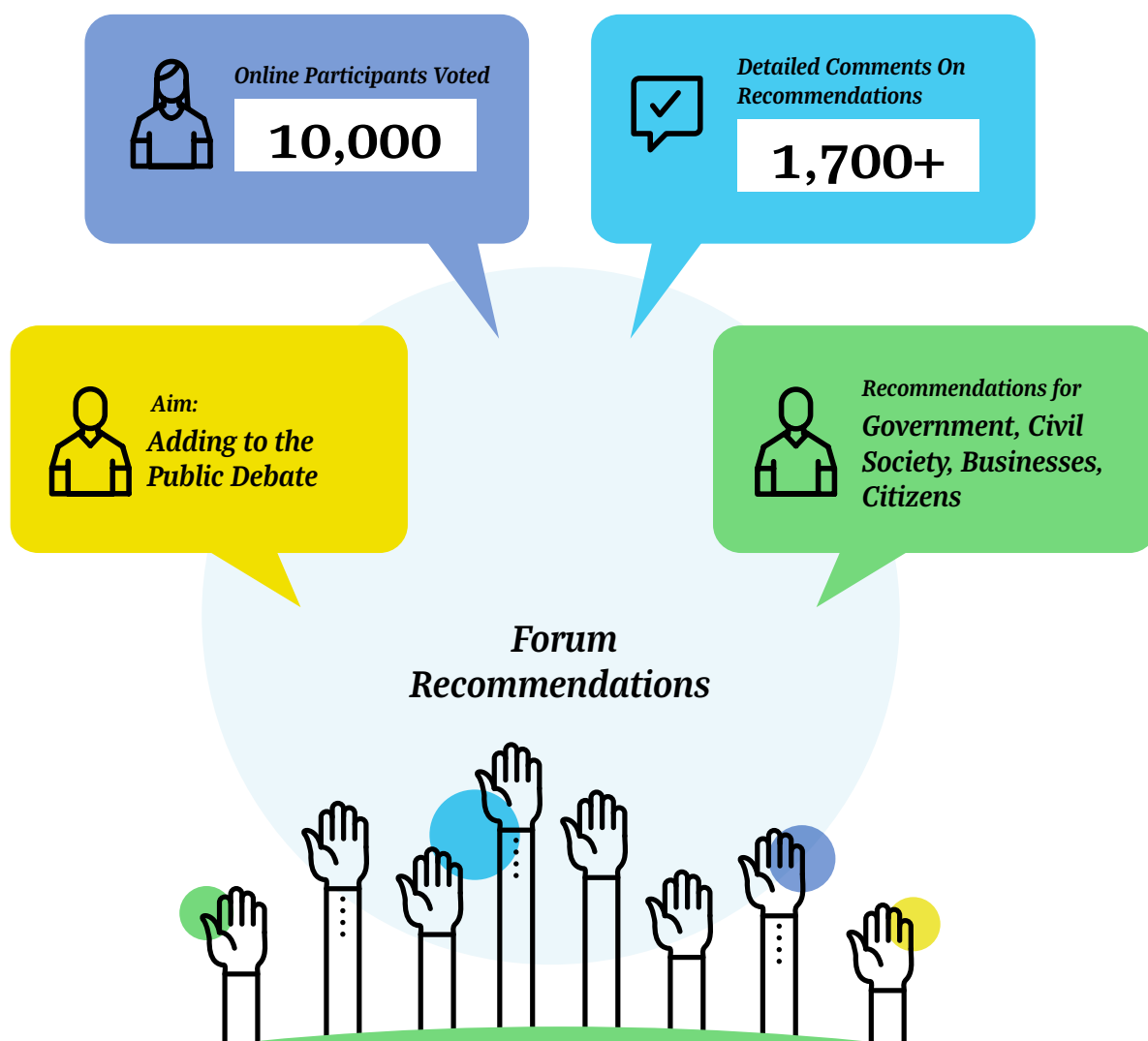*Bertelsmann Stiftung, Germany*

In the participation process "Forum against Fakes" the Bertelsmann Stiftung addressed the difficult and sensitive question of how Germany should deal with the increasing spread of disinformation, especially online. It did so by openly acknowledging the complexity of the problem and by running a process that combined the deliberative quality of a citizens' assembly with open online participation.

One key takeaway from our experience is that difficult issues such as how to deal with disinformation are inherently political and contested. There is no single right or wrong solution, and a broad public consensus is hardly attainable. The Forum approach recognises this by opening up the 120-member citizens' assembly to an online process involving more than 400,000 participants, adding publicity to the assembly's topic. It helped the assembly members to rethink their understanding of disinformation and their initial ideas thoroughly, and to understand their recommendations as contributions to an ongoing public discourse. Ultimately, the Forum against Fakes sought to shift the citizens' assembly from being a closed 'mini-public' to becoming a more open and integral part of the wider public, actively contributing to continuous and open public debate.

Setting the agenda for the Forum was a considerable task, because the topic of disinformation was so complex and so contentious. To enable targeted discussions in the assembly, the Forum started with a Germany-wide public consultation, which attracted almost 200,000 participants. The consultation identified sub-themes and concrete issues that Germans consider key to tackling disinformation, such as transparency in the use of artificial intelligence, the role of journalism, and the responsibilities of social media platforms. This input from a broader public helped structure the assembly's work and created a strong momentum for the debates that followed.

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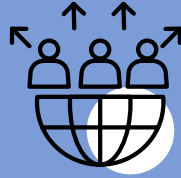04 The Democracy R&D Network in 2024

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The assembly itself was highly diverse, not only in terms of socio-demographic composition, but also in terms of political views. Several participants, for example, clearly held strong right-wing views. Although often very controversial, a constructive dialogue was always possible. As the first assembly meetings progressed, members began to develop draft recommendations based on their discussions with each other and with experts and stakeholders. To connect the initial recommendations of the assembly with the public debate, the recommendations were posted on an online platform and opened up to public feedback. Nearly 10,000 citizens participated online, providing over 10,000 votes and more than

1,700 detailed comments. This was one of the defining moments of the Forum. The assembly received a lot of constructive criticism, testimonies of personal experience, questions, strong agreement and sometimes even stronger disagreement. Public feedback and scrutiny added weight to the assembly's outreach and enabled it to thoroughly rethink and redraft its initial ideas into more nuanced and more politically feasible recommendations. A particularly important aspect of the final recommendations was to direct them not just to political decision-makers, but also to civil society, businesses and citizens, adding to the ongoing public debate rather than attempting to close it.

Online Participants Voted

10,000

Detailed Comments On Recommendations

1,700+

Aim:
Adding to the Public Debate

Recommendations for
Government, Civil Society, Businesses, Citizens

Forum Recommendations

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Trend 3

Expanding Deliberation: Growth in Regions

In 2024, citizens' assemblies continued to spread to new regions, with notable growth in Central and Eastern Europe and North America. Locally driven initiatives proliferated in CEE, strengthening democratic resilience in politically complex contexts, while new field-building efforts in North America brought key actors together. As deliberative processes take root in diverse settings, they demonstrate their adaptability and growing institutional recognition.
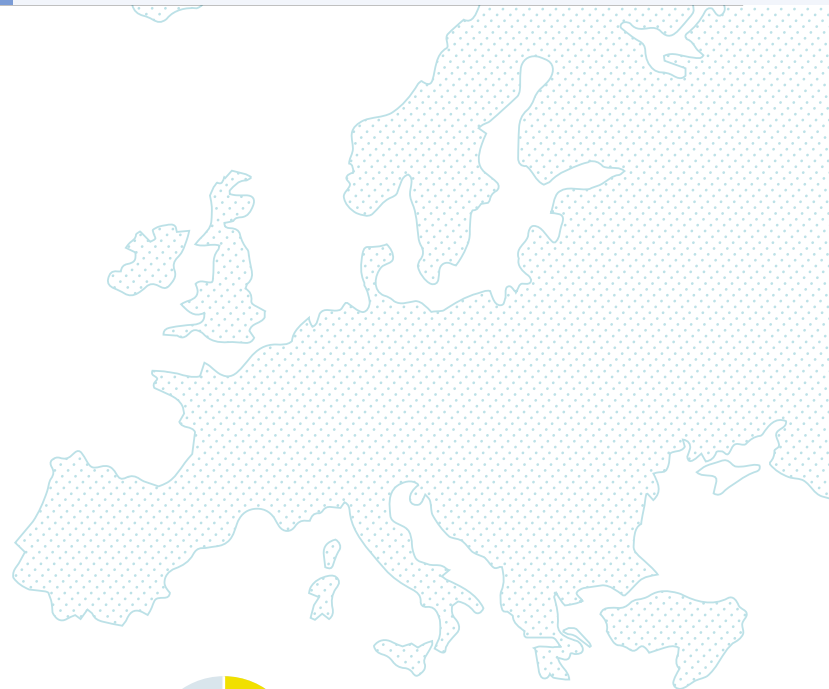
Central and Eastern Europe

👤 **Ieva Česnulaitytė**
/ *Lithuania*

Since 2016, a significant deliberative wave has emerged across Central and Eastern Europe, with 40 documented deliberative processes and more underway. This surge is particularly noteworthy as the number of countries in the region implementing citizens' assemblies is set to double in 2024-2025, reflecting a growing appetite for democratic innovation. This movement is largely locally driven, with 78% of assemblies taking place at the local level and a strong focus on environmental issues. Compared to global averages, these assemblies tend to be smaller and shorter, typically bringing together 53 citizens over four days.

This growth comes at a pivotal moment, as the region grapples with populism, polarisation, and public disengagement, all against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. Citizens' assemblies have the potential to strengthen democratic resilience, not only by empowering citizens and increasing transparency but also by preventing the weaponisation of divisive issues and by countering misinformation—critical functions in a region facing both external threats and internal democratic challenges.

78%
Citizens' assemblies held at the local level

Citizens' assemblies in Central and Eastern Europe face several key challenges, but practitioners have developed creative strategies to navigate them. Securing political will is difficult in elite-driven political cultures where citizen participation is often viewed as a risk rather than a democratic asset. To overcome this, advocates identify democratic champions within governments who can support assemblies from within. Mistrust between civil society and government further complicates legitimacy, with concerns about "participation-washing." To build credibility, many assemblies collaborate with respected international institutions, such as the European Parliament.

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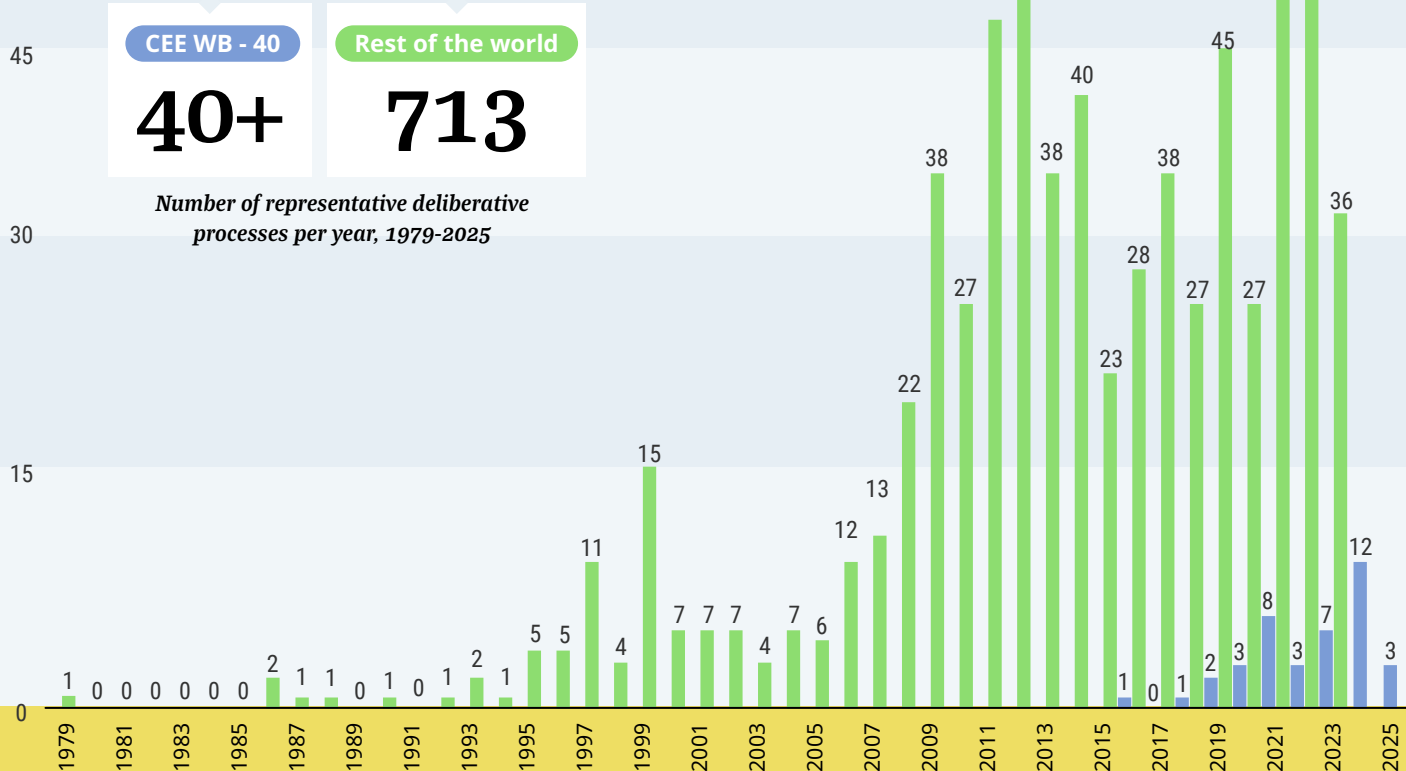|	01	02	03	04	05	06
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Finally, limited resources and capacity remain a significant barrier, with assemblies often relying on external funding and international expertise. To address this, organisers are experimenting with cost-saving measures, such as running multiple assemblies simultaneously, as seen in Mostar and Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, where two processes were coordinated to share resources and expertise. Additionally, there is a focus on prioritising local capacity-building to ensure the long-term sustainability of deliberative democracy in the region.

The wave represents a significant development in the evolution of democratic innovation in Central and Eastern Europe, demonstrating how citizens' assemblies can flourish even in

42%
Citizens' assemblies funded by European institutions
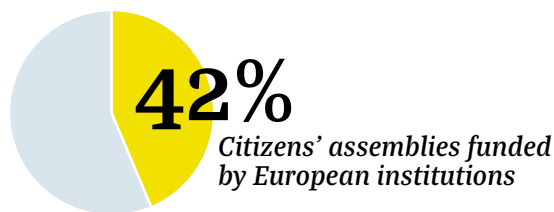
challenging political contexts. The fact that European institutions are leading in funding these initiatives (contributing to 42% of processes) suggests growing institutional recognition of their value. More than just decision-making mechanisms, citizens' assemblies have the potential to be key instruments for strengthening democratic resilience and preventing societal fractures in a region shaped by complex political histories.

A "deliberative wave" is emerging in Central Eastern Europe and Western Balkans since 2016

CEE WB - 40
40+

Rest of the world
713

Number of representative deliberative processes per year, 1979-2025

Note: n=752; Data for the rest of the world for 2024-2025 is unavailable and only preliminary for CEE&WB.

Source: OECD Deliberative Democracy Database (2023) complemented by desk research and qualitative interviews.

Image source: *Ieva Česnulaitytė (2024), "Citizens' Assemblies: Democratic Responses to Authoritarian Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe", DemocracyNext.*

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United States

👤 **Rahmin Sarabi**
/ *American Public Trust, US*

Momentum continues to build for deliberative democracy in North America as many work to advance the effort more boldly in this tumultuous political period.

The year 2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in Vancouver, BC—an occasion punctuated by the annual Democracy R&D conference. Fittingly, conversations on the role of citizen deliberation in electoral, charter, and constitutional reform have re-emerged, reinforcing the relevance of these models in today's evolving political landscape.

In the U.S. and Canada, at least three municipal assemblies are slated for 2025, building on the two held in 2024. Topics include youth homelessness, urban planning, child care, and city charter reform. There is cautious optimism about a nascent trend: governments are increasingly funding the core costs of citizens' assemblies, with two of three assemblies in 2025 municipally funded. This shift could allow national philanthropic efforts to focus on strengthening the infrastructure needed to scale deliberative democracy more broadly.

Key Snapshots in the United States

1. The Democracy Funders Network will soon release a landscape report on US citizens' assemblies and deliberative democracy, providing funders with a clearer picture of the field's promise and opportunities.

2. FIDE expanded into North America, bringing lessons from its citizens' assembly schools in the EU to the US with two held in Arizona and DC, in addition to their work to establish common definitions and a learning series across assemblies.

5. The first university-convened climate assembly in the US will be held at The City University of New York in 2025 with The Assembly Project leading implementation.

6. New Hampshire Together hosted a statewide citizens' assembly on voting integrity, polarisation, and political responsiveness, coupled with a legislative strategy to drive impact.

3. The Deschutes Assembly on Youth Homelessness received great local and national press coverage thanks to the leadership of COCAP, DemocracyNext, and Healthy Democracy.

7. State-level investment in deliberation saw a major milestone with Washington State allocating $2 million to pilot a statewide network of "community assembly" enclave deliberations. However, the funding status of this initiative has become uncertain under the Trump administration.

8. CivicGenius, now a program of the longstanding National Civic League, is building on their history of deliberative engagement to host their first citizens' assembly in Utah in 2025.

4. Colorado has emerged as a leading state in democracy innovation, with assemblies planned in Boulder and Fort Collins in 2025, building on the success of one held in Montrose in 2024. Northern Colorado in particular benefits from nearly two decades of groundwork laid by the Center for Public Deliberation.

9. Increasing exploration of digital democracy and AI tools, often to extend participation beyond assembly members, making deliberation more inclusive and scalable (see pol.is, Remesh, Cortico, Frankly, CrowdSmart).

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Image by: Final Montrose Community Report

Strengthening the Field Through Collaboration

—

The past year also saw the emergence of two significant field-building efforts in the U.S.:

Citizens' Assemblies and Deliberative Allies (CADA) launched a bi-monthly series of calls featuring case studies and learning opportunities, bringing together practitioners, academics, and advocates.

The Assemble the Field series was introduced as a complement, providing a dedicated space for practitioners and advocates to develop shared strategies, foster collaborative working groups, and engage in collective sensemaking.

Looking Ahead: Strategic Media, Coalition-Building, and Place-Based Efforts

—

While deliberative democracy and citizens' assemblies offer a powerful antidote to the dysfunctions of American politics, they remain largely unknown to the public and are not yet widely demanded. To change this, the field must broaden its narrative reach, and the need for impactful strategic media has never been more urgent.

The recent election cycle underscored the growing influence of non-traditional media channels—such as podcasts, YouTube, and influencers—in shaping public discourse. Leveraging these platforms will be critical to expanding awareness and support beyond academic and policy circles, making deliberative democracy a more visible and compelling part of the conversation about democratic renewal.

In the U.S., much of the field has focused on place-based efforts—working at the city and county levels—due to the feasibility of engaging governments at this scale. Equally importantly, there is a belief that shared local challenges foster collaboration and offer a path beyond the polarisation of national politics. The goal has been to move beyond 'one-off' initiatives to multiple assemblies over a span of years, and ultimately to see public deliberation embedded as a regular, institutionalised component of local democracy. This emphasis is expected to continue in the years ahead, driven by multiple factors fueling greater interest in local solutions—long regarded as the laboratories of democracy in the U.S.

Finally, stronger coalition-building remains essential. Rather than standing alone as a movement, deliberative democracy should position itself within broader efforts for democratic renewal. Advancing this work requires forging deeper connections with aligned movements in democracy reform, civic engagement, and institutional innovation. To do so, we must articulate a compelling vision of how deliberative democracy can help build a government truly of, by, and for the people—transforming it from an experiment into an expectation in American political life.

Amidst the national turbulence, momentum is quietly building. Now is the time to create public demand, expand institutional support, and make deliberative democracy a central pillar of a renewed, resilient democracy for our times.

Thank you to Matt Byrne and Laura Berry for their feedback.

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Trend 4

Strengthening Deliberation: Institutionalisation and Impact

In 2024, deliberative democracy took steps toward deeper integration and accountability. Efforts to institutionalise citizens' assemblies continued, while efforts for measuring their impact picked up the pace. Together, these developments can strengthen deliberation's role in governance and and demonstrate its long-term benefits.

Institutionalisation

Ieva Česnulaitytė
/ *Lithuania*

Felipe Rey
/ *Ideemos, Colombia*

Ione Ardaiz
/ *Arantzazulab, Spain*

In 2024, the institutionalisation of citizens' assemblies continued, representing a significant ongoing shift in democratic innovation, moving beyond one-off processes to more systematic forms of citizen engagement. Institutionalised assemblies are deliberative bodies with established mechanisms for ongoing deliberation, ranging from permanent councils with agenda-setting powers to structured processes embedded within existing governmental frameworks. These assemblies differ from traditional ad-hoc models by having more defined roles and clearer connections to decision-making processes.

In the Basque region of Spain, efforts to institutionalise have been evolving on a regional and local level throughout 2024. In 2021, Arantzazulab began the journey of exploring and deepening deliberative democracy. Since then, the lab has been working with different actors at local and international levels. They have framed a strategy for institutionalising deliberative democracy: Arantzazulab uses a scaling framework developed by the McConnell Family Foundation and the Tamarack Institute, which focuses on three approaches: scaling up (influencing laws and policies), scaling out (reaching more citizens) and scaling deep (influencing cultural roots). This approach resonates with broader emerging work on scaling democratic innovations, such as the Horizon Europe project ScaleDem, which is developing a Theory of Scaling Democratic Innovations through a consortium of research and practitioner organisations. In scaling out, the proposal has been drawn up for the first Permanent Citizens' Assembly at the level of the Basque Country, as specified in the Law on Energy Transition and Climate Change in the Basque Country, which was approved with broad support in February 2024. The Basque Country Citizens' Assembly was conceived by Arantzazulab and the institutions of the Basque Government (EVE and IHOBE) with the expert support of Deliberativa. The design of the Citizens' Assembly of the Basque Country Citizens' Assembly is inspired by several pioneering cases in Europe, such as the Ostbelgien Permanent Citizens' Council and the Brussels Permanent Climate Assembly. On the local level, the Permanent Citizens' Assembly of Tolosa was developed in 2024. This design incorporates the lessons learned from the previous ad-hoc citizens assembly and is inspired by the mixed deliberative committees of the Francophone Brussels Parliament.

Scaling Up
Influencing laws and policies.

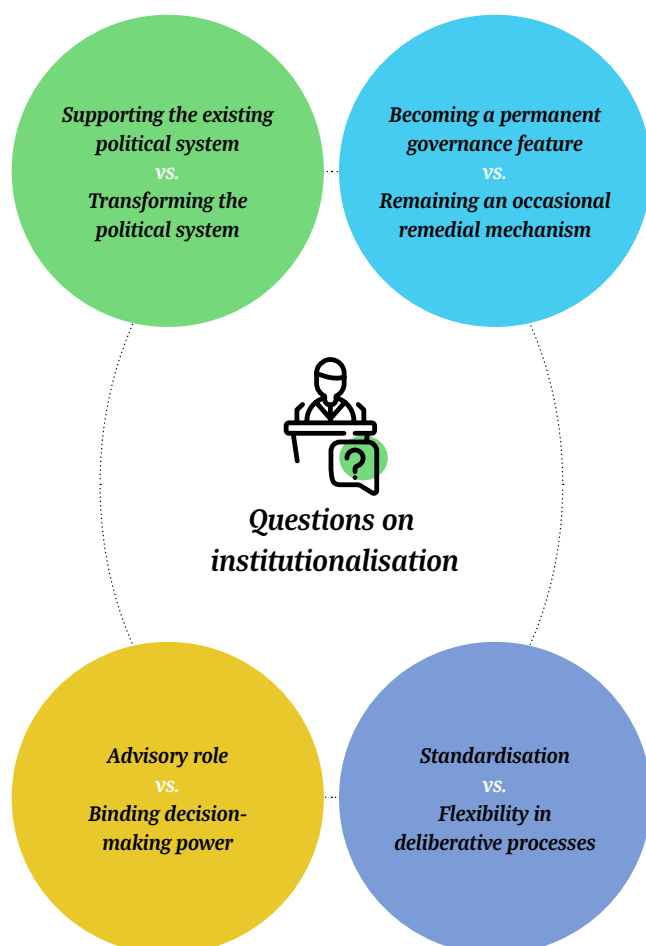**Scaling Out**
Expanding citizen participation.

Scaling Deep
Transforming cultural structures.

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Major challenges to more widespread institutionalisation persist, from penetrating political culture with more collaborative approaches and securing political will for these permanent deliberative processes, to the search for the most suitable ways to embed citizen deliberation institutionally, administratively, and legally.

The field is currently grappling with critical debates about the nature and scope of institutionalised assemblies. Key discussions center on four main tensions: whether assemblies should support existing political systems or aim to transform them; whether they should become permanent governance features or remain occasional remedial mechanisms; the extent of their decision-making power (advisory versus binding); and the potential rewards and risks of standardisation. Some practitioners advocate for deeper integration, while others caution against institutionalisation that might compromise the deliberative spirit of these processes.

Supporting the existing political system
vs.
Transforming the political system

Becoming a permanent governance feature
vs.
Remaining an occasional remedial mechanism

Questions on institutionalisation

Advisory role
vs.
Binding decision-making power

Standardisation
vs.
Flexibility in deliberative processes

Measuring Impact

Paulina Pospieszna
/ Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

The academic community and practitioners are rising to the challenge of assessing the impact of citizens' assemblies and other deliberative processes—not only on participating individuals but also on institutions, social actors, and broader societal structures. Multiple initiatives emerged in 2024, recognizing the need for and importance of investigating impact at this critical moment. These initiatives reflect the growing recognition that assessing the impact of citizens' assemblies is essential for understanding their role in strengthening or revitalizing democracy.

The concept of impact is inherently complex and multidimensional, encompassing both those directly engaged in these processes and those who remain outside them. Some approach this question at the micro-level, focusing on how participation in deliberative processes influences individuals. They track changes in participants' attitudes, perceptions of democratic processes, and knowledge acquisition. Special attention is given to those entering the process with radical views or deep-seated scepticism toward democracy, as their transformations offer unique insights. Others examine the deliberative process itself, often conducting evaluations using established frameworks such as those developed by the Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies or the OECD's widely adopted evaluation guidelines. However, scholars increasingly recognise that existing frameworks alone cannot fully capture the complexity of citizens' assemblies' impact. While these frameworks strive to be comprehensive, they often struggle to account for the nuanced differences between short-term and long-term effects, their contextual dependencies, and the interplay between design, implementation, and various forms of impact—beyond just policy outcomes.

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A newly established research consortium, Integrating Deliberation for Impact (i4i) proposes a tripartite model that examines three critical aspects of impact: policy impact (changes in public policies, laws, and resource allocation), political impact (effects on social actors, public discourse, and broader democratic engagement), and polity impact (transformations within governing structures and decision-making processes). We invite both researchers and practitioners to reflect on the fluidity of these categories, as they may not be neatly separable. Moreover, could the emergence of one type of impact preclude another—for example, can (or even should) institutional and political effects precede policy change? Can one form of impact condition or reinforce another, or perhaps even hinder it? If so, how?

The challenge in measuring impact also lies in examining the causal mechanisms underlying the relationship between assemblies and their effects, given the multitude of intervening variables. These factors can include contextual differences, political culture, trust in institutions, public engagement levels, political context (e.g., prior experience with participatory mechanisms in a given country), external influences, and even subnational variations. Central and Eastern Europe, where citizens' assemblies are still in their infancy, provides particularly compelling cases that demand deeper examination and new reports on the CEE region point to the region's unique challenges and opportunities. Yet, as evaluation frameworks grow increasingly comprehensive, a paradox emerges: the more factors we include, the harder it becomes to isolate what precisely drives impact and why. Our i4i project seeks to address this challenge by focusing on integrative design features, particularly Political Integration (engagement of actors and decision-makers) and Structural Integration (institutional and procedural incorporation of CAs into governance).

Challenges in Measuring the Impact of Citizens' Assemblies

Complexity of Impact Measurement
Assessing both direct and indirect effects on individuals, institutions, and society.

Short-term vs. Long-term Effects
Differentiating between immediate changes and sustained democratic transformations.

Contextual Factors (Political, Institutional)
Political culture, institutional structures, and prior experience with participatory mechanisms.

Interplay Between Impact Types
How policy, political, and governance impacts influence or hinder one another.

Challenge of Isolating Causal Mechanisms
Identifying clear cause-effect relationships despite multiple influencing variables.

The more factors we include, the harder it becomes to isolate what precisely drives impact and why

Deliberative tools have the potential to reshape democratic processes, enhance legitimacy, and address pressing governance challenges. Yet, as the field advances, we must continuously refine our approaches, ensuring that our frameworks capture not only what works but also why and how. The future of deliberative democracy depends on this ongoing effort. And most importantly, this endeavour requires cross-sectoral collaboration—scholars and practitioners must work together to refine methodologies, enhance impact frameworks, and translate findings into actionable insights.

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02

Field Advancing Assemblies and Juries

This year has seen a wealth of deliberative processes organised across all levels of governance and various regions of the world. We highlight some of them that stood out by advancing the field - assemblies happening in new places, testing new methods, addressing especially challenging topics, and achieving exceptional impact. This list is by no means exhaustive - you can find a list of all cases received from network members in Annex A.

All deliberative processes below were composed of people selected by lottery. All of these processes included stages of learning about a particular policy issue, careful deliberation, and development of recommendations.

New Countries

....

New Methods

....

Challenging Issues

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Exceptional Impact

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Towards Institutionalisation

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Field Advancing Assemblies and Juries

New countries

New countries **1**

Skopje Climate Assembly / *North Macedonia*

Image by: *ZIP Institute*

Country (and city):

North Macedonia, Skopje

Organised by:

Nexus and ZIP Institute

Question tackled:

What can the government do to lower air pollution in Skopje?

Number of Assembly Members: **65**

Number of days of deliberation: **5**

More details

The Skopje Climate Assembly is the first in-person citizens' assembly held in North Macedonia, addressing the urgent issue of air pollution in one of Europe's most polluted cities. Skopje's severe air quality problems stem from deep-rooted socio-economic and energy challenges, including heavy reliance on fuelwood for heating due to energy poverty. The assembly brought together 65 randomly selected citizens from diverse backgrounds to deliberate and craft actionable recommendations targeting energy, transportation, and public health. By empowering citizens to influence policy through deliberative democracy, the assembly not only fosters inclusive decision-making but also sets an inspiring precedent for tackling environmental and public health crises in the Western Balkans.

● *North Macedonia*

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New countries **2**

Riga Resident Assembly / *Latvia*

Image by: *Jānis Spurdziņš*

📍 ***Country (and city):***
Latvia, Riga

↻ ***Organised by:***
Green Liberty association with the Riga City Council

💬 ***Question tackled:***
Developed recommendations for the Riga Urban Greening Plan 2027-2031

☺ ***Number of Assembly Members:*** **35**

📅 ***Number of days of deliberation:*** **5**

More details 👆

The Riga Resident Assembly was the first citizens' assembly in Latvia. Residents of Riga developed 49 recommendations for the greening plan of Riga's urban environment for 2027-2031. 41 recommendations received support and were submitted to the Riga City Council for consideration. The focus of the assembly was on issues related to adaptation to climate change, paying attention to topics such as mitigating the impact of rainwater floods, mitigating the impact of heat islands, biodiversity in the urban environment, as well as the availability of green areas.

● *Latvia*

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New countries **3**

Zvyagel Citizens' Assembly */ Ukraine*

Image by: *The Council of Europe*

📍 ***Country (and city):***
Ukraine, Zvyagel

↻ ***Organised by:***
Zvyagel City Council, Council of Europe, DemNet

💬 ***Question tackled:***
How to create urban spaces as public locations for social interaction and recovery?

👤 ***Number of Assembly Members:*** **45**

📅 ***Number of days of deliberation:*** **6**

More details

Ukraine's first Citizens' Assembly, held under wartime conditions in Zvyahel, marks an important milestone for deliberative democracy. The assembly brought together a representative group of citizens to address the creation of public spaces for social interaction and recovery. Despite the ongoing war, assembly members collaborated over three weekends to develop actionable recommendations, including systems for parking, youth engagement, and mental health support. It is one of the two assemblies implemented in Ukraine, the other one taking place in Slavutych. This initiative not only strengthened civic resilience but also demonstrated the power of inclusive, deliberative processes to foster community cohesion and drive democratic progress even in the face of conflict.

● *Ukraine*

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Field Advancing Assemblies and Juries

New methods

New methods **4**

Resurgentes / *Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, México*

Image by: *Extituto de Política Abierta*

In 2024, the Resurgentes project was launched as an innovative initiative led by Delibera Brasil, Extituto de Política Abierta, Democracia en Red, Instituto Sur, and Fundación iDeemos. This project brought together four citizens' assemblies in different cities across Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico, all connected through a shared methodological framework and a unified thematic focus: How can Latin America mitigate the climate crisis? Each citizens' assembly followed the same structured approach while addressing a specific local issue—such as solid waste management in Buenaventura, Colombia. What made Resurgentes particularly novel was its seamless integration of deliberative processes across multiple locations. Rather than existing in isolation, the assemblies formed a continuous, evolving dialogue where participants in each city built upon the proposals from the previous one, contributing new insights and shaping a broader Intercity Pact.

Technology played a key role in this process, enabling real-time collaboration and ensuring that the collective knowledge generated in each city flowed into the next. The *Intercity Pact*, serves as a dynamic and participatory document where anyone can provide feedback and submit new suggestions to further enrich its scope. By fostering deep connections between citizens' assemblies and leveraging technology to generate meaningful and impactful outcomes, Resurgentes stands as a landmark in participatory climate action across Latin America.

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Country (and city):
Mexico, Nuevo León

Organised by:
Instituto Sur

Question tackled:
Rainwater harvesting and monitoring of green areas

Number of Assembly Members: 50

Number of days of deliberation: 2

Country (and city):
Colombia, Buenaventura

Organised by:
Extituto de Política Abierta and Fundación iDeemos

Question tackled:
Solid waste management

Number of Assembly Members: 45

Number of days of deliberation: 2

Country (and city):
Brazil, Bujaru

Organised by:
Delibera Brasil

Question tackled:
Developing local production aligned with the concept of bioeconomy in the state of Pará

Number of Assembly Members: 46

Number of days of deliberation: 3

More details

Country (and city):
Argentina, Mar de Plata

Organised by:
Democracia en Red

Question tackled:
Climate crisis and waste management

Number of Assembly Members: 44

Number of days of deliberation: 3

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New methods **5**

National Citizens' Assembly on Nutrition / *Germany*

Image by: Deutscher Bundestag

Germany's Citizens' Assembly on Nutrition convened 160 randomly selected citizens to deliberate on health protection, environmental and climate compatibility, food production and labeling, and conditions for raising farm animals. The assembly experimented with new methodological elements. Notably, the Bundestag established a dedicated staff unit to support the assembly. I also allowed participants to autonomously set subtopics for the assembly and limited the outcome to nine concrete recommendations from the start of the process. This structured approach facilitated focused discussions and resulted in actionable proposals, such as implementing free and healthy lunches for all children and introducing a mandatory national label for all products sold in Germany and the European Union, considering environment, animal welfare, and health aspects.

Country:
Germany

Organised by:
Mehr Demokratie e.V. and Deutscher Bundestag

Question tackled:
Nutrition in Transition: Between Private Matter and Governmental Responsibilities

Number of Assembly Members: **160**

Number of days of deliberation: **10**

More details

● *Germany*

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New methods **6**

Deliberative Meta-Assembly */ Colombia*

From October 18 to 21, 60 Bogotá citizens participated in the first meta-deliberative assembly in Colombia, and one of the first of its kind globally. Unlike typical citizens' assemblies that deliberate on substantive issues, this assembly focused on procedural deliberations about how to design future citizens' assemblies.

The assembly was composed of 34 women and 26 men, representing all 20 localities of the city. Age distribution included 20 young people, 30 adults, and 10 elders. Socio-economically, 30% of the participants were from low-income backgrounds, 10% from high-income backgrounds, and 50% from middle-income groups. To form the assembly, 51,000 citizens were initially contacted, with more than 2,000 expressing interest in participating. Outreach efforts included 11,000 phone calls, public registration sites set up in the city's 20 boroughs, and 40,000 WhatsApp text messages.

The meta-deliberative assembly made several recommendations, ranging from regulating the use of time in future deliberations to establishing methods for replacing members in case of vacancies. It also addressed procedures for revising previous assembly decisions, assisting in the drafting process, and monitoring the implementation of future recommendations by political agents. This included proposing oversight bodies to ensure accountability. To foster consensus-building, the assembly suggested voting mechanisms other than the majority rule and recommended visualization tools to help members understand their peers' perspectives. It also advocated for procedural flexibility, allowing future assembly members to modify agendas and introduce new

discussion points. Additionally, the assembly set criteria for selecting future deliberation topics and clarified the roles of various stakeholders, including civil society and experts, in future citizens' assemblies.

📍 ***Country (and city):***
Colombia, Bogota

↻ ***Organised by:***
District Planning Secretariat of the Mayor's Office of Bogotá D.C., Fundación Corona, and Extituto de Política Abierta

💬 ***Question tackled:***
How should Bogotá's Citizens' Assemblies operate starting in 2025?

👁 ***Number of Assembly Members:*** **60**

📅 ***Number of days of deliberation:*** **4**

More details

● *Colombia*

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New methods 7

Deschutes Civic Assembly on Youth Homelessness / *United States*

Image by: Oregon State University - Cascades. Some faces are blocked due to privacy requests.

⊙ **Country (and city):**
United States, Oregon, Bend

⟳ **Organised by:**
Central Oregon Civic Action Project, City of Bend, Healthy Democracy, DemocracyNext, MIT

💬 **Question tackled:**
What should our priorities be for building community solutions to prevent and end youth homelessness?

😊 **Number of Assembly Members:** **30**

📅 **Number of days of deliberation:** **5**

[**More details**]

Central Oregon's historically high rates of homelessness among youth and families have risen dramatically since 2020. In the Fall of 2024, thirty everyday residents of Deschutes County came together to help find solutions in the region's first-ever Civic Assembly. Deschutes Civic Assembly on Youth Homelessness is methodologically interesting as it has experimented with the use of technology: it is the world's first tech-enhanced assembly where the entirety of the conversations were being recorded in an effort to improve the quality, legitimacy, and transparency of the process, and to generate outputs grounded in the voices of assembly members. The recordings were fully anonymised so that individuals could speak freely during deliberations.

● *United States*

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New methods **8**

Youth Climate Ambassadors Assembly / *Denmark*

Image by: CONCITO - Some faces are blocked due to privacy requests.

As part of Copenhagen's efforts to engage citizens in shaping the Copenhagen Climate Plan 2035, the Youth Climate Ambassadors Assembly was launched in 2024 to ensure that young voices were actively included in climate policymaking. Thirty students were randomly selected from five Copenhagen schools, creating a diverse group of young assembly members. Over seven full-day workshops, they received expert briefings, conducted research, and took part in creative visioning exercises—such as imagining life in a sustainable Copenhagen in 2035. Their final recommendations focused on food, housing, and transport and were presented to the city's Climate Citizens' Assembly and local policymakers, ensuring direct input into decision-making. Running parallel to the Climate Citizens' Assembly, which included participants aged 16 to 99, this initiative demonstrated an innovative youth-focused deliberative model, highlighting a growing trend of youth-inclusive participation in climate governance.

Country (and city):
Denmark, Copenhagen

Organised by:
Copenhagen Municipality, in collaboration with CONCITO

Question tackled:
What does a good life in Copenhagen look like with far fewer greenhouse gas emissions from the consumption of food, housing and transport and how can we best achieve this together?

Number of Assembly Members:
(7th grade) from five Copenhagen schools **30**

Number of days of deliberation: **7**

More details

● *Denmark*

29

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Field Advancing Assemblies and Juries

Challenging issues

Challenging issues *9*

European Citizens' Panel on Tackling Hatred in Society

/ *European Union*

Image by: *European Commission*

Country:
EU - wide

Organised by:
European Commission, ifok, Missions Publiques

Question tackled:
What can we do about hate and how can we enhance mutual respect in our societies?

Number of Assembly Members:
Representing 27 EU Member States

150

Number of days of deliberation:

6

More details

Europe today is experiencing an alarming increase in hate speech and hate crime. All forms of hatred undermine society as a whole and threaten the foundations of democracy. While free expression is a fundamental right and a cherished value in the EU, human rights law acknowledges that it must not be exploited to incite hatred and violence. The European Citizens Panel on Tackling Hatred in Society brought together 150 randomly selected citizens to look at the root causes of hatred and the ways to address them, with the aim of producing recommendations on how to build bridges across fractured groups and communities. To tackle this challenging issue, assembly members worked on developing a common understanding of hatred by unpacking perceptions and testimonies surrounding hate, identifying causes and drivers of hate today and discussing potential fields of action in which hatred can be tackled in society.

● *EU - wide*

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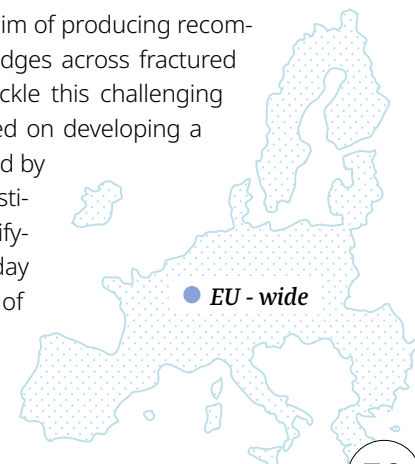
Challenging issues **10**

Forum Against Fakes */ Germany*

Image by: *Bertelsmann Stiftung*

Country:

Germany

Organised by:

Bertelsmann Stiftung, the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, the Stiftung Mercator and the Michael Otto Foundation for Sustainability

Question tackled:

Multiple questions on disinformation

Number of Assembly Members: **120**

Number of days of deliberation: **9**

More details

Germany's "Forum Against Fakes" tackled tackled the complex and sensitive issue of disinformation, a growing threat to democracy in the digital age. Organised by the Bertelsmann Stiftung, the initiative combined a unique blend of public consultation and deliberative democracy. Over 120 randomly selected citizens, reflecting Germany's diversity, engaged in a nine-day citizens' assembly and tackled multiple questions. How can we protect freedom of expression and protect ourselves against manipulated information? What role do social media and advancements in the field of artificial intelligence play in the context of digital communication? How can we prevent interference of foreign governments, e.g. with elections in Germany? As a result, they proposed 15 recommendations and 28 specific measures. These ranged from promoting media literacy and establishing a seal of approval for high-quality journalism to holding social media platforms accountable. The process was enriched by input from over 423,000 participants in three online consultations, generating more than 1.5 million votes.

● *Germany*

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Challenging issues **11**

Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation / *Canada*

Image by: *Manmitha Deepthi*

Country (and city):
Canada, District of Saanich and City of Victoria

Organised by:
MASS LBP, Councils of Victoria and Saanich

Question tackled:
What are the costs, benefits, and disadvantages of an amalgamation of the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich?

Number of Assembly Members: **48**

Number of days of deliberation: **8**

More details

The Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly represents a significant step in municipal democracy by addressing the contentious issue of amalgamation between two municipalities. This process empowers a randomly selected, demographically representative group of 48 residents to evaluate the potential costs, benefits, and disadvantages of amalgamation. The assembly is independent of direct political influence, supported by an impartial technical analysis, and funded jointly by the municipalities and the Province of British Columbia. This structure effectively removes conflicts of interest, allowing citizens to deliberate on governance and service integration without undue bias. The assembly's final report, due in June 2025, will provide councils with recommendations on whether and under what conditions amalgamation should proceed, exemplifying a robust model for civic participation in resolving complex governance issues.

● *Canada*

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Field Advancing Assemblies and Juries

Exceptional impact

Exceptional impact **12**

Jemena People's Panel / *Australia*

Image by: *Jemena Energy Networks*

Country (and city):

Australia, Melbourne

Organised by:

MosaicLab, Jemena Energy Networks

Question tackled:

How should Jemena prepare for a sustainable energy future while meeting customer and community needs today?

Number of Assembly Members: **50**

Number of days of deliberation: **5**

More details

The Jemena Electricity Networks People's Panel brought together 50 people to help inform Jemena's five-year business plan, ensuring it aligns with both customer needs and the transition to a sustainable energy future. Panel members engaged in a structured, multi-session deliberation, considering diverse perspectives and evidence, including independent technical analysis. An interesting feature of this process was the integration of a custom GPT tool, enabling participants to explore and interact with gathered information in new and dynamic ways. This application of artificial intelligence enhanced accessibility and supported more informed discussions. By incorporating transparent, inclusive, and data-driven practices, the People's Panel serves as a model for how energy companies can build trust and collaboratively navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving energy landscape.

● *Australia*

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Exceptional impact **13**

Bude Area Community Jury on Climate Change / *United Kingdom*

Image by: Shared Future CIC

⊙ ***Country (and city):***
United Kingdom, Bude

↻ ***Organised by:***
Shared Future CIC, Bude Climate Partnership, The National Lottery Community Fund

💬 ***Question tackled:***
How can we respond to a changing climate, including sea level rise, to support our community to thrive?

👤 ***Number of Assembly Members:*** **34**

📅 ***Number of days of deliberation:*** **6**

[More details]

The Bude Area Community Jury on Climate Change met over three weekends to answer the following question: How can we respond to a changing climate, including sea level rise, to support our community to thrive? This was the first deliberative process in the UK to focus on sea level rise and adaptation. Following the Jury, Bude was awarded £3mn in Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme (CTAP) funding to adapt to sea level rise. Alongside the main jury, a children's jury took place at Budehaven Community School, which developed its own recommendations.

United Kingdom ●

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Field Advancing Assemblies and Juries

Towards institutionalisation

Towards institutionalisation **14**

Copenhagen Semi-Permanent Climate Assembly / *Denmark*

Image by: We Do Democracy

The Copenhagen Semi-Permanent Climate Assembly is a pioneering example of semi-permanent deliberative democracy aimed at shaping the city's climate future. Over three years, the assembly engages citizens to develop actionable recommendations for the Copenhagen Climate Plan 2035, reflecting public values and priorities on key climate issues such as food, housing, and transportation. In its first year, 36 randomly selected assembly members deliberated over six meetings to craft 12 specific recommendations, ranging from promoting car-free neighborhoods and sustainable building to encouraging less animal-based food consumption and reducing food waste. This iterative process ensures that future assemblies build on previous recommendations, fostering continuity and deeper public engagement.

● *Denmark*

Country (and city):
Denmark, Copenhagen

Organised by:
We Do Democracy, Copenhagen City Council

Question tackled:
What does a good Copenhagen life look like with far fewer greenhouse gas emissions from the consumption of food, housing and transportation, and how can we best get there together?

Number of Assembly Members: **36**

Number of days of deliberation: **6**

More details 👆

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03
New Publications and Resources

In 2024, network members and the broader ecosystem have published a range of new resources and expanded the knowledge the field holds. This body of literature adds to the extensive list of resources we have accumulated over the years.

The 2024 body of publications and resources showcases a focus on addressing global challenges and advancing practical methodologies. They vary from developing proposals of a more deliberative, sortition-based democracy, to frameworks and guides on how to design, run and evaluate assemblies, and strategies for systemic change. There is a strong commitment to reflection and continuous learning, with insights drawn from evaluating past and ongoing initiatives. All these contributions emphasize inclusivity, scalability, and adaptability, offering actionable frameworks and tools to support the implementation of deliberative practices across diverse contexts.

Books and Chapters

Principles, Guides, Guidelines, Methodologies

Databases

Papers and Articles

Reports

Tools

Videos

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New Publications and Resources

1 Books and Chapters

Activated Citizenship - the Transformative Power of Citizens' Assemblies

Marjan Ehsassi
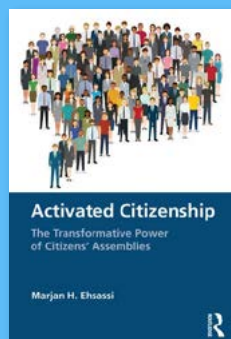
Activated Citizenship addresses the growing disengagement from political institutions by exploring democratic innovations that foster meaningful citizen participation. It introduces the concept of the "Activated Citizen" and provides a framework to measure civic and political engagement. Through extensive field research in Paris, Brussels, Ottawa, and Petaluma, the book examines pressing issues like climate change, homelessness, and euthanasia, combining quantitative data with personal testimonies. By analysing government-led citizens' assemblies, it highlights their potential to strengthen democracy. The final chapter offers practical recommendations for enhancing deliberative platforms, making this a vital resource for scholars and policymakers seeking democratic renewal.

André Bächtiger and John S. Dryzek
Deliberative Democracy for Diabolical Times

Graham Smith
We Need To Talk About Climate: How Citizens' Assemblies Can Help Us Solve the Climate Crisis

Graham Smith and Claire Mellier
Activism and climate assemblies (Chapter for a book for Carnegie: Civic Activism in an Intensifying Climate Crisis)

Lottocracy: Democracy Without Elections

Alexander Guerrero
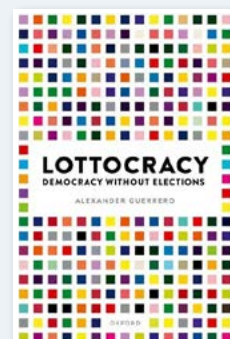
Democracy is in crisis, but the real problem may be elections themselves. They fail as accountability mechanisms, encourage short-termism, fuel division, and enable elite control. Modern electoral democracies are ill-equipped to tackle urgent issues due to policy complexity, citizen ignorance, elite capture, and growing distrust. This book argues that elections are broken and introduces lottocracy—a system where representatives are chosen by lottery instead. It explores lottocracy's potential, its challenges, and how it reshapes fundamental ideas about democracy, equality, and legitimacy.

Terry Bouricius
The Trouble with Elections: Everything We Thought We Knew About Democracy is Wrong

Tom Atlee
Co-Intelligence - The Applied Wisdom of Wholeness, Interconnectedness, and Co-Creativity

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New Publications and Resources

2 Principles, Guides, Guidelines, Methodologies
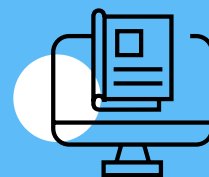
Impact Evaluation Framework

KNOCA

This Guidance Document introduces a framework for evaluating climate assemblies, recognizing their diversity and the need for tailored assessments. It presents the KNOCA Impact Evaluation Framework, which categorises impact into three areas—state actors, non-state actors, and systems—and three types: instrumental (policy changes), capacity (institutional support), and conceptual (shifts in understanding). The document offers a conceptual checklist and practical examples to help evaluators identify relevant impact areas, indicators, and data sources. By applying this framework, evaluators can deepen understanding of climate assemblies' impact, fostering informed debate and stronger climate governance.

Arantzazulab
Design for Democracy Innovation methodology

Iswe
Integrating health into a global citizens' assembly: design considerations and infrastructure options

Damir Kapidžić
How to organise a deliberative process at local level? A guide for local authorities

KNOCA
Making The Most of Climate Assemblies: Playbook for Civil Society Organisations

Democracy R&D
Institutionalization Living Guidebook

KNOCA
Children and Young People's Participation in Climate Assemblies

European Commission
European Citizens' Engagement Guidebook

Pandora Ellis, Mel Stevens, Jeffrey Kennedy, Simon Pek
Student mini-publics: How to run democratic innovations in universities

FIDE North America
Citizens' Assemblies: An Introduction to Definitions & Guidelines

WHO
Citizen engagement in evidence-informed policy-making: A guide to mini-publics

Iswe
Global Citizen Deliberation on Artificial Intelligence: options and design considerations

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New Publications and Resources

3 Databases

Mehr Demokratie e.V. and the Institute for Democracy and Participation Research Wuppertal, [Database of mini-publics in Germany](#)
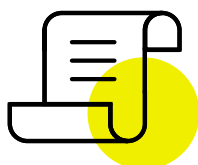
New Publications and Resources

4 Papers and Articles

Angela Jain and Hans-Liudger Dienel (Eds.)
→ [Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research - Special issue on Citizens' Assemblies](#)

DemocracyNext
→ [Six ways to democratise city planning - Enabling thriving and healthy cities](#)

DEMOS
→ [Citizens' White Paper](#)

Ieva Česnulaitytė
→ [Citizens' Assemblies: Democratic Responses to Authoritarian Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe](#)

Jack Stilgoe
→ [AI has a democracy problem. Citizens' assemblies can help](#)

John S. Dryzek and Simon J. Niemeyer
→ [How to constitute global citizens' forums: Key selection principles](#)

KNOCA
→ [Developments in Sub-National Climate Assemblies: Lessons from Local and Regional Levels](#)

KNOCA
→ [Towards Permanent Climate Citizens' Assemblies: Learning from the Early Adopters](#)

Lucy Parry and Nicole Curato
→ [Deliberative Integrity: Risks and Responses in Mini-Public Governance](#)

Michelle Dennis
→ [I Want a Say in How My Taxes are Spent!](#)

Nicole Curato Graham Smith, Rebecca Willis, David Rosén
→ [Deliberative Democracy and Climate Change: Exploring the Potential of Climate Assemblies in the Global South](#)

Rikki Dean, Alan Marx, Indira Latorre, Santiago Niño, Felipe Rey, Su Yun Woo and Ming Zhuang
→ [Spotlighting the Backstage Governance of Citizens' Assemblies: Lessons from East Asia, Europe and Latin America. Global Citizens' Assembly Network (GloCAN) Technical Paper No. 1/2024](#)

Sammy McKinney
→ [Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Citizens' Assemblies: Benefits, Concerns and Future Pathways](#)

Stephen Elstub
→ [Coupling Mini-Publics with Legislatures – A Solution to Parliamentary Decline?](#)

Tamara Ehs
→ [Citizens' Councils of Vorarlberg and the Climate Crisis (in German)](#)

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5 Reports

Promoting Deliberative Democracy in the Basque Country in Spain

OECD

This report takes stock of the project carried out by the OECD, Arantzazulab, and public authorities in the town of Tolosa and the province of Gipuzkoa (Spain) to experiment with the use of public deliberation. It explores ways to improve deliberative processes in the Basque region, including looking at the link between those who participate in deliberative processes and the broader public, the role of civil servants in ensuring ownership of deliberative processes, the governance structure, or making evaluation and follow-up more systematic. The report also sets out three pathways to promoting and systemising deliberation across all levels of government in the Basque Country: 1) institutionalising deliberative practices; 2) embedding deliberation in public administration; and 3) mainstreaming deliberation both within and outside government.

Claire Mellier, Stuart Capstick
→ How can citizens' assemblies help navigate the systemic transformations required by the polycrisis?

KNOCA
→ Climate Assemblies: Emerging Trends, Challenges and Opportunities

Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue
→ The Deliberative Wave in Canada

OECD
→ Exploring New Frontiers of Citizen Participation in the Policy Cycle

6 Tools

European Commission,
→ Citizens' Engagement Platform

7 Videos

Bertelsmann Stiftung
→ Forum Against Fakes

Delibera Brasil
→ Bujaru's Citizens' Assembly

DemocracyNext
→ Deschutes Citizens' Assembly

Public Democracy Los Angeles,
→ So, Are you Thinking about Creating a Citizens' Assembly?

We Do Democracy
→ Mixed deliberative committee in the municipality of Vejle in Denmark

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04
The Democracy R&D Network in 2024

Democracy R&D was founded in 2018, inspired by Lyn Carson's idea of connecting people around the world working to promote deliberative democracy. Seven years later, the network brings together more than 300 members from across the globe, including many from countries in the Global South. Democracy R&D is now recognised as one of the most important networks in this field, and its annual meeting—held to date in Madrid, Paris, Manchester, Berlin, Copenhagen, and Vancouver—has become the leading international gathering where practitioners, advocates, scholars, and public servants come together to discuss current trends in deliberative democracy.

Democracy R&D functions as a true network, with a lean central structure and the strength of its work rooted in its members. In addition to its annual meeting, the network organises year-round learning calls and workshops on a wide range of topics. Two years ago, the network entered a new phase of development, structured around three core program areas: collaborative learning, field-building, and constitutions and charters. Beginning this year, the network will also publish an annual report—like this one—to provide a yearly overview of the most important developments in the field. This will be complemented by a quarterly newsletter to help us stay up to date on a regular basis.

The network also runs the New Frontiers Project, which has addressed issues such as institutionalisation, Global South–Global North learning, deliberation on difficult issues, applications beyond the executive and legislative branches, and innovations in sortition. The network currently supports two interest groups: one focused on field building and the other on deliberative constitutions and charters.

The network is funded through contributions from its members as well as from international supporters, including the National Endowment for Democracy, the Robert Bosch Foundation, and the Salvia Foundation.

New Members

Annual Meeting

Learning Calls and Workshops

Web Page

New Frontiers Project

Living Guidebooks

Governance of the Network

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The Democracy R&D Network in 2024

1 New members

Germany
• Agency for Citizen Participation Badem-Wurttenberg
• Daniel Oppold

Lithuania
• Ieva Cesnulaityte

South Korea
• Susan Lee

UK
• Democracy and Culture Foundation - ECF
• Rodney Schwartz

Turkey
• Yuva Association

Japan
• Institute for Global Environmental Studies - IGES

Belgium
• Cato Leonard

Switzerland
• Pro Futuris

USA
• AI and Democracy Foundation
• Civic Genius
• Democracy Without Elections
• Alexandra Levy
• Brian Sullivan
• Canning Malkin
• Patsy Kraeger
• Valerie Lemmie

Spain
• Marea Deliberativa
• Pablo Garcia Arcos

India
• Centre for Environment Education

Australia
• Amplify
• Gauge Consulting
• Baogang He
• Chad Foulkes

Italy
• Tessa Dunlop

Israel
• Quipu

Austria
• Manfred Hellriegl

Greece
• Democracy and Culture Foundation

South Africa
• South Africa Citizens' Assembly Working Group

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The Democracy R&D Network in 2024

② Annual Meeting

👤 **Peter MacLeod**
/ *MASS LBP, Canada*

In September 2024, MASS LBP in partnership with Australia's NewDemocracy Foundation hosted the [Democracy R&D Global Summit in Vancouver](#), marking the first time this gathering of global deliberation practitioners has convened in North America. The summit coincided with the 20th anniversary of British Columbia's Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, offering

173
Delegates participated in the event

21
Countries represented at the annual meeting

80
Network members contributed as panelists, moderators, and presenters

30
Presentations and workshops enriched the program

Images by: Emily Jin

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📑
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Images by: Emily Jin

an opportunity to reflect on the significant growth of deliberative democracy practices worldwide. Today, over one thousand citizens' assemblies have been organised in various national contexts, reshaping relationships between governments and citizens.

With 173 delegates from 21 countries, the summit showcased innovations in deliberative practice, addressing themes such as inequality, multilingual processes, and the integration of Indigenous and diverse perspectives into democratic decision-making. Niigaan Sinclair's keynote on Indigenous collaborative governance highlighted the historical depth and ongoing relevance of deliberative traditions among Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike.

The event also aimed to demonstrate to our colleagues in the United States the practical impact and potential of deliberative democracy. At a time when many democracies face challenges, the summit provided clear examples of how deliberative processes can build trust, enhance citizen engagement, and improve democratic legitimacy.

Overall, the Vancouver summit highlighted the steady growth and rising influence of the global deliberation community. Participants at DRD2024 shared experiences that demonstrate clear progress toward creating democratic governance that is more inclusive and responsive.

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The Democracy R&D Network in 2024

3 Learning Calls and Workshops
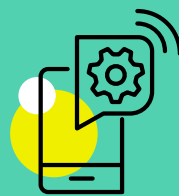
Throughout the year network members shared their knowledge during numerous learning calls. You can watch recordings of most of these sessions below. If you'd like to share your work with the network during a learning call, please reach out - we'd be happy to hear from you.

2024

Topic: Deliberation in Conflict Affected Areas (Philippines)
Date: February 22-23
Presenter(s): Johnson Badawi, Andrea Bernarte (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue)

Topic: Convention on the Future of Armenia
Date: March 11-13
Presenter(s): Artak Apitonian and Victoria Papikyan (The Future Armenian Development Foundation), and Rich Wilson and Claire Mellier (Iswe Foundation)

Topic: "The Trouble with Elections" book
Date: May 28
Presenter(s): Terrill Bouricius

Topic: Vorarlberg Citizen Councils
Date: June 26
Presenter(s): Manfred Hellrigl

Topic: Citizen Participation in Badem-Wurttenberg
Date: August 1
Presenter(s): Daniel Oppold

Topic: Software Supported Physical Lottery
Date: August 6
Presenter(s): Nick Gill (Sortition Foundation)

Topic: "Activated Citizenship" book
Date: September 4
Presenter(s): Marjan Ehsassi

Topic: "We Need to Talk About Climate" book
Date: October 15
Presenter(s): Graham Smith

Topic: Deliberative Democracy and Climate Change: Exploring the Potential of Climate Assemblies in Asia and the Pacific
Date: October 29
Presenter(s): David Rosén

Topic: Democratic Functions Workshop
Date: November 21
Presenter(s): Nivek Thompson

Topic: Evaluating Mini-Publics and other Participatory Processes
Date: December 9
Presenter(s): Ventseslav Kozarev and Tessa Dunlop (Joint Research Centre)

Topic: Diversifying Democratic Innovations
Date: December 10
Presenter(s): Ventseslav Kozarev, Angela Guimarães Pereira, and Tessa Dunlop (i4Policy)

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The Democracy R&D Network in 2024

4 **Web Page**

We undertook a comprehensive redesign of the Democracy R&D website with two main goals: refreshing existing content by adding new members and projects, and introducing new sections. The updated site now offers practitioners of deliberative democracy a dedicated web portal, improving access to key resources and fostering global connections. The new content includes:

An interactive map showing the locations of organizations, with a focus on participation from the Global South.

A library *containing* key books, articles, guides, and reports produced by network members.

Archives with all available information from the annual meetings.
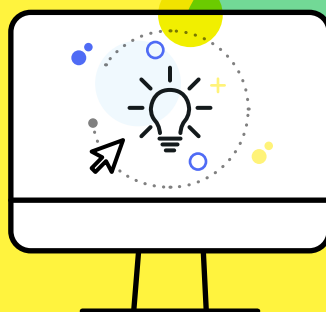
Information about the network's governance bodies, its members, and main projects.
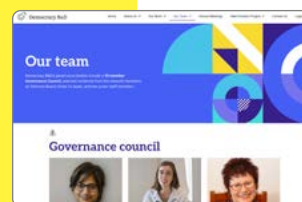
A dedicated section for the New Frontiers Project*, featuring detailed descriptions, relevant information, and the three digitized Living Guidebooks, which are interactive and can be updated by members in the future.

This redesigned site serves as a comprehensive resource hub for those involved in deliberative democracy worldwide

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5 New Frontiers Project

We have successfully supported organisations in the Global South in applying the methodologies developed by the New Frontiers Project, providing them with the necessary technical assistance. These methodologies have now been fully implemented, and their outcomes are available to the entire community of practice.

To select the projects for support, we launched an open call inviting organisations from the Global South to apply. A total of 16 organisations responded, and after careful evaluation, we selected five projects for funding. Below we present a summary of the projects chosen for support:

Central and Eastern Europe

India

Nigeria

Brazil
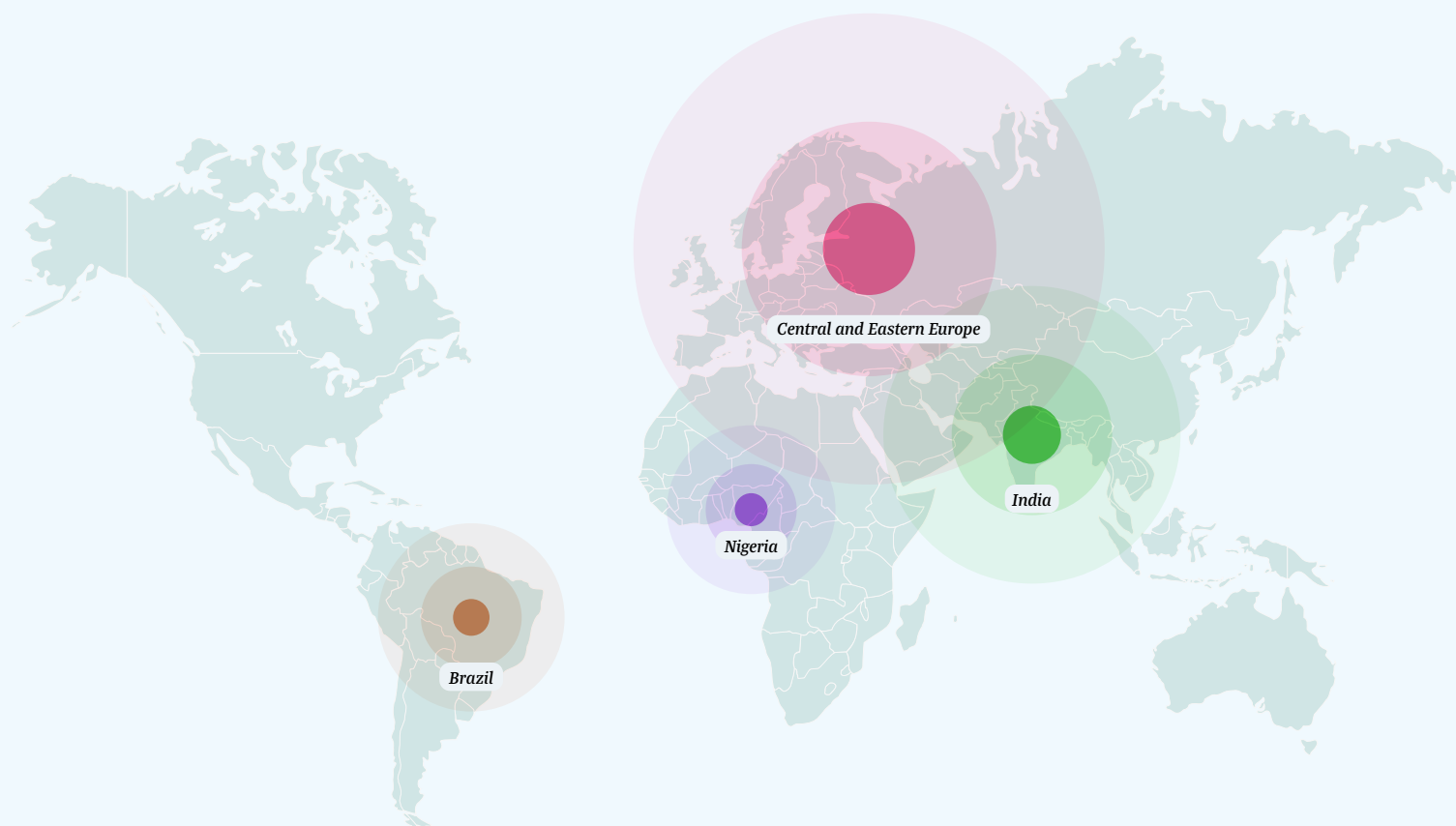
16
Organisations applied for support

5
Projects selected for funding

Global South
Region where supported organisations are based

New Frontiers Project
Methodologies successfully implemented

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New Frontiers Project

3D India (Demonstrate, Deliberate, Democratize)

The 3D India (Demonstrate, Deliberate, Democratize) project, led by the Centre for Environment Education in India, implemented and evaluated mutual learning methodologies among Global South countries, focusing on tools and alternatives for citizen selection through lotteries. The lack of viable selection methods in many Global South countries hinders the organization of inclusive and representative citizens' assemblies. The project successfully expanded knowledge about civic lotteries and strengthened the capacity for random selection methods in the region.

Documentary on the 3D India Project

Final Report of the 3D India Project

New Frontiers Project

Indigenous Peoples' Integration in Bujaru's Citizen Assembly

In Brazil, the project led by Delibera Brasil strengthened collective learning on deliberation with Indigenous and traditional communities in the state of Pará, where Indigenous peoples occupy more than 25% of the territory across 77 Indigenous lands. This initiative aimed to address the historical exclusion of these communities from political participation, which has been dominated by predominantly white, male, and cisgender representation, by developing innovative deliberative tools to foster their inclusion. The experience was documented to share lessons with other members of the network.

Documentary on the Bujaru´s Citizen Assembly

Short Guide: Enhancing Integration of Indigenous and Traditional Communities in Citizens' Assemblies

Final Report of the Indigenous Peoples' Integration in Bujaru's Citizen Assembly Project

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New Frontiers Project

Turn Up Democracy

The Turn Up Democracy project, led by Yiaga Africa in Nigeria, implemented and evaluated methodologies and tools to institutionalise deliberative democracy through the establishment of People's Assemblies in at least three local government areas (LGAs) in Lagos State. Designed to describe and document the People's Assemblies as an innovative model, this project strengthened citizen inclusion and promoted more transparent decision-making processes at the local level.

[Documentary on Turn Up Democracy Project](#)

[Final Report of the Turn Up Democracy Project](#)

New Frontiers Project

Difficult Deliberations

Exploring Possibilities for Citizens Assemblies on Historical Memory, Minority Rights, and Post-Conflict Governance in Central and Eastern Europe

This project, carried out in several Central and Eastern European countries, was led by DemNet Hungary in collaboration with Gazela Pudar Drasko (University of Belgrade) and Damir Kapidzic (University of Sarajevo). This project explored the use of deliberative tools to address issues such as historical memory, minority rights, and governance arrangements in post-conflict contexts. Through virtual roundtables, it brought together deliberation experts and specialists in these areas to discuss practical approaches for tackling these challenges.
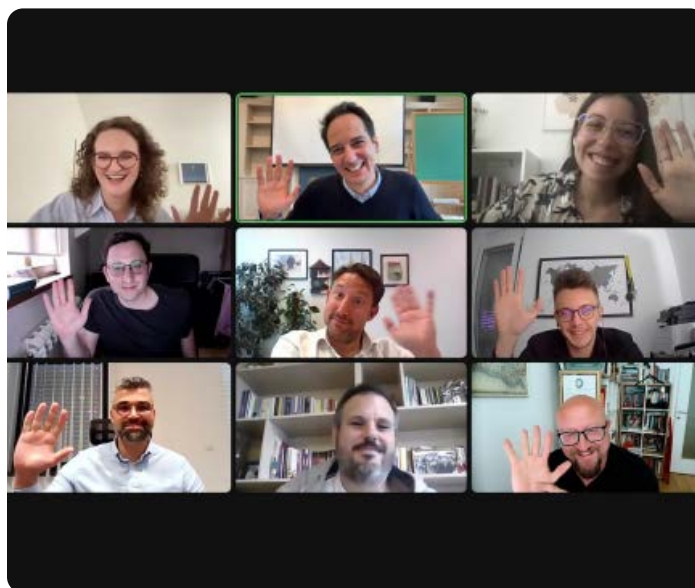
[Report on Expert Survey: "Difficult Deliberations in Central and Eastern Europe"](#)

[Final Report of the Difficult Deliberations Project](#)

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The Democracy R&D Network in 2024

6 Living Guidebooks

With funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), we created three Living Guidebooks as a collaborative effort involving several members of the Democracy R&D Network. These guidebooks are the result of various virtual and face-to-face workshops and activities where network members shared their diverse perspectives on deliberations. Currently available on our website for the entire network to use, these guidebooks serve as tools to enhance deliberative practices. They have already been utilized by the projects we support in India, Brazil, Nigeria, and Central and Eastern Europe.
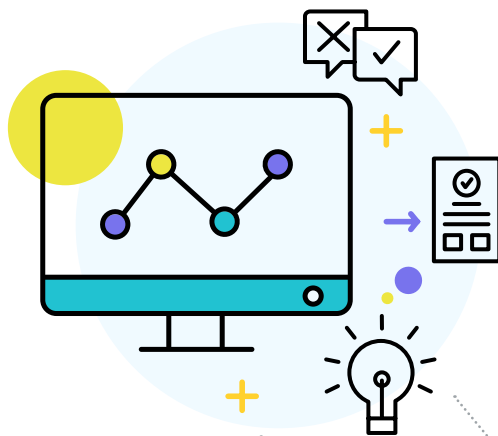
1 Deliberation on Difficult Issues
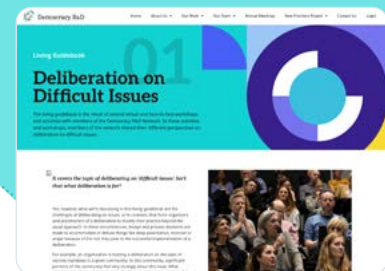
3 Institutionalisation

2 South–North Learning (SNL)

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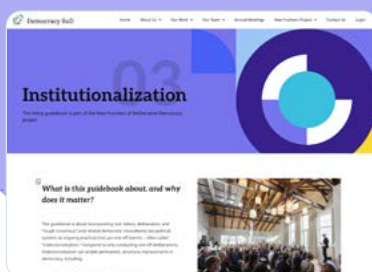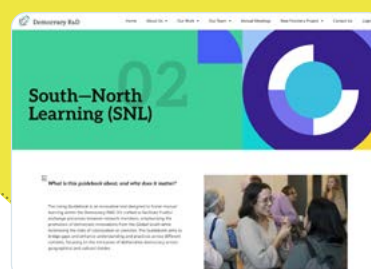
Living Guidebook 1

South-North Learning Guide 👆

This Living Guidebook is an innovative resource designed to promote mutual learning within Democracy R&D. Its main goal is to facilitate meaningful exchange among network members, with a particular focus on advancing democratic innovations from the Global South while mitigating the risks of colonization or coercion. Among its many valuable contents, the *Living Guidebook* introduces eight new concepts and definitions, shares six case studies, and discusses two methodologies and tools, providing essential insights into the challenges and opportunities of democratic innovation.

8 new concepts and definitions

6 shares case studies, and discusses

2 methodologies and tools for democratic innovation

11 pre-deliberation strategies

2 methodologies and tools

33 concrete approaches to mitigate vulnerabilities

Living Guidebook 2

Difficult Issues Guide 👆

The Living Guidebook on Difficult Issues was developed through a combination of online and in-person collaborative sessions with members of the Democracy R&D Network, where participants shared diverse perspectives on addressing contentious or sensitive topics in deliberation. The guidebook incorporates research on real-life examples of deliberations dealing with complex issues, draws from fields like conflict management, dispute resolution, and risk communication, and reflects on how challenges related to "difficult topics" can affect different stages of the deliberative process. Among its key contributions, it explores 11 pre-deliberation strategies, presents 2 methodologies and tools, and offers 33 concrete approaches to mitigate vulnerabilities, equipping practitioners with actionable insights to navigate complex discussions effectively.

Living Guidebook 3

Institutionalisation Guide 👆

The Living Guidebook on Institutionalisation is designed for advocates, practitioners, civil servants, academics, funders, and journalists who aim to make deliberative practices a foundational element of democracy. It focuses on transforming democratic innovations from occasional events into permanent, ongoing practices. Among the key insights offered in this guidebook, some of the most significant include 10 case studies that illustrate different pathways to institutionalisation, 2 practical tools and methodologies to support implementation, and 11 concrete proposals that offer strategic directions for embedding deliberative democracy more deeply into governance structures.

10 case studies that illustrate different pathways to institutionalisation

2 shares case studies, and discusses

11 practical tools and methodologies

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The Democracy R&D Network in 2024

7 Governance of the Network

In 2024, two new Co-Leads were invited to join David Schecter in leading the network. Felipe Rey and Indira Latorre, law professors from Colombia and founders of iDeemos, took on this role in January 2024.

One of the most significant activities of Democracy R&D in 2024 was the restructuring of its governance by inviting network members to join the Advisory Board and the Governance Council. This modification aims to enhance inclusivity and leverage the diverse expertise within the network. The Advisory Board comprises leading figures in democratic innovation and public policy, providing strategic guidance and insights. The Governance Council includes lottery selected representatives from various sectors who will oversee operational effectiveness and ensure that the organisation's mission aligns with its values and objectives. Together, these groups will play a crucial role in shaping the future direction of Democracy R&D.

Co-Leads

David Schecter

Indira Latorre

Felipe Rey

Advisory Board

Alice Siu

David Van Reybrouck

Doreen Grove

Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul

Graham Smith

Ieva Cesnulaityte

Jane Mansbridge

Lyn Carson

Marjan Ehsassi

Mauricio Mejía

Nicole Curato

Sanskriti Menon

Savaş Zafer Şahin

Silvia Cervellini

Tatsuro Sakano

Governance Council

David Dunetz

Irena Fiket

Louise Humblet

Nicole Armos

Nivek Thompson

Sanskriti Menon

Tatsuro Sakano

Tim Hughes

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What's Next?

The Democracy R&D network and its members are entering a period of growth, innovation and adaptation to the changing world in 2025. Our work and ideas become ever more relevant against the backdrop of global democratic decline. Despite the new challenges it raises, there is an impressive number of citizens' assemblies and juries already underway or planned, research continues, and major publications are expected. Our community will come together to reconnect and learn from one another in Brussels in the upcoming annual meeting of the network. Together we are strong and capable of taking on challenges that come our way.

Annual Meeting in Brussels
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DR&D Projects
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Upcoming Assemblies
....

Upcoming Resources
....

Challenges and Resilience

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Annual Meeting in Brussels

☑ 15 16 October
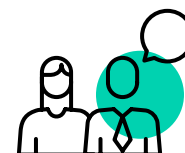
This year, the network's annual conference will take place in Brussels on 15-16 October. It is hosted by FIDE, G1000, Missions Publiques, and Democratic Society. The event will bring together academics, practitioners, and policy makers from across the globe.

What is the Democracy R&D Annual Conference?

The Democracy R&D Annual Conference is a global gathering of democratic innovators working in the field of deliberative democracy. It is an inclusive space for practitioners to share expertise, learn from one another, challenge ideas, and build meaningful professional connections across the network.

What is the theme for 2025?

The theme for the 2025 conference is Crossroads. The "deliberative wave" is moving at different paces across different contexts. Seven years after the establishment of Democracy R&D, there are many inspiring success stories, bittersweet experimentations, dead ends to draw lessons from, uncharted territories to explore, and many new actors and network members joining the journey. Yet, our community of practice also faces global headwinds in polarisation, autocratisation and populism, leaving none of us unaffected. While they make our work more relevant than ever, these global trends also call on us to face some hard questions. Standing at multiple crossroads, what are the pathways for public deliberation to effectively rise to this moment?

[You are invited to submit workshop ideas and follow to register and attend](#)

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What's Next?

DR&D Projects
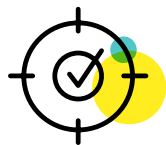
The second phase of the New Frontiers project is now underway. This phase focuses on four critical frontiers:

1 — *Deliberation beyond the legislative and executive branches of government*

2 — *Adapting sortition for the Global South*

3 — *Agenda setting and governance*

4 — *Field-building in the Global South*
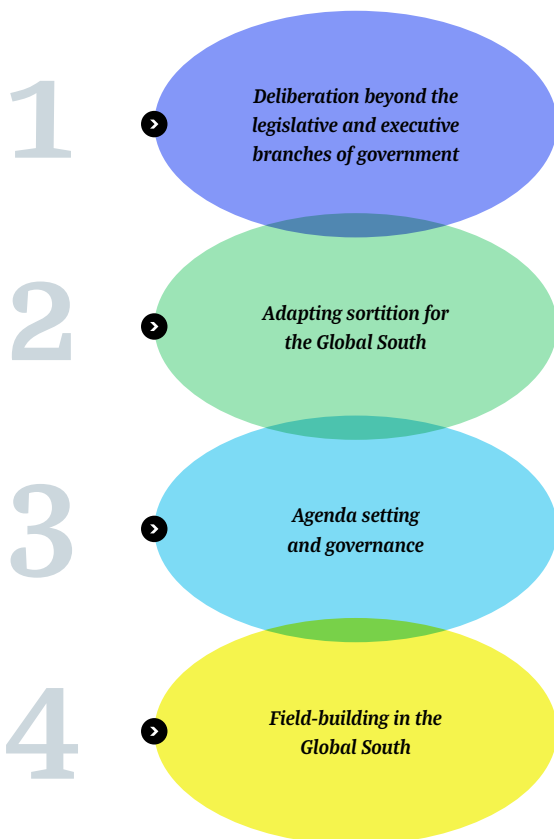
A central component of this phase is the establishment of Deliberative Action Groups (DAGs), which will collaboratively develop and implement projects aimed at strengthening deliberative democracy practices in the Global South. Each DAG will serve as both a project implementation team and a learning community, generating practical outcomes while fostering the exchange of knowledge and innovation across the network.

Upcoming Assemblies

Numerous significant citizens' assemblies are taking shape. Just to name a few - Norway is preparing to tackle the profound question of national wealth management through deliberation, while the Netherlands has launched an ambitious national climate assembly. At the local level, three pioneering citizens' assemblies are being established through DemocracyNext's cities programme in Lithuania, Luxembourg and the Gambia, while Pune, India, is addressing urban congestion through citizen deliberation.

Upcoming Resources

The field's intellectual foundations continue to strengthen. 2025 will bring several anticipated publications, including a second edition of the Handbook of Democratic Innovations and Governance, as well as a range of academic articles and practitioner reports.

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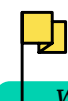
What's Next?

Challenges and Resilience

The field of deliberative democracy faces important challenges that require careful attention. There is a pressing need for sustainable funding mechanisms to ensure the longevity and quality of citizens' assemblies. As democratic institutions face mounting pressures from populism and geopolitical tensions, questions arise about how to scale up deliberative practices effectively. There are also legitimate concerns about the risk of institutionalising assemblies without adequate power or clear purpose – a phenomenon that could potentially undermine their democratic potential. A strong need for evidence of assemblies' positive impact on social cohesion and democratic resilience remains an important area of focus.
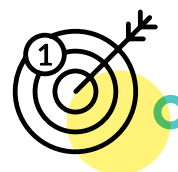
While democratic systems are challenged in many parts of the world, the enduring promise of deliberative democracy offers hope. Citizens' assemblies consistently demonstrate that when people come together across political divides, thoughtful dialogue and collective decision-making remain possible. The growing diversity of assembly applications - from complex topics to new countries - shows their adaptability to different contexts and challenges. Even in challenging times, creating spaces for meaningful citizen participation and deliberation remains not just possible, but essential for the democratic future.

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Annex A

This year has seen a wealth of deliberative processes organised across all levels of governance and various regions of the world. Below is the list of examples submitted by network members.

> Citizens' Assembly for Climate of Catalonia

> National Citizens' Assembly on Nutrition in Germany

> Climate Assembly Edermünde (Bürgerrat Klima)

> European Citizens' Panel on Tackling Hatred in Society

> Banja Luka and Mostar citizens' assemblies in Bosnia and Herzegovina

> Climate Research in Dialogue in the Netherlands

> European Citizens' Panel on Energy Efficiency

> European Citizens' Panel on Tackling Hatred in Society

> Toronto Residents' Reference Panel on Inclusive Climate Action

> Harit Setu Jan Sabha on cycling promotion in Pradhikaran

> Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

> Burnaby Community Assembly

> Unify Montrose

> We Need To Talk, Belgium

> National Assembly on Workplace Democracy, Canada

> New Berliners´ Assembly on Climate Change

> Amplify, Australia

> Town of Gibsons Residents Assembly

> A pan-Canadian conversation about primary care

> Southampton Citizens Climate Assembly

> Gesellschaftsforum Bundeskunsthalle Bonn / Kunstgewerbemuseum Dresden citizens' assemblies in Germany

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Annex B

The complete list of sessions of the 2024 Democracy R&D Annual Meeting in Vancouver.

September 19, 2024

The Deliberative Wave in North America.
Panelists: Marjan Ehsassi, Aftab Erfan, Malorie Flon, Harry Gottlieb, & Patti Pon.
Moderated by: Richard Johnson.

From Skepticism to Support: How to Win Over Politicians and Policy-Makers.
Panelists: Yago Bermejo, Zakia Elvang, Sonia Furstenau, Joe Mathews, Matthew Mendelsohn.
Moderated by Yves Dejaeghere.

Special Briefing: An introduction to Citizens' Assemblies.
Presented by Peter MacLeod.

Deliberative Democracy and Inequality.
Led by Matthew Mendelsohn.

Designing Civic Lotteries: New Approaches.
Led by Bailey Flanigan and Joanna Massie.

Climate Deliberation in the Global South: Potential, challenges and future directions.
Led by Silvia Cervellini, David Rosén, Sanskriti Menon, Indira Latorre, Silvia Remolina.
Online Contributors: Nicole Curato, Edwin Msewa, Damien du Preez.

Integrating Multi-Species Perspectives in Democracies.
Led by Giovanni Allegretti, Yves Mathieu, Mahmud Farooque

Citizens' Assemblies on Hate Speech and Disinformation.
Led by Dr. Angela Jain, Hans-Liudger Dienel and Peter MacLeod.

Deliberation and Experiential Futures.
Led by Dr. Stuart Candy.

Facilitating Meaningful Deliberation Across Languages.
*Led by* Nicole Armos, Jacob Birkenhäger, Keith Greaves, Kerstin Luecker, Yves Mathieu and Athavarn Srikantharajah.

Sortition Beyond Assemblies.
Led by Alexander Guerrero and Tom Lord.

Municipal Assemblies and City Planning.
Led by Amina Yasin, Vivian Castro-Wooldridge, Jillian Youngblood, Brandyn Keating, and Zakia Elvang.

Where Tech Meets Talk: Can Deliberation and Technology Work Together?
Panelists: Liz Barry, Dr. Angela Jain, Aviv Ovadya, Taylor Owen, and Kris Rose.
Moderated by: Peter MacLeod.

From Good to Great: Delivering Better Assemblies with Shared Standards.
Led by Iain Walker.

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September 20, 2024

Keynote: Indigenous Perspectives on Collaborative Governance and Deliberation with Niigaan Sinclair.

Ready, Set, Show: Assemblies from the past year and in the year ahead. Lightning Round Assembly Showcase.

Citizens' Assemblies and the Merits of Independent Evaluations.
👤 *Led by* Marjan Ehsassi.

AI and Deliberation.
👤 *Led by* Aviv Ovadya and Kyle Redman.

The New Frontiers of Deliberative Democracy Project.
👤 *Led by* Sofía Castillo, Cynthia Mbamalu, David Schecter, Felipe Rey, Indira Latorre, Sanskriti Menon, Samson Itodo, and Silvia Cervelini.

Public Budgeting and Strategic Deliberation.
👤 *Led by* Silvia Cervellini, Philip Lindsay, Benjamin Solotaire, Iain Walker, Giovanni Allegretti and Paolo Spada. Online Contributors: Pedro Marin, Marianna Sampaio, Su Yun Woo Check.

Embedding Deliberation: getting governments on board.
👤 *Led by* Daisy Thomson, Che Wagner, and Felix Arndt.

Coordinating and Improving Resources.
👤 *Led by* Nikhil Kumar, Silvia Cervellini, Nicole Armos, Malorie Flon, Louise Rasador, Marjan Ehsassi, Matt Byrne.

Democratic Innovation in Education.
👤 *Led by* Simon Pek and Adam Cronkright.

Combining Assemblies with Mass Online Participation.
👤 *Led by* Dr. Angela Jain, Ben Eersels, and Christiane Dienel.

How to Pitch an Assembly.
👤 *Led by* Jasmin Kay, Kayte McKnight, and Kyle Redman.

The Role of the Facilitator: Balancing Autonomy with Impact.
👤 *Led by* Scott Lappan-Newton and Zakia Elvang.

State of the Network - What's New and What's Next?
👤 *Presenters:* David Schecter and Felipe Rey.

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