

## NEWS



### **A metropolitan vision for participatory budgeting**

Thursday 30/11/2017

On November 23 and 24, the International Forum "Let's Talk About Participatory Budgets" was held in Guadalajara, Mexico. The event was organised by the Government of the State of Jalisco, the association El Colegio de Jalisco, and the School of Public Administration of Mexico City. Its aim was to create a platform for discussion and to exchange experiences and knowledge related to participatory budgeting implementation.

Metropolis one of the institutions collaborating with the International Forum, was represented by the School of Public Administration of Mexico City (co-organiser of the event), which since 2013 has been the headquarters of the Metropolis Regional Training Centre for the Americas. Metropolis was also represented by a number of member cities, including Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Guadalajara, Madrid, Montevideo, Montreal, Porto Alegre, Puebla and Santiago de Chile.

Among the contributions made by Metropolis members, the experience shared by Buenos Aires stands out in particular. Since 2017 the city's BA Elige project has provided innovations in citizen participation through the use of information technologies and a more effective communication with inhabitants. The project was also

the result of collaboration with another member city, Madrid, within the framework of a pilot programme for subnational entities as part of the Open Government Partnership.

Montevideo is one of the cities with the longest tradition of participatory budgeting implementation in Latin America. It was especially interesting to find out how a long-term process can be adapted to fit a constantly changing context, in order to stay up-to-date, continue towards consolidating democracy, and encourage social capital.

The experiences exchanged in Guadalajara managed to highlight some common challenges, which include: increasing the number of citizens involved, overcoming clientelism and the politicisation of participatory processes, regaining citizen trust in institutions, strengthening the institutional abilities of the different participants, and more.

In addition, a number of proposals to update democratic practice were presented, as well as visions for the future. Based on a study of Porto Alegre, a pioneering case for participatory budgeting implementation, Montreal spoke about the option of adopting new means of democratic participation, such as citizen assemblies with broad decision-making powers, to act as a counterweight to local congresses.