

# Summary Report

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## /// Participedia School on **TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INNOVATIONS**



University of the Western Cape  
Cape Town, South Africa

Memorial University  
St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

June 10-15, 2024



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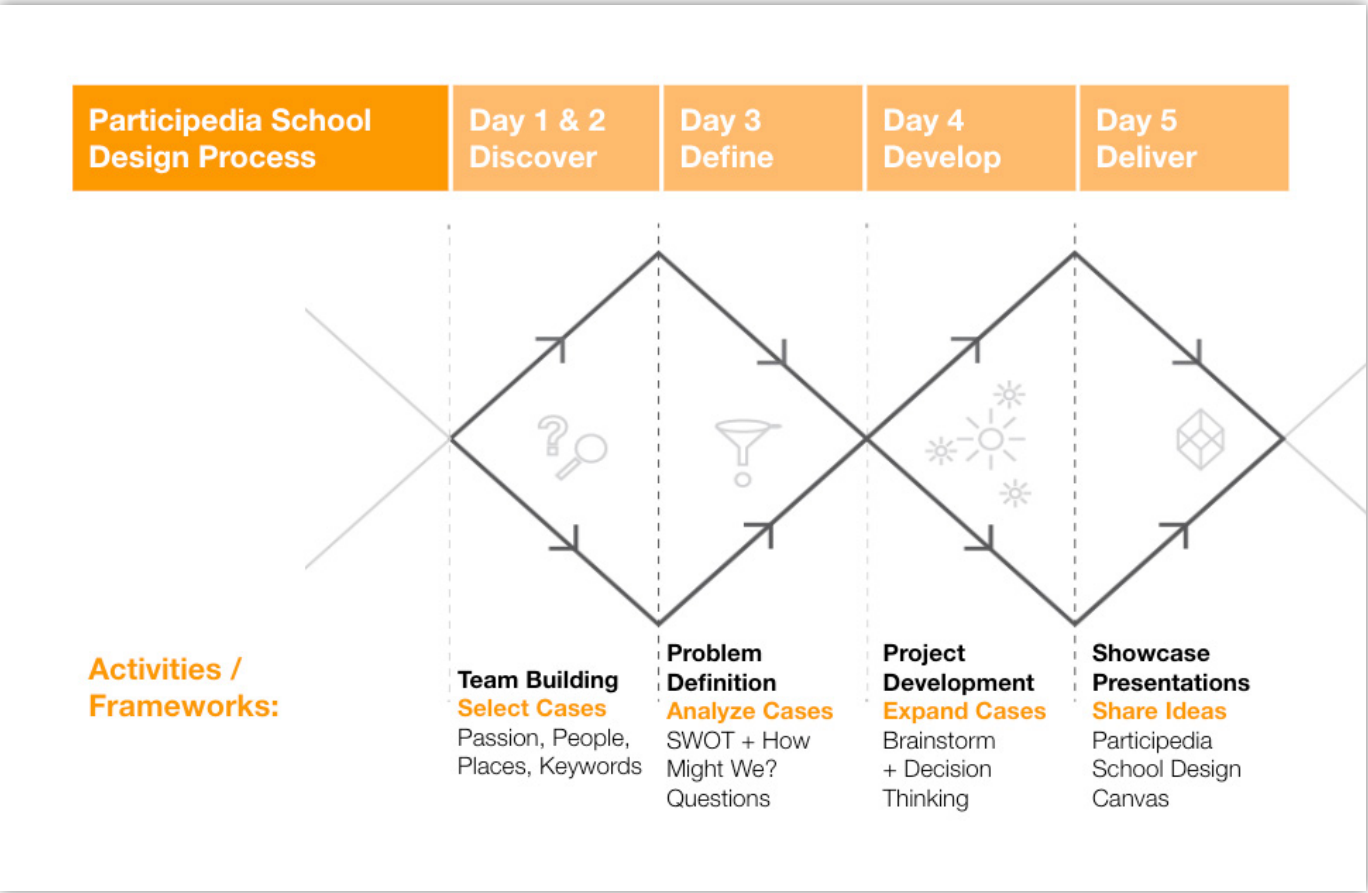


# Introduction



In response to the evolving dynamics of global governance and the creativities of peoples, transnational public participation is being fundamentally reimaged. As innovations, theoretical advancements, social movements, and policy developments emerge worldwide, it is crucial to center the involvement of individuals and groups across national borders in political processes, decision-making, advocacy, and design. The challenges we face today—complex, intertwined, and transcending national boundaries—demand democratic solutions that are equally transnational. New methods, tools, and processes are gaining momentum globally, including deliberative mini-publics, transnational organizational designs, digital infrastructures, and methods for connected participation, research, and coalition-building. In this context, it is imperative to convene diverse voices, share experiences, and acquire the necessary skills to identify, research, and design transnational democratic innovations.

From June 10–15, 2024, Participedia, in partnership with Memorial University, the University of the Western Cape, McMaster University, the Coady Institute, the Federal University of Minas Gerais, the Innovation for Policy Foundation, Missions Publiques, Democracy International, and an international consortium of leading faculty and practitioners, hosted Participedia School 2024 on Transnational Democratic Innovations. This decentralized event was held simultaneously at Memorial University (St. John's, Canada) and the University of the Western Cape (Cape Town, South Africa) and used a cross-site active problem-solving pedagogy that led to transformative experiences. The Participedia School brought together 78 student, practitioner, and scholar participants, an additional 33 facilitators and faculty between the two locations, from across the globe to engage with emerging theories and practices of cross-border participation and innovation in global politics. The School's curriculum was accredited with a certificate from the Coady Institute.



## Pedagogy

Participedia School 2024 was informed by four key pedagogical traditions: active problem-solving pedagogy, transnational pedagogy, grounded pedagogy, and co-design. Each of these approaches played a critical role in shaping the school's unique educational model and case-based transnational design, fostering an environment that encouraged deep engagement, self-reflexivity and epistemic openness, accountability, and transformation.

*Click here to download the complete syllabus for Participedia School 2024.*

### 1. Active Problem-Solving Pedagogy

Our active problem-solving pedagogy emphasized student engagement through real-world problem-solving tasks using case studies. This approach encouraged learners to apply critical thinking and analytical skills to tackle complex issues, moving away from traditional passive learning models. Instead, students actively participated in discussions, collaborated in teams, and engaged in hands-on learning. The use of structured problems, which reflect the complexity of real-world challenges, promoted creativity and adaptability.



2. Transnational Pedagogy

Transnational pedagogy transcends national and cultural boundaries by fostering a global perspective in education. This approach integrated diverse cultural viewpoints into the learning process, promoting a more inclusive understanding of global issues. Through transnational exchanges, students came to challenge dominant frameworks, opening space for encounters between diverse perspectives and lived experiences that led to generative solution-oriented outcomes.

3. Grounded Pedagogy

Grounded pedagogy focuses on the lived experiences, cultures, and knowledge systems of marginalized and indigenous communities. This approach challenges the dominance of Western epistemologies and views students as co-creators of knowledge, engaging actively with their social and political contexts to address systemic inequalities. Grounded pedagogy empowered our students by connecting classroom learning to local struggles for justice, sovereignty, and cultural preservation.

Students were seen as co-producers of knowledge and we engaged with critical methods to interrogate power structures and envision alternative transnational interventions rooted in participants' own histories and ways of knowing.

4. Co-Design

Co-design emphasizes inclusive and collaborative design processes that honor and integrate diverse knowledge systems, cultural perspectives, and lived experiences. It focuses on engaging diverse stakeholders to co-create solution-oriented ideas that are both contextually relevant and culturally sensitive. By valuing diverse viewpoints and lived experiences, we fostered innovative and equitable design conversations within the context of case challenges.

By integrating active problem-solving, transnational, and grounded pedagogy with the principles of co-design, Participedia School 2024 was able to achieve our learning objectives, aligning with our commitment to participatory, inclusive, and democratic education.

Importantly, these pedagogies were developed from the experience and learning of Participedia School 2023 on Radical Democracy. An emerging Participedia School pedagogy that is flexible to the needs of the topic, contexts, and learners, but maintains core pedagogical and democratic principles, is developing from our programming, and we are on our way to making Participedia the 'global classroom on democratic innovation'!



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Learning Objectives

The School's objectives were shaped by creative workshops, symposiums, hybrid transnational panels, policy and skill-building workshops, artistic engagement, peer learning classroom sessions, and co-design group project and share-back activities. The objectives were fourfold:

- 1. Interdisciplinary, intersectional, and international exchange:** Bring together junior scholars, field leaders, and practitioners to collaborate across diverse fields, perspectives, practices, and regions with the hope of fostering mutual understanding and innovative transnational designs.
- 2. Knowledge sharing, transfer, and dissemination:** Facilitate collaboration through co-design and co-learning sessions, where participants exchange expertise and learn from each other. These sessions enable participants to develop a shared framework for addressing key issues while leveraging each other's strengths and experiences.
- 3. Training for students and practitioners:** Provide skill development and field-specific training that supports professional growth and enhances expertise in transnational democratic innovation. This training equips participants with practical tools and methodologies to address real-world challenges, ensuring they leave with applicable, hands-on experience.
- 4. Knowledge synthesis and dissemination:** Sharing insights among practitioners, students, international organization staff, activists, and diplomats to ensure cross-sectoral knowledge exchange. This synthesis ensures that the knowledge generated is both comprehensive and applicable to a wide range of fields, enhancing its impact on global practices.

Participants took an active role in shaping and maintaining a respectful and productive learning environment throughout the Participedia School. They were encouraged not only to engage with speakers but also to interact with one another, fostering a collaborative and dynamic atmosphere. Active participation took many forms, including asking thoughtful questions, providing comments that enriched discussions, and actively listening to different perspectives.

Participants were also encouraged to take notes to enhance personal learning and to contribute their insights through presentations, workshops, and group work. This diverse range of engagement ensured that all voices were heard, creating a rich, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating space where knowledge could be co-created and shared.

By taking ownership of their learning experience as co-creators, participants helped cultivate a collective environment that was genuinely transnational and led to deeper understandings and meaningful exchanges.



# Cases & Design Projects

Participants at Participedia School 2024 collaborated on creative group projects that synthesized insights gathered throughout the week. Working in groups, they were asked to select a transnational case study from a provided collection, each of which presented specific processes and policy challenges for analysis. Using the frameworks introduced during the school, groups collectively analyzed their chosen case. Offering a range of cases allowed multiple groups to explore the same case from different perspectives, shaped by their diverse backgrounds and experiences. By documenting their learning each day, participants were able to reflect, process ideas, and develop unique approaches to the complex issues within their selected case. The goal was not to produce polished solutions but to generate thoughtful and creative ideas as project outcomes. At the end of the week, groups from both school sites working on the same case had the opportunity to connect and exchange insights, fostering cross-site collaboration and shared learning.

## Cases and Design Pathways:

(Click to view documents)

- Reducing Global Plastic Pollution: Transnational Treaties in the Making
- Participatory Truth and Reconciliation in Indonesia and Timor-Leste
- Gene Drives for Genetically Modified Mosquitoes (GMMs) in Africa
- Dignified Sanitation in Informal Settlements: Transnational Coalition-Building in Cape Town (South Africa) and Nairobi (Kenya)
- Canada–Germany Hydrogen Alliance: Fuel of the Future and Need for Transnational Deliberations



## Transnational Democratic Innovations Co-design Canvas:

This Canvas served as a repository and workspace for groups throughout the design process. The Companion Guide to the Canvas provided conceptual clarity and more detailed explanations on how to use the Canvas.

- Transnational Democratic Innovation Canvas
- Companion Guide for the Canvas



Transnational Democratic Innovation Canvas for Participedia School		Group Member Names:	How Might We?	Project Title:
<b>1 Purpose: Topic</b> What is the <b>issue</b> that you've chosen to work on? What is the general issue that your democratic innovation is seeking to address?	<b>3 Stakeholders &amp; Roles</b> Who are the key stakeholders involved? What roles should they serve in the activity? How should decision making and deliberative power be exercised? <b>Convener(s)</b> Who should organize and host this transnational democratic innovation to best achieve your purpose? <b>Participants</b> Who should be included in the transnational democratic innovation to best achieve your purpose? How might power constrain or pose barriers to participation and for whom? What principles are most relevant to achieve the activity's purpose (for example, inclusivity, representation, lived experience)? <b>...Other Roles</b> Which other stakeholders should be involved in this transnational democratic innovation to best achieve your purpose?			
<b>2 Purpose: Process &amp; Desired Outcome</b> What is the <b>design pathway</b> that you feel will best address the issue you're seeking to address? What is the outcome that you hope to achieve?	<b>4 Outreach Method</b> How should participants be reached or selected? How might diverse positionalities, economic and political circumstances, and power, be factored into outreach design and support?			
<b>5 Levels of Engagement</b> What is the level of participant engagement?				
<b>6 Other Important Considerations</b> What are other important considerations relevant for this <b>design pathway</b> ? How might your activity connect with other other initiatives, or with formal decision-making processes? How might participants interact with each other? How might participants be supported to participate? How might your activity be designed to ensure integrity, to address structural constraints of participation and empowerment? Does your proposed democratic innovation confront power structures?				
<b>7 Storyboard of the Activity</b> Draw the story of how this this transnational democratic innovation would take place.				

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Cases and Canvas provided to participants



# School Themes

## Day 1: Why We Need Transnational Democracy

### Transnational Programming:

The School formally opened with a transnational hybrid session involving brief remarks by Paul Emil-janowicz on democratic pedagogy and 'Groundings with my Brothers', followed by Jon Stever on the possibilities of transnational democracy. Our day one keynote session then began with talks on

the Challenges and Possibilities in Global Democratic Governance... featuring speakers Vijay Prashad of the Tricontinental Institute, and Ambassador Keisha McGuire, President and CEO of the Present and Future Institute.

In the keynote, Vijay Prashad and Ambassador Keisha McGuire each highlighted the critical need for a reformed international order

and inclusive global democracy. Prashad critiqued the hypocrisy of major powers like the US, Great Britain, and NATO, accusing them of obstructing Palestinian statehood and disregarding global ceasefire calls, thus exemplifying the collapse of international norms of democracy and human rights. He argued that the routine violations of the UN

Charter reveal a stark disparity between the values these nations profess and their actions. Prashad advocated for strengthening regional mechanisms, reducing global arms spending, and reallocating resources to social programs.

Following Vijay, Ambassador McGuire's talk further emphasized the necessity of reform by focusing on global crises such as genocide, climate change, and pandemics. She criticized the UN's current structure for marginalizing smaller and diverse nations, which has impaired effective responses to these crises. The missed opportunity for global solidarity during the pandemic and the ongoing Gaza genocide illustrate the urgent need, according to McGuire, for a more inclusive and democratic world order. McGuire stressed the importance of integrating young voices into global decision-making processes. Both speakers concurred on the need for a more inclusive, equitable, and representative international system, highlighting the essential role of the Global South and transnational democracy in shaping these new relationships.

The first day's hybrid session concluded with provocative and short impulse talks, moderated by Jon Stever, on Opportunities in Global Governance. This panel explored themes of transnational participation and regulation, inclusivity, power and inequalities, ethical and social implications, and the adoption of collaborative and multilateral approaches. Kalypso Nicolaïdis, Ana Cristina Ruelas, Yurij Castelfranchi, and Ricardo Mendonça each addressed critical dimensions of global governance and technology regulation in their impulse talks.



Nicolaïdis highlighted the need for a democratic transformation in global governance, advocating for a polycentric approach that balances diverse political modes and addresses wealth and power imbalances. She drew attention to the importance of the Global North supporting the Global South and adopting diverse mechanisms to address global divisions and democratic disenchantment.

Ruelas, Castelfranchi, and Mendonça further explored these themes by focusing on specific global challenges. Ruelas discussed the development of inclusive guidelines for regulating digital platforms through UNESCO's decentralized consultation process, emphasizing the importance of broad participation from marginalized groups. Castelfranchi called for global regulatory frameworks for genome-editing technologies like CRISPR/Cas9, advocating for public involvement and novel mechanisms such as citizens' assemblies. Mendonça addressed the governance of artificial intelligence (AI), stressing the need for equitable, transnational regulation to democratize AI and mitigate its risks, including biases and surveillance. Together, these talks highlighted a unified call for more inclusive, democratic, and globally coordinated approaches to governance and technology regulation. This session concluded with a lively transnational Q/A discussion.

### Local Programming:

Outside of the transnational hybrid sessions, each location hosted local programming in either a morning or afternoon timeslot to align with the School's learning objectives. Due to time differences, Memorial local programming was 'one session ahead'. On Day 1, participants took part in a group exercise aimed at co-creating community agreements, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration. This was followed by a group discussion where participants explored and defined what democracy means to them, encouraging diverse perspectives and deeper reflections on democratic values. Later, the design project was introduced, giving participants an overview of the cases to be analyzed, setting the stage for critical engagement and creative problem-solving. Participants briefly reviewed the cases and began to understand the various contexts and challenges they would address. The day concluded with a Design Studio session focused on DISCOVER activities, where participants reflected on their passions, key people in their lives, and places of significance. This helped ground their learning in personal experiences and connections, preparing them for the collaborative design work ahead.



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DAY 1 WHY WE NEED TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRACY

OPENING TALKS

Challenges and Possibilities in Global Democratic Governance



PAUL EMILJANOWICZ  
McMaster University  
(Moderator)



VIJAY PRASHAD  
Tricontinental Institute

Can there be a new international political order?



AMB. KEISHA MCGUIRE  
Present and Future Institute

Navigating Multilateral Reform - Possibilities and Pitfalls

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DAY 2 DESIGN & DEMOCRATIC THEORY

CONVERSATION

Theory Listens and Responds: Foundational Democratic Norms



AZUCENA MORAN  
Research Institute for Sustainability  
(Moderator)



ARCHON FUNG  
Harvard University



MARTA WOJCIECHOWSKA  
King's College London



MARK WARREN  
University of British Columbia



FIONA ANCIANO  
University of the Western Cape

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DAY 1 WHY WE NEED TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRACY

IMPULSE TALKS

Opportunities in Global Governance



JON STEVER  
Innovation for Policy Foundation (Moderator)



KALYPSO NICOLAÏDIS  
School of Transnational Governance, EUI

Opportunities to reform regional governance institutions in the European Union



YURI CASTELFRANCHI  
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

Genome Editing and Transversal Brazil Experience



RICARDO MENDONÇA  
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

AI and Algorithms in Global Governance



ANA RUELAS  
UNESCO

Global Consultation and Global Guidelines for Regulating Digital Platforms

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DAY 2 DESIGN & DEMOCRATIC THEORY

SESSION

Pluriversality, Design & Power



FIONA ANCIANO  
University of the Western Cape



SEBASTIAN CALDERON  
i4Policy

Governance Vocabularies Initiative



MARIANA GONZALEZ  
People Powered

Ideas, Arrangements, Effects: Toward Design Justice



JESI CARSON  
Participedia

Ideas, Arrangements, Effects: Toward Design Justice



## Day 2: Design & Democratic Theory

### Transnational Programming:

Our first transnational hybrid session of day two opened with a conversation panel, Theory Listens and Respond, featuring Mark Warren, Archon Fung, Fiona Anciano, and Marta Wojciechowska, and moderated by Azucena Moran. This panel introduced and explored the foundational democratic norms underpinning the Participedia School Co-Design Canvas.

Mark Warren, Archon Fung, Fiona Anciano, and Marta Wojciechowska each offered critical insights into the praxis of democracy. Warren emphasized that while democratic norms are straightforward in theory, they are complex in execution due to inherent tensions. He suggested that institutional failures should be viewed as opportunities for growth and progress, particularly in the current challenging global climate. Fung expanded on this by exploring the horizontal and vertical challenges within democracy. He argued that the complexity increases on a global scale due to less structured hierarchies and greater variance among groups, stressing the need for effective representation and accountability across diverse social strata.

Anciano and Wojciechowska built on these themes by focusing on inclusivity and intersectionality in democratic processes. Anciano highlighted the need for ongoing reassessment of democratic norms to ensure social and economic equality and to elevate contributions from the Global South on par with the Global North. She noted the disconnection between citizens and democratic institutions, advocating for better demonstrations of how citizen participation impacts outcomes. Wojciechowska, on the other hand, stressed the importance of intersectionality in shaping democratic practice, urging the creation of more inclusive and compassionate democratic spaces. Together, these presentations highlighted the necessity of adapting democratic practices to address global and

local complexities, ensuring that diverse voices are effectively included and represented in the conceptualization and operationalization of democratic processes.

Putting these ideas and tensions into analytical practice, this session was followed by a cross-site engagement workshop, Seeing Power, facilitated by Fiona Anciano, Mariana Gonzalez, and Jesi Carson. School participants from both Memorial University and the University of the Western Cape were paired in virtual groups that crossed both sites and offered the opportunity to meet and engage in smaller group discussion about power dynamics in everyday life. Students were also guided through pluriversal and design justice approaches by Mariana Gonzalez of People Powered and Jesi Carson of Participedia, to help question normative institutional design through a critical lens. They discussed how social arrangements influence design outcomes, emphasizing that design often marginalizes vulnerable groups and needs to be rethought to be more collaborative and inclusive. They highlighted the importance of considering affordances and constraints within design systems and stressed the need for critical assessment through a design-justice lens to adapt methods and better serve diverse participants. This framework offered a foundation to introduce the Participedia School Design Project and Canvas, offering tools and methods to be used throughout the week.

Following this, Sebastian Calderon of i4Policy introduced the “Governance Vocabulary Initiative,” to show how pluriversal design can be incorporated into rethinking governance in response to challenges by pluralizing perspectives. Sebastian argued that in order to challenge issues of marginalization, political polarization, and citizen dissatisfaction, plurality in governance and democracy needs to be embraced. This can look like adopting diverse democratic models that reflect different cultures and communities and disrupting traditional frame-



works and concepts of governance through tools like the “Pluriversal Dictionary,” a resource combining a dictionary and a thesaurus to connect various democratic concepts globally. Participants were invited to engage with these ideas, to challenge their existing knowledge systems, and to consider their relationships to power when designing democratic innovations.

### Local Programming:

On day two, each site - albeit at different times - had local team-building and orientation workshops to form community agreements and design teams. Local programming continued with a hands-on workshop led by i4Policy, where participants learned decision-making strategies through a practical “Decision Thinking” approach. This session emphasized applying structured thinking to complex challenges, allowing participants to

enhance their decision-making skills. Following the workshop, the focus shifted to the design project, where participants conducted a SWOT analysis, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to their projects. This exercise provided deeper insights into the contextual factors shaping their work and helped refine their project strategies. Unique to the Memorial location, a local public panel discussion explored the impact of megaprojects and the role of citizens in shaping them. Andrea Felicetti, Ashley Fitzpatrick, and Kelly Blidook shared their expertise, fostering a dialogue on civic engagement in large-scale initiatives.



## Day 3: Practicing Transnational Democracy

### Transnational Programming:

Our day three hybrid session “Transnational Democracy, Rebooted” explored the intersections of coloniality, student movements, capitalism, and urban participatory processes in the making and operationalizing of transnational democratic innovations. Moderated by Frank Lekaba from Democracy Without Borders, it aimed to blend theory with grassroots experiences and consider transnational responses as part of local ecosystems.



Bevil Lucas from Reclaim the City and representing The Cissie Gool House, drawing on his decades of experience as a co-leader in an ongoing grassroots occupation, emphasized the influence of colonial structures of housing and urbanism in Cape Town, advocating for the reimagining of democratic spaces and the importance of participatory processes in addressing housing needs and building trust. In contrast, Lindokuhle Mandyoli from the University of the Western Cape addressed the experience of the “Rhodes Must Fall” and “Fees Must Fall” student movements, linking these to broader issues of coloniality, representation, and capital accumulation that perpetuate social stratification. Both pre-

sentations drew on the experience of South Africa, demonstrating the creativity and labor of peoples to actively address transnational and local challenges in their communities.

Expanding on these interventions, Lama Alarda from the University of Brussels emphasized that the effects of colonialism persist despite its formal end, emphasizing the necessity for a prolonged and collective effort to counter these enduring practices, both at the level of our knowledge production and also in terms of political action and policy design. Azucena Moran from RIFS drew from her own experiences and knowledges from Latin America to highlight how participatory processes can sometimes reinforce unequal power structures and hierarchies, rather than challenge them or make space for democracy. The panel outlined the need for genuine inclusion and autonomy for marginalized communities in transnational democratic innovations, as well as highlighted the connections between localities across geography, while also addressing the disconnect between normative democratic theory and its application in post-colonial contexts.

Our second session featured Caroline Vernaillen from Democracy International, Frank Lekaba from Democracy Without Borders, Nicole Curato and Melissa Ross from GloCAN and Salome Nduta from the Women Human Rights Defenders Hub. The session offered a comprehensive exploration of various critical perspectives on transnational democracy, highlighting both the promise and challenges of implementing democratic innovations across national borders.

Caroline Vernaillen from Democracy International emphasized the significance of who proposes and decides on issues within direct democracy mechanisms, advocating for a UN-level initiative akin to the European Citizens’ Initiative. Frank Lekaba of Democracy Without Borders supported this with the We the Peoples Campaign, proposing a UN Parliamentary Assembly, a UN World Citizens



Initiative, and enhanced civil society engagement to improve global representation. Nicole Curato and Melisa Ross from GloCAN addressed persistent inequalities in transnational deliberation, pointing out that these processes often replicate existing global and gender disparities. They stressed the need to prioritize the voices of those directly affected by global issues and cautioned against idealizing “bottom-up” approaches, which can still foster hierarchies and may benefit more from stronger network linkages rather than simply increasing participant numbers. Salome Nduta from the Women Human Rights Defenders Hub highlighted the importance of transnational coalition-building among women defenders in East Africa, demonstrating how cross-border support is crucial where human rights are threatened. The session drew out the complexities of advancing global democratic practices and the need for a nuanced approach to inclusivity, power dynamics, and effective coalition-building.

Throughout the presentations and Q/A, several key themes emerged. These included the need for more direct citizen participation in global governance, the challenges of ensuring true inclusivity and equality in transnational processes, the importance of critically examining “bottom-up” approaches, the value of targeted coalition-building for specific rights issues, and the need to balance scale with depth and effectiveness in transnational initiatives. This session explored the complexity of implementing democratic innovations at a global level and brought focus to the need for careful consideration of power dynamics, inclusivity, and practical challenges in these efforts.

### Local Programming:

Day 3 allowed room for participants, supported by facilitators, to conduct case analysis and group work, where participants expanded the Participedia School Codesign Canvas and began collaborating to refine their project ideas and strategies.



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DAY 3PRACTICING TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRACY

PANEL

Transnational Democracy Rebooted: a critical reflection on coloniality, Student Movements, capitalism, and Urban Participatory Processes



FRANK LEKABA  
Democracy Without Borders  
(Moderator)



LAMA ALARIDA  
University of Brussels



LINDOKUHLE MANDVOTI  
University of the Western Cape



BEVIL LUCAS  
Reclaim the City



AZUCENA MORAN  
Research Institute for Sustainability

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DAY 4DESIGN FOR TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRACY

DESIGN TALK

Transnational Participation in Local Contexts



MELISA ROSS  
GloCAN/University of Bremen



SEBASTIAN CALDERON  
i4Policy

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DAY 3PRACTICING TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRACY

TALKS

Transnational Democratic Proposals



JON STEVER  
i4Policy  
(Moderator)



CAROLINE VERNAILLEN  
Democracy International  
Direct Democracy Mechanisms at the Global Level



FRANK LEKABA  
Democracy Without Borders  
We the Peoples Campaign



NICOLE CURATO  
University of Canberra  
Challenges to Transitional Democratic Innovation



MELISA ROSS  
University of Bremen  
Challenges to Transitional Democratic Innovation



SALOME NDUTA  
WHRD Hub/ Coody Institute  
Transnational Coalition Building (LGBTQ+ Rights)

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DAY 4DESIGN FOR TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRACY

SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOP

Facilitating Transnational Deliberation



ANTOINE VERGNE  
Missions Publiques



IRINA BONCZOK  
Missions Publiques



# Day 4: Design for Transnational Democracy



## Transnational Programming:

Day four's hybrid session opened with "Transnational Participation in Local Contexts", an interactive presentation led by Melisa Ross of the Global Citizens Assemblies' Network (GloCAN), and Sebastian Calderon of i4Policy. Melisa Ross introduced GloCAN, the network's focus on global deliberation processes, and their impact on global issues by producing actionable insights for creating power-sensitive approaches to global deliberation. While varied democratic processes are valuable, ever-present power dynamics and inequalities need to be considered within innovation. Global processes need to be connected to local realities, promoting inclusivity and ensuring that participants in global forums truly represent their communities. Sebastian Calderon then spoke on the topic of "3D consultations," which are decentralized, distributed, and deliberative processes.

Used in UNESCO's development of guidelines for the governance of digital platforms, the process involved gathering input from over 10,000 people across 134 countries, ensuring diverse voices were included, especially from the Global South. Organizing these consultations, however, needs to centre the importance of training local organizers, providing accessible learning materials, and ensuring transparency in how citizen inputs are incorporated into the final outcomes. The session then concluded with an interactive activity where participants are asked to work in groups to map out local realities and communities that could be impacted by their transnational democratic innovations. They were encouraged to identify stakeholders, consider who may benefit or be left behind, and design their processes accordingly.

The second half of the fourth day's hybrid session featured a skill-building workshop facilitated by Missions Publiques' Antoine Vergne and Irina Bonczok on "Facilitating Transnational Deliberation." Offering cross-site engagement, this workshop saw participants placed in their design-project groups before meeting with the group studying the same case at the opposite site. Groups were then able to offer insights and feedback, share-back concerns, and perspectives, as participants discussed their democratic innovations. Vergne and Bonczok consulted with groups throughout the workshop, providing feedback and advice on the participants' projects, drawn from their extensive experience in facilitating citizen dialogues and deliberative democracy processes across the globe.

## Local Programming:

On day four, at the University of the Western Cape, the day began with a "Transnational Democracy Talk Show" hosted by Julien Landry and featuring participants Caroline Vernailen, Namhla Matshanda, and Frank Lekaba. This interactive session



fostered a lively dialogue on democracy across borders, with insights from various local perspectives. Participants then engaged in brainstorming and group work on the Codesign Canvas. At Memorial University, participants attended a Citizen Engagement Master Class, led by Peter MacLeod from Mass LBP. This session was livestreamed to allow remote viewers to benefit from MacLeod's expertise on fostering meaningful public involvement in decision-making processes. This was followed by a "NL and a Global Perspective," which brought together Ross Reid, Peter MacLeod, Carolann Harding, and Tom Cooper to explore Newfoundland and Labrador's role in global democratic initiatives. The distinct programming at each location provided valuable insights into local and global democratic practices, deepening participants' understanding of the diverse ways democracy takes shape.







## Day 5 & 6: Transnational Project Design and Showcase

### Transnational Programming:

The final cross-site transnational hybrid session moderated by Daniel Schugurensky, opened with the panel, “Reflections on Transnational Democracy,” during which speakers Áurea Carolina, Peter McLeod, and Bonny Ibhawoh, shared brief talks before engaging in a shared discussion on the topic of transnational democracy, deliberative democracy, and citizen participation in global governance.

Áurea Carolina focused on the need for bold and innovative approaches to address global challenges, drawing from traditional knowledge and the experiences of social movements like Brazil’s MST (Movimento Sem Terra). Advocating for a commitment to life and care in political action, Carolina empha-

sized the importance of collective learning and resolution. Peter MacLeod of Mass LBP highlighted the crisis of legitimacy in global governance and argued for a plurality of tactics to enhance democratic processes. He emphasized the importance of hybrid models that combine traditional and new forms of representation, such as sortition-based assemblies, to better reflect community needs. Noting the importance of transnational dialogues, he suggested that these efforts could help create solidarity and understanding across different jurisdictions, and the potential for such processes to contribute to social and human development. Bonny Ibhawoh of Participedia and McMaster University discussed the importance of expanding the concept of deliberative democracy to include diverse voices and perspectives, especially those not traditionally considered in Western frameworks. He emphasized the need for global assemblies that allow citizens to deliberate on critical issues like climate change and AI ethics, beyond the control of states.



Questions from participants then focused on the implementation of citizen-led global assemblies, the potential conflicts between transnational conversations and transitional justice, and the role of social movements in contributing to democratic processes. To close, panelists stressed the need for creating spaces where people can engage in global deliberations beyond the confines of government control, with a particular focus on the importance of bottom-up, civil society-led initiatives in transitional justice and other areas.

We then facilitated a virtual sharing round to close the fifth day’s hybrid session, during which we paired project groups up with another project team across sites. This gave each group the opportunity to tighten up their presentation and incorporate any final notes and clarifications from their peers. On day six, groups presented their final projects locally, for faculty and peer feedback.

### Local Programming:

On Day 5, local programming focused on the final stages of project development and refining presentation skills. Participants dedicated the day to polishing their design projects, ensuring their ideas were ready for presentation. To enhance their communication abilities, unique methods such as round-table group speed dating were used, allowing participants to practice delivering their presentations to different groups in quick succession. This interactive format encouraged rapid feedback and helped participants sharpen their messaging, preparing them for the final showcase of their work.



# Design Projects

## CASE: Canada–Germany Hydrogen Alliance: Fuel of the Future and Need for Transnational Deliberations



### UWC

The “Big Five” project addresses the potential environmental impacts of hydrogen development in Canada, and emphasizes the need for more inclusive and informed public engagement in transnational energy projects. As Canada and Germany collaborate on exporting hydrogen globally, there is growing concern over the lack of understanding of the technology’s climate impact and the exclusion of non-state actors from decision-making processes. The project advocates for a decolonized approach, ensuring that local communities, including Indigenous groups, are actively involved in deliberations. It also highlights the importance of accurate and accessible communication, particularly in languages understood by affected populations, to empower non-state actors to influence policy and hold governments accountable for environmental risks. Despite the strong appetite for hydrogen policy on both sides, the project critiques the inadequate public participation mechanisms and calls for a more transparent and inclusive pathway to ensure long-term engagement in the decision-making process.

### MUN

By forming a transnational consortium, this project will map and connect a diverse array of stakeholders, including national and provincial governments, private industry, and local communities, ensuring that all voices are equitably represented. Central to this initiative is a transnational citizens’ assembly, selected through sortition, which prioritizes representation for those most affected by the hydrogen development. This assembly will be informed by experts across various fields and will engage in comprehensive deliberation to produce recommendations, including stringent environmental safeguards. To maintain public trust and accountability, the project will implement an ongoing deliberative review process, ensuring that these safeguards are monitored, reported, and transparently updated.

## CASE: Reducing Global Plastic Pollution: Transnational Treaties in the Making



### UWC

The “Justice League” project aims to integrate the voices of vulnerable communities into the United Nations treaty process, ensuring these voices are heard and respected while appealing to member states. To achieve this, the project identifies key stakeholders, including local natural structures, civil society organizations (CSOs), pressure groups, allies such as academics and social media activists, and supportive member states like Rwanda. The approach emphasizes inclusivity, diversity, empowerment, and transparency, recognizing the need for both direct and indirect outreach methods. The project seeks to address the barriers posed by the exclusion of poor and vulnerable groups from key discussions, aiming to connect and engage these communities through dialogue, deliberation, and creative methods like videos and photo galleries. By forming alliances with academia and CSOs, and by leveraging ongoing conversations and existing UN mechanisms, the project strives to amplify these marginalized voices and ensure their concerns are integrated into the treaty-making process, despite competing interests from corporations.

### MUN

This project is aimed at creating an inclusive and reflexive process for developing international plastic waste policies. The project operates through a multi-staged agenda-setting process that involves two advisory bodies: one composed of experts, politicians, and elites, and another made up of ordinary citizens. This separation ensures that the voices of everyday people are not overshadowed by elite dominance, allowing them to contribute their lived experiences and knowledge about plastic pollution. The initiative begins with town halls where citizens prioritize problems related to plastic waste, followed by a global sortition process that moves from identifying these priorities to generating policy ideas. These ideas are then crowdsourced, enabling broad participation, including outreach to marginalized communities. The final policy proposal is developed collaboratively with the International Negotiating Committee (INC) and the UN, and is then subject to a vote. As an additional step, the proposal is returned to the local communities involved for final evaluation and sign-off, ensuring that the treaty reflects the needs and perspectives of those most affected by plastic pollution.



## CASE: Dignified Sanitation in Informal Settlements: Transnational Coalition-Building in Cape Town (South Africa) and Nairobi (Kenya)

### UWC

How might we bring vulnerable children into dialogue with policymakers and community leaders so that they may advocate for their right to sanitation? The “JAMBO - PooRaid Festival” project aims to empower vulnerable children and young people in South Africa and Kenya by bringing them into dialogue with policymakers and community leaders to advocate for their right to sanitation. Recognizing that sanitation is a complex, interconnected issue that disproportionately affects marginalized



communities, the project uses creative methods like photovoice images, visual arts, and educational workshops to help children express their experiences and challenges related to sanitation. The festival will serve as a platform for children to showcase their artwork and engage in discussions, highlighting the broader systemic issues linked to sanitation, such as housing and water access. The project

emphasizes ethical considerations, ensuring that the children's voices are respected and that the approach is multidisciplinary, involving stakeholders like schools, parents, and community leaders. The goal is to create a co-developed, adaptable plan that pressures governments to implement and budget for sustainable sanitation policies, while also addressing the psychological and emotional needs of the participating children.

### MUN

This project aims to ensure that voices within informal settlements are heard and valued. The initiative involves creating forums for knowledge transfer and mutual learning, beginning with a facilitator visiting settlement dwellings and sampling community members—10 individuals per community—to engage in roundtable discussions. These discussions focus on identifying the most pressing struggles related to sanitation that residents face daily. Following several of these meetings, a transnational knowledge exchange will be conducted, where participants from informal settlements in Kenya and South Africa collaborate to devise a shared strategy, recognizing both unique challenges and common issues. The plan is then brought back to the local communities for reassessment and further action, ensuring ongoing alignment with the communities' needs and realities.

## CASE: Participatory Truth and Reconciliation in Indonesia and Timor-Leste



### UWC

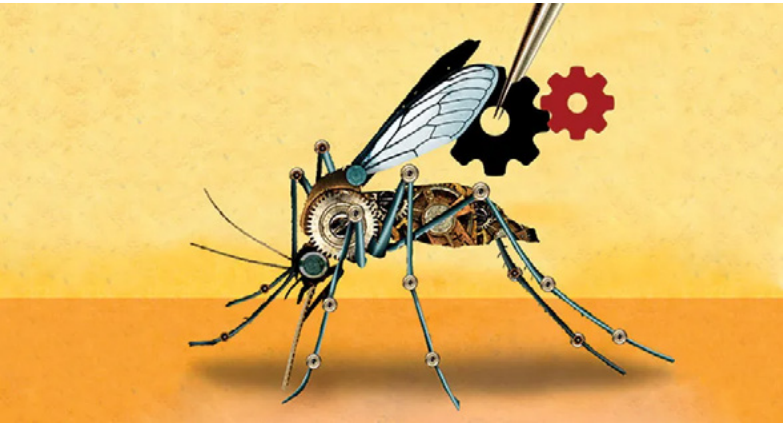
The “ReconciliAction” project aims to address the failures of past Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) in Timor-Leste by proposing a more inclusive, multilayered approach that is deeply rooted in local and traditional understandings of justice. Unlike previous top-down processes that focused on elites and neglected the voices of ordinary citizens, this project emphasizes the need for a people-centered TRC process. It advocates for extensive community consultations to shape the commission, ensuring that it reflects the needs and ideas of the people. The project also stresses the importance of linking TRC efforts with tangible reparations, holding both the government and communities accountable for implementing justice. Drawing lessons from TRCs in other countries like South Africa, the “ReconciliAction” project uses a bottom-up, citizen-led approach, aiming to create a process that is iterative, adaptable, and representative of the people's will.

### MUN

The transnational democratic innovation project seeks to address the shortcomings of the 2005 Truth and Friendship Commission in East Timor, which was criticized for its lack of inclusivity and participation. This initiative aims to establish a new truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) by democratizing the truth-finding process itself, focusing on grassroots involvement rather than a top-down approach. By partnering with local organizations that are culturally sensitive and aware of their communities' needs, the project emphasizes citizen deliberations and youth engagement to create meaningful reconciliation. Through capacity building, hybrid recruitment methods, and ensuring accessibility, the initiative aims to empower marginalized voices, document the truth, and foster mutual aid and solidarity among participants, ultimately fostering long-term peace and understanding.



# CASE: Gene Drives for Genetically Modified Mosquitoes (GMMs) in Africa



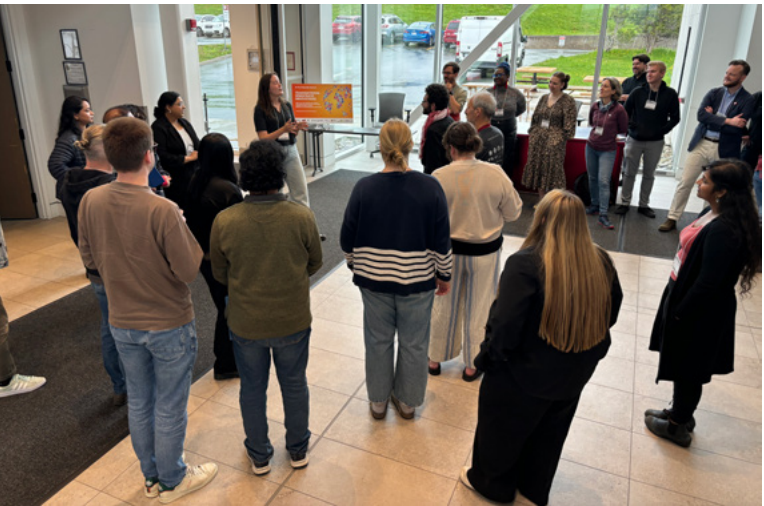
## UWC

How might we democratize the process of deciding a malaria eradication strategy in africa? The “Mosquito Rangers” project is an innovative initiative that seeks to democratize the decision-making process for malaria eradication strategies in Africa by addressing the complex interplay between human and ecological considerations. The project acknowledges the significant power asymmetries where big tech companies and powerful donors often dominate the narrative, pushing for GMO mosquito solutions without sufficient input from local citizens who are most affected. To counter this, the project implements a four-stage process that begins with local deliberative forums to set agendas and map knowledge, followed by regional discussions to build shared understanding, and culminates in a large people’s assembly to synthesize these inputs into a comprehensive declaration. Throughout, the project emphasizes the need for empathy, cultural engagement, and the inclusion of diverse knowledges—including indigenous perspectives—to ensure that solutions are not only

scientifically sound but also that they resonate emotionally and ethically with the communities involved. By integrating art and storytelling, “Mosquito Rangers” aims to simplify complex scientific concepts, fostering a more inclusive and informed dialogue about the future of genome editing and its implications for malaria eradication.

## MUN

This project addresses the question of whether to release genetically modified mosquitoes to combat malaria in Africa. Designed to be an inclusive process, this initiative focuses on engaging all affected parties, particularly those in regions most impacted by these diseases. Hosted by the African Union in a theater setting, the deliberation will utilize a citizens’ jury composed of evenly selected participants: pro and anti-genome editing advocates, uninformed citizens, unbiased experts, and others. The deliberative process will be observed by public officials but driven by the citizens, who will use theatrical methods to express their concerns and fears. Outreach will be conducted through WhatsApp, radio, and in-person methods to ensure broad participation. The outcomes of the deliberation will be documented and shared via a documentary, social media, and an official report to the African Union and its member states, providing a transnational platform to share and test the citizens’ jury’s insights.





# Feedback & Reflections

## Reflections from Memorial University, Canada

By Sean Gray, MUN Faculty Lead

The Participedia School on Transnational Democratic Innovations at Memorial University was a truly special event. Set against the iconic backdrop of Signal Hill in St. John's, Canada, it brought together a diverse group of students, faculty, and global activists to explore new models of democratic governance for the 21st century. Signal Hill's significance dates back to 1901 when Guglielmo Marconi successfully transmitted the first radio wave across the Atlantic from Cabot Tower, marking the world's first wireless transnational communication. Cape Town's own Signal Hill, though different, shares a similar history of global connection, where flags were once used to signal the arrival of ships in its ports. These two hills, both symbols of long-distance communication, perfectly reflect our shared global mission: bridging linguistic and cultural divides through dialogue, collaboration, and mutual learning.

Over the course of the week, 40 students, both local and international, came together with scholars, practitioners, and activists from countries as varied as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Argentina, and China. Their shared goal was to rethink the ways citizens can engage in transnational and global forums to tackle the most pressing challenges of

our time—whether it be climate change, colonial legacies, economic inequality, or the governance of emerging technologies. With the guidance of a dedicated and enthusiastic international teaching team, students explored creative solutions, learned from each other's experiences, and were inspired to take these new ideas into their own communities.

The diversity of voices present was one of the most remarkable aspects of the school. Democracy activists and students from across the globe exchanged stories and strategies, learning from the unique challenges each faced in their respective countries. These conversations were rich with cultural insight, personal reflection, and a deep commitment to shaping a more just and inclusive global governance system. Students left with a renewed sense of purpose, equipped with innovative tools to address global governance challenges and a profound understanding of how democratic participation must evolve in a rapidly changing world. I feel incredibly privileged to have contributed in some small way to the success of the Participedia School on Transnational Democratic Innovations, and I will carry the energy and optimism from this week with me for years to come.





## Reflections from the University of the Western Cape, South Africa

*By Fiona Anciano, UWC Faculty Lead and Babongile Bidla, UWC Research Assistant*

As a University with a rich history of supporting democratic rights and innovations we were very proud at UWC to co-host the 2024 Participedia School on Transnational Democratic Innovations. UWC is located in the beautiful, but complex, city of Cape Town, and this setting provided a fitting background to conversations on representation, inequality, rights, power and democracy. The school benefitted from a carefully designed curriculum, conceptualised by talented academics and practitioners from Participedia's global network. This brought innovation to a week-long programme that encouraged participants to engage in solution oriented problem solving through grappling with challenges that face countries across the globe. Of course, the participants were the heart of the school. At UWC participants came from numerous countries in Africa and beyond, and each brought their own rich experience to the room. The benefit of linking scholars from the global North with those from the global South was a key strength of the design of the transnational school. We only wish there could have been more time for cross site collaboration, and that technology was foolproof! Overall this was a wonderful, enriching space to spend a week – the debates were timely and important, the design work led to novel thinking and, most importantly, long term networks and friendships were formed.





# What the Participants are Saying...

*“You were amazing. The entire experience was so well organized and conducted. I am in awe of how the team continually created a space for learning and engagement and invited all of us to take ownership of that space. Thank you.”*

—University of the Western Cape Participant

*“The learning of this experience was very relevant to my current work and future ambitions.”*

—Memorial University Participant

*“The moderation of the program was great. The facilitators around had hands-on experiences and were very instrumental in guiding us through our cases.”*

—Memorial University Participant

*“I particularly appreciated the learnings from practitioners in the global south as almost all my day to day work is in the global north.”*

—Memorial University Participant

*“It was a great learning experience and meeting with related activists and colleagues. The selection of participants and facilitators was perfect.”*

—Memorial University Participant

*“It was amazing, phenomenal, and transformative. The diversity of people, experiences, and engagement techniques was fresh, interesting, and inspiring.”*

—University of the Western Cape Participant



*“As a law student with an interest in pursuing constitutional law, this program has broadened my understanding of democratic processes and the complexities involved. The knowledge and skills acquired are highly relevant to real-world scenarios. The hands-on exercises on policymaking and campaign design offered a practical understanding of the intricacies involved in these processes.”*

—Igran Abdi Ali Ibrahim, Law Student at the University of the Western Cape (UWC Participant)

Click to read more: [Transnational Democratic Innovations: A Reflection of the 2024 Participedia School in Cape Town, South Africa](#)



*“As a Graduate researcher, the opportunity to network with experts in the field of democratic innovation was a welcome addition to my professional development as the Coady Institute offered a certificate for participation in the Participedia School.”*

—Nnamdi Nnake, PhD Candidate, History, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada (UWC Participant)

Click to read more: [Reflections on the 2024 Participedia Partner's Conference and Summer School](#)



# Appendices



**Fiona Anciano**  
University of the Western Cape



**Babongile Bidla**  
University of the Western Cape



**Azucena Moran**  
Research Institute for Sustainability



**Paul Emiljanowicz**  
Participedia, McMaster University



**Caroline Vernailen**  
Democracy International



**Lindokuhle Mandyoli**  
University of the Western Cape



**Louise Rasador**  
Innovation for Policy Foundation (i4Policy)



**Frank Lekaba**  
Democracy Without Borders



**Melisa Ross**  
University of Bremen



**Maia Lepingwell-Tardieu**  
Participedia, McMaster University



**Paolo Spada**  
University of Southampton



**Belisa Rodrigues**  
Innovation for Policy Foundation (i4Policy)



**Jesi Carson**  
Participedia



**Julien Landry**  
St. Francis Xavier University, Coady Institute

## University of the Western Cape Team Bios

### Fiona Anciano, University of the Western Cape

Fiona Anciano is an Associate Professor in Political Studies and founder of the Politics and Urban Governance Research Group (PUG) at the University of the Western Cape, and a Visiting Researcher at University West, Sweden. She is a qualitative social science researcher with an interest in urban governance, democratisation, citizenship and civil society. Working with student teams, she conducts research in informal settlements on urban democracy. She has managed 11 grant projects in Cape Town over the last eight years and has produced numerous local and international publications, including a co-authored book *Democracy Discon-*

*nected: Participation and Governance in a City of the South*, in 2019 and edited the 2021 book *Political Values and Narratives of Resistance: Social Justice and the Fractured Promises of Post-colonial States* both published in the United Kingdom by Routledge.

### Lindokuhle Mandyoli, University of the Western Cape

Lindokuhle Mandyoli is an Associate Lecturer, Department of Political Studies, University of the Western Cape, with research interests in the capital/race debate in South Africa, democratic constitutional hegemony and the intellectual history(ies) of the South African student movement. He is a recipient of the Centre for Humanities Research PhD Fellowship in the National Research Foundation's Flagship for Critical African Humanities and the co-lead of the UNESCO Chair Project titled: Universities as Sites of Protection and Activism. He is also a recipient of the Mellon Writing Fellowship at the University of Minnesota's Interdisciplinary

Centre for the Study of Global Change (ICGC). In his PhD research, he is investigating the ways in which constitutional democratic hegemony inevitably reproduces different in form, but similar in essence, socio-political, socioeconomic and cultural problems that were produced by colonialism and apartheid. Drawing a comparison between the 1976 Uprisings and the 2015 #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa, he explores how hegemony manifests itself differently in both these moments, while under a consistent logic in two qualitatively different regimes. He is heavily involved in various working groups and projects featured here.

### Babongile Bidla, University of the Western Cape

Babongile Bidla is a Masters Candidate in Political Studies at University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Work Integrated Political Studies (WIPS) at University West. Babongile works as a Research Assistant at the Politics and Urban Governance Research Group (PUG). With a keen research interest in the intersection of politics, technology, and urban development, Babongile aims to understand contemporary societal challenges and explore innovative solutions.

### Paul Emiljanowicz, McMaster University, Participedia

Paul Emiljanowicz is the Managing Director of Participedia and a sessional lecturer in the Arts & Science program at McMaster University. He is also an active member of the Tshepo Institute for the Study of Contemporary Africa and the Global Development Section of the International Studies Association, as well as a board member for Demo. Reset: Deliberation in the Global South, Africapols, and Democracy Without Borders. His research is focused on contributing to reconceptualizing development, the state, and democracy by engaging with the ideas, experiences, and peoples who have traditionally been excluded. His programming centers around strengthening, defending, and re-imagining inclusive democracy and citizen participation through democratic innovations.

### Julien Landry, COADY Institute, St. Francis Xavier University

Julien joined the Coady International Institute in April 2015 as Senior Program Staff, bringing over 15 years of experience at the intersection of citizen participation, community development and adult education, both in Canada and internationally. As part of his role in advancing Coady's thematic work in the area of Participation, Accountability and Governance, Julien designs and facilitates educational programs focused on citizen engagement, advocacy, social accountability, good governance and accountable democracies. He also leads Coady's knowledge-building efforts in participatory governance, as part of the Participedia project. His work is grounded in the belief that any development process must enable citizens and communities to participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect them. To this end, he has designed and facilitated education and training programs with civil society, public, and private sector partners, and has worked in several fields: participatory community and urban planning, collaborative governance for social inclusion, human rights education and social mobilization, youth-centered community development, organizational development, and strategic planning. Prior to joining the Coady Institute, Julien worked with UBC's Centre for Human Settlements, and with Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education. Julien holds a Master's Degree in Community and Regional Planning (Community Development and Social Planning) from the University of British Columbia and a B.A. in International Development and Political Science from McGill University.



## Jesi Carson, Participedia

Jesi Carson is a design researcher and interaction designer specializing in community engagement and creative facilitation. Jesi currently leads the Design Technology Team of Participedia, and additionally serves as Co-director and Board President for the Vancouver Design Nerds Society, producing participatory workshops and public art installations rooted in design thinking. Expanding her practice to explore democratic and Design Justice pedagogies, Jesi recently co-founded the Global Classroom for Democracy Innovation, where she and her team train and mentor higher education students from the Global South and North to facilitate their peers in community-engaged, project based learning and co-design.

## Maia Lepingwell-Tardieu, McMaster University, Participedia

Maia Lepingwell-Tardieu is a PhD student at McMaster University, in the Department of French. Studying Francophone literature, her research focuses on silence, memory, and trauma across the Caribbean diaspora. She is particularly interested in questions of epistemics, the abject, and reimaginings of space and time within the decolonial cracks.

## Louise Rasador, Innovation for Policy Foundation

Louise is a resourceful and innovative professional with a strong focus on empowering individuals and communities to actively participate in decision-making processes. She brings extensive experience in participatory methods, such as facilitation, consensus building, mediation, and negotiation, complemented by her expertise in project and people management. She holds a Master of Laws (LL.M.) from the the London School of Economics and Political Sciences (2022), a Master in Business and Management (M.B.M) from the São Paulo School of Business Administration of Fundação Getúlio Vargas (2015), and a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) degree from the São Paulo Law School of Fundação Getúlio Vargas (2012).

## Belisa Rodrigues, Innovation for Policy Foundation

Ms Rodrigues, a South African native, holds a Fine Arts, Marketing and MBA degree from University of Cape Town. Over the last 20 years has worked as Operations Manager, General Manager and Business Development Manager at various pan-African arts NGOs in South Africa. She currently runs her own social enterprise consultancy called Belle and Co, together with an Associate network of experts in training, policy and research services. She has held a number of leadership positions at the National Arts Council, African Union ECOSOCC, AVA, Music in Africa Foundation. She is a Mandela Washington Fellow [2016]. Her passion is supporting the talent of cultural entrepreneurs across the African continent.

## Azucena Moran, Research Institute for Sustainability

Azucena Morán is a Research Associate at the Research Institute for Sustainability - Helmholtz Centre Potsdam. Her transdisciplinary work explores deliberative and participatory responses to planetary challenges. She is part of Participedia's Editorial board and the Steering Committee on Democratic Innovations of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR). She has lectured at the University of Potsdam and conducted research at the Berlin Social Science Center and Public Agenda.

## Melisa Ross, University of Bremen

Melisa Ross is a postdoctoral researcher at SO-CIUM Research Center on Inequality and Social Policy at the University of Bremen in Germany. She is also a project co-lead at the Global Citizens' Assembly Network, and has been a fellow at Public Agenda (2021-2022, New York), at WZB Berlin Social Science Center (2017-2021), and a guest researcher in Brazil, Uruguay, and Poland. She co-authored the evaluation report of the Global Assembly, and her research spans contemporary issues in Latin American politics, neoliberalism and postneoliberalism, citizen participation, deliberation, and democratic innovations.

## Paolo Spada, University of Southampton

Paolo Spada received his Ph.D. in Economics from Bologna University in 2006, and his PhD in Political Science from Yale University in May 2012. Between 2011 and 2013 he was a Fellow at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School. Between 2013 and 2015 he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions at the University of British Columbia. In 2015-2016 he worked at the University of Southampton managing and evaluating two parallel Citizens Assemblies. In 2017-2018 he worked on the Empatia project at CES at the University of Coimbra (Portugal) and on the Scholio project at CSD at the University of Westminster (UK). In 2018-2019 he worked at GSSI teaching Public Policy before joining the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Southampton. Dr. Spada is currently a Lecturer at Southampton.

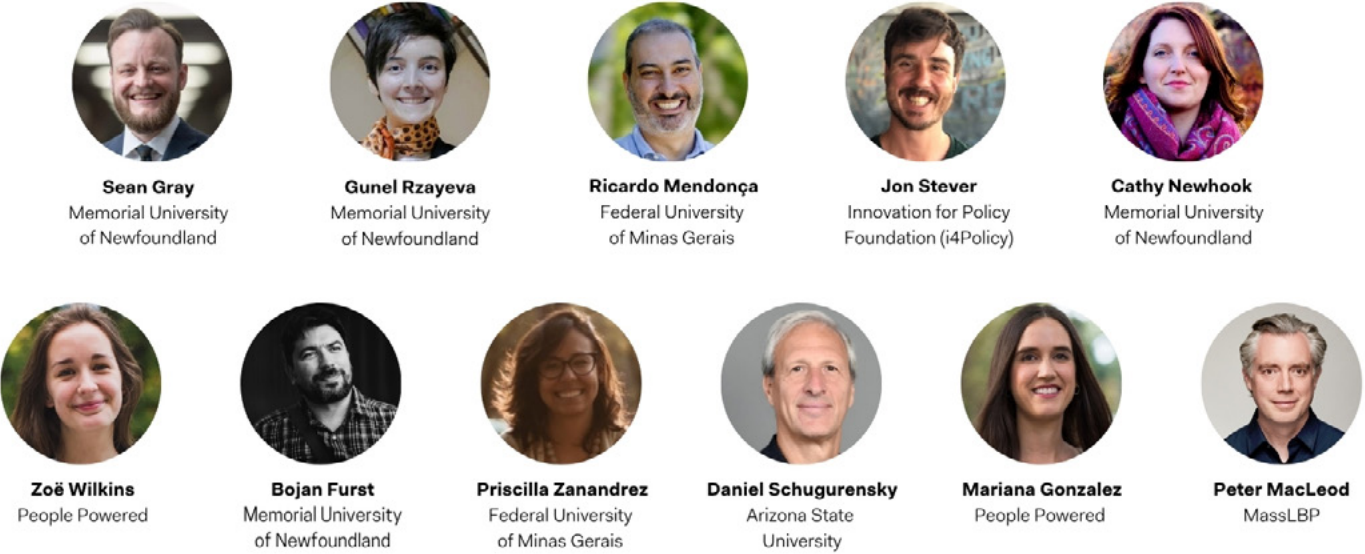
## Caroline Vernailen, Democracy International

Caroline Vernailen is responsible for Democracy International's Public Relations and Global Community building. Among other things, she oversees the development of the International Democracy Community of activists which seeks to link organisations and people working on democracy issues worldwide. Their goal is to collect best practices from civil society and academia, and allow people working on direct democracy issues to publicize their projects and connect with each other.

## Frank Lekaba, Democracy Without Borders

Frank Lekaba is a Senior Lecturer in the Wits School of Governance. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Peace Studies and International Relations and Master of Social Sciences in International Relations from the North-West University, and DLitt et Phil in Politics from the University of Johannesburg. He previously worked as a Lecturer at the North-West University, a researcher in the Human Sciences Research Council's Africa Institute of South Africa.





# Memorial University Team Bios

## Sean Gray, Memorial University

Sean Gray is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada. His research and teaching interests lie at the intersection of democratic theory and public policy, with a special focus on deliberation, civic engagement, and political ethics. Dr. Gray received his BA from Queen's University and his PhD from the University of British Columbia. Prior to joining Memorial in 2022, Dr. Gray was a faculty member in the Committee on Degrees in Social Studies, Harvard University, with additional teaching appointments at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He completed his postdoctoral work at Harvard's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation and has held fellowships at the Centre for Advanced Studies Justitia Amplificata, Goethe University Frankfurt, and the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, where he studied as a Fulbright Scholar. Outside of his academic work, Dr. Gray has served as a consultant for several orga-

nizations looking to implement participatory governance models to improve public service delivery, including the City of Vancouver and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

## Cathy Newhook, Memorial University

Cathy Newhook is the Manager of Public Policy and Communications at Memorial University's Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development. With over 20 years' experience in policy, civic engagement, communications and project management, Cathy's current role involves connecting university and community expertise by creating programming and platforms for dialogue and collaboration. Cathy has worked in all areas of the public sector, including federal, provincial, and municipal government, as well as community-based NGO and post-secondary education sectors. Cathy holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and English from the University of Ottawa, and is currently a Master of Arts candidate with the Department of Political Science at Memorial University, where she is completing a thesis in innovative democratic governance models.

## Günel Rzayeva, Memorial University

Günel Rzayeva is an MA candidate (thesis) in Political Science at Memorial University of Newfoundland. She holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree from Azerbaijan, and a master's degree from Spain. Her previous research projects focused on election communication and voting behaviour in the US, Israeli-Russian relations, and European integration. This past summer, she briefly joined the University of Oslo to study human rights. Günel has gained most of her professional experience in academic settings, including research, editorial work and publishing. Her current research interests include political participation, democratic innovations, deliberative law and policy-making, and crowd-sourced constitutionalism.

Social Policy. In this role, she worked at a refuge for migrants at Mexico's southern border, focusing on legal advocacy work and community building with the long-term residents at the shelter. She has also worked as a community researcher with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute on the evaluation of a climate change mitigation program in rural Panama, as well as on other research and policy evaluation programmes across academia and the charity sector. Zoë completed her bachelor's degree in political science and philosophy at McGill University. She also holds a master's degree in international social and public policy from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her research focused on the participation of refugees in international decision-making and governance.

## Jon Stever, i4Policy

Jon Stever co-initiated and coordinated the world's first global citizen's assembly, the 2021 Global Assembly on the climate and ecological crisis. He is a co-founder and managing director of Innovation for Policy Foundation (i4Policy) and co-founder of Impact Hub Kigali, among other initiatives. He has advised and trained senior government officials and communities across more than 50 countries.

## Archon Fung, Harvard University

Archon Fung is the Winthrop Laflin McCormack Professor of Citizenship and Self-Government at the Harvard Kennedy School. His research explores policies, practices, and institutional designs that deepen the quality of democratic governance. He focuses upon public participation, deliberation, and transparency. He co-directs the Transparency Policy Project and leads democratic governance programs of the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Kennedy School. His books include *Full Disclosure: The Perils and Promise of Transparency* (Cambridge University Press, with Mary Graham and David Weil) and *Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy* (Princeton University Press). He has authored five books, four edited collections, and over fifty articles appearing in professional journals. He received two S.B.s — in philosophy and physics — and his Ph.D. in political science from MIT.

## Zoë Wilkins, People Powered

Zoë Wilkins supports the participatory climate democracy work at People Powered. This includes the Climate Democracy Accelerator, which supports civil society and government to design together plans for climate action. Prior to joining People Powered, Zoë was a senior researcher at the Centre for Deliberative Research at NatCen, and before that, a senior researcher and engagement officer at the Institute for Community Studies and the Young Foundation, focusing on piloting new approaches at the intersection of participatory research and social action. Most recently, she led the design and delivery of a citizens' assembly on the future of the natural environment in Wales and a deliberation with stakeholders and central government in the UK on environmental policy. Before her time at the Young Foundation, Zoë was a McBurney Fellow at McGill University's Institute for Health and



**Daniel Schugurensky, Arizona State University**

Daniel Schugurensky is a professor in the School of Public Affairs and in the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University, where he is the founding director of the Participatory Governance Initiative, the director of the master's in social and cultural pedagogy, and the coordinator of the graduate and the undergraduate certificates in social transformation. He has published more than 100 articles, book chapters and technical reports on a variety of topics, including adult education, community development, participatory democracy, citizenship education, social economy, civic engagement, higher education, migration, and volunteer work. One of his current projects focuses on school participatory budgeting.

**Ricardo Mendonça, UFMG**

Ricardo F. Mendonça is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Brazil (Brazil). He is a Research Fellow at the Brazilian National Institute for Digital Democracy (INCT.DD) and the coordinator of Margem (Research Group on Democracy and Justice). He also holds fellowships from the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and from Fapemig. Mendonça works in the areas of democratic theory, contentious politics, and political communication. His recent publications include *Research Methods in Deliberative Democracy* (with Ercan, Asenbaum and Curato; Oxford University Press, 2022), *Deliberative Systems in Theory and Practice* (with Elstub and Ercan; Routledge, 2019), and *Junho de 2013: Sociedade, Política e Democracia no Brasil* (with Tavares and Ballestrin, EdUERJ, 2022).

**Priscilla Zanandrez, UFMG**

Priscilla Zanandrez holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Management, and a Master's degree and PhD in Political Science from the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Currently, she is a researcher and project manager for the Participatory Democracy Project at the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Researcher at the Institute for Democracy and Democratization of Communication (National Institute

of Science and Technology/IDDC) and the Participedia Project (UBC). She has experience in the areas of Political Science and Public Management, mainly on topics related to Participation, Policy Councils, Socio-State Interfaces, Civil Society Organizations and Participation Systems. Currently, she is dedicated to the study of the relationships between participation and democratic values in Latin America.

**Peter MacLeod, MassLBP**

Peter MacLeod (he/him) is the founder and principal of MASS LBP, and one of Canada's leading experts in public engagement and deliberative democracy. Since its founding in 2007, MASS has completed more than 200 major policy projects for governments and public agencies across Canada while popularizing the use of Civic Lotteries and Citizens' Assemblies, and earning international recognition for its work. Peter frequently writes and speaks about the citizen's experience of the state, the importance of public imagination, and the future of responsible government. A graduate of the University of Toronto and Queen's University, he is an Action Canada fellow (2003) and a recipient of the Public Policy Forum's Emerging Leaders Award (2008). In 2013, he launched Wagemark, the first international wage certification standard aimed at reducing workplace pay disparities while promoting corporate competitiveness. He was also appointed to serve on the Ontario government's open government task force. Between 2020 and 2022, he chaired the Canadian Citizens' Assemblies on Democratic Expression. He is the past chair of Toronto's Wellesley Institute for Urban Health and currently serves on the boards of the Environics Institute and the YMCA of Greater Toronto. He is also an adjunct lecturer at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto.

**Mariana Gonzalez, People Powered**

Mariana uses design, systems thinking and project management to help grow the collective power of organizations and advocates supporting participatory democracy.

She holds a bachelor's degree in innovation and design engineering (with a minor in operations management) from Universidad Panamericana in Guadalajara, Mexico, and a master's of fine arts in transdisciplinary design from Parsons School of Design at The New School in New York City. Previously, she worked at the Healthy Materials Lab, demonstrating how healthier building materials can be incorporated into affordable housing to provide better living conditions to low-income communities. Additionally, she has worked on design projects with Guatemalan artisans, and members of low-income neighborhoods in Mexico. At People Powered, Mariana manages the membership program and implements engagement strategies that build the collective power of the member community. She also designs and implements inclusive collective governance and decision-making systems. Aside from exploring the intersection between design, community building and democracy, Mariana seeks to achieve and promote more sustainable living, enjoys discovering unique places around New York City by walking and biking, and loves to be immersed in nature.

**Sebastián Calderón, i4Policy**

Sebastian Calderon is a lawyer and a historian with an academic background in deliberative democracy, peacebuilding, and political advocacy. Calderon is a program coordinator for i4Policy, an international government consultant in citizen participation and peace process activist with experience in building mobilization, and developing civic technologies for participation.



# Extended Reflection by the University of the Western Cape Team

—Fiona Anciano and Babongile Bidla

The 2024 Participedia Winter/Summer School on Transnational Democratic Innovations was held at the University of Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town, South Africa from June 10, 2024 – June 15, 2024. This event brought together a global network of researchers, educators, practitioners, policy-makers, and activists to engage on democracy and design innovative solutions for some of the world's most pressing problems. Additionally, the symbolic importance of hosting this school in South Africa and at UWC was that it happened on the 30th anniversary of South Africa's democracy and at UWC, known as the intellectual home of the left, which played a fundamental role in the attainment of democracy.

This report will reflect on some of the key aspects from the school – these are: learning; experience and key take-aways from the vantage point of the UWC team as one of the sites for the school.

## Learning

Given the amount of preparatory work that went into the curriculum design of the school, the learning experience of the participants was enhanced significantly by the extensive nature of the school's thematic areas and focus on design thinking as a key learning outcome. The school encouraged the participants to engage a range of challenges from a vantage point of both global and local contexts ('glocal' became somewhat of a buzz word during the school). This approach made the learning both engaging but also relevant.

However, on context, there was much about the school that could be improved in relation to thinking about democratic innovations, both in practice and theoretically, through the lens of the global

south experience. By this we mean that the latent, often unspoken perpetuation of the notion of global south as perpetual students and the global north as innovators and thus teachers, reared its head in the school. This can be avoided by employing a more deliberate awareness of the uneven relations of power that exist in the knowledge and innovations production space.

Finally, the overall experience was educational and it was particularly enhanced by the quality of the participants in the school. This speaks to recruitment and selection and how choosing a diverse group of participants enriched the nature of the debates and thus democratic innovations that emanated from the school.

## Experience

The participants had the pleasure of experiencing the summer school in the historic University of the Western Cape, based in the beautiful city of Cape Town. While engagement and learning were the fundamental objectives of the school, the environment within which it takes place determines the experience. Beyond the glowing reflections from participants on their experience of the school as this site, it was evident for us as the organizing team that the social events organized on the campus enhanced the general experience of the participants. It created an environment wherein the participants to engage freely and socially, which had a positive impact on the ability for participants to be open during sessions in the school and bolstered authentic and compassionate engagement.

Some of the participants reflected on how humbling this experience was for them, in that it opened up so many other contexts for them that would be unimaginable in their ordinary engagements. Moreover, we found that networks and connections were developed during the school that have the potential to be nurtured for greater collaboration in the future.

## Key Take-Aways

There are four key take-aways that we have reflected on at the UWC site. They are:

### 1. The Importance of Context in the Curriculum Design

The school brought together participants with a variety of experiences and from a multitude of contexts. This meant that the design of the curriculum needed to take this into account in order to diversify the learning and the engagement opportunities. This is a very difficult undertaking, however it was one of the key elements of the school that could be improved. Of course, this does not mean that equilibrium will always be possible, but it is important to be intentional about the experiences on both ends.

### 2. Design Thinking as Catalyst for Innovation

The participants found the design thinking process particularly animating and useful. This kind of practical thinking, facilitated quite innovatively by Jesi Carson and other faculty during the school, resonated immensely with democratic innovators who are practitioners working with people every day. For example, as the school progressed many of the participants drew examples from their own context and could start thinking creatively about solutions through the design thinking model. The school must be commended for achieving its goal of giving the participants a very practical tool to take back to their contexts and one which can contribute to the continued processes of democratic innovation.

### 3. Neutralizing the Power Relations in Designing Solutions

The radical and admirable proposition of this school was to have it run at different sites (political contexts) simultaneously and see how this would enhance its impact by meeting its objectives of thinking innovatively about democracy. This ambition puts on the table the inevitable tensions that exist due to the geopolitical situation in the world right now between the global south and north. Consequently, these tensions played themselves out in the school (which we must add are usually

good for authentic engagement, and were ably ameliorated by the community agreements arrived at by all participants at the beginning of the school). It is important, per our observation, to confront these head on and at the onset of the school in order for everyone to know they are acknowledged, but not given too much space to cloud our ability to learn from each other.

Thus, looking at the school as a safe space of equals existing in an unequal world will encourage honest and authentic engagement that will not dampen the general critical energy of the school.

### 4. Dynamic Facilitation

Lastly, this school was a breath of fresh air in terms of facilitation techniques. There was a balance between talks, participant participation and group work. The participants took responsibility for a project early on and were able to practically link their learnings to the problem/project assigned to them. The healthy number of 'bums-on-seats' is evidence of this fascinating way of facilitating. This was one of the best offerings of the school, which we are sure will be translated into normal practice by many participants within their own contexts.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it was an absolute honour to host this conference and we are grateful to the Participedia team for the trust and support throughout the process. While there are some things we can improve in the future, the overwhelming view is that this was a successful school and its impact will be felt in various contexts for some time to come.



# Thank you!

To all of our participants, organizing team, invited faculty and guests: We appreciate you! Participedia School was a huge success thanks to your efforts and participation.

We also thank our primary funding sponsor, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, host institutions, University of the Western Cape and Memorial University, and project host institution, McMaster University.

Stay tuned for Participedia School 2025!

## /// Participedia

**[participedia.net](https://participedia.net)**

[@participedia](https://participedia.net)

[info@participedia.net](mailto:info@participedia.net)

