



NEWSLETTER 1

Participative Democracy Working Group aims at creating a worldwide network of XR groups in order for them to efficiently implement Citizens/Peoples Assemblies, spreading deliberative participatory democracy practices everywhere.

Participative Democracy creates an exchange platform of moral and practical support, multi-lingual interactive training, resources, research and collaborative, remote working amongst national and regional XR groups across the spectrum of the

Majority and Minority Worlds. PartDem shall act as a forum for reciprocal giving and receiving of advice, experiences and ideas on participative democracy of all hues-including the benchmark standards of CAs.

Our international newsletter tells stories of deliberative participatory democracy as it happens around the world and according to the views of local actors of change.

SUBMITTED BY MAHIEU XR FRANCE

Presentation of the French CA chapter and of the French democratic context :

Extinction Rebellion France was created at the very same time as the Yellow Vests social protests, in which there are democratic claims such as a "Citizen Initiated Referendum" or "Popular Assemblies". The French Citizen Assembly (CA) group was launched by the French working group of XR Scientists, at the very same time as the government responses to this Yellow Vests democratic claims, in order to observe and analyze these responses and do research on our last XR claim. First, there was a national "Great Debate", but it failed because it mostly seems like Macron's one-man show. Then a group of Yellow Vests, participative democracy researchers and eco-activists (with some supporters but not as official members of XR), called "Citizen Vests", negotiated with the French government another response to the Yellow Vests protest, and it led to the "Climate Citizen Convention" (CCC). After quite a long internal debate in XR on this CCC, we produced a stabilized comparison between XR CA and the CCC, that concluded that we could support the 150 drawn-at-random citizens plus the CA-like deliberative process, without endorsing the CCC as a perfect whole, and even less the government that allowed it happen, on its unreliable terms. The CCC is working one week-end per month during 7 months, from october 2019 to april 2020 : our CA group gained the consent of XR France local groups about our CA/CCC comparison in december 2019, and we got into action in january 2020 ! Our actions are (not yet...) civil disobedience since it is set up with other organizations, but we do activism (XR choir), regenerative culture (French food) and political experiment (moving debate) as well. Recently we made a supporting video for the 150 citizens of the CCC, and we are to organize an event with the Quebec Canadian researcher Francis Dupuis-Déri about anarchist critique of elective democracy (we have local elections in march 2020), and the role of social ecological movements such as XR (but also the current protest against the pensions reform) in these matters.



SUBMITTED BY NESSY XR UK

Climate Assembly UK, which enters its third weekend this Friday, is breaking new ground in British democracy. Participants from all walks of life are discussing how the UK will reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Citizens' assemblies can be transformative. They have been used to great effect in countries such as Ireland, where they paved the way for historic referendums on same-sex marriage and abortion. But while we support the idea of Climate Assembly UK, at its heart is an inconvenient truth: 2050 is too late.

The government's target takes a casual approach to the emergency. But the enemy is at the gates. From flooding in Britain to record-breaking fires in the Amazon and Australia, the dramatic shift in the planet's climate is already taking its toll.

At global level, the 2050 target will mean 1.5C of warming – with a distinct possibility of passing that threshold. Every increment in temperatures brings untold destruction. A world beyond 1.5C is a world of annual heatwaves in Europe, and one in which small island nations will have disappeared. It's quite a gamble to take on our futures.

Even if the world's governments accept that bet, countries like the UK have a duty to act more quickly. Britain ranks fifth highest globally in terms of its historical emissions. We also have the capacity to turn our economy around more rapidly. What's more, the current target only accounts for emissions generated on our own soil, sweeping under the carpet all emissions from trade.

Climate Assembly UK is deliberating on a red herring. Participants should be deciding not just how, but how quickly, we need to act. Given half a chance, we know the assembly could help us win this fight. Fights, however, can't be won when you have one hand tied behind your back. We need a new citizens' assembly that starts from the facts.

SUBMITTED BY ANNIF XR GERMANY

In various countries, XR is already calling for the convening of citizens' assemblies at the respective national levels, whereby the undertone is always that these also make sense on a regional and local level. Basically, it is about adding deliberative participation processes to our democratic system and thereby deepening it. Since the COP-25 in Madrid, the idea of formulating global demands has also been considered, in which "global citizens' assemblies" could be evoked. So why leave out the EU level?

Looking at the architecture of the international climate policy, it can be seen that the EU is a decisive lever, much more decisive than the lever of individual nation states. We are therefore in a situation in which the climate policy guidelines are mainly set within the framework of the EU and individual states can therefore repeatedly refer to this level when we call on them to take more radical measures on the one hand; on the other hand the raising of the EU targets can be blocked in an undemocratic way by precisely these individual states. Accordingly, we should call for a EU citizens' assembly to jointly address

this greater leverage and at the same time point out democratic deficits in the EU.

A citizen's assembly on EU-level could be a response to the democratic deficit within the European Union and could serve as an institutional idea of how to make European (climate) policy more democratic. Thereby the EU could become a pioneer in the establishment of deliberative democracy and set an example worldwide. There have already been deliberative participation procedures at the EU level



with randomly selected citizens and more are planned. Considering these plans of randomly selected “Agoras” in connection with the „Conference on the Future of Europe“, the call for a European Citizens’ Assembly is highly topical.

To this purpose, we created an XR working group focusing on the XR third demand of the convening of a Citizens Assembly at the EU-scale. Of course, the demand can only be of broad significance if people from as many EU-member states as possible are involved in its elaboration. Therefore we would like to invite all of you to join the working group on EU-level citizens assemblies. However, the necessity to address international climate policy does not stop at EU-borders, which is why we are also pleased about support from non-EU countries.

Interested in joining the team? Join us here: <https://organise.earth/xrglobal/channels/ca-foreurope-wg>

SUBMITTED BY XRSANTANU XR INDIA



Image Credit: RR Prasad & Annamalai (National Institute of Rural Development, India)

The system of Panchayat Raj (Local government) has been part of Indian history since early days. It helps bridging the gap between decision making centers & centers of actions. PESA Act 1996 of the Indian constitution is much evolved & matured version of Panchayat Raj – aimed to form autonomous councils at village level for self-governance. PESA sought to pave the way for a vibrant and mature democracy. It’s a departure in some respects from representative to participatory democracy.

The fundamental spirit of the Panchayat Extension Act for tribal areas is that it devolves power and authority to Gram Sabha (village assembly) and Panchayats rather than delegation; hence it paves way for participatory democracy. PESA is based on the cardinal principle of governance that human communities are the best agency to handle most of their survival challenges, manage their affairs and progress towards growing emancipation through the instrumentality of participatory deliberative democracy.

The cardinal principal that underlies PESA has two corollaries in relation to development namely

a) Any community can best decipher advancement and modernity when it is grounded in the strength of its own culture and way of life and; b) an negotiate both advancement and modernity only when it is



founded on the bedrock of its own culture and way of life.

PESA is built around six facets of democratization as the means to rebuild self-governance in the tribal areas.

The first is self-determination by a community of its human and administrative boundaries.

The second facet of self-governance is the competency of the citizen's assembly to take safeguard and care for the interests of its members, preserve its natural and human resources, its material and non-material culture and ensure peace and well-being. PESA is founded on deliberative consensus-based decision making by the people functioning through the village assembly.

The third facet is the legal enablement of the community to negotiate development and modernity founded on the bedrock of appreciation of its own culture and traditions.

The fourth facet is the onus on the state to recognize the competence of the community to takes steps to remedy its own ills and curb its own exploitation.

The fifth facet is the accountability of the executive to the legislative or deciding body the 'gram sabha' (village assembly).

The sixth and critical facet is the guarantee of 'supremacy' of the gram sabha in the exercise of its powers which stipulates the fundamental principle of administration in a democratic frame, In a nutshell; accountability is to the people and not to the superior official. The facet is the recognition of the fundamentals of democracy – that is power inheres in the people and any power exercised by a 'superior' authority is the power granted by the people and no superior body can assume the powers of the people unless they have been conferred specifically by the people.

However, it has been faced by many challenges & many attempts are being carried out to weaken & dismantle it.

Reference: Summary of PESA from Training manual of PESA, 1996 by RR Prasad & V. Annamalai (<https://cloud.organise.earth/s/MjWdgrZ5JKPL3fG>)



extinction
rebellion

