

BRIEFING NOTE: Constitución CDMX

Method

Collaborative Drafting, Open Innovation

Participatory Task

Ideas, Opinions, Drafting

Owner: Mexico City's Government

Location: México City, México

Years in Operation: 2016-2018

Implementation Level: Municipal/State

Platforms: Web, Offline

How does it work?

Mexico's Congress gave the Mayor of Mexico City exclusive authority to craft the city's constitution, which would then be ratified by a constitutional assembly. However, to increase popular legitimacy, the Mayor, instead established a working group tasked with receiving public input. In turn, The Lab for Mexico City set up the Constitución CDMX (CDMX referring to "Ciudad de México") digital platform, which offered the public four ways to participate in the process: 1) a survey, 2) online petitions, 3) collaborative drafting, and 4) an event platform. The opportunities to participate were heavily advertised via social media and local high school volunteers were enlisted to get out the word on street corners.

Constitución CDMX's participation methods included the following:

1. **Survey:** This seven question survey aimed to capture residents' hopes and fears, expectations, and ideas for the future of the city and mapped them by age, gender and neighborhood.
2. **Online Petitions:** The City collaborated with Change.org Mexico to set up a tool where residents could petition the working group. Any petition with 5,000 signatures was analyzed, and a legal opinion was sent to the petition-maker and its signees. When a petition garnered 10,000 signatures, the proposing resident(s) would

present his/her proposal to three representatives of the Working Group. When a petition surpassed 50,000 signatures, the proposing resident(s) presented their proposal in a working session with the Mayor, who committed to explicitly include it in the constitutional draft.

3. **Collaborative Drafting:** Residents could add their comments or suggestions to essays prepared by the Working Group that addressed questions of constitutional theory, proposals of a technical nature, and related academic papers using MIT's pubpub platform.
4. **Event platform:** An event platform was created that enabled resident-organized events related to the constitution to be promoted to increase participation. Event organizers could also upload the findings of their events to the collaborative editing platform and receive feedback from other platform users.

Each week, the Working Group reviewed a summary of the Constitución CDMX platform's activity, discussed the resident inputs and, with technical and legal support, reflected the result of their discussion in an evolving draft of the constitution. The Working Group's final draft was then passed through the Mayor to the Constitutional Assembly which held responsibility for final review and endorsement of the constitution.

What are the outcomes?

Within six months, 341 proposals were submitted as online petitions, and signed by more than 400,000 unique users. Four petitions surpassed the 50,000 signatures threshold, while another 11 got more than 10,000 signatures. In total, 14 petitions were successfully included in the Constitutional draft. Additionally, the survey mechanism generated 30,000 geo-tagged responses from 1,474 neighborhoods, accounting for 90% of all neighborhoods in Mexico City; 100 essays were submitted to the collaborative drafting platform and received 1000 comments; and 55 resident-organized events were registered. As a result, the final document is considered to be the most progressive constitution in Latin America, and it has been recognized by the United Nations as a, "historical document that addresses the central challenges of development and peace," and as, "a guide to fulfill the universal, indivisible and progressive nature of human rights, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the 2030 Agenda."

What does it cost?: The platform development cost was \$15,000. There were also additional costs for outreach and marketing, as well as for digital kiosks and mobile devices which were used to encourage participation from citizens who did not have access to the Constitución CDMX platform online..

What are the benefits?

- Having multiple ways to participate - from filling out a survey to writing a petition - encouraged more people to participate.
- The Mayor's commitment to include language drafted by the public if it garnered enough signatures enhanced legitimacy. At the same time, the Mayor made clear that citizen proposals that did not reach the signature threshold would be considered but not automatically included. By clearly communicating these boundaries, expectations were surpassed.
- Partnership with a well-known brand name (Change.org) increased trust and participation in the process.

What are the risks?

- The main challenge initially encountered was the lack of trust in the process and with the government - trust was essential to robust citizen participation.
- The still present digital divide in Mexico City created implementation challenges and necessitated offering face-to-face participation options.

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