

“Citizens Assemblies in times of crisis”

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Citizens' assemblies and other sortition-based participation methods are trending around the world. As a means to involve citizens directly in political decision-making, the method of citizens' assemblies has been applied in a broad variety of thematic fields, political settings, and geographical contexts.

But can citizens' assemblies also contribute to problem-solving in the event of a crisis?

The method became well-known in particular through two examples in Ireland, where citizens' councils were used in a situation of political stagnation: The parliament could not find a majority solution to reform abortion law or answer the question of same-sex marriage. With the help of citizens assemblies recommendations to solve the question at stake were developed and published. Based on these recommendations, referendums were held with a majority of the Irish population following the suggestions of the citizens' assembly.

The character of crises can be extremely diverse. What crises have in common is that they put a system under shock and demand for a strong political response and a substantial change, which often affects social life. Looking at some recent examples, we would like to discuss: Can citizens assemblies help to find political answers to crises and facilitate social change?

Here, we list a number of citizens' assemblies, which did address societal crises. The papers shall present retrospective analyses on the effects of theses and comparable citizens assemblies:

Covid19

Forum COVID-19 in the German state of Saxony, Citizens' Report of the forum published on 19 March 2022 [COVID-19: More dialogue recommended \(buergerrat.de\)](https://www.buergerrat.de/COVID-19:More-dialogue-recommended)

Citizens Assembly Corona in Baden-Württemberg: <https://beteiligungsportal.baden-wuerttemberg.de/de/mitmachen/lp-16/buergerforum-corona/>

Right to education in the pandemic Belo Horizonte: [Direito ao Ensino dos Estudantes durante o Período Pandêmico](https://www.dereitohumanos.org.br/pt-br/2020/07/direito-ao-ensino-dos-estudantes-durante-o-periodo-pandemico/)

[Bristol: Bristol Citizens' Assembly](https://www.bristolcitizensassembly.org/) (Ways out of the Covid-19 crisis)

Franco-German dialogue on cross-border cooperation during COVID-19, French-German crossborder region (Grand Est/Baden-Württemberg), Missions Publiques

Climate

Climate Assemblies: [Address the climate and ecological crisis | Global Assembly](https://www.globalassembly.org/), The Irish Citizens' Assembly 2016-2018 - La Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat (CCC) in France (2020-21), - Climate Assembly UK (2020), - Scotland's Climate Assembly (2020-21) - Danish Climate Assembly (2020-21) - Finland's Citizens' Jury on Climate Action (2021) - German Climate Assembly (2021) - Jersey's Citizens' Assembly on climate change (2019) [National Climate Assemblies - KNOCA](https://www.knoca.org/)
Climate Assembly Berlin: <https://www.berlin.de/klimabuergerrinnenrat/>

Municipal climate assemblies in Brazil:

<http://deliberabrasil.org/projetos/decidadania-o-clima-na-pauta-legislativa/>

[Auroville: Citizens' Assembly](#) (Water Supply)

[Oslo: Borgerpanel "New Water Ways"](#) (Flooding Management)

[Poznan: Panel Obywatelski](#) (Forest and climate change / coal phase-out)

Fortaleza Citizens' council on waste management (2019)

<http://deliberabrasil.org/projetos/conselho-cidadao-de-fortaleza/>

(https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Conselho-Cidadao-de-Fortaleza_Relato-rio-de-Proposicoes-Democraticas-ultima.pdf)

Peace and War

Facilitate peacemaking in conflict zones, Brett Henning [Could Citizens' Assemblies Save Democracy? | Crisis Group](#)

A UN Democracy Fund project in the **Balkans** used the citizen assembly model to address high rates of **vaccine hesitancy** and mistrust of government – illustrating the need for such mechanisms when public trust is under strain in emergencies. <https://www.un.org/democracyfund/news/undefined-pioneers-citizens'-assembly-pandemic-responses-address-hesitancy-mistrust-denial>

Systemtrust in Democracy

Germany's Citizens' Assembly on Democracy [Germany's Citizens' Assembly on Democracy \(Bürgerrat Demokratie\) – Participedia](#)

New Chilean constitution: An assembly in Chile charged with drawing up the country's new constitution extended the deadline by which the first draft must be ready by three months on Tuesday, as its members struggle to digest a lengthy list of proposals addressing environmental and social issues. <https://cdd.stanford.edu/2020/national-deliberative-poll-in-chile/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/may/14/chile-constitution-gender-equality-women>

Ethics, Health and Lifestyle

[Jersey: Jersey Assisted Dying Citizens' Jury](#) (Assisted suicide)

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