

NEXT library 2023

New ways of democracy: citizen  
engagement in public libraries

Lisbon Libraries Network  
PL2030  
Joint Research Centre

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# Approach

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*Can public libraries' social infrastructure contribute to the making of more inclusive and effective policies?*

Different languages

**Unexpected** conversations

*Is this meaningful to me as an individual and to us as a collective?*

*Do I understand the purpose? Does the process actually allow a conversation to happen?*

Invited / uninvited forms of public participation

**'Insurgente citizenship'**: narratives that challenge conventional thinking

Policy issues reflexion and deliberation – leading to **action**

# Case studies

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## Inspirations from the PL2030 lighthouse libraries' network

- De Krook Library, Ghent, Belgium: The Comon project
- Aarhus, Denmark: Make their voices heard in a climate citizens' assembly
- Multiplo, Cavriago, Italy: co-producing the library's strategic plan for 2030
- Lisbon, Portugal: A green library is growing in the city
- Novi Sad, Serbia: Creating new spaces of dialogues
- Valongo, Portugal: Building *biotecas* in green spaces
- Democracy at the library in Finland: a project by Sitra

# Conclusions

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Challenges arising from citizen involvement in public libraries are:

- Defining the meaning of community.
- Map communities accurately and respectfully, avoiding prejudice.
- Check whether the parties stakeholders are honestly committed to participate in decision-making (including marginalized populations and minorities).
- Silence does not mean agreement.
- Participation is not an authoritarian process, so conflict and disagreement are indicators of transparency and honesty.

# Rough guide download

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**Rough Guide to Citizen Engagement in Public Libraries**  
(5.39 MB - PDF)

