

# From Projects to Permanence

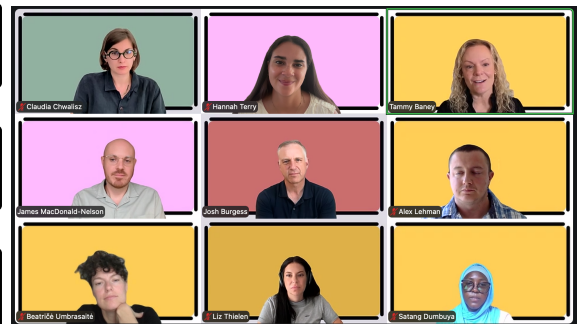
## *Citizens' Assemblies as New Democratic Institutions in Cities and Regions*

# DemocracyNext

9 July 2026 — [Event page](#) — [Video](#)

Read the [paper](#)

The authors make the case for approaching citizens' assemblies not as one-off events dependent on political will at a moment in time, but as **new institutions to which power can be shifted**. Doing so, they argue, requires a completely different mindset. It needs to be approached like a **marathon, not a sprint**.



## Speakers

- [James MacDonald-Nelson](#), Cities Programme Lead, DemocracyNext
- [Hannah Terry](#), Cities Programme Coordinator, DemocracyNext
- [Satang Dumbuya](#), Assembly Facilitator, The Gambia
- [Tammy Baney](#), Executive Director of the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC)
- [Beatrice Umbrasaitė](#), Advisor to the Chief Architect at Vilnius City Municipality
- [Alex Lehman](#), Delegate, Deschutes Civic Assembly
- [Anca Datcu](#), Assembly member, Esch-sur-Alzette citizens' assembly
- [Liz Thielen](#), Lead Facilitator, Snakke & Co
- [Josh Burgess](#), Senior Advisor - USA Program, DemocracyNext

[demnext.org](https://demnext.org)  
[demnext.substack.com](https://demnext.substack.com)  
[LinkedIn](#)

## Key takeaways

- **Alex:** The most powerful part about it wasn't necessarily the recommendations and how they were implemented by the local government, but how energised some of the delegates got afterwards... It's not addition to the community, it's multiplication.
- **Anca:** Most importantly, this experience has strengthened my trust in the authorities. I now genuinely feel that our voices and opinions matter. I believe that it is essential for all of us to continue expressing our perspectives, trusting that, in time, the authorities will respond and act accordingly.
- **Beatrice:** Everything is so much more simple when we just get together and start speaking. We can have agreements and disagreements, but it's not that serious. I think that's very important to experience. I also think that this was one of the [reasons] why Assemblies are crucial in today's world.
- **Liz:** If multilingualism is part of the design from the start, it doesn't really create barriers. It creates such a solidarity, it pushes the limits of the social groups that were established beforehand, to include people more and more.
- **Satang:** Citizens' assemblies are the future of Africa. To be very honest with you, we're still in a new democratic dispensation but we're looking forward to the future and working with civil society and government to ensure that we push the idea of citizens' assemblies in The Gambia.
- **Tammy:** I would say that this is hard work and heart work... we're building community. It's intentional, it lifts that veil and brings people together where they can see their hearts together. Every voice matters, and it's an opportunity for us to celebrate that.