

Effective and Accountable Governance of Global Citizens' Assemblies

Lessons from the world's first Global Assembly
on the Climate and Ecological Crisis

Global Citizens' Assembly Network
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Preface

What does it take to run an effective and accountable global citizens' assembly? How are roles and responsibilities distributed across an international network of process designers, project implementers, and delivery partners? What structures can be put in place, so principles of deliberative democracy are not only operationalised in the process design of the global citizens' assembly but also in organising the assembly itself?

The Global Citizens' Assembly Network (GloCAN) challenged Melisa Ross, Hazel Jovita, and Lucas Veloso to answer these questions through a governance review of the world's first Global Assembly on the Climate and Ecological Crisis. In 2021, 100 people, selected through a multistage civic lottery that mirrored the global population, met online for sixty-eight hours over eleven weeks to deliberate on the charge: how can humanity address the climate and ecological crisis in a fair and effective way? The outcome of this process is the People's Declaration for the Sustainable Future of the Planet Earth, delivered at COP26 in Glasgow.

The organisers and the evaluation team have documented the lessons from the Global Assembly. These reports are available on the Global Assembly's website: <https://globalassembly.org/report>. This Technical Paper is a follow-up to those reports, this time focusing on the internal governance of the Global Assembly. It surfaces the perspectives of various actors involved in the design and implementation of the Global Assembly to understand what worked and what could be done better to make the governance of global citizens' assemblies more effective and accountable.

We hope you find this report useful.

Nardine Alnemr and Nicole Curato
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Key Findings

This technical paper offers recommendations on the internal governance of transnational citizens' assemblies. We draw lessons from the world's first Global Assembly on the Climate and Ecological Crisis as documented in reports and secondary data, as well as from new data we gathered in focus group discussions and individual questionnaires. We surface challenges of inclusion, contextualisation, transparency, and conflict resolution in organising and delivering transnational deliberation, and discuss strategies and recommendations on how to face those challenges.

In this paper, we use the term **internal governance** to refer to the structures and mechanisms through which stakeholders in a transnational citizens' assembly establish their roles and responsibilities, how they set goals, allocate resources, design, and implement the assembly. Internal governance matters to transnational citizens' assemblies because they involve many diverse stakeholders in close collaboration: who decides over the assembly, how it's implemented, and what happens when things don't work can directly affect the process, the deliberation, and relations among stakeholders within and beyond the assembly. We use the term **stakeholders** to refer to all groups involved in commissioning, designing, and delivering the process.

We offer multiple courses of action to strengthen two dimensions of internal governance in global deliberation: effectiveness, and accountability.

Pathways to Effective Governance

Effective internal governance comprises responsible and responsive coordination, and adaptive decision-making. We recommend that actors who commission, design and deliver the process should:

1. Include representatives from all stakeholder groups in the design, stewardship, and implementation of the assembly. This comprises regional

and local delivery partners, who can contextualise the process according to different practices and realities.

2. Allow for flexibility in design and adaptability in implementation. Regional and local stakeholders are best suited to adapt the process to their context, to changing conditions and emerging challenges.
3. Keep open access to information and clear channels for communication with all stakeholders. These are key to collaborating across regions and time zones, simplifying bureaucracy, and avoiding misunderstandings.

Pathways to Accountable Governance

Accountable governance safeguards the transparency of the process and creates mechanisms to assign responsibilities and tackle conflict. It is essential to ensure stakeholders' trust in the assembly and its sustainability over time. To develop accountable governance mechanisms, we recommend that:

1. All stakeholders collectively determine their own roles and responsibilities and agree on rules for decision-making and lines of accountability. These agreements should be documented, and changes should be communicated in a transparent manner.
2. Actors who commission and deliver the assembly should appoint a person or group to oversee the integrity of the process and review conflicts. This person or group must be accessible to all stakeholders and assembly members. They should have the autonomy to investigate and take action over conflicts.
3. Actors who commission and deliver the assembly should co-develop a plan and options about how to continue collaborations with all stakeholders and Assembly Members after the process is concluded.

For comments and invitations for further conversation, please contact Melisa Ross at melisa.ross@uni-bremen.de

Background

Transnational citizens' assemblies are complex processes led by multiple stakeholders with different roles and responsibilities. For example, the world's first Global Assembly engaged over 400 stakeholders and around 120 organisations across 112 countries as part of the process delivery. They spoke 39 languages and were located across at least ten different time zones¹. These stakeholders represented different groups involved in the design and implementation of the process. They were based in multiple countries, spoke different languages, and operated under diverse cultural codes. Their roles and how they related to each other determined many aspects of the deliberation and shaped human relations within and beyond the Global Assembly.

This technical paper reflects on how transnational assemblies can be better governed by opening up the 'black box of deliberative democracy', as one of our respondents defined the internal governance of an assembly. To do so, we identify pathways for the effective and accountable internal governance of a global citizens' assembly by looking at the following:

- **Stakeholders**, all groups and individuals involved in the commissioning, design, and delivery of transnational deliberative processes.
- **Internal governance** of transnational deliberation, which refers to the structures and mechanisms through which those stakeholders establish their roles and responsibilities, how they set goals, allocate resources, design, and implement the assembly.
- **Effective** internal governance, which comprises responsible and responsive collaboration, and adaptive decision-making oriented towards successfully achieving implementation while also considering the needs and capacities of everyone involved. It pertains to the necessary coordination to achieve the assembly's goals, especially when working with constrained resources.
- **Accountable** internal governance, which ensures the transparency of the process, creates mechanisms to assign responsibilities and tackle conflict, and ensures responsiveness and duty of care towards other stakeholders and

¹ See: www.globalassembly.org. All linked websites were last accessed on September 30, 2023.

participants. Those mechanisms are relevant to the process' internal and external legitimacy and contribute to its sustainability over time.

Research Design & Ethical Considerations

We examined the internal operations of the world's first Global Assembly² to learn about how design, decision-making, implementation, and contextualization took place. We draw lessons from the structures and processes that worked well, identify emerging problems that can challenge future transnational assemblies, and develop recommendations to improve actual and potential shortcomings. Three questions guided this technical paper:

1. What structures, processes and channels of internal governance were in place during the Global Assembly?
2. What challenges arose during the process that put those structures to the test, what responses were developed, and what was missing?
3. How can our learnings from the Global Assembly inform more effective and accountable governance in future transnational deliberative forums?

To answer these questions, we:

- Examined publicly accessible reports on the Global Assembly, including the Global Assembly Report³, the Executive Summary⁴, and the Evaluation Report⁵.
- Analysed primary data gathered for the evaluation report, including the pre- and post-deliberation survey and interviews conducted by the external evaluation team. All accessed data was anonymised.
- Conducted six focus group discussions in three languages to allow respondents – when and where possible – to participate in their first language.

² 'The Global Assembly' and '2021 Global Assembly' are used here interchangeably to refer to the Global Assembly on the Climate and Ecological Crisis that took place in 2021.

³ See: <https://globalassembly.org/resources/downloads/GlobalAssembly2021-FullReport.pdf>

⁴ See <https://globalassembly.org/resources/downloads/GlobalAssembly2021-ExecutiveSummary.pdf>

⁵ See:

https://researchsystem.canberra.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/82182314/Global_Assembly_Evaluation_Report.pdf

Each focus group lasted between 90 and 120 minutes, with three to five participants each. We had a total of 17 participants from different stakeholder⁶ groups in the Global Assembly, including Assembly Members, Community Hosts, Cluster Facilitators, Notetakers, and Breakout Facilitators.

- Administered one-on-one questionnaires to four Central Circle members, who could opt to reply in writing or in an interview. Interviews lasted an average of 90 minutes.

Our research followed a power-sensitive approach⁷. We designed focus group and individual questions from a perspective that centers on diversity, asymmetries in roles, positionalities, and the subjective experience of our respondents. In doing so, we granted special consideration to material and power inequalities that preceded the Global Assembly and shaped how stakeholders participated and experienced global deliberation as a political exercise⁸.

Ethical Considerations

We have anonymised our respondents' identities to create safe environments where they could express their views openly. We led focus groups with minimal moderation, encouraged openness and critical reflection, and purposefully invited participants to converse with each other. As moderators, we also made sure every participant had the opportunity to express their views⁹. Central Circle members were not included in Focus Groups due to pre-existing hierarchical and/or contractual relationships with other stakeholders during the Global Assembly. They were instead provided with a questionnaire or interviewed individually. Additional measures for identity protection were taken when requested by respondents, such as not recording and not citing specific information provided.

⁶ An anonymized breakdown of focus group participants and a brief description of their roles and responsibilities are listed in the Annex.

⁷ See Strumińska-Kutra, M., & Scholl, C. (2022). Taking power seriously: Towards a power-sensitive approach for transdisciplinary action research. *Futures* 135 (2022), 102881

⁸ On how power relations inform deliberative processes, see: Curato, Hammond, and Min (2019). *Power in deliberative democracy*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁹ Following recommendations by Cyr, J. (2019). *Focus groups for the social science researcher*. Cambridge University Press, esp. Chapter 3.

Pathways to Effective Governance

How can stakeholders leading transnational deliberation best coordinate among themselves to achieve the assembly's goal? To answer this question, they must reflect on who is included (and who is excluded) from design, implementation, and contextualization; the diversity of interests and experiences of everyone involved; and how to collaborate across difference.

Courses of action toward more effective governance include:

1. Actors who commission and/or deliver the process should include representatives from all stakeholder groups in the design and implementation of the assembly. This includes regional and local delivery partners, as they can better contextualize the process according to different practices and realities.
2. Actors who design and deliver the process should allow for flexibility in design and adaptability in implementation. Regional and local stakeholders are best suited to adapt the process to their context, to changing conditions and emerging challenges.
3. Actors who commission and deliver the process must keep open access to information and clear channels for communication with all stakeholders. These are key to collaborating across regions and time zones and simplifying bureaucracy.

1. Including all stakeholders in commissioning and implementation

Who are the stakeholders that design and deliver transnational deliberation? Who leads the process, and who decides who leads the process? In local or national citizens' assemblies, a commissioner (such as a government agency) typically initiates a citizens' assembly and appoints a delivery team to design and implement the process. In transnational deliberation, commissioning and delivery tasks may be performed by the same stakeholder groups, as was the case in the Global Assembly, where the same organisations initiated and partly implemented the process. Or commissioning and delivering tasks may be shared by multiple stakeholders. Both

scenarios scale up the complexity vis a vis a local or national citizens' assembly. The actual internal structure and the relationship between those groups can vary widely, but an embedded understanding of context remains key to adapting the design and implementation to different countries, regions, cultures, and languages. Based on our findings, we recommend that commissioning and delivery groups include more diversity in their composition and share the convening power with other stakeholders.

- **The groups leading the design and delivery of a global citizens' assembly should have representatives from all stakeholder groups.** This includes commissioners and delivery teams. Active involvement in decisions regarding design and implementation can ensure that their interests, concerns, and challenges are present at each stage, contributing to making more informed decisions.

For example, in the Global Assembly, involving regional (Cluster Facilitators) and national/local partners (Community Hosts) allowed the commissioning, design, and delivery team (Central Circle) to understand the best ways of conducting recruitment, adapting the process, and supporting Assembly Members¹⁰. Still, the capacity to adapt the design was only partly delegated to Cluster Facilitators, and did not comprise the core assembly design, nor resource allocation. Final decisions over those were informed by consultation with Cluster Facilitators but taken by the Central Circle. Several respondents insisted that Cluster Facilitators should have been part of the Central Circle to better inform those decisions.

- Stakeholder representatives can be selected through multiple ways, including sortition over a pool of volunteers, designation among peers, or direct voting within each stakeholder group.
- Those representatives should also reflect diversity in terms of expertise, gender, region, and ethnicity. Our respondents suggested at least one representative per continent or world region. Bringing in intersectional experiences allows systematically disadvantaged groups to share firsthand knowledge of concrete barriers and needs.
- Actors who commission and deliver the assembly should also target and involve individuals and organisations that represent groups so far absent from

¹⁰ For a detailed description of each stakeholder role and responsibilities, please see the Annex at the end of this technical paper.

leadership in transnational deliberation. They could include indigenous communities, migrants, undocumented residents, as well as representatives from communities most affected by the substantive issue at the core of the assembly's remit (e.g. climate crisis).

- Stakeholder participation in design and delivery should allow for different degrees of engagement. No individual stakeholder should be mandated to engage beyond their capacity.

In the Global Assembly, several stakeholders confessed to stretching over their roles and capacities to respond to emerging needs, such as replacing translators or finding last-minute solutions to power cuts at Assembly Member's locations. Others instead reported that they considered the Global Assembly simply as a job, albeit one that brought them joy and fulfilment. Not all stakeholders may be interested in devoting their time and energy to the governance of the process, to co-designing or co-implementing beyond their job description.

2. Contextualizing and decentralizing decision-making

Reality never fits nicely into process design. What works in some places does not work in others. Natural catastrophes affect the basic infrastructure and living conditions of Assembly Members. Conditions change, responsibilities cannot be fulfilled, people drop out, and new demands emerge. Actors who commission and deliver transnational assemblies should, therefore, rely on the expertise and situated knowledge of stakeholders working on the ground. We recommend **decentralising decision-making to allow for flexible process design, informed contextualization, and adaptive implementation:**

- **Groups in charge of process design must consult with all stakeholders. Delivery must be decentralised.** Decision-making power over issues of contextualisation and local implementation should lie with regional and/or local delivery partners. Having this power will allow them to sort contextual barriers and address specific needs.

The Global Assembly adopted a decentralised model based on 'holacracy' to involve Cluster Facilitators as regional coordinators, who could bring in the contextual needs of their represented countries and Assembly Members and propose solutions to problems

specific to their areas. But to join as delivery partners in the Global Assembly, Cluster Facilitators and Community Hosts needed to be registered as NGOs in their countries. In many places, organised civil society groups do not formally register as NGOs due to the costs this entails. This requisite may have prevented relevant and experienced partners on the ground from joining or forced Community Hosts to find alternative arrangements (such as ‘loaning’ another organisation’s register). Other factors, like the compressed timeline and limited funding, also constrained the potential of the decentralised network to work effectively.

- Actors who deliver the process should plan for sufficient time for recursive re-design of the deliberative process after each phase. Prototyping tools and testing them on the ground can help predict challenges and develop solutions. This can be especially relevant in areas and with communities especially affected by the problem at the core of the assembly’s remit (for example, the climate crisis). Admissible/inadmissible deviations from core design features of the deliberative process should be clarified in advance and subject to discussion and redefinition if conditions change.

For the Global Assembly, prototyping labs were organised with partners across the world to test different aspects of the deliberative process – including the best configuration and number of devices needed for interpretation.

- Transnational processes are affected by global and local events. Regional and local stakeholders should take up monitoring functions to keep tabs on environmental, political, and social events that might affect delivery in their countries or regions (such as climate catastrophes, violent conflict). They should also have the capacity to adapt the process accordingly and count on additional resources (for instance, a dedicated fund) to do so.

Assembly Members in the Global Assembly were affected by power cuts, rains and storms, and violent conflict. Their Community Hosts improvised solutions – but these were limited to individual situations.

- Roles and functions close to the experience of Assembly Members should always rely on backup. Substitute professionals should be trained and remain on hold to take over hosting, translation, note-taking or tech support (if applicable).

Translation presented one of the biggest challenges to the implementation of the Global Assembly. Some translators were hired but not skilled enough to enable their Assembly Member to participate, while others were unable to perform their roles due to material barriers or problems with the tech. Others dropped out or failed to show up. This affected the quality of deliberation and Assembly Member's experience of the process.

3. Opening access to information and communication

Running a transnational citizens' assembly demands constant, simultaneous and/or asynchronous communication among stakeholders, possibly across time zones and locations and in multiple languages. They must also document decisions, develop information materials and guidelines, consolidate recommendations, etc. **Stakeholders must develop clear rules about when and how to communicate and ensure equal access to information.** This is necessary to develop shared understandings and align goals, responsibilities, and how to fulfil them.

- Stakeholders should collectively determine, early on, what the appropriate channels for communication are suited to different ends and dimensions of their tasks. These channels should allow for both synchronous and asynchronous communications to respect the individual availability of stakeholders. When online, they should rely on widely used applications and/or software that is also available for mobile devices.
- Regional and local stakeholders should seek to form communities of practice, including Assembly Members, to share operational information, coordinate delivery, and solve day-to-day issues.

For example, several Portuguese-speaking stakeholders in the Global Assembly created a WhatsApp group where they shared translated materials to avoid doubling the workload and ensure a faster turnover of materials Assembly Members. Southeast Asian stakeholders opted for Line instead of WhatsApp because it's more commonly used in the region.

- **Actors who commission and deliver the process must make an open digital repository available with all pertinent documentation and materials related to the process.** It should include information about the commissioning

process, the selection of delivery partners, and stakeholders' contact information.

- The repository must present information in simple language, in formats that are easy to understand, and in all (or most) languages spoken by stakeholders. It should be easily searchable and, where possible, based on tools widely used by the general population. It should also incorporate accessibility features such as text-to-speech, screen readers, and other tools that attend to individuals with disabilities.

The Global Assembly produced an online Wiki that hosted all learning resources from the Global Assembly, their translations and contextualisations. Yet, most of our respondents were unable to recall who was leading the assembly, when or why it was initiated, who and how decided over the remit, and who was involved in delivery beyond their direct contact persons (such as Community Hosts or Cluster Facilitators). Others also reported difficulties with the language, length, and format of information and education materials, signalling towards accessibility issues.

- Process documentation can rely on AI-based/automated transcription and translation. Information materials, especially those related to the substantive question or remit, should ideally rely on alternative formats beyond writing, such as videos, storytelling-based resources, audio files, graphs, and pictures.
- Deliverers and local/regional stakeholders should offer training on how to access and use information and communication channels to stakeholders and Assembly Members, especially considering those less familiar with the technologies or the interface.
- Costs for hosting the repository, leading training, and developing information and tools should be considered early in the process budget.

Pathways to Accountable Governance

What are the responsibilities of stakeholders to each other and to Assembly Members, and what happens when they are not fulfilled? How can they address differences in views and tackle conflict? Accountability in the internal governance of a transnational deliberative process can face challenges such as informality and lack of transparency in decision-making, unclear roles and duties, absence of channels to voice complaints, and lack of adequate mechanisms to address differences and conflict. These challenges can damage trust in the process.

Action courses towards more accountable governance include:

1. All stakeholders must collectively establish their roles, responsibilities, and agree on rules for decision-making and lines of accountability. These agreements should be documented, and changes to them should be communicated in a transparent manner.
2. Commissioners and deliverers should appoint a person or group to oversee the integrity of the process and review conflicts. This person or group must be reachable by all stakeholders and participants and have the autonomy to investigate and trigger sanctions with independence from commissioners and deliverers.
3. Commissioners and deliverers should co-develop a plan and options about how to continue collaborations with all stakeholders and Assembly Members after the process is concluded.

1. Transparency about roles and decision-making

Transparency is central to accountability. Open communication and accessible information about the assembly's process and stakeholders' roles and decision-making criteria are essential for building and maintaining their trust. However, evidence on the delivery of citizens' assemblies, including the case of the Global Assembly, shows that the definition of roles and responsibilities is often very diffuse and informal. This may not present problems when commissioning and delivery are led by relatively small teams, one or few groups or organisations, and can allow for

more responsiveness and adaptability to change. However, it can also negatively impact stakeholders' clarity about their capacities, the transparency of the process, and its legitimacy, thus increasing the risk of conflict. **We recommend ensuring the transparency of decision-making processes and results.**

- All stakeholders should collectively and individually determine their roles, functions, responsibilities, and lines of accountability to each other. These can be determined in advance via terms of service or contracts. Changes to individual or group roles must be documented and communicated to all stakeholders.
- **Commissioners and deliverers must develop clear rules over how to reach decisions** regarding process design, implementation, contextualisation, and changes in any of those dimensions.

In the Global Assembly, most design and delivery decisions were made by the Central Circle, with input and recommendations from different advisory bodies and individuals. Other stakeholders often did not feel empowered to make decisions over changes in implementation or adjustments that deviated from the design. When in doubt, they deferred to the Central Circle, though most respondents agree that the Central Circle was always receptive and quickly responsive. Some stakeholders were not aware of how the Central Circle reached decisions over matters escalated to them.

- Actors who deliver the process should make available the documentation about roles and responsibilities, as well as decisions over design, implementation, and adaptation to context, to all stakeholders. This could be done using the open repository (see above).

During the Global Assembly, some Community Hosts made substantial alterations to the recruiting system. In turn, other Community Hosts requested additional funds or changes in conditions to attend to the specific context of their Assembly Members. Some of these requests were granted by the Central Circle, others not. Our respondents did not have clarity over the procedures and reasons, which negatively impacted their trust in the process.

- Commissioners and deliverers should hold an open, general meeting with all relevant stakeholders - potentially also open to Assembly Members - on a regular or semi-regular basis. This can help make the assembly's internal

operations more transparent. These meetings should be announced regularly, and minutes should be kept at least in the most spoken languages.

Our respondents from the Global Assembly recalled different practices regarding internal communication. Some reported regular meetings with the Central Circle, while others were unaware of such meetings. Some stakeholders created regional channels for communications, while others were only aware of vertical reporting channels with their recruiters (for instance, Community Hosts and Cluster Facilitators). This enforced the image that even contextual decisions needed to be consulted ‘up the hierarchy’ and may have created unequal conditions for stakeholders of the same group.

2. Integrity and Conflict resolution

As in any process, conflicts and ethical challenges can arise in the delivery of transnational assemblies. Issues may range from unfulfilled responsibilities and failures to deliver according to the terms of collaboration, interpersonal conflict and tensions arising from different forms of expression, language and cultural barriers, or work styles. The inability to confront these issues directly risks perpetuating divisions, strengthening existing hierarchies, and impeding collaborative and peaceful resolutions conducive to process delivery.

Incorporating conflict resolution mechanisms entails appointing reference persons to address conflict, uphold the integrity of the process, and protect all individuals involved:

- All stakeholders should be involved in co-developing shared values and rules of practice. The rules should also determine the kinds of breach, their consequences, and a chain of accountability between stakeholders. They can be produced through a deliberative process and should be adaptable to individual capacities and situations.
- **A person or group of persons can be appointed to oversee integrity and trigger accountability mechanisms.** This could take the form of an Ethics Board and should include representatives of all stakeholder groups, including Assembly Members, and potentially external advisors. Alternatively, integrity assessment and conflict management powers could be assigned to an existing

advisory body, or to an Ombudsperson (or group). They should be reachable at any time by any stakeholder, including Assembly Members and observers.

- The person of the body assigned oversight powers should have autonomy and independence in their action, especially regarding commissioners and deliverers. They should have the capacity to investigate complaints and reach decisions that can effectively protect the integrity of affected individuals, make recommendations for improvement, and/or provide alternative solutions to the conflict, such as mediation.

Our respondents reported that problems during the implementation of the Global Assembly were usually escalated to the Central Circle, including failure to deliver and non-compliance with the terms of service. Most respondents did not feel entitled to tackle those problems directly. This may have created unnecessary delays in solving urgent issues in delivery. Some respondents further reported interpersonal issues and tensions but were not aware of any clear mechanism to address them. This made them question if a conflict should be tackled at all, if all failures to deliver were addressed, and who made the final decision over how to handle those problems. Time pressures made these respondents feel they should rather send the issue ‘up the hierarchy’ and move on with their tasks.

- Actors who commission and deliver the process should consider training all stakeholders in nonviolent communication¹¹ and in other methods and techniques for conflict management as part of their onboarding strategy.

3. Sustaining Links with Stakeholders

A transnational citizens’ assembly brings together individuals to work together for a short period of time, but where they collaborate and exchange intensively with each other. It creates a community of practice and experience and allows for bonds to emerge across difference. Once the process is over, stakeholders and Assembly Members may have an interest in continuing the conversations, developing collaborations, or following up on the outcomes of the process. **Abruptly interrupting those relations can damage trust in the process and among stakeholders.** Establishing the conditions to sustain those relationships can be

¹¹ See for instance: <https://www.cnvc.org/>

considered a complementary aspect to stakeholders' duty of care towards each other and towards Assembly Members. This can be achieved by:

- Actors who commission and deliver the process should **co-design a plan that outlines voluntary options for information, dissemination and engagement** after the process is concluded. The plan should be consulted with Assembly Members and all stakeholders. Any stakeholder should also be able to opt out at any time.

Some respondents confessed they were disappointed by the disconnection with the Global Assembly after it concluded. While many reported the experience was 'life changing' and informed their own work and activism afterwards, they also wished they knew what would happen after the publication of the People's Declaration and whether the commissioners and deliverers had plans for similar exercises in the future. Some Community Hosts also reported that their Assembly Members wanted to continue collaborating with the initiative, but did not know how to do so.

- Communication channels and repositories can be kept active after a process is over. Resources and responsibilities for maintaining those channels, for how long, and under what conditions should be established in advance.
- Stakeholders can lead additional opportunities for communication and engagement, for instance, through newsletters, annual reports, performance assessments, or (digital) town hall meetings.

Outlook

This paper draws on evidence collected about the Global Assembly. The process was a pioneering experience of global and multilingual deliberation. It tested many of the usual tools of Citizens' Assemblies at a truly global scale for the first time, facing unique challenges under time pressure and resource constraints. It operated as a proof of concept and should be regarded as a success under those conditions. All our respondents emphasised this view.

However, our evidence was limited to this single case. Future comparative research on transnational deliberation should help test, inform, and further develop these recommendations. Additional limitations to our data include:

- **Timeframe:** Data collected both for the Evaluation Report and for this technical paper was produced between 2021 and 2023. Focus Groups took place in the third and fourth quarters of 2023. This has affected respondents' recollections of the experience. Future research endeavours should aim to be conducted during and/or shortly after a transnational deliberation process ends.
- **Hierarchies:** Power relations cannot be erased or ignored. Contractual relations between different stakeholders, perceived status differences between researchers and focus group participants, and lack of information about differences in the role and involvement of researchers in the Global Assembly may have affected focus group and questionnaire responses. Future research should ensure respondents are informed about the role of researchers and evaluators and further develop efforts to create safer spaces for critical reflection.
- **Commissioning:** The Global Assembly was a civil society-led process, without separation between commissioning and delivering bodies, structured around a decentralised network of partners across the world. Both the process organisation and the delivery took place exclusively online. Some aspects of our recommendations may be thus limited to comparable processes. For instance, we expect that processes commissioned by international governance institutions may demand additional measures for accountability.



Acknowledgments

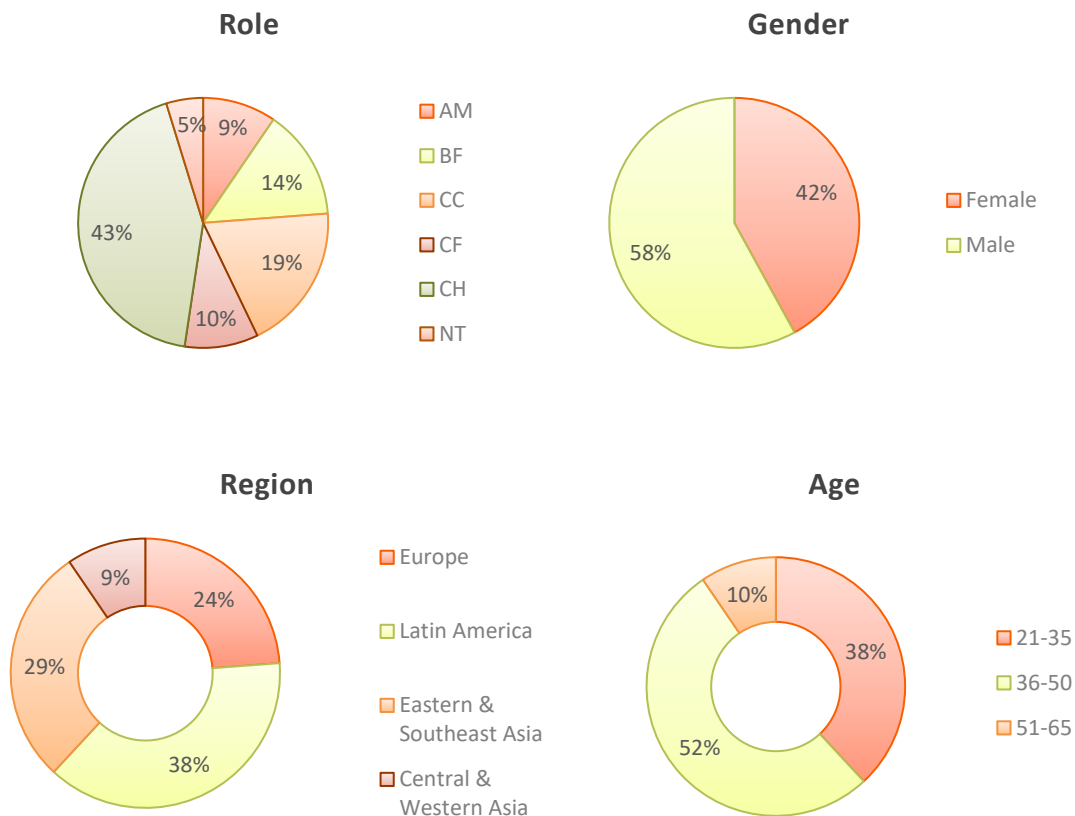
We thank our focus group and questionnaire respondents for contributing their time and energy to this research endeavor, and for their honest answers and constructive suggestions towards building more effective and accountable transnational deliberation. To protect their anonymity, we are unable to list their names here.

We also thank Claire Mellier and Susan Lee for their support in contacting former Global Assembly stakeholders.

Finally, we thank Nicole Curato and the Global Assembly Evaluation Team for making select data sources available for our consultation.

Annex

Breakdown of Focus Group and Questionnaire Respondents



Global Assembly Stakeholder Glossary

Role	Description
AM Assembly Member	A participant of the Global Assembly's Core Assembly selected by global civic lottery. Their role was to deliberate with their peers on the framing question and co-produce recommendations, primarily in the form of the People's Declaration for the Sustainable Future of Planet Earth. They represented only themselves, but collectively approximated a descriptive sample of the global human population in terms of geography, age, gender, education, and attitudes about climate change.
CC Central Circle	A group of 10 individuals representing the founding organizations of the Global Assembly responsible for its high-

		level strategy, development, and administration.
CF	Cluster Facilitator	A civil society organization and/or research center and its staff/representatives who administered a Cluster. They provided a layer of managerial decentralization, distributing leadership across the Global Assembly, as well as reducing the administrative burden on the Central Circle.
CH	Community Host	A community organization and its staff/representatives who were based near one of the points selected by the global location lottery. They performed the following roles: recruitment of potential Assembly Members for the Core Assembly, contextualization and translation of information materials, promotion of the Global Assembly, enabling participation of Assembly Members (including transportation, internet connectivity and computer access, live translation during sessions or provision thereof, technical support, payment). While often present during deliberations, they served only as a conduit for Assembly Member participation and were instructed not to influence them in any way.
BF	Breakout Facilitator	A convenor of Breakout Group discussions. An experienced facilitation professional whose skills lie in their ability to lead, but not influence, constructive deliberations between Assembly Members, ensuring that all voices and perspectives are heard and respected equally.
NT	Notetaker/Editor	An individual responsible for collating the outputs from Breakout Group discussions and documenting them to be evaluated by all Assembly Members later.

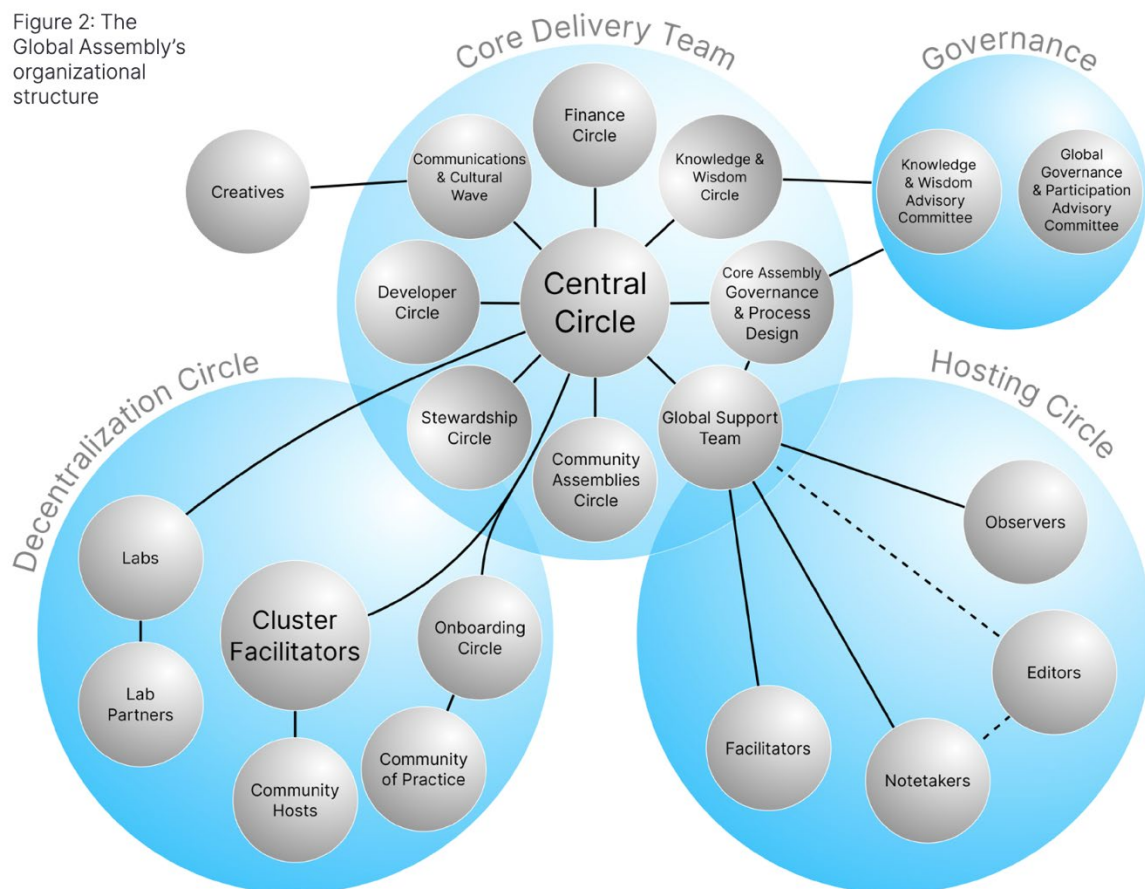
Source: adapted from the Global Assembly Full Report, pp. 21ff.

Internal Governance Structure of the Global Assembly

The Global Assembly was initiated by individuals and organizations who held a common intent to run a global citizens' assembly. The process was led by a group of individuals representing those initiators, known as the Central Circle. The absence of an external commissioning entity allowed Global Assembly initiators to create a hybrid internal governance structure they term “non-hierarchical”. It is based on the principles of “holacracy and distributed leadership”, which are meant to allow stakeholders to be “autonomous and functioned around a collection of roles and responsibilities.” The Central Circle was advised by a Knowledge and Wisdom Advisory Committee (KWAC) and the Global Governance and Participation Advisory Committee (GGPAC). For their roles and responsibilities, see the Global Assembly Full Report, pp. 35-38.

Organizational structure

Figure 2: The Global Assembly's organizational structure



Source: Global Assembly Full Report, p. 36

In our study of internal governance structures, we focused on stakeholders that were decision-makers and implementers of the Core Assembly deliberative process. That means we assessed roles, responsibilities, and relationships between members of the Central Circle, the Stewardship Circle, the Global Support Team, the Core Assembly Governance & Process Design, the Knowledge and Wisdom Circle, the Finance Circle (Core Delivery Team), as well as Cluster Facilitators and Community Hosts and the Onboarding Circle (Decentralization Circle) and Facilitators, Notetakers and Editors (Hosting Circle). We did not evaluate the role of advisory bodies and individuals (Governance Circle), nor of the Communications and Cultural Wave, the Developer Circle, the Community Assemblies Circle, the Labs and Lab Partners, the Community of Practice, and the Observers.

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