

Throughout the world, the need for workable strategies for multi-stakeholder consensus building around public interest issues is growing significantly. Political and social leaders increasingly turn to dialogue as a fundamental tool for strengthening governance and democracy, and for preventing and managing conflicts and crises.

In 2001, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) established the Democratic Dialogue Project based in Guatemala. Since then, this project constitutes an active service instrument to dialogue initiatives promoted by country offices of Latin America and the Caribbean, which underpins UNDP's core effort of promoting growth with equity and helping strengthen the democratic institutions upon which peace and stability for development depend.

Originally focused on the Latin American and Caribbean region, the Project is now being expanded to the global level, incorporating experiences and strengthening relationships with people working in other continents. For this effort, the Project has counted on the support of the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, BCPR.

Project Components

- Knowledge creation
- Partnerships
- Technical support
- Capacity building



Knowledge Creation

The Project creates, compiles, systematizes and disseminates theoretical and practical knowledge on dialogue based on the experiences, lessons learned and best practices of the processes carried out in the region.

Its website at www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org features access to a wide range of information including case studies, experiences, tools and methodologies for dialogue. It also offers links to dialogue-related sites.

Partnerships

The Project works to establish and strengthen partnerships with individuals and organizations who share a commitment to promote and support multi-stakeholder dialogue processes for conflict prevention and management.

The main partnership strategy of the Project is the **Community of Practice**, a network of dialogue practitioners, like-minded institutions and organizations. Currently, this community is formed by 16 international organizations and around 90 practitioners.

- Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the UNDP (BCPR)
- Bureau for Development Policy of the UNDP (BDP)
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- Carter Center
- Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations (DPA)
- Global Leadership Initiative (GLI)
- IDEA International
- Inter-American Foundation (IAP)
- International Institute for Sustained Dialogue (IISD)
- Mediators Foundation
- Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (nIMD)
- Organization of American States (OAS)
- Oslo Governance Center of the UNDP
- Third Side Network
- University for Peace
- WSP International



Technical Support

The Democratic Dialogue Project provides a range of responses to UNDP Country Office's demands to support dialogue and consensus-building processes coming from governments, social organizations, institutions and other local actors. One of the mechanisms of the Project for responding to these demands is its Support Network, made up of a multidisciplinary group of professionals. Among others, the Project provides the following services:

Exploratory missions

- context analysis and strategic mapping of actors
- definition of the scope of the dialogue
- methodological and process recommendations

Advisory

- comprehensive design of dialogue processes tailored to each situation and political-institutional context
- broad, transparent and inclusive consensus building
- facilitation of workshops and related events
- processes for formulating public policies
- communications policy for dialogue processes
- articulation of networks
- follow-up of actions to ensure sustainability of agreements

Capacity Building

In all the dialogue processes it supports, the Democratic Dialogue Project observes the principle of building local capacities on dialogue tools and methodologies aimed at UN country teams, political, and social leaders throughout the region. Among others, the Project offers capacity building on the following subjects:

- construction of social capacities for dialogue, agreement-reaching and consensus-building
- facilitation tools and methodologies
- design of dialogue processes and learning for action
- comparative analysis of democratic dialogue experiences

Visit our website at:
www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org

Contact us at:
democraticdialogue@undp.org

Head Office

Europ Plaza World Business Center
Torre IV, Nivel 10
5^a avenida 5-55 zona 14
Guatemala City
Central America

Phone: (502) 2384-3100
Fax: (502) 2385-3859

UNDP RBLAC
DC-1 22nd. Floor
One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
Tel: (212) 906-5415



United Nations Development Programme



Regional Bureau for Latin
America and the Caribbean

Democratic dialogue is a cross-institutional process for addressing complex societal problems or challenges that cannot be addressed successfully, sustainably, legitimately and peacefully by any single institution.



It is a tool that complements democratic institutions.

Democratic dialogue is multi-stakeholder, bringing together diverse people that are part of the problem and must be part of the solution; that is, a microcosm of formal and informal influential leaders that make decisions in a society.

It is inclusive because people from different sectors, gender, classes, parties, hierarchies, religions, generations and culture, who normally work separately or even in opposition to one another, engage in a common dialogue process.

Democratic dialogue opens safe spaces for people to talk with and listen to one another thus contributing to build trust and transform relations.

Democratic dialogue is connected to action, as the participants emerge from the process with a shared sense of purpose, commitment to a common future, and steps agreed upon to bring the desired future into being.

“Dialogue is the main tool of a democratic society. Through dialogue, national debate is rationalized and consensus is reached for the construction of values, principles and rules of the game that regulate governance and help solve the differences between the political powers and people in a harmonious way”.

Carmelo Angulo Barturen
Spain Ambassador to Argentina

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DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE PROJECT

Promoting multi-stakeholder
consensus building as a tool for
strengthening governance in
Latin America and the Caribbean

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