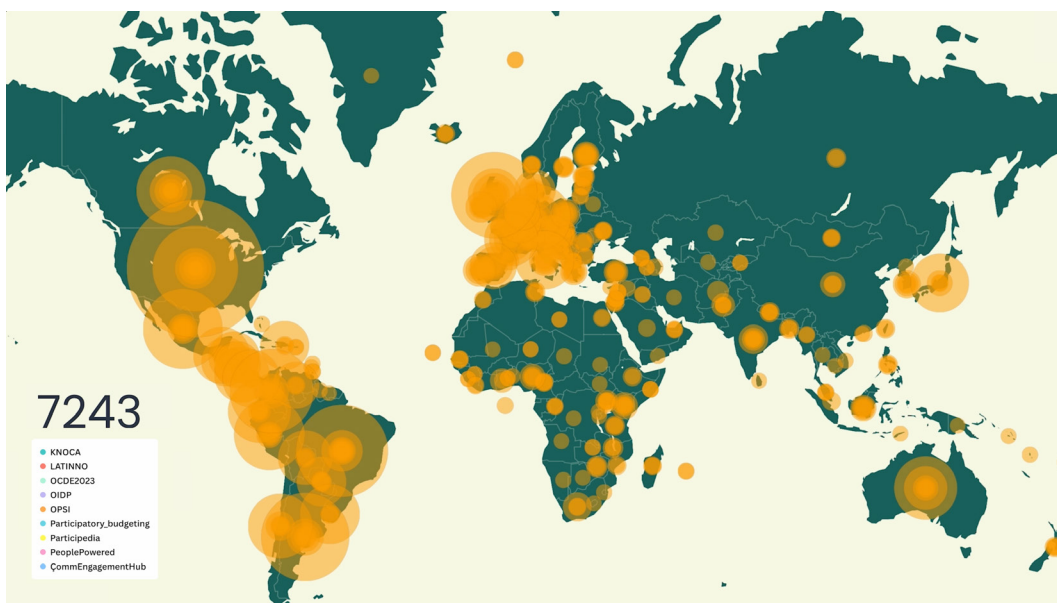


# Appendix B

Mapping global  
cases of participation

Between late 2025 and 2026, we have sought to map formal participatory processes reported over the last decade from a diverse set of repositories and networks. Indicative sources include: KNOCA, LATINNO, the OECD 2023 repository of deliberative processes, ODP, OPSI, Participatory Budgeting networks, Participedia, People Powered, and the Community Engagement Hub. The mapping spans deliberative mini-publics such as citizen assemblies and juries, participatory budgeting, co-production initiatives, and formal community processes at local, regional, national, and transnational levels.

Records were standardised, very broadly de-duplicated across overlapping catalogues, and enriched with minimal metadata (years, topics, locations). Text fields (process titles and descriptions, if any) were analysed using Natural Language Processing (NLP) with the help of Dr Maria Paz Raveau from Faro UDD Chile. Below is the resulting map of 7243 cases for reference. [Here](#) is a technical summary of the process.

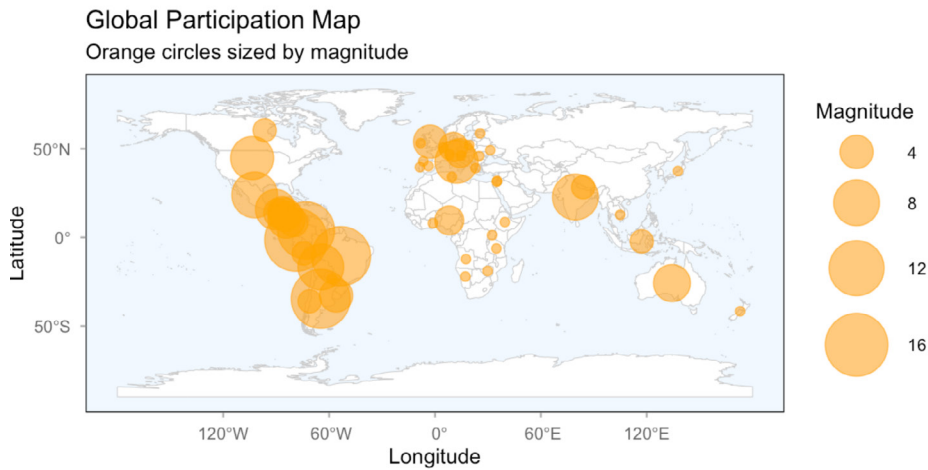


The dataset is intentionally heterogeneous, combining government-led, civil-society-led, and hybrid initiatives. It encompasses processes focused on young people, small businesses, and vulnerable groups across various continents. However, it is important to acknowledge that this dataset is incomplete and reflects the language, reporting, and visibility biases commonly found in open repositories. In our analysis, it effectively demonstrate how different participatory processes have tackled the themes of the Deep Dives, aiming to stimulate further debate on this critical issue.

## Deep Dive 1: Climate, Food, and Farmers

The figure below illustrates the number of participatory processes from our original mapping that connect to this topic. This was derived using a set of indicative keywords, which were iteratively tested and validated against the database to ensure they captured relevant cases.

While the original mapping of over 7,000 cases is unevenly distributed across continents, the results nevertheless offer a useful indication of underlying patterns.



Keywords used: ['food waste', 'farmer', 'land', 'seed', 'food label', 'agroecological', 'pesticide', 'compost', 'biogas', 'consumer awareness']

The distribution of cases in the source material of the original map shows a strong concentration in South America (36%), followed by North America (28%) and Europe (23%), with other regions representing a much smaller share. This indicates a clear geographical imbalance in the dataset.

| Region        | Total Cases | %   |
|---------------|-------------|-----|
| Africa        | 249         | 3%  |
| Asia          | 465         | 6%  |
| Europe        | 1726        | 23% |
| North America | 2054        | 28% |
| Oceania       | 232         | 3%  |
| South America | 2705        | 36% |

Within Food Systems and Agriculture, South America remains dominant (42%), and its positive variation (+6) suggests that this theme is particularly overrepresented relative to its already large baseline. Asia (+4) and Africa (+3) also show moderate increases, indicating a stronger relative engagement with this theme compared to their overall share.

In contrast, Europe (-7) and North America (-6) display negative variation, suggesting that, although they have a high number of cases overall, food systems and agriculture are comparatively less prominent within the participatory processes available in that region.

| Region        | Total Cases | % change vs total |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Africa        | 11          | +3                |
| Asia          | 19          | +4                |
| Europe        | 29          | -7                |
| North America | 41          | -6                |
| Oceania       | 6           | 0                 |
| South America | 77          | +6                |

Overall, the pattern suggests that Food Systems and Agriculture is especially salient in the Global South, particularly in South America, while being comparatively less central in regions with a higher overall number of cases.

The countries with over ten cases of participation with at least one of these keywords were the following:

| Country   | Frequency |
|-----------|-----------|
| Argentina | 14        |
| Brazil    | 14        |
| Colombia  | 13        |
| Ecuador   | 16        |



## Main findings

### Idea 1: Participation is already being used to shape food systems, particularly in regions where the impacts are most immediate

Our analysis of global cases of participation shows that across the world, communities, civil society organisations, public authorities and other actors are already convening participatory processes to address questions of farming, food production, food security, land use and agricultural transition. In other words, participation is not an aspiration or future desire. **It is already part of how societies are negotiating these transformations in practice.**

From our mapping of more than 7,000 registered cases of public participation, at least 183 explicitly focus on farming and food production. This is a significant finding because it demonstrates that farming issues are already being treated as matters of public concern and collective deliberation. These cases suggest that **affected communities are not only responding to food-system pressures as passive recipients of policy or technological change.**

The geographical distribution of these cases is particularly important. Compared with the overall distribution of participation cases in the database, farming and food production are more strongly represented in South America, Asia and Africa, with increases of around five percentage points relative to the baseline. By contrast, participation cases in Europe and North America are comparatively less likely to focus on this topic. This pattern suggests that **participatory engagement around food systems is especially prominent in regions where the social, ecological and economic consequences of food-system change are perhaps more immediately, or at least, unevenly felt.**

This matters for two reasons. First, it challenges the assumption that democratic innovation and participatory governance are primarily driven by the Global North. In the field of food systems, many of the most relevant participatory practices around farming are emerging from regions in the Global South, where communities face acute pressures linked to climate vulnerability, land-use change, food insecurity, rural livelihoods and agricultural dependency. Second, it shows that participation is already functioning as a practical infrastructure for collective problem-solving. People are already creating spaces to deliberate over priorities, contest trade-offs and imagine alternative futures.

The broader implication is that future work on food-system governance should not begin from the question of whether participation is needed, but from the recognition that participation is already happening. The key challenge is to understand where it is taking place, who is involved, what forms it takes, and under what conditions it can influence policy, institutions and material outcomes.

## Idea 2: Food systems discussions are deeply connected to land, livelihoods, and local economies, not just production or consumption

Our analysis of global cases of participation shows that when people discuss farming and food production, key concepts that emerge are 'land use', 'food waste', 'land management', and 'land tenure'. In that sense, we see a strong connection to questions of **ownership** and livelihoods, not just the food that is produced and consumed.

Examples include Argentina's land forums and land policy roundtables, Bolivia's National Summit of Land and Territory, Colombia's rural development municipal councils and participatory land reform processes, Mexico's ejidal assemblies and community land management, Nepal's National Land Rights Forum, and we even analysed a case Zimbabwe on traditional authorities and fast-track land reform. These examples show that food-system participation is often inseparable from struggles over land access, tenure, territory and rural rights. **Participation here is connected to fundamental questions of sovereignty.**

## Idea 3: Farmers are not a homogeneous group

Our analysis of global cases of participation shows that when people discuss farming and food production, they make relevant distinctions and qualifications. This differentiation is visible both qualitatively, when looking at each specific event, and quantitatively, in the language used to describe participants and issues. Across the dataset, we see this through the use of terms such as 'small farmers', 'smallholder farmers', 'family farmers', 'women farmers', 'young farmers', 'Indigenous farmers' and 'aquaculture farmers'.

Indeed, a significant group of cases concerns Indigenous and community-based territorial governance. Examples include Brazil's Indigenous Land Management Plans and Map of Indigenous Lands, Nicaragua's 3D mapping of Indigenous territories, Colombia's Afro-Colombian community councils, Mexico's consultation processes connected to Indigenous and communal land, New Zealand's Māori women's rights mobilisation, and Ecuador's National Council of the Montubio Nation. These cases are important because they show that food-system governance is also about recognising the centrality of people and their connection to communities.

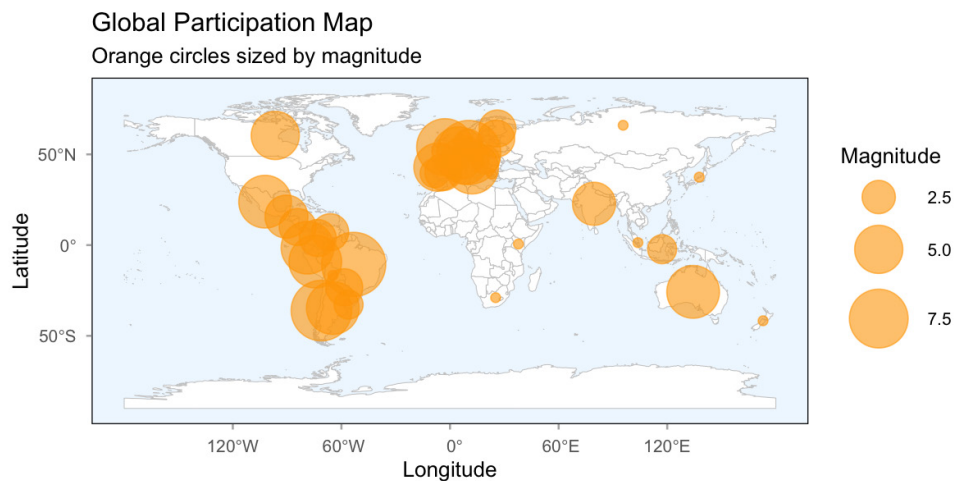
And more generally, the most frequent qualifiers associated with farmers relate to scale and economic position, especially small, smallholder, family and local farmers. This is reinforced by the prevalence of participatory cases focused on food security, solidarity economies, cooperative ownership, and access to markets. Examples include family farming councils in Uruguay, participatory approaches to productive chains in Ecuador and Peru, smallholder-focused programmes in Bolivia and Guatemala, and cooperative governance structures in Ghana's cocoa sector.

Gender is another recurring axis of differentiation. References to women farmers, female farmers and women's farming cooperatives appear across regions, including Latin America, Africa and Asia. Examples include Argentina's National Meeting of Female Landworkers, Nicaragua's initiatives to advance women's rights in farming cooperatives, and Ghana-based women-led cooperative development. These cases suggest that participatory processes are being used to **surface gender-specific constraints related to land access, labour, credit, care responsibilities and representation.**

As we map different cases of participation around farming and food production, the main lesson is clear: food-system participation works best when it acknowledges heterogeneity rather than assuming uniform interests among “farmers”. **The global evidence shows that when organising around farming and food production, participation reflects the real diversity of farming actors, with notable differences in relation to the role of community, economic scale and gender.**

## Deep Dive 2: Food, Climate and Cities

The figure below illustrates the number of participatory processes from our original mapping that connect to this topic. This was derived using a set of indicative keywords, which were iteratively tested and validated against the database to ensure they captured relevant cases. While the original mapping of over 7,000 cases is unevenly distributed across continents, the results nevertheless offer a useful indication of underlying patterns.



Keywords used = transport, zoning, rooftops, mobility, urban, green spaces, community garden, nature spaces, food market, fresh food. The keywords ('transport','mobility','urban') were also used, but only when in conjunction to GCA related terms ('planet', 'green', 'food', 'climate', 'energy', 'sustainable','sustainability','agriculture', 'environment', 'biodiversity', 'ecosystem','ecology')

The overall distribution of cases in the source material of the original map shows a strong concentration in South America (36%), followed by North America (28%) and Europe (23%), with other regions representing a much smaller share. This indicates a clear geographical imbalance in the dataset.

| Region        | Total Cases | %   |
|---------------|-------------|-----|
| Africa        | 249         | 3%  |
| Asia          | 465         | 6%  |
| Europe        | 1726        | 23% |
| North America | 2054        | 28% |
| Oceania       | 232         | 3%  |
| South America | 2705        | 36% |

In contrast to the overall distribution, this theme shows a pronounced concentration in Europe (34%), which displays a strong positive variation (+11). This suggests that Urban Life and the Built Environment is significantly more prominent in European participatory processes than in the dataset overall.

South America (38%) remains the most represented region, broadly in line with its overall share (36%), with a slight positive variation (+2), indicating a continued but not disproportionate emphasis on urban issues.

By contrast, North America (19%) shows a notable negative variation (-9), suggesting that, despite its large overall share of cases, urban themes are comparatively less central within its participatory processes.

Asia (-1), Africa (-1), and Oceania (-1) all show slight negative variations, indicating that urban issues are somewhat underrepresented relative to their already smaller shares.

| Region        | Total Cases | % change vs total |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Africa        | 9           | -1                |
| Asia          | 27          | -1                |
| Europe        | 169         | +11               |
| North America | 92          | -9                |
| Oceania       | 11          | -1                |
| South America | 188         | +2                |

Overall, and unlike any other GCA theme, this “Urban Life” reveals a shift towards Europe as a key site of urban-focused participation, while North America appears comparatively less engaged, and South America maintains a strong but proportionate presence.

The countries with over five cases of participation with at least one of these keywords were the following:

| Country        | Frequency |
|----------------|-----------|
| Argentina      | 6         |
| Australia      | 6         |
| Belgium        | 6         |
| Brazil         | 9         |
| Chile          | 8         |
| Ecuador        | 6         |
| Germany        | 9         |
| Italy          | 6         |
| Mexico         | 6         |
| Peru           | 6         |
| United Kingdom | 7         |

The wordcloud below shows pairs of words (bigrams) that include at least one of the selected keywords. To keep the analysis focused and meaningful, only combinations following NOUN–NOUN (e.g. land use) and ADJECTIVE–NOUN (e.g. small farmers) structures were included. This is a common text analysis technique, as these grammatical patterns tend to capture stable and interpretable expressions of key ideas. In simpler terms, this approach helps identify how important topics are most often described in practice, by looking at which words tend to appear together.

The most frequent bigrams, such as urban development (12 cases), green spaces (12), urban mobility (10), and sustainable mobility (8), indicate a strong focus on the planning and transformation of urban environments, particularly in relation to transport and environmental sustainability. Closely related terms, including urban environment (7) and urban agriculture (6), reinforce this emphasis on cities as key sites for ecological and socio-economic intervention. This is further supported by the recurrence of terms like green space (4) and urban space (3). That is, one key framing of cities is that they are part of the ecology as well.



# Main findings

## Idea 1: Participation in this space is strongly centred on cities as sites of transformation, particularly in relation to sustainability and infrastructure

Our analysis of global cases of participation shows that participation in the field of urban life and the built environment is heavily organised around the city as a key site of transformation. The most recurrent terms in the dataset include urban development, green spaces, urban environment, urban agriculture, urban planning, urban growth, urban areas, and urban space. In particular, urban development and green spaces are some of the most frequent concepts, followed by urban mobility and sustainable mobility. This indicates that participatory processes are not treating urban issues as isolated service-delivery problems, but as interconnected questions of sustainability, spatial planning, infrastructure and quality of life.

The country-level cases reinforce this pattern. Examples include Participatory Forums for a Sustainable Buenos Aires in Argentina, Sustainable Cities Platform and Urban Management SP in Brazil, Metropolitan Platform for Sustainability in Mexico, Paraguayan Network for Sustainable Cities, Águeda Sm@rt City Lab in Portugal, and Future Montevideo in Uruguay. These cases suggest that participation is being used to deliberate over the future of cities as complex systems.

The sustainability orientation is particularly visible in cases focused on climate, green spaces and urban environmental quality. Examples include Tallinn Climate Assembly on Green Spaces, Tartu Climate Assembly, Barcelona Citizens' Climate Assembly, Milan's Permanent Citizens' Assembly on Climate, Canton Geneva Forum Citoyen on nature conservation and climate protection, and multiple UK climate assemblies in places such as Adur and Worthing, Blaenau Gwent, Herefordshire, Southampton, Brighton and Hove, and Newham. These cases show that urban participation is increasingly being used to address climate action at the local level, especially where climate policy intersects with mobility, green infrastructure, air quality and neighbourhood-level change.

At the same time, the data suggests that participation in urban sustainability is not limited to large global cities. Cases appear across metropolitan, municipal and neighbourhood contexts, including Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Quito, Tallinn, Tartu, L'Aquila, Montevideo, Barcelona, Geneva, Southampton, Brighton and Hove, and smaller localities such as Érd and Szeged in Hungary. This breadth is important for policy because it shows that participatory urban transformation is not only a "megacity" agenda. It can be adapted to different scales of governance, from neighbourhood improvement and public-space redesign to city-wide climate strategies and long-term urban development plans.

Idea 2: There is a clear focus on mobility and transport systems as key levers for change within urban environments

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## Idea 2: There is a clear focus on mobility and transport systems as key levers for change within urban environments

Our analysis of global cases of participation also shows a strong concentration around mobility and transport. The most frequent mobility-related concepts include urban mobility, sustainable mobility, climate mobility, transport transition, public transport, green transport, urban cycling, transport planning, mobility plan, mobility agenda, democratic mobility, municipal mobility and mobility behaviour. This suggests that transport is one of the main entry points through which the public is being invited (or claiming space) to deliberate on urban transformation.

The dataset contains a great diversity of examples. These include Debates on mobility and transportation in São Paulo, Konstanz Climate Mobility Plan, Planning Cells on Smart Energy and Transport Changes in Berlin's City Districts, Mini-borgersamling om klimavenlig transport in Denmark, SUMP City of L'Aquila Urban Sustainable Mobility Plan in Italy, World Bicycle Forum in Peru, Bicycle Barometer in Belgium, and Tartu's Climate Assembly on Urban Planning and Sustainable Mobility in Estonia.

This focus is not surprising. Mobility systems are one of the most visible and contested dimensions of urban life. Decisions about transport affect emissions, air quality, road safety, commuting time, access to work and education, public space, social inclusion and the distribution of urban benefits. Our technical analysis also shows that mobility appears alongside terms such as air quality, infrastructure, planning, public service, social equity, urban development, urban planning, sustainability, sustainable development and governance. This indicates that participatory transport debates are often broader than transport alone: they connect mobility to social justice, climate action, access to services and the everyday experience of the city.

Mobility should be treated as a priority domain for participatory urban governance. Transport transitions will require not only technical planning but also democratic legitimacy. This is particularly the case considering the many trade-offs of expanding cycling infrastructure, reallocating road space, investing in public transport or introducing low-emission zones, which can generate public resistance if they are perceived as imposed from above. Participation can help cities identify locally acceptable pathways for reducing emissions, improving accessibility and redesigning public space.

### **Idea 3: Urban contexts emerge as critical spaces for linking participation with governance, where citizen input connects directly to planning and decision-making.**

Our analysis of global cases of participation also shows that urban participation matters most when it is linked to actual planning and decision-making. The strongest examples are not just conversations with citizens; they are processes connected to city plans, climate strategies, mobility plans, participatory budgets, infrastructure projects, urban development frameworks and long-term municipal decisions. This is crucial. People are more likely to trust and engage with participation when they can see how their input will be used. If participation only collects opinions but does not influence decisions, it risks becoming symbolic. But when it is connected to budgets, plans and implementation, it can become a practical tool for better governance.

This connection between participation and governance is visible in cases such as Municipal Strategic Plans in Argentina, Urban Management SP in Brazil, Quito Decides in Ecuador, Participatory Budgeting in Ilo, Peru, Auckland's 10-year Budget consultation, Strategic Plan for Zonal Development in Montevideo, Future Montevideo, Citizens' Assembly Urban Development Plan 2040 in Germany, Planning Cells on the Development of the District at Tempelhofer Damm, and Citizens' Assembly on Lynetteholmen in Denmark. These cases show how the subnational institutions can play a pivotal role in making participation consequential and create specific policy instruments to dock the outputs.

This matters because cities are where many governance challenges become concrete. Climate commitments, infrastructure plans, transport policies and sustainability goals all require decisions about land, money, services and everyday behaviour. Participation can therefore act as a bridge between high-level policy ambitions and the lived realities of residents.

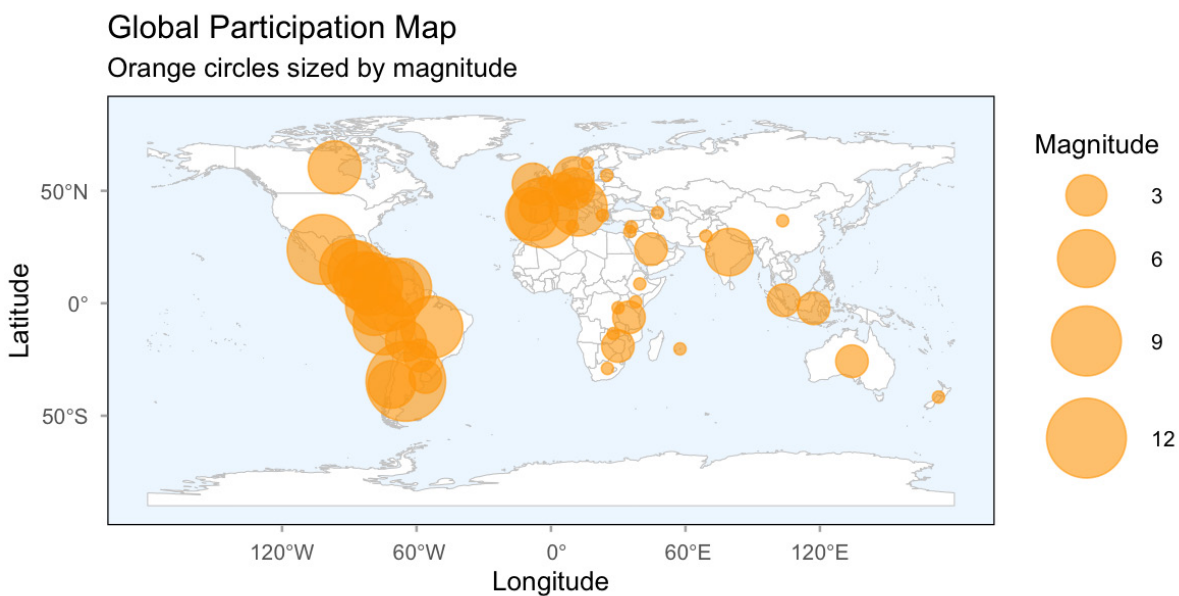
The data also suggests that participatory urban governance is multi-sectoral. Mobility appears alongside energy, housing, infrastructure, public space, air quality, water, waste, social equity, economic development and environmental sustainability. This is important because urban challenges rarely fit within one departmental silo. For example, a decision about transport may also affect air quality, public health, neighbourhood cohesion, climate mitigation and access to employment. Participatory processes can help governments identify these interdependencies and avoid narrowly technical solutions.

The cases also show that participation can operate at different stages of governance. Some processes help define agendas, such as citizen assemblies on climate or urban futures. Others contribute to planning, such as mobility plans, strategic plans, green-space assemblies and urban development processes. Others support monitoring, innovation or implementation, such as digital platforms, hackathons, citizen science tools and participatory budgeting. This suggests that participation can be embedded across the policy cycle: agenda-setting, design, implementation, monitoring and revision.

Overall, through our analysis, the subnational level and cities are positioned as perhaps the strongest way to link participation and policy instruments. However, city governments should design participatory processes with clear institutional pathways. Participants should know how their input will be used, which decisions it can influence, what constraints exist, and how authorities will report back on implementation.

### Deep Dive 3: Food, Climate and Identity

The figure below illustrates the number of participatory processes from our original mapping that connect to this topic. This was derived using a set of indicative keywords, which were iteratively tested and validated against the database to ensure they captured relevant cases. While the original mapping of over 7,000 cases is unevenly distributed across continents, the results nevertheless offer a useful indication of underlying patterns.



Keywords used: ['right', 'tradition', 'education', 'responsibility', 'access', 'legal']  
 in conjunction to GCA related terms ['planet', 'green', 'food', 'climate', 'energy',  
 'sustainable','sustainability','agriculture', 'environment', 'biodiversity', 'ecosystem','ecology']

The distribution of cases in the source material of the original map shows a strong concentration in South America (36%), followed by North America (28%) and Europe (23%), with other regions representing a much smaller share. This indicates a clear geographical imbalance in the dataset.

| Region        | Total Cases | %   |
|---------------|-------------|-----|
| Africa        | 249         | 3%  |
| Asia          | 465         | 6%  |
| Europe        | 1726        | 23% |
| North America | 2054        | 28% |
| Oceania       | 232         | 3%  |
| South America | 2705        | 36% |

Compared to the source distribution, this theme shows a relatively balanced pattern, though with some notable regional shifts. North America (28%) aligns exactly with its overall share (0 variation), indicating that issues of Society, Culture and Wellbeing hold a consistent level of importance within its participatory processes.

Europe (22%) is also broadly in line with its baseline, with only a slight negative variation (-1), while South America (33%), despite remaining the most represented region, shows a small decrease (-3), suggesting that this theme is somewhat less prominent relative to its overall weight.

In contrast, Africa (+3) and Asia (+2) display positive variations, indicating that societal and cultural issues are relatively more emphasised in these regions compared to their baseline shares.

| Region        | Total Cases | % change vs total |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Africa        | 11          | +3                |
| Asia          | 15          | +2                |
| Europe        | 39          | -1                |
| North America | 50          | 0                 |
| Oceania       | 3           | -1                |
| South America | 59          | -3                |

Overall, this theme appears more evenly distributed than others, with a modest relative strengthening in Africa and Asia, and a slight rebalancing away from South America

The countries with over five cases of participation with at least one of these keywords were the following:

| Country    | Frequency |
|------------|-----------|
| Argentina  | 12        |
| Brazil     | 7         |
| Colombia   | 10        |
| Costa Rica | 6         |
| Ecuador    | 6         |
| Guatemala  | 6         |
| Honduras   | 6         |
| Italy      | 6         |
| Mexico     | 9         |
| Panama     | 7         |
| Peru       | 7         |
| Venezuela  | 6         |
| Spain      | 9         |

The wordcloud below shows pairs of words (bigrams) that include at least one of the selected keywords. To keep the analysis focused and meaningful, only combinations following NOUN–NOUN (e.g. land use) and ADJECTIVE–NOUN (e.g. small farmers) structures were included. This is a common text analysis technique, as these grammatical patterns tend to capture stable and interpretable expressions of key ideas. In simpler terms, this approach helps identify how important topics are most often described in practice, by looking at which words tend to appear together.

The most frequent bigrams, such as human rights (13 cases) and legal environments (5), indicate a strong emphasis on rights-based approaches and the institutional frameworks that underpin them. Closely related terms, including human right, property rights, civil rights, and fundamental rights, reinforce the centrality of ‘rights’ as a key organising principle within this theme. In parallel, terms like environmental rights, citizenship rights, consumer rights, and land rights indicate the extension of rights-based framings across multiple domains.



# Main findings

## Idea 1: Participation in this space is strongly grounded in rights-based approaches, with a clear focus on legal and institutional frameworks

A central finding from our analysis of global cases of participation is that participation in the area of food, climate and culture is often framed through rights. The most prominent phrase in the data is human rights, followed by related terms such as fundamental rights, civil rights, property rights, environmental rights, citizenship rights, consumer rights, land rights, water rights and rights of children and adolescents. Legal language is also visible through terms such as legal environments, legal identity, legal capacity, legal representation, legal status, legal needs and legal framework.

This matters because it shows that participation is not only about consultation or the 'good will' of powerholders to involve people. Across the cases, participation is tied to formal rights, institutional obligations and legal recognition. Examples include Argentina's local council for the protection and promotion of the rights of children and adolescents, Costa Rica's national policy for a society free from racism and discrimination, Guatemala's consultation of Indigenous peoples on the right to food, Uruguay's national education plan for human rights, and Tanzania's work on mapping land rights of Maasai women. Participation is a key mechanism to enforce already established rights and legal commitments.

The dataset also includes several processes linked to public accountability and legal or institutional oversight. Examples include transparency in the justice system in Argentina, citizen participation in open government in Costa Rica, public policy dialogues in Peru, citizen guardians in Mexico, and environmental law organisations in Zimbabwe and Zambia. These cases suggest that participation can help connect citizens with the institutions responsible for protecting rights and delivering public goods.

The policy significance is clear: when participation is linked to rights, it becomes more than a space for expressing preferences. Participation should be designed as part of rights-based governance. This means linking public engagement to clear institutional responsibilities, legal protections and mechanisms for accountability.

## Idea 2: Issues of access, inclusion, and representation are central, highlighting participation as a means of addressing structural inequalities

The analysis of global participation cases also shows that access is one of the most important themes in the field of food, climate and culture. The data includes repeated references to food access, service access, education access, health access, water access, justice access, information access, market access, care access, loan access, resource access, wheelchair access, equal access, equitable access and universal access. This range suggests that participation is often used to address barriers that prevent people from fully exercising their rights or benefiting from public policy.

This is important because structural inequalities are often experienced through unequal access: access to food, health services, education, information, justice, public services, digital tools, environmental resources or political voice. Participation can help make these barriers visible. It allows communities to explain where systems are failing, which groups are being left out, and what kinds of changes are needed.

The country examples show this clearly. In Panama, cases include national meetings of young people of African descent and a national council for early childhood care. In Brazil, there are municipal councils for children and adolescents and Indigenous climate alert initiatives. In Mexico, cases include a centre of social policy and human rights, citizen guardians and platforms for public engagement. In Colombia, the dataset includes community action boards, rural populations, ethnic and popular sectors, and initiatives to guarantee citizen participation during the pandemic.

Participation should be used to identify and reduce barriers to access. It should prioritise groups affected by exclusion and ensure that participation itself is accessible, inclusive and representative.

### **Idea 3: Education and capacity-building play a critical role, linking knowledge with the ability to exercise rights and engage in decision-making**

Another finding from our analysis of global cases of participation is the importance of education and capacity-building for tackling food, climate and communities. The data includes references to environmental education, participatory education, citizen education, electoral education, quality education, school education, virtual education, water education, sustainability education and broader forms of learning connected to rights, public services and democratic participation.

This suggests that participation depends not only on being invited into a process, but also on having the knowledge, confidence and resources to take part meaningfully. People need to understand their rights, the institutions involved, the choices on the table, and the possible consequences of decisions. Without this, participation can reproduce inequalities, because those with more education, time, confidence or institutional knowledge have more effective means to influence.

The cases show different ways in which education and participation are linked. Examples include Nicaragua's construction of a national education plan, Uruguay's national education plan for human rights, Greece's initiative on young consumers and basic rights, Ecuador's student watchdog clubs monitoring school health, Ireland's Youth Assembly, and youth participatory budgeting in Portugal. These examples show that education and youth policy itself is a core concern that can be tapped into.

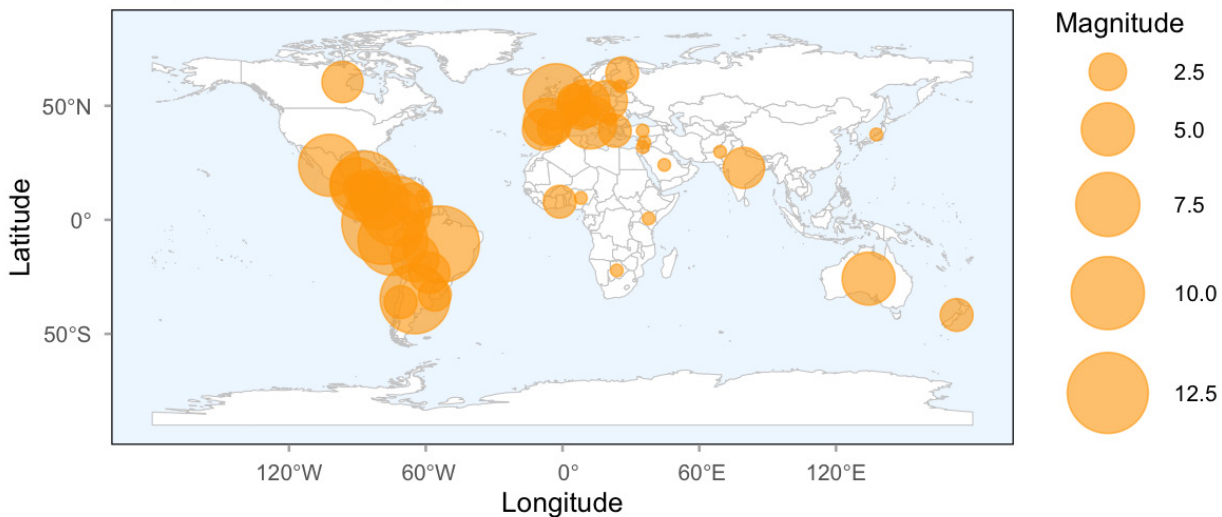
Environmental and sustainability education also appears strongly. This is important because many of the cases connect rights, wellbeing and environmental challenges. Participation around climate, biodiversity, food, water, energy and environmental protection requires citizens to engage with complex information. Capacity-building can help people understand these issues and participate more effectively in decisions about sustainability and public resources.

Across the cases of participation, we see a strong pattern: Governments should invest in civic education and capacity-building as part of participatory processes. People need information, skills and support to exercise their rights and influence decisions effectively.

## Deep Dive 4: Food, Climate, and Health

The figure below illustrates the number of participatory processes from our original mapping that connect to this topic. This was derived using a set of indicative keywords, which were iteratively tested and validated against the database to ensure they captured relevant cases. While the original mapping of over 7,000 cases is unevenly distributed across continents, the results nevertheless offer a useful indication of underlying patterns.

**Global Participation Map**  
Orange circles sized by magnitude



Keywords used: ['health', 'healthy', 'nutrition', 'nutritive', 'nutritious', 'food access', 'affordable food', 'fresh food', 'food security', 'hunger', 'hungry', 'wellbeing', 'safe food', 'processed food', 'quality of life'] in conjunction with GCA-related terms ['planet', 'green', 'food', 'climate', 'energy', 'sustainable', 'sustainability', 'agriculture', 'environment', 'biodiversity', 'ecosystem', 'ecology']. The keywords ['health', 'healthy', 'wellbeing', 'quality of life'] were counted only when they appeared alongside these climate-related terms.

The distribution of cases in the source material of the original map shows a strong concentration in South America (36%), followed by North America (28%) and Europe (23%), with other regions representing a much smaller share. This indicates a clear geographical imbalance in the dataset.

| Region        | Total Cases | %   |
|---------------|-------------|-----|
| Africa        | 249         | 3%  |
| Asia          | 465         | 6%  |
| Europe        | 1726        | 23% |
| North America | 2054        | 28% |
| Oceania       | 232         | 3%  |
| South America | 2705        | 36% |

Compared to the source distribution, this theme broadly mirrors the overall regional pattern. South America remains the most represented region with 36% of all cases, exactly matching its baseline share, while Europe also aligns fully with the baseline at 23%. Africa likewise shows no variation, with 3% of cases.

The main shifts appear elsewhere. North America reaches 30% of cases, which is 2 percentage points above its baseline share, suggesting that health-related issues are somewhat more prominent within its participatory processes. Oceania also shows a modest positive variation (+1), while Asia falls below its baseline share at 4% (-2).

Overall, the theme of health appears widely distributed but not radically rebalanced across regions. The strongest overrepresentation is found in North America, whereas Asia is comparatively less represented than in the overall map

| Region        | Total Cases | % change vs total |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Africa        | 5           | 0                 |
| Asia          | 8           | -2                |
| Europe        | 43          | 0                 |
| North America | 55          | +2                |
| Oceania       | 7           | +1                |
| South America | 65          | 0                 |

The countries with over five cases of participation with at least one of these keywords were the following:

| Country                  | Frequency |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Argentina                | 9         |
| Brazil                   | 11        |
| Colombia                 | 9         |
| Ecuador                  | 13        |
| Honduras                 | 9         |
| Mexico                   | 7         |
| Panama                   | 6         |
| Peru                     | 9         |
| United Kingdom           | 8         |
| United States of America | 15        |



## Main findings

### Idea 1: Food security is being reframed to include nutrition and health, pointing to a broader paradigm of “nutrition security”

Looking through our map of global cases of participation from the angle of health, food and climate, the most dominant concept is food security. However, it does not appear in isolation. It is closely associated with concepts like ‘healthy food’, ‘nutritious food’, ‘nutrition security’, and related phrases such as family nutrition, nutrition programme, nutrition issues, nutrition skills and nutrition subsidies. This suggests that participation in this space is not only concerned with hunger or food supply, but also with the quality, health value and social distribution of food. As we see it, this pattern indicates a conceptual broadening of security.

The country-level cases reinforce this pattern. In Ecuador, the dataset includes the Special Program for Food Security, Food Security Workshops, and Andean Organizations for Advocacy on Food Security Policies. In Honduras, the cases include the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security, National Food and Nutrition Security Forums, the Innovation Forum for Food and Nutritional Security, and the University Observatory on Food and Nutritional Security. In Brazil, relevant cases include State Food and Nutritional Security Councils, the National Committee on the National Policy of Agroecology and Organic Farming, and the Food Advertising Observatory. El Salvador includes a National Consultation on Sustainable Food Systems, while Germany includes a Citizens’ Assembly on Sustainable Nutrition, and Serbia includes a Citizens’ Assembly on Food Labelling.

These cases show that participation is being used to discuss not only whether people have enough food, but also what kinds of food systems support health, nutrition and wellbeing. The evidence points to a broader paradigm of food security. The dominant language is still “food security”, but the surrounding terms and cases show that participation is also engaging with nutrition, healthy diets, child and family nutrition, food labelling, urban agriculture, agroecology and food-related health outcomes. For policy, this means that participatory food security processes should not be framed only around access to sufficient food, but also around access to healthy, nutritious and socially appropriate food.

### Idea 2: Health policy is becoming integrative, linking mental health, public health and ecological conditions

Our analysis of global cases of participation shows that health-related participation is not narrowly focused on hospitals or clinical services. Indeed, the most frequent health-related phrases after food security are around mental health and clean environment. The data also includes terms such as community health, healthy environment, healthy ecosystem, emotional wellbeing, environmental wellbeing, health outcomes, health systems, health services, population health, physical health and integral health. This indicates that participation is engaging with a broad understanding of health that includes mental, social and environmental dimensions.

The prominence of mental health is particularly important. Country-level examples include Argentina's Honorary Advisory Council on Mental Health and Addictions, the United States case on Reversing Youth Mental Health Outcomes, and broader youth and wellbeing-oriented cases such as Uruguay's Refreshing a Right: Youth Discussing Health. These cases show that mental health is one of the clearest ways in which participation is being connected to health policy. These may not immediately link to food and climate, but they are certainly gathering civic energy. And they also intersect, as we consider the angle of climate and food anxiety.

Environmental and ecological dimensions also appear clearly. Our analysis shows the importance of concepts like a healthy environment and a healthy ecosystem. In the cases, these concepts are also link healthy conditions, clean water, sanitation, physical activity and climate neutrality. In the case list, this ecological dimension is visible in examples such as Argentina's social monitoring of the sanitation of the Matanza-Riachuelo basin, Ecuador's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Program in Loja, Finland's Healthy Outdoor Premises for Everyone HOPE project, and the UK's Wandsworth Citizens' Assembly on Air Quality.

The data suggest that participation is being used to expand the scope of health policy. Health is connected to mental wellbeing, environmental quality, sanitation, clean water, air quality, climate change, food systems and quality of life. We take from this that participatory health approaches should not be limited to health services alone. They should also include the environmental and social conditions that shape health outcomes. And, conversely, a broader conception of health situates it as a key entry point to the food and climate debate.

### **Idea 3: Community-governed approaches are central to linking health, food and climate**

Looking through the global cases of participation in the intersection of health, food and climate, the presence of community-based, council-based and locally governed approaches is notable. Key concepts include community health, that is also connected in the cases to community organising, citizen participation, participatory management, governance, local health, population health, vulnerable populations, public service and wellbeing. This matters because food- and climate-related health challenges are deeply contextual. Community-governed approaches can allow local knowledge to inform policy, help identify risks early, and support solutions that are socially acceptable and culturally grounded.

The country-level examples are relevant to this approach. Peru includes a Community Health Surveillance System and the Glass of Milk Committees. Brazil includes Municipal Councils for Children and Adolescents, and Innovation Labs of the Unified Health System. Venezuela includes Working Committees of the Communal Councils and the Special Program for Food Security. These cases suggest that participation is being institutionalised through councils, committees and other instances that connect communities with food and health governance.

As we see it, the global cases of participation point to community governance as a central feature of participation at the food, climate, and health nexus. The cases include councils, observatories, committees, community surveillance systems, participatory budgeting, urban agriculture initiatives, food security workshops and local climate-health deliberations. We believe community-governed approaches should be treated as part of health infrastructure, especially in contexts where food insecurity, environmental risk and wellbeing are closely connected.



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