

The Global Community: Concept for a global democracy

Summary

This document provides an overview of the Global Community, a new platform to enable global direct democracy. It includes arguments on necessity and required characteristics of a global direct democracy; the basic concepts of the Global Community; a description of specific aspects of the concept that are relevant for the platform's future implementation; and a draft plan for its implementation.

1 Introduction

Many of today's social, political, and economic problems have a global dimension. Their solutions elude the powers of any one nation state or group. While international organizations allow for the coordination of state efforts, they frequently operate on a diplomatic level, far from the needs and wishes of the individuals who are affected by those organizations' decisions. At the same time, digital technologies – both existing and emerging ones - provide the means to design and implement a global direct democracy for everyone. The time is ripe to add the missing layer of democracy: global voting for every human of the world – as global citizens!

2 Fundamentals of global democracy

2.1 Manifest for a Global Democracy

- Global problems require global responses.
- Global democracy shall address only global problems.
- Everyone has the right to participate in the global decisions with an equal vote.
- Global democracy does not replace existing institutions on the local, regional and national levels.
- Today's digital technologies allow every global citizen around the world to participate in debate and voting equally and inclusively.
- Dialogue is a key for good democratic decision-making.
- Well defined solutions will include mechanisms that compel all nation states to align.
- Global democracy will use novel forms of democracy going beyond conventional processes, structures, and mediums

2.2 What are truly global topics?

We are in an age of economic, financial, political, social, and ecological globalization; global interconnections and relations shape many aspects of our lives. For example, this also holds true for environmental issues, illicit financial flows (tax evasion) and data governance, where many problems as well as solutions are global.

While many problems of persons around the world can and should be solved by democratic decisions on local, regional, or national level, there are some problems that are truly global and have to be addressed above the level of nation states. On the contrary, if the problems are only viewed from the perspective of the nations, then the

national interests will be valued higher than the global ones. Only a global democratic approach can do justice to global issues.

Those problems that cannot be solved by any nation state alone and can only be solved on a global level are truly global – and the problems that will be addressed by the global community.

2.3 Who is a global citizen?

In short, a global citizen means every natural person, age 16 and older, regardless of their nationality or status. Because everyone has the right to participate in decisions that affect them, the definition has to be as inclusive as possible. The Global Community should listen to every human being on earth in order to allow for the best decisions to emerge to solve global problems.

2.4 Why does everyone have the right to participate?

Taking part in collective / state / government decisions that affect one's life is a basic human right, specifically the right to participate in the government of one's country, "directly, or through freely chosen representatives", as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1]. Several other human rights treaties and documents such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [2] provide similar descriptions.

2.5 Will this lead to a global government?

Today's systems of global governance rely mainly on international treaties and international organizations established by member states. Both international treaties and international organizations are mechanisms in which individual citizens have little or no input or control. Many of them suffer from deficits in democratic participation.

The Global Community proposes a version of global democracy. It gives global citizens a voice to identify global problems, suggest solutions and vote for their preferred solution. Giving a democratically legitimized opinion on the global level, without the need for a global government.

2.6 How will this affect the sovereignty of states?

Globalization has shown that no state can exist independently of the others. Every national, "sovereign" decision already takes into account its effects on the relations to other states - at least in theory. These decisions should reflect the will of the concerned nation's people. The Global Community does not aim to strip any populace or constituency of its freedom to decide how it wants to live; rather, it aims to empower all global citizens with the freedom to help shape the world they want to live in through joint global decisions across national borders as one Global Community.

3 Basic concept of the Global Community as a global direct digital democracy

3.1 The 8 steps of the Global Community Principle

The Global Community Principle relies on a concept of 8 steps that tie together the identification of problems and possible solutions with the democratic deliberation (debate), decision-making and implementation of the solution.

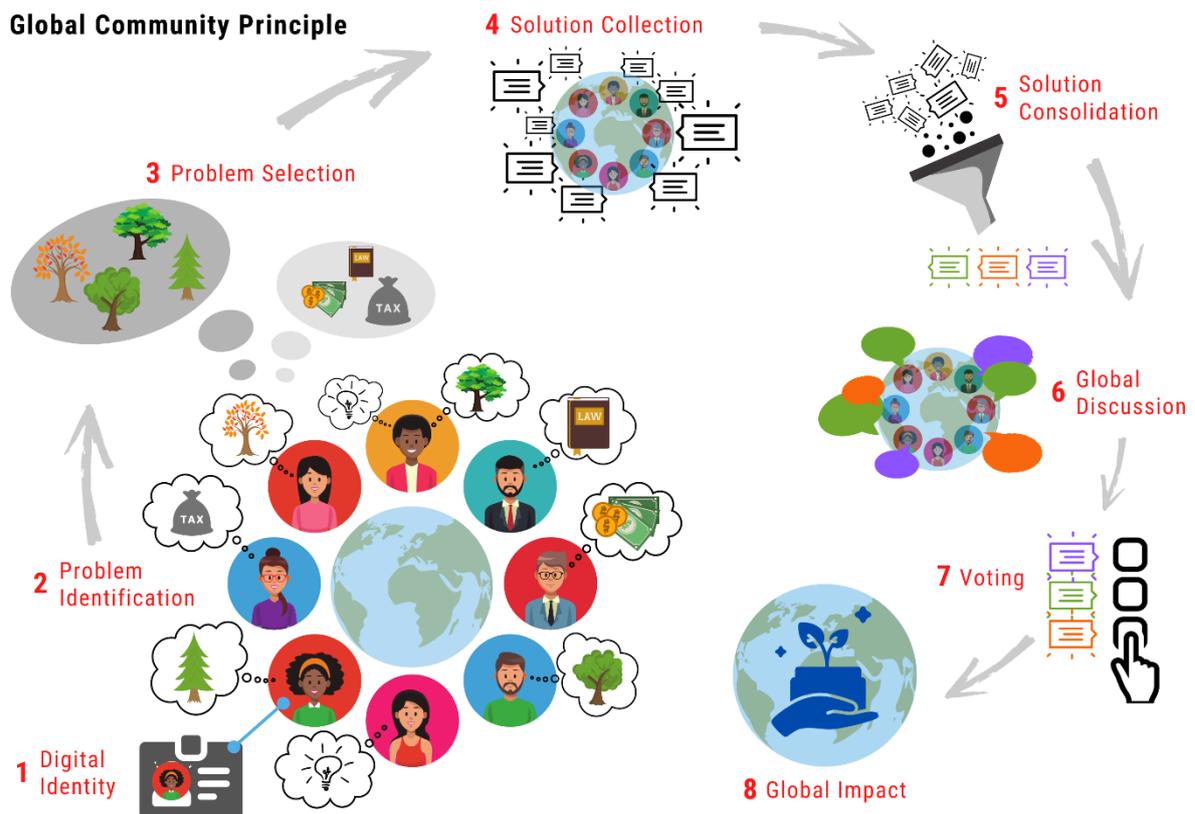


Figure 1: Illustration of the 8 steps of the Global Community Principle showing the 8 steps of (1) digital identity, (2) global problem collection, (3) problem consolidation, (4) solution collection, (5) solution consolidation, (6) global discussion and deliberation, (7) voting, and (8) global impact.

Step 1: Digital identity

It is foundational that global citizen be provided, equally and inclusively, a unique, digital identity, which is protected against fraud or theft. False granting of multiple identities has to be prevented as much as granting identity to non-humans like e.g. computer bots.



Step 2: Global Problem Identification

Every global citizen can submit problems that need to be addressed on the global level to the Global Community platform. The Global Community platform will collect and list the problems in a transparent and reliable manner – automatically translated into all major languages.



Step 3: Problem Consolidation

All problems submitted to the platform will be screened to find the truly global ones. Key criteria are expected to include that the problems affect a large number of persons in multiple countries and several continents. Artificial Intelligence (AI) methods will be needed to consolidate the large number by clustering and aggregation, and also will check whether issues are truly global. Bias has to be prevented and transparency has to be retained. The complete list of all “truly global issues” will be posted on the Global Community platform.

Issues that are interesting but concern local or national matters will be identified and can be transferred to the corresponding government if possible.

As working on and discussing problems lead to a better understanding of them and the identification of additional issues, steps 2 and 3 work in an iterative and synergistic manner.



Step 4: Solution Collection

For the proper decision-making, possible solutions to any global issue can be proposed by any global citizen and any submitted idea or proposal will be included in the “Solution Collection”. The complete list is visible to anybody interested in this topic so that all ideas can be rated or improved, and missing facts can be collected. The accessibility for all global citizens and their participation will ensure that solutions have a global scope and can have a positive global impact.

4 Solution collection



Step 5: Solution Consolidation

All proposals for potential solutions can either be optimized or rated by the global citizens, possibly be worked out with expert panels, the virtual global equivalent of citizens assemblies, or with the help of digital algorithms. This might lead to additional ideas for solutions, thus creating an iterative process of steps 4 and 5. Furthermore, as working and discussing solutions usually lead also to a better understanding of the underlying issues, this iterative process is interwoven with the iterative process of steps 2 and 3. In the end, this iterative process shall provide a consolidated set of solutions, which constitutes the ballot¹. The solutions on the ballot may be alternatives or synergistic in solving the issue, yet they must not be interdependent, such that each solution can be voted on independently.



¹ Whether an explicit filtering of solutions based on their conformance with principles of human rights is required, or whether the described discussion mechanisms will be sufficient to prevent solutions being adopted that violate international humanitarian law, is still subject of discussions.

Step 6: Global Discussion and Deliberation

To assure that all voting global citizens make an informed and reasoned decision for their vote later on, the proposed solutions, incl. the background and underlying issues, have to be publicly available. Ideally, the ballot is accompanied by an accessible document, perhaps similar to the well-known Swiss voting booklets. Furthermore, there has to be room for discussion and deliberation. The Global Community platform will not take part in the discussion or decision making process but will ensure an absolute transparent presentation of how the proposed solutions were worked out.

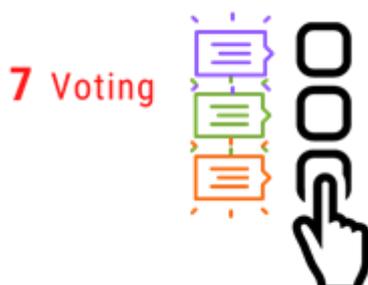


Step 7: Voting

Finally, the ballot with the proposed solutions will be voted on. The vote will take place digitally in order to allow for global participation. Ensuring that the voting is secure, verifiable and secret is a key requirement for the Global Community platform.

Providing novel methods of delegation, e.g. liquid democracy, can increase the participation by the global citizens. Novel methods will be considered as and when they develop to find the best solution for the global voting process.

The results of the global vote will be published on the Global Community platform in a transparent way with all details available and will not be commented by the operator of the Global Community platform.



Step 8: Global Impact

Based on the results of the global voting, the democratic decision will be implemented through the appropriate (existing or new) channels, e.g. via national governments and international organizations. The power of the global majority but also the fact, that the solution has been worked out on basis of a global view will guarantee an implementation in most of the regions. International activities like sanctions or special taxes will force countries to join in, which may have voted differently or have governments which did not implement the Global Community's decisions.



8 Global Impact

4 Towards implementation of a global democracy

Examples for implementations or at least ideas exist for each of the proposed steps. While they vary in maturity, it is assumed that an implementation of all proposed steps is technically possible. The way to achieve the global democracy as a whole is not yet clear and will require the collaboration of many actors on different levels. One key step seems to be to get a critical mass of knowledgeable and engaged actors to collaborate in clarifying the relevant concepts and start implementation of different aspects of the global democracy in a coordinated manner – according to their respective resources and fields of expertise.

Digital identities exist on less-than-global scales in both the public and the commercial sectors. One instructive example in the public sector is Estonia². A global digital identity could be derived from existing digital identities, such as those provided by states or commercial providers.

E-Voting is discussed in many countries on the national level. Data security concerns have led to a limited uptake so far. The experiences in those cases and improvements as part of national e-voting systems can be translated to the global scale. Blockchain technologies appear to provide a viable basis for publicly verifiable collection of voting results. But implementation of voting systems that implement verifiability and secrecy requirements are still lacking.

² <https://www.id.ee/en/article/id-card-and-its-uses/>

4.1 Iterative approach via modular proofs of concept

As mentioned above a set of implementation concepts already exist, the viability has not been shown for some concepts, especially on the global scale. There also seem to be no implementations of a complete system that are implementing all steps suggested above, although several tools provide useful coverage, including CONSUL³, Decidim⁴, Democracy.Earth⁵, DemocracyOS⁶ and World Parliament Experiment⁷. The practical experience with these tools is generally limited but encouraging.

The plan for implementation of a global democracy might have to include smaller scale pilots conducted in collaboration with communities in different countries.

5 Conclusion

The Global Community provides a concept that combines classic steps of direct democracy with digital tools in order to create a global digital direct democracy. The technologies necessary to implement it in a digital platform do exist or are currently emerging. We are now in the process of evaluating the most appropriate solutions, reaching out to actors working on similar issues, and starting to work on pilots for each step of the Global Community platform. Globally collaborative work will be necessary to understand and specify the detailed requirements, implement and test partial solutions, and integrate and implement the complete system.

6 Bibliography

- [1] "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," 1948. [Online]. Available: <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>. [Accessed 10 10 2020].
- [2] "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," 1966. [Online]. Available: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>. [Accessed 10 10 2020].

Feedback and contact

If you have input, suggestions, or feedback to this document, please send an email to Lars Lünenburger, who leads the Working Group on Global Democracy Principles of GloCo, lars@gloco.ch. If you want to participate in GloCo, please visit our website <https://www.gloco.ch>.

³ <https://consulproject.org/en/>

⁴ <https://decidim.org/>

⁵ <https://democracy.earth/>

⁶ <https://democraciaos.org/en/>

⁷ <http://world-parliament.org/>