

Exposé: The Global Democracy Experiment



The Global Democracy Experiment: www.tgde.org

Executive Director: Dr. Rasmus Tenbergen

E-mail: rt@ifld.de

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Executive Summary

The Global Democracy Experiment is an internet-based simulation of a working global democracy. It is already online: www.tgde.org. Participants can submit petitions on political issues, procedures or representatives and vote on them. It is the task of the representatives to implement the decisions in real life (like an NGO). Via the internet, the technology behind the Global Democracy Experiment provides unlimited opportunities to collect support proposals of individuals and organizations. The system can be applied to local, national and international democracies, to advocacy groups, and to private enterprises, in sum: to any organization with an organized decision-making process. The Global Democracy Experiment is a technology-enhanced direct democracy process with no time and space constraints. It embodies the future of comprehensive voting, because it allows more participation, more democracy, more efficiency, and more international cooperation.

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The Functions of the Global Democracy Experiment

The present decision-making process termed “Global Democracy Experiment” works by means of the following mechanism within an established system of specified participants, procedures, rules, and representatives visible in a common web-space:

Step 1: Every participant has the right to submit petitions („future votes“) concerning content, procedures, or representatives of the system.

Step 2: Every participant has the right to select 10 future votes per week.

Step 3: The 10 most frequently selected future votes make it on a weekly list of ”current votes”.

Step 4: Past “current votes” are collected as ”past votes“ in an archive. Past votes with at least 10% participation rate and a majority in favor become part of a „program“.

Step 5: Through future votes, the participants elect a representative („speaker“). It is the task of the speaker to implement the program in the reality of the organization addressed. The speaker can appoint other representatives to help with this task.

An application of this process can be seen on www.tgde.org in the „rules“ section.

With the exception of the first step, all rules can be changed through future votes.

The following table illustrates the mechanism of the software:

VOTES		
<p>FUTURE VOTES Participants submit petitions concerning contents, procedures or representatives. The select 10 petitions from a weekly list of future votes. These votes become current votes in the next week. The votes can be discussed in a forum.</p>	<p>CURRENT VOTES The participants say yes or no to selected votes.</p>	<p>PAST VOTES All decisions are collected in an archive.</p>
INSTITUTIONS		
<p>PROGRAM Votes with 10% participation and a majority in favor become part of a program.</p>	<p>PRESIDENT An elected President and appointed representatives have the task to implement the program in the reality of the organization addressed.</p>	<p>PARTICIPANTS There is a list of all participants with the possibility of individual profiles containing information voluntarily shared by the participants.</p>

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Rules of the Global Democracy Experiment

I. Preliminary Rules (Subject To Change)

The following institutions constitute the GDE:

1. General Assembly (GA)
2. Government (G)
3. Parliament (P)
4. Court (C)
5. Discussions (D)
6. Program (PR)
7. Administration (A)

1. General Assembly

All participants together build the GA, the most important decision-making body of the GDE. All participants have the right to submit petitions concerning any aspect of the GDE (contents, procedures, persons). There is a list of all petitions in the "future votes" section. Each participant is asked to nominate 5 petitions per week for next week's "current votes" section. The top 5 petitions will be subject to a GA vote the following week. Votes are accepted if at least 10% of the GA participates and an absolute majority votes in favor of a petition. All petitions must be structured in a "yes" or "no" format and must be written in the format "The GA is kindly asked to decide the following:".

2. Government

The Government is the executive body of the GDE. Members of the Government are the President and several ministers appointed by the President. It is the task of the Government to promote the GDE, support its development and -above all- to implement

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its results in the political process. At least every three months a general election takes place. All participants of the GDE are allowed to run for President. All candidates are listed and can be elected by the GA. If there is no absolute majority for a candidate, a second vote must decide between the two candidates receiving the most votes in the first round. The President can be replaced at any time by a petition in the "current votes" section. The President has the right to post two petitions each week in the "current votes" section. It is the duty of the President to inform the GA about the activities of the Government.

3. Parliament

The Parliament is a discussion forum possessing certain privileges. The Parliament has the right to post 3 petitions each week in the "current votes" section. There are 50 members of parliament, elected in a general election by the GA. The best 50 of a list of all candidates become members of parliament. The best candidate is elected chair of the parliament and organizes the decision making process.

4. Court

The Court helps to settle disputes concerning the GDE rules. 10 judges are elected using the same procedure applied to elect the members of parliament. The Court works upon request of the participants.

5. Discussions

The Discussions serve to organize the opinion-building process before a vote takes place. Discussions may concern any subject, they are related to certain categories and to the petitions posted in the "future votes" section. New categories may be opened at any time. The discussion of regional topics is encouraged as a preparation for future "regional democracy experiments" (RDE) as a part of the GDE.

6. Program

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The Program is the result of the GDE discussions and votes. Successful votes (except those related to electing officials) directly build the GDE Program structured by categories. The GDE Government shall promote and implement this Program.

7. Administration

The Administration helps and consults the Executive Director in the conduct of the GDE. Involvement of the GDE participants in the Administration is encouraged.

II. Basic Rules (cannot be changed)

1. All participants of the GDE have the right to submit petitions relating to any subject as long as these petitions do not violate basic principles of democracy. There will be a vote on petitions if they gather the pre-established amount of support (see I., 1.).
2. The Executive Director is free to decide what he considers to be necessary for the GDE. He will, however, refrain from using this right or will use it as rarely as possible in order not to interfere with the democratic opinion building process of the GDE. If he makes a decision contravening the will of the majority of participants, he must formally substantiate such decision.
3. The participants have the right to change all rules of the GDE (except rules II, 1. and II, 2.), if there is an absolute majority and a sufficient voter turnout for a specific proposal.

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Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the Global Democracy Experiment (GDE)?**

The Global Democracy Experiment is a generic simulation of a working Global Democracy on the Internet. For this purpose it mirrors the main political institutions of an existing state. As a model of democratic opinion making and policy execution it can be generalized to all organizational and institutional settings, including corporations, governmental subsystems, non-governmental organizations, and large, multi-site peer groups.

- **What is the purpose of the Global Democracy Experiment?**

The GDE aims at providing a platform on which each human being can discuss and vote on issues of international relations. The results are supposed to be introduced into the real political process.

- **Who founded the Global Democracy Experiment?**

Rasmus Tenbergen, Ph.D., a McCloy Scholar at Harvard University, founded the GDE. The GDE is a private initiative of young professionals and scientists who have been political activists in several fields for many years.

- **How can I participate?**

Each person may take part in the Global Democracy Experiment. The only formal requirement for participation is to register. For registration, please follow the instructions on the main page.

There are several possibilities to participate. You could:

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- vote on issues, persons, and procedures;
- discuss petitions in the Discussions section;
- bring petitions;
- nominate petitions for positions
- run for Member of Parliament, President, or Judge

• **What are the bodies of the Global Democracy Experiment?**

The GDE consists of four bodies:

The General Assembly

The Government

The Parliament

The Court

Furthermore it encompasses an administrative body, a discussion forum, and its program.

• **How does the General Assembly work?**

The General Assembly is the legislative body of the GDE. It consists of all registered participants. Its main purposes are to vote on petitions which were brought; to elect the Parliament and the Government; and to determine its procedures. The GA may vote on all issues except on the Basic Rules.

• **How are the petitions processed?**

Each participant has the right to submit petitions. All petitions must be structured in a "Yes" or "No" format and should be prefaced with the formal "The General Assembly is kindly asked to decide the following:". All submitted petitions which have not yet been decided on are listed on the "future votes" sections of the GDE site, and are supposed to

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be debated on in the Discussions section of the GDE. Each participant is asked to nominate five petitions per week for the "current votes" section. The five top-ranked petitions will be subject of a vote in the respective following week. Votes are accepted if at least 10% of the GA participates and an absolute majority votes in favor of the petition. This threshold might be subject to change.

- **How does the Parliament work?**

Just like any democratically elected parliament, the Parliament of the Global Democracy Experiment intends to be a body discussing political issues in a rational, long-term, and methodical manner. Thus, its members are supposed to behave responsibly and are given some privileges in return. The Parliament has the right to post three additional petitions each week in the "current votes" section, regarding issues it deems relevant for the GDE. The Parliament consists of a single chamber and has 50 members who are elected by the General Assembly. Elections are held sequentially. The duration of the legislative term is decided by the GA as well. The 50 candidates who receive the most votes become Members of Parliament.

- **Why does not the Parliament provide regional representation?**

The GDE assumes that in a globalized world every human being is responsible for problems, which might effect the entire world population. Thus, according to such global responsibility, the representation of single states, or continents, does not fit with the concept of the GDE. However, the discussion of regional topics is encouraged as a preparation for future "regional democracy experiments".

Furthermore, a region-based Second Chamber might be installed by the General Assembly upon request.

- **What does the Program of the GDE include?**

The totality of the adopted petitions forms the Program of the GDE. Furthermore, the

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Basic Rules are part of the program. The Basic Rules can be found on the Rules page.

- **What is the function of the Government of the GDE?**

The Government is the executive body of the GDE. It consists of the President and several ministers appointed by the President. It is the task of the Government to promote the GDE, support its development, and to implement its results in the political process. All participants of the GDE are allowed to run for president. Procedures of the election are subject to changes made by the General Assembly, and are published on the Rules page.

- **What is the function of the Court?**

The Court of the GDE is established to settle disputes concerning the GDE rules only. It does not intend to replace such bodies as the International Criminal Court, the International Court for Human Rights, or any similar institutions. It consists of 10 judges who are elected by the same procedure used to elect the members of parliament. The court works upon request of the participants.

- **How does the GDE intend to introduce its results into the real political process?**

The more people participate in the GDE, the more likely they will be to be able to influence real-world decisions. The GDE government will approach decision-makers and tell them how many people support specific ideas.

- **Does the GDE intend to replace existing political institutions some day?**

The GDE creates more participation, more democracy, more efficiency, and more international cooperation. As such, it is not intended to replace existing institutions, but it can be used in addition to them.

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Examples from the Website of the Global Democracy Experiment

Please see the paper version of this document or go to: www.tgde.org