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CONSUL CON

DAY 2 - 11:20 - Main Stage

According to the users

Words from municipality representatives and CONSUL DEMOCRACY users **North Ayrshire**, **Montes de Oca**, **Flensburg**, **Nova Gorica** and **Nairobi**.

Session recap

At a glance

The closing panel of the morning plenary put CONSUL's users at the centre.

- Laura Taylor (North Ayrshire Council, Scotland)
- Annick Poirot (Municipality of Flensburg, Germany)
- Anthony Artiaga Méndez (Municipality of Montes de Oca, Costa Rica)
- Martha Lemba (Nairobi City County, Kenya) and
- Nika (Municipality of Nova Gorica, Slovenia)

They introduced their contexts, described a success story, shared lessons learned and answered audience questions on representativeness, moderation workload and marketing. A recurring theme was the combination of digital tools with in-person participation, and the role of transparent processes in rebuilding trust in local government.

Key messages

- CONSUL is used across very different contexts: from a 95,000-inhabitant German city to a metropolis of around 7 million daytime residents.
- Participatory budgeting is the most common entry point, often followed by a wider use of consultations, votes and document review.
- Digital participation works best when combined with in-person formats, especially for older people and those with fewer digital skills.
- Involving young people early builds lasting engagement: in North Ayrshire, young people vote from age eight and make up half the project review panel.
- Lowering barriers matters: Flensburg dropped mandatory registration and saw participation increase.
- Transparency rebuilds trust: when citizens can see the whole decision-making process, the administration 'cannot hide anything'.

Facts, figures and references

- North Ayrshire: 9 participatory budgeting cycles since 2022 and 40 consultations since January 2026. Young people vote from age 8 to 25.
- Flensburg: about 1,500 registered users. Typical processes attract 150 to 400 participants, mostly aged 25 to 50.
- Montes de Oca: participatory budget of about 10 percent of property tax revenue. Community leaders training programme with the University of Costa Rica.
- Nairobi: SemaNai platform, pilot planned around November. 85 wards, 17 sub-counties.
- Nova Gorica: European Capital of Culture (with Gorizia) last year.

Takeaways for the community

- Youth involvement, low entry barriers and hybrid formats emerged as the most transferable success factors.
- Cities want more peer exchange on how others tackle similar challenges, which supports the case for a stronger community of practice.
- Measuring representativeness remains a weak spot: most cities only know participant profiles when they ask in surveys.