Incubator for Participatory Democracy

World Forum for Democracy

Participation Index for Cities

District Antwerpen

July 2017

Introduction

The Council of Europe's participatory democracy incubator grew out of the World Forum for Democracy, an annual event, organised by the Council of Europe in collaboration with the French government, the Alsace Region and the city of Strasbourg, to debate key challenges for democracy worldwide and to highlight and encourage democratic innovation.
Through an open call, interested cities have been invited to apply for the first hackathon:

Amsterdam (Netherlands); Arnsberg (Germany); Bolton (United Kingdom); Bonn, (Germany); Bucharest (Romania); Falun (Sweden); Ghent (Belgium); Katowice, (Poland); Lisbon (Portugal); Madrid (Spain); Neapoli-Sykies (Greece); Nis (Serbia); Palermo (Italy); Reykjavik (Iceland).

These are the founding cities of the incubator for participatory democracy.

In 2017 other interested cities are joining, and to date we have received application from: *Bolton, Greater Manchester (United Kingdom.); District Antwerp (Belgium); Genk (Belgium); Messina (Italy); Mira (Italy); Reykjavik (Iceland)*.

The Incubator

The Participatory Democracy Incubator was conceived as a physical space, linked to a community, where project leaders can have access to support expertise, resources and services to prototype and grow their idea. The challenge was to adapt this concept to democracy, to find out what kind of ecosystem and support should be built around democratic innovations for a greater impact, while using the immense expertise and knowledge accumulated at the World Forum for Democracy. It brings together local decision-makers and democracy innovators from across the world to help transfer knowledge and create new ideas about increasing citizen participation and impact in cities' democratic decision-making.
The incubator participants debate in the context of interactive brainstorming sessions, solution and formation methods about strategies for solving expanding participatory, deliberative and direct democracy – locally and in a national scale; tools to provide to agencies to invest in citizen participation; ways to encourage successful participation of the diversity in the city in order to prevent democracy from becoming a privilege of some.

The Participatory Democracy Index is one of the tools used by the Incubator to help cities assess their achievements, identify challenges, and monitor progress over time.

Participatory city definition

The optimal strategy for participatory democracy on a city level would involve a demonstrated commitment to public participation. When public officials and other leaders make strong, clear claims about the value of participation, they can help

inspire citizens to get involved. Cities with a coherent regulatory and policy framework for participation are more likely to succeed.

Boards and commissions can be a powerful tool for public participation, especially if the members of these bodies believe that bringing other citizens to the table – not just representing their voices – is a key part of their role. When communities support regular, interactive, and meaningful participation on a broad range of issues, they are better able to meet the diverse needs and goals of citizens.

There are many different methods, tools, apps, and meeting formats for public participation. Because different tactics fit different goals and scenarios, and because citizens have diverse needs and goals, cities are more likely to succeed if they employ a wide variety of methods. While efforts to increase transparency and open government may not be sufficient to increase public participation, they are essential complements to participation initiatives. Transparency can increase government accountability, decrease corruption, and enable citizen problem-solving efforts by giving civic technologists access to government data.

Public participation is more likely to improve over time if it is being evaluated in regular, transparent, and interactive ways. If citizens themselves are involved in measuring and assessing engagement initiatives and structures, they will have a greater stake in the success of those efforts, and more ways to ensure that participation is equitable, accountable, and productive.

Methodology

The Participatory City Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 69 questions grouped in ten indicators. Including a set of sub-questions for some of the 69 questions, the cities can gain a maximum of 94 points. The points are converted into a percentage measure to ensure the comparability of results. The ten indicators include commitment, regulatory and policy framework, advisory boards and commissions, civic associations, range of issues, range of tactics, grassroots problem-solving, young people, transparency, and monitoring and evaluation. The index serves as a tool of self-assessment for the cities to critically evaluate and improve their structures for citizen participation.

Taking into account that a growing number of new cities are willing to join the Participatory Index, it might be decided to compare the cities not only within the entire sample, but also according to specific criteria to be developed (e.g. size of the city, number of inhabitants). It is believed that this approach would allow for more valid and useful comparison, visual presentation and filtering of the results.

District Antwerpen – an overview[1]

Antwerpen (Antwerp) is the largest city of the Flemish region in Belgium, and the second largest city of Belgium after Brussels, the capital city. Antwerpen is a

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[1] The overview of the city is inspired by the city's official webpage: https://www.antwerpen.be/nl/

flourishing economic centre in Belgium. The city has the second largest seaport in Europe after Rotterdam. In addition, Antwerpen is home to one of the largest diamond trade centres in the world. The city's main feature is the diversity in its districts. With hundreds of different nationalities, Antwerpen-Noord is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the city. Antwerpen is also home to orthodox Jews and many other faith communities. Moreover, the recent trend of mass migration being experienced across Europe has increasingly diversified the already multicultural districts of Antwerpen.

The city of Antwerpen is composed of nine districts – Antwerp, Berendrecht – Zandvliet-Lillo, Berchem, Borgerhout, Deurne, Ekeren, Hoboken, Merksem and Wilrijk. Eight of these districts used to be independent municipalities until 1983, when they merged with the (former) municipality of Antwerpen. In 2001, however, the city of Antwerpen opted for decentralisation and installed directly-elected district councils in order to reduce the gap between citizens and the authorities.

This report will focus on the district of Antwerpen, which has a population of 195,000 inhabitants. The percentage of citizens eligible to vote in the city is 57%, according to the city's answers to our index questionnaire.

Commitment

The optimal strategy for participatory democracy on a city level would involve a demonstrated commitment to public participation. Citizens are often doubtful about their ability to help solve public problems, and sceptical about the willingness of public officials to respond to their concerns. When public officials and other leaders make strong, clear claims about the value of participation, they can help inspire citizens to get involved.

The rate of achievement of the District's commitment is of 65%, higher than the City's sample's rate of 49%.

It is highly commendable that the District of Antwerpen has **formally adopted** a public statement declaring the importance of public engagement and explaining how citizens can participate. However, the District of Antwerpen, in order to systemize its participation strategy, has not yet developed a **participation plan**,or **official long-term strategy** guiding the participation efforts of different departments in a coordinated manner.

In order to keep its citizens informed about participation progresses in the city, the local administration produces a **newsletter** and some other regular bulletin that informs citizens about what the city government is doing, and how they can participate. Nonetheless, the District does not produce an **annual report** on the state of public participation.

Positively, the District of Antwerpen values the power of networking in all communication media, while reinforcing its image in its own institutional communication using social media tools.

Council meetings in Antwerpen are open to the public; however the city **has not** established a participation commission (an official body, broadly representative of the city's population, which is charged with overseeing public participation). We encourage the District to establish such a commission since it could provide energy

and ideas to realise opportunities for the district's community development, enhance a genuine engagement of its inhabitants, and offer people the capabilities needed to participate and deliberate well.

Furthermore, effective engagement by the citizens requires a political support for the genuine devolution of the decision-making process. Therefore, we encourage the District of Antwerpen to formally adopt a participation plan guiding the participation efforts of different departments or agencies in a coordinated manner – it could also facilitate collaboration with non-governmental organizations to support participation.

In Antwerpen there exist opportunities for citizens to give input on how participation should be structured and supported, as well as vote for particular policy decisions.

Lastly**,** we praise the District of Antwerpen for establishing an **annual awards programme** beneficial to support citizen engagement, supported by the city or by a non-governmental organisation, which recognise citizens, public officials, or other leaders for their efforts to support public participation.

Best Practice

The Auckland Plan (New Zeland)[2]

The Auckland Plan is strategy to get ideas and define the priorities of Aucklanders for the future of the city to develop and implement a broad-based thirty-year strategic plan of urban development. Many people have been involved in the preparation of this plan: Auckland residents, community groups, infrastructure providers, the central government, iwi (minority group), business groups and voluntary organisations have helped shape this plan for Auckland's future. Although the Mayor and Auckland Council have led its development, the Auckland Plan is for all of Auckland and all Aucklanders, and its successful implementation is based on the conviction that leadership, action, investment, and commitment from many organisations, groups and individuals is essential.

In 2009 the Royal Commission on Governance in Auckland recommended that a single council for Auckland be established to address its fragmented governance and poor community engagement. Since its inception on 1 November 2010, the Auckland Council has provided a new model of local government in New Zealand. The Council consists of the governing body (Mayor and 20 Councillors), as well as21 local boards, which represent the interests of local communities. This governance structure strengthens Auckland-wide leadership and provides effective local democracy.

Having a single council has given Auckland an unprecedented opportunity to plan for its future in an integrated way, and to bring together actions for better transport, environmental protection, improved land uses, housing growth, and

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[2] http://participedia.net/en/cases/auckland-plan-participatory-urban-planning-new-zealand

economic development in one plan, and with one authority responsible for their co-ordination.

The selection of participants for the draft of this Plan was open (self-selection) to all residents of Auckland, which means that everyone who was interested in participating could be part of the process. In addition, the Office of Ethnic Affairs supported the process and encouraged ethic communities to participate.

This process started on 23 March 2011 with the celebration of "Auckland Unleashed," a full-day summit attended by nearly 500 registered participants to discuss Auckland's future. For increasing the visibility of the process, national and local media members were invited to attend the event, which was held in the Aotea Centre (the largest performing arts centre of its kind in New Zealand).

Participants attended a series of workshops during which they could come up with a range of ideas and discuss the main priorities of the city that could contribute to Auckland.

Participant guides and information were distributed before the summit in the OurAuckland magazine, an official magazine delivered monthly to about 500,000 homes across the region to provide Aucklanders with information about activities, events and other news. This magazine is also available from local libraries, service centres and local board offices.

A discussion document (Workshop session summary— by workshop) was formulated to help prepare the draft Auckland Plan. Additionally, this document provided an opportunity for Aucklanders to offer feedback on proposed directions through comments via the website, post, email, Twitter, Facebook, and also by attending discussion events. The Auckland Council received around 8000 pieces of feedback representing ideas for consideration for the draft Auckland Plan.

Additionally, from late March to early August 2011, the Auckland Council staff also celebrated meetings with the twenty-one Local Boards and workshops co-hosted with organizations around the city, environmental and social/community groups, as well as with academic and professional institutions to receive about 1000 inputs to be considered during the writing of the draft Plan.

Following this, a first draft of the Auckland Plan was completed in June 2011 by the Auckland Council in consultation with Local Boards, government agencies and stakeholder organisations. Through four different plans, different priorities for Auckland's development were identified that would make it the world's most liveable city by 2040. These plans are: the Auckland Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, the City Centre Master Plan and the Waterfront plan. All the summary documents were translated to Maori, Chinese, Korean, Samoan and Tongan.

Then, the draft of the Auckland Plan was released for a fresh public consultation process. From 20 September to 31 October, reference copies of the plan were available on the official website and from local libraries, council service centres and

local board offices; and people were able to give feedback online, by post or at public road shows.

Outcome:

For the first time in New Zealand, this process has brought together data from, analysis of and insights on into the human, economic, environmental, social, cultural and other factors. Consequently, today Aucklanders are now better informed on the reality of the city and issues of other areas.

They also had the opportunity to produce creative and innovative ideas with a fresh outlook. At the Auckland Unleashed Summit, citizens could deliberate and define the priorities of the plan according to their interests and concerns. Those priorities received attention from decision makers and the media. Furthermore, the creation of the Auckland Plan was a chance for citizens to feel that they were making positive changes and producing long-term sustainable results within the region. In this sense, citizens had the possibility to directly influence public policies that will have an enormous impact on their lives, such as employment, public transport, education, and other areas, for the next thirty years.

Dialogue with the City[3]

Dialogue with the City's aim was to engage the citizens of greater Perth in developing a planning strategy to make the capital of the state of Western Australia the "world's most liveable city by 2030". The process included disseminating information to the public over several months, holding a deliberative forum on September 13, 2003 with 1,100 citizens, and then implementing the suggestions and decisions made at the forum. The final result was "Network City: A Community Planning Strategy for Perth and Peel." At the time is completed, it was the largest deliberative forum to be held in southern hemisphere. Dialogue with the City was modelled after the "Listening to the City" initiative organized in New York City to gather public input about how to rebuild the site of the World Trade Centre that was destroyed in the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001.

The main potential problems Dialogue with the city focused on were: economy and employment, sustainable environment, integrating transport and land use, residential land balance, costs of urban form, and infrastructure coordination. The government also wanted to come up with more creative ways to address those issues. The ultimate purpose was to come up with a plan to make Perth a sustainable city, but also by coming up with a strategy for the urban development of the city.

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[3] http://www.participedia.net/en/cases/dialogue-city

In many places, the regulations governing public participation are outdated and unclear. In other places, public officials and staff do not have the participation skills and resources they need. Cities with a coherent regulatory and policy framework for participation are more likely to succeed.

The rate of achievement of the city's regulatory and policy framework is of 86%, considerably higher than the City's sample's rate of 53%.

The District of Antwerpen has concrete regulations and policies that govern public participation. These regulations are reviewed on a regular basis. Moreover, public officials, staff, and citizens **understand** how the laws governing public participation are being interpreted and applied. Furthermore, Antwerpen has a well-used, widely known document – a policy, protocol, or set of procedures – that **helps public officials, staff, and citizens understand when and why to use specific participation approaches**. This document, however, does not explain how a specific approach will affect policy decisions.

Furthermore, the city has a small budget (0,5% of the annual district budget) for public participation and employs only a small team to support public participation activities (11% of the total city workforce).

Positively, Antwerpen's public administration provides **training opportunities for public officials and city staff** who want to learn more about how to support effective participation; and it facilitates, encourages, and supports public participation being included as a category in the job expectations of people serving in management-level positions for the city.

Best Practices

Action Planning[4]

Action Planning is an approach, rather than a specific method, which helps focus ideas and decide what steps you need to take to achieve particular goals. It is a

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[4] http://participationcompass.org/article/show/152

statement of what you want to achieve over a given period of time. Preparing an action plan is a good way to help reach objectives (this can apply to organisations and individuals). An effective action plan should give a definite timetable and set of clearly defined steps; for each objective there should be a separate action plan.

Action Planning is commonly used for town planning purposes on issues such as development, regeneration and identifying existing problems in an area. It is often local interest groups that come together to address the issues. These groups can consist of experts from different professions such as town planning and architecture, but can also include local citizens.

Action Plan events are generally structured in 5 phases:

1. A meeting of stakeholders, professionals and citizens where the issues are raised and investigated.

2. A series of topic and design workshops which are open to everyone.

3. A brainstorming of the ideas raised in the workshops.

4. An analysis of the ideas that have been put forward in the form of proposals.

5. The agreed proposals will be published in a report along with an outline of actions to be taken.

Participatory Training[5]

Participatory Training provides training and support for people who want to use participatory methods in their work to involve and engage others. This includes community consultation and research by involving community members in identifying priorities, developing solutions and action planning. They help people with community consultations by providing training for local residents and professionals.

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[5] http://www.participedia.net/en/organizations/participatory-training

Boards and commissions can be a powerful tool for public participation, especially if the members of these bodies believe that bringing other citizens to the table – not just representing their voices – is a key part of their role.

The rate of achievement in the field of advisory boards and commissions is of 58%, slightly higher than the City's sample's rate of 56%.

The city supports citizens' participation through **4 advisory boards/commission** (organised as a public body that have an official advisory role to government) on which citizens can serve. The members of these 4 boards are chosen through an **open application process** where anybody can apply. Unfortunately, the members of these 4 boards **are not** broadly representative of the larger population, in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income level, and immigrant/native-born. On a good note, its members **sometimes** lead public participation efforts that bring other citizens to the table. Likewise, public officials are obliged to **give information** to boards and commissions, and consider their recommendations.

Furthermore, meetings of the boards **are** structured and facilitated in ways that encourage productive dialogue, deliberation, and participation. Perhaps Antwerpen could improve by organising a roundtable process using online tools since it would be much more effective for acquiring broad input from the Antwerpeners, refining policy directions and forming the necessary consensus among its citizens.

Best Practice

Citizen Councils of Grenoble (France)[6]

France has expressed its desire for the enhancement of participatory democracy with the implementation of the "law on local democracy". Aiming at strengthening citizens' power within towns that have at least 3,500 inhabitants, this law encouraged a lot of cities, like Grenoble, to develop participatory processes. In 2002, Grenoble founded six participatory citizen councils for the six areas that

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[6] http://participedia.net/en/cases/citizen-councils-grenoble-france
  http://www.grenoble.fr/461-conseils-citoyens-independants.htm

composed the city. These "conseils consultatifs de secteurs" (CCS) have allowed citizens living in the six different districts to give their opinions about municipal projects and to express their concerns about the development of Grenoble.

Since 2002, residents of the city of Grenoble have been able to express their opinions and make recommendations on city planning, education, cultural life, and other municipal issues.

Any citizen interested in participating in an event can do so. Participants are self-selected and can participate on a volunteer basis. Information about how to join is disseminated via pamphlets, posters, and online websites. Each CCS involves a structure in which citizens and public officials share power, with an elected representative and a citizen serving as co-presidents. CCSs additionally involve three separate groups, each composed of about 50 people (the first one composed of motivated citizens, the second of associations, and the third of specific associations of the district). In addition, specific task groups are open to any citizen and are often organized to broaden the points of view on the different projects. Most of the plenary committees are held publicly so that the population can contribute its opinion. Recently, the city council has encouraged CCSs to make a special effort to involve young people, the elderly and non-national residents in the process.

Grenoble's mayor and city council are responsible for organising and overseeing the CCS program. Special liaisons exist in order to facilitate communication between the city's central government and the citizen councils. Every CCS is allocated a sum of €11,000 per year. This amount, however, is directed toward the functioning of the committees themselves, rather than the implementation of their proposals. The city government ultimately decides whether or not to pursue the recommendations of the CCSs, and is thus responsible for financing the projects. Every CCS has to meet at least once every three months in a plenary committee in order to discuss the main projects of Grenoble.

The majority of people involved in the CCSs claim that they are satisfied and would like to get even more involved in future projects of their city. At the end of the day, citizen participation, even if limited, was one of the main objectives behind the creation of the CCSs. Considering that the CCSs' organization and their role have evolved considerably between 2002 and 2011, becoming increasingly involved in every decision taken by the city Council, one may assume that their power and weight will grow within the next few years.

Kitchen Table Conversations[7]

A kitchen table discussion is a small, informal meeting that takes place in someone's home or a local cafe. Kitchen table discussion groups are often used in conjunction with other methods as part of a wider community engagement process.

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[7] http://participedia.net/en/methods/kitchen-table-conversations

During the meeting, participants discuss issues related to a broader project or topic. They may be provided with a guide or set of questions from interest groups or local governments, but there is no formal agenda for the meeting.

The aim of kitchen table conversations is to enable dialogue within the community, in a way that is informal and relaxed. Often the discussion is part of a suite of community engagement tools, and participants can receive a guide to the issue at hand, and possible questions they might want to discuss. The conversation can be about something broad like "what is important to you?" to a specific question like "what methods could be used to control wild horse populations in Kosciuszko National Park?"

Kitchen table discussions aim to build and deepen a sense of community and explore the range of opinions on an issue. It fosters community organising and can stimulate and nurture public debate.

Kitchen table discussions are hosted by volunteers who want to take part. In general they are part of a broader engagement process or connected to a particular organisation. Hosts can then invite who they want to join the discussion, generally around eight or nine people.

Most importantly, kitchen table conversations have been used effectively in Australia to stimulate community engagement. Voices for Indi, a community organisation in north-east Victoria has used the kitchen table model to encourage residents to discuss issues relevant to their locale. In total 53 conversations took place with 425 participants. Feedback was provided from the individual meetings and led to the production of a community report summarising the views represented from the kitchen tables on issues of politics and representation and community concerns. The conversations in Indi aimed to redirect attention and dialogue on the genuine concerns of the electorate - as opposed to the agendas promoted by partisan politicians. Following the campaign, an independent candidate won the seat in Indi.

The kitchen table model has the potential to play a key role in a healthy public sphere, contributing to democratic debate through encouraging dialogue and engagement on important issues.

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Civic associations

Many cities have civic associations, operating in neighbourhoods, schools, and other settings, which help to engage people in public life. These associations are better able to contribute to public participation when they are inclusive, broadly supported, and well-connected to government.

The rate of achievement in civic associations is 39% lower than the City's sample's rate of 60%.

Positively, in the District of Antwerpen there are **active online networks of citizens** in the majority of neighbourhoods, and active **neighbourhood associations** are also operational in the majority of neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood meetings, events, and online forums regularly attract large, diverse numbers of people. Unfortunately, the city does not have a neighbourhood council system or some other network that gives neighbourhood groups an **official** role in public decisions.

In the District of Antwerpen there is a system of tracking who participates in neighbourhood groups and neighbourhood meetings, though it is inconsistent. Additionally, Antwerpen **supports** training programs that help build the engagement capacity of neighbourhood groups, and there are also city employees who are tasked with maintaining communication between neighbourhood groups and local government.

As for **active parent groups and schools**,the District of Antwerpen has stated that it does not have any power in the field of Education, thus the district did not provide any information so to assess the commitment and involvement of such groups of people in the district's life. However, we remind the District of Antwerpen that parents' meetings could be structured and facilitated in ways that encourage productive dialogue, deliberation, and participation. Likewise, active online networks of some kind – either official or informal – in the majority of all schools would enhance the dialogue among public authorities, the district administration and educational institutions. The situation would be even better if the school system supported training programs that help build the engagement capacity of parent groups. The leadership of parent groups should be broadly representative of the

school population, in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income level, and immigrant/native-born. Communities and schools are important partners in promoting citizens engagement. Schools can also play an important role in a broader district strategy by creating supportive social networks for children, young people and families; providing a facility for community sport programmes and events; and building awareness and knowledge about physical activity. Secondary school students can serve as role models and coaches for younger children, and universities can assist the community by developing and evaluating special programmes in collaboration with the local community.

Moreover, faith communities, clubs and social groups along with ethnic associations help engage large numbers of people in public decision-making and problem-solving in the District of Antwerpen, widely using spaces for public participation events and activities.
On the other hand, community organising or ethnic associations do not help engage large numbers of people in public decision-making and problem-solving. Nonetheless, in district Antwerpen social events regularly help engage large numbers of people in public decision-making and problem-solving. Finally, most neighbourhoods have buildings that are welcoming, widely used spaces for public participation and activities.

Best Practice

C.A.R.O.N. – Community Alliance to Revitalise Our Neighbourhood: Violence Prevention by Engaging Youth and Immigrant Families[8]

C.A.R.O.N. (Community Alliance to Revitalize Our Neighborhood), an initiative of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office in USA, works to create strong and healthy immigrant families that are integrated into their community. C.A.R.O.N. works in partnership with schools, the faith community, youth groups, and parents. Family engagement and outreach programs offered through C.A.R.O.N. encourage civic participation by educating community members about their rights and responsibilities and help prevent youth violence by supporting on-going positive connections between law enforcement and community members. Outreach workers make home visits in response to referrals from schools and attend "house parties" hosted by trusted community members to share resources to reduce street violence and recruitment of minors into gangs. Sherriff's deputies convene and facilitate community dialogues to better understand concerns in the community and identify ways for the community and county officers to collaboratively address them.

C.A.R.O.N. also assists communities in organizing neighbourhood watch programs by sharing tools on how to start and operate these programs.

A recent Spanish Speaking Citizens Academy in Pescadero includes nursery and farm workers from the coastal community. Topics addressed in this seven or eight week course include: Drugs, Gang Awareness, Domestic Violence, California Highway Patrol (laws and procedures), Civic Engagement, County Emergency

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[8] http://participedia.net/en/cases/caron-community-alliance-revitalize-our-neighborhood-violence-prevention-engaging-youth-and

Services, K-9 Demonstration, Correctional Facility Tour and Communications Services including Dispatch.

A success story:

Lydia moved from Mexico to the unincorporated North Fair Oaks community, an ethnically diverse community that is significantly less affluent than many other communities in the county. Fearing that her children might fall victim to street violence or possible recruitment by gangs she was considering returning to Mexico when she attended a C.A.R.O.N. community dialogue.

Lydia had reservations about law enforcement officers due in part to her experience with law enforcement in her native Mexico. The deputy sheriffs that worked with the C.A.R.O.N. program helped Lydia overcome that fear and hesitation, "I had the opportunity to see first-hand how the Sheriff's officers talked to the kids and the parents. We saw the other face. They are like us. I learned that the deputy sheriffs are not only there to enforce the law, but always there to help people."

Making a positive connection with a local law enforcement officer and learning about her rights and responsibilities in her new community led Lydia to enrol in and complete parenting classes and an eight-session Citizens Academy. With her youngest son in high school, she is a student at Canada College and works for the Redwood City School District as a yard duty officer. Lydia is giving back to the community as a literacy tutor for parents and supports the county by helping newcomers transition into the community.

Lessons Learned:

Some immigrants have an inherent fear and distrust of law enforcement based on their experiences in their country of origin or as recent immigrants in the United States.

Positive, personal interactions between local law enforcement and community residents can be a powerful violence prevention strategy as it helps strengthen communications and build mutual trust.

Partnering with trusted community members can help law enforcement and other local officials build connections with immigrant communities, which in turn can lead to better informed public programs.

Bi-lingual staff or staff who comes from immigrant families can be effective bridge builders between local government and the communities they serve.

Volunteers can help connect newcomers to local governments thus decreasing the burden on staff.

Makers Point[9]

Hunts Point Habla! is a community-cantered planning project led by Makers Point in Hunts Point, Bronx (USA). The Hunts Point Habla! Team is reaching out to residents to hear what they think about their community and how they wish to improve the quality of life in Hunts Point. At the end of this project, Makers Point will identify projects that have community support and work with residents to make their great ideas happen.

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[9] http://www.makerspoint.org/projects/

Hunts Point Habla! is a capacity building program model, supported in part by the Hunts Point Alliance. Makers Point is empowering a team of young, local leaders to lead the initiative. This team is attending community events and engaging with residents at local events and gathering places. Their goal is to reach as broad, inclusive, and representative group of residents as possible and start building a network of residents that can support projects with their social, political, and intellectual capital in the years to come.

Most cities face a range of challenges and opportunities that affect citizens and that deserve productive public participation. When communities support regular, interactive, and meaningful participation on a broad range of issues, they are better able to meet the diverse needs and goals of citizens.

The rate of achievement in range of issues is of 21%, lower than the City sample's rate of 44%; although it must be stressed that for some issues-fields the District is not entitled to any power.

The District of Antwerpen has experimented with a range of different issue to involve citizens in policy-making.

These issues could include, for example,, planning and land use, public health, education, budgeting and public finance, transportation, policing and public safety, and racism and cultural difference.

A high quality citizen participation in each of the fields would need to involve large numbers of people (at least 5% of the population), except for planning and land use. We do not have enough information to assess if the people who participate are broadly representative of the larger population; however participation should strive to be more interactive, i.e. it should facilitate two-way communication between citizens and government, as well as among different kinds of citizens. In the District of Antwerpen, there are not opportunities to participate at least once a month, and the participation experience should make a greater effort to provide people with the information they need. The participatory experiences should also give people a chance to discuss why the issue matters to them and provide people with a range of choices or policy options to consider. The participatory activities must have a clear impact on policymaking in order to be more meaningful, as well as enable people to take action in a variety of ways (e.g. as volunteers, or in committees or task forces, or through other groups and networks in the community).

Positively, in the District of Antwerpen participatoryactivities in different fields (although we do not have received enough background information for all the fields) are enjoyable for people. Moreover, in the District of Antwerpen there are

not meaningful opportunities to participate on other key public issues. However, we would like to stress the need to also improve participation on other issues of citizens' concern.

Best Practice

Consensus Forum[10]

Consensus forums are a popular method of deliberative democracy when complex, broad policy issues require a workable if not peaceable agreement among disparate groups. Where the two differ is in the number of active participants in the plenary session. While consensus conferences call together a limited number of people (10-15) to formulate questions to a panel of experts and so come to a decision, consensus forums often involve 80-130 individuals who work in small groups to develop points of consensus. The forum format is more amenable to situations in which the policy issue is sufficiently broad to demand a range of suggested approaches rather than one plan of attack (Aspiri 2010). Consensus forums are often deployed in broader policy areas such as sustainability and the environment where a number of different approaches may be taken to effect the same result.

There is no one participant selection method used in the service of consensus forums but many different approaches taken depending on the context. For example, the NCDD recommends that a Community Reference Group - made up of but not limited to stakeholders, community leaders, and government representatives - be established to oversee the entire process and ensure that it is transparent and respectful (NCDD 2008). As well, to ensure that a broad range of views and opinions are represented and that there is a balance of stakeholders and non-aligned citizens, the NCDD recommends three selection methods:

1. Community members responding to invitations sent to a large random sample of the population, usually targeted to geographical areas and other relevant demographic criteria

2. Community members responding to advertisements in state wide and local newspapers

3. Invitations sent to the broadest range of stakeholders, including industry groups, community lobby groups, interest groups, state and local government.

Following the forum, the lead decision maker chooses and leads an Implementation Team consisting of a diverse group of forum participants. The Team is charged with compiling all consensus decisions and developing a 'plan of attack'. Depending on the breadth and complexity of the topic addressed at the forum, sub-Teams or 'Project Teams' may be established to deal with different areas of the issue. For example, a forum held on sustainability may require one Team to work on air pollution and another to focus on agricultural degradation. To assist them in their endeavours, each project Team is supplied with one or more industry experts to deal with the more technical aspects associated with the implementation of the

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[10] http://participedia.net/en/methods/consensus-forum

forum's recommendations. It is preferable that each project Team consist of at least one member from the head Implementation Team.

It is important that event planners be open to criticism before, during and after the forum so that problems can be addressed as they come up and so that we, as practitioners and scholars, may learn more about the efficacy of certain modes of action. During the forum, table facilitators will check-in periodically with the lead moderator to provide feedback on the process. The facilitators will also be debriefed following the event so they can discuss what they learned and what aspects of the process might be improved in future.

Participants are also a welcome source of feedback on the process either through surveys; Open-ended questionnaires or in-person interviews.

Active Citizens[11]

Active Citizen is Moscow's citizen engagement app that asks Muscovites their opinion on city issues – like transport, healthcare and education – on a weekly basis. Participation is incentivized through a points system, where citizens receive points when they vote in a poll or e-referendum. Points can then be exchanged for city services like rent-a-bike, parking spaces or theatre tickets.

The Active Citizen app is an initiative embarked upon by the new city government wherein citizens of Moscow gain access to the platform via a smartphone app and a website. The project sees citizens weigh in on issues and polls via questions related to the functioning of the city of Moscow and its regional government. Citizens have up to a fortnight to vote before results of the survey are sent over to the agency that put forth the question. At this point, the agency has a fortnight to decide on a decision upon how it would then fulfill the wishes of the majority.

DigiTel – Tel Aviv[12]

DigiTel wants to provide residents with a single interface with the city; a digital, innovative, streamlined, and easily accessible platform through which all interactions between resident and municipality could occur.

Specifically, DigiTel is a personalised digital communications network, designed for residents with a focus on their interests, location, day-to-day activities and transport options.

Open to all residents of Tel Aviv, aged 13 and over, DigiTel allows the municipality to build a personalised view of each of the residents. On the basis of this unique view, Tel Aviv is able to offer residents relevant information, activities at their local community centres, and special deals on interesting events at cultural venues and sports arenas. The information is delivered via messages and notifications.

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[11] https://www.mos.ru/en/news/item/25221073/

[12] http://citiscope.org/story/2015/tel-avivs-digitel-e-government-app-and-smart-card-all-one
http://citie.org/stories/digital-governor-story/

In order to register, citizens are required to sign up at designated sites to self-authenticate, and upon registration, users are given the opportunity to create a unique profile, indicating their personal and social preferences. Once a profile is generated, the municipality is able to send citizens information, updates and offers of importance and relevance.

For example, residents can be informed of road closures and advised to take alternative routes. Similarly, if a resident indicates an interest in sports, they are notified about the Tel Aviv marathon and offered a discount on the registration fee.

An exciting joint venture is with local theatres – when and if theatre tickets are not sold, the municipality can use the residents card to direct citizens to heavily reduced tickets. This is a win-win situation for the theatre as well as the citizens who indicated they were interested in culture.

DigiTel has also made previously burdensome transactional tasks simpler and more resident-orientated. For example, previously residents were required to physically collect a regional parking validation for their car in order to park freely in their neighbourhood. But through DigiTel, residents can now apply online for a regional parking validation and have it delivered personally to them by courier free of charge.

Ultimately, through DigiTel, the municipality is providing customised digital services to its residents – at any time and from any place.

6

Range of tactics

There are many different methods, tools, apps, and meeting formats for public participation. Because different tactics fit different goals and scenarios, and because citizens have diverse needs and goals, cities are more likely to succeed if they employ a wide variety of methods.

The rate of achievement in range of tactics is of 80%, considerably higher than the City's sample's rate of 44%.

The District of Antwerpen has used a wide range of different methods and tactics to support public participation and involve citizens in policy-making. Some of these include **Social Media Aggregation tools** to find common words and strings of words online and Surveys and Polls – both offline and online – which allow the city has collected the citizens' opinions on different subjects. Additionally, the district uses keypad polling using handheld polling devices or smartphones. Facilitated, **face-to-face small-group discussions** are used by the district to delve more deeply into people's views and perspectives, as well as the values, needs, and concerns that lie behind people's beliefs. Genk uses this method to also test how people's opinions change when presented with different options or pieces of information.

Smartphone-based tools allow citizens residing in the District of Antwerpen to enter data about particular problems and conditions, such as potholes, graffiti, and environmental hazards.

Via **crowdsourcing on online platforms,** and through face-to-face exercises, the city allows people to suggest ideas and then rank, refine, and comment on the ideas generated by the crowd. Furthermore, the city also uses online initiative that enable people to ask for or donate money, and small-grant programs run by institutions to support volunteer projects.

Unfortunately, Distric Antwerpen does not utilize online or face-to-face exercises, which wouldgive citizens a chance to test their knowledge, strengthen their relationships, or come up with their own solutions to public problems. Likewise,

online technologies that incorporate individual contributions into a central map, database or document are still not employed. In some cases they could be a precious mean to help people interacting and negotiation in areas where their contribution differ.

It is remarkable that in Antwerpen **Collaborative Planning Processes** bring people together for economic development reasons. The District organises Participatory Budgeting activities through which large, diverse numbers of people deliberate, plan, and vote on how to spend a proportion of public money. In such Public Deliberation exercises, citizens, public officials, public employees, and other stakeholders could also interact in small-group sessions where they share experiences, consider a range of policy options, and decide together what should be done.

Furthermore, online initiatives that enable people to ask for or donate money, and small-grant programs run by institutions to support volunteer projects are present in the city as well.

Best Practice

Budget Hero[13]

Can You Balance the Federal Budget better than a politician?

Budget Hero is a popular serious game which helps people of all ages understand the federal budget and the trade-offs involved in the budgetary process, have launched an Election Edition to illuminate the budget impact of policies championed by President Barack Obama and Gov. Mitt Romney as well as those related to the impending "fiscal cliff."

Budget Hero invites players to explore the financial and social impact of proposed cuts and expenditures as they create, test and compare their own federal budgets. Players can earn "badges" by "playing" policy cards that correspond with their values. Players across all demographics – including elder players – demonstrated a willingness to reduce the benefits going to the elderly including increasing the cost of drugs for wealthier seniors, raising the Social Security age, and slowing the increase of Social Security benefits.

The updated version 2017 contains 27 new policies in all, including the Ryan Medicare and Medicaid Plans; Taxing Sugar-Sweetened Beverages; Changing Distribution of Social Security Benefit. Through Budget Hero you can hack away at government pork and make your own decisions about health care, military spending, or environmental protection. Choose one to three "badges" that reflect your political values. Then try to earn these badges by choosing from more than 70 policy options. The game is built on the Congressional Budget Office model, which incorporates pro and con arguments for each policy, drawn from dozens of sources, and vetted to ensure the game is nonpartisan. You can check how long it takes

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[13] https://www.wilsoncenter.org/budget-hero

before your budget goes bust. The results can be shared with friends via Facebook or Twitter eventually.

Tools for collaborative policy planning- Consul[14]

In terms of collaborative policy making *Consul* is an e-government and e-participation digital platform software originally developed for the Madrid City government.

Since it launched in September 2015, new features have been added and other cities have started to use the software to develop their own participatory digital platforms – including Barcelona.

The main principles on which the platform is based are: open participation, transparency, the combination of online and offline participation, and citizen empowerment. The platform helps to manage the complexity of participation, which is often a challenging task for councils.

The platform brings government closer to the population by opening up direct participatory channels for policy making.

Consul allows citizens to be an active part of the city government by offering them different kinds of participatory mechanisms for direct democracy, deliberation and other collaborative political practices.

Consul allows users to launch collective debates, to propose and support proposals, to organise physical meetings, to run citizen surveys, to organize votes on how investment should be distributed, or to write laws in a collaborative way. In summary, a key value has been to integrate several functionalities into the same digital participatory platform.

What are the main strengths?

- The platform provides an open space for sharing and discussing the things that matter to citizens;

- it allows citizens to submit proposals related to the kind of city that they want to live in;

- citizens can vote on whether to accept or reject the most supported proposals. If a proposal is accepted by the majority, the City Council accepts it as its own and makes it happen;

- it enables citizens vote to decide how to distribute investment across the city and the districts.

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[14] http://tools.dcentproject.eu/
   http://www.decide.madrid.es
   http://www.decidim.barcelona

7

Grassroots problem-solving

Citizens have more ways to contribute to public problem-solving than ever before. Productive public participation strategies encourage and support citizens to take action in a variety of ways.

The rate of achievement of the District in this field is of 67%, considerably higher than the City's sample's rate of 35%.

In their public statements about the value of participation, **public officials and staff support the idea that citizens can help contribute to solving public problems**. However, participation opportunities are not organised in a way that allows citizens to discuss and opportunities for them to take action.

Positively, the District runs a **small-grant program to support the implementation of action ideas**. The creation of a small-grant program would support the implementation of citizens' action ideas.

The city **does not** support an annual citizens' academy or some other training program for citizens. Setting up a training system for citizens would help the District to familiarise the public with common local police procedures, activities, opportunities and most importantly, it would create a roadmap for a community's future.

It is worth noticing that the District has already set up an **annual awards program – supported by the city and/or perhaps by a non-governmental organization – which recognizes citizens for their efforts to solve public problems**.

Finally, **young people** play an active role in the District's community development, and they contribute a certain number of **volunteer hours before graduation**.

<u>Best Practice</u>

Edinburgh Living Lab[15]

It is an initiative that capitalises on local talent and use data-driven analysis to develop games, apps, communication platforms, and other digital products that make the region more vibrant and sustainable.

Edinburgh Living Lab is a city-wide collaboration whose founding partners are the City of Edinburgh Council and the University of Edinburgh. Our goal is to bring academia, the public sector, industry and the third sector together in order to work with citizens in co-designing, testing and implementing new services, processes and products that generate social, environmental and economic value. It is radically interdisciplinary and comprises a set of resources, knowledge, tools, and relationships that will develop over time.

The complex problems of modern cities require holistic approaches, and the Living Lab brings together knowledge, experience and partnerships to explore new approaches to innovation, sustainable development and informed policy-making in the city. Our approach combines data-driven analysis and participatory design techniques to support social innovation.

A key part of our conception of a Living Lab includes carrying out participatory research with 'end users' through small-scale experiments. This contributes to developing a better understanding of the people and systems in which a proposed intervention or activity is situated and what kind of impact it may have. It is also part of an iterative process of experimenting / refining / redefining an intervention to make sure that it really works in the way that it is intended to.

Better Neighbourhoods- Better Reykjavik[16]

Better Neighbourhoods won the Nordic Best Practice Challenge in category 1 "Public Communications". Over 70.000 people have participated to this project out of 120.000 inhabitants. The 15 top ideas are processed by the city of Reykjavik every month; so far 476 ideas have been approved.

The aim of the project is to improve the quality of the inhabitants' surroundings. Through this inventive project, the residents are offered influence beyond what is normally seen in a representative democracy. The city of Reykjavik has found a successful strategy to enhance public participation in the municipality.

Specifically, Better Reykjavik is an all year idea gathering and prioritisation by citizens for the City of Reykjavik. Every month 10-15 top ideas in 10 categories are moved into city administration for processing. Citizens are informed via website and by email with reasons for decisions.

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[15] http://edinburghlivinglab.org/
[16] http://www.citizens.is/portfolio/better-neighborhoods-helps-citizens-understand-the realities-of budgeting/
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/12RZZG2M3sCYP7uBhpyI7MytzwLsumXgWcgfpxPewrY/edit?usp=sharing

About the process:

1. Citizens submit their ideas;

2. The city of Reykjavik evaluates their cost;

3. Citizens vote on the ideas;

4. The city of Reykjavik executes them;

5. Citizens use the results.

What kind of ideas do citizens submit?

Issues vary from improving the environment, facilitating playing, and improving pedestrian and cycling transport within the scope of the city.

Citizens can vote for the ideas: the vote is electronic, binding and secure. 107 ideas were voted in by citizens in 2015. One vote per person is ensured by strict authentication.

The city executes the ideas: some ideas are realized in a few weeks, other ideas take over a year. It depends on many factors, such as the number of departments and the people to be involved, as well as the planning of regulations.

Citizens use the results: from benches to footpaths to dog parks to better lighting to playgrounds. More trees, trashcans, repair pavements, food gardens, added speed bumps or pedestrian lights. Improvements from Better Neighbourhoods are easily found in all areas of the city of Reykjavik.

As the adult citizens of the future, young people need experiences and education that prepare them for their future roles. But young people can also be dynamic leaders in the present. Productive participation strategies tap into the present and future civic capacity of young people.

The rate of achievement of the District's commitment to young people is 67%, lower than the City's sample's rate of 79%. The District did not provide some answers in this field considering that it is not entitled power in the field of education and youth.

Hopefully, in the District of Antwerpen, young people have meaningful opportunities to address key issues facing students within the school system. However, the district did not provide any information with respect to educational aspects of students' life in Antwerpen. On a good note, outside the school system, there are meaningful opportunities for young people to take part in public decision-making and problem-solving. Additionally, the District of Antwerpen fully supports a youth council as well; even though people who take part in the youth council are not broadly representative of the larger youth population, in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income level, and immigrant/native-born. This youth council can present recommendations to local government, and it regularly organises participation opportunities that bring other young people to the table.

Best Practice

Youth Participatory District Councils[17]

The Youth Participatory District Council is a space for permanent participation made up of councillors elected in the neighbourhood assemblies in the first round of the Participatory Budget (PPJoven – Argentina). Once the first round is concluded, the totality of the councillors reunite and determines what will be the mode of operation

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[17] http://participedia.net/en/cases/participatory-budget-joven-de-rosario

of the youth participatory council, which is coordinated by a technical team in the Youth Centre.

The main function of the Participatory Council is to systematise and re-elaborate the demands made by their peers, by additionally identifying the responsibilities which each one of the jurisdictions of the state (municipal, provincial, national) in each given demand. Accordingly, the councillors can develop projects which, in the first place, were presented to the city mayor and the municipal cabinet for its technical and financial evaluation, which will be discussed by youth participating in the second round.

There were two main reasons for the interest in this initiative. The first was low turnout among youth, and the second being the representative political crisis which has affected the country since the end of the 90s. This particularly affects the youth population, thereby generating widespread apathy and lack of motivation concerning participation in political matters.

The PPJoven has the followed general objectives:

- Enlarge the capabilities of the youth to achieve social and political inclusion starting with the recognition of their rights as citizens;

- strengthen relations between the local state and youth civil society organizations to generate connections which aim to improve the quality of life among the youth in particular and society in general.

As specific objectives it states:

- Promote and diffuse the PP of Rosario among the youth;

-Create discussion and debate spaces concerning the problems concerning participatory democracy, citizen rights, and management controls on municipal matters.

PPJoven not only tries to strengthen the participation of young people, both individually and as a sector to influence and make decisions in public institutions; but also is committed to the formation of citizenship regardless of the immediate and visible results, such as the works and activities carried out based on the decision of the young people.. It hopes to change the way citizen participation and its relation to management is thought about.

Santa Barbara's Youth Speak-Outs[18]

The City of Santa Barbara's Youth Council plays an important role in providing city leaders with information about the needs and desires of youth in their community. The council, composed of 16 high school students and 4 junior high students from the community, holds twice yearly "Youth Speak-Outs".

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[18] http://www.ca-ilg.org/case-story/santa-barbaras-youth-speak-outs

These forums give young people a chance to make their voice heard on important local issues that affect both youth and adults in the community. The youth council members collaborate with other area youth organizations and school in order to draw a large number of young people to these events that represent a broad cross section of the community.

Topics have included teen violence, suicide, the media's influence on young people, graffiti, and teen drug and alcohol abuse. After each Youth Speak Out, Youth Council members make a presentation to the Mayor, City Council, and other relevant decision makers to let them know how youth in their community feel about an important local issue.

According to Teen Programs Supervisor Susan Young, the Youth Council has been very effective at creating positive change in their community. The council members have worked with local leaders to get a teen centre and skate park for their city.

After one speak out on teen drug and alcohol abuse, the youth council made a presentation to the city council asking them to consider passing a social host ordinance, which would hold adults who host parties with underage drinking youth legally responsible. The city council asked youth commission members to work with them on developing and writing the ordinance, and asked two of the teens to join city council members on the committee that considered the issue. When the committee voted to go ahead with the ordinance and send it to the full city council for final approval, members of the Youth Council, along with youth from the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Teen Coalition, made a presentation at the city council meeting about why they thought the ordinance should be passed.

The city council voted unanimously to approve the social host ordinance in July of 2008.

While efforts to increase transparency and open government may not be sufficient to increase public participation, they are essential complements to participation initiatives. Transparency can increase government accountability, decrease corruption, and enable citizen problem-solving efforts by giving civic technologists access to government data.

The rate of achievement as for this indicator is of 50%, lower than the City's sample's rate of 63%.

On this note, it is a positive point that the District has an **official website**. The website could be enriched by the **live streaming** of public meetings, potentially with opportunities for remote interaction by citizens.

Moreover, the District releases data on public services and financial data in machine-readable formats (such as PDF). However, this does not apply to public meetings.

Unfortunately the District **does not** support Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) but does support efforts to help the local civic tech community use public data. Additionally, it helps citizens understand and use public data.

Best Practice

London Datastore[19]

The London Datastore has been created by the Greater London Authority (GLA) as a first step towards freeing London's data. They want everyone to be able access the data that the GLA and other public sector organisations hold, and to use that data however they see fit – for free. The GLA is committed to using its connections and influence to request other public sector organisations into releasing their data here too, and it's an objective backed strongly by Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London.

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[19] https://data.london.gov.uk/

The Datastore now contains 850 datasets with open APIs covering 16 themes from employment and skills to transparency and health, allowing entrepreneurs the opportunity to use the data to create new businesses and solve city problems.

In 2015 it won the ODI Open Data Publisher Award.

Raw data often doesn't tell you anything until it has been presented in a meaningful way and most people do not have the tools to do this. That is why we are keen for you to visualise or build apps from the data available.

Citizen notifications[20]

Citizen notification is a service that lets citizens sign up to receive information on municipal decisions of interest to them; using the municipal open API on town hall agendas, the platform allow citizens to sign up to be notified about several decisions.

Currently in use in Helsinki, it also offers citizens the opportunity to participate in decisions that involve their municipality, and crowd sources content that can then be used in the decision making process. Its aim is to create more online and offline political engagement.

The tool allows citizens to search for municipal decisions that match their interests. Once a citizen has performed a search, they are given the option of subscribing to future municipal decisions which match their search criteria. Their email address and search criteria are then stored and emails are generated and sent when a new decision is made. On the decision pages, users can share the issues to social media and - importantly - they can open up a discussion related to that tool.

D-CENT tools[21]

There are many open source products for citizen engagement that cities can immediately test, instead of building their own with limited budget or knowledge of what they hope to achieve through increased engagement.

For example cities could look to the European D-CENT project, a toolbox of direct democracy and collaborative policymaking products, based on open standards, APIs and shared identity systems, to take their first steps in digital citizen engagement or build on growing systems.

D-CENT (Decentralised Citizens Engagement Technologies) is a Europe-wide project bringing together citizen-led organisations that have transformed democracy in the past years, and helping them to develop the next generation of open source, distributed, and privacy-aware tools for direct democracy and economic empowerment.

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[20] https://fi.okfn.org/paatokset-nakyviin/
    http://decisions.okf.fi/
[21] http://tools.dcentproject.eu/

D-CENT has run large-scale pilots in Spain, Iceland, and Finland through Lean UX experimentation and by leveraging existing network movements with a user-base of tens of thousands of people. D-CENT builds on some of Europe's largest experiments in direct democracy, including:

1. the Open Ministry site for crowdsourcing legislation linked into parliament in Finland;
2. The e-democracy website Better Reykjavik in Iceland developed by the Citizens Foundation;
3. Podemos, the new bottom-up Spanish political movement;
4. The municipal citizen coalitions Barcelona en Comù and Ahora Madrid.

The D-CENT tools enable citizens to keep informed and participate in issues that matter to them.

Public participation is more likely to improve over time if it is being evaluated in regular, transparent, and interactive ways. If citizens themselves are involved in measuring and assessing engagement initiatives and structures, they will have a greater stake in the success of those efforts, and more ways to ensure that participation is equitable, accountable, and productive.

The rate of achievement in this field is of 63%, considerably higher than the City's sample's rate of 20%.

Unfortunately, the District of Antwerpen **does not have** a widely used, well-understood plan or protocol for evaluating public participation processes; it lacks a plan or protocol for evaluating public participation processes and outcomes. It also lacks a system for evaluating the outcomes of these processes. However, **there exists a process** for tracking the long-term effects of public participation on key social indicators. In this context, **participatory processes and outcomes need to be viewed through an equity lens**. The District **uses** surveys, questionnaires, or other evaluation instruments to **evaluate individual participation opportunities**. The results of evaluations should be made publicly available and broadly disseminated. Lastly, there are regular opportunities for public officials, staff, and citizens to analyse participation evaluations and make recommendations.

The district of Antwerp has a PB for 10% of the annual budget of the district. Citizens can decide on every topic within the powers the district. (Public space, planning, land use, youth, culture, sports and so forth).

Best Practice

Delphi Survey[22]

A Delphi Survey is a series of questionnaires that allow experts to develop ideas about potential future developments around an issue. The questionnaires are

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[22] http://participedia.net/en/cases/use-delphi-method-develop-horse-control-strategy

developed throughout the process in relation to the responses given by participants.

Delphi Surveys are used to gather collective forecasts through questionnaires about likely or possible developments in particular areas. Delphi Surveys can be carried out face to face, online or by post. In online versions, participants are given their own login and password to access the site. This is useful when the expert participants are very busy people. The technique aims to derive the benefit of the opinions of a group of experts, while avoiding the disadvantages of 'group-think' and group dynamics where certain individuals dominate the discussion. The process takes place in a number of stages:

- The first questionnaire either asks the participants to individually identify issues and generate as many ideas as possible or to answer more close ended questions such as the likely dates for specific developments.
- The second questionnaire anonymously feeds back all the ideas and forecasts sent in the first round to all participants. This questionnaire also provides space for participants to refine each idea, comment on their strengths or weaknesses and to suggest new ideas.
- An additional questionnaire then summarises the input from the second questionnaire and asks for further clarification, strengths, weaknesses, and new ideas. This stage can be repeated as many times as necessary until consensus on key points is reached.
- The end product is either a consensus amongst the participants on likely and possible future developments, or a wide range of possible developments and their relative strengths and weaknesses.

Conclusions

The District of Antwerpen has an aggregate participatory city index of 57%, higher compared with the city's sample of 50%.

Overall, The District of Antwerpen has a good strategy for participatory democracy and a demonstrated commitment to public participation; however, the city has not yet developed a participation plan or other **official** long-term strategy guiding the participatory efforts of different departments in a coordinated manner. Despite this, the District of Antwerpen has a coherent regulatory and policy framework for participation, and it is commendable that the District's public administration provides training opportunities for public officials and city staff who want to learn more about how to support effective participation.

Furthermore, it is worth recalling that boards and commissions can be a powerful tool for public participation at the local level. Positively, the District of Antwerpen has established four advisory boards on which citizens can serve. The District has also aimed to have online civic associations, specifically operating in neighbourhoods, which help to engage people in public life. It is worth pointing out, however, that these associations are better able to contribute to public participation when they are inclusive, broadly supported, and well-connected to the local government.

Antwerpen is facing a range of challenges and opportunities that affect citizens and that deserve productive public participation. Its district community supports participation on a broad range of issues. However, the city still needs to improve in terms of inclusiveness and regular support. It is also worth mentioning that the District of Antewerpen uses different methods and tactics to support public participation and involve citizens in policy-making.

Definitely, Antwerpen would require having more ways to allow its citizens to contribute to public problem-solving than ever before. Indeed, productive public participation strategies encourage and support citizens to take action in a variety of ways.

Although we do not know if Antwerpen's young people have meaningful opportunities to address key issues related to participation, youth are very much supported outside of the school system. The District's efforts to increase transparency and open government could definitely lead to enhanced public participation; they are essential complements to participation initiatives. Indeed, transparency can increase government accountability, and enable citizen problem-solving efforts by giving civic technologists access to government data.

The findings suggest that there is space for improvement in light of participatory policies in the city. The District could identify useful insights and examples from other cities and civil society organisations in the fields of commitment, regulatory and policy framework, advisory boards and commissions, civic associations, range of issues, range of tactics, grassroots problem-solving, young people, transparency, monitoring and evaluation, and remain an active member city of the participatory democracy incubator to improve the District's index results.

Recommendations

When it comes to participatory policies, with reference to the survey results, the District of Antwerp could enhance the fields below by introducing different actions, while taking into account the worldwide best practices suggested throughout index report as inspiration:

Boards and commissions: The District's meetings of boards and commissions should be structured and facilitated in ways that encourage productive dialogue, deliberation, and participation. Most importantly, they should be inclusive while taking into account the population diversity. Likewise, they should regularly use online tools to interactively engage the public.

The most important function for an advisory board or commission is to serve as a creative source of ideas in the policy making process. A board can collect and respond to the needs of the community. This kind of approach often leads to new ideas, as this advisory body may develop into an innovative group of citizens that will suggest new alternatives to the local administration. Perhaps, the District may start with setting up a local issue forum, where everyone has a greater voice in local decisions and in local public policy making. Indeed, one of the most important features of a local Issues Forum is that it is citizen-driven. Anyone can introduce a topic, concern, or idea for discussion as long as it relates to an issue that impacts the quality of life in the local community. A local Issues Forum empowers individual citizens to bring their ideas, suggestions, and concerns to the forefront of public attention.

In boards and commissions, city staff members are usually assigned as a liaison to work with a board and commission. City boards should draw upon staff expertise as a resource to adequately perform their assigned functions and to provide valuable advice. Therefore, the relationship should be mutually beneficial.

Even in communities with alert and accountable news media, information about important proposed policy changes may not get to affected citizens for some time. Advisory boards can offer a feedback link to the governing board members, as well as take information to the citizens. A synergy with local media may help with this process since the advisory board itself is usually newsworthy. As for inspiration, the District may find interesting some best practices suggested throughout this document.

Civic associations: Civic associations, operating in neighbourhoods, schools, and other settings, help to engage people in public life. Therefore, the District of Antwerpen may wish to consider setting up a neighbourhood council system or some other network that gives neighbourhood groups an official role in public decisions. The District should also come up with a strategy to structure and facilitate neighbourhood groups in ways that encourage productive dialogue, deliberation, and participation. It is advisable for the leadership of most neighbourhood groups to be broadly representative of the neighbourhood, in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income level, and immigrant/native-born. Social media tools are powerful for citizens' participation also through the school system.

Transparency: Public meetings should be televised or live streamed, with opportunities for remote interaction by citizens. Release financial data in machine-readable formats. Transparency is a key element of public trust and confidence. A commitment to transparency demonstrates to the community that the city and its officials have nothing to hide and that the local administration is accountable.

There are a variety of ways to show this commitment: 1) conscientious observance of transparency laws; 2) concerted efforts to share information with the public about local agency operations and decision-making process; 3) commitment to engaging the public.

Above all, it should be stressed that transparency of public authorities is a key feature of good governance and a gauge of a pluralistic and democratic society. The right of access to official documents is also essential to the self-development of people and to the exercise of their rights. It also strengthens public authorities' legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens, and its confidence in them. To this aim, it is worth recalling the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents and the Open Government Partnership's subnational government initiative; the latter a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In this view, cities and subnational governments are where considerable action and innovation takes place on

open government. Local transparent governments can have a major impact on citizen's everyday lives than national level governments[23].

Monitoring and evaluation: The city should have a protocol for evaluating public participation processes. Publish the surveys, questionnaires, or other evaluation instruments' results and broadly disseminate them.

In view of the above, we wish to congratulate the District of Antwerpen for the efforts taken so far. The Participation Index for Cities has shown that there is room for further improvements, and we are confident that through its participation in the Incubator for participatory democracy, and other opportunities for peer learning, the results will rapidly be visible and tangible.

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[23] 1) CoE Convention on access to official document: http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/
2) Subnational Governments and the Open Government Partnership:
https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/subnational-governments-and-open government-partnership