

youthpart

„When can we drop the ,e‘ in participation?“


Documentation

Seminar On Youth & E-Participation

August 19 & 20, 2013

Helsinki | Finland

Youth & participation
in the digital



THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN SETS OUT
THE RIGHTS RELATED TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
PARTICIPATION, INCLUDING:
THE RIGHT TO FORM THEIR OWN VIEWS (ART.12),
TO FREE EXPRESSION AND ACCESS TO SOURCES OF INFORMATION
(ART. 13),
TO FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION
(ART. 14), AND TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND PEACEFUL
ASSEMBLY (ART. 15).



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Mrs Kuusi & Mr Wilhelmsson

Youth Policy &
e-participation

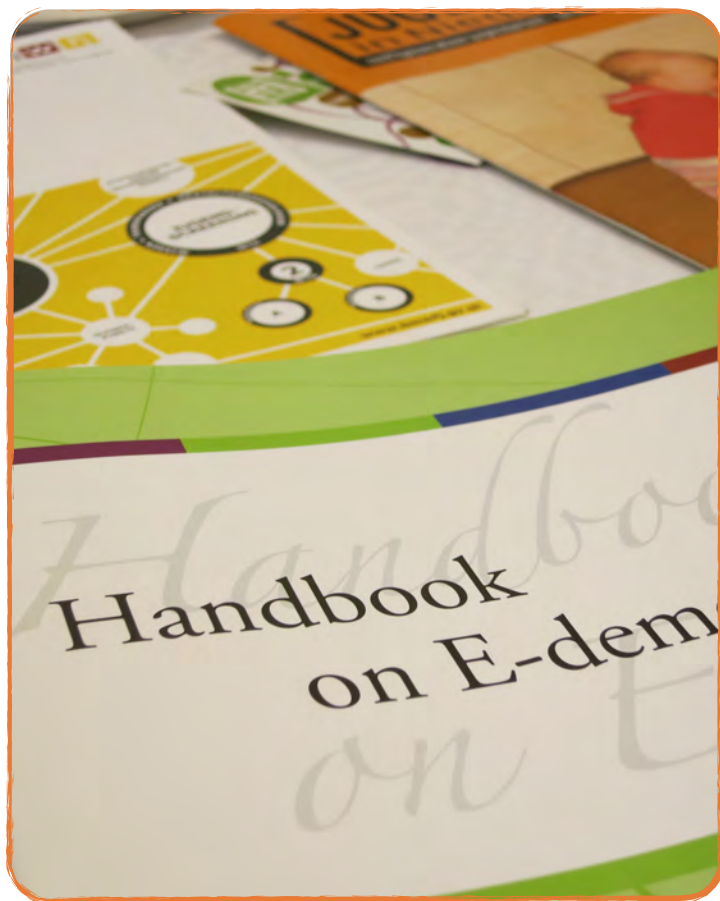
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Who is this



We1

Helsinki, Finland. 30 people from various backgrounds met for two days to discuss one single topic: e-participation & youth.

The project youthpart and its Finnish partner Koordinaatti invited experts from youth work, software development, open government, administration and young people themselves.



come !

Overall the seminar aimed to take stock of youth policies on digital youth participation, the exchange of good practice and the further development of the „guidelines for successful e-participation by youth“.

The method of peer learning in the context of youth policy was the thread of the seminar: In groups of two the experts provided their feedback on the status of the guidelines at that point and thus contributed essentially to their improvement.

But also during the presentation of the eight good practice examples from Finland, Scotland, Austria, England, Germany and the EU, the project representatives focused on the lessons and experiences they made in practice, hence, going beyond the pure description of their projects.

Overall, this seminar was filled with first-hand experience and proved to be an effective way in European policy-making.

About the seminar //

„Peer Learning on e-participation & youth:
exchange of good practice“



Introduction

The European project youthpart organized a Peer Learning seminar entitled 'e-participation & youth', that took place in Helsinki on 19 and 20 August 2013, in cooperation with its Finnish partner Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling Work Koordinaatti. The seminar focused on good practices and guidelines of youth e-participation.

The peer-learning seminar 'e-participation & youth' aimed to strengthen the international dialogue and promote multilateral cooperation at a practical level. The concept of peer learning – essentially, learning from each other – is one of the EU Youth Strategy's strongest instruments for promoting youth policy cooperation in Europe. Youthpart and its European partners contribute towards the EU Youth Strategy, specifically the 'participation' action field, through their cooperation and engagement in the field of e-participation for youth.

„This kind of dialogue lead to yet another intended outcome of the seminar: guidelines for successful e-participation for young people“

The seminar involved the exchange of good youth e-participation practices between the UK, Austria, Spain, Finland, Germany – all of which are participating partner countries – and the European Commission. To this end, national delegations of experts have been invited to present their local approaches and to identify and discuss success factors together with other experts. This kind of dialogue lead to yet another intended outcome of the seminar: the European partners jointly draw up guidelines for successful e-participation for young people. These will be discussed by all attending experts and the outcomes will be added to the presentations of the partners' good local practices.

Elements of the Peer Learning Seminar

- Welcoming by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland
- Presentation of participants and understanding the status and role of e-participation in different countries
- External input about e-participation & youth
- Introduction of Guidelines for successful e-participation & youth
- Presentation of good practice from participating partner countries
- Questions and discussion of good practice examples
- Feedback and responses from national experts towards the guidelines

About the seminar //

„Peer Learning on e-participation & youth: exchange of good practice“



Background

In 2011, the German Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth started a new way of international cooperation: so-called multilateral cooperation projects with the aim to function as a cross-border think tank to seek input for current topics in youth policy. Hereby, the German Federal Ministry for Family, Senior citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) uses the concept of Peer Learning as provided by the EU Youth Strategy.

One of the aims of the “youthpart”-project on e-participation of young people was to produce “Guidelines of successful e-participation of young people in decision-making processes at the local, regional, national and international levels” (“guidelines”). This was done in cooperation with a network of European partners: the Austrian Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, the British Youth Council, the

Spanish Institute for Youth (INJUVE), the Finnish Development Centre for Youth Information and Counselling (Koordinaatti), and with the European Commission’s DG Education & Culture (D1 Youth).

„The youthpart project cooperates with a network of European partners from Austria, Finland, Spain, United Kingdom, and the European Commission.“

The purpose of the guidelines is to assist all those who wish to realise a successful e-participation process with young people by providing a document with aspects they may take into consideration.

During two partner meetings in November 2012 in Bonn and April 2013 in London, youthpart and its European partners drafted the current version of the Guidelines. This happened for example also by taking into account the feedback from national experts.

To further improve the guidelines and open up the process, in 2013 two events took place to receive feedback from two specific groups: practitioners and young people. The practitioners met during the peer-learning seminar in Helsinki, while the young people met during the European Youth BarCamp in Vienna in October (18-20; youthbarcamp.eu).

Aims of the Peer Learning Seminar

Exchanging good practice of e-participation and youth from different partner countries alongside these questions:

- Which tools & internet-based services have been used?
- What has been the added value of internet-based services in this good practice example when compared to traditional (offline) participation?
- What would be recommendations or learning's from the good practice example for future initiatives?

Further development of guidelines for successful e-participation of young people alongside these questions:

- According to your practical experience: What is there to be changed in the guidelines, considering the points in the single phases? (Development phase, implementation phase, access & information, input phase, output & outcome phase, evaluation phase)
- Is there something on top that should be included? Is there something that is missing?
- What points mark an added value when it comes to e-participation compared with traditional (offline) participation?

About the seminar //

„Peer Learning on e-participation & youth: exchange of good practice“

Agenda Day I 19. August 2013 | Chair: Jaana Fedotoff (Koordinaatti)

12:30 hrs	Lunch at the hotel Arthur
14:00 hrs	Welcome Ms Jaana Fedotoff Coordinator, Koordinaatti - Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling, Finland
14:10 hrs	Opening words: Promoting youth participation Ms Emma Kuusi Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland
14:45 hrs	Introduction of participants & situation of eParticipation in different countries
16:00 hrs	What's next in e-participation? Status in Finland Mr Niklas Wilhelmsson Senior Planning Officer, Ministry of Justice, Finland
17:00 hrs	Coffee
17:30 hrs	Introduction of the Guidelines Ms Nadine Karbach, Project Coordinator youthpart IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany
17:55 hrs	Good practices from the partner countries Otakantaa.fi Ms Rauna Nerelli, Ministry of Justice, Finland ypart Ms Eva Panek, Liquid Democracy e.V., Germany Group work and discussion – Round I with two examples
19:10 hrs	Impressions and feedback from group discussion
19:25 hrs	End of day one

Agenda Day II | 20. August 2013 | Chair: Merja-Maaria Oinas (Koordinaatti)

9:00 hrs	Welcome Day II - Questions, remarks from yesterday
09:15 hrs	Good practices from the partner countries Offenbach/Queich Mr Mike Bourquin, Offenbach/ Quaich, Germany Initiative Channel Ms Merja-Maaria Oinas, Koordinaatti, Finland Young Scot Mr Kyle Usher, Young Scot, UK Group work and discussion – Round II with three examples
10:45 hrs	Coffee
11:15 hrs	Good practices from the partner countries Milton Keynes Ms Elizabeth Beale and Ms Emma Hosking, Milton Keynes, UK Ourspace Mr Michael Sachs, Uni Krems, Austria Salzblog Mr Jochen Höfferer, Stadt Salzburg, Austria Group work and discussion – Round III with three examples
12:45 hrs	Lunch
13:45 hrs	Presentation of group discussions & questions
14:15 hrs	Final conclusions
14:30 hrs	End of seminar

About the seminar //

„Peer Learning on e-participation & youth: exchange of good practice“

The understanding of the term „e-participation“

PARTICIPATION is sharing, becoming involved and taking action. This implies that citizens choose to actively participate in, and contribute to, public decision-making at different levels (i.e., local, regional, national and European). In the case of e-PARTICIPATION, this involvement and participation in decision-making takes place electronically through the use of online information and internet-based technology. In a political sense, the term expresses the fact that many aspects of the everyday lives of citizens are determined by political processes. Essentially, e-participation is interactive online policy-making in action.

We distinguish between two dimensions of e-participation:

- **Direct** participation online. Here, political decisions are influenced directly and structural links to political decision-making processes are enabled.

- **Indirect** forms of e-participation. They reach out to internet users and encourage them to support certain issues and positions. In turn, they also contribute to the development of political opinion. One example is activities that are designed to encourage young people to participate in political matters via digital channels.

Both dimensions include activities created by young people and youth organisations, youth work, educational and citizenship projects, and activities initiated by administrative bodies and decision-makers.

These two dimensions of e-participation are inseparable and complementary, as evidence has shown. That said, these *youthpart* Guidelines are designed exclusively for direct e-participation and describe the preconditions for the success of such activities.

About Youthpart

youthpart, a multilateral cooperation project, is organised by IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany with assistance from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The project serves to identify innovative approaches towards e-participation for young people at the national and international level. It also provides support to pilot projects run by public authorities and youth work organisations and assists them as a partner in developing their schemes. The overarching aim of youthpart is to provide support, advisory services and help in continuing to develop online participation formats in cooperation between Germany and the project's European partners.



About Koordinaatti- Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling Work

Koordinaatti is a national development centre of youth information and counselling. Its aim is to ensure that all young people living in Finland have access to quality youth information and counselling services. Quality services increase the chances of young people being heard, participating and getting involved. Through its activities, Koordinaatti creates possibilities for the active development of the national youth information and counselling service network. The network consists of professionals in the youth field working in municipalities and various youth organisations.

Following a decision-in-principle by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, Koordinaatti has been appointed as one of the organisations in the National Youth Work Service and Development Structure. Koordinaatti was established as part of the City of Oulu's Centre of Youth Affairs in 2006.





Key

No seminar without proper introduction. For this, the Finnish partner Koordinaatti could bring two high-level experts to the seminar: Mrs Emma Kuusi, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland, and Mr Niklas Wilhelmsson, Senior Planning Officer, Ministry of Justice, Finland.



notes

The selection of these two representatives of two different Finnish ministries demonstrates the cross-ministerial approach to youth policy and participation.

The key question of the input from Mrs Kuusi can be summarized as: „when will e-participation be a normal part of participation?“ or, to put it more controversial „When can we drop the „e“ in participation“.

Mr Wilhemsson stressed the meaning and value of Open Government and Gov2.0 in this input. He provided various practical examples of the e-participation Environment in Finland.

Christian Gieseke, trainee at the project „watch your web“ by IJAB at that time and social media reporter during the seminar, listened carefully to the input of both experts - read his summary on the following pages.

Promoting youth participation

Emma Kuusi



If you talk about eParticipation, you have to define at first, what participation actually means: the ability to take part and to be heard – but also an attitude towards the way you want to get things done. In this context participation describes a working method for many different fields of action: from your everyday life, decisions in the local community to political and global issues. The question that needs to be asked is, when the “e” in eParticipation can be dropped. In order to achieve this goal, it is important to not focus on tools but on the aim: to increase participation and to educate young people so they can use their influence. Therefore it must be stressed that web-based solutions and face-to-face dialogue can exist next to each other. In the next paragraph, it will be outlined how the Finnish government tries to improve the possibilities for young people to participate.

In March 2006, the basis of the Finnish youth policy – the so-called “Youth Act” – came into force. According to the first chapter of the Act, the purpose is to support young people's growth and independence, to promote their active citizenship and empowerment and to improve their growth and living conditions. “The implementation of the purpose is based on communality, solidarity, equity and equality, multiculturalism and internationalism, healthy life styles, and respect of life and the environment.”¹ The target group is defined as people under 29 years, which makes nearly 35% of the Finnish population.

The Finnish youth policy receives its money from a funding system: the appropriations for youth work in the state budget consist of lottery funds amount of 52 million €. This money is used for promoting participation, equality and every day life management and development of youth work and youth policy. Participation is supported through 14 national development and service centres for youth work (incl. Koordinaatti, Allianssi, Youth Research Network), national youth organisations and other institutions and projects.

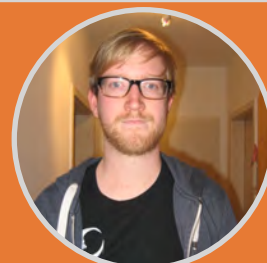
The responsibilities for the development of youth work and youth policy are separated on the principle of subsidiarity, so the municipalities are responsible for the local level. On the national level, the Ministry of Education and Culture prepares a Youth Policy program which is adopted by the government in every electoral period. These programs are evaluated every year with a final evaluation in January every four years.

Three aspects form the core of the current Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme (for the years 2012-2015), which was prepared in an open and transparent process: participation, non-discrimination and everyday life management. Altogether there are nine strategic goals for the program – as an example the first one and the associated measures shall be outlined: children and young people will grow up to become active citizens with a sense of shared responsibility. To reach this aim, the effects of legislation and decision-making for children and young people will be increasingly evaluated; it is also ensured, that young people take part in the decision-making processes in all ministries. Another project concerns student body activities, for which a permanent structure in all schools from 2014 onwards is planned.

With the Youth Act, the associated projects and the Youth Policy Programs, the Finnish government wants to increase the opportunities for young people's participation in many different fields – offline and online. Participation will update itself automatically, therefore the “e” in eParticipation can be dropped and will be a normal integrated part of it one day.

About the author

Christian Gieseke studies History and Political Science of the 20th century at the University of Jena. He was an intern at IJAB in Bonn during the summer period of 2013 and wrote about the seminar for the IJAB homepage and Twitter.



The Finnish eParticipation Environment

Niklas Wilhelmsson



For a successful democracy it is important to not take it for granted – it must be developed to be kept alive and attractive to the people. One of the concepts is the “Collaborative Government” or “Gov 2.0”. This refers to the modernization of the way governments engage and collaborate with citizens and involves policy shifts in culture and empowerment of citizens, harnessing the opportunities of new technologies. The bases for collaboration are transparency in all ways of political decision-making and participation. For succeeding in the latter, there are plenty of good circumstances: people have higher education and more free time than ever, as well as a good IT infrastructure and networking sources. This leads to an increasing peer production and participation phenomena, which are supported by theories of collective intelligence and crowdsourcing. All this can lead to a so-called “co-production of government” – but how do we get there?

To answer this question it is worth looking at the statistics that deal with the use of eParticipation tools in Finland. 73 % of Finnish citizens have already tried eGovernment and nearly half of the Finnish population prefers such channels compared to regular ways of participation. In the EU, Finland ranks 6th in the availability of online services in the public administration and 5th when it comes to the use of these services. Concerning the further development of Finnish e-democracy, the focus lies on three aims: it is important to develop already existing platforms and to create a joint portal for all administrative online consultations; furthermore a cooperation with other existing participation forms, e.g. media, is necessary. The third aspect concentrates on developing methods for finding and making use of dialogue and discussion in other webfora.

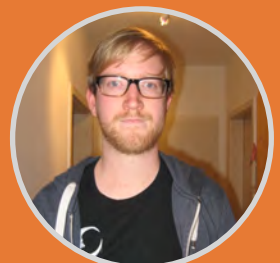
The frame for the Finnish eParticipation Environment is the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy, which is organised by the Ministry of Finance and one of the government's key projects. The program comprises eight projects, which were chosen based on significance and cost-

efficiency as well as cross-sector collaboration, customer focus, quality and innovativeness. One of these projects is the eParticipation Environment, led by the Ministry of Justice. Its estimated costs are three million Euros and it was advertised through a marketing campaign starting in autumn 2013 in radio, print media and social media. The services were presented to public administration and to non-governmental organizations and in several events; furthermore a special citizen jury for commenting both goals and execution of eParticipation services was installed. Adding to this, a “Have your say”-blog informs on current events and steps of the project

The Environment contains of several websites which cope with different aspects like planning of participation (otakantaa.fi) or citizen initiatives (on kansalaisaloite.fi). It enhances and enables dialog and interaction between citizens, politicians and public servants and improves e-participation possibilities – at local and national level. The aim is to modernize web-based tools and processes into a “toolbox” that is easy to take into use by everyone. The key benefits are numerous: it is cost-effective and open and the tools and methods support a variety of participation methods. Another advantage is that larger groups of stakeholders can be reached and the participation is much easier because of less time-bound or physical limits. Even if the project itself only lasts until 2014, a long time goal should be kept in mind: to build an ecosystem of e-services – with commercial and non-profit add-on services complementing the services developed in the program.

About the author

Christian Gieseke studies History and Political Science of the 20th century at the University of Jena. He was an intern at IJAB in Bonn during the summer period of 2013 and wrote about the seminar for the IJAB homepage and Twitter.





Youth

A recurrently arising question when it comes to youth & e-participation is „What is the status of youth policy in your country at this moment?“.

This section aims to provide an overview about the status and contribution on e-participation & youth.



Policy

All the project partners, including youthpart, contributed to this section:

The British Youth Council provided its perspective on the situation in the United Kingdom, Koordinaatti reflected upon the status in Finland. INJUVE shared its input on youth & e-participation in Spain and the Austrian Ministry for Families and Youth described the state of youth policies in Austria.

Youthpart provided a snapshot on the policies in Germany, while the European Commission provided the cross-boarder helicopter perspective, seeing the wider picture in Europe.

European Commission

DG Education & Culture, Youth Unit



"Encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe" is one of the aims of the European Union written into the Lisbon treaty¹. "Participation" is also one of the eight themes of the EU Youth Strategy, which came into force in 2010.

With this mandate, the Commission seeks not only to encourage Member States and other organisations to strengthen the role that young people play in their decision-making processes, it also aims to promote such youth participation at EU level.

In this context, the EU published a study it commissioned from the London School of Economics on "Youth Participation in Democratic Life"², which provides valuable insights into how young people view the current political structures and how they want these systems to change to become more relevant to and representative of young people. These findings are being disseminated to Member States and other stakeholders, and they are encouraged to follow the examples of best practice highlighted in the report.

The Commission also supports the Structured Dialogue with young people. This process is led by the European Youth Forum, together with the Trio of Presidency countries and the European Commission. The twice yearly consultations of young people at national levels and the ensuing EU Youth Conferences provide a valuable input to the EU's decision making processes within the youth field and more widely across the Commission.

New and emerging technologies already play a large role in helping more young people to participate in consultations. However, as e-participation is still an immature science, we need

to share the lessons that are learned and the best practice that is developed.

A good example of this is the part-EU funded "Ourspace" project, discussed elsewhere in this report, which trialled different online engagement techniques at national and international levels over three years. The project will be fully evaluated, and the results will be made public so that others may benefit from its work.

The Commission will also be building on other experiences, in particular those gained by participating in the youthpart e-participation project, when it adds new online engagement and e-participation tools to the European Youth Portal. These tools will be made available to the national organisers of the Structured Dialogue consultations to help more young people to participate and influence decision-makers.

¹ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – Article 165, 2, pt 5:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0047:0200:en:PDF>

²http://ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/lse_study_on_youth_participation_-_2013.pdf

About the author

Graeme Robertson, Policy Officer at the European Commission, DG Education and Culture, Youth Unit. Project Manager for the redevelopment of the European Youth Portal.



Austria

Federal Ministry for Families and Youth - Youth Competence Centre



The main concerns of Austrian Youth policy are ensuring the well-being of young people and providing them with opportunities for the future. The Austrian Youth Strategy (development process started with the beginning 2012, see <http://www.en.bmfj.gv.at/Youth/youthstrategy/Seiten/default.aspx>) of the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth (BMFJ) is therefore developing a scheme for all of Austria that pools knowledge in the field of youth policy.

The main focus of this strategy is on the 14- to 24- year old age group, though the Youth Strategy extends further to encompass young people under 30 years of age. Policies and measure for these groups should be collected, systematised and optimised for maximum effectiveness. At the same time, the Youth Strategy should identify new fields of action and cooperation.

In all areas, the Youth Strategy formulate visions, goals and measures that are to be implemented.

„A core criterion of the Youth Strategy is the active inclusion of young people“

Three strategic framework objectives were defined, one of them is "Participation and Initiative". Besides elections, there are numerous forms of (e-)participation in Austria, of which only a

portion are actually used by young people. It must therefore be clarified whether existing forms of participation truly meet the needs of today's youth and how barriers to participation can be lowered, especially for groups from disadvantaged backgrounds. In particular, the strategic goal 2.2 "50 percent of all young people between the ages of 14 and 24 will have taken part in a participation project" aims to strengthen appropriate projects, to develop quality standards and to increase their number.

Since the early 90s the "ARGE Partizipation" (Participation Working Group) is an institution of the provincial youth departments, because in terms of competencies, the implementation of co-determination and participation opportunities at provincial, regional and municipal levels is the task of the respective provinces. Task is to coordinate participative measures in Austria and to further develop them – see their website www.jugendbeteiligung.cc (German only). The Federal Ministry of Youth and the National Youth Council are also members of this working group.

An e-Participation Barcamp (2012) constitutes the beginning of a more intense examination of the issue of youth participation via the internet by the working group. In cooperation with youthpart relevant standards are being developed.

About the author

Robert Lender, Federal Ministry for Families and Youth - Youth Competence Centre. The Centre is the operating unit for the Youth Strategy. Established in May 2013, the Centre coordinates key activities, offers

knowledge and skills, and establishes contract with experts. The goal of the Centre is to develop a stable network between a diverse group of youth policy stakeholders.



Spain

Instituto de la Juventud - Spanish Institute for Youth



E-participation in political and social life is a new phenomenon, which is taking shape over the past years. Therefore, it needs to spread through mentality and behaviour patterns in our society to grow in importance and to start being a relevant element in the whole picture. In Spain implementation of this form of participation hasn't yet been complete, but it is getting closer.

E-participation processes are defined in the Youthpart Guidelines, as a transitive process, with participation of a group of youth and the concerned public power, with the implication of both in a specific matter. According to this definition, the development of e-participation has not yet reached this stage in Spain. But it is getting closer. Because the necessary elements and factors are there, and we only need the inclusion of this concept into the mentalities of authorities and young people to make it a normal form of participation.

There is a growing demand among Spanish young people for political, social and economical participation. More than ever since democracy was restored in Spain, young people are very active and involved in political issues. The 2011 demonstrations, the most important of which took place in Puerta del Sol of Madrid, but that occurred all over Spanish soil, were fully organised through Internet, without any political party or association having part in them, only young people who used the Web as their means of expression for political participation. But his case was not the only one.

We have a young generation that has the highest level of academic training ever in our history. Young people are cult, have knowledge of their rights and also have access to information worldwide, not only mainstream information, through media, but also grassroots information and citizen's activism. This creates a ground, where young people in our country have a higher level of requirements in terms of democracy and participation.

Also, people under 25 nowadays belong to the generation 2.0, that have entered the world with a "www" approach, and that do not conceive social, public or private action without technicalities such as Smartphones, tablets, computers, etc. all of which permanently connected to Internet. Therefore, their first encounter with social and political life will naturally be through this very way.

The nature of e-participation today in Spain, consequently, is a young generation extremely active in the Web in terms of social and political discussion, criticism and proposals. There is a hunger for a space in the conduction of society that is not met through traditional means; moreover, when we are facing a situation of lack of opportunities for many young people, which is taking away many of them from the institutionalised system of public participation.

Public powers, on the other hand, are moving more and more rapidly to meet this need for a public space, demanded by young people. Many municipalities are opening ways for the participation of young people in local life, in youth policies of local administrations, and in general issues of municipal life. There is a good series of examples that are developing in this moment. The next step needed is the one that will lead us to the Youthpart definition of e-participation, where young people have a "transitive" relationship with the concerned administration. When young people have the power to decide in their part of the process, or even getting to set the agenda, in collaboration with public administration.

This stage of the process has not been reached yet, but all necessary factors and ingredients are there. And a national push forward, supported by a European work team, with instruments such as the *Guidelines* may be the definitive impulse to get there.

About the author

Bruno del Mazo Unamuno, Policy Officer for International Organizations and Bilateral Cooperation at INJUVE



Finland

Koordinaatti - Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling Work



In Finland, youth work falls under the administrative responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Youth work and youth activities in Finland are subject to national legislation which defines currently young people as everyone under 29 years old. The lives of children and young people should be approached through three focuses in child and youth policy: participation, non-discrimination and everyday life management.

The Youth Act

National legislation concerning young people is the Youth Act which purpose is to support the growth and independence of young people, promote active citizenship and social empowerment among young people, and improve their growth and living conditions.

The Youth Act includes provisions on young people's right to participate and has been one of the reasons why e-participation services have been developed.

"Section 8. Young people's participation

„Young people must be given opportunities to take part in the handling of matters concerning local and regional youth work and youth policy. Further, young people shall be heard in matters concerning them.”¹

Children and Youth Policy Programme

Government adopts a Children and Youth Policy Development Programme every four years according to the Youth Act. It's prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture together with the other ministries concerned.

Current Children and Youth Policy Program 2012-2015 enhances participation and social inclusion. There are seven different strategic goals and concerted actions. Media skills and

participation in the information society is one of the measures to ensure that children and young people will grow to become active citizens with shared sense of responsibility.

According to the program all children and young people will be ensured the basic prerequisites for participation and social inclusion in the information society. National implementation includes education, teaching and youth work. For instance media education projects, online youth work and other online applications will be supported, as well as ensuring better use of information technology.

The current program can be read and downloaded online: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2012/liitteet/OKM8.pdf?lang=en_

Youth services are provided by the Government and local authorities and implemented by local authorities, youth associations and other organisations. There's a cross-sectoral and multiprofessional approach. In Finland the Ministry of Education and Culture supports national youth organisations, youth work service organisations and other organisations involved in youth work.

In Finland there are several different types of online participation services and tools hosted by local municipalities, organisations or youth councils in which young people are able to voice their ideas and participate. The national Initiative Channel (www.aloitekanava.fi) is one of children's and young people's participation and consultation systems available.

¹ http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Nuoriso/lait_ja_saaedokset/Youth_act_Nuorisolaki_amend_2010_en.pdf

About the author

Merja-Maaria Oinas is working as a planning officer at Koordinaatti - Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling. Koordinaatti is responsible for the national coordination, development, marketing and communication activities

of Aloitekanava.fi (Initiative Channel) since 2008. Her work includes planning and organising training events and seminars for moderators, providing guidance and counselling on questions related to the service, communication on topical themes, and much more.



United Kingdom

British Youth Council



Youth participation has been a feature of democratic life in the UK for decades and is formally recognised by the government at local and national level. The government's current policy "Positive for Youth" states that "young people have a right to have their views taken into account in all decisions that affect their lives" and it is committed to "empowering young people by enabling them to inspect and youth proof services and policy". So it is natural that youth participation embraces the benefits of e-participation, which has improved quality in three ways:

1. Young people can self-educate without the filter of the formal educational system, choosing topics and learning in their own time.
2. They can discuss, share and shape opinions with each other and people of all ages through online forums and online feedback.
3. They can choose, vote for and hold to account a structure of elected youth-representatives, encouraging many to take up roles in that structure.

All these developments increase speed, reduce cost and empower young people to be more independent.

In the UK, independent charity the British Youth Council (byc.org.uk) is officially recognised as the organisation to broker a system of youth participation with government through its democracy engagement partnership 'Youth Voice', which includes the work of the UK Youth Parliament (ukyouthparliament.org.uk), Local Youth Councils, the Young Mayor Network and the government. This overlaps with, and complements, initiatives in the three devolved nations run by the Scottish Youth Parliament, Northern Ireland Youth Forum and Funky Dragon (the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales). These initiatives represent a formal relationship which enables consultation and campaigning. In addition youth participation has thrived in NGO structures and supports special interest, minority and faith group campaigns, all with a route to communicating with public decision making, and all using online methods.

Some examples of e-participation include the production of resources and information online, which empower young people

directly. BYC has over 400 free online resources, and young people can access other specialist NGO sites and surf the whole internet to gather information. Some NGOs work together to share resources for young people online – such as the Votes at 16 Coalition (votesat16.org), or the League of Young Voters (leagueofyoungvoters.co.uk).

Secondly website forums, such as Facebook and others, enable young people to exchange views, debate and argue so that they build expertise and evidenced viewpoints. BYC, for example, participates in a European online project called Ourspace (joinourspace.eu) which allows young people from different countries to share views, debate, and establish priorities with online voting.

Thirdly many use Facebook, YouTube, Twitter (or similar) to promote issues, elections, candidates and debate the latest news. They link young people to polling, surveys, and hold elections for young people. The more people engaged online (via 'likes' or 'followers') the more young leaders credibly get the attention of government. However, the introduction of online methods for youth elections in the UK is still low; only 2% of participation in elections in 2013 is done online; 8% via text, and 25% using a mixture of e-participation and paper-balloting. The majority of votes, 65%, are still cast using paper ballots.

The next challenge for e-participation in the UK in 2014 is to see if it will play a significant role in getting more young people registered to vote and increase their turnout for the 2015 elections. Will politicians, who have a bad image with young people, be able to use e-participation to improve their appeal? The League of Young Voters is using e-participation methods, such as its Vimeo film, guides, and the VoteMatch questionnaire tool to engage youth and politicians.

However, while e-participation makes the process faster, youth-led and provides politicians with more information on what young people want, it is not replacing, but complementing, traditional methods.

About the author

James Cathcart is the Chief Executive of independent charity the British Youth Council, the official youth council of the UK which is governed by elected young people and is a member of the EJF. Its initiatives include the Local Youth Council Network, Young Mayor Network and the UK Youth Parliament.



Germany

International Youth Service of Germany (IJAB e.V.)



“E-participation & youth policy in Germany – A policy snapshot”

Policies on e-participation & youth take place at various levels in Germany: At the national, the intermediate levels as well as local level. Consequently, it appears useful to display the different activities regarding e-participation & youth policy by these different levels. This section seeks to provide an overview and a snapshot of the current policies and supporting projects that have been realised recently.

To start with the federal level, youth policy related to e-participation is reflected in different ways. For example, there was the Enquete-Commission on Internet & society of the German Bundestag. This Forum consisted of 17 representatives of all parties and 17 independent experts met over a period of three years (2010-2013) to discuss a large variety of digital issues at stake, e.g. copyright, media literacy, net neutrality. The 18th independent expert was the audience: through implementing special software, citizens have been asked to contribute, discuss and provide content online. Overall, the commission compiled a major report containing, for example, policy recommendations and called for a permanent committee on digital issues.

Also, from 2010 till 2013, the “Dialog Internet” of the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) took place, aiming to initiate several projects on youth and digital media to explore various dimensions of young people and children’s online behaviour. One of the projects of the “Dialog Internet” is the youthpart project, a project that continues till mid-2014. The focus of the project youthpart is to explore success factors for digital youth participation, and to gather European experiences while fostering digital youth participation projects on the local level. Besides, the project developed several software tools, as well as guidelines for successful e-participation by youth. In 2013, the project included an extension focussing solely on local youth participation, called youthpart #lokal.

Furthermore on the federal level, two policy instruments are to be mentioned: The EU Youth Strategy as well as the Structured Dialogue, a policy-model that is operated by the

German National Youth Council (DBJR), called “ich mache - >Politik” („i am into politics“). Hereby young people between 12 and 27 years are asked to contribute their perspectives and ideas on several topics and in online tools towards the Independent Youth Policy („Eigenständige Jugendpolitik“) in Germany.

At federal state level, there are two states to be mentioned in particular: Rhineland-Palatinate holds its own Enquete-Commission for civic participation. Besides, it realised a federal state wide digital youth participation process through a youth forum (Original: “Liken. Teilen. Was bewegen.“). A representative of youthpart has been in the advisory council and shared experiences and provided input. Young people were asked to share their opinions and ideas online. The results have been given to politicians during a dedicated special event.

Also North Rhine-Westphalia linked any activities to an Open Government Strategy that also includes a chapter on e-participation and youth. In May 2013 they hold a big event to gather input from citizens to this strategy paper. Recently, the summary was published and Dr. Schwall-Düren (Minister for Federal Affairs, Europe and Media of North Rhine-Westphalia) has stressed that it was compiled independently by an editorial team and without any interventions from the state government.

At local level, reference shall be made to the local activities from youthpart #lokal. As mentioned already above, youthpart #lokal focuses solely on pilot projects supporting local authorities and young people equally to explore new ways of decision-making. In total seven local communities joined this program to further develop their local structures integrating e-participation measures for young people. This process is accompanied scientifically, and the results shall be available by the end of 2014.

Further reading:

// youthpart.de

// Federal Internet Enquete <https://blog.internetenquete.de>

// German National Youth Council „i make politics“ [http://](http://ichmachepolitik.wordpress.com)

ichmachepolitik.wordpress.com

About the author

Nadine Karbach is project coordinator for the project „youthpart - youth participation in the digital society“, that is executed by IJAB e.V. the International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany. She has mainly coordinated

the European policy exchange within the youthpart project. Nadine holds a master in communication science and has been active in European youth work since 2005.





Good

8 good practice examples from 5 different countries and 1 European project

Representatives of these projects showcased their projects and shared experiences from practical work. In addition the representatives provided recommendations that could be helpful for other projects in this field.



Practice

The good practice projects have been identified through the youthpart project and by its European project partners.

The projects are located in Finland, Germany, Austria, Scotland and England. Furthermore, one project with a European scope was selected.

Key criteria for the selection of the good practice projects has been their understanding of e-participation.

Besides also the geographical scope, for example, local, regional or European was of importance.

In this section these projects and their recommendations are presented.

“Stadt! Macht! Schule!” // Germany

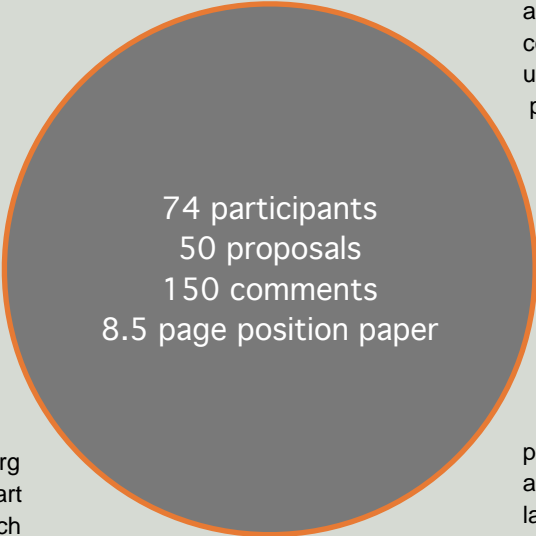
Local youth participation in Hamburg-Altona using the ypart.eu software solution for local youth participation

The “Stadt! Macht! Schule!” project was an online/offline participation project held on the youth-focused online participation platform Ypart, from October, 2012 till June, 2013. The project initiator was the non-profit organisation “Hamburger Stiftung für Wirtschaftsethik” (The Hamburg Institute for Economic Ethics) and was financially supported by the Robert Bosch Stiftung (Robert Bosch Institute). The project’s plan was to aggregate the opinion of young people concerning the design planning of “Mitte Altona,” a Hamburg city district in which a large construction project had been planned and finalized by the city council.

In order to collect the opinion of local adolescents (28 students from 5 Hamburg schools) the project made use of the Ypart platform’s proposal system, through which the youth could discuss the official urban development plan for “Mitte Altona”. The most popular or most discussed proposals would then be condensed into a position paper, which would summarize the proposals, interests, and wishes of young Hamburgers.

On the map located within the ypart instance, adolescents could view the master plan for the projected construction.

The map was color coded and labeled in great detail according to the official construction plans so that the participants could see how and for what these spaces were distributed.



74 participants
50 proposals
150 comments
8.5 page position paper

By marking on the map, signed up participants could directly reference locations within their proposals. These proposals could then be commented on and rated positively, ambivalently, or negatively by other users in the group. Additionally, the participants could directly reference to and make proposals on the various written parts of the master plan,

which were copied on the ypart platform in original quote.

Similar to how the map allowed a spatial awareness within the project, a temporal component was made possible with the use of the “milestones” function. The project’s time-line and scheduled events were integrated into the process to connect offline meetings with the discussion found online, and to notify users of specific steps in the process (such as its final date).

At the end of the process there were 74 participants who made a total of 50 proposals for which there were roughly 150 comments. Beyond the 74 youth participants, the online process was accompanied by administrators who were labeled with badges next to their usernames. These administrators created the selectable category types for proposals, set up the milestones, and managed the instance.

The 8.5 page position paper which resulted from the process was given over to the Hamburg Senator for Urban Development responsible for planning the construction project. This paper communicated the aggregate opinions as voiced by the participants.

Links & Contact

Project Website: <http://www.stiftung-wirtschaftsethik.de/projekte/wissen-lernen/stadt-macht-schule.html>

Stadt!Macht!Schule on Ypart: <https://smsaltona.ypart.eu>

Hamburger Stiftung für Wirtschaftsethik: <http://www.stiftung-wirtschaftsethik.de/stiftung.html>

Robert Bosch Stiftung: <http://www.bosch-stiftung.de>

“Stadt! Macht! Schule!”

--> Sharing experiences

The project initiator's feedback was the following: Using the online platform Ypart was very useful to combine offline and online elements and events, the function of collaborative textwriting (which is featured on ypart) was helpful for the creation of the position paper by the participants, the documentation and evaluation (user statistics) of the project was possible in an easy and timesaving manner.

However, there was also a reason for disappointment: at the end of the project's run the project initiators found, that their expected level participation never came to be. Given the size of the construction project (2nd largest in the city) and its prominence in public attention, the project initiators expected more participants and proposals than turned out.

From the perspective of the participants, a number of telling opinions were derived from questions posed to them. It was noted that the participants overwhelmingly found the online participation concept to be informative or helpful for discussion, but that the process was confusing from a technical usability perspective.

In Terms of the general learnings from the project, the question that was focused

upon in the presentation during the Peer Learning Seminar in Helsinki was, what were the possible reasons for the low participation rates? How can high



participation rates and the engagement of the participants be guaranteed?

The main answer which we came to is that for a participation process to be truly motivation, it must really culminate in an actual effect on the decision making. The process must not be affectatious, but rather it should be effective from the perspective of the participants. The fact that this participation project was essentially collecting the aggregate opinion concerning an already decided upon issue, means all decision making

was by and large already made. From the perspective of the participants the opinions had no apparent effect beyond their being voiced, which might have reduced the attractiveness of the participation project as a whole.

This example shows the importance of integrating participation projects in an official municipal decision making process. Through doing this, it can be guaranteed that there is “something to decide upon” for the participants, and that the proposals made actually have a chance to be realized. This is often a difficult task to realize, however, it is the key to any successful municipal participation process.

In addition to the above, we are also of the opinion that advertising and project initiator participation should be comprehensive, holistic, and involved. This includes the dissemination of the the project, which should happen in a clear, communicative, but wide-spread manner, but also activities on the platform which aim at keeping the participants at track. That means participants and stakeholders should hear feedback on the project before, during, and after its course is through. This of course includes the dissemination of knowledge on how the proposals made by the participants were realised and what were the general outcomes of the project.

About the author

Eva Panek is a social and political scientist, who works as a projectmanager for the non-profit and non-partisan organization Liquid Democracy e.V.

She is responsible for the coordination and counseling of youth participation projects taking place on the europewide youth participation platform Ypart, which is developed and hosted by Liquid Democracy e.V.



Small ... but 2.0! – e-participation in Offenbach an der Queich // Germany

Why should a community with 12,000 inhabitants use e-participation?

Offenbach an der Queich is a so called Verbandsgemeinde (community association/ population: 12.625) formed by the four communities Bornheim (population: 1.570), Essingen (2.215), Hochstadt (2.514) and Offenbach (6.353).

We are a small community – “out in the sticks”, like some people say. Where everybody knows everybody. So why should we do (e-)participation? Well, we found out, that not everybody knows everybody (anymore) and though we have a strong community, we see a decrease of voluntary commitment and of the identification of the individual with the community.

So the first idea was, to encourage young people to get involved stronger in the community – in their (future) community. We chose participation as adequate means and invited young people to a youth forum – nobody came. It seemed, that the young people were just not accustomed to being asked and (then) to being taken seriously.

We applied for taking part in Rhineland-Palatinate program “Spilleitplanung” (playing use planning) and could start the Spilleitplanung in 2006. Quickly we recognised that participation has to be equitable and that we have to offer participation for adults too. The “Offenbacher

Zukunftsinitiative”(Offenbach Future Initiative), short “OZI” was founded.

„We had been able to work directly with 89% of the 6-10-year-olds and 62% of the 11-18-year-olds“

Instead of inviting the kids, we visited them – best place for that is school. So we went into the schools in our community association (only elementary schools) and in the County Southern Winestreet. In the end we had been able to work directly with 89% of the 6-10-year-olds and 62% of the 11-18-year-olds.

We did not make any proposals in the offline participation and we want to it

exactly so in the e-participation. In the offline participation the main method was to give each of the kids 3 cards. They wrote topics on them – what is good, what is bad, what's missing, what could be improved in Offenbach? We clustered the cards under generic terms and the kids prioritised them with glue dots.

In both groups the top generic term was the often mentioned “leisure activities” (more stumping grounds, more “events”, more free accessible sports facilities, more/better playgrounds, ...), followed by “traffic”. “Traffic” was about public transport in the group of the 11-18-year-olds and road safety in the group of the younger ones.

The other three communities became very interested and we started several project-related participations there. We had a lot of small projects and some bigger ones, like the barbecue hut, the skate area, a road safety concept for the primary-school pupils, new playgrounds, ...

The analysis phase took a lot of time and scheduling meetings (to inform, to ask, to plan, ...) slowed down the process. So we were looking for a possibility to accelerate the process. On www.medienpaedagogik-praxis.de (web service about media literacy) we found an article about youthpart.

Links & Contact

Website: www.Jugendbuero-VGO.de

Offenbach an der Queich on Ypart: <https://vgo.ypart.eu>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bourquinmike> & www.facebook.com/jugendpflegeoffenbach

Twitter: @PalatinateMike & @JugendbueroVGO

Phone: +49 (0)6348 / 986-188

Mail: M.Bourquin@offenbach-queich.de & mike@Jugendbuero-VGO.de

Small ... but 2.0! – e-participation in Offenbach an der Queich

--> Sharing experiences

Youthpart and their platform ypart.eu seem to be what we were looking for:

- We think that the analysis phase will be much shorter, as the platform sorts the post by the votes they get. What's on top, is the most wanted topic.
- The participation will be irrespective of time and place. One does not have to be in the townhall on a Saturday, 7:00 pm, but can make proposals and take part in discussions anytime from anywhere (where you have internet access).
- Time and place are often inhibition thresholds. This independence also means that no discussion has to be broken off, as the event is over. Topics can be discussed fully.
- Additional information can be given more easily by linking – even afterwards without fixing a new meeting. And these information can be more than just paper but however are available all the time ... a film online can be watched again and again and not only on the event once via beamer.
- We will be able to offer participation continuously, the phases can run parallel. While we work on one topic, implement another, a new proposal can be made on the platform. So participation of young people can

become “normal” and an additional way within the decision-making process.

- In online discussions all voices are equal in their “loudness” and you can't cut someone off. We also think, that the some kids will rather “say” something online than they would do in a panel on a “real-life-meeting”.

We will use other online tools/services when needed. For example, when it comes to “real-life”-meetings, we will find the date via doodle.com.

Twitter seems to be for “old people”. But we will use Facebook – parallel to the Newspaper, our official gazette, our Sites and probably a newsletter. We are still discussing about Tumblr, as it is said, that the kids move more and more from Facebook to Tumblr.

We are open to using other services when needed. We will then ask our pros, which one they can suggest.

We think that one have to pay attention to most things we already had to in our offline participation:

- It's best when you can get a unanimously decision in the responsible council(s). Let them make decisions, what they offer; in our example is, that all the top-topics will be forwarded to the responsible committee and that all the way of the decision-

making process will be exposed (and translated by me, if necessary).

- Find out the benefits, each party could have, and tell them about them.
- There has to be a counselor for the kids and a translator for both sides.
- If there are periods, where “nothing” can happen (council's summer break, waiting for an approval from the county, ...) – do anything! (BBQ on the area where the Skater Park will be build; test-playing on other playgrounds in the region, summer slump-Party, ...). Do not let kids wait too long.
- If something seems to be impossible, spin around, find alternatives, try to find out, why the kids want that impossible thing and find something else that would do (kids wanted a swimming pool on a playground; in the end we found out that they wanted to play with water in the summer and a beam pump was enough).
- Speaking of “spinning around”: every idea is OK at first, than we will see if it is possible or if we need alternatives.
- Practise with your fellow campaigners not to ask leading questions.
- Tell everybody about the participation (PR!)

About the author

Mike Bourquin is Youth worker in the community association Offenbach an der Queich (since 1998).

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Salzblog! // Austria

The young voice in Salzburg

For the first time the city of Salzburg started the experiment "Youth Congress" in 2002. The aim was to create a platform able to place on the youth of the city their desires, concerns, worries and criticism. In 2006, the Youth Department of the City of Salzburg used this process of participation for the "information policy" of the borough with critically questioning "their" youth: whether and how to communicate with each other on the right way? Quite soon it became clear that a new way - a way to Web 2.0 - would be necessary. Together with experts the Youth Department of the City of Salzburg own designed the youth-oriented interactive information and communication portal.

As first Austrian city of Salzburg opened a blog (www.saltzblog.at) for young people and sat on a direct exchange between youth, politics and city government.

In further steps, this portal has been expanded to include email newsletters, a text message voting system and various social networks. In substance, this integrated communication concept still exists today. 2009 we had the first relaunch, in which we developed the SALT BLOG (portmanteau of Salzburg and

weblog) to a "social media hub". This was integrated into the existing structures Vz networks, Myspace, Youtube, Twitter and Facebook.



„The youth office invests approximately € 20,000 per year in participation projects“

At this time, Web 2.0 still uncharted territory for the municipality of Salzburg and a "nerd-on" 3 for the youth. Time for the Youth Congress in 2012, there was another relaunch, which revolves mainly around the integration of the mobile application "Salzburg Extra Ordinary". This should be completed by fall of 2013. As with many social media projects focus on a long-term "customer loyalty project" that

through steady supply of targeted offers relevant content. The experience teaches two important principles: social media in youth work can only supplement and / or adjunct to active youth (leisure) cultural projects and products work. And further: social media projects require a minimum of targets, plans and strategic basic considerations. Although these can be modified in certain temporary basis, this should always be kept in mind.

For the "SALZBLOG" this means: We want to inform the young Salzburg city and give them the opportunity to direct, straightforward, and take the city of Salzburg with the help of their media contact. Such a set is very simple, but many social media projects never write it clearly. To take a quick look at the financial component: As a rough estimation, the youth office invests approximately € 20,000 per year in participation projects. That is about 1% of the budget of the Youth Commissioner a year and only a small sum for the city of Salzburg, with its budget of about 450 million Euros.

Links & Contact

Website: www.saltzblog.at

Salzblog!

--> Sharing experiences

Simple basic rules of successful „e-participation" projects:

Stay on the course!

Young people as a group are far away from traditional institutions. They use their own (linguistic) code. Participation-Projects must not base on theory, but must be adapted to different target groups and then not overwhelm them.

Stay personally!

Young people want to be addressed directly and with their means without barriers and hierarchies. With a single offer you will not reach all young people. The Specials (setting, target, etc.) must be modified and varied depending on the target group.

Stay anywhere!

The potential is always as large as allowed by the prevailing political culture. Anyone who does not understand the development of political interest as „Holschuld" young people, the Internet and all its possibilities must use. But nothing can replace personal conversations and experiences in the immediate social environment of young people.

Stay well prepared!

Possible participation needs a clear statement of policy, accompanied each process by a professional staff, sufficient money and resources, functioning



networks and links and targeted public relations.

Stay realistic!

It only has sense to use a social network (e.g. Facebook) within existing relationship structures to maintain contacts, to share information and to raise awareness of the work. This happens in the reality of life of adolescents and young adults who use this means of communication greatly.

Stay interesting!

It is not primarily about the network in which a message is to be disseminated, but the "viral" fitness of this message. This means that there must be a story worth to

be told! Many institutions get into the world of social networks. We will post a summary of their classical press work and notes with astonishment you: there is no interest there. Questioning at your postings, what is the interesting aspect for my defined target group? This can be a particular photo (e.g. from a young person, which one marks it) or a reference point from the lives of the young people in their community.

Just because young people here have the new social network or social media almost always and in every situation, they come in their youth work on "networks" such as Facebook (www.facebook.com),

Pinterest (www.pinterest.com) and / of Twitter (www.twitter.com), etc. not over. You will be successful, if they prepare well (strategy, plan, team, resources, etc.), they radiate a positive and confident approach to the subject, working with the target group together at your gigs, they make fun more often in the foreground and always try something new. Connect it to a new "hybrid" because for young girls and boys there exists no longer the boundaries of an "on-and offline world". Social media in youth work are as LEGOS: Many small and colorful building blocks provide a great tower!

About the author

Jochen Höfferer works at the department of information and communication technology within the Magistrat of the city of Salzburg. His daily tasks are related to social media and open government.



OurSpace // Europe

e-participation in the European sphere

The OurSpace project started in July 2009 and ended in December 2013. The project was co-funded by the European Commission under the ICT Policy Support Programme and it ran by an international consortium of 9 partners from 7 different Member States of the European Union.

Project coordinator is the Athens Technology Centre in Greece that developed the platform together with the technical partners, National Technical University of Athens and Google. Political youth organisations, DUHA from Czech Republic and the British Youth Council, media partners, Café Babel and Foundation EurActiv PoliTech, and e-participation experts, Danube University Krems and 21c Consultancy, work together to develop and test an e-participation platform in real life environments.

The objectives of the project are to create an innovative communication platform for democratic participation. Therefore, existing technologies are used to provide a sustainable inexpensive platform for further usage. As the platform supports English, German, Greek and Czech language, an embedded translation tool facilitates cross border communication. The consortium seeks to create a community that is interested in discussing solutions for political issues. The platform shall also provide background information about the most

relevant issues discussed. Decision makers maintain a key role in the project as OurSpace intends to bridge the gap between young people and European decision makers. OurSpace provides them with feedback from young people all over Europe.

„The project was co-funded by the European Commission under the ICT Policy Support Programme and it ran by an international consortium of 9 partners from 7 different Member States of the European Union“.

In September 2012 the platform went live and different approaches to engage users in different countries show different effects that provide good lessons learnt for further development in the field of e-participation. The project runs pilots in four different

countries and integrates a European layer for cross border discussions. Decision makers have been already been successfully involved in discussion of the platform as interest in new communication solutions with citizens is growing.

The discussion process uses the technology of forums that are structured in a four stages process. In stage 1, users can suggest a theme and rate its relevance. Popular themes are transferred in stage 2, where discussions can take place and comments and concrete solutions to the stated problem (proposals) can be rated. In stage 3, the best rated proposals from stage 2 are rated in a final voting phase. Stage 4 shows the results and provides feedback from decision makers and relevant public bodies.

OurSpace includes web 2.0 communication channels such as social networks to attract users and promote the platform. A Facebook app and an Android app were created to attract user with mobile solutions for participation. The added value of the online solutions are an outreach to people with as one click brings you directly to a discussion, translation tools enable cross border discussions, participation at any time from any place and the online service allows for an easy inclusion of busy Members of European Parliament.

Links & Contact

OurSpace Platform: www.joinourspace.eu

Project Webiste: www.ep-ourspace.eu

Further Contact: www.donau-uni.ac.at/egov

OurSpace

--> Sharing experiences

The final evaluation report of the project will be submitted to the European Commission at the end of the project. However, constant analyses and intermediate evaluations already provide possible recommendations that can be taken from the OurSpace project:

It is important that those bodies that want to enforce e-participation procedures support actions and projects from the very beginning. The commitment and active participation of MEPs and public agencies must be visible to the target audience as this shows that e-participation can actually have an impact when key stakeholders show great interest and participate in the process. It is important to reduce all hurdles that prevent citizens to engaging in political discussions. The OurSpace project for instance requires users to register before participating at any stage of the discussion process, but users can remain fully anonymous and their accounts are not verified. Therefore the registration has no purpose except for counting the users and increasing the newsletter database. Additionally to regular registration, OurSpace offers Facebook registration, which automatically connects with the user profile and consequently is not



anonymous. Considering that only a minority of visitors and page viewers actually register with the platform, it can be assumed that more active involvement of visitors might be possible without a detailed registration procedure.

An e-participation platform must meet current expectations of users and must be designed according to the changing needs of the users. While users that are highly politically interested and active will use platforms that are not overly appealing in design, the masses can only be reached with premium online services.

Therefore an integration of all functionalities of an e-participation platform into a one-stop shop solution is important. Adding relevant features at a later stage will lead to low acceptance of the new features. Therefore a strong technical support is important for maintaining such platforms up to date.

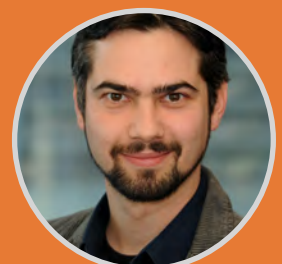
While the OurSpace project was clearly set up to experiment with different approaches to engagement on various levels, a final and official platform should ideally have a clear purpose and concrete aims and processes. These issues must be communicated clearly to the target audience, and it must be clear,

what benefits one platform provides compared to all the other online services available. Web usage and issues of communication and community building have been discussed in many academic papers. If you don't get the users' attentions within the first few seconds, they might not return again. Therefore marketing mechanisms must be implemented until a platform has been established within a reasonable size of community, including key stakeholders.

About the author

Michael Sachs is research fellow at the Centre for E-Governance at Danube University Krems. He was director of the Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government

and published several articles and papers in the domain of e-democracy. Now he coordinates post graduate master programmes and leads a team in the OurSpace project where he is responsible for the evaluation work package.



YoungScot // Scotland

e-Voting to engage with young people about local issues

Through the e-Voting platform (elections.youngscot.org) Young Scot aims to encourage and empower young people in the voting process for their local Scottish Youth Parliament elections (SYP) as well as for local youth councils and local projects. For many this will be their first experience of voting and our intention is that it is an interesting, engaging and simple process.

Young Scot and the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) have been working together since 2005 to support the SYP elections process by providing an e-Voting solution to local authorities to enable young people to elect their MSYPs online using their Young Scot Card. In 2011, unified elections took place for the first time, with voting taking place across Scotland during the same two week period.

To support this process, a completely new e-Voting system was created, making it quicker and easier to run elections and having the capacity to cope with tens of thousands of young people voting

simultaneously. The latest elections took place between 4th and 15th March 2013 and the use of e-Voting increased significantly.

„In 2013
35,656 young people
voted online.“

In 2013 35,656 young people voted online across 17 local authority areas. This was up from 16,233 young people who voted online across 9 local authority areas in 2011. There were 86 MYSPs elected to 45 constituencies.

Young Scot is keen to extend the use of e-Voting beyond the Scottish Youth Parliament elections, using it to empower young people to make decisions in their local communities. This has already been tested in the Shetland Islands for participatory budgeting.

In 2012, in partnership with Shetland Youth Services, Young Scot offered young people the unique opportunity to use their Young Scot NEC to directly influence how £8,000 from the 'You Choose - Voice Your Choice' project would be spent, in order to benefit local youth services.

To ensure that the project was accessible and inclusive to all young people, those that didn't own a card were offered a temporary card number, ensuring that all local young people had the opportunity to engage with local issues and shape services that reflect their needs.

Links & Contact

Website: www.youngscot.org

E-Voting website: elections.youngscot.org

YoungScot

--> Sharing experiences

Are there processes, tools, etc you would use again?

- In 2013 16 local authorities used this system. This required significant additional resources, the extent of which had not been foreseen. Next year more resources (in the form of staff members) will be involved in the process.

What would you do different next time?

- We plan to be better organised and prepared for the 2015 e-election and to increase the number of voters turning out to vote.

Where do you plan to improve?

- We also plan to encourage more local authorities to use e-voting to involve young people more routinely in decisions that affect them in their area. E.g. using e-voting to allow young people to suggest on the best use of youth service resources.

When you have a look at these different phases of an e-participation process (Development, Implementation, Access & Information, Input & Dialogue, Output & Outcome) what

are your experiences within the project?

- Yes we can recognise these stages in the e-voting system although not in the same order. As with the Rewards project the e-voting system went through an initial development and implementation phase for the 2011 SYP election. The evaluation of this led to developments being made for the 2013 election. I think these phases are useful, although it is vital to produce an 'agile' system that can be adapted once in use. It is unlikely to get it exactly right



the first time. There are always things to improve

What has been the added value of internet-based services in this good practice example when compared to traditional (offline) participation?

- E-voting using the Young Scot card would not have been possible without internet-based services. There was not, and still is not, a way to set up e-voting system using a card number verification. Also, we were able to display and promote the election candidates pre-election. The process of voting online has removed the laborious process of manual counting of votes. The 2013 e-voting elections saw the highest voter turnout in the history of the SYP elections. The e-voting system as well as an effective campaign promoting the election within local schools can help to increase voter turnout. In Shetland the local authority used e-voting to undertake participatory budgeting. Using e-voting made the whole process easier and it was suggested that young people preferred voting electronically.

About the author

Kyle Usher is Digital Development Manager at Young Scot overseeing the development of the organisation's digital platforms and manages the digital team in producing engaging online content for young people.



Milton Keynes // England

Local e-participation by young people

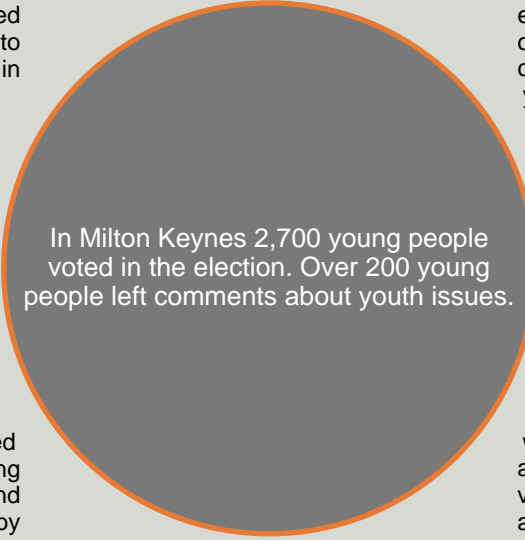
In 2009 Milton Keynes Council partnered with West Sussex County Council to learn how to engage young people in democracy through on-line voting.

West Sussex County Council is a large county in South East England. They were awarded Beacon Council for Positive Youth Engagement from 2006-2007. The award highlighted the implementation of an electronic voting system to increase access to democracy which West Sussex developed in 2000. Since using the system they have seen a significant increase in voter turnout compared to traditional voting methods. They believed that this was down to placing young people at the heart of the process and reflecting current thinking and culture by the use of e-voting.

Milton Keynes is a Unitary Authority also in South East England. In 2008 we formed a small group of young to become their first Youth Cabinet and started the process of looking at running the first borough-wide youth election. West Sussex offered to peer mentor Milton Keynes in their e-voting system. It was felt that this was a good partnership due to the differences within participation methods and demographics of the two areas.

The peer mentoring project ran from January- April 2009. West Sussex supported the training of staff in the voting system, creating timelines, publicity and voting materials. They also supported young people from each area to visit each other and shadow live election events.

Milton Keynes youth elections ran through secondary schools; both recruiting candidates to stand in the elections and



In Milton Keynes 2,700 young people voted in the election. Over 200 young people left comments about youth issues.

supporting young people to vote. Over 40 young people stood in the election for 24 places. The elections were broken into three constituencies (North, Central and South) and candidates and their schools were allocated a constituency depending on their geography. We asked candidates to write a short manifesto about why they were standing. Manifestos were published on the Milton Keynes Council youth page www.mysaymk.com as well as on the online voting platform. We also encouraged candidates to canvass their schools to support their campaign.

The elections ran over a two week period and we encouraged schools to arrange voting times which suited them. The voting system supplied by Mi-Voice is an internet based system which supplies voters with an individual identification number which can be printed onto a card or e-mailed to voters. We allocated batches of voting cards to each school and asked schools to arrange distribution

ensuring that each young person received only one card. Most schools allocated class time or lunch time slots where young people could vote. Some asked their students to take home their card and vote there.

Youth Workers, where possible, supported schools with their elections attending assemblies, tutor time, lunchtimes or lessons to explain the voting system and offer technical support.

One of the positive elements to the online system was the statistic data it was able to continually provide. We were able to see how many young people were voting and from which school. This was an invaluable tool which allowed us to target non-participating schools and offer them support. This also eliminated the need for manual counting saving both time and resources.

Part of the initial objectives of the project was to ensure that young people had the opportunity to articulate youth issues which the newly elected Youth Cabinet could work on. The platform allowed votes to add in a comment before completing the election process. This was invaluable information and formed the basis of the campaigns for the following two years.

In Milton Keynes 2,700 young people voted in the election. Over 200 young people left comments about youth issues. West Sussex increased their voter turnout again and continued to use online voting as their method for elections.

Links & Contact

Milton Keynes Youth Page: www.mysaymk.com

West Sussex Youth Page: www.yourspacewestsussex.co.uk

Voting System: www.mi-voice.com

Milton Keynes

--> Sharing experiences

Tradition voting vs e-voting

One of the concerns with when using e-voting is that it doesn't teach young people how to vote using traditional methods when they reach 18. Therefore it is important to think through the rationale for not using traditional methods in favour for new ones. Engaging young people in the democratic process is important, as apathy for voting within the 18-24 bracket is low, so encouraging young people to vote no matter through which method can be viewed as positive. It is important that senior management and elected members are willing to embrace e-voting. It will help with getting schools and young people on board.

E-voting: a cheaper option?

The process of e-voting removed the laborious process of manual counting eliminating the need for printing costs and staff time. However the system did have a licence cost (though the

licence lasts for 12 months) and still required staff to teach school staff and young people how to use the system.



Added value of e-voting

There were three main advantages to e-voting. Firstly that the system allowed all

manifestos to be uploaded (which photo's if required) meaning that all the resources in one location. Young people come make informed decisions after reading all the manifestos. The system also allowed greater flexibility in voting: young people could vote anywhere and at any time. The system was able to gather campaign information from young people, becoming a consultation tool at the same time. This information was invaluable to Youth Cabinet.

Partnership working

Whatever method of voting you use it cannot happen in isolation. Schools play an significant part within the election process and it is important to ensure communication about the elections happens timely and with consideration to other school pressures. Working with Democratic Services also ensured that the elections were closely monitored and supported.

About the author

Emma Hosking is a Youth Participation Worker for Milton Keynes Council. She is a qualified Youth Worker with an MA in Youth & Community Development Studies.

She has worked in Youth Participation for the since 2007. Emma co-ordinates and supports the Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament Members for Milton Keynes.



Initiative Channel // Finland

Finnish youth participation

The Initiative Channel is a national e-democracy service for young people and was developed to fulfill the requirement to find ways and means for young people to take part in determining youth work and youth policy, as stipulated in the Youth Act. The development of the service is supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland.

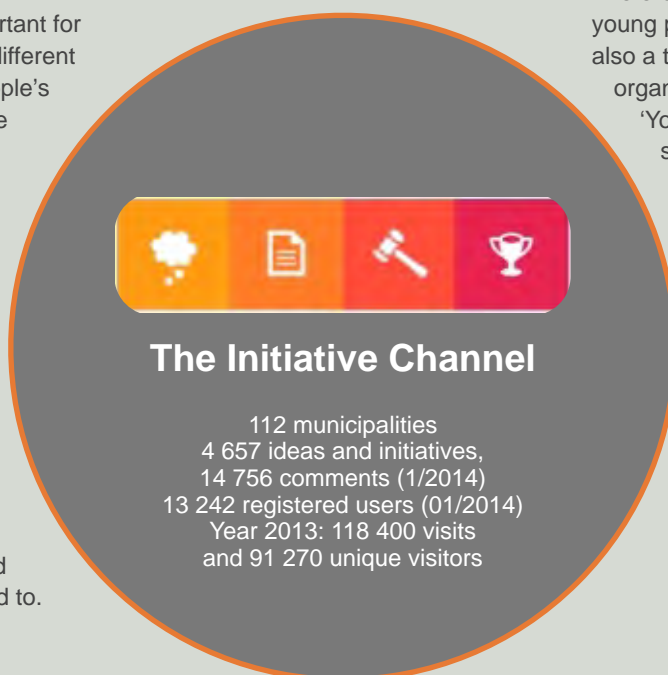
The Initiative Channel corresponds the strategic goals of the governmental Child and Youth Policy Development Programme 2012-2015. It is important for municipalities to provide several different tools for children's and young people's participation and consultation - the Initiative Channel is one of them. The service has been developed since 2006.

Currently the service is used by 122 municipalities in Finland. Moderating, maintaining and promoting the service is usually one of the work tasks of local youth workers or administrative staff. The young person drafting the idea is not required to have knowledge on how the idea should be processed further or who it shall be submitted to.

The function of the Initiative Channel is based on a process that helps young people's ideas to become initiatives with the support of a local moderator. An initial idea goes through a stage of commenting to become an initiative that is then forwarded to the proper authorities for processing.

An idea must get at least one supporting comment in order to become an initiative. If there are only comments against the idea or no comments at all, it will not be forwarded. Young user has to sign in to post an idea but young people can comment on ideas without signing in. The e-democracy service makes it possible to track how the initiatives are processed in the municipality because the decisions are updated online by a local moderator.

The e-democracy service is a dedicated young people's involvement channel, but also a tool for various municipal organisations to consult young people. 'Your Municipality Wants to Know' section of the Initiative Channel allows young people to answer questions that have been set for hearing by different municipal organisations and authorities (e.g. local policy-makers, organisations, youth councils).



Links & Contact

Initiative Channel: www.aloitekanava.fi / www.initiativkanalen.fi

Website of Koordinaatti: <http://www.koordinaatti.fi/en>

Initiative Channel

--> Sharing experiences

Sharing experiences

The Initiative Channel enables the participation of young people in the municipality in the development and improvement of their own immediate environment. It offers a ready-to-use model that would be difficult for small municipalities to launch from scratch. In addition, the service helps in making the interests of young people transparent, and it can illustrate the progress of various initiatives throughout the stages of municipal decision-making process.

The Initiative Channel provides a chance to participate, even for those young people who do not belong to any formal youth involvement group. One of the benefits of the service is that everybody can participate as long as they have an online connection and computer or mobile device. One of the advantages of the service is that it does not favour anyone; every young person has an opportunity to make their voice heard.

Making participation easy

Users are able to express their opinions anonymously or using a nickname, so participating is easy. Posting an idea is possible if user is logged into the Initiative Channel. If a young user doesn't have an account or prefers to post a comment anonymously it's possible. The service is a 'low-threshold' service and the feedback from the workers and young people has

been that commenting without logging in is a positive thing. There hasn't been any



need to pre-moderate anonymous comments in advance and require moderator's approval before being published. But moderators have the right to delete a comment if it's inappropriate afterwards.

Success stories

All the initiatives by young people that have led to improvements or amendments are found online. Success stories vary from small one-off amendments, such as repairing broken sports equipment, to large-scale measures, such as improving the quality of school meals or increasing the number of summer jobs available. Even a small change can mean a major

success story for an individual young person.

The Initiative Channel helps to bridge the gap between decision-makers and young people. Consequently, decision-makers can understand young people's interests better. The service helps to make the decision-making process transparent for young people and possibly provides the very first experience of democracy.

Importance of local workers

The role of municipal moderators is important as it includes various tasks. The local Initiative Channel is moderated and maintained by a local moderator (or moderators). Local workers are also responsible of promoting the service and informing about it to different stakeholders.

Different municipalities have different practices and different number of workers who are responsible of the tasks related to the service. It's very important that different tasks and responsibilities are divided and agreed among the workers.

Challenges involved in the service primarily concern human resources in the municipalities and the decision-makers' commitment. Commitment of the contact person and moderators, as well as management is important. Promoting the service to young people is one of the tasks and it demands the most resources, but it is also a precondition for generating awareness of the service and for involvement to become a reality.

About the author

Merja-Maaria Oinas is working as a planning officer at Koordinaatti - Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling. Koordinaatti is responsible for the national coordination, development, marketing and communication activities of Aloitekanava.fi (Initiative

Channel) since 2008. Her work includes planning and organising training events and seminars for moderators, providing guidance and counselling on questions related to the service, communication on topical themes, and much more.





Group

During the group discussion, the experts discussed in smaller groups with the representatives of the good practice examples.

Also they exchanged own experience about e-participation in pairs of two and thus provided valuable feedback on the guidelines.



work

Some feedback points that the participants of the Peer Learning Seminar provided during the group discussions are listed in this chapter, one for each phase of the guidelines. Also, all the listed feedback was adopted to the guidelines.

To complete the picture, please find in this chapter as well, the final version of the guidelines for successful e-participation by young people, that was adopted by the European partners during their last partner meeting in Madrid, on December 12 & 13, 2013.

Group discussion

Feedback on „Guidelines for successful e-participation for young people“

Development Phase

„There has to be a common framework and minimum standards in all e-participation processes“

- Please clarify: common framework; minimum standards (should they be listed?)
- Be more explicit. What do you exactly mean?
- Common: blurry, what does it mean

Implementation Phase

„Consideration of scheduling and timing-related issues faced by the administrative and political level as well as by young people“

- Should be shifted into the development phase
- Change grammar: „Consideration of scheduling, timing-related issues by the administrative and by young people“
-faced by the commissioning body & wider stakeholders.“

Access and Information Phase

„Appoint contact persons, mediators and translators, young people could contact for problems they face within an e-participation process“

- Mediator must be an expert on the whole process of participation (online/offline)
- Needs to be someone with experience of working with **young** people/local youth worker; need knowledge on e-participation process

Input & Dialogue Phase

„Explain the design and limitations of the software“

- If platform is clear and simply, this should be self-explaining
- Suggestion for reformulation: „Explain the design, main functions and limitations of the software“
- Platform design is not so important, but explanation about what you can do and what you cannot do

Output & Outcome Phase

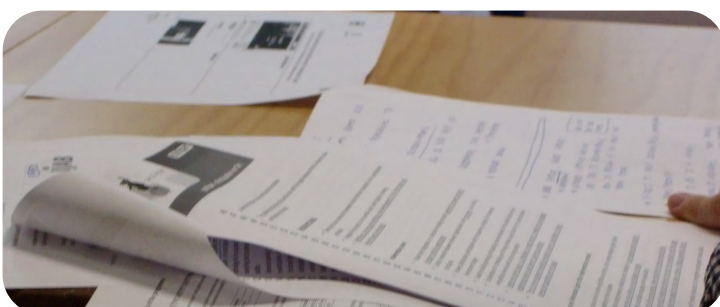
„Archive the entire process“

- Similar to „Ensure the process is documented“?
- Easier in e-part
- Similarity between this point and the first one (ensure that the process is documented)

Evaluation Phase

„Provide feedback to involved stakeholders“

- Feedback methods and styles need to vary, depending on the stakeholder
- Where is the feedback presented? Newspaper? Report? Public/private. Is it accessible to everyone?



**Guidelines
for successful
e-participation by young people
in decision-making
at local, regional, national and European levels**

(Last updated: 13 December 2013)

Introduction

Relevance of youth e-participation

The increasing use of ICT in people's everyday lives has created new ways to communicate, new spaces to share cultural experiences, and new methods to make their voices heard. For a majority of young people, consuming digital media and engaging in social networks have become normal parts of their lives.

The ever-expanding range of technological possibilities gives young people new opportunities to engage online and to become involved in decision-making. To ensure the effectiveness of these tools, they need to be fine-tuned and adapted to the environments, resources and communication channels of young people. New and innovative approaches need to continue to be developed and tested in order to identify and share the best practices for e-participation of young people across Europe.

Background to the Guidelines

In 2011 Germany's Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) adopted a new approach towards international cooperation, and created multilateral cooperation projects to function as cross-border think tanks to contribute input to current youth policy topics. To this end, the concept of peer learning – essentially, the act of learning from one another – offered an ideal framework as one of the EU Youth Strategy's strongest instruments for promoting youth policy cooperation in Europe. *youthpart*, a multilateral cooperation project by IJAB, the International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany, was established to start an international dialogue on how more young people can be encouraged to participate in decision-making in today's digital society. *youthpart* and the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, together with its European partners, the Austrian Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, the British Youth Council, the Spanish Institute for Youth (INJUVE) and the Finnish Development Centre for Youth Information and Counselling (Koordinaatti), and with the support of the European Commission's DG Education & Culture (Youth unit, D.1), produced this set of guidelines for successful e-participation by young people.

Designed as a multi-stakeholder process, the work began in December 2011 and ended in April 2014. During this time, the project partners attended four international workshops to develop and fine-tune the Guidelines and organised two events to gather feedback from European experts and young people. The complex process also included input from national advisory councils from each of the partner countries. These advisory councils reflected a range of stakeholders including young people, youth organisations, researchers, administrative bodies, software developers, practitioners and NGOs.

Guidelines as a reference framework

These Guidelines provide those planning an e-participation process for young people with a set of factors they should take into consideration to make the process more effective. They are designed to support youth policy experts, decision-makers, young people, youth organisations and administrative staff. These guidelines are advisory and can be adapted to the needs of different e-participation initiatives and the differing circumstances of young people, and to meet future technical and societal changes.

Guidelines for successful e-participation by young people in decision-making at local, regional, national and European levels

Definition of e-participation

PARTICIPATION is sharing, becoming involved and taking action. This implies that citizens choose to actively participate in, and contribute to, public decision-making at different levels (i.e., local, regional, national and European). In the case of e-PARTICIPATION, this involvement and participation in decision-making takes place electronically through the use of online information and internet-based technology. In a political sense, the term expresses the fact that many aspects of the everyday lives of citizens are determined by political processes. Essentially, e-participation is interactive online policy-making in action.

We distinguish between two dimensions of e-participation:

- **Direct** participation online. Here, political decisions are influenced directly and structural links to political decision-making processes are enabled.
- **Indirect** forms of e-participation. They reach out to internet users and encourage them to support certain issues and positions. In turn, they also contribute to the development of political opinion. One example is activities that are designed to encourage young people to participate in political matters via digital channels.

Both dimensions include activities created by young people and youth organisations, youth work, educational and citizenship projects, and activities initiated by administrative bodies and decision-makers.

These two dimensions of e-participation are inseparable and complementary, as evidence has shown. That said, these *youthpart* Guidelines are designed exclusively for direct e-participation and describe the preconditions for the success of such activities.

Overall principles of e-participation

Certain crucial aspects are common to all e-participation processes. These are:

- **Alignment with young people's realities** | e-participation processes need to be aligned with young people's lives. This relates to matters such as content, information and time management, but also to design and technical implementation. The processes should be designed to interest, stimulate and motivate young people to ensure their continuing involvement.
- **Resources** | e-participation processes require sufficient resources such as expertise, time, funding and technology, as well as staff to provide guidance and advisory services.
- **Effectiveness & direct influence** | e-participation processes need to have an outcome. A structural link to decision-making processes is essential.
- **Transparency** | the overall process needs to be transparent for everyone. This requirement extends to all information related to the process as well as to the software and tools used.
- **End-to-end involvement of young people** | young people need to be involved in all stages of the process. This includes a feedback option in all phases of the process.

¹transitive

²intransitive

Degrees of Participation model

The basic prerequisite for a direct participatory process is that it offers a structural link to public decision-making processes that is defined prior to the actual participation process. Those making the decisions should be involved in setting up the participation process.

The structure of the participation processes may vary depending on the intensity of the decision-makers' involvement (known as the Degrees of Participation model):

- Consultation and information in the shape of consultative processes
- Codetermination in the shape of decision-making with equal voting rights (i.e., all participants have equal input)
- Self-determination in the shape of agenda-setting (meaning that young people are involved in deciding what issues make it onto the political agenda) and decision-making processes with exclusive decision-making powers (meaning that the decision is entirely up to the young people without the need to consult others).

General structure of all e-participation processes

All types of e-participation process should have the following phase-related structure.

Development phase

During this phase, the general parameters and common principles of the process are defined after careful consideration. These constitute the backbone of the process.

- Participation processes should be linked to policy frameworks (e.g., directives, laws, strategies, conventions) of youth participation. This principle applies at all levels, whether local, regional, national or European.
- Young people need to be involved in all stages of designing the process and should participate directly in all decisions in this phase.
- There should be a consensus on how decisions are made and about the opportunities and limitations of the participation process. Raising false expectations would be detrimental to the process.
- The entire organisational team should agree on the online platform and the social media channels to be used. When designing the structure, the option for a separate online youth section should be considered, where necessary for the exclusive use of young people, to allow informal communication.
- The entire participation process should be integrated into an overall strategy for youth participation.
- Cooperation and transparency should be built in to the process from the start.
- Examples of existing participation processes and/or good practices should be collected, e.g. through the consultation of online platforms or databases. This input may be used as a resource when planning a participation process.
- Innovations in IT and internet technology should be researched, reviewed and integrated provided they are relevant and accessible by the target group. Generally, the tools should support the process, not vice versa.
- Easily accessible and appropriate technologies should be used (e.g., open source software). The software should be user-friendly, simple, accessible, inclusive, transparent and secure. It is essential that the technologies are tested by young people who will later use them, prior to going live.
- The schedules of all stakeholders – e.g. young people, administrative bodies, decision-makers – should be taken into account and be reviewed throughout the

- process.
- Compliance with legal requirements must be verified by experts in the run-up to all e-participation processes (e.g. tendering, copyright, data protection).

Implementation phase

During this phase, the general parameters should be put into practice, and the plans translated into concrete activities and actions.

- The participation process should be embedded in a decision-making process.
- To avoid raising false expectations, participants should be informed of the opportunities and limitations of the participation process as well as of how decisions will be made.
- The online platform and the social media channels should be opened so the participants can voice their needs and concerns. The participation process should also be made accessible to young people who do not have regular access to the Internet.
- A network should be set up involving relevant stakeholders, such as decision-makers, young people, youth organisations, youth workers, schools and, companies. Existing networks and structures should be used.
- Trained staff should be available to provide support to participants.
- It is imperative that all surveys and questionnaires are neutrally worded.
- It should be ensured that the participation process is handled transparently, that the interests of all participating stakeholders are protected, and that previously agreed parameters and common principles are respected.
- All relevant stakeholders should agree on a process to allow young people to raise complaints and grievances, and for these to be fairly reviewed and action taken as necessary.

Access and information phase (part of Implementation)

During this phase, basic principles that have been previously agreed should be put into practice. The tools and information should be made available to the target audience to use.

- The tools should offer a mix of online and offline interaction. The proportions will vary depending on the subject at hand.
- Participants should be made aware of how to make contact if they have problems or questions, need guidance and advice, or would like to request mediation.
- A feedback option for participants should be integrated into the tools.
- The tools should use easy-to-understand language and present the contents clearly and vividly.
- Stakeholders should define a set of online community standards and effective protocols for the monitoring and moderation of online activity. The people carrying out these tasks should be adequately trained.
- (Online) educational activities should be integrated to promote participants' media skills (online literacy).
- PR and marketing activities should be undertaken to encourage a wide range of potential users to take part in the process (e.g., via online, radio, TV and print).
- All information provided must be accurate, up to date and verified, with a clear statement of when the information was written or updated. All content should be relevant to young people and respond to their needs. For further criteria concerning

- information provision, please consult the Principles for Online Youth Information by European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA).
- Background information on the subject in question should be provided and made available using a language, format and style that is easily understood by the target audience.
- Open Data enables access to valuable information that supports the formation of opinions. Therefore, all open data should be made accessible to young people, respecting personal data privacy laws, so they can carry out their own additional research.

Input and dialogue phase

This phase is concerned with the actual running of the process and how the stakeholders are involved. It focuses on the topic at hand and the associated discussions, and reaches out to the target audiences.

- An explanation of why this specific e-participation process exists should be provided including its scope and limitations.
- The background should be explained, together with information on the initiators and implementing organisations as well as on the interests they represent.
- The structure, main features, potential and the limitations of the software should be referenced.
- The steps in the process and the timeline should be clearly explained.
- Reference should be made to the intended effect of the process.
- Effective safeguards against the unauthorised manipulation of the process and the software should be put in place.
- All participants should be provided with an opportunity to give feedback on the process.
- Full compliance with data privacy and personal privacy laws must be ensured.
- The social and local importance of the e-participation process and the final decisions should be communicated appropriately to all relevant stakeholders and target groups.

Output & outcome phase

This phase is concerned with the results of the process.

- The entire participation process should be documented and archived and this information made publicly accessible.
- The decision-makers (e.g., politicians) should be informed directly of the results.
- It should be possible, after a certain time, to verify whether the outcomes of the participation process have been implemented.
- Individual contributions should be displayed in an easily understandable manner in compliance with personal data privacy laws.
- The participants should be able to trace back their personal contributions to the process.
- The impact of the participants' contributions must be acknowledged and made visible during and after the process. This information should be actively communicated to the participants rather than waiting for them to ask for it.
- The outcome of the process should be published in a youth friendly and attractive way (e.g., using videos, audio, etc.) and should be freely accessible.

- The participants should be able to share their contributions – as well as the outcome of the process – with their friends, family and social networks.
- The data collected during the participation process should be made available to download and for further analysis.
- Where possible, the software and code should be made publicly available (e.g. open source).

Evaluation phase

This phase involves an assessment of the e-participation process with the aim to improve the quality of future processes. It should highlight what went well, what did not go according to plan, and give suggestions for future improvements.

- All relevant stakeholders, including young people in particular, should be able to give their feedback, views and opinions on the process, on the tools and software used, and on the outcomes and the implementation of the results.
- Evaluation methods and styles should vary depending on the stakeholder.
- The evaluation should contain concrete advice on improving future projects.
- The results of the evaluation should be made publicly accessible.



Expert

30 experts from six European countries with a variety of backgrounds: local authorities, software development, youth organisations, open government ngo's, youth ministries, youth information - it would have been a shame to miss this chance to ask their opinion on some current hot questions regarding e-participation & youth.

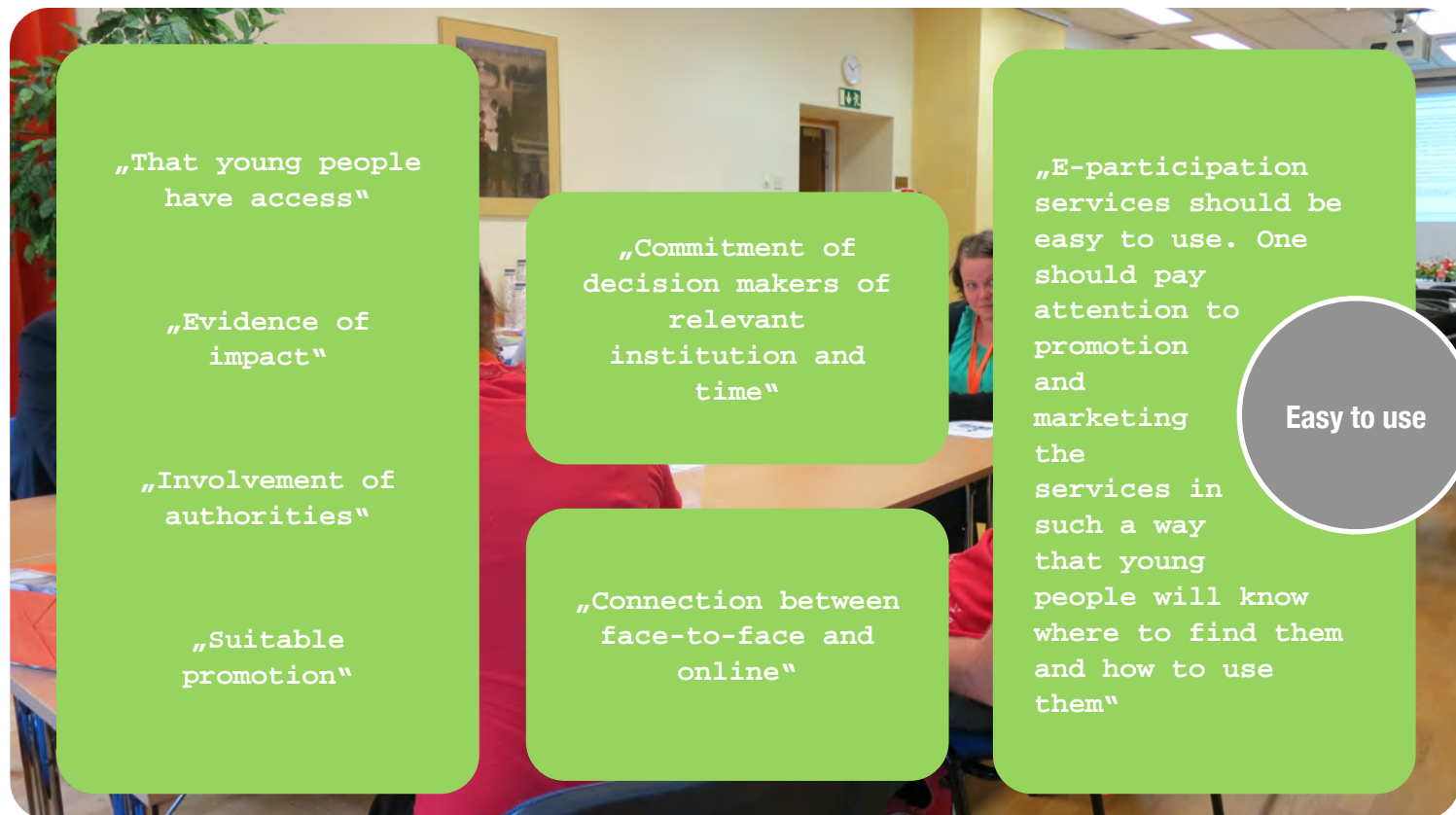


Interviews

Christian Gieseke, trainee at the project „watch your web“ by IJAB at that time and social media reporter during the seminar, met the experts during breaks and recorded their opinion.

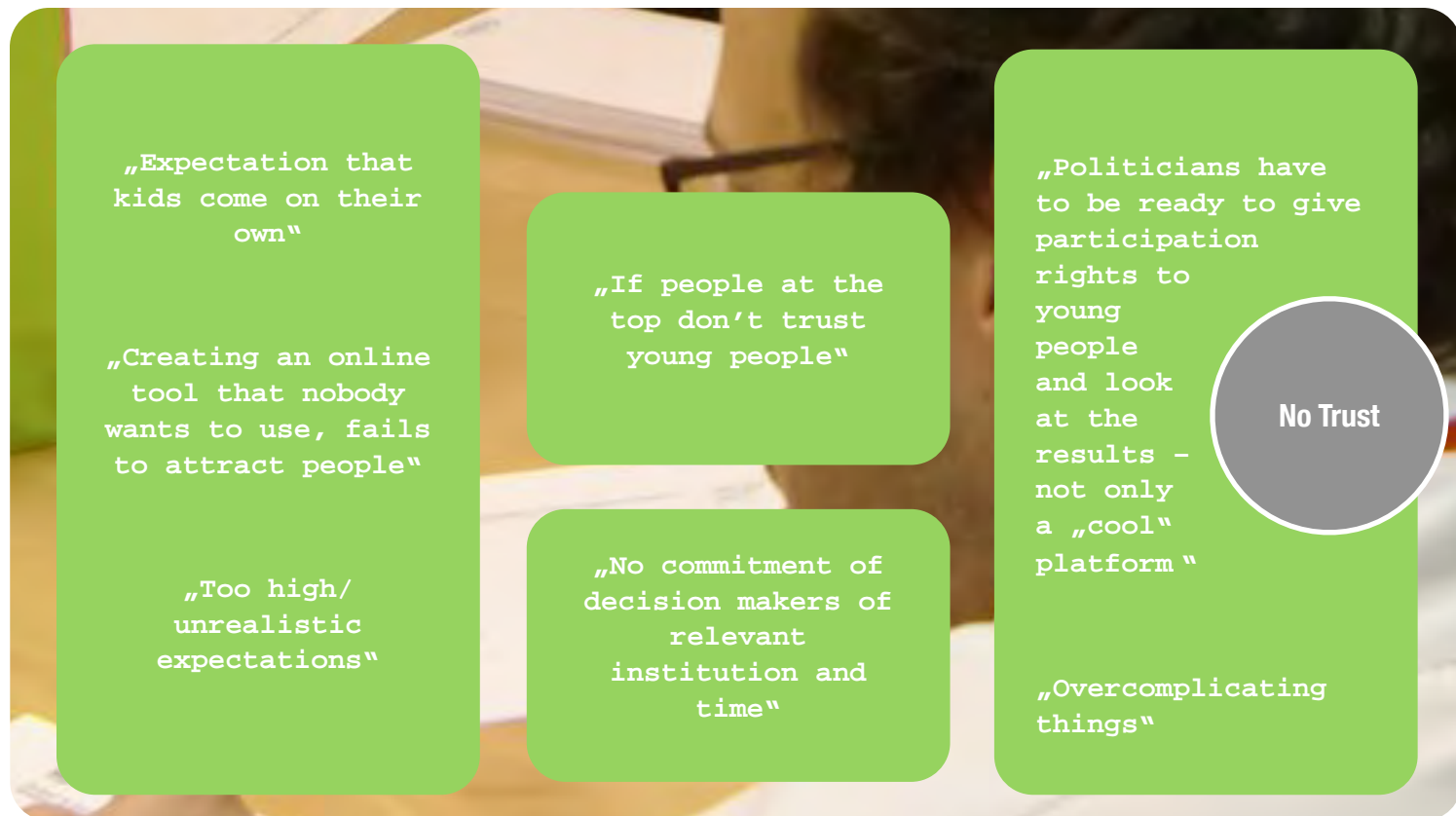
For example on the question: what is the perfect balance between traditional participation and e-participation. Or, if there is one success factor - the x-factor- for successful e-participation projects with young people, what is that x-factor?

He also asked what can be the biggest failure in e-participation processes with young people, and, what is the very first question these expert asks themselves when they plan an e-participation project with young people.

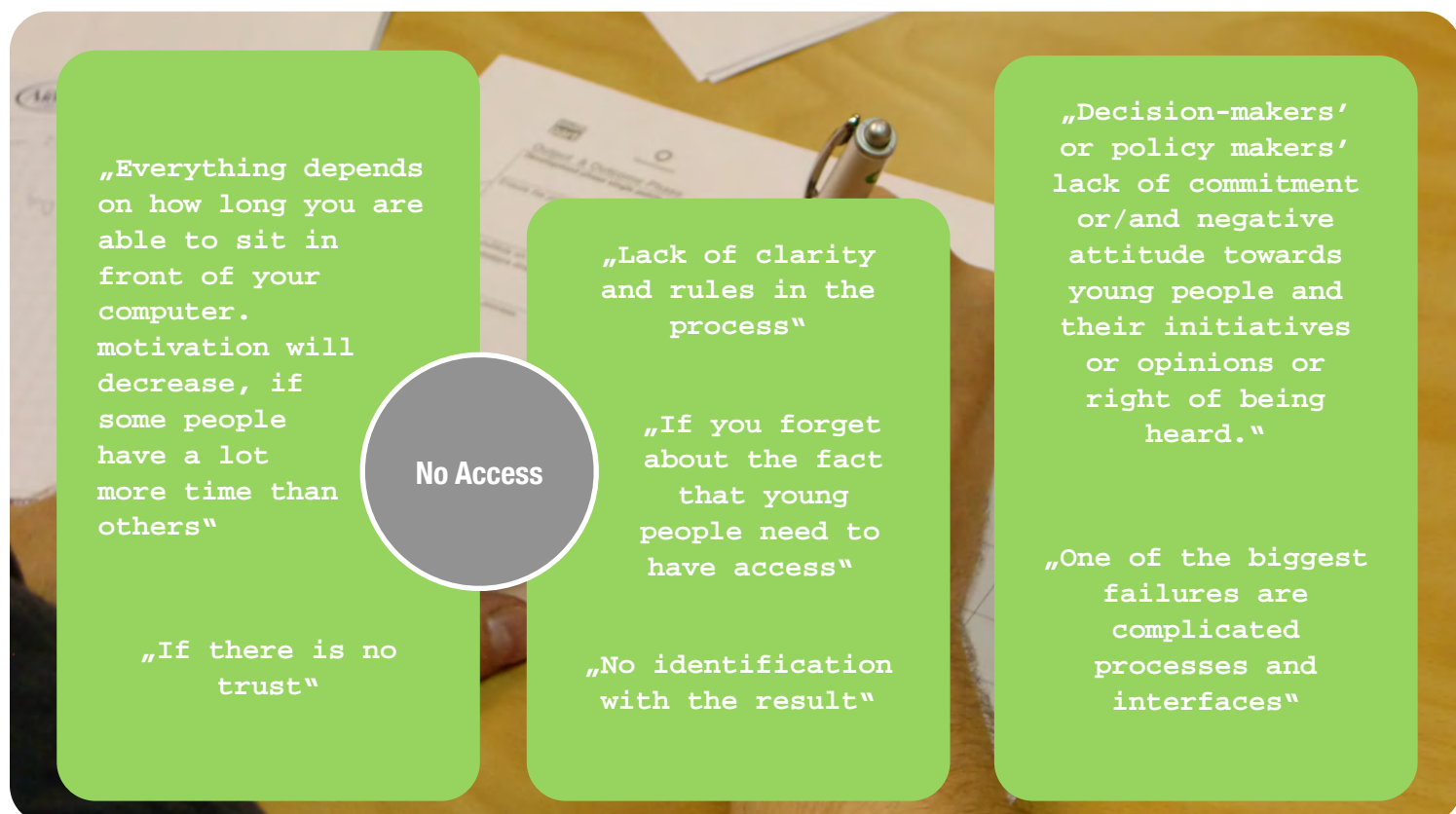


Your Opinion:
What factor is the x-factor when it comes to successful e-participation of young people?





Your Opinion:
What is the biggest failure, according to you, when it comes to e-participation of young people?



„What are the technical difficulties?“

„How is it gonna be maintained?“

„Which platform?“

„Which target group?“

„Branding and design: how does it look and feel?“

„What is the added value of e-participation?“

„Are the people, who commission the project, excited?“

„Looking at risk assessment“

„How do I

convince politicians to take part?“

Target group?

Your Opinion:
When you plan internet-based participation: what is the first question you ask yourself?

eParticipation Environment
Tools and platforms for



„Number of users: how is the marketing?“

„What is the decisive moment of personal concern for further engagement?“

„I need an amazing topic!“

„How is the target group involved in planning?“

„Why do I choose e-participation for this project?“

„Keep it simple and stupid!“

Added value of „e“

„45:55“

„50:50“

„20:80“

„50:50“

„75:25“

„35:65. Offline:
new input, addition
of sources“

„10:90, offline
only as an
addition“

„E-participation
services are good
tools but there
should be
possibilities to be
involved and
participate
face to
face.“

Face to face

„Depends
on aims“

Your Opinion:
Balancing traditional participation and e-participation: what is the perfect ratio for you?

„Depends on how
complex the
situation is:
more complex ->
more offline“

„It depends...“

„The bigger the
project, the more
should be done
online.
Transparency
can only be
guaranteed
online“

„No separation:
only one
discussion, then
you need to decide,
which tool works“

„60:40“

„30:70“

„Depends on topic,
regional
circumstances and
target group:
bigger project ->
more e-
participation“



Tweets

More than 150 tweets before, during and after this Peer Learning Seminar.

#epartfin was the Twitter Hashtag for this seminar. At the end it was changed to #epartfun.



Stefan Kühne

@etiennedevienne

Learned: "Infopation" - mixt
participation and informatio
(what about "infopassion" or
"participassion") :-)

& Media

Mostly, the tweets were sent via a web-interface, followed by devices using IOS or Android.

During and after the seminar, the organisers of this seminar, Koordinaatti and Youthpart, published articles on their websites.

Among the most used words were participation, Helsinki, Seminar, e-participation, thanks and Finland.

Some impressions have been collected in this chapter. Enjoy!

youth part **ijab Karbach&Ertelt** @youthpart 19 Aug
#epartfin starts right now!
Öffnen Antworten Löschen Favorisieren Mehr

Stefan Kühne @etiennedevienne 19 Aug
Graeme Robertson invites us to download "Youth participation in democratic life" bit.ly/14tYvdb #epartfin
Favorisiert von Rhammel Afflick und 1 andere

Rhammified Media @RhammifiedMedia 19 Aug
Currently discussing transitive and intransitive processes. #epartFin
pic.twitter.com/buX92yVrV4
Foto anzeigen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

youth part **ijab Karbach&Ertelt** @youthpart 20 Aug
Mike Bourquin from Offenbach/Quaid presents the first good practice-example of the second day at #epartfin in Helsinki!
Öffnen Antworten Löschen Favorisieren Mehr

youth part **ijab Karbach&Ertelt** @youthpart 19 Aug
Kick-off for our Peer-Learning Seminar on "e-participation & youth", Helsinki. Follow #epartfin for updates! pic.twitter.com/zB6o4UD2P0
Favorisiert von Rhammel Afflick und 1 andere
Foto ausblenden Antworten Löschen Favorisieren Mehr



Rhammel Afflick @Rhammified 20 Aug
Impressive to hear @kyle_usher (@YoungScot) talk about the ladder of participation! Young people at all steps. #epartFin
von Helsinki, Uusim. Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

Kyle Usher @kyle_usher 20 Aug
E-voting: Honest report from Milton Keynes on the shortfalls of the project. Need to include stakeholders, get them on board early #epartfin
Öffnen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

Rhammel Afflick @Rhammified 19 Aug
Arrived safely in Finland... Now ready for the discussions ahead. #epartfin
Öffnen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

Koordinaatti @Koo/dinaatti 19 Aug
Helsingissä käynnissä kansainvälinen seminaari nuorten verkkovalitsemisesta koordinaatti.fi/ajankohtaista/... #epartfin
Öffnen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

Valtikka.fi @ValtikkaFi 19 Aug
Finland has signed the open governance partnership. #epartfin
vm.fi/vm/en/05_proje...
Öffnen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

Rhammel Afflick @Rhammified
Do check out yourforum.org.uk #epartFin
Öffnen Antworten Retweetet Favorisiere

BritishYouthCouncil @bycLIVE 20 Aug
We're here with Milton Keynes who are now discussing their 2009 trial of e-Elections. #epartFin pic.twitter.com/OO09f4Vq9j
Foto ausblenden Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr



Stefan Kühne @etiennedevienne 20 Aug
First Presentation today @ #epartfin: jugendbuero-vgo.de/ozl/ Offenbach Future Initiative from Germany
Öffnen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

youth part **ijab Karbach&Ertelt** @youthpart 20 Aug
Now @kyle_usher talks about Young Scot! youngscot.org #epartfin
Öffnen Antworten Löschen Favorisieren Mehr

@PalatineMike @kyle_usher @lfr_nds
@etiennedevienne @Rhammified
@mipietila @YoungScot @bycLIVE
@mrtpf @Koordinaatti @jugendhackt
@supermaschine @OURSPACE_EU

E-PARTICIPATION SEMINAR PARTICIPATION
IMPRESSIONS YOUNG GROUP - :) HELSINKI YOUTH
CHECK DIE THANKS FINLAND
KEYNES MILTON INITIATIVE
"E-PARTICIPATION"

Stefan Kühne @etiennedevienne 20 Aug
Jochen Hoefler is now presenting salzblog.at/news/ - and he brought Original Mozartkugeln - is that a bribe? :-) [#epartfin](#)
Öffnen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

Frau Wohlfahrt @FrauKW 20 Aug
Wow, you are so fast. >@youthpart: The report about the first day is online! (german) ijab.de/aktivitaeten/... [#epartfin](#)
Öffnen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

ijab Karbach&Ertelt @youthpart 20 Aug
The report about the first day is online! (german) ijab.de/aktivitaeten/... [#epartfin](#)
Öffnen Antworten Löschen Favorisieren Mehr

BritishYouthCouncil @bycLIVE 20 Aug
[@Koordinaatti](#) @youthpart thanks for hosting us in Helsinki - it's been insightful seminar! [#epartfin](#)
Öffnen Antworten Retweetet Favorisieren Mehr

Stefan Kühne @etiennedevienne 20 Aug
Touchdown Vienna - thank you everybody for this great seminar in Helsinki! That was [#epartfun](#) & [#epartfin](#) pic.twitter.com/j4V3mogx8d
Foto ausblenden Antworten Retweetet Favorisieren Mehr



ijab Karbach&Ertelt @youthpart 20 Aug
Group discussion about Salzblog (salzblog.at). Topics: open data-sets, open budget-projects. [#epartfin](#)
Öffnen Antworten Löschen Favorisieren Mehr

ijab Karbach&Ertelt @youthpart 21 Aug
Peer Learning Seminar - "e-participation & youth" - Report of the second day is online (german) ijab.de/aktivitaeten/... [#epartfin](#)
Öffnen Antworten Löschen Favorisieren Mehr

Rhammel Afflick @Rhammified 20 Aug
Interesting to hear [@OURSPACE_EU](#) talking about keeping all your tools on one website (or platform). [#epartfin](#)
von Helsinki, Uusim: Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

ijab Karbach&Ertelt @youthpart 20 Aug
Group discussion about Salzblog (salzblog.at). Topics: open data-sets, open budget-projects. [#epartfin](#)
Öffnen Antworten Löschen Favorisieren Mehr

Rhammel Afflick @Rhammified 20 Aug
Some pictures from our time in Helsinki are on Facebook already. on.fb.me/1bP9Xp1 [#epartfin](#) [@koordinaatti](#) [@youthpart](#)
Öffnen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

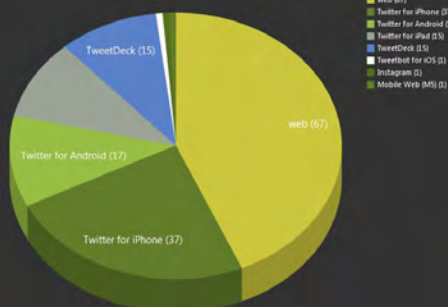
Koordinaatti @Koordinaatti 20 Aug
Huge and warm thanks to everyone for participating and being so active! [#epartfin](#)
Öffnen Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

Rhammel Afflick @Rhammified 20 Aug
Really excited to hear about [@Koordinaatti](#)'s Initiative Channel. [#epartfin](#) cc: [@youthpart](#) pic.twitter.com/J3Nsouw84d
Foto ausblenden Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr



Rhammel Afflick @Rhammified 20 Aug
Interesting to hear [@OURSPACE_EU](#) talking about keeping all your tools on one website (or platform). [#epartfin](#)
von Helsinki, Uusim: Antworten Retweeten Favorisieren Mehr

Christian Scholz @mrtapi 20 Aug
thanks to everybody at [#epartfin](#), it has been a pleasure! esp. thanks to the organizers!
Öffnen Antworten Retweetet Favorisieren Mehr



Peer Learning Seminar

“e-participation & youth” starts in Helsinki

by Christian Gieseke | August 20th, 2013 | ijab.de

”

The peer learning seminar on the e-participation of youth realised by Youthpart and its partners will be held in Helsinki (Finland) on 19 and 20 August 2013. On both days, IJAB editorial staff will post up-to date reports and give their first impressions.

”

The peer learning seminar organised by on “e-participation & youth” started in Helsinki on midday Monday. 30 participants from Spain, Austria, the United Kingdom, Germany and, naturally, Finland listened to the words of welcome by Jaana Fedotoff ([Koordinaatti](#)) and Nadine Karbach of Youthpart and the keynote speech by Emma Kuusi from the Finnish Ministry for Education and Culture.

In the subsequent presentation round, all participants cited keywords or slogans, which were most significant for them: Mika Pietilä's slogan ([Koordinaatti](#)) was especially succinct: “It's all about youth!”. Representatives from the various Youthpart partner countries gave a brief overview of e-participation and youth policy in their home countries. Rhommel Afflick (British Youth Council) left a particular impression, when he described the lack of a targeted strategy for youth in the United Kingdom, but also referred to the upcoming project entitled [YourForum](#).

Then Graeme Robertson from the European Commission further lifted everyone's spirits, when he frankly admitted that he participated primarily to be inspired by the good ideas of the participants for the totally revised European Youth Portal. For Germany, the presentation focussed on the Enquiry Commission of the German Federal Parliament, the Bundestag, the Dialogue Internet project, the EU Youth Strategy and the Structured Dialogue as well as contributions from the federal states of Rheinland-Palatinate and Northrhine-Westphalia and local presentations from the ‘youthpart #lokal’ project area.

Next on the agenda was a presentation by Niklas Wilhelmsson from the Finnish Ministry of Justice who stressed that e-participation can and will not work without transparency. He also underlined that citizens are intelligent enough to stop using opportunities for participation, when they get the

impression that such opportunities will have no influence at all on political decision-making processes.

After the coffee break, Nadine Karbach addressed the core of the seminar with her presentation of the “Guidelines”: Drawing on the insights gained in numerous examples of good

practices, these Guidelines will be further improved and specified for a successful online participation of young people. With this objective in mind, participants representing eight examples of good practices as well as experts from various areas come together on 19 and 20 August to exchange experiences and to integrate them into the Guidelines. The series was kicked off with an example from Finland, [otakantaa.fi](#) (Rauna Nerelli), and another one from Germany, [ypart](#) (Eva Panek).

The Otakantaa example is remarkable especially for its initiative on homosexual partnerships: in the first 24 hours alone, 100,000 citizens signed the accompanying petition - using an online tool. The ypart example also illustrated the difficulties in ultimately realising e-participation projects: 28 young people from schools in Hamburg reflected on the “Mitte Altona” (Altona Centre) construction project, but the subject of urban planning turned out to be highly complex for the online participation of young people. Following the presentations, the examples were discussed in two groups with an opportunity to ask questions. And the feedback on the Guidelines was also explored by the participants in greater depth in two group sessions.

All tweets and photos on the seminar will be collected under the [#epartfin](#) hashtag.



Organisers Draw Positive Conclusions of the “e-participation & youth” Peer Learning Seminar

by Christian Gieseke | [August 21st, 2013](#) | [ijab.de](#)

”

On 20 August, the second day of the peer learning seminar on “e-participation & youth”, the IJAB editorial staff continue their coverage of the event’s highlights. The second day of the seminar was entirely devoted to examples of good practices for the online participation of young people.

”

A total of six further examples of good practices were on the programme and attracted the participants’ attention. At the beginning, Mike Bourquin from Offenbach an der Queich presented the participation project of his local authority. The first three presenters also included Merja-Maaria Oinas ([Initiative Channel](#)) and Kyle Usher, who presented the Young Scot project. The subsequent group discussion was particularly intense on this project: both the financial and the data privacy aspects of the project were raised. And the participants had an in-depth discussion on the issue how e-participation for young people can be made even more attractive. Kyle Usher explained in this context that the e-voting platform included in Young Scot will shortly be linked to a rewards programme.

In the second round of presentations and discussions, Jochen Höfferer ([Salzblog.at](#)) could win over his entire audience even before starting his presentation, when he surprised them all with Mozartkugel sweets. Especially his newly coined term “Infopation” - a mixture of information and participation – stuck in the minds of the seminar’s participants. The ensuing discussion then focussed primarily on the publication of data sets and the concept of the “open budget” ([www.offenerhaushalt.at](#)), which is visualised for Salzburg on the Internet. And Mr Höfferer’s compatriot Michael

Sachs from the European “Ourspace” project ([joinourspace.eu](#)) could also rely on a group eager to debate especially the various forms of facilitating an online platform.



The group continued its intensive discussions following the presentation by Emma Hosking and Elizabeth Beale (Milton Keynes), who referred to the problems of keeping websites up to date at all times to be useful for young people. Based on their experience, young people otherwise very quickly and irrevocably lose interest in participating.

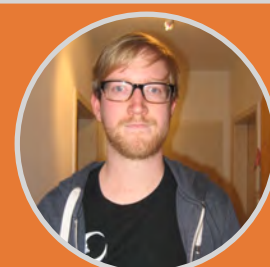
Following two intensive days, the organisers came to a positive conclusion. In a short feedback session, the participants called the seminar encouraging, motivating and helpful. And Nadine Karbach (IJAB)

commented that the numerous recommendations for the further development of the Guidelines on the online participation of young people were highly significant and that the additional benefit of the “e” in “e-participation” had been evident - even though “e” did not stand for “easy”.

>> [Report of the first day](#)
>> [Photos by Koordinaatti on Facebook](#)
>> [Report of the Finnish colleagues from Koordinaatti.](#)

About the author

Christian Gieseke studies History and Political Science of the 20th century at the University of Jena. He was an intern at IJAB in Bonn during the summer period of 2013 and wrote about the seminar for the IJAB homepage and Twitter.



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