

Cascais, Portugal

Challenge

What if citizens had access to an efficient, AI-integrated tool that allows them to pre-evaluate and enhance their proposals before presenting them to the municipality, increasing their chances of success?

Overview

A major challenge in processes that integrate citizens' proposals, such as the Participatory Budget (PB), is analyzing technical viability while maintaining trust in the process. Proposals are often submitted as brief statements without detailed information. If we could use AI tools to transform ideas into concrete proposals this would enhance reliability and transparency, making the system more accessible to all stakeholders (citizens, technicians, and politicians).

Stakeholders

- Municipal services
- IT team and the team responsible for the project introducing AI in Citizen Service
- Citizens
- Academic institutions to conduct research, benchmarking, and monitoring

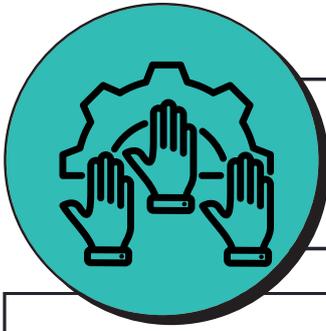


Context

The Cascais PB is a well-established practice with many years of experience, aspiring to empower citizens in making informed decisions regarding a portion of the municipal budget. It operates as a co-decision ensuring that projects receiving the most votes from citizens are implemented. Eligibility for voting is determined after rigorous technical analysis to assess project feasibility. The eligibility of proposals depends on their evaluation concerning: (i) municipal and national standards, regulations, and plans; (ii) current municipal strategies; (iii) the legal and fiscal status of the entity where the proposal is intended to be implemented (if applicable); (iv) market prices across various sectors; (v) past project implementation history; (vi) as well as other factors such as territory-specific diagnoses and characteristics. Therefore, a great involvement of technicians from the various departments is required. One of the primary challenges in the technical analysis process is coordinating the availability of these technicians.

Questions

- How is this issue currently affecting our community? What local data or reports highlight its impact?
- Who is most impacted by this challenge?
- What local resources, initiatives, or programs can we leverage to address the issue?



Istanbul, Turkey

Challenge

How might we set up and establish a digital participation platform in a highly diverse and multicultural megacity like Istanbul?

Overview

Istanbul, with its population of around 20 million people from diverse backgrounds, faces challenges in involving all residents in city governance. Digital democracy platforms offer a solution by providing online tools for information sharing, idea exchange, and participation in decision-making. However, key challenges include ensuring inclusivity for all age groups and tech comfort levels, addressing barriers such as internet access and language, and improving communication between residents and local government. By overcoming these obstacles, Istanbul can effectively utilize digital tools to foster a more inclusive and participatory democracy.

Stakeholders

- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
Central/District Municipalities/ City Council
- Digital Rights NGOs /Community Development Organizations/ Women's Rights Groups/ Minority Rights Groups
- Tech Companies/ Telecommunication Companies
- Youth Groups
- Universities and Research Institution

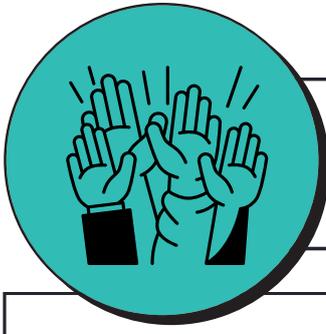


Context

Istanbul's diverse population faces significant socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender inequalities, which create disparities in access to city opportunities and participation in city management. These inequalities, including economic, gender, and ethnic barriers, can lead to apathy and anti-democratic sentiments. Addressing these issues is crucial for promoting democratization and fostering a more equitable and inclusive city. Key strategies include eliminating socioeconomic disparities, promoting gender and ethnic equality, and closing the digital divide to enhance civic engagement and inclusivity.

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Lviv, Ukraine

Challenge

How might we create digital spaces and tools to support local democratic processes in a city under martial law like Lviv, Ukraine?

Overview

In Ukraine, martial law has been implemented due to the full-scale military aggression by the Russian Federation. This decision has had significant consequences for all aspects of public life, including restrictions on the democratic rights and freedoms of citizens. Martial law limits local self-government's ability to function, affecting how citizens in Lviv and other Ukrainian cities can engage in city management and influence local decision-making.

Stakeholders

- Local authorities
- Civil Society
- NGO's
- Residents

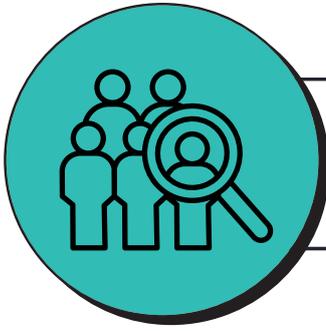


Context

Under martial law, the redistribution of power from local to central authorities in Lviv restricts local self-government's autonomy, delaying the resolution of crucial local issues. Additionally, martial law often leads to the postponement or cancellation of local elections, limiting citizens' democratic rights to elect their representatives. In Lviv, this results in indefinite delays for local council and self-government elections. Furthermore, martial law imposes legal restrictions such as curfews, movement limitations, and increased control over public gatherings, affecting daily life and civic engagement in the city.

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Rotterdam, Netherlands

Challenge

Finding enough candidates from different backgrounds for the 2026 elections of neighbourhood councils in Rotterdam is a challenge. Can civic technology help make this happen?

Overview

Neighbourhood councils, introduced in 2022, play a crucial role in boosting trust between residents and the city administration, but their effectiveness depends on how well they represent the community. Civic technology could help by increasing candidate participation, strengthening connections between councils and voters, and building trust. Key questions include how to engage more candidates, especially young people, in local democracy, and how to improve access to and support for civic technology in the democratic process.

Stakeholders

- Current members of the neighbourhood councils/ Networks of active residents
- Local communities/ Playground associations/ Youth organizations/ Cultural foundations
- Representatives of residents from different neighbourhoods
- Local media outlets
- Civic technology developers and providers
- Municipal government officials and administrators
- Community engagement specialists/ Communication strategists and language experts

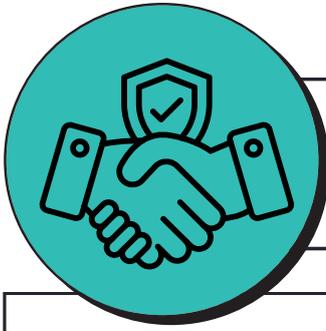


Context

In 2022, Rotterdam introduced Wijk aan Zet, a new local governance model grouping the city's 80 neighborhoods into 39 districts, each with its own council. This model allowed young people aged 16 and above to stand for election and vote, and candidates could run as individuals or on behalf of non-political organizations. The result was a more diverse representation that reflected the city's population, earning Rotterdam a nomination for the creative elections award at the Eurocities conference. However, failure to recruit enough candidates for these councils could lead to participation by a narrow segment of society, diminishing representation and increasing distrust.

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Sofia, Bulgaria

Challenge

How might we strengthen the collaboration & dialogue between the city administration and the citizens? We want to increase transparency and citizens' trust towards the public administration to support the overall long-term sustainable, innovative and green development of Sofia through civic tech and DECIDIM.

Overview

The challenge will also address the key challenge of strengthening collaboration between the city administration and citizens, increasing transparency, and supporting Sofia's sustainable development. Additionally, participants will delve into best practices for citizen engagement, the effective implementation of Decidim, and strategies to ensure long-term commitment from both citizens and the administration.

Stakeholders

- The central city administration (the Mayor; Sofia City Council; Sofia Municipality and its departments)
- The district municipal administrations (deputy mayors and administration of the 24 district municipalities in Sofia)
- Representatives of the various municipal organisations (e.g. Green Sofia) and enterprises (e.g. Sofia Investment Agency)
- All citizens in Sofia living in different districts of the city and knowing best their local realities and needs, incl. the citizens and the civil society; the public and
- the private sector; the local ecosystem - NGOs, clusters, associations, representatives of Academia, among others
- Cities that have already implemented DECIDIM/ other civic tech tools
- The DECIDIM community

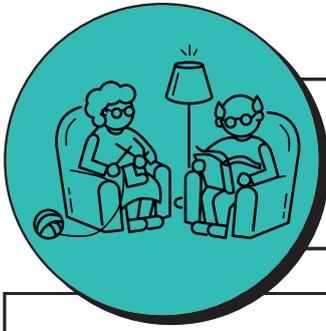


Context

Innovative Sofia plans to introduce new civic tech tools, particularly DECIDIM, to enhance citizen participation both online and offline, aiming to increase collaboration between the city administration and citizens, connect online and offline participation, and foster active co-creation for Sofia's sustainable development. Current initiatives like SOFIA CHOOSES and public consultations are steps towards this, but there's a need to expand these tools for greater functionality and engagement. The key challenge is to effectively use Decidim boosting long-term participation, ensure transparency, and learn from global best practices, addressing the city's insufficient use of civic tech and its impact on citizen involvement and urban development.

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Vilnius, Lithuania

Challenge

How might we bridge the digital divide and empower senior citizens in Vilnius to engage more actively in democratic processes?

Overview

Our challenge focuses on bridging the digital divide by involving older adults in using open data to boost their participation in city governance. The initiative aims to educate seniors about municipal services and products, fostering a more inclusive and tech-savvy community. By enhancing digital literacy, we seek to reduce technological disparities and increase civic engagement among the elderly.

Stakeholders

- Municipal Departments: Vilnius City Administration, Social Services Department
- Educational Institutions: Local libraries, Adult education centers
- Community Organizations: Senior citizen groups, NGOs focused on digital literacy
- Tech Partners: Local tech startups, Universities with tech programs



Context

The digital divide in Vilnius is significantly impacting older adults, limiting their access to information and civic participation, which leads to social exclusion and underrepresentation in local governance. Vilnius' growing senior population often lacks the necessary digital skills, highlighting the need for educational programs and digital tools tailored to their needs. Root causes include limited access to digital education, insufficient infrastructure for older populations, and low awareness of municipal digital resources. Without intervention, this gap will likely widen, worsening social isolation and reducing civic engagement among seniors. However, there are opportunities to empower older adults with digital skills, enhance community cohesion through inclusive initiatives, and leverage open data to create accessible content for them.

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