

Workshop Report: *Digitalization empowering citizen participation*

UBC General Conference 2019, Kaunas

Organizers: Elva Municipality and Smart and Prospering Cities Commission

Approx. 25 conference participants followed the invitation to discuss how digitalization can empower citizen participation and contribute to more inclusive cities in the BSR on the 2nd day of the General Conference.

Agenda

Keynote: “Using digital tools for unleashing citizen initiatives on local (city) level”

Maarja-Leena Saar, Estonian Cooperation Assembly

Practical examples by Elva Municipality & City of Kiel

- *Open governance and using digital tools - case study from Elva Municipality*
Kertu Vuks, Head of Development and Planning Department, Elva
- *Digital Week Kiel – A digital festival as key instrument of a citizen-focused digital strategy*
Cathrin Truckenbrodt, International Relations Manager, City of Kiel

Youth perspective

Discussion

Maarja-Leena Saar is Process Manager at the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, a competence centre founded by the President of Estonia, working on policy recommendations and initiatives on societal issues like (e-)democracy and public sector reform. She is the project lead of rahvaalgatus.ee - citizen initiatives platform for sending collective proposals to the Estonian Parliament. Maarja-Leena introduced how Estonia’s first digital signing platform rahvaalgatus.ee works and how collective decisions are made with the help of it. She also briefly introduced the process of how proposals proceed to parliament discussions. Her main suggestions were to keep it simple- choose right technology; combine online and offline tools and take time for adaption.

How digital tools can be an efficient instrument to address citizens was highlighted by the Head of Planning and Development Department of Elva Municipality Kertu Vuks. Kertu gave a brief overview what digital tools they use in Elva municipality (documentaton management system, kindergarden queues, e-services etc) to engage people and also introduced the principals of open governance.

Another aspect of digital transformation in the context of inclusiveness was presented by the City of Kiel: *Digital Week Kiel* is a festival format that was launched as a macrosocial project, ,by everyone for

everyone', so that citizens can jointly shape its contents, allowing everybody to share the benefits. Citizens, companies and institutions can experience digital transformation holistically and in practice during the Digitale Woche Kiel. The festival provides a framework in which key players from business, politics and society can organize or attend various workshops, conferences and exhibitions as well as networking formats on digital topics. In addition, Digital Week Kiel actively offers opportunities to promote digital literacy and skills of citizens and companies to positively face the effects of digital transformation.

How do young people think about the potential of digitalization for participation processes in cities? Concrete perspectives have been presented by two of the youth representatives attending the workshop: Alexander Nørup, Chair of Youth Council Kolding and Jakob Liebich from Rostock which encouraged another topic for discussion.

In conclusion the open and interactive format of the workshop led to very active discussions and an successful exchange about best practices in the BSR.