

Handbook for Educators

**Civics 4.0: Civic Education
for Digital Age**



Co-funded by
the European Union

General Information

Higher education institutions today operate in a rapidly changing environment - teaching and learning in higher education are being influenced by a well-rehearsed set of global trends such as the changing demography of student populations; growing global interconnectedness and the proliferation of digital media; and an increasing market orientation in higher education. Higher mobility rates at HEIs have led to increasingly diverse classrooms, and the need to educate students with a more global perspective of what it means to be a citizen became more salient.

At the same time, European democracies also operate in a rapidly changing environment. [The European Parliament's briefing on digital democracy](#)¹ from March 2020 states that the concept and definition of a 'public space' has radically transformed from that of a physical space, such as a town square or park into virtual public spaces on social media and online platforms. Social networks have become a modern day 'Agora' inside which conversation and debate is facilitated. This can be highlighted by the fact that the design elements of such platforms consciously reflect traditional, physical public spaces. Digital platforms enable a vast range of possibilities to discuss and debate political policies, access information regarding events and to rally support for social causes.

Higher education institutions need to acknowledge the value of different citizenship styles and emerging online environments, that may supplement or supplant civic knowledge of diverse student bodies. To enhance citizen engagement processes among students, educators should be aware of available and existing digital tools for democratic participation. They also need to know how to use them and what they aim to solve/address.

It is within this context that this Handbook examines the role Higher Education Institutions have in promoting the civic and social responsibility of students, with an emphasis on including students from diverse backgrounds in such initiatives. It is precisely this framework that gave us the inspiration to create the NEXUS4CIVICS project and upgrade educators' skills to Civics 4.0.

¹Gianluca Sgueo, European Parliamentary Research Service, Briefing (Re-) thinking democracy "Digital democracy - Is the future of civic engagement online?" [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/646161/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)646161_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/646161/EPRS_BRI(2020)646161_EN.pdf)

Civics 4.0

The digital revolution disrupted the economy, education, governance, transforming institutions and society as new ecosystems arise. It also changed important aspects of democracy, by expanding opportunities to engage in participatory politics through digital means. Digital media is helping youth be heard, gain visibility and such media facilitates their mobilisation and work for change. Utilising social media to circulate information, get involved, mobilise, advocate and put pressure has helped activists shape the conversation and raise awareness about fundamental societal issues. All these shifts call for a timely response in civic education, one that grants access to critical thinking, high-quality media literacy, and provides digital literacy skills. And since digital media and digital tools are increasingly central to civic and political life, they ought to be integrated in civic education. But besides providing depth of understanding, civic education should help students apply this understanding to today's problems, and give students civic strength to address most pressing societal challenges.

The World Economic Forum (2022)² proposes a new model of Governance - Governance 4.0 for digital age, one that 1) would replace today's short-term crisis management with long-term strategic thinking; 2) would replace the tunnel vision and top down approach, and 3) places the primacy of society and nature at the core of any new governance system.

Similarly to upgrading Governance to 4.0, there is a need to reimagine civic education for the digital age and with new challenges that arose, so that it could better equip students with skills to address climate change, erosion of social cohesion, deepening social divisions, debt crises, and other mounting problems. Civics 4.0 should put Society/Community at the centre of its teaching, providing students with knowledge of strategic thinking that builds on connectedness and crowdsourcing for solutions.

About the Handbook

The Handbook on Civic Education for the Digital Age supports educators in understanding potentials and challenges of digital democracy, and in exploring civic tech tools.

Handbook is to be used together with the [Inventory of civic-tech tools](#). The Inventory of digital tools for civic education presents a selection of inspiring civic tech tools and interventions in public participation, that can be used to demonstrate the potential of information and communication tools for civic engagement in classroom setting.

²Klaus Schwab, World Economic Forum, "This is what a new model of governance could look like" <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/this-is-what-governance-4-0-could-look-like/>

Civic tech tools in the Inventory are presented through questionnaire that provides critical reflection on digital means of civic participation, and lessons learnt from building tools. Inventory can be used by educators and by students and its main aim is to show the promise of novel ways of participation through digital means. The Handbook and Inventory together serve as a starting point on reimagining civic education for the digital age, providing educators with the main information about digital democracy and some hands-on tools that could be used to increase students' civic engagement.

The purpose of the handbook is to:

- Provide educators with a selection of relevant civic tech tools that aim to instil the curiosity and interest among students on how to utilise these tools.
- Assist teachers in understanding digital democracy and ways to engage with decision-makers through digital means.

The intention of the Handbook is not to provide thorough conceptualization and detailed knowledge on Digital Democracy or Civic Technology. The intention of the Handbook is to address the urgent need of educators to supercharge their knowledge on the state-of-the-art participatory tools and spark the interest of their students through inspiring Civic-tech tools and civic engagement initiatives. It can also be used by students since it was designed with the intention of introducing novel concepts and providing explanation of main concepts of participatory politics and the ways in which technology is shaping our interactions with decision makers.

Structure of the Handbook

In the Handbook's introductory section, we discuss why civic education matters for democracy. What follows is a description of NEXUS project approach to active citizenship and civic education (Nexus4Civics). In the subsequent chapter we frame the Handbook within the notion of Civic 4.0 - explaining main concepts such as Digital Democracy and Civic Technology. The central part of the Handbook is a presentation of Civic-Tech tools based on typology of public participation tools - whether their main aim is to inform / engage / co-create policies with citizens. All tools are presented through the same template (Tool ID, Description and Rationale). Added value for educators is presented through "Discussion questions for the classroom" section within each tool, aimed to facilitate conversation about various aspects of participation and engagement. Well-informed citizens, who know how to deliberate and engage in dialogue are at the heart of creating stronger democracies. Dialogues help us develop mutual understanding, relate with others' perspectives, negotiate over values, address complex public policy issues and call for action. However, research shows that many students feel reluctant to discuss politics, race, and other controversial topics in class settings (Stikma, 2021), while teachers feel they don't have the right skills and experience in manoeuvring at-times heated discussions about politics.

Handbook hoped to address this issue by introducing a set of questions around each civic-tech tool, that could be useful resources for teachers on how to ignite discussions and support civic dialogue among diverse standpoints.

Who is the handbook for?

Teachers are central to the development of students' interest in societal issues. Their knowledge, attitudes and skills are shaped by teachers who have the responsibility to teach them how to engage with society, both constructively and responsibly. Teachers can support students to develop into activists and promoters of just and democratic societies. Their role is to model positive actions by introducing lessons and activities that promote civic engagement.

The Handbook is mainly designed for educators who teach civic education, but it can be also used by educators who wish to integrate topics of civic education in other subjects. We can see it being used also by teachers and teacher trainers in formal school settings at the secondary school level: it encourages teachers to strengthen digital engagement by integrating it into their lessons. It can be used by professionals working in non-formal education or engaging with young people, for example in community organisations, social work, cultural or sport associations. It is also for parents seeking to raise empowered young citizens who actively contribute to democracy and society.

The ultimate beneficiaries of this handbook are students who in a rapidly changing environment need to develop a more global perspective of what it means to be a citizen. It is essential for youth to learn the skills and behaviour that reinforce community building and contribute positively to their society and the global community.

Why civic education matters for democracy

There has been a strong focus in recent years on the promotion of citizenship education, and several countries are making changes to their policies in this area. However, in teaching civic education, attention should also be given to democracy as an inclusive and engaging process, process of deliberation and consensus-building, that nurtures democratic society that values freedom of speech, equity, and social justice. Civic education practices that address all these different components of democracy, that look into ways of engaging with and shaping policy making process are uncommon. Civic education should recognise and promote different forms of citizenship: that besides fulfilling civic duties citizens also look for ways to actualize their identity through meaningful civic engagement in policy making.

Growing evidence suggests that young citizens are less committed to more 'dutiful' acts of citizenship such as voting instead seeking out opportunities for "personalized politics of expressive engagement" which include digital networking, acts of self-expression and contribution to participatory media.³ Even participation in protests and volunteerism relies heavily on the use of digital tools and social media, for event organization, communication and opinion deliberation. These acts of 'participatory politics' such as youth creating and circulating photos, memes and videos to their networks, all these can be considered as examples of digitally mediated forms of civic engagement (or digital civic engagement).

The problem with civic education is not so much that the focus on government and textbook knowledge of institutions and processes is wrong. Indeed, democracy is importantly based on formal institutions and processes, and civic education must prepare citizens to engage with those institutions. To teach Civics in 2020s means that we must recognize the inclinations of many younger citizens to approach politics from more personal standpoints that permit greater participation in the definition of issues, production and sharing of information and construction of action.

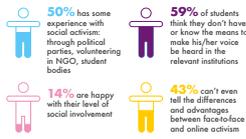
These findings were reflected also in data collected by the NEXUS team among the student population at three participating Universities, as this infographic shows.

³Cho, A. (2020). Digital civic engagement by young people. UNICEF <https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/media/706/file/UNICEF-Global-Insight-digital-civic-engagement-2020.pdf>

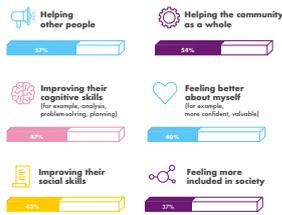
Students as Active Citizens in the Digital Age

Transforming civic education for an inclusive society

Students' participation today



What do they value in participation?



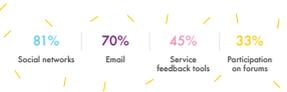
Smart-phone devices are central to student's participation



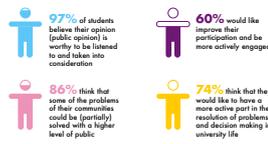
What topics are they passionate about?



Most commonly used tools for civic engagement



The need for change



Expectations from online activism

- To explore and use the civic tech tools
- To have access to information
- To know citizens' rights and how to participate in the decision making
- To reach out to and connect with more people
- To exchange ideas, to collaborate

NEXUS PROJECT AS THE MISSING LINK

- 75% are ready to invest time and effort to receive training in active citizenship
- As an extra-curricular activity (MOOC)
 - Learning by doing (tools provided but without any specific training)
 - Integrated as part of their university studies as a separate subject

nexus4civics.eu

If youth is online, and they are passionate about social issues and are willing to engage more – how do we make their voices count, and how can innovative civic education facilitate greater participation of youth people in digital democracy?

In "NEXUS in Dialogue" podcast we engaged in conversation with Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc, PhD, political scientist, activist, and feminist on How to teach civics in engaging way.

Watch this video to hear her inspiring Call for Action for civic educators.

Watch Elisa Lironi from ECAS talking how students can learn about policy making through the process of co-creation in civic tech.

Our approach to promoting active citizenship

As online spaces have become equally important as physical spaces as venues for political argument and social interaction, the digitalisation of democratic processes seems inevitable. This has become even more apparent during Covid-19 pandemic, when social distancing and restrictions on movement have forced parliaments to consider new methods of scrutiny, debate, and voting.

NEXUS built its approach to civics on the idea that learners should become able to understand the social world, to evaluate, critique and change it. Civic education should cater for the needs of young citizens and the social, political, and communication worlds they inhabit. And since young people's social, political and communication worlds are increasingly online, then civics too should be upgraded to promote digital participation and engagement tools that are familiar to digital natives.

The set of tools developed in the NEXUS project aims to empower both educators and students to explore the relationship between participatory digital tools and democracy and to engage with and campaign for their local communities. It does so by innovating civic education at higher education institutions through three main pillars of intervention, resulting in increased participation of students in the social life of their communities.

Three pillars include:

Massive Open Online Course: Civics 4.0 Active citizenship and participation in the digital age; and a knowledge sharing platform "NEXUS-4Civics Community"

Community engagement and service-learning Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions;

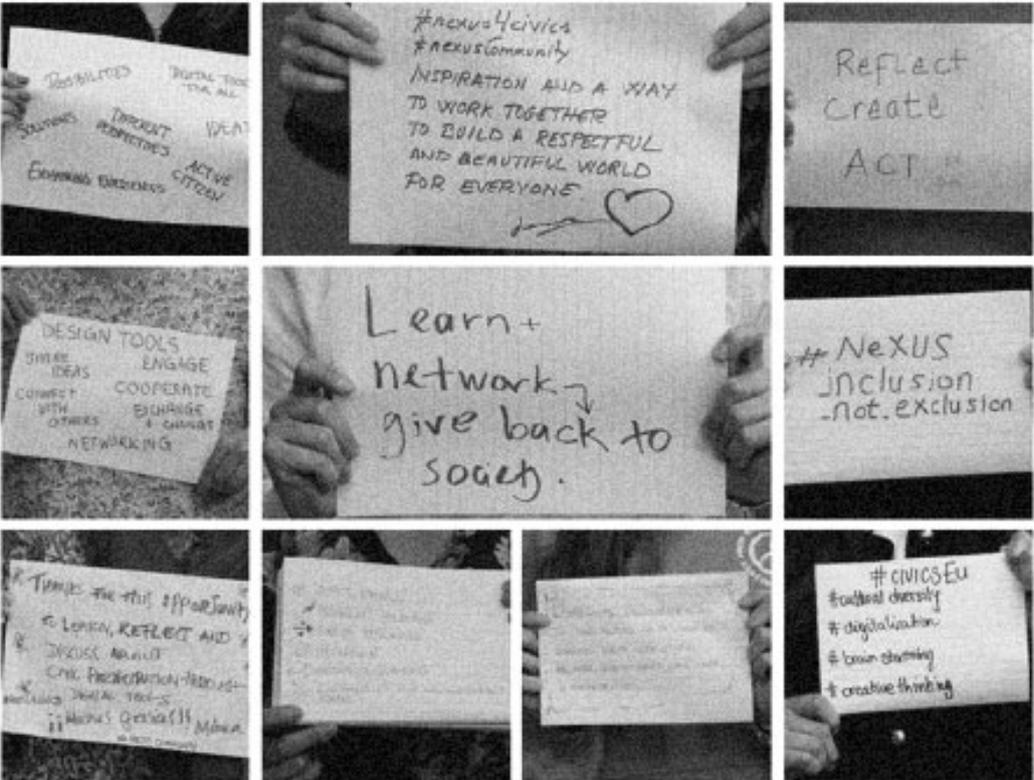
Toolkit Re-writing civics to 4.0: connecting students to institutions in the digital age, consisting of an Inventory of civic-tech tools for digital Democracy and digital citizenship education; and a Manual for educators on how to run workshops on Civic Education for Digital Age.

Nexus4Civics

These tools address the needs of educators to supercharge their skills for Civics 4.0 and to further inspire students to take action in their communities. They explore the relationship between digitally enabled participatory tools and democracy, including such dimensions as oversight and watchdogging, fact checking and fake news debunking, co-deciding, collective action and mobilisation. It enhances civic education by putting students in the centre of design, development and implementation of civic education activities through service learning and community engagement.

About Nexus

Watch this video to hear the rationale for developing NEXUS and how you can best use the package of interventions.

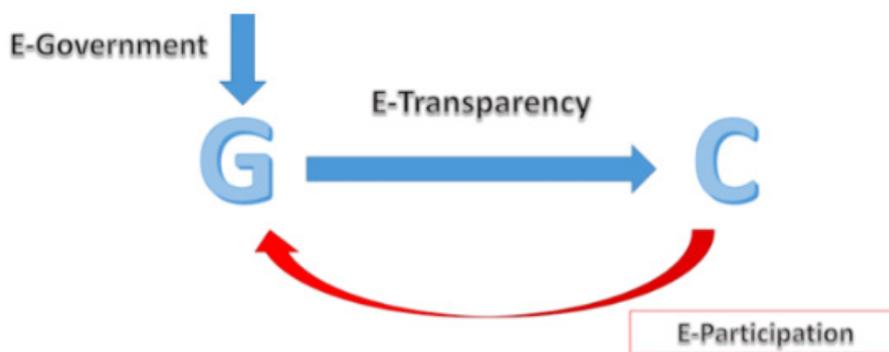


(photo-evaluation of NEXUS project by participants from NEXUS Civic Education Training For The Digital Age, Ljubljana, 25-29 April 2022)

Digital Democracy

Digital or e-Democracy can be simply defined as “the practice of democracy using digital tools and technologies” (Simon et al.,2017) , which can include more ‘passive’ digital democracy for citizens to be informed, towards a more ‘active’ one, where citizens take a participatory role in their communities’ political decisions.

E-Democracy is composed of three elements or dimensions: e-Government, e-Transparency, and e-Participation (Simon et al., 2017; Lironi, 2021; Richardson et al,m 2017. In this latter is where the concept of digital civic engagement is inserted:



Elements of E-Democracy. Source: Elisa Lironi (2021)

Other authors point out the importance of social networks in order to enhance democratic processes since they “allow users to have their own voice and comment “in public” on relevant issues” and can influence policy outcomes, as long as user participate in the debate in a pacific and respectful way (Richardson et al,m 2017).

Digital civic engagement can be defined as civic engagement activities that involve digital media of some kind, “a repertoire of practice that falls under ‘digital citizenship’ and that assumes and requires ‘digital literacy’ in order to happen” (UNICEF, 2020).

Potential & challenges

Listen to Elisa Lironi's brief summary of potential and challenges of Digital Democracy.

The role of Civic-tech

The use/application of new technologies, including information and communications technologies (ICTs) and social media, to encourage participatory democracy and foster citizen engagement has seen an increase in the last decade. They provide unprecedented opportunities to deepen democracy and transform the global political landscape, while also creating new challenges and risks.

The birth of Civic-tech

Citizens, activists, non-governmental organisations, researchers, media, as well as the public sector, recognised the potential of new technologies for advancement of public/civic life and more efficient allocation of public resources. Availability of open data (that public institutions publish in open digital format) facilitates the process of designing and creation of digital tools that help address or solve certain social/political problems/challenges, both on local and on global level. That created a space for co-creation of civil society with IT experts (programmers, developers, designers, data engineers), which led to synergy between new technologies and activism in the form of so-called Civic-Tech.

Civic-Tech can be broadly defined as “technologies that are deployed to enhance the relationship between people and government, by giving people more of a voice to participate in public decision making and/or to improve the delivery of services (usually by governments) to people. These technologies can be developed by either non-profit organisations or for-profit companies, or even by government itself” (Omidyar Network, 2017).

Civic-Tech aims at nurturing citizen engagement and empowering individuals to become agents for public good. It is a catalyst for social change through this citizen empowerment in which connection between citizens and governments is facilitated, consequently stimulating dialogue and debate. Additionally, it aids governments establish the needs and wants of the community with greater accuracy. Civic tech involves highly varied projects, among others these can be:

Civics 4.0 connecting students to institutions in digital age

- participatory budget platforms
- online petitions
- apps to send questions to government members
- local troubleshooting
- cooperative maps
- social media for residents
- digital technologies for transparency and accountability.

One should not confuse Civic-Tech with Gov-Tech. As CitizenLab defines, Gov-Tech encapsulates a broad scope of technologies provided to governments to facilitate improvements in the efficiency of their internal processes. Governments themselves are the beneficiaries of Gov-Tech, with the key objective being administration efficiency improvements through the digitalisation of work processes or incorporation of new tools. Civic-Tech on the other hand focuses on providing information to citizens and facilitating connection between each other and ultimately nurturing engagement with their government to create cooperation for the public good⁴.

In their report on Global State of Democracy, The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2019) summarised the ways new technologies shape democracy in internet era:

	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen participatory engagement• Democratization of information and media landscape• Increase societal checks on government and means of popular control, which can reduce corruption and enhance impartial administration• Bridge gap between citizens/voters and decision-makers• Strengthen representative government• Increase political equality• Increase pressure for political and democratic change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disinformation can distort and harm democratic processes, in particular the electoral process• Increase polarization, which can provide breeding ground for democratic backsliding• Decrease in quality of information for citizens to make informed choices• Weakened media environment undermines checks on government, facilitating unaccountable and corrupt practices• Tools to reinforce authoritarianism

The Importance of Civic Tech for Youth Participation

Watch this video by Elisa Lironi from ECAS to understand the role civic tech can play in fostering participation of young people.

⁴Citizenlab. What's the Difference Between "Civic Tech" and "GovTech"?
<https://www.citizenlab.co/blog/civic-tech/whats-difference-civic-tech-govtech/>

Typology of tools

Citizen participation in socio-political life and the construction of democracy actively rely on the use of new media and digital information communication technologies. Digital tools are used to gather and share information, reach more people than what would be possible through the traditional channels, but also to discuss and reflect on social issues, and organise and spread Calls for Action. Digital tools also allow easier coordination of activities (protests, public advocacy campaigns, etc.), faster formation of interest groups to propose legislative change, and more ways to influence policy and decision making.

The success of digital civic engagement depends on careful planning, implementation and constant review of the process and change of strategy in order to improve responses to societal challenges. Digital engagement only further enhances (offline) techniques that are already being used to engage and empower communities and groups. Digital engagement is not a substitute for traditional offline forms of civic activism. Its main potential is in the possibility to reach larger and more diverse audiences and social groups, and that citizen-activists can contribute in a way and dynamics that suit them and that reflect their personal interests and preferences.

International Association for Public Participation created a Spectrum of Public Participation that suggests 5 categories depending on the goal of the participation (IAP2, 2017) as shown in the table below:

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
		We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

© IAP2 International Federation 2018. All rights reserved. 20181112_v1

IAP Spectrum addresses the public's role in any public participation process, and is used internationally.

Many digital tools are built with this categorisation in mind, though many address more than one participation goal at a time (i.e. to inform and consult, or to involve and collaborate).

Methodology behind the selection of the tools presented in the Handbook

The IAP Spectrum of Public Participation served as a starting point for the NEXUS project. A number of discussions were had with stakeholders from the civic-tech community and experts on digital democracy led us to a simplified categorization: INFORM / ENGAGE / Co-CREATE, that we applied throughout MOOC modules, Inventory and Handbook. These can be defined as follows:

Inform

Techniques and tools that can be used to provide citizens with the information they need to understand the decision process, or be able to hold the government accountable, to help citizens make informed decisions, or to have oversight on public spending.

Engage

Techniques and tools that can be used to get support from citizens for a policy change or to initiate important discussion among wider public; advocacy and campaigning as means of participation.

Co-create

techniques and tools that can be used to obtain input from citizens on the decision process, bringing various stakeholders together to engage in shared decision making.

Inside the project MOOC, lessons about INFORM can be found in Module 3 "Monitoring public policy that affects you". Module 3 aims to build one's capacity to apply civic technology to monitor public policy and hold politicians and public officials accountable, using Freedom of Information and Open Government data and other available means.

Lessons about ENGAGE can be found in Module 4 "Connecting and engaging for social impact" where we presented potentials of civic technology to help citizens build their own campaigns and advocate for social causes.

Co-Creation is presented in Module 5 “Foster local participation: smart communities and digital participation”, which explains participatory democracy tools that can be used for co-creation and co-deciding with participants on matters of public importance, through participatory budgeting, public (e)consultations, and urban crowdsourcing.

List of selected Civic-Tech initiatives

In the chapters below, we will showcase 4 inspiring civic initiatives, and one case study interview for each category. While creating the Inventory, we reached out to various citizen initiatives that had an impact in their communities. We looked specifically at initiatives that relied on digital tools to reach their goals. For even more tools, check out the Inventory.

When deciding on the concept of the Handbook, we were guided by the need to make it up-to-date, attractive, and focussing on current trends in participation. Diversity of tools also covers topics that appeal to the student population - many Civic-Tech tools presented are trying to address issues like climate change, gender issues, right-to-city etc. The selection of tools and topics as it is now, with the background knowledge offered in the introduction section, should provide the reader with a sense of confidence to work with the topics that you may have not been familiarised with in your immediate daily work.

List of Civic-Tech Initiatives presented in the Handbook:

Case name	Category	Country	Type
Inform			
Vouliwatch	Page 20	Greece	Parliament watch
Donde Van Mis Impuestos	Page 21	Spain	Tax transparency Carbon emission
Climate Visualiser	Page 23	Sweden	
Pridem.si	Page 25	Slovenia	Wheelchair accessibility
Fake news Tracker	Page 27	Serbia	Fake news debunking

Case name	Category	Country	Type
Engage			
Minority SafePack ECI	Page 29	EU-wide	European Citizen Initiative
Bitna.si	Page 30	Croatia	Sexual harassment awareness campaign
Plant a tree	Page 32	Croatia	Climate action
Panta pa stan!	Page 34	Sweden	Disposable recycling
Samo ja pomeni ja	Page 36	Slovenia	Changing legislation on rape through online campaign
Co-create			
Consul	Page 38	World-wide	E-Participation
LabGov	Page 39	Italy	Co-designing public policies
District Labs	Page 41	Italy	Hubs for innovation
Action for Society	Page 43	Sweden	Safer cities collaborative platform
Glas Ljudstva	Page 45	Slovenia	Go To Vote campaign

Finally, discussion questions do not have to be used just for a given tool where they are presented. Many tools (and questions) are interlinked as they all have in common the goal of being participation tools aimed at increasing citizens' engagement. If the reader feels the need to expand his/her knowledge, then enrollment in the project's **MOOC** will provide access to valuable formative material, as similarly will browsing through the resources provided on the project's website.

INFORM

Vouliwatch⁵ / Parliament Watch

Vouliwatch is a not for profit parliamentary monitoring and transparency watchdog organisation that promotes political integrity, engages Greek citizens with legislative politics and grants them the opportunity to communicate, evaluate and hold elected representatives in the Greek and the European Parliament accountable.

The web app has several main functions:

- Monitor MP voting behaviour
- Policy Monitor (comparison and evaluation of parties' agendas)
- The Observatory (live newsfeed directly from the Parliament)
- Candidate Watch (presentation and citizens' interaction with party candidates)
- Ask the MPs / MEPs
- Crowdfsource ideas
- Issue of the Month (an online debate that results to a 'live' political lab)

CASE ID

GOAL: Parliamentary monitoring and transparency watchdog

URL: <https://vouliwatch.gr/about/en>

MADE BY: NGO Vouliwatch

COUNTRY: Greece

YEARS ACTIVE: 2014 - To date

The rationale: The election cycle doesn't end up on Election Day. Knowing what promises politicians and parties made during the election campaign and then following up whether they delivered on those promises and how they voted in the Parliament holds them accountable. This helps voters re-evaluate their choices for the next elections and it increases overall transparency.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- How do you stay informed about the decisions made in the Parliament?
- How well do you know the difference in party platforms?
- Who do you consult with when deciding on political options prior to voting?

⁵Vouli in Greek means "parliament"

¿Donde van mis impuestos? / Where my taxes go?

Dónde van mis impuestos (Where my taxes go) is a reference tool to easily explore the state budget and understand public spending in Spain. The project uses existing public data from official sources such as budget data, population data and inflation data. The aim of the tool was for citizens to be able to visualise state budgets. The tool shows in a clear way how the Spanish budget is distributed, where the income comes from, and how are expenses allocated.

Issue of the Month (an online debate that results to a 'live' political lab)

CASE ID

GOAL: Oversight of public spending

URL: <https://dondevanmisimpuestos.es/>

MADE BY: NGO Civio

COUNTRY: Spain

YEARS ACTIVE: 2014 - To date

The rationale: When students understand how governments make money and what they spend it on, it helps them become informed citizens who can make informed decisions when voting or discussing politics.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- Why do state and local governments need money?
- How do taxes play an important role in providing state and local governments with needed money?
- How can citizens be more involved in decisions on public spending allocations?
- Would you allocate state budget differently?

Inform case study 2

**¿Donde van mis impuestos? /
Where my taxes go?**



Climate Visualizer

Climate Visualiser tracks progress on carbon emissions and reductions and offers visual understanding of the municipality's or region's emissions and the remaining carbon dioxide budget. The hope with Climate Visualizer has been to contribute to a new local public debate, where all the actors/parties in a municipality have access to pedagogically accessible and up-to-date data describing emissions and necessary emission reductions.

CASE ID

GOAL: Tracking carbon emissions and emission reduction

URL: <https://climate-visualizer.netlify.app/>

MADE BY: NGO THE CLIMATE SECRETARIAT

COUNTRY: Sweden

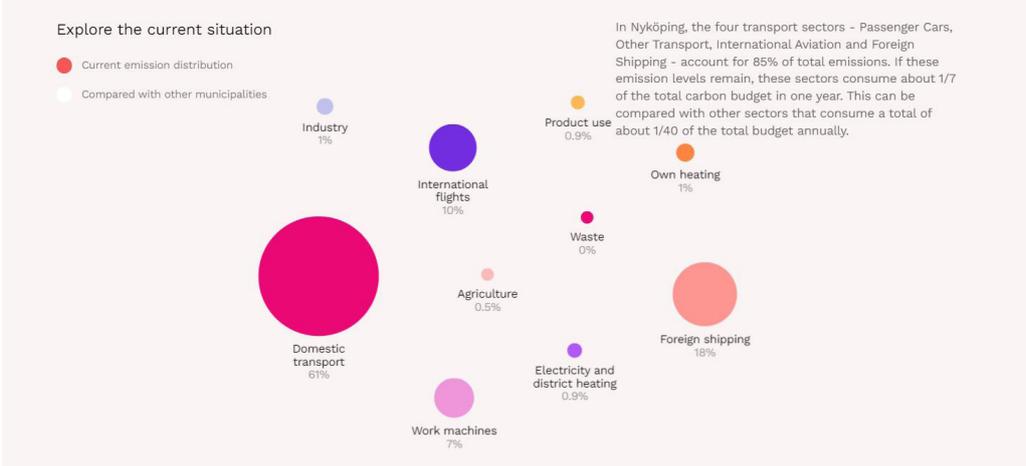
YEARS ACTIVE: 2020 - To date

The rationale: Students are taking action on climate change, and they demand to know what exactly governments do about climate targets. Climate digital visualisation tools are designed to help the public hold the government accountable and influence policy making process by understanding what they do and how they progress towards the Paris Agreement and the global temperature goals.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- What could be an action plan to handle carbon footprints at University?
- Does your municipality have a climate policy on carbon reduction?
- How can citizens get involved in having a better overview on promises and delivery on climate policies?
- Do you use any online tools for climate analytics?

Climate Visualizer



Pridem.si

The tool provides various information about wheelchair accessibility of Slovenia, and other necessary info (public transport, toilets, parking,...) that residents & tourists on wheelchairs may need. It offers categorised search of accessible locations. It lists accessible locations, categorised under groups: EAT, SEE, DRINK, SLEEP, DO, SHOPS and TOILETS.

CASE ID

GOAL: Mapping wheelchair-accessible places all over Slovenia

URL: <https://pridem.si/>

MADE BY: Aljoša Škaper, activist

COUNTRY: Slovenia

YEARS ACTIVE: 2019 – To date

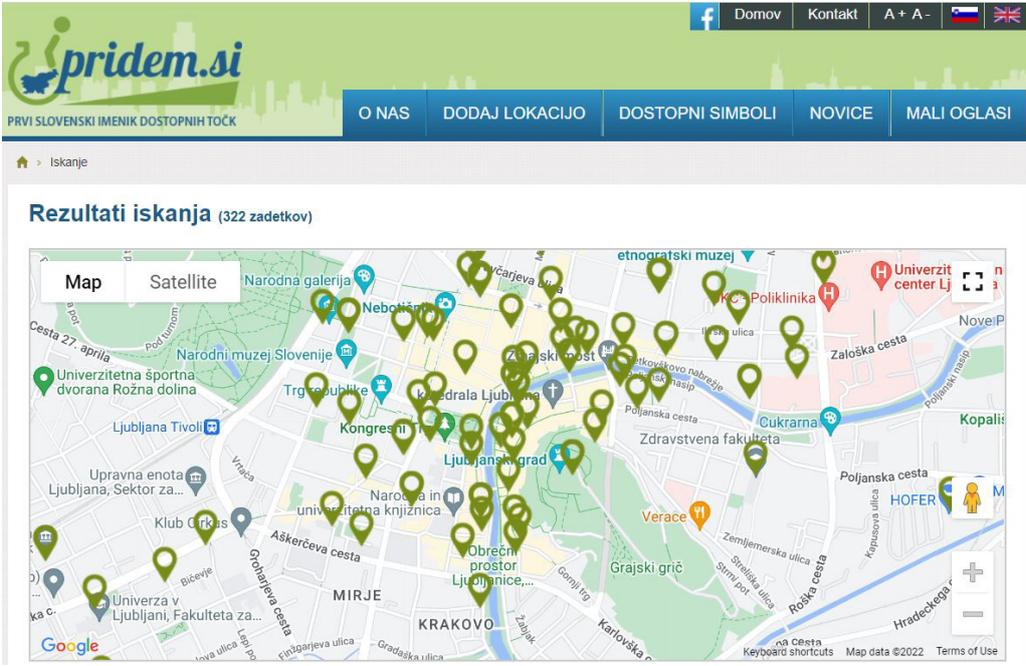
The rationale: Wheelchair accessibility mapping is hugely important to those whom it affects, having such a map can be life-changing for wheelchair users. Having data on wheelchair accessibility freely available and mapped, opens up all sorts of possibilities, like creating apps that plan out wheelchair routes.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- How accessible is your University and would having similar tools in place be possible to create?
- What can be done to make the improvements that are necessary to ensure access, equality and quality for students with disabilities.
- What are assistive and adaptive devices and technologies that you are familiar with?

Inform case study 4

Pridem.si



Fake news tragač / Fake news tracker

Fake News Tracker is a fact-checking website dedicated to the fight against disinformation published in Serbian language, both in traditional and new media. The analyses are conducted on the basis of daily monitoring of media content and reports from readers, who can submit materials whose authenticity they doubt.

CASE ID

GOAL: Fight against misinformation

URL: <http://www.fakenews.rs/>

MADE BY: Novi Sad, School of Journalism

COUNTRY: Serbia

YEARS ACTIVE: 2018 - To date

The rationale: The quality of public discourse is affected by the prevalence of online misinformation and disinformation news sources. Fact-checking tools aim to increase the participation of citizens in countering disinformation, as well as to raise awareness of the problems that disinformation can cause.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- Who has the biggest responsibility to stop the spread of fake news: governments, individuals or companies that own social media platforms?
- Where do you get most information from?
- What makes a source credible?
- How do you evaluate website sources for credibility? Do you know of any digital tools for verification of news?

Sumnjate u vest koju ste procitali?

Pošaljite nam je. Proverićemo.



Na ovoj stranici možete da prijavite vest za koju sumnjate da bi mogla biti lažna, a članovi naše redakcije će je proveriti u razumnom roku. Ukoliko želite da vam pošaljemo obrazloženje zaključka, molimo vas da ostavite svoj mejl.

ENGAGE

Minority SafePack European Citizen Initiative

One of the European Union institutions' responses to the "democratic deficit" in the EU is the introduction of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, an instrument that provides an agenda-setting tool accessible to different advocacy groups. ECI is a tool that allows European Union citizens to propose specific changes in those EU policy areas where the European Commission can propose new legislation. To launch an initiative, you need 7 EU citizens who have reached the voting age, living in at least 7 different Member States. If the project collects 1 million signatures, the European Commission decides whether to take action.

The European Citizens' Initiative "Minority SafePack" aims to promote the rights of national and linguistic minorities, ensure their protection at EU level and calls on the EU to use the tools at its disposal in this regard. The European petition campaign for the Minority SafePack was a success: they have gathered 1,320,000 statements of support and they have reached the threshold in 11 Member States (1 million signatures and 7 Member States are required for a European Citizens' Initiative).

CASE ID

GOAL: Protection of national and linguistic minorities at EU levels

URL: <http://minority-safepack.eu/>

MADE BY: Federal Union of European Nationalities

COUNTRY: EU

YEARS ACTIVE: 2013 - To date

The rationale: European Citizen Initiative are dependent on collecting citizen support and therefore need to have appealing and dynamic advocacy campaign strategies, to engage with as many citizens as possible. They also rely on digital tools to achieve the goal. That is why we chose to showcase ECI among ENGAGE tools.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- What Makes an Advocacy Campaign successful?
- How would you set up your own advocacy campaign?
- What skills, tools and resources do you think you need for your campaign?
- How often do you sign online petitions, and if you do, what are their causes?

Bitna.si / You matter

This is an online campaign that empowers those who have experienced some form of sexual harassment and violence to share their story with the aim of helping other victims realise that they are not alone. The aim of the tool was to gather stories shared during the campaign #ženeujavnomprostoru (#womeninpublicspaces), but the idea is to keep it online as a database continually updated by the users themselves when sharing their experience.

CASE ID

GOAL: Raising awareness on sexual harassment in public space, through online campaign portal

URL: <https://www.bitna.si/>

MADE BY: Association for Human rights and Civic participation

COUNTRY: Croatia

YEARS ACTIVE: 2020 – To date

The rationale: Although domestic and workplace violence is now widely recognized as a human rights violation, sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women and girls in public spaces are often neglected, with few laws or policies in place to prevent and address it. This campaign was aimed to raise awareness on the prevalence of how often sexual harassment occurs in public spaces.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- Does your University have a clear policy on sexual harassment?
- What is the societal impact of campaigns such as #metoo?
- What makes a public space safe and empowering?
- Are you familiar with online campaigns/digital tools that address these issues?

Bitna.si / You matter

bitna.si

[Početna](#) [O nama](#) [Pročitaj](#) [Ispričaj](#)

Sjetila sam se jos jednog #ženeujavnomprostoru Frendica i ja stopamo doma jer zivot u pripizdini gdje nema javnog prijevoza nocu a tad nije bilo ni taksija. Pokupi nas jedan auto, u njemu 4 decka, manje-vise nasih godina i krenu nas voziti doma (cca 12 km). Ja sjedim...

Pročitaj

Zasadi stablo, ne budi panj! / Plant a tree, don't be a stump!

Aware of the need to act in the face of the climate crisis, this civic initiative offers an answer in the form of planting trees, in order to raise environmental awareness and confirm social and ecological responsibility. In this way citizens help in the realization of the strategy for mitigating the consequences of climate change according to EU standards, improve the quality of our living and working environments, and alleviate the existing consequences of the climate crisis.

In order to have a more transparent and publicly accessible insight into the results of the civic initiative, in cooperation with the Center for Sustainable Development of GIS Technologies (CROGIS), a webGIS application was established to enter valid information about each planted site (geographical location, location, main participants, type and number of seedlings planted).

In addition to the ability to view and search locations according to selected parameters (location name, activity holder, county), the cartographic application provides all stakeholders in the implementation of the initiative and other citizens the opportunity to share cartographic content via social networks and download map clips in PDF format.

CASE ID

GOAL: Mobilizing citizens on climate action

URL: <https://panj.crogis.hr/>

MADE BY: NGO Zasadi stablo, ne budi panj

COUNTRY: Croatia

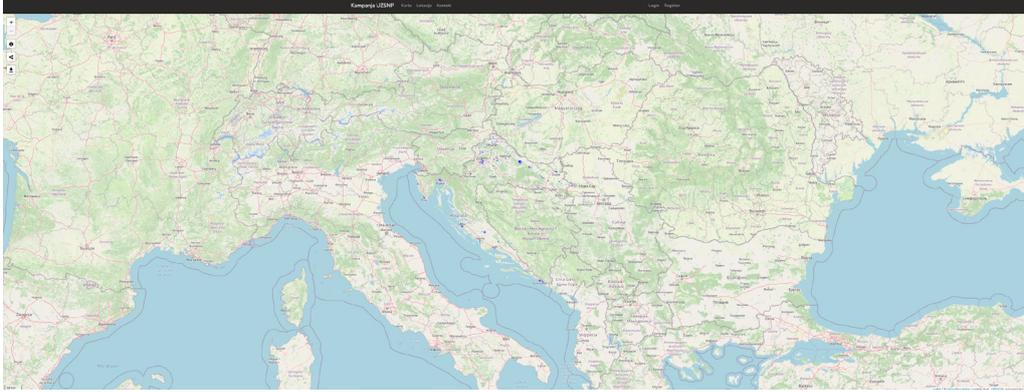
YEARS ACTIVE: 2019 – To date

The rationale: Restoring lost trees is essential to preventing the climate crisis. Trees capture CO₂ from the atmosphere and store the carbon in their leaves, stems, and roots, eventually increasing the carbon stored in soil.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- What is the responsibility of each individual for climate action?
- Do you follow Climate protests and what do you think of their online campaign strategy?
- How can students advocate for greener deals?

Zasadi stablo, ne budi panj! / Plant a tree, don't be a stump!



PANTA PÅ STAN! / ON-THE-GO DEPOSIT!

Panta på stan! (Deposit for on-the-go packaging) is a proposed gamified app campaign, aimed at raising awareness about the importance of recycling single use packages. App enables consumers to receive a deposit value when recycling their on-the-go packaging at regular recycling stations. App provides the ability to scan packaging and get points/money when sorting in FTIs stations alternatively closer to one's home, in an approved environmental station. The purpose of the project was to test and evaluate a deposit-return-system on "on-the-go" single use packaging.

CASE ID

GOAL: Reduce waste, promote recycling through points based system

URL: <https://www.getbower.com/>

MADE BY: Bower and Ornskoldsvik Municipality

COUNTRY: Sweden

YEARS ACTIVE: 2021

The rationale: Disposable items need to be more resource efficient for us to be able to handle the increased amount of waste that comes with our modern lifestyle with food and drink on the go.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- Can you think of any examples of how you reduce, reuse, or recycle in your lives?
- What are the best educational strategies for improving recycling rates and effectiveness?
- What would make you recycle more? Do you think gamified/point systems can increase interest in recycling?
- Do gamified apps generate a better user experience and civic engagement?
- Would you like to share some good experiences of recycling at your University?

PANTA PÅ STAN! / ON-THE-GO DEPOSIT!

The screenshot shows the Bower website interface. At the top left is the Bower logo. The navigation menu includes "Hur pantar jag?", "FAQ", "Återvinningsguiden", and "Business". The main content area features the headline "Vi gillar återvinning. Du gillar belöning. Vi borde bli vänner." followed by a QR code and the text "Återvinn allt, belöna dig själv. Ladda ner Bower." Below this are buttons for "App Store" and "Google Play". To the right, a smartphone displays the Bower app scanning a product. At the bottom, a row of partner logos includes Beiersdorf, coop, Mondelēz International, Orkla, FLUXE, CCS, Borden, and GP.

Samo ja pomeni ja / Only yes means yes

Samo ja pomeni ja is an awareness raising campaign and online petition that advocate for the model “only yes means yes” to define rape on the basis of consent. Only yes means yes campaign achieved a redefinition of rape in Slovenian legislation through advocacy, campaign of collecting authenticated signatures on terrain and online campaign. The objective of the campaign was successful, because it resulted in a changed definition of rape to the yes means yes model from the coercion model.

CASE ID

GOAL: Reduce waste, promote recycling through points based system

URL: <https://www.8marec.si/samo-ja-pomeni-ja>

MADE BY: Bower and Ornskoldsvik Municipality

COUNTRY: Sweden

YEARS ACTIVE: 2021

The rationale: A change in legislation, in this case an urgent change in the Penal Code, is not sufficient to effectively address the challenge of impunity for acts of sexual violence, but it is a necessary step to change attitudes and eliminate gender stereotypes and surviving beliefs about rape and other forms of sexual violence.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- What some of the benefits of using a petition, compared to other civic action methods, might be?
- How might students use petitions to effect change or convey important messages to government officials or others?
- What projects or issues in your community or state might benefit from a relevant petition?

The website was discontinued after the campaign reached its goal. Instead you can see some videos from the online campaign.

CO-CREATE

Consul

Consul is an open-source platform for Open Government and E-Participation that the NGO Danes je nov dan (Today is a new day) adapted and upgraded for local use in Slovenia. Consul is used by more than 100 institutions in 35 different countries, and was originally developed by the Community of Madrid. They upgraded the software and translated it for the Slovenian context as part of the broader campaign to introduce participatory budgeting in Slovenia. The open-source application has an attractive design and provides a pleasant user experience, making participatory budgeting a modern and interactive experience that it should be. Six Slovenian municipalities are already using the tool to include citizens in the decision making process.

CONSUL is a very comprehensive citizen participation tool for an open, transparent, and democratic government. Software features: Debates, Proposals, Participatory Budgeting, Voting, Collaborative Legislation.

CASE ID

GOAL: Consul is an online platform for public participation in decision-making

URL: <https://consulproject.org/en/>

MADE BY: At first by community of Madrid (first as Decide Madrid), later many other NGO joined

COUNTRY: EU WIDE

YEARS ACTIVE: 2015 - To date

The rationale: Participatory Budgeting is a civic-engagement process that can strengthen local democracy and help make public spending more equitable and effective by allowing community members to decide how to spend portions of an annual public budget.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- What are the benefits of participatory budgeting for the city and its citizens?
- How could a participatory budgeting process benefit your community?
- What steps can Universities take to encourage and mobilise students to participate in the community participatory budgeting process?
- Do you know any platforms for participatory budgeting?

LABGOV - The laboratory for the governance of commons

LabGov is an applied research laboratory for co-designing public policies for sustainable community development. It explores and develops methods, policies, and projects focused on the shared and collaborative management of urban spaces and resources. The first LabGov project carried out in Bologna laid the foundation of the Co-City protocol that was later tested in other Italian cities, including Battipaglia, Mantua, Reggio Emilia, and Rome. Several municipalities participated in developing innovative Co-City projects and experimenting with territorial collaboration pacts for commons-driven social and economic growth.

CASE ID

GOAL: Co-creation of public policy

URL: <https://labgov.city/>

MADE BY: Luiss Guido Carli University

COUNTRY: Italy

YEARS ACTIVE: 2011 - To date

The rationale: In the new city governance model LabGov proposes – what they call “urban co-governance” – the city (as public authority) acts as a facilitator of the emerging co-management structures throughout its territory and enables city inhabitants to actively take part in the regeneration of their habitat, improve their lifestyle, and develop the community they belong to. In this way, LabGov practices and advocates for the transition from urban commons intervention to a more just and democratic governance of the city as commons.

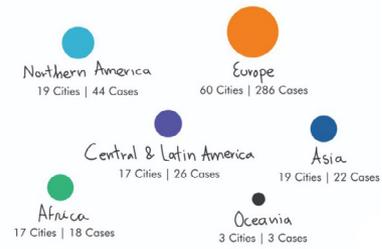
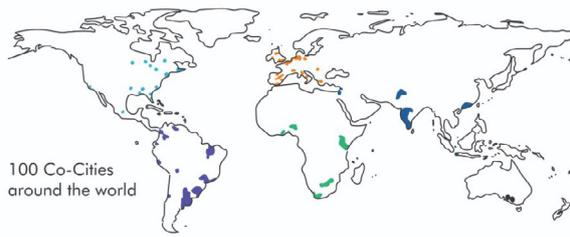
Discussion questions for the classroom:

- How can citizens shape their cities?
- Is your city council inclusive in their urban planning? Do citizens have a say, and if yes in what way?
- What can make urban planning more democratic and transparent?

Co-create case study 2

LABGOV - The laboratory for the governance of commons

Bridging the gap between theory and practice in urban co-governance



Explore our projects

District Labs

Starting in 2017, the City of Bologna, with the coordination of the Fondazione per l'Innovazione Urbana and in close collaboration with the neighbourhoods, has promoted District Labs, spaces for democratic interaction open to everyone. District Labs serve as hubs of innovation and collaboration between the city and citizens. Through neighbourhood public assemblies and thematic encounters via Internet, the objective is to activate stable processes of listening, dialogue, and collaboration in each neighbourhood to reveal priorities, needs, indications, and proposals to imagine shared solutions. FIU uses a range of participatory and co-design tools such as community mapping, planning for real, web-based engagement, open space technology, and assemblies.

CASE ID

GOAL: Democratic and accessible discussion labs to define future of the city and its neighbourhoods

URL: [HTTP://WWW.FONDAZIONEINNOVAZIONEURBANA.IT/PROGETTO/LABQUARTIERE](http://www.fondazioneinnovazioneurbana.it/progetto/labquartiere)

MADE BY: City of Bologna and the Foundation for urban Innovations

COUNTRY: Italy

YEARS ACTIVE: 2011 - To date

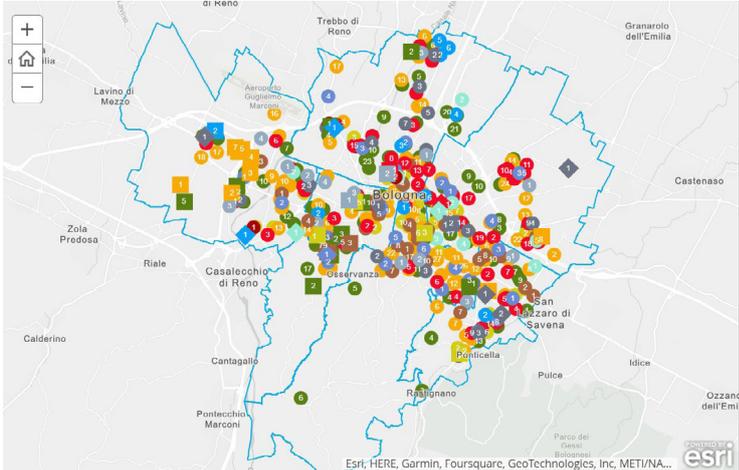
The rationale: Crowdsourcing enables ordinary citizens to contribute directly to the formation of policy, open-source governance theoretically provides a more direct means to affect change than do periodic elections.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- How is Crowdsourcing Expected to Improve Governance?
- Can you think of challenges and risks of applying Crowdsourcing in policy-making processes?
- What are some of the tools that can enable more direct communication between city officials and citizens?

Co-create case study 3

District Labs



Lab...

Laboratorio Quartieri

| 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |

Borgo Panigale - Reno

Navile

Action for society

The Action for Society is a platform for safer citizens through preventative collaboration. It enables a unified force where every voice is heard and everyone contributes in different ways. This is created through an app developed for individuals, and an Insight Portal for schools, associations, and municipalities. Before the app goes live for the public, a pilot test was carried out to refine the details, starting in Hökarängen, Stockholm. In the app, individuals are involved and make their school, association, workplace or living area safer, more fun and better. One can suggest ideas, invite others to activities or read about other initiatives aimed to create security. Schools, associations, municipalities and companies have access to Insight Portal where ideas, activities and other events are gathered from the app, which enables them to act both directly and preventively. For organisations, there are evidence-based educational programs based on The Non-Violence Project Foundation's methods to inspire, motivate and engage people in various ways, for example around self-esteem, harassment and handling conflicts without violence.

CASE ID

GOAL: Making public spaces safer and secure through co-deciding and collaboration with citizens

URL: <https://www.actionforsociety.com/>

MADE BY: Action for society Sweden

COUNTRY: Sweden

YEARS ACTIVE: 2020 – To date

The rationale: Making schools, workplaces or public spaces safer is a collaborative action between many stakeholders, and it is grounded in community engagement, capacity building, and data-based decision making. Balancing data-driven prevention and intervention strategies, the comprehensive plan reflects both community voices and community needs.

Discussion questions for the classroom:

- What makes your University campus environment be perceived as safe/unsafe?
- Are there any students' initiatives to improve the safety at University?
- What could be the benefit of engaging many stakeholders in the decision-making process regarding the safety of public spaces? What is the best way (tool) to facilitate their involvement? How would you make their voices count?

Action for society

SÅ FUNKAR DET!

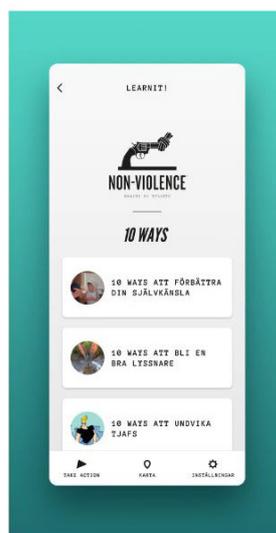
SLÅ PÅ DIN POSITION



SKAPA IDÉ, AKTIVERA, INFORMERA



LÄR DIG MER



Glas ljudstva / Voice of the people

Voice of the People emerged as a network of 112 civil society and non-governmental organisations ahead of Slovenian elections in 2022. Through a co-creation and deliberation process the network formed 100 statements (questions) that should be answered by political parties competing in general elections. Receiving answers on questions about social housing, minimum wage, reform of the public health sector, workers' rights, etc. would enable citizens to base their voting decision on platforms and party programs.

CASE ID

GOAL: Informing, engaging and co-deciding with citizens on go to vote campaign

URL: <https://glas-ljudstva.si/>

MADE BY: Network of 112 NGOS

COUNTRY: Slovenia

YEARS ACTIVE: 2021 – To date

The rationale: This case falls under all three categories: Inform, Engage, Co-Creat, as it informs citizens on different policies, it engages them in go to vote campaigns and it came in to life through the process of co-creation of 112 civic society organisations and citizens who were interested in the process.

NEXUS partner, Institute APIS made a documentary about the initiative as it was a unique moment in Slovenian history to have such a unified, proactive and engaged civil society during the 2022 elections, which in turn led to highest voter turnout in the last decade in Slovenia.

Discussion questions for the classroom

- What is the role of civil society during the election campaign period?
- Should Universities have a more active role in promoting voting, voting rights, voter education?
- What online tools and online campaign strategies did you observe parties use in elections? How do they target young people? Is their strategy working?

Conclusions

This Handbook on Civic Education for the Digital Age has presented the potential and challenges of Civics 4.0 within the NEXUS project work. This can be summarily defined as the integration of digital media and digitally enabled participatory tools into the process of civic education to raise students' awareness of the importance of participation and the development of the necessary skills to do so in a coordinated and collective way.

Through multimedia materials (short texts, videos, podcasts, and external links), the main purpose of the Handbook has been to provide a practical tool for educators and professionals working with young people who want to increase the civic engagement of their students exploring digital democracy and civic tech tools.

After a General section explaining the aims and audience of the document, the Introduction section is a reflection on the importance of civic education in order to participate in society in a democratic way, and how an innovative civic education has to meet the needs and interests of young people, including the digital dimension and its possibilities for enhance participation.

The rest of the Handbook refers to the description of the NEXUS project approach as Civics 4.0, which has been called "NEXUS4Civics", action-oriented and community and student-centered, and the practical resources developed in the project: i) the Civics 4.0 open online course and community; ii) the Guidelines on community engagement and service-learning; iii) and the toolkit of re-writing civics to version 4.0 with the digital inventory of civic-tech tools, together with a practical guide of 7 steps for workshops on digital civic education, and this teacher training Handbook itself.

The theoretical foundations needed to be able to apply the practical tools have been presented, what means e-Democracy and Civic tech and how the active component of (digital) civic engagement is inserted as the core of Civics 4.0. One of the main aspects highlighted has been that the digital aspects are not a differentiator from offline civic engagement, but a more far-reaching form.

The entire workflow of the Handbook leads us to the practical tools: description of typology and examples of inspirational case studies and initiatives using civic tech. The typology has been described and based within the framework of the Spectrum of Public Participation de (IAP, 2017), under three categories following the tool purpose: i) inform citizens about certain political processes and help them to make informed decisions (e.g., monitoring policy); ii) engage citizens to get involved in an initiative to change something (e.g., online campaigning); iii) and co-create, which involves different stakeholders, citizens and government, to make decisions together (e.g., crowdsourcing).

A total of 15 civic tech initiatives have been presented in practical templates including the description of the tool and practical ideas for educators to raise awareness using these cases within their teaching practice. The selection of tools has been made based on a variety of i) the three purposes explained above; ii) the local, national and European level contexts; and iii), the variety of topics of interest among young people identified by the NEXUS project at the beginning during a desk research and need analysis stage in order to target the real students' needs, such as women rights, environmental issues, government transparency and political trust, policy making, people with special needs and social inclusion, or smart cities and communities and crowdsourcing.

With this diverse range of proposals, it is hoped to provide educators with some inspired foundations and ideas for innovating the process of civic education.

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Co-funded by
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Co-funded by the European Commission, as per grant decision no. 2019-1-ES01-KA203-065861

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