Centre for
Public Impact
A BCG FOUNDATION

Finding **LEGITIMACY**
A global conversation

Tackling challenges together

How technology is transforming citizen engagement
for better and more inclusive policymaking

ENGAGE BRITAIN

Contents

About the Centre for Public Impact

The Centre for Public Impact (CPI) is a not-for-profit founded by the Boston Consulting Group. Believing that governments can and want to do better for people, we work side-by-side with governments — and all those who help them — to reimagine government, and turn ideas into action, to bring about better outcomes for everyone. We champion public servants and other changemakers who are leading this charge and develop the tools and resources they need, like our Public Impact Fundamentals, so we can build the future of government together.

About Engage Britain

Engage Britain is a new policy organisation focused on tackling Britain's 'too difficult' challenges by bringing together people, communities, practitioners and frontline specialists.

It aims to bridge the divides currently paralysing British politics, going beyond traditional approaches to policy making and bringing together those with different views, knowledge and experience. Its work will put citizens and communities at the heart of finding ways forward on the biggest issues.

ENGAGE
BRITAIN

Acknowledgements

Working together has been a theme throughout this research project.

An introductory note from the Centre for Public Impact and Engage Britain

It would be no exaggeration to say that in today's developed world, political debate is becoming more **polarised**. The arrival of social media has encouraged us to share our opinions more openly, but we tend to be speaking in our own echo chambers. Today, we are scratching our heads over how to find common ground on some of the biggest challenges of our time, such as the challenge of an ageing population, our fragile planet, and rising inequalities.

For governments, it is a struggle to know how to navigate a conversation with the public on such difficult issues in a new and unpredictable public sphere. So much so, that often the public sector's dialogue with citizens can feel inauthentic and can unintentionally squeeze out voices that need to be heard. However, we believe that technology can offer a solution.

> *We were encouraged to find that deliberative conversations are happening in new and more inclusive ways all over the world – with the help of technology.*

Engage Britain and the Centre for Public Impact set out to understand how technology was being used all over the world to positively engage people and help find solutions to tough policy challenges.

This collaboration came about because of our organisations' shared belief that we should trust people not just to have conversations but to find solutions together. We wanted to find out more about how people and governments are deliberating over important issues across political, cultural and geographical divides, beyond the town hall and speaking not only to the usual suspects – all with the help of technology innovations.

> *We feel optimistic about the potential of these emerging forms of tech-enabled deliberative methods to enhance the policymaking process.*

We were encouraged to find that deliberative conversations are happening in new and more inclusive ways all over the world – with the help of technology.

People do indeed want to engage with government and one another, and they are finding ways to compromise and cooperate when the process allows them to do so. The way technology specifically is now enabling many of those conversations to happen is reaching new heights of sophistication and scale.

We feel optimistic about the potential of these emerging forms of tech-enabled deliberative methods to enhance the policymaking process.

They are already assisting governments and their partner organisations to work with wider and more diverse groups of people. We are going to use these insights to help support the development of Engage Britain, which will engage UK citizens in relation to some of their country's most intractable policy issues.

Worldwide advances in communication technology have greatly expanded opportunities for public deliberation and democratic innovation, and it is a constantly evolving space. "Participedia", a research network and database for public participation and democratic innovation, identifies 422 cases of **online deliberation**. In truth, the number of cases of governments, NGOs, and citizens adapting technology to deepen democratic processes on a regional or national scale is probably much higher.

The cases we have chosen to illustrate and assess were selected because together they capture some of the most promising and varied examples of conversations that go beyond the usual participants and the usual methods. We have put together seven case studies: six used a combination of online and offline deliberative processes and one used mainly online methods. All of them attempted to reach new heights, either in terms of the number of participants involved or the diversity of participants. These seven case studies will live on CPI's **Public Impact Observatory**, an extensive library of policies assessed for impact from governments all over the world. We assessed these examples for their potential to achieve better outcomes by using CPI's Public Impact Fundamentals – a framework for successful policy – whereby three factors matter most: Legitimacy, Policy and Action.

The seven case studies:

- Access to Fertility Treatment through Democracy Seoul
- Building Consensus and Compromise on Uber in Taiwan
- Crowdsourcing Better Education Policy in Reykjavik
- Statistics New Zealand's Public Engagement on the 2018 Census
- Estonia Citizens' Assembly, Restoring Political Legitimacy
- Urban Redevelopment in Madrid
- US corporate income tax reform through TheChisel

We also analysed two further examples that are presented as briefings:

- Climate CoLab Contests 2015: The Global Climate Action Plan
- The Internet Governance Forum's Online Deliberative Poll on Internet Accessibility.

Although they are not specific policy challenges, they intrigued us because their technology is helping people communicate differently on big issues that cover several policy areas at once.

Success depends on Legitimacy, Policy and Action in equal spades

Many reports of such innovations look only at the numbers of people involved and the level of their engagement but we felt it was also important to look at the potential of these deliberative tools to achieve longer-term public impact in the real world. To assess these matters depended on the public availability of reliable information. It was encouraging to find that many of our case studies ranked highly on Legitimacy, but Policy and Action matter as much for longer-term impact and were often harder to assess. For example, understanding precisely why some of the initiatives did not become enshrined in policy or why some deliberations were designed to be advisory, as opposed to giving the public the final say. We also found it hard to track the participants' levels of satisfaction throughout the process.

It is still early days but, looking ahead, it will be important to discuss expectations with the public in good time, explain the methods chosen, and share what happened throughout. This will enable people not only to trust the whole process – even if they were only involved in part of it – but importantly to learn from what has been tried before.

Alleviating the "legitimacy crisis", not eliminating government

Within this blossoming field of innovation, levels of success vary widely in terms of the scale of engagement, its sustainability and impact. We have assessed cases that have engaged tens of thousands of citizens (Better Reykjavik), brought opposing sides together (vTaiwan, Corporate Tax Reform), and helped resolve a democratic crisis and had lasting impact on government policy (Estonia Citizens' Assembly, Democracy Seoul). Equally, we encountered frustrations and unrealised potential, low levels of participation (as could be argued was the case in the public engagement process for the New Zealand 2018 Census), and governments stalling on or rejecting the people's recommendations (see Estonia and vTaiwan).

We can see that these democratic innovations are still negotiating their relationship within the established political system and are grappling with age-old institutional and cultural challenges of political engagement, such as a lack of trust. At this stage, it is still uncertain how we should evaluate the democratic significance of scale, what levels of participation one can reasonably expect on a given topic of debate, and what level of engagement warrants government action. These are just some of the many areas worthy of further study.

Throughout this project, we asked ourselves how far these democratic innovations could help to alleviate what many say is a worldwide "crisis of legitimacy". In 2017, CPI asked citizens worldwide (through face-to-face and social media conversations) how governments could rebuild legitimacy – the deep reservoir of support needed for governments to be effective. They said:

- Working together with people towards a shared vision
- Bringing empathy into government
- Building an authentic connection
- Enabling the public to scrutinise government
- Valuing citizens' voices and responding to them.

These "legitimacy behaviours" relate closely to the quality of citizen engagement. They were voiced especially loudly by those who have thus far felt unheard or squeezed out of conversations – for many reasons, including age, race, gender, political opinion or geographic location.

"All of our examples can complement and enhance existing government policy and decision-making processes and, indeed, are already doing so.

Our selected case studies and stories alone cannot, of course, teach us how to meet all of these expected behaviours of a modern government or solve the "crisis of legitimacy". However, we do believe that these innovations offer a real and sustained chance to help governments respond to citizens' expectations in the day-to-day world of policymaking.

These examples do not represent, therefore, an alternative to governments but an alternative way for governments to think about working with people.

All of our examples can complement and enhance existing government policy and decision-making processes and, indeed, are already doing so.

They combine offline and online processes, and in doing so they allow people to discuss and hear others' views in a safer, more inclusive, more transparent and accessible space than is on offer through traditional "consultation" processes.

Finally, these studies reassure us that people are not as polarised as social media and party political rhetoric might lead us to believe.

"In all of our cases, citizens were able to agree a course of action, even when opinions were very divided.

In all of our cases, citizens were able to agree a course of action, even when opinions were very divided.

We hope these case studies and examples of what is possible and actually happening will inspire governments and their partners to think of policymaking with people in ways that can include, excite, and break through the noise. We hope too that public engagement processes much like the ones we reviewed will become an integral part of policymaking and decision-making across Britain and the rest of the world. This will require governments to accept that they do not always know the answers – and nor should they. In fact, acknowledging this reality could represent the biggest signal yet that governments do indeed want to strengthen legitimacy and find that all-important common ground.

Nadine Smith,
Centre for Public Impact

Julian McCrae,
Engage Britain

Key findings across eleven examples of deliberative processes where technology played a part

- Innovations in deliberative processes are widespread and becoming more prevalent.

- Many deliberative processes have emerged from a trust/legitimacy problem — but they have also been used to address specific policy challenges or broader global issues or to inspire problem-solving ideas.

- Tech-enabled conversations and deliberations can happen at any level of government, but have the potential to operate at scale.

- All initiatives need to be clear about their source of authority and how they are going to interact with existing power/political actors, so that they are not just dismissed when a politician does not like the results.

- A combination of online and offline methods appears to be a popular and successful approach. Typically, the online components have been used to crowdsource ideas, offline ones to enable those ideas to be sorted, revised and developed into more formal proposals.

- A key advantage of technology for crowdsourcing processes is its capacity to overcome the barriers of time, geography and logistics in bringing large numbers of people together. However, they can be rejected by politicians as not being a true representation of how all of society would react.

- It remains an important consideration for governments to allow for a lack of access to the internet, particularly in countries with more remote communities and lower levels of digital literacy. This was particularly apparent in the Statistics New Zealand case study.

- It is essential to understand from the outset who has the final decision-making power and how that decision was reached, not only for transparency and the management of public expectations but also to understand which method of deliberation will work best and which online and offline processes will be needed.

- We know that the topics people have the appetite to discuss and decide on really matter when it comes to participation levels, but we do not yet know what level of participation is enough to be seen as fully legitimate, and this may vary from case to case.

- Technology is not, and should not be, a replacement for government or much-needed face-to-face conversations. Many of our most successful examples use technology to support more traditional forms of decision-making rather than replace them entirely.

- Whether people join the debate or not has less to do with their view of technology and more to do with how healthy those people feel that their relationship with government is, in general. Therefore, the relationship government needs to be worked on simultaneously with the introduction of new processes, and it may even work better when it is not government that is leading on the engagement, as many of our stories show.

Further information on our findings

1. Why and under what circumstances have these methods emerged?

Five of our case studies emerged as a result of a political or economic crisis or claims of a lack of legitimacy around government. Since these crises, the tools have all continued to be used, well beyond their original one-off application. They have reset the culture of participation in politics and shaped a new relationship between government and citizens.

The willingness to embrace new technology and the way that it can engage individuals directly – especially those who might not normally get involved in policy discussions – is what sets these deliberative tools apart from surveys or consultations. They enable a more complex discussion and exploration of issues where there is no clear view on how to resolve a crisis. They allow a more nuanced discussion, moving away from the binary referendum debate. Estonia, vTaiwan, Better Reykjavik and Madrid are all examples of these.

2. Where in the world do these methods take place?

Democratic innovations using digital technology are taking place all over the world, and many of the cases involve technologies and methods that have wide applications across six continents (Decide Madrid, Better Reykjavik, Deliberative Polling, Climate CoLab). The cases discussed here take place in South-East Asia, Europe, North America, and New Zealand, while two cases adopt an explicitly global scope (Deliberative Poll, Climate CoLab).

The cases explore public deliberation and engagement at supranational, national and local levels. Not surprisingly, the larger the scope of deliberation, the higher the stakes will be, and the vTaiwan and the Estonia case studies demonstrate that communication with a whole nation, though more challenging, is certainly achievable. At the supranational level, the Climate CoLab story shows that opportunities for impact can occur independently of government decisions, for example through funding charitable enterprises and initiatives. At all levels, however, political commitment and buy-in to the legitimacy of the process eventually matters if ideas are to be implemented or have a direct influence on policymaking or legislation.

3. How and when does it work?

Across the case studies, we can observe many variations in the innovations' objectives, the topics they address, the design and functionality of the technology used, how digital elements feature in the wider process, and the political and economic context in which they operate. However, it is possible to observe some emerging patterns and trends.

Combining online and offline methods appears to be a popular approach. Typically, the online components have been used to crowdsource ideas that draw on the diverse knowledge of large numbers of people, while offline components have been used to enable those ideas to be sorted, revised and developed into more formal proposals (see vTaiwan, Estonia Citizens' Assembly, Better Reykjavik).

In order to achieve a productive and legitimate deliberative process, it is important that the public are fully informed and have a shared understanding of the facts. This can be challenging when the issue involves complex information and/or highly contested claims. A notable achievement of these cases is the care many took in presenting information in a clear, accessible and balanced way, and the use of technology and design to consolidate information and make it more engaging (US Corporate Income Tax Reform).

A key advantage of technology for crowdsourcing is its capacity to overcome barriers of time, geography and logistics in bringing large numbers of people together. This can make the process far more inclusive, engaging people who might not attend physical meetings in town halls, for example. Technology does present its own barriers, however, most notably the digital divide that disproportionately excludes poorer and older citizens. In response, some cases have included offline channels for contributing ideas (most notably in Democracy Seoul, but see also Better Reykjavik and Decide Madrid).

The process of sorting, revising and refining proposals typically takes place through face-to-face meetings, with a prominent role for a more limited number of experts and policymakers (Decide Madrid, vTaiwan). The cases reveal how transparency and accountability of this process can be enhanced at this stage through technology, by live-streaming debates and allowing remote participation (vTaiwan) and by providing clear feedback to show the

public they have been listened to (Corporate Income Tax Reform). The case studies also provide warnings of potential breakdowns of trust when decisions are not as transparent (Estonia Citizens Assembly, Statistics New Zealand Census 2018). This suggests there is still a role for face-to-face communication in more nuanced and rich discussions around complex challenges, along with the need to ensure these discussions are transparent.

The value of crowdsourcing rests on numbers not representativeness. It is based on the idea that many eyes on an issue can help identify solutions that would elude a small group of experts. Participants in crowdsourcing do not have to be representative of the general population, and due to their specific interests they tend not to be. In order to get a sense of what the wider population might think about the proposals, some cases have experimented with a distinct method that involves creating a representative microcosm of the population to deliberate on proposals (Estonia Citizens' Assembly, Online Deliberative Poll). The cases suggest that these experiences can produce high-quality deliberation, resulting in opinion change, learning and consensus. The validity of this method, how one should interpret the significance of the results of these "publics", is less clear. The sample may be representative of the general public demographically, but it cannot be said to "represent" the public as a formally elected parliament does. It provides a counterfactual picture of what the general population might conclude if they were to deliberate. This ambiguity can create a justification for political actors to ignore results that they do not agree with. This suggests a need for care in the use and presentation of these techniques.

4. How involved must political leaders or those working for them be?

Civic organisations that are independent of government have been central to the success of these cases. In most instances, the technology and tools used are developed by NGOs and civic tech communities, and the initiatives are delivered by organisations and individuals that are non-profit, non-partisan, non-politically aligned (vTaiwan, Democracy Seoul, Better Reykjavik, US Corporate Income Tax Reform). In many cases, the initiatives arrive after periods of crisis in public trust of political leadership, and these initiatives can be seen as independent and innovative potential solutions. This suggests it is desirable for some distance between the initiatives and political leaders.

Often, the success of the initiative also depends on political leaders being open and receptive to the recommendations emerging from the platform. A key part of the public's motivation for taking part in such deliberative processes depends on the idea that they will be listened to and ultimately see political change, and this typically requires institutional responsiveness and political leadership.

Whether a political leader will or should respond to the outcomes of democratic innovations depends on a number of factors, not least the quality and legitimacy of a given initiative. What these cases clearly demonstrate is the potential value of public engagement and the capacity of well-designed public deliberation to bring out the best in citizens, and reach solutions to problems that have eluded political experts (Democracy Seoul, US Corporate Income Tax Reform), or left traditional political decision-making channels in deadlock (vTaiwan). There is therefore a clear place for these processes, when well managed and delivered, to enhance political decision-making, which could be of great benefit to political actors.

5. What are the lessons and potential stumbling blocks to look out for?

It is most helpful to think of these democratic innovations and the technology they use, not as a panacea or as a means of overthrowing existing governments and decision-makers but rather as tools for supporting decision-making and strengthening the public sphere. The likely success of these tools depends on a range of factors concerning their application.

It is vital that the purpose of the public engagement process and how it relates to decision-making power is clearly defined and communicated. This is important for understanding the requirements of the process, identifying what technology and methods would best deliver the kind of public input needed, and for setting realistic expectations for the public regarding their role. The initiatives illustrate how different methods and technologies can be used to achieve different elements of a deliberative process, from gathering ideas to filtering and refining them, and ultimately making decisions.

A recurring theme was that many of the initiatives achieved what they had on a shoestring budget, frequently relying on volunteers and goodwill. Many practitioners felt constrained, believing that with greater political commitment and resources the process could have been far more successful. When reflecting on the priorities for

resources and the most effective way the process could have been improved, many practitioners repeated the same thing, highlighting recruitment as the major issue. In these processes, there needs to be a clear answer to the question: "Why should the public participate in this debate?"

Reaching out to people, engaging them and keeping them engaged is a fundamental challenge. Whether people joined the debate or not had less to do with the technology involved and more to do with their trust in those running the process, their interest in the issue, and their belief in the value of their voice in the wider decision-making process. That is why those deciding to embark on this pathway must pay as much attention to the how (our legitimacy behaviours can guide them here) as to the what, such as what platform to use. "Democracy washing" or consulting the public about things they will not engage in or cannot influence will weaken the culture around these tools and may hinder future engagement. It is important that governments understand where the appetite is for conversation.

Finally, as well as asking why the public should participate, we must also ask "why should the government listen?" A crucial factor in the success or failure of an initiative rests on how responsive the government and other actors are to the process. A determining factor in this is the extent to which any deliberative process can claim to express legitimate democratic authority. This requires the initiative to be accountable, transparent, inclusive and clear in communicating the value it adds to the democratic process. The cases illustrate how a well-designed process can produce valuable public input, but the willingness of governments to listen to even the best recommendations varies. One hurdle many governments will need to overcome is a fear of saying they do not have all the answers and would like to open the discussion up to people. In many countries, this is already part of the culture; in others, a major shift in understanding what government is for needs to happen. Governments need not have all the answers or take the "tough" decisions for us, but instead should be prepared to listen to and trust the public, and work on ways of collaborating with them to solve the challenges we all face.

How we assessed the case studies

Our case studies shine a light on how innovations in technology have been helping citizens engage over big questions facing their region, country and the world.

Each case study contains a section that outlines the initiative and its impact. We assessed each case study using the Public Impact Fundamentals framework.

The Public Impact Fundamentals framework is a diagnostic tool for policy making to help improve the impact of a government initiative. The assessment is based on the **nine elements of policy success**. We use the framework to assess whether these key elements that increase the likelihood of policy success are in place to create better outcomes for people.

The tool is useful to diagnose policies that have been implemented in the past, are current or are under consideration by government for the future.

More information on the Public Impact Fundamentals is available at www.centreforpublicimpact.org.

These seven case studies assessed using the Public Impact Fundamentals will join over 300 other stories of public impact from around the world on the Public Impact Observatory at www.centreforpublicimpact.org/observatory.

LEGITIMACY

ACTION
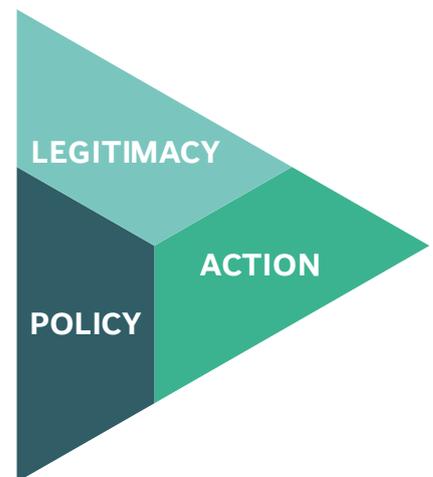
POLICY

About our briefings

We also feature two 'briefings' that show how technology has the exciting potential to bring large numbers of people together to discuss issues and ideas in public policy.

Those stories are also available online on the CPI's Viewpoints pages at **https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/insights**.

Access to Fertility Treatment through Democracy Seoul

Method: Online and offline

⁄ In brief

South Korea has the lowest fertility rate in the world, an issue which is expected to create serious economic problems for the country in future,[1][2] and many South Koreans affected by infertility are experiencing mental health problems as a result.[3] Koreans seeking IVF treatment encounter a range of barriers relating to the high cost and limited availability of services. The issue of the country's low birth rate is recognised as a major problem, and the national government started providing support to infertile Koreans in 2006. However, the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) had not developed any policy on infertility, considering it an issue for the national government.

In 2018, a community of Koreans who were seeking fertility assistance, made a proposal calling for the SMG to expand the number of health centres offering IVF treatment. They did this through a new public engagement platform called Democracy Seoul. The platform allows citizens to propose and debate topics they would like to be considered by the SMG. These debates may ultimately lead to a vote, effectively petitioning the mayor and local government to respond.

The proposal on infertility gained support from the public and officials alike. Following months of debate and consultation involving affected individuals, policy experts and the general public, the proposal was put to a vote on Democracy Seoul, and 97 percent voted in favour. In March 2019, Seoul's mayor, Park Won-soon, committed to providing financial support for IVF treatment, expanding the number of health centres offering the treatment, providing information to the public about infertility treatment and government support, and taking measures to ensure those affected by infertility were able to receive support from mental health services.

The challenge

South Korea's fertility rate is the lowest in the world.

In 2018, the average number of babies born per woman of reproductive age fell to 0.98, which is likely to create a number of problems for the country in future, including underfunded pensions and expanding debt. Experts warn that this may well produce a vicious cycle of economic uncertainty, causing the birth rate to drop even further.[1][2] At the same time, the number of infertile Koreans who would like to have a child is around 220,000, and infertility is increasing across the country.[3]

Infertility can have a serious impact on the mental health and relationships of those affected. A study organised by the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare showed that 86.7 percent of the 214,588 Korean women who were treated for infertility in 2015 said they had felt depressed, worthless and isolated, while 26.7 percent had considered taking their own lives due to depression caused by infertility.[3]

Low birth rates have been recognised as a major social issue and, from 2006, the Korean government has been providing financial support to Koreans who seek fertility treatments, as part of its demographic policies to tackle the low birth rate.[3] To date, however, the SMG has not considered that improving access to infertility treatment was the way to address the issue. In fact, there are a number of barriers for those seeking IVF treatment in Seoul, including high cost and limited availability. Treatment involves daily injections for up to eight weeks, and the treatment is only available in a limited number of hospitals, meaning that it can be incredibly difficult, inconvenient and costly to receive treatment. While the SMG professed readiness to deal with the problem, there was no policy or department at the city level addressing this issue. In January 2018, the self-organised community for infertile couples sought to address the issue, using Democracy Seoul.[5]

The initiative

In January 2018, the community for infertile couples, which has approximately 50,000 members, posted the suggestion: "What if public health centres could provide IVF treatment?" through Democracy Seoul. [5]

The platform was launched in 2017 to encourage citizens to take part in making suggestions to the SMG and thereby cocreating government policy. The SMG is responsible for the funding and administration of the project, but it works in partnership with the organisation Parti Coop in delivering Democracy Seoul. Parti is a social
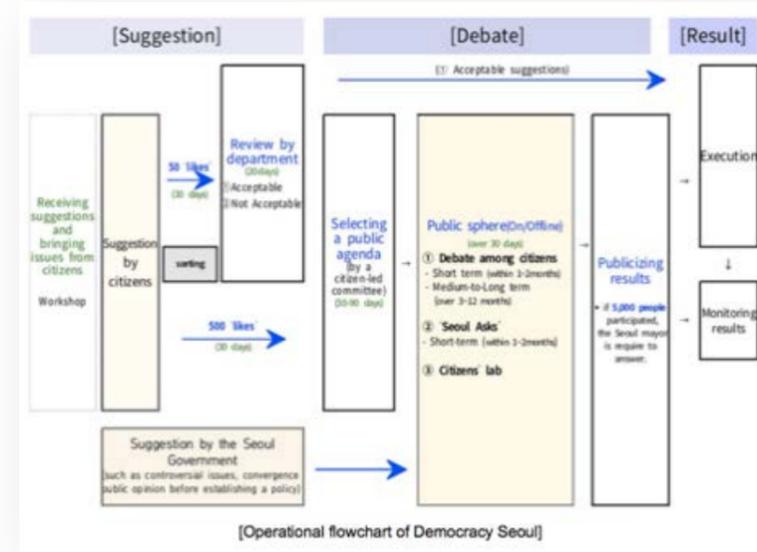
cooperative established by democracy activists, who aim to strengthen the public sphere and enable more democratic decision-making.[4] They use digital technology to provide innovative solutions to democratic problems, developing toolkits and platforms, as well as organising workshops and offline events. Parti is responsible for the planning and operational support of Democracy Seoul.
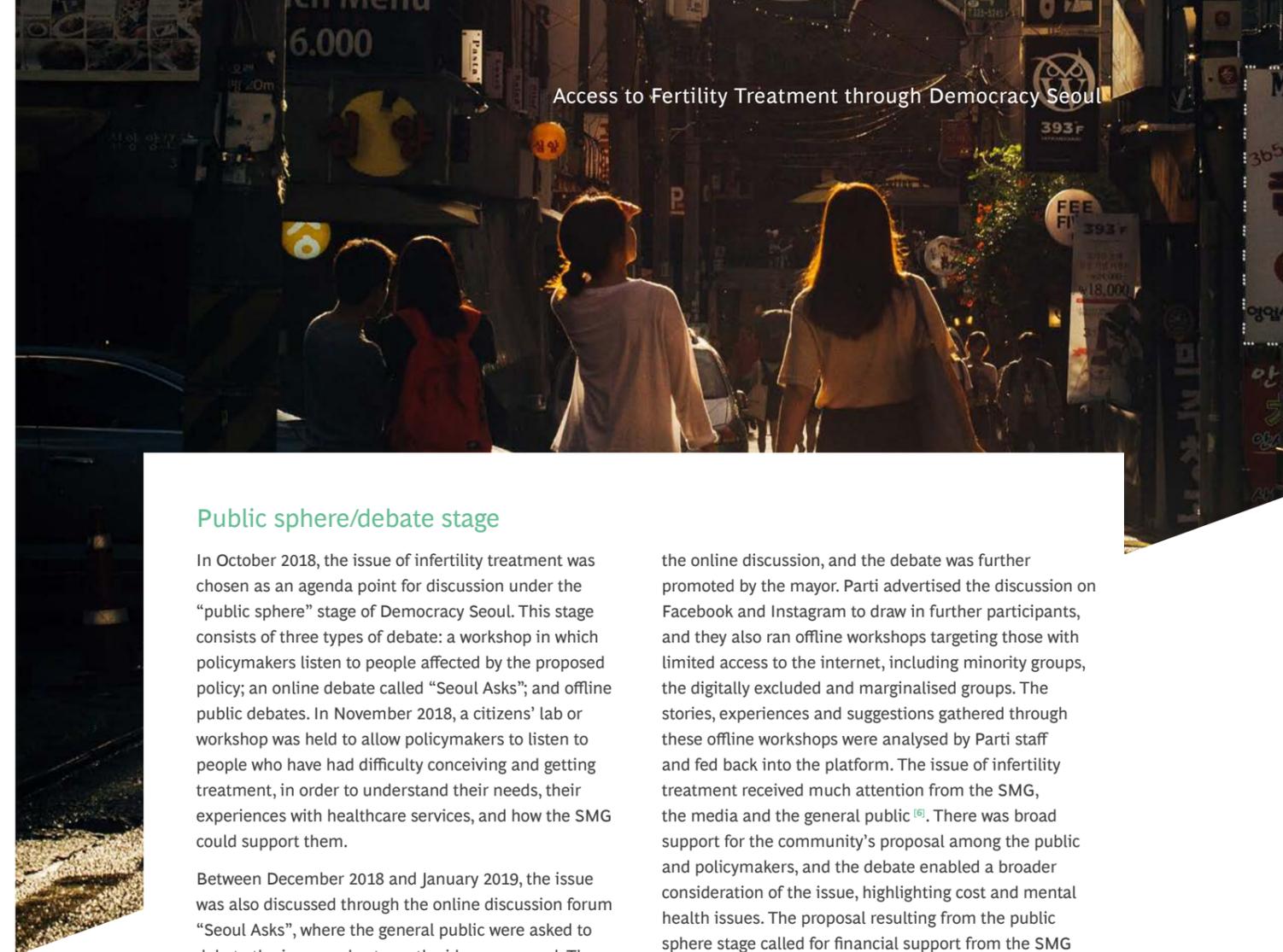
Suggestion stage

The community for infertile couples submitted a proposal calling for an expansion of designated health centres that provide infertility treatment. They did so via the first stage of the Democracy Seoul process, called "citizen suggestions". At this stage, which lasts for 30 days, any citizen can leave a suggestion on a specific topic or proposal and share the idea with other citizens, who may support the proposal with a "like" as well as leaving any comments. If the proposal acquires 50 likes or more, it is reviewed to ensure it is acceptable for the process; if it acquires 500 likes or more, a citizen-led committee is required to consider including it as part of a public debate. The proposal submitted on infertility treatment received more than 2,500 comments and over 5,000 likes, thereby bringing it to the attention of officials and qualifying it for consideration for public debate.[5]

SMG staff and the Parti team performed a fact-check and audit of the proposal. The primary purpose of this was to ensure that different perspectives on the issue had been included for public debate. They also commissioned a private research institution to write a report documenting the country's current infertility treatment policies and summarising existing research on these policies. In the summer of 2018, the proposal and accompanying reports were passed for the consideration of a citizen-led committee. The central role of this committee in the Democracy Seoul process was to check the report, determine whether the proposal should be put on the agenda for public debate, advise how the issue was to be framed, and ensure information and resources were balanced and easy for citizens to use.

[Operational flowchart of Democracy Seoul]

Democracy Seoul Screenshot: https://medium.com/parti-xyz-developers/democracyseoulwonifdesignaward-b1a29eb73745

Public sphere/debate stage

In October 2018, the issue of infertility treatment was chosen as an agenda point for discussion under the "public sphere" stage of Democracy Seoul. This stage consists of three types of debate: a workshop in which policymakers listen to people affected by the proposed policy; an online debate called "Seoul Asks"; and offline public debates. In November 2018, a citizens' lab or workshop was held to allow policymakers to listen to people who have had difficulty conceiving and getting treatment, in order to understand their needs, their experiences with healthcare services, and how the SMG could support them.

Between December 2018 and January 2019, the issue was also discussed through the online discussion forum "Seoul Asks", where the general public were asked to debate the issue and vote on the ideas proposed. The SMG used both online and offline channels (e.g. print media and awareness-raising campaigns) to publicise

the online discussion, and the debate was further promoted by the mayor. Parti advertised the discussion on Facebook and Instagram to draw in further participants, and they also ran offline workshops targeting those with limited access to the internet, including minority groups, the digitally excluded and marginalised groups. The stories, experiences and suggestions gathered through these offline workshops were analysed by Parti staff and fed back into the platform. The issue of infertility treatment received much attention from the SMG, the media and the general public [6]. There was broad support for the community's proposal among the public and policymakers, and the debate enabled a broader consideration of the issue, highlighting cost and mental health issues. The proposal resulting from the public sphere stage called for financial support from the SMG for those seeking IVF treatment and an expansion of designated public health centres offering IVF.

Democracy Seoul Screenshot: https://ifworlddesignguide.com/entry/258566-democracy-seoul

An online vote on this final proposal was open from 14 December 2018 to 13 January 2019, and 97 percent of the 5,435 participants voted in favour.[5] The Democracy Seoul process states that if a proposal receives over 5,000 positive votes, the Mayor of Seoul is required to provide a direct response to the demands, and the proposal concerning infertility treatment was the first such case. The implications of implementing the proposal by making changes to the policy were considered in a series of expert meetings and conferences held between January and February 2019.

Implementation or "results" stage

On 26 March 2019, the mayor held a town hall meeting to address the proposal. Over 150 people attended the event, including many newly-married couples preparing for pregnancy, and couples and individuals struggling with fertility issues.[6] During the meeting, the mayor heard from citizens about their experiences, noting the economic burden of IVF and the effect of infertility on the mental health of those affected. The mayor recognised the need to expand IVF services and providing greater financial support for those seeking IVF, and the following action plans were made:

1. Define a step-by-step implementation plan to enable more public health centres to provide fertility treatment

2. Consult with stakeholders, the city municipal assembly, and the 400 Private Medical Institutions Network regarding delivery

3. Establish the Seoul City Pregnancy and Childbirth Information Centre, to provide policy information related to the policy

4. Cooperate with the national government to actively resolve the issue.[7]

In addition, the mayor also committed to providing better mental health support services, including counselling, for those receiving IVF treatment. The government has committed to executing the policy changes by the end of 2019 and aims to monitor its progress.[7]

Democracy Seoul Screenshot: https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20190325147400004?input=1195m

Timeline summary

Democracy Seoul Screenshot: https://democracy.seoul.go.kr/front/discussion/result01.do?sn=183262

19 January 2018:
Proposal to improve access to infertility treatment submitted via Democracy Seoul

10 February 2018:
Discussions to establish agenda

27 November 2018:
Citizen workshop

14 December 2018 to 13 January 2019:
Public voting online via Democracy Seoul: Results: 5,147 total votes (5,007 in favour of the proposal / 135 against / 5 other)

14 January 2019:
Review of the department in charge and consultation with related organisations (Health Promotion Section)

26 March 2019:
Seoul Mayor holds a town hall meeting addressing the proposal.

The public impact

Before the initiative, there was no policy related to infertility treatment, and the SMG considered it to be an issue for the national government. The Democracy Seoul platform provided a space in which citizens were able to demand that action be taken on this issue at city level, and where they could collaborate with experts and policymakers to ensure policies effectively addressed the needs of those affected. The initiative resulted in the mayor committing to provide financial support to enable couples to receive fertility treatment, expand the number of public health centres that provide treatment, improve publicly available information about treatment and support, and provide mental health services to support individuals receiving IVF treatment and their partners.[7]

The Democracy Seoul platform has won international awards for its service design,[8] and has been recognised by the UN for promoting gender-sensitive public services to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals.[9] Its prominence has grown, and it currently has 147,826 members, with 270,000 citizens participating in a number of debates (the population of Seoul is 10 million). The platform has hosted 3,141 suggestions, of which 28 led to action by the SMG.

Public impact
What did and didn't work using the <u>Public Impact Fundamentals</u>

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`
Political Commitment `Strong`
Public Confidence `Strong`

Policy
Clear Objectives `Strong`
Evidence `Strong`
Feasibility `Strong`

Action
Management `Good`
Measurement `Good`
Alignment `Strong`

Legitimacy

Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`

The process was initiated by the community of infertile couples, and one interviewee involved in delivering the initiative describes how this community group took an active role throughout the process. After the proposal was submitted, Parti took steps to ensure the policy was thoroughly researched, different stakeholders' views were identified, and the framing of the agenda was balanced. Throughout the public debate, Parti and the SMG reached out to the citizens affected, policy experts, and other stakeholders, such as health centres, and mental health experts, to ensure that the process was informed by their experiences and knowledge.[6]

Political Commitment `Strong`

Media reports suggest that SMG officials have declared their strong commitment to the initiative and to address the problem of infertility by introducing new policies.[5] A member of Parti commented that the Mayor of Seoul has a "massive interest" in Democracy Seoul, highlighting the platform's importance in his election campaign "Democracy City, Seoul" and his commitment to respond directly to popular proposals made on the platform. Another member of Parti further noted that they had received strong support for the project from the SMG's New Media department through its resourcing and promotion of public debates on the platform.

Public Confidence `Strong`

A member of Parti observed that the initiative attracted attention and support from the public, the SMG, and the media.[5][6] The community of infertile couples, who initiated the process, took an active role, and their demands were perceived by the wider public as being entirely justified, while their proposal was seen as meeting broader social needs on the vital issue of South Korea's low birth rate.[6] Moreover, infertility is an issue that resonated with many people who engaged in the online discussion and who had experienced

it, either directly or through friends and family. Parti, which archives the events and records feedback from participants regarding their opinions on the public debates they attended, also found strong support for the proposal and satisfaction with the Democracy Seoul process and the mayor's response. [7]

The issue was widely reported by local and national news networks.[5][6] News reports of the town hall event attended by the mayor described strong public support for the way in which he listened to and engaged with those speaking and for the policy commitments emerging from the process.[6]

Policy

Clear Objectives `Strong`

The initiative developed a set of specific policy objectives based on a nuanced and in-depth consideration of the nature of the problem and the experiences of those affected. The overall objective of the initiative was to improve access to IVF treatment and support those affected. The main barriers to accessing fertility treatment were identified as the high cost and the shortage of hospitals providing IVF. The policy proposals directly addressed these challenges by calling for greater financial support from the SMG for those seeking IVF and an expansion of designated public health services offering treatment. The mayor committed to providing a step-by-step implementation plan to meet these objectives.[5] [7]

Evidence `Strong`

There were extensive efforts to ensure that the best available evidence informed the decision-making process and the resulting policy. Teams from Parti and the SMG fact-checked and audited the proposal and other suggestions made during the engagement process. A policy research institution was hired to provide a report of current policy, any potentially controversial issues, and additional considerations. These elements were included to ensure the debate was well informed and supported by rigorous and balanced evidence. The policy proposals went through several stages of scrutiny from experts, a citizen-led committee, and the wider public.

Feasibility `Strong`

Parti has run Democracy Seoul since October 2017, and its team is made up of members with extensive experience in facilitation, democratic engagement, and the use of civic tech. Members of Parti observed that the process was run efficiently and they received sufficient financial resources from the SMG to deliver the project. The initiative met the original timeframe, and the policies' feasibility was

rigorously scrutinised through consultation with policy experts. The media have reported positively on Democracy Seoul's capacity to address this and many other issues, including topics related to healthcare, gender equality, and the environment.[5] The platform won an international design award from iF in 2019, which commented positively on its use of digital technology to enable effective citizen engagement and participation.[8]

Action

Management `Good`

Media reports suggest the initiative followed a transparent procedure that clearly established who was responsible for the delivery of different elements of the process.[5] The initiative drew on appropriate support, applying the expertise of independent academic researchers, SMG staff, and other stakeholders. Public debate was supported by consultation with experts and policymakers to identify the risks and issues involved. Media reports describe how the mayor took clear responsibility for implementation.[6]

Measurement `Good`

The project is in the early stages of implementation, and its measurement is therefore difficult to assess. However, the mayor has committed to providing a step-by-step plan for implementing the envisaged policy changes and monitoring the progress of their implementation.[6] The Democracy Seoul platform also has a dedicated space for monitoring and evaluating the execution of policies that have been implemented as a result of debate on the platform.[10]

Alignment `Strong`

A member of Parti observed that Democracy Seoul's focus is on fostering a public sphere for debating policy issues and encouraging departments to understand citizen opinion. This interviewee felt there was close alignment between the values of the policy and those of the political actors involved. Moreover, policymakers recognised the challenge of better supporting those experiencing infertility as an important one, and all the participants considered that the recommendations emerging from the initiative were valid and met a pressing social need.[7]

References

[1] **South Korea's fertility rate set to hit a record low of 0.96**, Benjamin Haas, 3 September 2018, The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/03/south-koreas-fertility-rate-set-to-hit-record-low

[2] **South Korea's fertility rate is the lowest in the world, 30 June 2018**, The Economist, https://www.economist.com/asia/2018/06/30/south-koreas-fertility-rate-is-the-lowest-in-the-world

[3] **200,000 Korean women diagnosed with infertility yearly: data**, Clair Lee, 19 June 2018, Korea Herald, http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20180619000808

[4] **Parti Coop and the Seoul Government Won an iF Design Award 2019**, Parti, 8 March 2019, Medium, https://medium.com/parti-xyz-developers/democracyseoulwonifdesignaward-b1a29eb73745

[5] 보건소난임주사공론화이끈온라인플랫폼'민주주의서울', 26 March 2019, YNA, https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20190325150700004?input=1195m

[6] 박원순"난임문제해결위해서울의료원에난임센터설립", 26 March 2019, Newsis, http://www.newsis.com/view/?id=NISX20190326_0000600027&cID=14001&pID=14000

[7] 보건소에서도난임주사를맞을수있다면어떨까요?, 26 February 2019, 민주주의서울, https://democracy.seoul.go.kr/front/discussion/result_before01.do?sn=183262

[8] **Democracy Seoul Digital Democracy Platform**, iF World Design Guide, https://ifworlddesignguide.com/entry/258566-democracy-seoul

[9] **2019 UNPSA Fact Sheet**, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN99253.pdf

[10] 실행, Democracy Seoul, https://democracy.seoul.go.kr/front/practice/list.do

Building Consensus and Compromise on Uber in Taiwan

Method: Online and offline

In brief

In 2015, the issue of Uber regulation was addressed in Taiwan through a unique process of citizen engagement called vTaiwan. Uber's arrival in Taiwan in 2013 presented several challenges, a key issue being the regulation of the company and ensuring fair competition with similar taxi services. vTaiwan brought together citizens and stakeholders to agree an approach to the issue. Using the Pol.is platform, the initiative was able to crowdsource ideas and identify areas of consensus between different parties. Throughout the process, the initiative utilised online and offline methods and different technologies to ensure the process was transparent and open to public engagement and scrutiny. Initially, groups were fiercely divided. However, by the end of the process, recommendations emerged that received almost universal approval. These suggestions were taken forward to talks with Uber, taxi drivers, and the government, which were broadcast live and transcribed. The process resulted in Uber and other groups making important concessions in response to the suggestions, and the government adopted new regulations in line with vTaiwan's recommendations.[1]

The challenge

The ride-sharing app UberX, one of the services provided by Uber Inc, arrived in Taiwan in 2013.

It was very popular with the public, but traditional taxi drivers were losing customers and there was much controversy surrounding its operation. Uber was registered as a technology company, but the Ministry of Transportation and Communication deemed Uber a transport company and ordered it to obey the taxi laws, something Uber initially refused to do. Taxi drivers and many members of the public felt Uber had an unfair advantage, as a result of a number of factors: Uber drivers did not need to have insurance or a professional driver's licence; their charges undercut a fare structure set down in law for taxi firms; and the company was not paying the same taxes as local firms.[2] Uber's arrival eventually sparked protest and civil disobedience from taxi drivers.

The initiative

Because the arrival of Uber in Taiwan proved controversial, it required an effective response from the Taiwanese government. Communication between Uber Inc and the Ministry of Transportation and Communication had been problematic, and Uber Inc's status as a technology company had generated challenges to traditional policy approaches. The Taiwanese minister for digital affairs, Jaclyn Tsai, therefore invited a civic tech community called g0v (pronounced "gov zero") to support the government in addressing the issue.

g0v is a decentralised community of coders, NGO workers, civil servants, and volunteers who develop digital tools to support a more open government. Based in Taiwan, they had been operating since 2012, but rose to prominence in 2014 following their role in supporting decision-making during the Taiwanese student protests, known as the Sunflower Movement. After attending a g0v hackathon in December 2014, Jaclyn Tsai asked g0v to build a platform that enabled citizens to engage in rational discussion online. The g0v community developed a new public engagement process called vTaiwan – the v stands for "vision", "voice", "vote" and "virtual". It focuses on forming public participatory policy about digital technology.[3]

In August 2015, at the request of several government authorities, including the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and the Ministry of Finance, vTaiwan hosted the Uber case. The process was designed to support open and transparent deliberation, addressing what constitutes fair regulation of Uber in relation to competing services.[3][4] It brought together citizens and stakeholders who represented different perspectives on the issue. The process was broken down into four stages: the objective, reflective, interpretive and decision stages.

1. Objective stage

During the initial two-week objective stage, g0v researched the issue to help define the policy challenge and identify and contact relevant stakeholders. They agreed on a date to launch the engagement process, and were given a URL that everyone could share at once to reach their constituents.[5] The community gathered relevant facts, evidence and research on the topic and prepared material for the public. This included interpreting legal jargon and translating it into something more readily understandable for the purposes of presenting a topic description and initial statements to initiate public discussion.

2. Reflective stage

The reflective stage uses the Pol.is platform to crowdsource ideas and gather public opinion. Facebook adverts and social networks were used to target participants and draw them on to Pol.is, including reaching out to affected groups such as Uber drivers to ensure their perspective was included. The most prominent feature of the Pol.is platform is its visual and structural expression of patterns in support for user-generated opinions.[6] Participants vote on other users' suggestions, where the options are to agree, disagree or "pass". Participants may also contribute their own ideas. Pol.is provides visual feedback in the form of a map which highlights areas of consensus, as well as representing non-mainstream opinions.[7] There is a word count limit of 140 characters on contributions, and a key feature of the platform is that participants cannot reply directly to others. These design features prevent trolling and enable scalable communication.

The reflective stage took 4 weeks, during which time 4,500 people participated and voted on 145 comments. Participants included taxi drivers, UberX drivers, and passengers of both Ubers and traditional taxis. Two broad groups quickly emerged from the process identified on the basis of the statements they supported, one pro Uber and another (twice as large) that was fiercely anti-Uber.[5] The organisers decided that for an idea to progress to the next stage, it needed to achieve 80 percent approval among all participants. This was calculated on the basis that the participants were initially split 60-40, so the majority and at least half of the minority group would need to agree.[5] As a result of this, people would compete to define moderate statements that crossed the divide between the groups. From this process, 6 recommendations emerged which received approval from over 80 percent of contributors. There was a general consensus on the need to regulate UberX and protect established public-private transport.
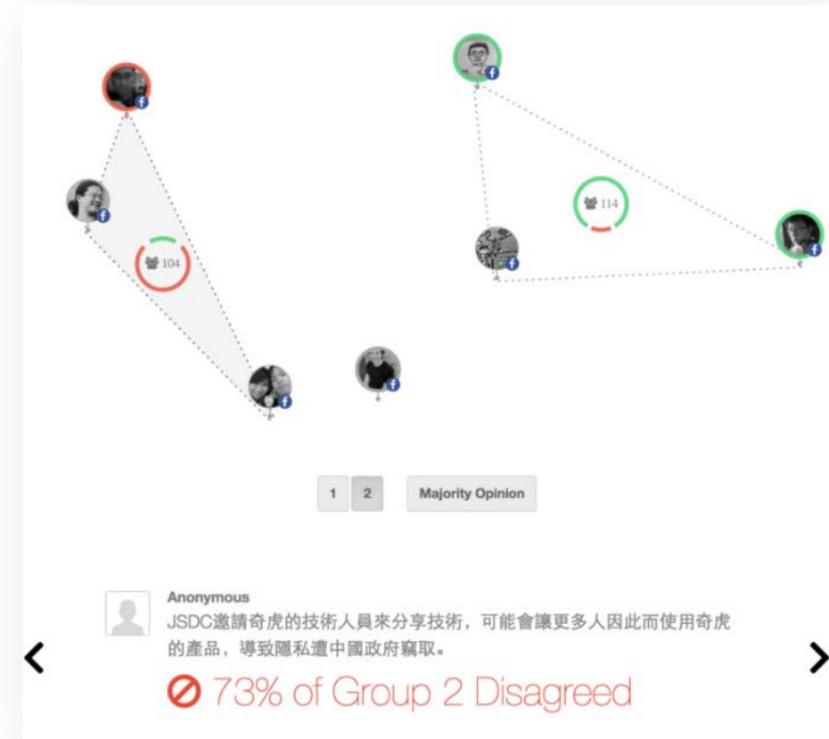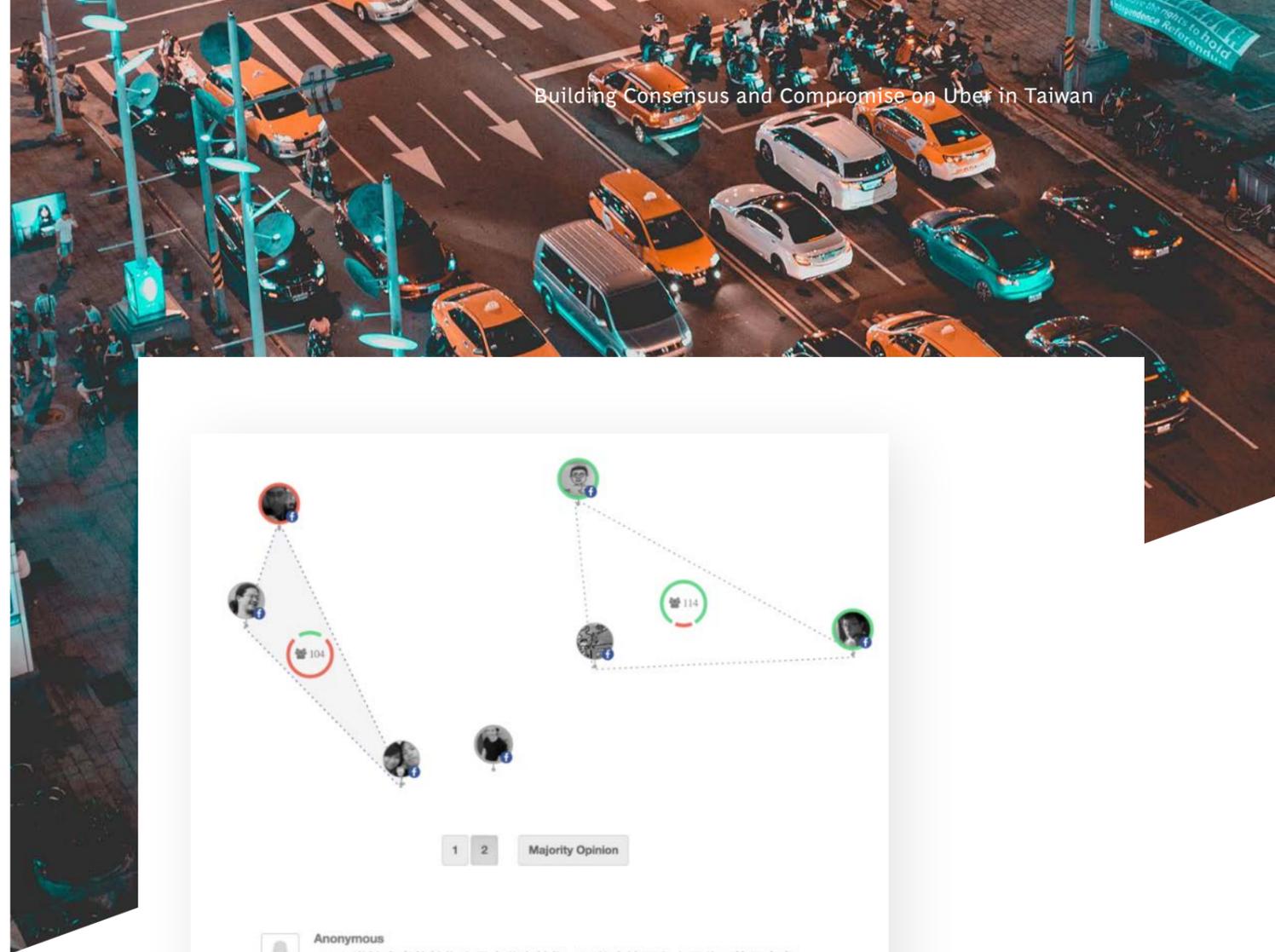
vTaiwan Screenshot: Pol.is provides an interactive visual representation of levels of support for different positions, 1*pMs6yP2VVS6sdNEBniTNqQ.png
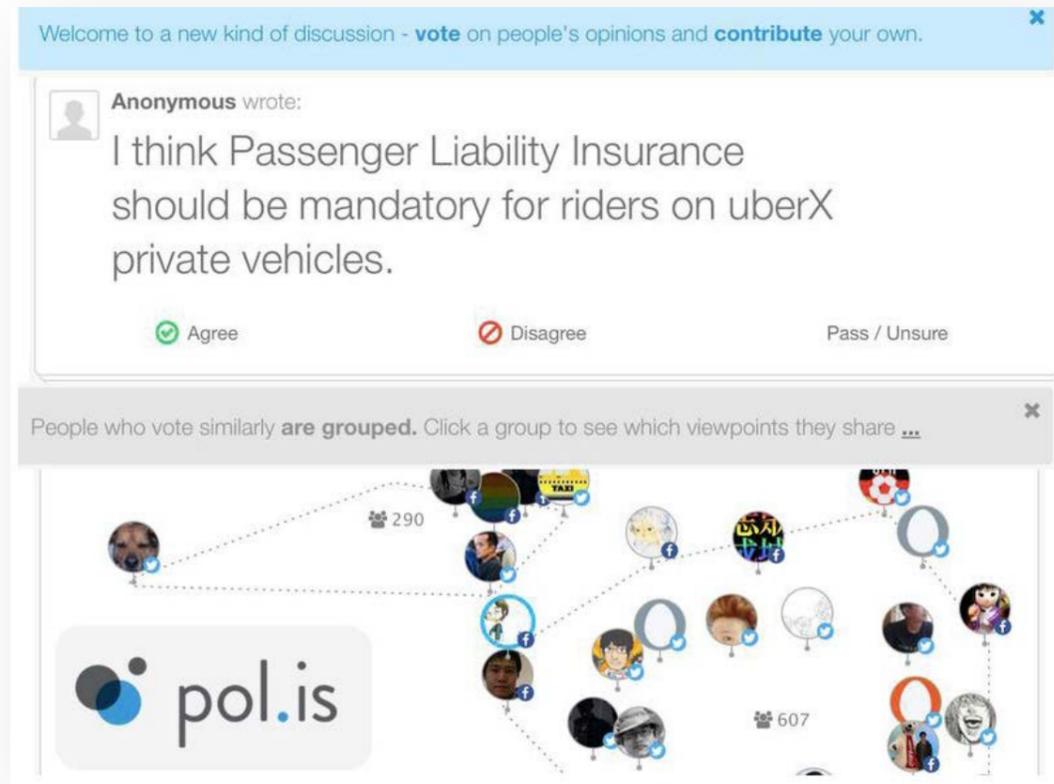
vTaiwan Screenshot: In the Pol.is interface participants are able to agree, disagree or pass on user-generated ideas, 1*_0dcMOk-wKnZpXDlgKjZeg.jpeg

vTaiwan Screenshot D: Stakeholders gather to discuss the recommendations in public meetings, screen.jpg

3. Interpretive stage

In the interpretive stage, online participants joined a two-hour public meeting with academics, industry experts, active online users from the Pol.is survey, and representatives from the following four stakeholders:

- "The Association of Taxi Drivers in Taipei...
- "Taiwan Taxi, the country's foremost taxi fleet
- "Uber Inc...
- "The Ministries of Transport, Economic Affairs and Finance."[6]

The meeting combined the results of the Pol.is survey with more detailed discussions and idea exchange, enabling the development of firm proposals. There was further opportunity for public input and scrutiny at this stage through a process described as telepresence.[6] Using streaming service technologies such as LIVEhouse. in, the meetings were live-streamed and transcribed, and the public could participate remotely through online chat rooms and digital whiteboards, which could then feed back into the meetings. Over 1,800 people watched this event

or participated remotely, for example asking questions via the chatroom.[5] Faced with public pressure and consensus around the demands, Uber conceded to almost all the recommendations before the legislative process began.

vTaiwan Screenshot:
Stakeholders respond to recommendations emerging from Pol. is during the interpretive stage,
https://youtu.be/QxHkGq57pWw?t=1071

4. Decision stage

In the final decision stage, proposals emerging from the process were developed into a draft bill and sent to parliament. There was a delay of a few months at this stage due to a transition in the post of minister for transport, and the following proposals were eventually ratified in 2016:

- Taxis no longer need to be painted yellow
- Taxis can display medallions in different ways
- App-based taxi fleets cannot pick up passengers from the street randomly
- People may not charge less than the standard taxi fare
- The app-based fleets are subject to public auditing to ensure they display correct driver and car identification, how the fare is calculated including surge pricing and they must display average ratings from all customers.[5]

Using Pol.is, the reflective stage generated the following six recommendations:

1. The government should set up a fair regulatory regime on transport instead of protecting certain groups with vested interests.

2. On the issue of paying taxes in Taiwan, Uber has the responsibility to put forward a responsive mechanism to convince Taiwan's community of its good faith.

3. UberX should follow the practices of taxis and require their vehicles to display the registration certificate, licence and complete driver's information at a visible place in the vehicle.

4. Transport is similar to food medicine in that it should be subject to more stringent definitions and checks than other general service platforms.

5. Private passenger vehicles should be registered. They should be limited to two shifts per day in order to achieve the car-pooling effect. An additional passenger protection insurance cover should also be purchased.

6. I think it should be permissible for a for-hire driver to join multiple fleets and platforms.[11]

Timeline summary

Spring 2015:
Objective stage, g0v research issue and prepare for public engagement process

15th July- 15th August 2015:
Reflective stage, public debate through Pol.is

September 2015:
Interpretive stage: two hour meeting live streamed to the public

23rd May 2016:
Taiwan's administration ratified legislation emerging from the process

25th October 2016:
Legislative changes come into effect

The public impact

As a result of the conversations on Pol.is and face-to-face meetings, the stakeholder groups made the following concessions:

- Uber agreed to provide its international liability insurance policy to Jaclyn Tsai and, if needed, release it for public review

- Uber agreed to mandate all drivers to register and obtain professional driver's licences, and provide the necessary support

- If legalised in some areas, Uber was willing to pay for UberX car permits, as well as transport taxes

- The Taipei Taxi Association also expressed a willingness to work with the UberTAXI platform under mutually agreeable terms

- The Taiwan Taxi Fleet promised to offer better services, if taxi pricing were to increase in response to market demand.[3]

On 23 May 2016, the administration pledged to ratify the recommendations emerging from the process and amend the Regulation on Automobile Transportation Management. The following legislative changes came into effect on 25 October 2016:

- Taxis no longer need to be painted yellow

- Taxis can display medallions in different ways

- App based taxi fleets cannot pick up passengers from the street randomly

- People may not charge less than the standard taxi fare

- The app based fleets are subject to public auditing to ensure they display correct driver and car identification, how the fare is calculated including surge pricing and they must display average ratings from all customers.[3]

The only issue on which representatives of Uber did not agree concerned their tax status. If they committed to being a taxable entity in Taiwan, then drivers would become their employees rather than being self-employed. At the time, Uber was fighting a legal battle on this issue in California and, had they made this concession in Taiwan, it would have been likely to sway the legal proceedings in California against them.[6] This issue has been a recurring one for the company's operations.

The process appeared to ease tensions between traditional taxi drivers and Uber, although new government legislation in 2019 may cause Uber to exit the Taiwanese market.[8]

Following the successful pilot of Pol.is with Uber, the vTaiwan process was applied to Airbnb regulations and internet alcohol sales.[3] To date, 26 issues have been discussed through vTaiwan, 80 percent of which have led to decisive action from the government.[9]

Public impact
What did and didn't work using the
Public Impact Fundamentals

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`
Political Commitment `Strong`
Public Confidence `Strong`

Policy
Clear Objectives `Good`
Evidence `Strong`
Feasibility `Good`

Action
Management `Fair`
Measurement `Fair`
Alignment `Good`

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`

"All stakeholders displayed a remarkable willingness to cooperate and work with each other." Audrey Tang [3]

The organisers of the vTaiwan process were careful to engage the relevant stakeholders, including Uber Inc, other taxi companies, and the drivers and passengers of both services. The initiative also engaged representatives from the relevant government departments and the broader public. The use of Pol.is enabled a diverse range of voices to be represented with a transparent indication of levels of support for different ideas. Stakeholders and the public were involved throughout the process, notably through the use of technology such as Pol.is and through the two-hour, live-streamed face-to-face meetings.[6]

Stakeholders demonstrated a strong commitment to the process, as evidenced by their capacity to make concessions and work together. For example, Uber agreed to several points of action including coaching drivers to obtain professional driver's licences, providing insurance, and paying for car permits. The Taipei Taxi Association expressed willingness to work with the UberX platform, and the Taiwan Taxi Fleet promised to offer better services.[6]

Political Commitment `Strong`

Several government authorities displayed strong commitment to the initiative, dedicating time and resources to resolving the areas of disagreement, notably the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and the Ministry of Finance. There is also evidence that Ministry of Transport staff developed a positive relationship with stakeholders during the process.[3][5] In addition, Jaclyn Tsai was strongly committed to the vTaiwan process that hosted the Uber discussions.[10]

It should be noted, however, that not all cases on vTaiwan have received the same level of commitment from government as the Uber case. One interviewer involved in the process observed that they have struggled to maintain autonomy from the government in terms of what issues get discussed.

Public Confidence `Strong`

The vTaiwan initiative emerged in the wake of a political crisis in Taiwan that had greatly undermined confidence in the Taiwanese government.[10] Jaclyn Tsai was keen to restore faith in political decision-making by using digital technology to enable open public engagement. She chose to reach out to g0v, the grassroots community, because of its experience and credibility.[10] The process through which the Uber case was discussed enabled strong involvement from citizens and various stakeholders.[3] The discussion was transparent, and the recommendations put forward gained the support of over 80 percent of citizens who participated.[3][5]. Since the Uber case, participation in the vTaiwan process has increased and public engagement processes have expanded, suggesting confidence in the process and its organisers.[11]

Policy

Clear Objectives `Good`

In response to the challenge presented by Uber, the objectives of the initiative were to open up taxi competition to Uber in a way which was acceptable to the Taiwanese population and perceived as fair by other taxi services.[2][3] The initiative's objectives were to also open up decision-making and enable greater citizen participation and transparency in the legislative process.[1][4] vTaiwan aimed to bring together citizens and stakeholders to set the agenda for debate using the Pol.is platform. In this sense, the specific agenda and recommendations were not set out clearly at the start of the initiative but emerged through the process in an open and transparent way. The final recommendations were described as very clear and coherent.[5]

Evidence `Strong`

The initiative established clear stages and methods for ensuring that the best and most relevant evidence was gathered for the Uber case. The vTaiwan process itself was developed on the basis of research into existing practices and years of experimentation within g0v.[11][5] Before its application in this case, it had been trialled on other cases, for example vTaiwan had hosted debates on regulation regarding crowdfunding platforms.[4] The initial stage of the process identified and reached out to stakeholders and those with expertise in the area, gathering and preparing

research and legal reports relevant to the case. The Pol. is platform's capacity to crowdsource ideas enabled 4,500 people to generate and scrutinise proposals relating to the regulation of Uber, improving the strength and quality of recommendations and providing clear evidence of the levels of support for each point of view. Finally, the meetings between Uber Inc, Taiwan Taxi, the Association of Taxi Drivers in Taipei, and government representatives were open to the public and followed by at least 1,800 people, ensuring greater accountability and transparency regarding the decisions made.[2]

Feasibility `Good`

In the Uber case, vTaiwan's use of technology, notably the Pol.is platform, enabled it to support participation on a scale that would not otherwise have been achievable or would have been extremely expensive. The process also relies on support from volunteers, which has further reduced costs.

vTaiwan is currently limited to addressing issues relating to digital technology, such as Uber. In order for the initiative to expand – in terms of addressing a wider range of topics and engaging a larger, more diverse group of participants – the process will probably require more full-time staff, and the recommendations deliberative events would need to be more binding on the government.[11]

The success of the initiative relies on strong commitment from political actors, and it should be noted that not all cases on vTaiwan have been as successful as the Uber case. If the government refuses to discuss a public issue, the topic will not go through the vTaiwan process. A draft bill of selling alcohol online, developed through vTaiwan with strong public support, was rejected by the Legislative Yuan due to its conflict with existing e-liquor policies.[2]

Action

Management `Fair`

The initiative resulted in positive action from all major stakeholders. On 23 May 2016, the government ratified most of the recommendations emerging from the process. This included ensuring that Uber drivers were correctly registered and insured and that appropriate checks were carried out to confirm they were displaying the correct identification information and not undercutting fares. A key issue that Uber did not give way on – and

the government did not enforce – was taxation, in part because this would have impacted a court case they were involved in.[2]

It has been argued that the biggest limitation of vTaiwan is that the government is not bound by the discussions. Consequently, it is vulnerable to being what Jason Hsu, a former activist who helped bring vTaiwan into being, called a "tiger without teeth".[11] Although the government implemented recommendations in the Uber case, there are limited means to ensure recommendations are well managed or acted upon.

Measurement `Fair`

The success of the initiative can be measured by the extent to which it was able to create a level playing-field for Uber and other taxi services. In this respect, the results were mixed. The initiative did result in government legislation and decisive action from stakeholders. This included ensuring that Uber did not undercut existing metered pricing, opening Uber to public auditing, and ensuring that taxi drivers have professional licences, together with greater flexibility for how taxis are presented (e.g removing the requirement that they are painted yellow, please see The Public Impact above). One of the biggest problems that Uber poses to lawmakers is its stance on taxation, and the failure or unwillingness of the Taiwanese government to address Uber's tax advantages can be seen as the biggest limitation of the process.[2]

A further measure of the initiative's success is the extent to which the process opened up the legislative process and managed to engage citizens. In this respect, the initiative ensured that meetings between Uber and government officials took place in the open, being live-streamed and transcribed, rather than taking place behind closed doors, as is more typical of such meetings.[2] The initiative managed to engage 4,500 participants in the reflective stage and 1,800 participants in the interpretive stage.

Alignment `Good`

The initiative involved bringing together actors with different interests, including groups with business interests that were in direct competition with each other. The aim of the initiative was to facilitate a consensus between all stakeholders on the regulation of Uber. The stakeholders demonstrated good faith and a willingness to cooperate, during the initiative and also in the implementation of the measures.[3][5]

References

[1] **The Right Way to Cut Corporate Taxes**, The Editorial Board, 12th November 2017, The New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/12/opinion/corporate-tax-cuts-gop.html

[2] **U.S Corporate Tax Reform**, 3 November 2017, Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-corporate-tax-reform

[3] **Reform Corporate Income Tax**, 15 March 2018, TheChisel, https://thechisel.com/proposal/reform-corporate-income-tax

[4] **Republicans Sought to Undercut an Unfavorable Analysis of the Tax Plan**, Jim Tankersley, 4 December 2017, The New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/us/politics/republicans-joint-committee-on-taxation-estimate.html?module=inline

[5] **An Overview of Recent Tax Reform Proposals**, Mark P. Keightley, 28 February 2017, Congressional Research Service, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44771.pdf

[6] **A New Proposal for Corporate Tax Reform: Joint Event Between American Enterprise Institute and the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center**, Tax Policy Center, https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/event/new-proposal-corporate-tax-reform-joint-event-between-american-enterprise-institute-and-urban

[7] https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=The%20most%20thoughtful%20plan%20to%20reform%20US%20corporate%20tax%20is%20now%20also%20the%20best%20presented.&src=typd

[8] **Why Lower Corporate Tax Rates?** 18 January 2018, Reconsider Media, https://www.reconsidermedia.com/lastestblogposts/why-lower-corporate-tax-rates

[9] **A Bipartisan Plan to Cut Corporate Taxes**, William A. Galston, 31 October 2017, Wall Street Journal, https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-bipartisan-plan-to-cut-corporate-taxes-1509487574

Crowdsourcing Better Education Policy in Reykjavik

Method: Online and offline

In brief

In January 2017, Reykjavik's city council decided to crowdsource ideas to cocreate its Education Policy 2030, calling for ideas from main stakeholders (teachers and other staff members, parents and students) and using an online platform called Better Reykjavik. This was the first time that a specific policy of national or local government within Iceland was crowdsourced. The council asked: "what skills do we want our education system to have provided our children by 2030?". It held meetings with key stakeholders between February and April 2017 and identified five basic competencies and skills that were most needed: social skills, self-empowerment, literacy, creativity and health. The council then crowdsourced ideas from the public on how the education system could foster these skills, using a combination of offline workshops and online discussion with citizens via the Better Reykjavik platform.[1] From May to June 2017 around 10,000 people participated in the crowdsourcing process in total, 5,800 people participated online, generating 56 ideas and 204 arguments.

During the autumn of 2017, these ideas were synthesised and developed in a draft proposal and action plan, and following reviews the city council approved the policy. The implementation process started formally at the end of December 2018, with a commitment from the implementation team to closely monitor and evaluate the process and review after three years. A Development and Innovation Fund provided ISK200 million to support Reykjavik's schools and leisure centres in delivering the education policy, which was entitled "Let Our Dreams Come True". The implementation team is providing support and tools to enable schools and leisure centres achieve the policy goals in their local contexts.[5]

The challenge

The City of Reykjavik's challenge for its Education Policy 2030 can be framed as a series of three questions:

- What skills do we want children to have when they leave school in 2030?

- What ideas for education policy can help ensure children develop these skills?

- How do we develop a coherent plan across pre-schools (aged 1-5), elementary schools and leisure centres in the city to support our aims?[2]

The city council therefore sought to engage in a large-scale public engagement process to help develop ideas on the skills that it should prioritise, and the education policies that could help the city's school children acquire those skills.[1]

The initiative

At a meeting of the city council on 17 January 2017, council members agreed to begin the development of the city's long-term education policy.[3]

A steering committee was appointed, comprising civil servants and representatives of all city council departments. Their role was to manage the project and ensure the following work was carried out:

- An analysis of state education in the city
- The development of key educational goals
- Ensure close cooperation between project management, the online consultation platform, party representatives, and schools and leisure centres
- An action plan for the proposal and implementation of the policy.

The following month, a consultation forum led by the Mayor of Reykjavik was convened. Its members were responsible for researching and creating a joint action plan for education policy. Key stakeholders were invited to the forum by the mayor, including representatives of the School and Leisure Council, elected representatives of the council, domestic and international education experts and academics, managers of schools and leisure centres, and representatives of staff, parents and students.[4]

Between February and April 2017, 11 meetings were held with about 450 participants in total, including representatives of parents' associations, young people, staff at kindergarten, primary school and compulsory school (the term used for education between 6 to 16), and representatives of the central office of the School and Leisure Division. The purpose of the meetings were to establish the basic attributes children would need on graduating from school in 2030. The participants agreed on five basic attributes:

- **Social skills – societal responsibility and agency**
  The ability to engage in fruitful social relations with others and to impact the community and environment positively. A strong emphasis was placed on empathy, cooperation, kindness and respect.
- **Self-empowerment – a strong self-image and belief in one's own abilities**
  Self empowerment is based on self-discipline and determination, helping children to make independent and responsible decisions, face adversity, and coexist peacefully with others. Children learn to recognise their strengths and weaknesses, set goals and follow through with them.

- **Literacy – knowledge and understanding of society and the environment**
  The ability to read, understand, interpret and actively engage with written language, numbers, images and symbols. This includes a broad interpretation, incorporating emotional intelligence and reading social situations, and interpreting the media, IT and statistics.
- **Creativity – applying creative thinking**
  A multifaceted process based on curiosity, creative and critical thinking, and the ability to apply knowledge, initiative and skill. Creativity flourishes when it meets diverse challenges, questions and solutions. Children's creativity produces something of value in and of itself as well as for society and/or the local community.
- **Health – healthy lifestyle and wellbeing**
  Health refers to lifestyle choices, consumer behaviour, physical ability, reproductive health and physical and mental wellbeing. A healthy individual is someone who maintains a healthy lifestyle and has the ability to safeguard his or her own health.[5]

From May to June 2017, the council ran an online and offline public consultation process to gather ideas on how to achieve these five basic competencies and skills. The online component was delivered through collaboration with a not-for-profit digital democracy organisation called the Citizens' Foundation, using its platform, Better Reykjavik. This platform crowdsources solutions to urban challenges and was launched by the foundation in May 2010. The platform is well established in local politics, 70,000 people have participated in total – from an overall population of 120,000 – and the city council has committed to reviewing the 15 most popular ideas each month. As soon as an idea is presented on Better Reykjavik, it is regarded as a common property of the city.
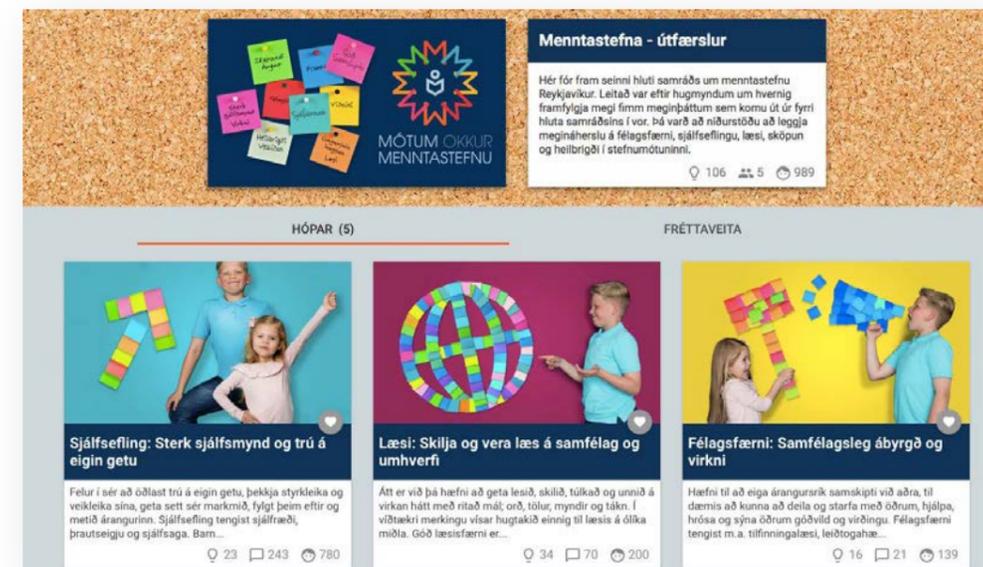
Better Reykjavik Screenshot: *Better Reykjavik's Education Policy Discussion Home Page,* https://betrireykjavik.is/community/725

The platform hosted the discussion on the Education Policy 2030, organising a central hub for the project and separate space for each basic competency. Registered users could participate by presenting ideas, examining the ideas of others, giving their reasons for supporting or opposing ideas, and voting. The platform filters suggestions to some extent by highlighting the most popular ideas, while city council staff also sifted through ideas themselves. There were 5,800 participants, 56 unique ideas were submitted, and around 300 arguments for and against those ideas were put forward.

In addition to the online component, offline meetings were held at different locations, such as schools and leisure centres. A total of 96 workplaces participated, and participants included administrators and staff at schools and leisure centres as well as parents and children. Final reports by the city council estimated that around 10,000 people participated in the public consultation process.[4]

Some of the more popular proposals that emerged through Better Reykjavik included promoting finance and IT education, data interpretation skills, open learning materials, meditation and yoga exercises, and critical thinking, as well as setting up greenhouses at all primary schools.[2]

From September 2017 to November 2018, several meetings were organised to synthesise the data and develop it into a policy draft and action plan. These meetings involved the steering committee, the consultation forum, the school and leisure division, and the University of Iceland. The city council approved the final version of the policy draft and action plan on 20 November 2018.[1][3][4]

The implementation process started formally at the end of December 2018. The implementation team – from the Department of Education and Youth, led by the Centre for Innovation in Education, a division at the Department – established a systematic implementation process, timeline and action plan. The team placed an emphasis on enabling schools and leisure centres to implement policies based on their local conditions and in collaboration with other schools. The city council was committed to providing the necessary support, and after a three-year period, an assessment will be made on how successful the project has been, and the improvements needed in light of this experience will be identified.

Timeline summary

17th January 2017:
Council agreed to crowdsource Education Policy 2030, steering committee appointed

27th February 2017:
Consultation forum of stakeholders convened

9th May- 6th June 2017:
Public consultation utilising Better Reykjavik and offline workshops

September 2017:
Steering committee and consultation forum met to prepare data for policy drafting stage

November 2017:
School and Leisure Division held a public meeting organising ideas

March to May 2018:
Project management team work with academics at the University of Iceland on developing policy approaches

April 2018:
Mayor and steering committee prepare draft of education policy

June- September 2018:
Draft submitted to the School and Leisure Division for comment

June- September 2018:
Draft submitted to the School and Leisure Division for comment

September 2018:
Policy incorporated into the city's template for policy and incorporation of comments

November 8th 2018:
Final version of City of Reykjavik's Educational Policy approved and referred to the City Council

November 20th 2018:
City Council of Reykjavik approve the new education policy

The following actions were adopted for the first three years of the implementation process:

- Emphasise language development, reading skills and reading comprehension for all children, regardless of their native language

- Simplify the entire support system for children with special needs

- Increase the priority of natural subjects, mathematics, outdoor learning and creativity

- Ensure that children have more equal opportunities and access to diverse art and vocational training at school and in schools

- Improve facilities for school and leisure activities, so that housing and equipment make it easier for employees to work on the advancement of the 2030 education policy

- Implement a comprehensive use of digital technology in school and leisure activities

- Increase the number of professional staff in kindergartens, compulsory schools and leisure services, and promote professionalism and cooperation

- Provide school and leisure employees with ample opportunities for career development and therefore ensure targeted advice and guidance on work

- Establish a development fund to support innovation in school and leisure areas and provide workplaces with advice on applications in domestic and foreign development funds

- Establish an Innovation Centre for Education which supports the implementation of the policy at all establishments, with a particular emphasis on career development and pedagogical counselling.[4]

The public impact

The actions that have already been implemented are:

- New rules for the Development and Innovation Fund for Let Our Dreams Come True, were approved by the city council in February 2019.

- A Centre for Innovation in Education has been established to provide support and advice to workplaces in implementing the education policy and its individual focus areas in collaboration with institutions inside and outside the city.

- An interactive cooperation agreement has been signed with the School of Education at the University of Iceland, which includes lifelong learning, career development and professional guidance, as well as making the activities of the school and leisure area of Reykjavík more visible.

- A project manager for international cooperation and grants has been appointed to support workplaces in their grant applications.[5]

The Development and Innovation Fund for Let Our Dreams Come True was approved, providing a fund of ISK200 million. This allows schools and leisure centres to apply for support in implementing policies promoting the five basic competencies, and 208 applications have been made so far.[4] The implementation team has developed two to four key metrics for each basic competency and is currently developing indicators to support evaluation of the policy.[5] The team has also run a series of events and neighbourhood meetings to promote the policy. The 2030 education policy was introduced at all local school management meetings in the spring semester, and representatives of the implementation team have been to visit several workplaces to support applications for development funds, introduce the policy, and create plans for its implementation.[4]

Public Impact
What did and didn't work using the <u>Public Impact Fundamentals</u>

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`
Political Commitment `Strong`
Public Confidence `Good`

Policy
Clear Objectives `Good`
Evidence `Strong`
Feasibility `Good`

Action
Management `Good`
Measurement `Good`
Alignment `Strong`

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`

The initiative was developed in close consultation with the key stakeholders: representatives of staff, parents, and students at the different stages of education from preschool to senior school; managers of schools and leisure centres; and domestic and international academics and educational professionals. These groups were involved at various stages of the initiative, from initial meetings determining the policy and the key priorities through to evaluating the ideas generated via crowdsourcing. One person involved in running the education policy observed that among those stakeholder groups involved, there was a strong commitment to the process and many shared priorities. Around 10,000 members of the public (out of Reykjavik's 220,000 population) actively participated in the process, giving up time to attend workshops and contribute online.[4]

Political Commitment `Strong`

The council's School and Leisure Division collectively took the decision to crowdsource education policy using the Better Reykjavik platform. This was an ambitious project that involved the commitment of time and resources from many political actors. Representatives from all parties in local government were involved in delivering the project.[4]

An independent academic interviewed said there was strong political commitment to the initiative, and they noted that the Mayor of Reykjavik and the head of the School and Leisure Division were among its most enthusiastic advocates. This interviewee went on to say that they were unaware of any political figures who opposed the process, although some academics had reservations about the use of crowdsourcing. Those involved in the delivery observed strong cross-party commitment.[3] The project's implementation was further supported by a dedicated fund of ISK200 million, which was approved by the city council.

More broadly, there was strong political commitment to the crowdsourcing and the Better Reykjavik process enjoyed support from the mayor, the city council, and the process had by this point become a semi-institutionalised way of enabling public input into decision-making at the local level. Indeed, since 2010 there have been 1,045 ideas submitted to the council, 220 of which were approved, 289 rejected, and 336 are still being processed.[1]

Public Confidence `Good`

Around 10,000 residents (out of a population of 220 000) participated in the crowdsourcing initiative, and were broadly very positive about what the initiative was trying to do and about their own experience of it.[4] There was some criticism that the policy failed to address what were considered to be important grievances around staffing shortages and pay at the time, coming after a period of economic austerity.[3] There were mixed attitudes about the significance of this: for example, while some welcomed the more positive focus on ambitions that the policy introduced, others, according to one interviewee, thought it was too "fluffy" and might entail placing more demands on stretched services.[3]

The initiative took place three months before city council elections, and although there was no suggestion that it was politically motivated, one interviewee felt that this meant some political actors were less likely to be critical about public engagement and education policy in general. At an institutional level, the Better Reykjavik platform enjoys a remarkably high level of participation: 70,000 people have participated indicating strong confidence in those who were delivering the public engagement process.

Policy
Clear Objectives `Good`

The central question the initiative aimed to address was what qualities people would like to see in a secondary school graduate in 2030 (see also The Challenge above). Through public consultation, the city council identified five principal attributes, and while these were presented at a relatively abstract level they were clearly defined.[5] The initiative then developed a set of specific actions and policy ideas that would help to deliver these goals. One interviewee commented that they felt the objectives were as clear as they could have been.[3]

Evidence `Strong`

The organisers of the initiative drew on both local and international expertise in order to analyse ideas and develop policy and action plans. There were clear efforts made to explore existing policy and practice and consider how they could inform and strengthen the education policy developed in this case.[3] The crowdsourcing

element of the initiative used a tried and tested platform in Better Reykjavik. This had been used since 2010 to allow citizens to contribute ideas for local government and – through Better Neighbourhoods in 2011 – engage in participatory budgeting.[6] This had the advantage, therefore, of being a platform that many citizens would already be familiar with.

Feasibility `Good`

The proposal and action plans were refined through a process of scrutiny that involved policy experts. The policy draft was reviewed, assessed and refined by the School and Leisure Division, and finally the implementation process was supported by a implementation plan and outline schedule developed through consultation with experts, schools and leisure centres to ensure they were realistic.[4] During an interview, a member of the implementation team said that they were given sufficient resources to deliver the aims of the proposal.

The public consultation process was praised for its capacity to engage a large number of people. Relative to public engagement through traditional town hall meetings, the use of technology enabled more convenient and cost-efficient engagement with a wider group of people. The offline element of the public engagement also involved efforts to meet the public at various different locations around the city. This was to enable people to participate in a more convenient way – one interviewee explained that part of the motivation was that some parents and children might feel more comfortable attending the meeting at their own school rather than going to the central office of the School and Leisure Division. Another interviewee noted, however, that there was no record of demographic information about participants, for example in terms of gender or education level, so it was difficult to fully investigate how representative these meetings were.

Those involved in the process highlighted a concern over the short time given to deliver the project. One interviewee commented that only a few weeks were allowed for organising promotional work on the project, and felt this limited the number of people who were able to participate. Many felt that the public engagement itself (from 9 May to 6 June) was too short, and the project would have benefited from allowing more time for ideas to be digested and developed. One person involved in the project observed that it was remarkable that it was so successful, given the time and number of staff involved in the project.[3]

Those responsible for running the technical side of the initiative felt they could have provided a better experience given more time, for they would then have been able to introduce further functionality for the purpose of debating

the policy, including extending the word limit on ideas and allowing contributors to attach PDFs or other sources of evidence to support their comments. Another interviewee said that the project would ideally have taken a year.[3]

Action

Management `Good`

During the delivery of the initiative, there were clearly established responsibilities and mechanisms in place. This included a steering committee, chaired by Skuli Helgason, to manage the process and ensure the delivery of the initiative's aims . A consultative forum led by the mayor, Dagur B Eggertsson, and advisory experts led by educational policy expert, Pasi Sahlberg. Fríða Bjarney Jónsdóttir was assigned to monitor the implementation, with the support of an implementation team, which used the lean Kanban Method (further details) to monitor progress and manage tasks, as well as setting out clear action plans.[4]

Several people involved in the initiative reported that they found it to be well managed. Indeed, one observed that it was remarkable how successful it was, given limited resources both in terms of time, staff and money available for public engagement. They also commented that decision-making during the initiative had strong support from experts and experienced staff, and that the project management was efficient.

There was some concern over the implementation of the recommendations developed through the initiative. This was due to taking place at the same time as council elections, one person remarking that no one knew whether there would be the same will among political actors after the election to make this project a priority. This created some difficulty in establishing accountability, as the steering committee had to be reorganised. However, a further interviewee responsible for implementation commented that the results of the election ultimately had no effect on the support for, or implementation of, the policies developed through the initiative.[3]

Measurement `Good`

The implementation team established a systematic implementation process, timeline and action plan. They are also developing two to four key metrics for capturing each basic competency to support schools and leisure centres in implementing policies. The team used a large information table with a "Kanban Board" to monitor implementation progress. There are plans to provide an electronic checklist as a tool to help schools and leisure centres record their own progress.[4]

Alignment `Good`

Those involved in the delivery of the project identified strongly with the principle of engaging with the public on education policy. Indeed, many felt that the initiative could have gone further in gathering children's input into education policy.[3] People involved in delivering the process were surprised by how positive and consensus-oriented the conversations were between otherwise disparate groups (i.e. the shared interests between parents, teachers and children, and between staff at kindergarten, primary school and compulsory school).[3] One interviewee commented that there was support for the policies across the different political parties on the city council. When interviewed, a member of the implementation team felt the team were united around both the methods of policy implementation and the goals identified through the initiative. [3]

References

[1] **Vinna við mótun menntastefnu Reykjavíkurborgar til ársins 2030**, Better Reykjavik website, https://betrireykjavik.is/group/1250/open

[2] **Aldrei víðtækari samráð um stefnumótun**, Reykjavíkurborg, 6 December 2017, https://reykjavik.is/frettir/aldrei-vidtaekari-samrad-um-stefnumotun

[3] **Vinna margar hendur létt verk?** Guðbjörg Lára Másdóttir, June 2018

[4] **Menntastefna Reykjavíkur til 2030 - Mótun stefnu og innleiðing á fyrstu mánuðum**, June 2019, https://fundur.reykjavik.is/sites/default/files/agenda-items/samantekt_menntastefna_reykjavikur_motun_og_innleiding.pdf

[5] **Let Our Dreams Come True: Reykjavík Education Policy 2030**, Reykjavikurbord Skola-og Fristundasvio, https://reykjavik.is/sites/default/files/menntastefna_rvk_ens_web.pdf

[6] **Better Democracy**, Citizen.is, https://www.citizens.is/portfolio_page/better_reykjavik/

Estonia Citizens' Assembly, Restoring Political Legitimacy

Method: Online and offline

In brief

Following political scandals concerning party funding in Estonia in 2012, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves invited grassroots organisations to develop ideas on how to restore public faith in the democratic process and address flaws in the country's democratic system. The result was a 2013 citizens' assembly, referred to as Rahvakogu or "deliberation day". As part of Rahvakogu, an online platform was used to crowdsource ideas to amend Estonia's electoral and political party laws, together with other issues related to the future of democracy in Estonia. Over 60,000 people visited the website during the three weeks it was live, with 2,000 registered users contributing and the process producing 6,000 proposals. This was followed by a modified version of a deliberation day, a face-to-face assembly involving a representative sample of 314 citizens to vote on the ideas. The top fifteen ideas were presented to parliament. Of the fifteen proposals, three have been implemented with slight modifications and become new laws or legal amendments, and four have been partly adopted or become commitments in a government programme.[1]

The challenge

In the Economist Democracy Index 2012, Estonia was categorised as a "flawed democracy",[2] primarily due to low participation and low trust in political parties.[3]

In the Economist Democracy Index 2012, Estonia was categorised as a "flawed democracy",[2] primarily due to low participation and low trust in political parties. [3] In the early 2010s, Estonia experienced a series of political scandals including two party leaders being charged with corruption.[3] Things came to a head in 2012 when a whistleblower exposed a scandal in party donations and funding. In May 2012, Silver Meiker, a former Estonian MP, announced that his party's officials had given him EUR7,600 of unknown origin, which he was required to donate to the party. He claimed that dozens of other party members had donated funds to the party in this way, including MPs. Although the party denied this, and the investigation collapsed due to a lack of conclusive evidence, the public were not reassured by the denials.

In autumn 2012, these scandals served as a catalyst for widespread protests and street demonstrations.[4][5][6] A pamphlet called Harta 12 (Charter 12) was published in the newspaper Postimees, fiercely attacking Estonia's political establishment and claiming that the country's democracy was crumbling. The pamphlet was translated into a petition that collected over 18,000 signatures and was supported by opinion leaders in the media and academia.

In response, the President Ilves, who was relatively well trusted by the public, identified the need to calm the atmosphere and develop a way to allow the public voice to be heard and to restore faith in the democratic system.[6]

The initiative

The ice cellar meeting

President Ilves invited representatives of civil society organisations and political parties, social scientists and signatories to Charter 12 to discuss the demonstrations and the challenge of how to restore faith in the political system. The meeting was broadcast online and became known as the Jaakelder or Ice Cellar meeting, in reference to the location of the meeting in an ice-cooled basement in Tallinn. The discussion considered democratic innovations in other countries, including the work of James Fishkin and the crowdsourced constitution of Iceland. There was common understanding that deliberative features and digital technology should be used in the process. There were differing levels of support for the process, with representatives of political parties being uninterested, particularly in crowdsourcing, while NGOs displayed far more enthusiasm for the ideas under discussion.

The meeting resulted in a decision by the president to sanction and initiate an Estonian Citizens' Assembly, featuring a crowdsourcing process and a deliberation day for citizens to suggest ideas and debate proposals for democratic reform. The process was organised and run by grassroots organisations, including a group of civil society advocates from the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, the Praxis Centre for Policy Studies, the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations (NENO), the Open Estonia Foundation, the e-Governance Academy, and the Citizens' Foundation.

Estonia Citizens' Assembly Screenshot: President Ilves at the Ice Cellar Meeting, https://news.postimees.ee/1127590/estonia-s-praxis-to-work-out-people-s-assembly-proposals-by-end-of-february

Stage 1: Crowdsourcing

In January 2013, the online platform People's Assembly, Rahvakogu.ee, was launched to crowdsource ideas on five predetermined issues: electoral law, political party law, the financing of political parties, public participation in political decision-making, and the politicisation of public office. The platform also provided an opportunity for citizens to comment on, support or criticise the submitted proposals. The platform used a modified version of the Your Priorities software developed by the Citizens' Foundation, which had previously been used successfully in public engagement processes in Iceland.

The Rahvakogu.ee stage lasted for three weeks and attracted 60,000 visitors, 2,000 registered users, and generated 6,000 proposals and 4,000 comments on those proposals.

Stage 2: Expert meetings

In January 2013, the online platform People's Assembly, Rahvakogu.ee, was launched to crowdsource ideas on five predetermined issues: electoral law, political party law, the financing of political parties, public participation in political decision-making, and the politicisation of public office. The platform also provided an opportunity for citizens to comment on, support or criticise the submitted proposals. The platform used a modified version of the Your Priorities software developed by the Citizens' Foundation, which had previously been used successfully in public engagement processes in Iceland.

The Rahvakogu.ee stage lasted for three weeks and attracted 60,000 visitors, 2,000 registered users, and generated 6,000 proposals and 4,000 comments on those proposals.

Stage 3: Rahvakogu, deliberation day

The Rahvakogu was held on 6 April 2013. A random sample of the population was selected to participate, using the government's national database register. In all, 550 citizens were selected, of whom 314 chose to attend.

There were 18 amendments discussed at tables of approximately 10 people. Each table was hosted by a moderator to assist in the process and their preferences were eventually aggregated into a group preference via formal voting. This process identified the top 15 ideas, which were then taken before parliament.
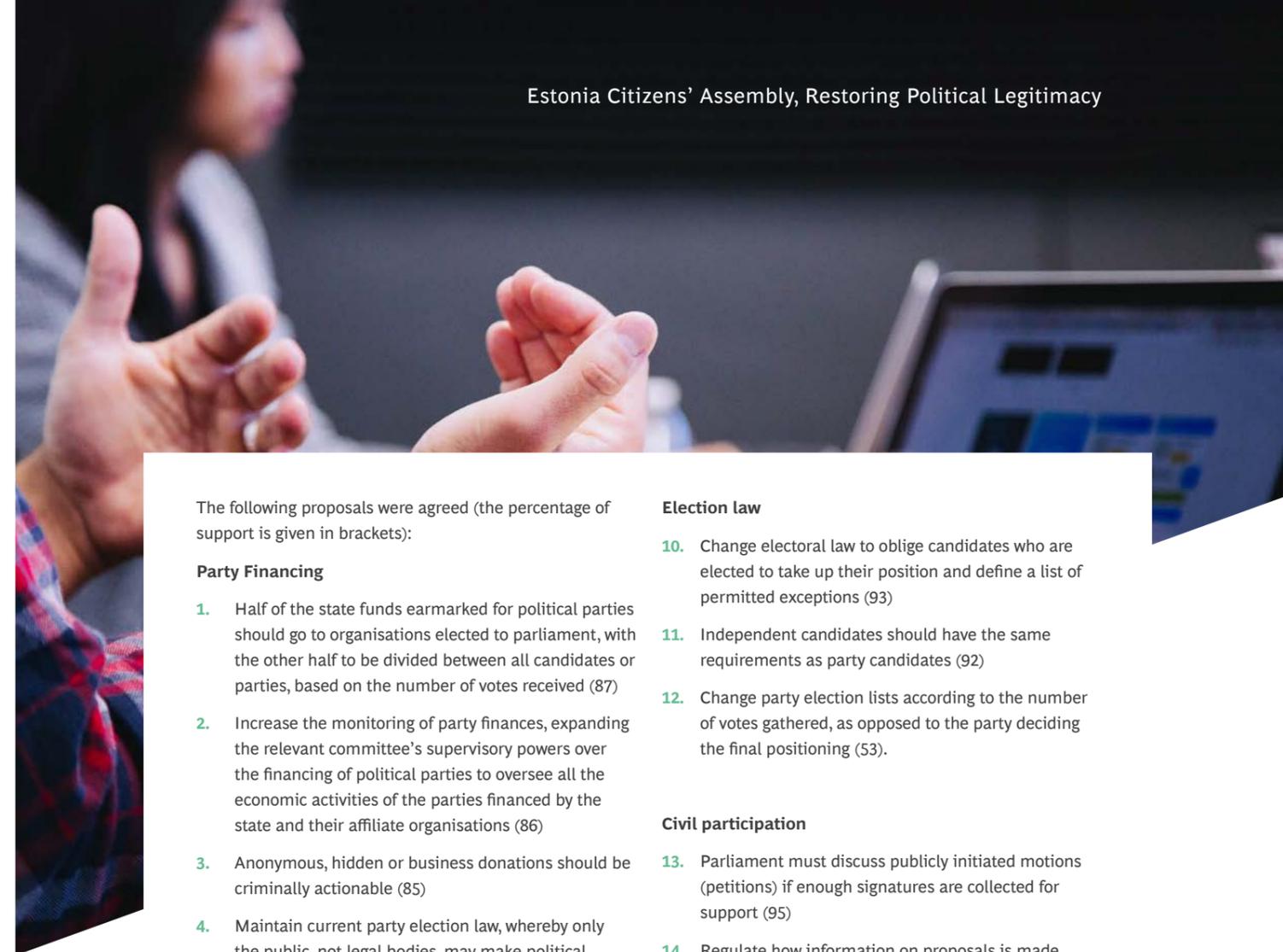
The following proposals were agreed (the percentage of support is given in brackets):

Party Financing

1. Half of the state funds earmarked for political parties should go to organisations elected to parliament, with the other half to be divided between all candidates or parties, based on the number of votes received (87)

2. Increase the monitoring of party finances, expanding the relevant committee's supervisory powers over the financing of political parties to oversee all the economic activities of the parties financed by the state and their affiliate organisations (86)

3. Anonymous, hidden or business donations should be criminally actionable (85)

4. Maintain current party election law, whereby only the public, not legal bodies, may make political donations (78).

Politicisation of public office

5. Establish laws to regulate requirements for state and local municipality representatives and improve regulation of the roles and responsibilities of board members of state-owned companies (87)

6. Prohibit MPs from joining the supervisory boards of state-owned enterprises (62).

Political parties

7. The election threshold in parliamentary elections should be lowered from 5 percent to 3 percent (75)

8. The number of people needed to found a political party should be reduced from 1,000 to 200 (65)

9. The possibility that, if a certain number of signatures are collected, a candidate can forgo the requirement to put up a security deposit (at 44 percent support, this was the most popular amongst three approaches offered to addressing this issue).

Election law

10. Change electoral law to oblige candidates who are elected to take up their position and define a list of permitted exceptions (93)

11. Independent candidates should have the same requirements as party candidates (92)

12. Change party election lists according to the number of votes gathered, as opposed to the party deciding the final positioning (53).

Civil participation

13. Parliament must discuss publicly initiated motions (petitions) if enough signatures are collected for support (95)

14. Regulate how information on proposals is made public and increase public participation in drafting legislation (84)

15. Simplifying the process of publicly initiated proposals and referendums (75).[7]

The day itself became a major media event, attracting a great deal of public attention.[6] Feedback collected from participants suggested it was a consensus-oriented atmosphere and that participants were satisfied with the experience. Of these, 90 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the "results were similar to their own viewpoints", while all agreed that they were "happy that they decided to participate", with 88 percent strongly agreeing.

Stage 4: Representative arena

There were no clear-cut institutional regulations on how the proposals produced by this initiative would reach parliament. President Ilves used his presidential privilege to propose bills to the legislature and handed over the fifteen agreed proposals to the Parliamentary Constitutional Committee to evaluate. Three proposals (numbers 8, 9 and 13) were implemented with slight modifications and became new laws or legal amendments. Four proposals (1, 2, 3 and 11) were partly implemented or have become commitments within the government's programme.

The public impact

As stated above, three of the fifteen proposals sent to parliament have since become law, while four proposals were partly implemented or redefined as commitments in the government's programme.

The three legal changes were:

13. Parliament must discuss publicly-initiated motions (petitions) if enough signatures are collected for support

Legal amendments were adopted that require parliament to start official procedures based on public petitions that receive at least 1,000 supporting signatures. This has resulted in citizens' petitions being discussed through parliament and eventually resulting in new laws.[9]

8. The number of people needed to found a political party should be reduced from 1,000 to 200

Parliament agreed to lower the number of members required for the establishment of a party from 1,000 to 500 (this has enabled two new parties to be formed).

9. The possibility that, if a certain number of signatures are collected, a candidate can forgo the requirement to put up a security deposit

To boost political competition, parliament reduced the candidate's deposit required for entering national elections by half and increased the financing of parties that failed to meet the election threshold. A monetary fine was established for accepting prohibited donations, and the powers of the Political Party Financing Supervision Committee were expanded.

However, there was some dismay in the media and among the people involved in the process that only three of the fifteen proposals were fully adopted. The organisations involved in delivering the initiative were disappointed that when the proposals reached parliament, they turned down offers of assistance and continued to operate behind closed doors.[6] Nevertheless, there have been reports of a gradual culture change in Estonian politics, in which participatory democracy has now entered the mainstream. Both parliament and government have made proposals for opening up the political process and ceding their monopoly on setting agendas and offering solutions.[4]

One result of the process has led to the development of Rahvaalgatus.ee, a new online digital democracy platform, which was launched in March 2016. This platform facilitates making proposals, debating and voting on them, and ultimately petitioning for the proposal to be discussed in parliamentary committee. Since its launch, eight initiatives have reached the 1,000 threshold to be discussed in parliamentary committees. There have also been awareness-raising campaigns focusing on young adults, older people, and Russian speakers, who are typically the least engaged with civil society and issues in Estonia.[8]

Timeline summary

January 2013:
Crowdsourcing stage (three weeks)

February 2013:
Analysts grouped proposals and comments

March 2013:
Five thematic seminars

6 April 2013:
Rahvakogu or Deliberation Day

Public impact
What did and didn't work using the Public Impact Fundamentals

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Good`
Political Commitment `Fair`
Public Confidence `Good`

Policy
Clear Objectives `Fair`
Evidence `Good`
Feasibility `Strong`

Action
Management `Fair`
Measurement `Fair`
Alignment `Good`

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Good`

In developing the initiative, President Ilves reached out to a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of political parties from across the spectrum, civil servants, opinion leaders in the media and academia, political scientists, social interest groups, and the non-profit sector. The president was an advocate of the public sphere and democratic innovations and was keen to ensure stakeholders were involved from the start. The meetings were broadcast live to enable greater transparency.

The initiative also engaged the general public. The crowdsourcing event was successful in attracting a large number of citizens. It was reported that 60,000 visited the site, while 2,000 contributed to the online debate. The crowdsourcing process was vulnerable to self-selection bias, and research identified a bias in participation towards more highly educated citizens, those already politically active, and a demographic profile of professional, male, and leaning towards right-wing views.
[6] By contrast, the deliberation day stage was based on a representative sample, allowing for more diverse and representative public input.

Political Commitment `Fair`

Political commitment was strong from some actors, notably the president and those involved in the delivery of the stages of the process leading up to policymaking. This included NGOs, experts and other organisers involved in the crowdsourcing, expert meetings, and Rahvakogu. The final stage involved engaging representative institutions, and these actors – politicians and civil servants – did not display the same commitment, and failed to engage or participate beyond the initial Ice Cellar meeting. Indeed, during the Ice Cellar meeting, one attendee from an NGO described the political parties involved as being uninterested, especially in the crowdsourcing element, and had argued for a "politics as usual approach".[6].

Public Confidence `Good`

The initiative emerged as a response to a crisis in public confidence in parliamentary democracy and the integrity of Estonia's political parties. The initiative was sanctioned by the president and organised by grassroots political organisations, who were perceived – by those advocating for change – as holding greater legitimacy than those impacted by the donations scandal.[6]

A survey was circulated, gathering feedback from participants at the deliberation day event, which suggested high levels of satisfaction: 298 out of the 314 participants completed the survey. Overall, 90 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the results reflected their own viewpoint and that they had increased their knowledge of the topics discussed. The vast majority claimed that they had become more interested in politics in general, while all those who completed the survey agreed that they were happy that they decided to participate and 88 percent strongly agreed with this statement.[6] The event itself was described as a major media event, attracting a great deal of public attention.

Although media reports and subsequent research indicate high levels of trust in the initiative among citizens, there was disappointment at the limited action taken by political institutions. There was some evidence that levels of trust in institutions had not increased, at least in the short term.

Policy

Clear Objectives `Fair`

The primary objective of the initiative was understood at an abstract level as restoring faith in Estonia's democratic system. This objective was made more specific by identifying five issues around which this would be discussed and achieved: electoral law, political party law, the financing of political parties, public participation in political decision-making, and the politicisation of public office. A short-term objective of the process was to calm tensions and street protests. Some civil society groups were ambivalent about cooling the momentum of street protests in this way, and expressed concern that the president "took over" the issue and institutionalised it.[6]

Evidence `Good`

The process itself was well researched, emerging through open consultation with experts in the field.[6] In particular, it drew on practices in Iceland – utilising tools developed there – and on the work of James Fishkin. The crowdsourcing process enabled ideas and knowledge from a wide range of citizens to emerge and inform decision-making. The expert meetings allowed for a more in-depth reflection and the refinement of proposals. The process ensured that the public were well informed and the proposals debated were well supported by evidence and expert analysis.

Feasibility `Strong`

Media reports and research indicate that the process was well managed and delivered efficiently within the proposed timeframe.[6][4] The process deployed open source technology to facilitate large-scale participation at a relatively low cost compared to traditional methods. This minimised demands on staff and participants and enabled greater inclusivity. The only major challenge to the project's feasibility was a lack of clarity about influencing existing decision-making institutions.

Action

Management `Fair`

The entire process was described by the organisers involved in its delivery as an ad hoc solution. Consequently, there was a lack of clarity regarding the form of the process. For example, there was an understanding that deliberative features and digital technology should be used, but it was not initially clear how this would be achieved.[6] The most significant area of uncertainty was that there were no clear institutional regulations for transmitting the proposals produced by the process to parliament. In the event, President Ilves used his presidential privilege to propose bills in the legislature, and handed over the fifteen agreed proposals to the Parliamentary Constitutional Committee. However, it was unclear how parliament would weigh up the proposals generated by the initiative.[6]

Measurement `Fair`

The initiative generated a clear set of policy recommendations, indicating the levels of public support and detailing how they could be implemented. The main challenge concerned ambiguity over how these recommendations should be treated at an institutional level. Of the fifteen recommendations, eight have not been acted on at all and four have been only partly implemented. However, three proposals have been adopted into law, and their impact has been monitored and evaluated.[9]

Alignment `Good`

The president and those involved in the delivery of the initiative were strongly committed to the values of improving public engagement and democratic accountability and supported the specific means of the initiative. The most notable actors included the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, the Praxis Centre for Policy Studies, NENO, the Open Estonia Foundation, the e-Governance Academy, and the Citizens' Foundation. There was some concern that political actors, such as MPs, who were ultimately responsible for legislating on the recommendations generated by the initiative were far less aligned with those values. Nevertheless, media reports imply a potential culture change following the process, whereby actors from parliament have been far more willing than they were to embrace public participation and similar initiatives.[4]

References

[1] **Rahvakogu – People's Assembly in Estonia**, January 2013, Portfolio Page, Citizen.is, https://citizens.is/portfolio_page/rahvakogu/, Accessed July 2019

[2] **Democracy Index 2012: Democracy at a Standstill**, 2013, The Economist Intelligence Unit https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report. aspx?campaignid=DemocracyIndex12

[3] **Estonia**, Mikko Lagerspetz and Henri Vogt, 2013, in Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe (Third Edition), Sten Berglund, Joakim Ekman, Kevin Deegan-Krause and Terje Knutsen (eds.), Edward Elgar Publishing, Northampton, England

[4] **Rahvakogu or "Peoples' Assembly": Open Government in Estonia**, 4 August 2015, Open Government, Join Up, https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-government/document/rahvakogu-or-peoples-assembly-open-government-estonia

[5] **Case Studies on e-Participation policy: Sweden, Estonia and Iceland**, Joachim Åström, Hille Hinsberg, Magnus E. Jonsson and Martin Karlsson 2013 in Citizen centric e-participation, Praxis Centre for Policy Studies

[6] **Democratic Innovations in Deliberative Systems- The Case of the Estonian Citizens' Assembly Process**, Magnus E. Jonsson, 2015, Journal of Public Deliberation 11(1), https://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol11/iss1/art7/

[7] **People's Assembly Results: Lower Election Threshold, But 'No' to Direct Presidential Elections**, ERR News, 6 April 2013, https://news.err.ee/106943/people-s-assembly-results-lower-election-threshold-but-no-to-direct-presidential-elections

[8] **Crowdsourcing policy, debating ideas and voting via Estonia's e-democracy platform, 20** February 2017, Digital Social Innovation, https://digitalsocial.eu/case-study/23/rahvaalgatus

[9] **Rahvakogu – How the people changed the laws of Estonia**, Gunnar Grimsson, Giedre Razgute and Hille Hinsberg, 2015, Citizens Foundation, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lhoyZfRsgfhQkcSppu3L78_Uz_IugUkzMycN2xg3MPo/edit

Statistics New Zealand's Public Engagement on the 2018 Census

Method: Online and offline

⟩ In brief

Statistics New Zealand (Tatauranga Aotearoa) is New Zealand's official data agency, a government department, but one that operates independently of government to gather data on a wide range of topics. In preparation for the country's 2018 census, the agency identified that a fifth of the questions from the previous census in 2013 might need to be revised to ensure they were up-to-date and relevant to the needs of the public, government, and other stakeholders. These topics included contentious and socially sensitive issues such as gender identity, sexual orientation and religion as well as issues subject to rapid change, such as technology.

Statistics NZ, or Stats NZ, recognised the need for greater public input in its decision-making process to address gaps in its knowledge and to ensure its decisions were grounded in an understanding of the views of the public and affected populations. Stats NZ developed a public engagement initiative that included online engagement, offline workshops, and a formal submissions process of census questions, followed by two years of testing potential questions. This was the first time Stats NZ used an online approach as part of their public engagement, in which it was supported by Loomio, a cooperative social enterprise that had developed a platform designed for supporting discussion and decision-making. The Loomio platform was used to host online public discussion, while the organisation also assisted in the online recruitment process and in providing facilitation training for Stats NZ staff.

The initiative was particularly successful at accessing marginalised and hard-to-reach groups, including young people, and enabling their views to inform the reworking of the questions for the 2018 Census.[1] Despite this, the eventual census has been criticised for its "digital first" approach to data gathering, its failure to include a Pākehā ethnic category, its questions on sexual orientation, the absence of a non-binary gender option, its low completion rates, and the delays in publishing results.[2][3]

The challenge

The New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings was due to take place in 2018, five years after it was last held in 2013.

Information from the official census helps determine how billions of dollars of government funding are spent across the country. It is also used by councils, community groups, iwi (Māori tribes or collectives) and businesses to plan for the future, and it helps the government make decisions about which services are needed and which locations should be prioritised. This would include the provision of hospitals, kohanga reo (kindergartens where lessons are conducted in Māori), schools, roads, public transport, and recreational facilities.[4]

In developing the census questions, Stats NZ was aware of the need to ensure the information gathered by the census was up-to-date and relevant to contemporary needs, while also ensuring sufficient compatibility for comparison across previous censuses. Therefore, Stats NZ engaged in internal testing of potential questions, identifying a range of areas potentially in need of revision. These included questions about technology, e.g. should people still be asked whether they use fax machines, gender identity, e.g. should there be a third gender option, and topics relating to smoking, drug

use, and religion. Stats NZ recognised that the process of decision-making would benefit from further input from stakeholders, the public, and affected populations.

The initiative

In late 2014, Stats NZ tested potential census questions within their team. They identified the fact that up to a fifth of the questions might need to be changed.

The questions covered a wide range of issues, of which the Stats NZ team had only partial direct experience, so they recognised the value of public input and of engaging a diversity of groups in the process of reworking questions. There was concern within the organisation that traditional approaches to public engagement, such as town hall meetings, would only attract a small, unrepresentative portion of the population.

With these concerns in mind, the agency appointed a project manager and hired Loomio to support them in engaging the public online and in recruiting a wider and more diverse population of participants. Loomio provided Stats NZ staff with training in online facilitation, advice on the delivery of the project, and management of the Loomio discussion platform itself, which offers online discussion and decision-making. It includes various features that nudge groups towards consensus-based decision-making and visual tools that support debate. It had previously been used by a variety of groups across the globe, including local government in New Zealand, Podemos in Spain, student organisations in the UK, and Belgium's Pirate Party.

Stats NZ initially tried to recruit participants through newspaper adverts. However, this strategy had very limited success. With the support of Loomio, they engaged in social media and online marketing and managed to recruit a much wider audience. Part of this strategy included a technique called "snack media".

This involved taking small pieces of content, typically concerning controversial issues, and placing them in various social media channels that would then draw people on to their site. Furthermore, much of the information that government documentation and Stats NZ provided regarding their decision-making was written in dense prose, often inaccessible to the public. The Loomio team therefore provided support in summarising and adapting this material to ensure it was accessible and engaging. Through the Stats NZ's existing mailing lists and social media, the team reached out to groups within the LGBTQ+ community, Māori, religious organisations, and other civic groups that would be particularly affected by proposed changes.

The Loomio discussions remained open for two months from 30 April to 30 June 2015. The discussions were organised around key themes and divided into the following 12 topic areas:

- Education and training
- Ethnicity, culture and identity
- Families and households
- Health
- Housing
- Income
- Location
- Population structure
- Second address/residence
- Telecommunications
- Transport
- Work. [4]

Each topic area was further divided into individual discussion subtopics: for example, "Ethnicity, culture and identity" included 11 discussion subtopics, such as ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and gender identity. When visiting an individual discussion subtopic, participants could read a summary of the issue, preliminary recommendations produced by Stats NZ on changes to the questions, and a summary of key points and suggestions emerging from the public discussions. The discussions on Loomio were facilitated by members of Stats NZ. Participants were informed that the discussions would be considered as an input to the final decision-making process, and 260 people participated in these discussions.

Luke (kaiwhakarite) · 4 years ago

Kia ora Ina. Good questions. I too am interested to know what others think around hapu affiliation being asked in the Census. We already have people listing hapu in the iwi boxes for census and those are coded to an Iwi or in other cases to a residual grouping where it is not possible to establish which iwi grouping that hapu belongs to. The current review of the Statistical Iwi Standard and Classification will be interested in peoples views on these types of questions also Ina. I am also personally interested in how likely it is that people actually know their hapu especially 2nd or 3rd generation urban Māori. Lets see if there are others with thoughts on your patai.

IKS Ina Kara-France Senior Policy Advisor: Maungaharuru-Tangitu Trust · 4 years ago

Kia ora, Good Point re. Urban Maori. However, lets assume the benefit of the doubt' and at least provide an option. In our research, findings show that Hapu desire to be represented as a descendant of Tupuna, not a descendant of a legal entity. What are others experiencing? Kia ora.

Luke (kaiwhakarite) · 4 years ago

Morena Ina. Good to korero with you this morning. Thought I would post up the link for Making a Formal Submision. Then it is just a matter of choosing the topic/s you wish to submit on and type your submission into the box provided. Kia ora ra

Loomio Screenshot: Discussion of Iwi Affiliation on Loomio, https://www.loomio.org/d/P3VxUG4r/iwi-affiliation

In addition to online deliberative engagement, Stats NZ ran a series of face-to-face seminars and stakeholder workshops in Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton and Wellington in May 2015. These seminars involved small groups of experts, statisticians and academics.

Finally, a formal submission period ran between 18 May and 30 June, beginning two weeks after the online deliberative engagement process. This process was open to all citizens, who could make formal suggestions directly to Statistics NZ, either as individuals or organisations. The process involved filling in a form that could be submitted via the Statistics NZ website, by email or through paper submissions. Statistics NZ began this process two weeks after the online deliberative engagement process, because

they expected that by then the online engagement process had allowed people to discuss with others and develop their thinking on the topics. The Loomio platform provided a link to the form, and advised participants that submitting a formal suggestion was the best way to influence decisions.

Following the public engagement process, Stats NZ carried out survey development work and testing, including cognitive testing of questions (cognitive tests are used to understand how respondents interpret questions and instructions), mass completion tests, and two large-scale pilots of the census. The conclusions and final decisions were then made by Stats NZ and published in a final report.

Timeline summary

Late 2014:
Internal testing of questions within Stats NZ

30 April 2015 to 30 June 2015:
Online deliberative engagement, using Loomio

May 2015:
Face-to-face stakeholder workshops

18 May to 30 June 2015:
Formal submission period

2016 to 2017:
Census questionnaire development and testing

July 2017:
Final decisions reported

The public impact

The final decisions regarding the 2018 census were made by Stats NZ, following the public engagement and formal submission period and subsequent testing. The process resulted in several changes and additional questions to the 2018 census. Many changes were not prompted specifically by public engagement, but rather by other considerations and at other stages of the testing process.

The newly-added topic areas included:

Location
- Usual residence one year ago

Housing
- Access to basic amenities
- Dwelling dampness indicator
- Dwelling mould indicator

Transport
- Educational institution address
- Main means of travel to education

There were also major changes to questions in the following subtopic areas:
- Disability
- Types of heating
- Means of travel to work
- Place of residence five years ago.

The main topic areas where changes to questions had been considered but, in the end, were not included were:
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Step families
- Licence to occupy (a common tenure for people living in independent, self-care, townhouses and units in retirement villages, in which a person lives in a dwelling but does not own it)
- Ownership of other dwellings
- Second address/residence.[6]

The decision made by Stats NZ to exclude questions on sexual orientation and gender identity was a particularly contentious one, as it went against the findings of the public engagement process. Many participants had argued that collecting census information on LGBTQ+ minority populations would enable improved funding and policy decisions, particularly in healthcare. Consultation on gender identity also revealed a high level of interest in collecting relevant data. It was felt, particularly by NGOs and researchers, that this information would be useful to inform funding and policy decisions of relevance to these population groups.

While Stats NZ conducted testing on questions around these issues, the final report commented with regard to the inclusion of questions regarding sexual orientation: "The results from the July 2016 test indicated that there would likely be some issues in producing high-quality data for this topic. In the data collected, the non-heterosexual populations were smaller than the number of respondents who did not answer the question or indicated they preferred not to answer it. As a result, the level of confidence in the data we would be able to produce for this topic would be of concern. We also received some negative feedback in our public testing of this question, indicating sensitivity to answering questions on this topic."[6]

Thus, a key concern was that collecting information on sexual orientation in a self-completed questionnaire like the census would not produce good quality data. Stats NZ decided instead to including relevant questions in other surveys, such as the New Zealand General Social Survey, a survey of approximately 8,000 people run every two years and which focuses on wellbeing.[6]

On the decision to exclude questions regarding gender identity, the final report concluded: "Testing indicated that response behaviour to this question was variable across transgender respondents. Gender identity can change over time and be expressed in a number of ways and forms. It is difficult to create a question that captures all these aspects. Information collected from a census question on gender identity would not enable us to output any population estimates on the populations

of interest. Therefore, we will not include this topic in the 2018 Census. However, we are committed to further investigating this important but complex topic within the wider OSS (New Zealand's Official Statistics System)."[6] The decision was therefore to exclude any questions regarding sexual orientation or gender identity from the 2018 census.

Finally, the categories of ethnicity remained unchanged, despite extensive debate online. Various terms for New Zealanders of European descent were considered. Stats NZ use the category "European New Zealand", while many online commentators preferred "New Zealander", and others wanted "Pākehā" a Māori term for New Zealanders of European descent, while yet others suggested "Tauiwi", a term for any non-Māori person born in New Zealand. Each term was contested.[7]

As the final report explains, the majority of comments stated a dissatisfaction with the response options, claiming that they were insufficient and divisive. Many commenters felt that 'New Zealand European' was an inadequate description and wanted a 'New Zealander' response category. Others commented on the difference between national identity and ethnicity, and the value of the ethnicity data. In their view, less meaningful data would be the result if a 'New Zealander' response option was included."[6] The implication of the last point was that it blurred the distinction between national and ethnic identity.

The final report provided the following reasons for its decision not to change questions on ethnicity. "The 'New Zealander' responses decreased from 10.9 percent to 1.6 percent between the 2006 and 2013 censuses. It appears that the response rate is largely dependent on publicity around this topic. Yet, most submissions during the engagement process favoured retaining the question as doing this will provide the data quality benefits of continuity and comparability over time. Statistics NZ therefore decided that their question on ethnicity will be included with no change [that is, it retained the terminology of 'New Zealand European']."[6]

On 6 March 2018, the government census was carried out. It was a "digital first" census with citizens primarily expected to use the internet to answer the questions.[3] The release of the results has been delayed three times, and they are expected to be released in September 2019.[8] The data has been delayed in part due to a low response rate, falling from 94.5 to 90 percent. [9] Richard Arnold, a lecturer in Victoria University's School of Mathematics and Statistics, said of the low completion rate that "it is disastrous… the problem is that whenever you have undercount you've got some risk of error, risk of bias". [11] Arnold believes that large groups which might have had significant numbers of people missed out include people aged in their teens and early 20s, Māori and Pacific Islanders, and the elderly. [11] This is a particular issue in relation to data provided by Māori respondents, whose response rate is predicted to be as low as 70 or 80 percent. Inadequate operational resourcing and staffing levels have been blamed for the low completion rate.[3] This could have significant impact on representation and resources for Māori, especially for small iwi. One report quotes an expert as saying that Māori risk losing an electoral seat and more than 20 new iwi will not be counted correctly, due to unreliable census data.[3]

The 2018 Census has also been criticised for its failure to include Pākehā as an ethnic identity option, any questions on sexual orientation, and any questions that capture non-binary gender identity.[2] [10] New Zealand's minister of statistics, James Shaw, said that it was too late to change the questions, but he would push to include questions on gender identity and sexual orientation in the 2023 census. He further highlighted other ways of collecting data in the meantime, explaining that "we've got to gather this data because we make significant healthcare funding decisions and other public policy decisions in relation to this community, and we don't have granular enough information at the moment".[3]
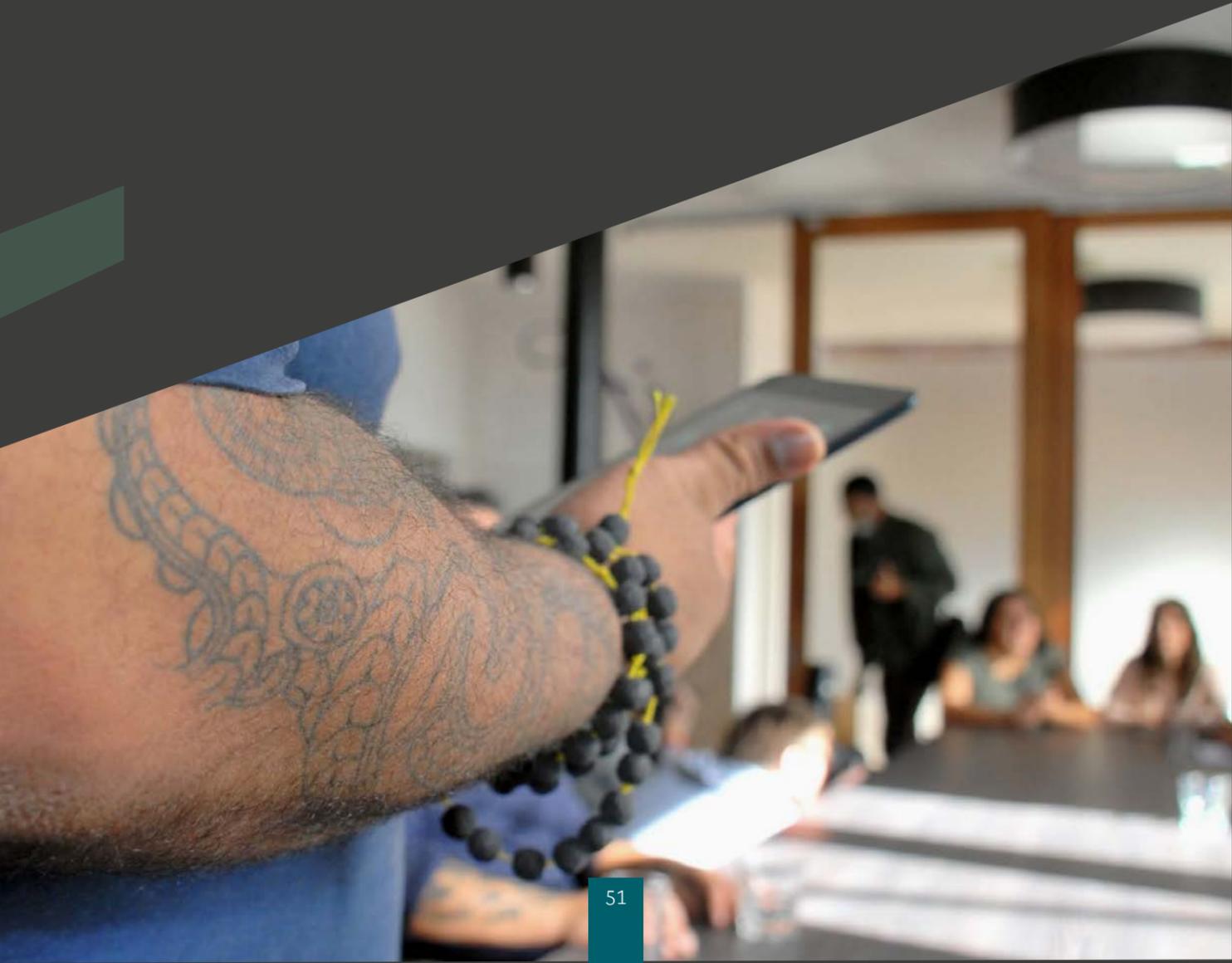
Public impact
What did and didn't work using the
<u>Public Impact Fundamentals</u>

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Fair`
Political Commitment `Good`
Public Confidence `Fair`

Policy
Clear Objectives `Strong`
Evidence `Strong`
Feasibility `Good`

Action
Management `Strong`
Measurement `Strong`
Alignment `Good`

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Fair`

During the initial stages, three broad stakeholder groups were identified: government, users (for example, corporations that were interested in demographics change), and the general public. In addition to engaging the three broad stakeholders, Stats NZ also used mailing lists and social media to engage groups particularly affected by decisions on whether to include specific questions, for example on sexual orientation, religious affiliation, ethnicity, and Māori descent.[7]

Stats NZ reported being very satisfied with the project and its capacity to access hard-to-reach groups and engage a much wider group of people than through traditional methods. Susan Riddle from Stats NZ observed that through Loomio they were able to "reach people who wouldn't have otherwise contributed to the conversation, including marginalised populations and youth".[1] While the use of a digital platform to perform public engagement reduced some barriers and enabled a larger and more diverse group of participants to be recruited than traditional town hall methods, it should be noted that the project recruited only 260 people, and the online method introduces its own barriers via a digital divide that typically excludes older people and those with limited access to the internet. Some communities with limited connectivity, such as many Māori communities, were therefore disproportionately excluded.[9]

In this sense, although the process was more open and inclusive than previous approaches, there were limitations to stakeholder engagement. Furthermore, on some key issues the final decisions taken went against the recommendations that had emerged from the public engagement process. In its final report, Stats NZ acknowledged the input from the public and provided an account of why they did not implement these recommendations.[6] Nevertheless, the decisions have been criticised in the media, and some stakeholder groups have ultimately felt excluded and let down by the outcome.[10]

Political Commitment `Good`

An individual from Loomio reported that political commitment was high for the public engagement process, and that – despite the project's limited funding – those members of Stats NZ who were involved in the project displayed strong commitment by their willingness to try new things and by their responsiveness to Loomio's guidance. A retrospective analysis conducted by Stats NZ observed that having two members of the Stats NZ team as a dedicated resource was a particular strength of the project.[5]

Although Stats NZ was generally enthusiastic about the project and invested in it, one interviewee noted that the department's communications team was much more cautious and was concerned that the public engagement was risky because it opened the government to criticism and potential embarrassment. Loomio led workshops addressing these fears and developed strategies for mitigating risk, but ultimately this shows that there were conflicting tendencies regarding political commitment within the government and its various agencies.

Public Confidence `Fair`

Evidence on public confidence is mixed, and it is helpful to make a distinction between initial attitudes to the public engagement process and attitudes to the final decisions of Stats NZ and its execution of the 2018 census. The public engagement process itself received positive feedback from the participants involved, one member of Loomio commenting that "individuals from the trans-community reported that although they recognised that the ultimate decisions were made by Stats NZ, they appreciated that efforts had been made to engage with them and that this represented the first time they felt the government were taking transgender issues seriously". The agency's retrospective analysis observes that one of the project's strengths was that it created a "real buzz that the government was willing to engage in this way" and that the "gender diversity community (sic) were still talking about the project after the process". Furthermore, the success of the project in engaging the public through digital methods was seen to have had "flow-on effects" with other organisations.[5]

Nevertheless, there has subsequently been a sense of disappointment and some harsh criticism of the decision not to accept the results of the public engagement process and gather information on either sexual orientation or gender identity in the 2018 census.[2][10] Social activist Aych McArdle

commented: "If you don't count someone, you're almost saying they don't count", and observed the importance of collecting this information for providing health and education services.[10]

The delivery of the 2018 census has also been criticised on other counts, with news reports highlighting problems of operational resourcing and subsequently low completion rates. In particular, there were problems in collecting data on the Māori population due to the primarily online execution of the census, which may have significant adverse effects on the representation of Māori and on resources for small and vulnerable groups.[3] Matthew Tukaki, Māori Council spokesperson has been quoted as saying that "this is a disgrace because the data runs the risk of telling a story that is neither accurate nor true. It gives public servants the ability to paint a picture that, because there was no or little response from some of these Māori communities, no one lives there and therefore it's a perfect excuse to withdraw services".[9]

Policy

Clear Objectives `Strong`

The objectives of the public engagement initiative were clear: Stats NZ wanted to gather public opinion on potential changes to the 2018 census. Specifically, it wanted to engage a larger and more diverse public than it expected to achieve through traditional offline processes. The purpose and scope of the public engagement process were also clearly communicated to people through the Loomio platform – public input would be used to advise decision-makers and direct them on the potential revisions. In addition, Stats NZ presented summaries of the topics online, as well as the reasoning behind its preliminary judgements on what future questions should look like and summaries of the online conversations over the course of the public engagement process.

Evidence `Strong`

Stats NZ's retrospective analysis argues that one of the strengths of the project was the "high-quality information used to help decision-making".[5] The public engagement process itself was delivered with the support of Loomio, a team with deep expertise and experience in online facilitation, open technology development, and collaborative decision-making. The process was piloted within the Stats NZ team before the public engagement process began. According to an internal assessment, Stats NZ and Loomio worked together to ensure the participants

were well informed, and material about the subject matter and purpose of the project was clear, accessible and based on strong evidence.

Feasibility `Fair`

During the public engagement stage, the use of technology both in engaging the public and hosting discussions was considered to increase the efficiency and significantly reduce costs and barriers when compared with the traditional approaches of print media engagement and town hall meetings.[1] However, as mentioned above, relying heavily on online technology produces its own barriers, and while the process did use offline workshops, they were described by an internal assessment as "too little, too late".[5]

One interviewee observed that, in their experience, governments frequently underestimate the costs and resources required for a public engagement process. In this case, they felt that while they had managed to engage 260 members of the public in the process, they could have engaged thousands with greater resources and more time dedicated to recruitment. An internal assessment observes that "a larger proactive targeted campaign would have greatly benefited the process".[5]

The initiative met the original timeframe, and the policies' feasibility was rigorously scrutinised through consultation with policy experts. The media have reported positively on Democracy Seoul's capacity to address this and many other issues, including topics related to healthcare, gender equality, and the environment.[5] The platform won an international design award from iF in 2019, which commented positively on its use of digital technology to enable effective citizen engagement and participation.[8]

Action

Management `Strong`

Stats NZ appointed a project manager to oversee and administer the process of public engagement, and one interviewee involved in the delivery of the project described how they employed younger and more tech-savvy people to support them. Loomio provided training for 20 people involved in the project to develop the skills necessary for hosting and facilitating public discussion processes. One interviewee observed that much time was dedicated to developing the skills of those involved in

delivering the project and building capacity in relation to public engagement, and this was regarded as one of the project's more successful elements.

The analysis of the project identified a number of strengths in relation to the project management, including a clear structure and setup, and a flexibility within the system to adapt to challenges and improve the approach to public engagement. There was a strong relationship between Loomio and the Stats NZ team, which enabled a robust engagement process.[5]

Measurement `Strong`

After the initiative finished, Stats NZ investigated whether the information emerging from the public engagement process could have been acquired from other data sources. It also carried out extensive testing of the proposed changes, including cognitive tests of questions, mass completion tests, and two large-scale pilots in 2016 and 2017. These tests were designed to ensure that the questions produced high-quality data and helped determine the agency's ultimate decisions about which questions to adapt or retain unchanged, and which new questions to include.

Alignment `Good`

The analysis of the project indicated a strong commitment and alignment of values on the part of those delivering the project. It observed a strong relationship between Stats NZ and Loomio, characterised by a high level of trust, honesty and integrity, as well as both partners being very responsive to each other. The report also describes the Stats NZ team as having the courage and willingness to try different things, while Loomio was described as providing ongoing, detailed and thoughtful support.[5] One interviewee from Loomio also described the Stats NZ team as being very committed to the project and the aims of the public engagement process.

References

[1] **Statistics NZ use for Loomio**, 2016, Loomio,
https://blog.loomio.org/2016/11/16/statistics-new-zealand-use-loomio-for-citizen-engagement/

[2] **Counted out: anger as New Zealand census fails to tick all the boxes**,
Eleanor Ainge Roy, 6 March 2018, The Guardian,
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/06/counted-out-anger-as-new-zealand-census-fails-to-tick-all-the-boxes

[3] **Political Roundup: The Absolute Debacle of the 2018 Census**, Bryce Edwards,
6 March 2019, New Zealand Herald,
https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12210123

[4] **2018 Census**, 2015, Loomio, https://www.loomio.org/2018census/

[5] **Retrospective Summary Stats NZ**, 4 August 2015, Statistics NZ

[6] **2018 Census report on final content**, July 2017, Statistics NZ,
https://www.stats.govt.nz/methods/2018-census-report-on-final-content

[7] **2018 Census- Ethnicity, culture and identity**, 2015, Loomio,
https://www.loomio.org/d/cNUhrpJE/ethnicity

[8] **NZ Census Update: September 2019 for the first release**, Penny, 30 April 2019,
id experts, https://blog.id.com.au/2019/population/new-zealand-population-census/nz-census-update-september-2019-for-the-first-release/

[9] **Census 2018 Heads Should roll, incompetence reigns**, Māori Council (press
release), 17 December 2018, Scoop independent news

[10] **LGBT community slams Statistics New Zealand's "gross incompetence"**,
O'Driscoll, E, 4 July 2019, News Hub,
https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2018/01/lgbt-community-slams-statistics-new-zealand-s-gross-incompetence.html

[11] **Political Roundup: Statistics NZ and a census failure of "epic proportions"**,
Edwards, B, 16 April 2019, New Zealand Herald,
https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12222855

Urban Redevelopment in Madrid

Method: Online and offline

In brief

In 2015, one of Spain's largest plazas, the Plaza de España in the Moncloa-Aravaca district of Madrid, was in urgent need of redevelopment following years of abandonment and deterioration. This was an important project because the square is a significant tourist attraction, located near the Royal Palace. In deciding how this urban space should be renewed, Madrid City Council opened up the decision-making process to local citizens using both online and offline methods. The council designed and launched Decide Madrid, a novel digital platform that acted as a hub for information and supported large-scale citizen participation through questionnaires, deliberation, and voting on proposals. Over 2,500 citizens were involved in the development of the basic elements of the tender, debating and evaluating 70 proposals and ultimately voting for the winning project, "Welcome Mother Nature". The model developed through Decide Madrid has been replicated in 90 other cities and regions, while the platform itself was awarded the UN Public Service Prize, which recognises excellence in public service delivery around the world.

The challenge

The Plaza de España is the second largest plaza in Spain, a popular tourist attraction featuring a monument to the writer Miguel de Cervantes.

It is also adjacent to two of the most prominent skyscrapers in Madrid (Edifico España and Torre de Madrid) and located near the royal palace. The last major reform of the Plaza de España in Madrid was in 1969 and it has since seen years of abandonment and decline.[1] Evaluations by Madrid City Council indicated that the site suffered from limited accessibility and connection to the surrounding spaces. The report also identified abandoned buildings and residential spaces nearby.[1] The square was therefore in urgent need of redevelopment.

Decide Madrid Screenshot: Plaza de España before redevelopment, https://sumfinity.com/hdr-photos/spain/madrid/cervantes-monument-plaza-de-espana/

The initiative

To address this issue, Madrid City Council adopted a novel participatory approach.

Following years of declining public confidence in politicians, exacerbated by corruption scandals and the Spanish government's politics of austerity, the city council (led by the relatively new left-leaning political party, Ahora Madrid) was a keen advocate of participatory processes in local decision-making. In 2015, it launched the Decide Madrid platform, aiming to ensure transparency in government proceedings and to widen public participation in council decision-making and spending processes.[2] The platform has subsequently played an important role in urban redevelopment projects, with the redevelopment of the Plaza de España a notable example.[2][3] The City of Madrid allocated EUR1.1 million to the preparation, dissemination and startup of the participatory processes. This was judged by independent researchers to be a more than sufficient budget to carry out the engagement process involving the Plaza de España.[3]

Decide Madrid Screenshot: https://decide.madrid.es/proceso/plaza-espana-resultados

The City of Madrid does not have a general action plan that specifies how participatory processes should be undertaken. The stages for the participatory decision-making process were therefore designed and developed around the needs of the specific case of the redevelopment of Plaza de España and differed from other cases delivered through Decide Madrid. The participatory process for España can be broken down into the following 10 phases.

Phase 1: Debate and working groups

The city council organised three initial working groups to gather information about integrating the square with the neighbourhood and city, including how to ensure mobility and environmental sustainability. Having gathered this information, council representatives and officers met with public actors such as residents' associations, town planners, and hoteliers, to define the scope of the intervention and develop a questionnaire on the renewal of the Plaza de España for a citizen survey (delivered in phase 3).

## Phase 2: External communication

The General Directorate of Urban Strategy wrote a series of reports for citizens in order to inform their decision-making when completing the questionnaire. These included a summary of the project, reports on the Plaza's historical evolution, a study of the use of the area, and documentation of environmental and building preservation issues relating to the project.

Phase 3: Citizen Consultation via Decide Madrid

The citizen consultation began on 28 January 2016 and lasted 40 days. The online platform Decide Madrid hosted a survey called "Questions about the participatory process on the possible intervention in Plaza de España", which consisted of 18 questions, including the following:

The questions were:

- Do you think it is necessary to reform the Plaza de España?

- Do you think that it is necessary that the reform of the Plaza de España should also affect adjoining areas and the streets through which it is connected?

- Do you think it is necessary to limit some of the following uses (street markets, commercial, terraces, hotels, restaurants, all of the above, other)?

- What do you feel would be the best course of action regarding the sites monuments, including the monument to Cervantes?

- What do you think should be done with the trees that are currently in the square?

- What actions do you think are necessary regarding the traffic in the vicinity of the Plaza de España?

- What would you like to happen regarding the existing parking spaces in the Plaza de España?

- Do you think that the construction works in the Plaza de España should be carried out in such a way that the environmental impact is minimised, even if this implies an increase in cost?

- What measures of environmental sustainability would you like addressed in the design of the Plaza de España?

- How do you use this space?

- What services, activities or uses do you think are missing, or are unwanted?

- Finally, if a reform to Plaza de España is carried out, what type of form do you think it should take?
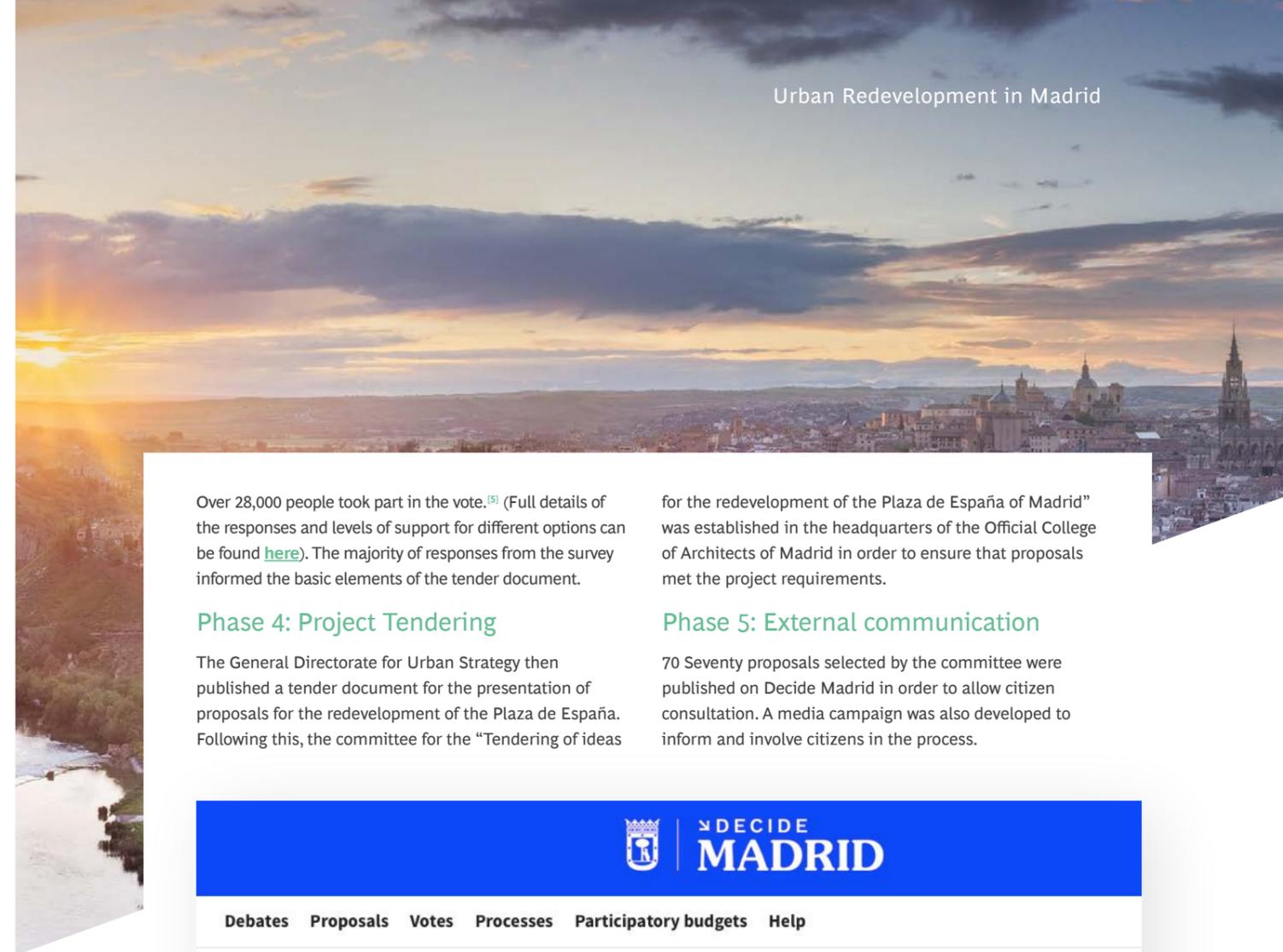
Over 28,000 people took part in the vote.[5] (Full details of the responses and levels of support for different options can be found here). The majority of responses from the survey informed the basic elements of the tender document.

Phase 4: Project Tendering

The General Directorate for Urban Strategy then published a tender document for the presentation of proposals for the redevelopment of the Plaza de España. Following this, the committee for the "Tendering of ideas for the redevelopment of the Plaza de España of Madrid" was established in the headquarters of the Official College of Architects of Madrid in order to ensure that proposals met the project requirements.

Phase 5: External communication

70 Seventy proposals selected by the committee were published on Decide Madrid in order to allow citizen consultation. A media campaign was also developed to inform and involve citizens in the process.
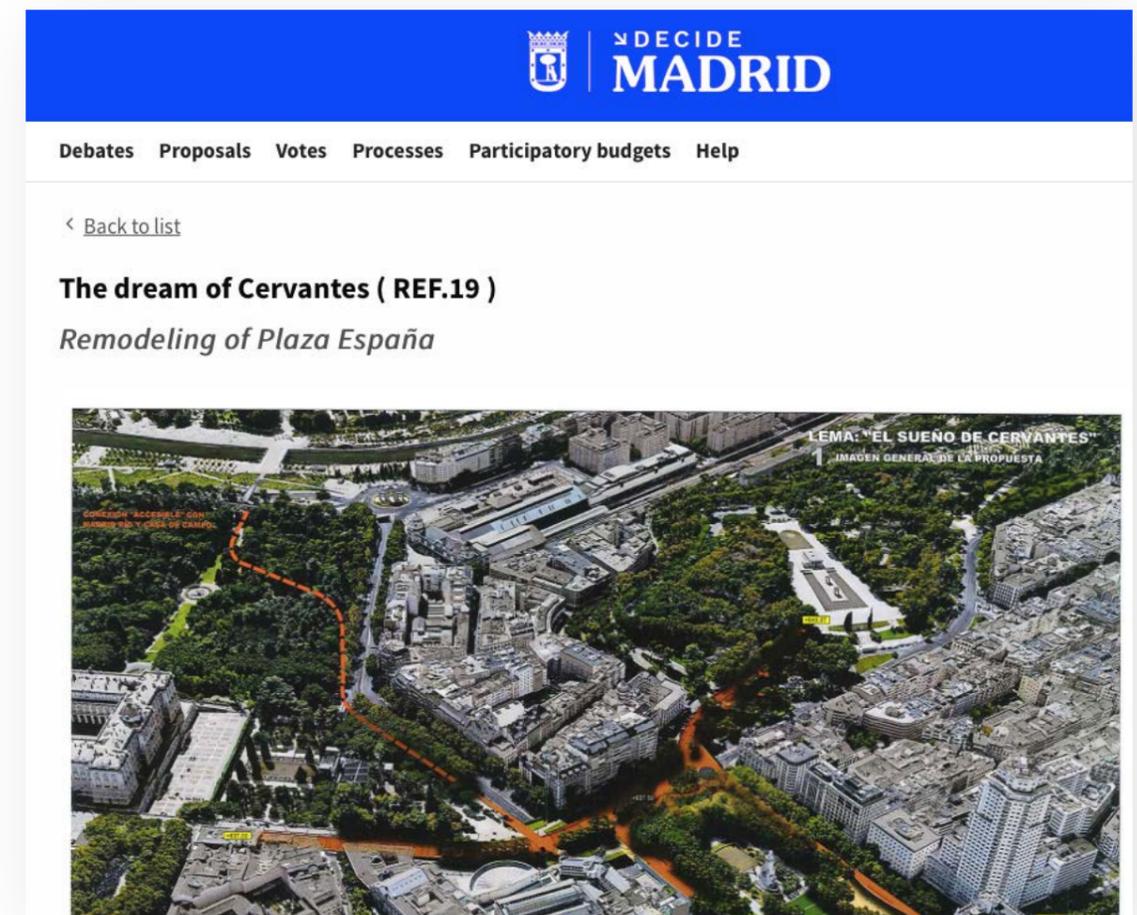
Decide Madrid Screenshot: Project page for one of the 70 proposals: The Dream of Cervantes, https://decide.madrid.es/proceso/plaza-espana/proyectos/29

J Javi Martorell • 10/18/2016 12:47:12

In my opinion, this is one of the projects that best tackles the environmental issue. It considers species whose maintenance is not very high (projects with grass meadows are very beautiful but at the same time unsuitable for Madrid, from the point of view of their sustainability). On the other hand, it is respectful of the current trees, although the felling or transplanting areas may not be very clear in the project. I like it and, without detracting from others that have seemed very interesting to me, I voted for this project.

Without answers   No votes | 👍 0 👎 0

E Ecomania Spain • 17/10/2016 13:30:38

I like this project, Bailén street is buried in its passage through the square, which in my opinion is the most important of this intervention. What I like the least is that they want to modify the layout of the square. I would leave things there as they are in those places where changes are not necessary for the execution of the project.

Without answers   No votes | 👍 0 👎 0

P Paloma Martín • 10/11/2016 16:36:39

Spectacular, it was necessary

Without answers   No votes | 👍 0 👎 0

L Luis MG • 10/11/2016 13:37:16

Images are not good

Decide madrid Screenshot D: Discussion of one of the 70 proposals: El Diablo Cojuelo,
https://decide.madrid.es/proceso/plaza-espana/proyectos/34

Phase 6: Citizen consultation for the evaluation of projects

Citizens evaluated and voted on the proposals via the Decide Madrid platform. This took the form of individual pages for each proposal, providing supporting details and images. By scrolling down, participants could then comment on and discuss the proposal in a threaded forum. Participants could vote on both the project and the comments. 7, 613 participated and voted in this process, there were 908 comments on the projects and 975 votes on the comments.

Phase 7: Evaluation of proposals by committee and publication of results

Following the consultation, a further committee was assembled and included representatives of relevant government departments and social actors, such as architects, engineers, town planners, and other experts in urban development. This committee was chaired by a representative of Madrid's Department of Sustainable Urban Development, and its purpose was to evaluate the projects selected by citizens and select a few to be submitted to a public vote. Five proposals were initially selected, and further information was requested from the authors of the proposals, which were, in order of popularity:

1. Urban Prairie (903 votes)

2. Welcome Mother Nature (401 votes)

3. From East to West (297 votes)

4. A Walk Through the Cornisa (170 votes)

5. My Favourite Corner of Madrid (103 votes)

A second round of evaluations by the committee followed, narrowing the proposals down to two projects, A Walk Through the Cornisa and Welcome Mother Nature. The results were published on Decide Madrid and once again put to a public vote.

Phase 8: Final public vote and publication of results

The two final proposals were put to a final vote which began on 13th February and ended on 19th February 2017. The winning proposal, with 63.5 percent of the vote was Welcome Mother Nature.[4]. In all, 183, 476 people took part in the voting.[3] The results were published via various channels, including Decide Madrid.

Phase 9: Technical consultation on the viability of the winning proposal

The General Directorate for Urban Strategy consulted external experts as well as the local Heritage committee on the viability of the winning project. This resulted in a minor modification to the original project.

Phase 10: Development of tender specifications and award of the project

Towards the end of 2018 the General Directorate for Urban Strategy developed and published the tender specification for the redevelopment of the Plaza de España.

Timeline summary

14 December 2015:
Working group convened

28 January 2016:
Public consultation

June 14th 2016:
Project competition

14 June 2016:
Project competition

4 October 2016:
Evaluation of projects

13-19 February 2017:
Final Citizen vote on the winning project.[5]

The public Impact

The project to remodel Plaza de España, based on the proposal Welcome Mother Nature, is one of the most successful examples of citizen engagement in Spain.[2] The Decide Madrid platform on which it was conducted received the 2018 UN Public Service Prize.[3]

Institutions from more than 90 cities and regions worldwide are replicating the Decide Madrid model, using the open source Consul software on which it was based. Notable examples including Barcelona, Buenos Aires, A Coruña, Oviedo, Paris, Turin and Valencia.[2]

Decide Madrid Screenshot: Winning proposal "Welcome Mother Nature" illustration,
https://decide.madrid.es/docs/plaza/30_dossier_finalista_welcome_mother_nature.pdf

Public impact
What did and didn't work using the <u>Public Impact Fundamentals</u>

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`
Political Commitment `Good`
Public Confidence `Fair`

Policy
Clear Objectives `Good`
Evidence `Strong`
Feasibility `Good`

Action
Management `Good`
Measurement `Weak`
Alignment `Good`

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`

The Plaza de España project engaged a diversity of stakeholders, including resident associations, professional groups – such as architects and town planners – charities, political authorities, and professionals from different government departments, such as the Department of Climate Change and Mobility and as the Department of the Economy and Public Finance. These groups were involved from the start of the project, identifying the problem and citizens' expectations of the project and determining the design of the questionnaire. Citizens were also involved at an early stage of the project, as the questionnaire invited input into the parameters of the project and enabled a process of co-governance that had been absent from similar projects.[3]

Political Commitment `Good`

In the case of Plaza de España, the political groups involved in Madrid's local government have demonstrated commitment to the process by allocating sufficient budget and accepting the outcome.[3] However, while there was a commitment to accept the outcome, political actors influenced the potential outcomes very significantly at different stages. For example, the committee chaired by Madrid's Department of Sustainable Urban Development was able to narrow down the initial selection to five projects and then finally to two, which were not the most popular with the public but were rather the second and fourth most popular, well below the Urban Prairie (see The Initiative above).

There have been reports of varying levels of support among different political groups and also of some discontent among civic and neighbourhood associations. Of Madrid's main four political parties, the left wing Ahora Madrid and the centre-left Partido Socialista Obrero Español demonstrated greater support for the

project, while the centre-right Partido Popular and the centrist Ciudadanos have been more reluctant, claiming that the low levels of citizen participation delegitimise the decisions. At a more abstract level, the newer parties (Ahora Madrid and Ciudadanos) have dedicated more space to citizen participation in their programmes than have more traditional, established parties.

The process, as delivered through Decide Madrid, also limited the power of citizens' associations, since their proposals and support carried no more power than those of any other individual citizen. This might have resulted in the associations being suspicious of the process, but this does not appear to have been an issue.

Public Confidence `Fair`

The process was open and inclusive in the sense that all of Madrid's citizens were free to take part. The initiative involved both online and offline methods of engagement, allowing participants to engage by whichever methods they found most convenient, including online, by post and by phone. The total number of participants engaged at the different stages were:

- 28,249 (0.84 percent of the population of Madrid) for the questionnaire
- 7,613 (0.23 percent) for the second vote on 70 proposals
- 183,476 (6.6 percent) for the final vote.[3]

On the one hand, this represents far higher levels of public input and involvement than traditional approaches; on the other hand, critics have described participation levels in this and other Decide Madrid processes as either low [2] [6] or insignificant relative to the city's total population.[3] More men participated than women, although this trend is reversed in other applications of the Decide Madrid platform. [3] The platform has also been criticised for a lack of support for people with sensory disabilities: for example, it lacks a text-to-audio function to enable participation for people with visual impairments.[3][6] Decide Madrid has also faced criticism for a lack of transparency and a failure to provide an accurate evaluation of levels of participant satisfaction.[6]

On the specific issues of the neutrality of information, the security of the voting process, and protection of personal data and privacy, an academic evaluation of the process was more positive. It observed that the technology ensured that citizens were given a wide range of evidence-based information, and that security was assured through identity verification, a well-designed signing up process, and encryption systems.[6]

Policy
Clear Objectives `Good`

The objectives of the Plaza de España were clear: to "rebuild the pedestrian infrastructure of the area, generate new open air spaces and improve existing ones, promote a programme for leisure and commerce, develop a sustainable urban space and link the square with the different urban spaces that surround it".[3] Part of the process of citizen engagement involved allowing citizens to provide input into the project's objectives and structure. Thus, how the objectives were to be achieved was intentionally left open. An academic report raised criticisms over the clarity of communicating the objectives to the public. For future campaigns, it suggested, further efforts would be needed on the part of public institutions to improve social awareness and citizen education campaigns for initiatives of this kind. There is also a need to present a clear summary of the project's objectives, methods and schedule.[3]

Evidence `Strong`

The Decide Madrid process represents Madrid City Council's first attempt at e-democracy, and evidence suggests the process was thoroughly researched. It was the result of a three-year investigation and learning by a collection of anti-corruption and pro-equality political organisations, including the 15-M Movement and the political parties Podemos and Ahora Madrid. During this period, these groups actively searched for referential models and digital tools, investigating democratic innovations in other countries such as Iceland (see Better Reykjavik) and Finland (see Open Ministry). Finally, a small prototype was tested, called the Open Mincent system.[6]

In the specific case of Plaza de España, evidence was gathered from a wide range of stakeholders and experts during the process of developing the initiative and evaluating proposals. The Department of Sustainable Urban Development also prepared all the necessary information in a range of documents that were published on the Decide Madrid platform.[3] This information included evidence on a number of issues, including a study of pedestrian usage of the square, environmental surveys, and sociodemographic and mobility reports to ensure that citizens had "maximum information".[2] The 70 selected proposals were published on the website with all paperwork generated by each proposal made physically available in the Plaza de España itself. Two potential difficulties have been highlighted with this approach: the information overload, as a result of the exhaustive paperwork, and the technical language used, which presented further barriers to citizens.[3]

Feasibility `Good`

The City of Madrid allocated EUR1.1 million to the preparation, dissemination and startup of participatory processes, including the redevelopment of the Plaza de España, which independent academic research on the project concluded was more than adequate. However, there is no publicly available information about how much finance was devoted to each process, and the same researchers recommend that this information be published to improve transparency.[3]

Action

Management `Good`

In 2015, the City of Madrid introduced a the Office of Citizen Participation, Transparency and Open Government, whose responsibilities include promoting and administering citizen participation, facilitating cooperation and volunteering, and promoting transparency and accountability. An academic paper about the project judged that, in general terms, the new municipal office helped ensure that the Plaza de España process had appropriate institutional support to guarantee its successful development.[3]

Measurement `Weak`

Evaluations of the project show a failure to implement a process of monitoring and evaluation. They argue that this has impacted negatively on the initiative, because these processes would have facilitated continuous improvement and institutional learning.[3]

Alignment `Good`

The Plaza de España project involved a range of political actors and departments dedicated to the values of the process, notably the Department of Citizen Participation, Transparency and Open Government, the General Sub-directorate of Citizen Participation and Volunteerism, and the General Directorate of Urban Strategy. Furthermore, there was a strong culture of resident-led movements and associations working in collaboration with municipal administrations.[3] Data from the Centre for Sociological Investigations in 2014 showed a high percentage of Madrid's civil society (63 percent) had supported a "bottom-up" model of representation [3]. This suggests that the values of the initiative were aligned with the preferences of civil actors.

References

[1] **Resumen: Plaza de España Informatión, Análisis Y Diagnóstico**, 2018, Decide Madrid website, https://decide.madrid.es/docs/resumen_plaza_espana.pdf

[2] **Case Study: Decide Madrid**, 2018, Involve, https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/case-studies/decide-madrid

[3] **The Quality of Participatory Processes in the Urban Redevelopment Policy of Madrid City Council**, Gema Sánchez Medero and Gema Pastor Albaladejo, October 2018, Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government 16(4) 841-872, https://eprints.ucm.es/50844/1/gema%20Sanchez-Article%20Text-3694-1-10-20181023.pdf

[4] **Welcome Mother Nature: Winning Project**, Madrid, Housing and Urban Planning, Town Planning Portal, https://www.madrid.es/portales/munimadrid/es/Inicio/Vivienda-y-urbanismo/Urbanismo/Plaza-de-España-comienzan-las-votaciones-para-elegir-el-proyecto-ganador?

[5] **Remodelación de Plaza España**, Decide Madrid, https://decide.madrid.es/proceso/plaza-espana-resultados

[6] **Does e-participation Influence and Improve Political Decision Making Processes? Evidence From a Local Government**, Ángel Iglesias Alonso and Roberto Luciano Barbeito, 30 August 2016, Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government 14(4), http://pub.lex-localis.info/index.php/LexLocalis/article/view/14.4.873-891%282016%29

US corporate income tax reform through TheChisel

Method: Primarily online

In brief

In late 2015, Eric Toder of the liberal thinktank, the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, and Alan Viard of the conservative thinktank, the American Enterprise Institute, drafted a joint proposal on how to reform federal corporate income tax in the US. Representing two prominent US institutions from opposite sides of the political debate, they launched their proposal on TheChisel.com in January 2016 to reach bipartisan public support. TheChisel is an online platform that allows US citizens to engage in public policymaking with experts from nonpartisan organisations and bipartisan coalitions. Online participants can comment and vote on expert proposals, which are revised to build consensus. Once a majority vote is secured, TheChisel helps send a final proposal to Congress.

It was broadly accepted by politicians, economic analysts, and the media at the time that the US corporate income tax system was flawed.[1][2] However, there was disagreement over how to solve this complex policy challenge and concern that the measures under consideration by congressional leaders would be counterproductive.[1]

US corporate income tax policy is a complex area. Toder and Viard's first task was communicating the issue in a way that was easy for the non-expert reader to understand and provide sufficiently detailed and balanced information to allow citizens to engage in deliberation and reach informed judgements on potential solutions. They next presented a solution on TheChisel platform, outlining what the proposed action was and predicted outcomes. This proposal eliminated the highest statutory tax rate of 35-39 percent and added USD170 billion annually to the federal debt (for a net present value of USD1-1.5 trillion in federal debt over time).[3] This proposal was then presented for online debate and voting.

An estimated 500 members of the public participated in discussing the issue, commenting and voting on the online reform proposal. Levels of support for the proposal among the population were analysed in terms of demographic information and participants' political orientation, and compared with those of the general US population.[3] The initial proposal was rejected by online participants due to the unacceptable level of debt. Eric Toder and Alan Viard revised their reform suggestions by modifying the transition period, capturing taxes on profits housed offshore, maintaining revenue neutrality, and reducing corporate income tax to 15 percent. Following these changes, a second online vote was held and consensus was achieved, with a majority of both liberals and conservative public participants supporting the proposal.

Ultimately, the proposal was overtaken by events in Congress in December 2017 where legislation was enacted that reduced corporate income tax from 35 percent to 21 percent, a measure that was estimated to add USD1 trillion to the national debt.[4] Top officials from the Commerce Department and Treasury Department have commented that the proposal developed through TheChisel offered a better solution than the one enacted.

The challenge

At the time of the initiative, the US had the highest statutory corporate tax rates in the developed world, yet collected less corporate tax revenue as a share of gross domestic product than many of its trading partners. It has been argued that the tax encourages companies to invest, book profits, and move charters abroad.

The tax also discourages firms from investing in the US, and enables multinationals to avoid tax by shifting profits to low-tax countries. In the years leading up to this initiative, Congress had hosted several tax reform discussion drafts, and in the 113th Congress (2013-2014) the Tax Reform Act of 2014 proposal was considered, which would have made substantial changes to corporate income tax and the treatment of multinational corporations.[5]

Many of the options that were being considered included either raising or removing US taxes on foreign profits earned by US companies.[3]

It was argued that these proposals were counterproductive: while they addressed some elements of the problem, they also generated perverse incentives, one approach involving raising US taxes on foreign profits earned by US companies.[2] This would reduce the incentive to invest and book profits abroad, but would increase incentives to invert to foreign charters. Alternatively, removing US taxes on foreign profits of US chartered companies would reduce the incentive to invert to foreign charters, but would increase incentives to book profits abroad.[2][3]

The initiative

In response to the challenges presented by the corporate income tax system, two experts organised an initiative utilising an online platform called TheChisel.com. The experts sought to represent all sides of the debate and identified two broad positions aligning with left and right thinking on the issue. They are two highly-respected corporate income tax experts, who represent opposing political ideologies, but came together to develop materials and an initial plan: Eric Toder of the liberal thinktank, the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, and Alan Viard of the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

Stage 1. The issue and the solution

Defining the issue

Toder and Viard worked with TheChisel to define the issue by:

- Developing material that communicated vital information about the corporate tax system in a way that was easy to understand, simple, and engaging, such that both sides could agree that the information collected was salient, accurate, and accessible
- Posting online on TheChisel.com the specific problem definition, a glossary of key terms, and data visualisations and illustrations of contextual background information to educate the public at large on the most important common ground facts

about US corporate income tax

- Posting their proposed solution in an easy-to-understand fashion with attendant budgets, rollout plans, and expected results (both economic and social).

The experts outlined the most salient points required to understand the problem's contextual background and posted the following information on **TheChisel.com**:

1. The US has the highest statutory corporate tax rates among developed countries at 35-39 percent

2. The current US tax system encourages companies to invest, book profits, and move charters abroad

3. The double taxation built into the current corporate income tax is a vestige of the past

4. The current tax system treats companies unequally, based on financing and organisational structure.

5. Other reforms now being considered do not adequately address the current system's harmful effects

6. Key terms and definitions.[3]
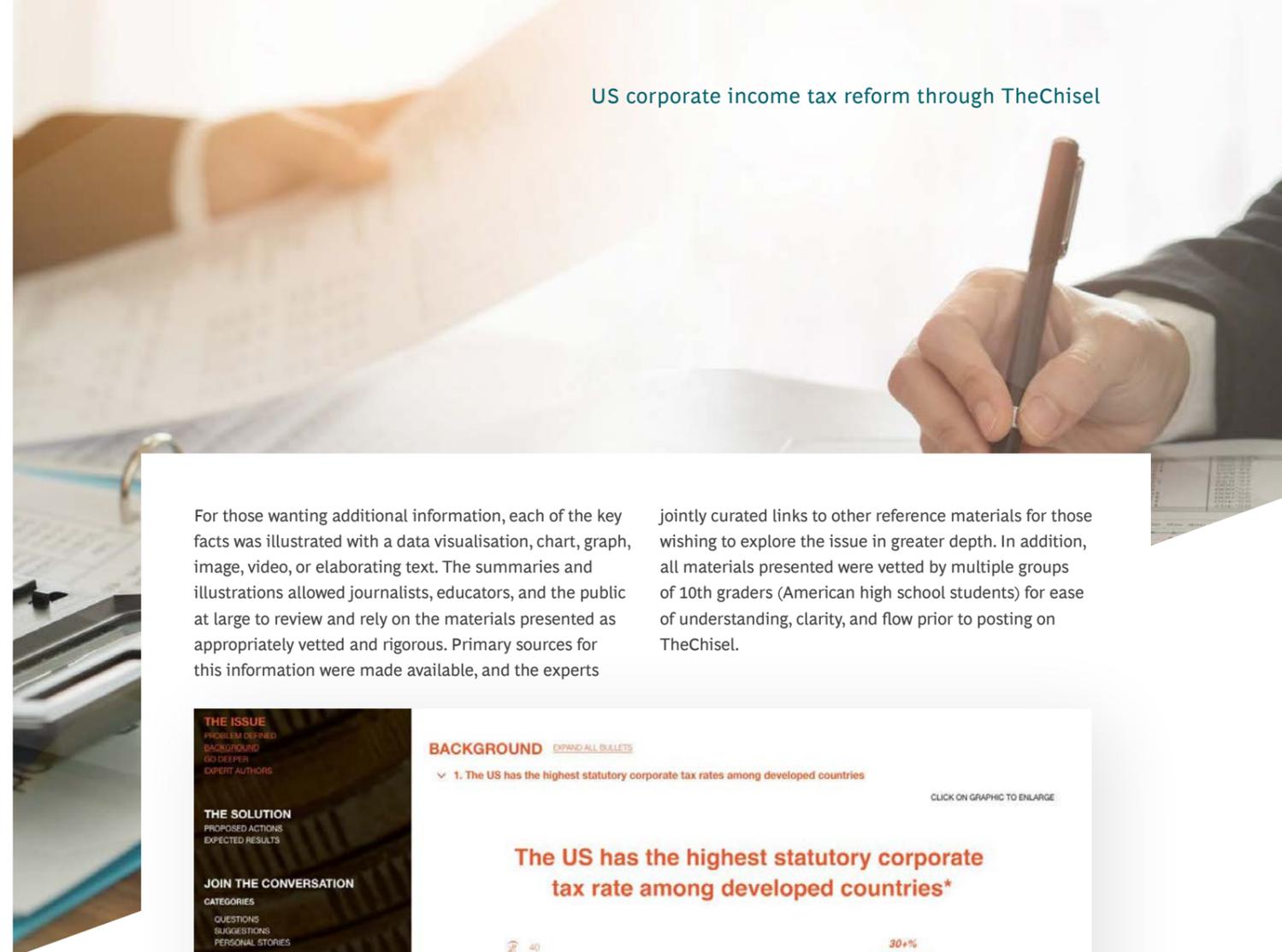
For those wanting additional information, each of the key facts was illustrated with a data visualisation, chart, graph, image, video, or elaborating text. The summaries and illustrations allowed journalists, educators, and the public at large to review and rely on the materials presented as appropriately vetted and rigorous. Primary sources for this information were made available, and the experts jointly curated links to other reference materials for those wishing to explore the issue in greater depth. In addition, all materials presented were vetted by multiple groups of 10th graders (American high school students) for ease of understanding, clarity, and flow prior to posting on TheChisel.
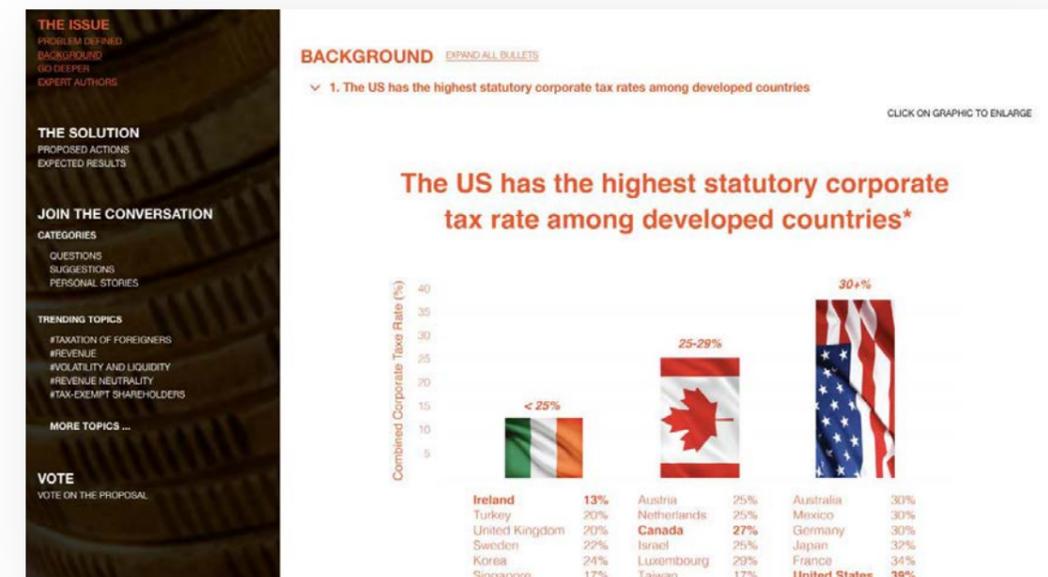
US Corporate Income Tax Screenshot: Background information on the topic presented on TheChisel, https://thechisel.com/proposal/reform-corporate-income-tax?category=question#comments

The solution

The experts' jointly developed initial solution proposed:

1. Eliminating corporate income tax (highest rates of 35-39.6 percent)

2. Taxing shareholders at ordinary income tax rates on dividends and accrued capital gains

3. Establishing transition arrangements

4. Addressing the proposal's revenue shortfall.

TheChisel's guided framework asked the experts to enumerate the expected results (economically and socially) of their joint proposal and establish a budget. They anticipated the following outcomes:

1. Companies would no longer have a tax incentive to move their charters abroad

2. Investment in the US would increase

3. Tax treatment would be more equal for companies with different financing and organisational form

4. The plan would cost around USD170 billion per year, with a net present value of USD1-1.5 trillion addition to the federal debt.

All the information provided in Stage 1, the Issue and the Solution was jointly agreed by the experts. Some direct sources or "go deeper" sources may have had an ideological left- or right-leaning bent, but the experts jointly determined that the data or presentations were rigorous and worthy of inclusion.[3] The two experts and TheChisel shared the proposal with friends, family, colleagues and interested groups. The plan was also used for educational purposes at George Washington University by economics professor Joann Weiner.[6]

Stage 2. Join the conversation and the vote (iterative)

Citizens were invited to review the information and proposed solution. Using TheChisel's online discussion forum, members of the public could engage with each other and with the experts by:

- Asking questions to seek clarification
- Making suggestions to improve the proposal
- Sharing personal stories relating to their experiences with the issue.

Around 500 people participated in the online discussion and vote. Participants were recruited through TheChisel's e-newsletter and mailing lists. Information about the demographics and the political orientation of participants was gathered, and this information was used to model the likely levels of support for the proposal across the US population.

Following the discussions, members of the public could vote on whether they found the proposed solution acceptable. In order for the proposal to pass, it needed to acquire a majority of support from each constituent group. There were an estimated 102 typed responses posted publicly on TheChisel, averaging 110 words each, 192 votes (up or down) on comments, and 400 votes on the final proposal captured privately on TheChisel. It should be noted that the public cannot see how anyone has voted nor can they see votes in progress – this is to avoid confirmation bias.

Of the 102 comments posted on the site, 78 were questions and answers between public individuals and the two experts Toder and Viard; 21 were public individuals' suggestions and the experts' responses; and 7 were personal stories from individuals.

The initial proposal developed by the experts was rejected in the first round of voting. It received only minority support from liberal and conservative segments, although support was slightly higher among conservatives. Comments revealed that the main reason the public rejected the proposal was the fact that it was not "revenue-neutral": while it reduced the corporate tax rate, it would also have incurred more than USD1 trillion in additional debt over time, which most voters deemed unacceptable. It should be noted that only the experts can make direct revisions to a proposal on the platform.
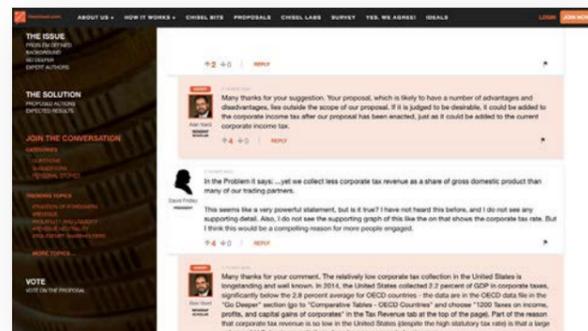
US Income Tax Reform Screenshot: Join the Conversation section of TheChisel, https://thechisel.com/proposal/reform-corporate-income-tax?category=suggestion#comments

In response to this public pushback, the experts revised their proposal in June 2016. The revised plan called for:

1. Reducing the highest corporate income tax rate to 15 percent
2. Taxing shareholders at ordinary income tax rates with credit for corporate income taxes paid
3. Smoothing accrued gains and losses to reduce tax volatility
4. Providing transition relief for privately held companies that go public
5. Exempting small shareholders from taxes on dividends and capital gains
6. Imposing a 15 percent tax on the interest income of non-profit organisations and retirement plans
7. Establishing transition arrangements.

The experts revised their expected results, reaching the following conclusions:

1. Companies would have little tax incentive to move their charters abroad
2. Investment in the US would increase
3. Companies would book additional profits in the US
4. Tax treatment would be more equal for companies with different financing and organisational form
5. The proposal would not open up new opportunities for tax avoidance
6. The tax system would become slightly more progressive.
7. The Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center estimates the plan would be approximately revenue-neutral in the long run; it could even raise revenue if it takes into account the taxes collected on the additional profits that are likely to be booked into the US in response to a reduced corporate tax rate.[3]

As a result, the votes changed such that the majority in the relevant constituent groups (in this case liberal and conservative groups) of the population supported the proposal. It received majority support among both liberal and conservative segments of the participants, with the rate of support among conservatives being slightly higher than the rate of support among liberals. The process took only one iteration with this fundamental change.

Timeline summary

October - December 2015:
Correspondence with experts and TheChisel to launch project, determine background information, and solution presentation; numerous iterations for experts' joint approval on graphics and editing of content.

January 2016:
TheChisel launches its platform to the public with the experts' Corporate Income Tax Reform proposal

January 2016 - March 2016:
Experts and TheChisel share proposal with "friends and family" across the nation; the plan is taught in an undergraduate economics class by Professor Joann Weiner. Experts interact online with the public, responding to questions, suggestions, and personal stories.

June 2016:
Experts revise proposal, given pushback from the public. Public continue commenting and voting on the proposal. Professor Weiner presents updated plan at the conference in Washington, DC and mentions the initiative (further details)

The public impact

The initiative was overtaken by policy developments. In December 2017, US Congress and President Trump enacted legislation lowering the corporate income tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent as part of a tax rate cut estimated to add more than USD1 trillion to the federal debt.[3]

However, feedback on the proposal and the process was highly enthusiastic:

- Organisers of the initiative claimed that key officials from the US Commerce Department and Treasury Department have commented that the proposal developed through TheChisel was a better solution to the problem than the one enacted in 2017, and expressed a desire to apply some of the elements of this proposal in future legislation

- John Arnold (conservative), a Texas hedge fund manager and philanthropist, tweeted that "the most thoughtful plan to reform US corporate tax is now also the best presented"[7]

- Several articles in major publications outlined the new proposal[8] [9]

- Experts received additional funding to continue their studies.

As a result of seeing the proposal, Ann Ravel, a liberal and former chair of the US Federal Election Commission, introduced TheChisel to a conservative organisation keen on campaign finance reform. TheChisel matched the organisation to a liberal organisation and created a new bipartisan proposal for Campaign Finance Reform – "Counter Big Donor Influence with Small Donor Tax Credits" – made jointly by US PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) and Take Back Our Republic. Her response was that "TheChisel is one of the most innovative and promising initiatives I've ever seen to achieve change and to change the polarisation in this country." Subsequently, new pairs of opposing thinktanks have come together and developed joint proposals on TheChisel, including Peel Back Farm Subsidies developed jointly by US PIRG and the National Taxpayers' Union Foundation.

Public impact
What did and didn't work using the Public Impact Fundamentals

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`
Political Commitment `Fair`
Public Confidence `Good`

Policy
Clear Objectives `Strong`
Evidence `Strong`
Feasibility `Good`

Action
Management `Strong`
Measurement N/A
Alignment N/A

Legitimacy
Stakeholder Engagement `Strong`

The two primary stakeholder groups in the initiative were identified as liberal and conservative US citizens. As a first step, the initiative brought together highly regarded experts from opposite sides of the political debate, who reached agreement on the salient facts of US corporate income tax in developing a bipartisan reform proposal. [9]

The public engagement stage then allowed different sections of the population, defined by demographic data and self-identified political orientation, to comment on and debate the proposal online. In a first vote they rejected the initial proposal, which led to substantive revisions. While a total of approximately 500 stakeholders were engaged in the development of the final reform proposal, no information on participants (e.g. educational background, home state, or age) is publicly available. The acceptability of the final proposal was made dependent on a majority vote among both liberal and conservative segments of the participants. Yet, it is unclear how many participants identified as liberal or conservative.

Political Commitment `Fair`

The experts responsible for the proposal were actively involved in the online feedback and engagement process, with members of the public asking questions, making suggestions, and telling their personal stories. Approximately 40 percent of the comments comprised the primary experts' interaction with the public. The initiative was used by the experts to test and evaluate the quality of the proposals emerging from the process. There was limited marketing or engagement from wider lobbying groups and political figures, and no government institution publicly supported the initiative.

Public Confidence `Good`

Eric Toder and Alan Viard are highly respected experts in their field, who enjoy the confidence of different sides of the political debate.[9] In representing these viewpoints and agreeing on the information presented in the process, they were able to lend it their authority. Public participation in the process increased over time, suggesting strong engagement. There were also very positive reports in the press on the approach and outcome.[8][9] A further strength of the initiative lay in presenting often complex information in an accessible way that allowed for meaningful and informed input from the public.

According to the organisers, the experts involved in the project said that they were surprised to discover that the quality of discussion, scrutiny and suggestions of lay members of the public was higher than they had received from other experts. Furthermore they claimed as a result of the success of this pilot, there was interest in scaling up the initiative and launching it nationwide to encompass thousands of Americans.

Policy

Clear Objectives `Strong`

The purposes of the initiative were clearly stated, and it provided a clear description of the policy challenge, the proposed solution, and expected outcomes. In addition, all materials presented were vetted by several groups of 10th graders (American high school students) for ease of understanding, clarity, and flow, prior to posting on TheChisel. TheChisel, with the approval of both experts, revised the presentation of the proposal based on how easy the students found it to use and understand.

Evidence `Strong`

One of the strengths of the initiative was to build a strong, bipartisan, evidence-based proposal on which to ground decisions. This involved a process of collecting a wide range of research and evidence and mediating between the different groups to identify what information was well founded, acceptable to both sides, and salient to the issue. This resulted in substantive revisions in the proposal and shifts in opinion among the experts.

Feasibility `Good`

According to an interviewee involved in delivering the project, key officials from the US Commerce Department and Treasury Department have commented that the proposed solution to corporate income tax reform developed through this initiative was not only feasible but was a preferable solution to the one enacted in 2017. They have since expressed a desire to apply some elements of the proposal in future legislation. Feedback from experts and political actors suggests that the case illustrates the value of public engagement and of drawing on the collective intelligence of the public to develop optimal solutions to complex policy challenges. The initiative made effective use of technology to coordinate expertise and invite large-scale public engagement in a way that was more cost-effective and efficient than traditional forms of civic engagement.

A key condition for the success of this initiative was the willingness of key stakeholders to engage and act in good faith. Therefore, the capacity to replicate the success of this initiative depends on ensuring that multiple stakeholder groups are willing to work together to forge a consensus-driven decision or plan. On this issue, highly respected experts from liberal and conservative backgrounds were willing to commit their time to the development of a bipartisan proposal. The challenge for any future application would rest on the attitude of stakeholders and the receptiveness and cooperation of decision-making institutions.

An individual involved in delivering the initiative commented that the scope for projects such as these to influence decision-making at the federal level would depend on navigating lobbying influence and powers at the institutional level. It was suggested that, at least for the time being, the project was best suited to decisions at a local or state level.

Action

Management `Strong`

In addition to working with two of the nation's most highly-regarded tax experts, TheChisel is an experienced team comprised of senior executives, project managers, and analysts. Proposals were vetted and required a majority of support amongst different groups. In addition, TheChisel's advisory board also provided feedback on the process and outcome.

Measurement N/A

The initiative was a pilot that did not lead to implementation therefore it cannot be evaluated on measurements to ensure effective implementation.

Alignment N/A

The initiative was a pilot that did not lead to implementation therefore it cannot be evaluated on the alignment of values of those responsible for implementing the policy.

References

[1] **The Right Way to Cut Corporate Taxes**, The Editorial Board, 12th November 2017, The New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/12/opinion/corporate-tax-cuts-gop.html

[2] **U.S Corporate Tax Reform**, 3 November 2017, Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-corporate-tax-reform

[3] **Reform Corporate Income Tax**, 15 March 2018, TheChisel, https://thechisel.com/proposal/reform-corporate-income-tax

[4] **Republicans Sought to Undercut an Unfavorable Analysis of the Tax Plan**, Jim Tankersley, 4 December 2017, The New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/us/politics/republicans-joint-committee-on-taxation-estimate.html?module=inline

[5] **An Overview of Recent Tax Reform Proposals**, Mark P. Keightley, 28 February 2017, Congressional Research Service, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44771.pdf

[6] **A New Proposal for Corporate Tax Reform: Joint Event Between American Enterprise Institute and the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center**, Tax Policy Center, https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/event/new-proposal-corporate-tax-reform-joint-event-between-american-enterprise-institute-and-urban

[7] https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=The%20most%20thoughtful%20plan%20to%20reform%20US%20corporate%20tax%20is%20now%20also%20the%20best%20presented.&src=typd

[8] **Why Lower Corporate Tax Rates?** 18 January 2018, Reconsider Media, https://www.reconsidermedia.com/lastestblogposts/why-lower-corporate-tax-rates

[9] **A Bipartisan Plan to Cut Corporate Taxes**, William A. Galston, 31 October 2017, Wall Street Journal, https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-bipartisan-plan-to-cut-corporate-taxes-1509487574

Climate CoLab Contests 2015: Global Climate Action Plan

Method: Primarily online

❯ In brief

The year 2015 was a critical one for climate change and sustainable development, with the culmination of two major UN processes intended to shape the future direction of global efforts on the environment. These were the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which included the requirement for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, and the Paris agreement on climate change (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). In 2015, Climate CoLab hosted the Global Climate Action Plan initiative, a series of contests in which people across the world were invited to join an online community, put forward proposals, and integrate solutions to address climate change.

Climate CoLab is a problem-solving platform that aims to harness collective intelligence to address global climate change. The project is organised and developed by the Centre for Collective Intelligence at MIT. The platform allows any individual or group to put forward a proposal under different categories for reducing carbon emissions and meeting climate change targets. The proposals are assessed by expert judges for their feasibility and mitigation potential, and voted on by the Climate CoLab community. Winners of the contests are awarded various prizes, including one USD10,000 grand prize, other cash awards, seed funding, and opportunities to meet senior officials. In 2015, the contests resulted in awards for a range of projects, notably the grand prizewinner, "SunSaluter", which was a low-cost passive solar tracker that produces clean water, and the Global Contest winner, "Solar Dollars", a project advocating a world currency to price and finance carbon mitigation.[1]

The initiative is included in this series because it represents an ambitious and well-established use of technology to enable crowdsourcing and collective intelligence in solving a highly complex challenge or "wicked problem". The project has attracted high levels of participation, with 115,000 registered members across 170 countries. Since the initiative addresses a broad issue rather than a specific policy challenge, it is explored as a briefing in this series.

The challenge

The central question for this initiative was "What should be the world's plan to address climate change?"[2] The year 2015 was a critical one for climate change and sustainable development, with the culmination of two major UN processes intended to shape the future direction of global efforts on the environment.

The aim of Climate CoLab was to use technology to harness the collective intelligence of citizens across the globe in developing ideas that help address climate change and allocate resources and support for the most promising ideas to meet national and global targets. Climate CoLab launched the Global Climate Action Plan initiative in 2015 as a "contest web", its first attempt to integrate different contests, and combine proposals to address global and regional goals.[2]

The initiative

The Global Climate Action Plan 2015 was a series of contests held by Climate CoLab.[2] In addition to funding from MIT-related organisations, the initiative also received funding from various NGOs, including the UN's Environment Programme and the UN's Climate Resilience Initiative A2R (for further details on Climate CoLabs sponsors see). The contests were delivered through carefully designed stages utilising the Climate CoLab platform. The initiative in 2015 was conducted in five stages.

Stage 1. Proposal creation
(1 July to 18 October)

The initiative began by hosting contests inviting people to submit proposals for tackling climate change, posting them on the Climate CoLab platform. Anyone could submit a proposal, although people were required to register as a member on the site. Contests were organised around a specific sector or field concerning climate change, for example:

- Land use, agriculture and forestry
- Energy supply
- Buildings
- Transport
- Public attitudes
- Adaptation
- Waste management
- Industry
- Geoengineering
- Cities.

Authors of the proposal were required to provide the following information:

- A summary of the proposal
- A description of the future actions to be taken, and who would implement the idea
- An explanation of how the actions would be desirable and the quantifiable impact the actions would have (including estimated costs and impact on carbon emissions).[1]

Additional information such as videos and graphical illustrations were supported by the platform. There was space for comments from other community members. The deadline for these proposals was 18 October.

As well as these proposals, Climate CoLab introduced a further layer of contests, described as "integrated contests". These entailed inviting participants to combine different sectoral proposals into combined plans to address regional and global targets in ways that were mutually compatible and collectively sufficient. To be mutually compatible, the different parts of proposals should not violate any important constraints. For example, if they were to be paid for by the same budget, they must not collectively exceed the total budget. To be collectively sufficient, the combination of the proposals must be enough to solve the problem to a satisfactory degree. For example, if the goal of the plan was to reduce emissions by 40%, and the proposals only delivered a 10% reduction then this was not considered sufficient.

The contests were organised into one global contest, and six regional contests in addition to the sectoral contests described above. Expert judges were able to provide specific information regarding regional budgets and targets. An internal currency called "CoLab Points" were used to allocate points to individual elements of an integrated plan based on the value determined by

expert judges. This was intended to incentivise authors of both proposals and plans to work together to increase the strength of proposals and plans and thereby increase points, the plan with the most points won a further integrated contest award of USD10,000 which would be shared between contributors. The organisational structure of the initiative is illustrated in figures 1 and 2 below.

1. **What** (actions will be taken)
  1.1. Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (*Mitigation*)
    1.1.1. Energy supply
    1.1.2. Buildings
    1.1.3. Transportation
    1.1.4. Industry
    1.1.5. Land use and other sectors
  1.2. Adapt to climate change (*Adaptation*)
  1.3. Reduce the warming effects of GHG emissions (*Geoengineering*)
2. **Where** (will the actions be taken)
  2.1. Global
  2.2. National
    2.2.1. US
    2.2.2. China
    2.2.3. …
3. **Who** (will take the actions)
  3.1. Governments
  3.2. Businesses
  3.3. Other organizations
  3.4. Individual citizens and consumers
4. **How** (will the actions be taken)
  4.1. Physical actions
  4.2. Political actions
  4.3. Economic actions
  4.4. Cultural actions

Climate CoLab Screenshot:
Figure 1: Climate CoLab taxonomy of complex problems applied to the issue of climate change (Malone et al 2017)
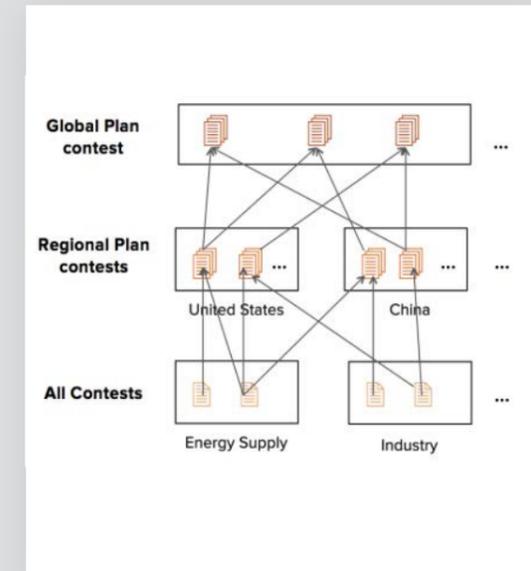
Climate CoLab Screenshot:
Figure 2: The Climate CoLab Contest Web combines proposals within contests (boxes) integrated through regional and global plans [2]

The platform provided tools to help participants estimate the impact and costs of proposals, notably a computer simulation model that provided environmental and economic impacts.

Stage 2: Semifinalist selection (18 to 26 October)

After the submission of proposals and plans, community members could support proposals they liked and add comments to help refine the proposals of others. Following the submission deadline, the proposals were evaluated by Impact Assessment Fellows. These were expert judges who were committed researchers and volunteers working with Climate CoLab. They evaluated proposals and plans against the following criteria: novelty, feasibility, impact, and presentation quality. Furthermore, plans were judged in terms of how well they combined or packaged different proposals to articulate a broad, coherent and feasible vision for what the entire world can do about climate change.[2] This process of evaluation led to the selection of semifinalists to progress to the next stage.

Stage 3: Proposal revisions (26 October to 5 November)

Semifinalists were able to work online with Impact Assessment Fellows and others to refine and develop their proposals. The platform supported this process through a simplified computer simulation model which assesses overall reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global temperatures.

Stage 4: Finalist selection (5 November to 16 November)

The judges reviewed the refined proposals and selected 65 finalists.

Stage 5: Public voting period (16 November to 6 December)

Members of the Climate CoLab community voted on the finalists. The proposals for each contest with the most votes received Popular Choice Awards. The expert judges also selected the Judges' Choice winners. The most popular project was awarded a USD10,000 Grand Prize. A further cash prize of USD10,000 was awarded to the global integrated contest winner. 'Further cash awards, seed funding, and opportunities to meet senior officials and implementers were awarded to other contest winners.

The winning proposal pitch, includes a summary and links to further information including impact calculations, evaluation and comments, https://www.climatecolab.org/contests/2015/energy-water-nexus/c/proposal/1318104

In summary the 2015 contests included the following:

The following statistics on participation in the 2015 contests gives an indication of levels of public and stakeholder engagement:

- 24 contests
- 550 contest entries
- Approximately 11,000 votes cast
- 65 finalists
- 35 winners, representing 11 countries
- 1 USD10,000 Grand Prize Winner and 2 Honourable Mentions
- 41 Advisors
- 92 Judges
- 68 Fellows.[6]

Timeline summary

1st July- 18th October 2015:
Proposal creation and submission period

18- 26th October:
Semi-finalist selection

26th October- 5th November:
Proposal revisions

16th November- 6th December:
Public Voting Period

The public impact

The 35 Popular Choice Award or Judges' Choice winners were announced across 24 contests. These projects were given various forms of support, including cash prizes, seed funding, advice, and opportunities to meet those capable of implementing the proposals. The winner of the Grand Prize was "SunSaluter: A low cost, passive solar tracker that produces clean water", submitted by Eden Full and Jake Schual-Berke. This was a low-cost solar panel rotator designed for the developing world. It uses gravity and water to rotate a solar panel throughout the day, generating 30% more electricity. The device was described as 30 times cheaper than motorised solar trackers and far more durable. It was also claimed to produce four litres of clean drinking water each day.[3] SunSaluter is a non-profit organisation that operates in 19 countries, focusing particularly on India. As of 2019 it claims to have delivered electricity to 17,335 people, avoided 3,672 tons of carbon emissions.[4]

The global contest winner was Solar Dollars: The World Currency to Price and Finance Carbon Mitigation by global4c.org. This was a proposed digital currency to be issued as a reward for climate mitigation, using the Bitcoin Blockchain and financed by Green Quantitative Easing.[5]

Evaluation and lessons learned

Things that worked well

Participation and recruitment

One interviewee involved in the project suggested recruitment was effective in the initiative and highlighted a number of successful elements of their approach:

- Social media, notably Twitter and LinkedIn, were very helpful for reaching out to people

- The name recognition of MIT and the UN, as well as other collaborators and sponsors, was important for drawing people in and giving them confidence in the process

- Both collaborators and sponsors offering prizes, and participants who were keen on promoting their project, had incentives to engage in promotion of the initiative and utilise their contacts and networks. This was felt by the interviewee to be effective in drawing more people in.

Generally, the initiative has enjoyed high levels of engagement. As of August 2018, the Climate CoLab community is described as having over 115,000 registered members, representing over 170 countries. The statistics for Climate CoLab members are as follows (percentages in brackets):

- Aged 21-29 (30)
- Aged 30-39 (20)
- Aged 40-49 (13)
- Aged 50-64 (20)
- Aged under 18 or over 65 (17)

- College or university graduates (86)
- Completed or are currently attending graduate or professional school (53)

- Employed full-time (45)
- Students (20)
- Freelance consultants (17)
- Part-time employee, retired, or unemployed (17).[6]

From these figures, we can observe that the population participating in Climate CoLab is diverse, although certain sections of the population are overrepresented (such as the representation of university-educated people). Crowdsourcing is, of course, inherently unrepresentative, since those with the most interest in an issue or aspect of an issue (e.g. geoengineering) will self-select to focus on contributing to that aspect of the problem, and such contributions will be unrepresentative of the wider population. The value of a crowdsourcing process concerns numbers rather than representativeness, and the capacity to allow many people to identify ideas, solutions and problems that might elude a small number of experts. In this respect the initiative enabled many people with diverse expertise, experience and backgrounds participate in solving a common problem.

One interviewee highlighted two significant barriers to entry. The contests were held in English, which excluded potential participants who did not speak English, and the interviewee observed that some proposals had quality issues, in part because of the language barrier, thus presenting a further layer of exclusion. The interviewee explained that they had worked on ways of supporting the process in other languages, but currently lacked the resources to fully enable this. Secondly, access to the internet has rapidly increased, although in many cases access is primarily through mobile

phone devices. As such, Climate CoLab made efforts to ensure their platform worked for mobiles, but nevertheless the interviewee noted there was room for improvement in increasing accessibility to the process for those with limited access to the internet.

Feasibility and flexibility of the process

The initiative was designed to break down the challenge of climate change into specific issues. Building on developments in the field of computer-supported cooperative work, the platform utilises technology to combine individual contributions to larger goals in a way that is cheap and efficient compared to traditional methods of collaborative decision.[9] The platform is publicly available and uses open source software. Although the project is aimed at the specific issue of climate change, the developers argue that the taxonomy they have developed and the technology built to support it could be applied to other complex problems.[9]

One interviewee involved in delivering the contests felt that through years of experimentation they had developed a relatively "foolproof method" (the project had been running contests for five years prior to the 2015 initiative), that the contests were very easy to set up, and operated like a "well-oiled machine". She observed that when working with collaborators and sponsors, one thing they often needed to push back on was timelines. She explained that organisations often overestimate the availability of experts and underestimate the time required for the process. She explained that for crowdsourcing to work best there needs to be adequate time for input from both the public and expert judges. Climate CoLab offered varying levels of support to collaborators: while some organisations wanted to run the contests and recruit experts themselves, others required more intense support from the Climate CoLab team.

Another interviewee observed that since anyone could submit a proposal, there was great variety in the quality of the initial proposals they received. Since each proposal is evaluated by both experts and the public in relation to its impact, its feasibility and the quality of evidence supporting it, the contest was very effective in filtering these and generating high-quality ideas.

Clear structure and use of evidence

The objectives of the initiative were clearly set out on the platform, including the aims and likely outcomes of individual contests. Participants are given guides on how to develop proposals and contribute to the contest, what to expect during the different stages and the criteria of evaluation of proposals.[6][8] At the various stages of the initiative, steps were taken to ensure decisions were well researched and evidenced and supported by the judgement of experts in their field. This includes the design and architecture of the platform, and the taxonomy applied in organising the contests.[9] Proposals submitted through the platform were scrutinised and refined by the wider Climate CoLab community, with further oversight and expert input from judging panels. Evaluation criteria and judges' comments were publicly available, and there was further support from computer simulation models to help evaluate proposals.[1]

One interviewee involved in the delivery claimed that the proposal form was quite long and the user interface was not as easy to use as they would have liked. This was attributed to limited resources: while more commercial projects might have a team of developers, the project has only one developer involved in addressing these issues.

Things that worked less well

Individualistic rather than collaborative work

Participation tends to be quite individualistic. People often came to the platform with a particular idea, sometimes patented, that they wanted to get funding and more recognition for. As such, there was often very little collaboration at the sectoral level. One interviewee involved in the delivery of the contests observed that while some people contributed ideas to others, for the most part people worked on their own project. For many people, they were already deeply invested in their project and passionate about its potential, and there was therefore a tendency for people to be reluctant to accept criticism from others, including judges. This deviates somewhat from the intended dynamics of the collective intelligence process, in which people are not just incentivised to compete with each other but also to collaborate to improve ideas and outcomes.

The "integrated" element of the contests was intended to address this, introducing a points system to determine the winner of the process. However, according to one interviewee, for the most part this was not taken up in the way that the organisers expected. The eventual winner of the global integrated contests (Solar Dollars) was one of the few attempts to bring in other people on the project.

Political commitment and implementation pathways

The initiative exists independent of government, but it does receive support and funding from various international bodies, charities and NGOs. Most notably, the initiative is strongly supported by the UN.[7] One interviewee involved in the delivery of the initiative explained that a number of attempts to work with both national and local governments had been frustrated. Climate change is a contested and politicised issues, and they described how plans to work with Mexico's government and state governments in America had failed, due to leadership changes that were less sympathetic to environmental issues. Furthermore, sponsors have lost funding halfway through a contest, meaning that the prizes have had to be changed. The interviewee went on to explain that one of the most important areas in which they have tried to develop the project is through working with collaborators to strengthen the capacity for ideas emerging through the process to be implemented and developing "implementation pathways".

The support offered by Climate CoLab includes financial support and seed funding, as well as advice and opportunities to meet people who may be potential collaborators in delivering the project. While many projects emerging through the process have been successful (for example, SunSaluter), others have struggled where commitment to the project by different parties involved has waned.

Conclusion

Climate CoLab's 2015 Global Climate Action Plan contests demonstrate how technology can be used to enable collective intelligence to generate high-quality solutions to complex policy challenges. The process was very successful in engaging a large number of participants, filtering and refining proposals to produce well-evidenced, feasible solutions, and providing resources and expertise to help deliver those ideas. The success of crowdsourcing processes such as these rests on their capacity to reach out to as many people as possible, having mechanisms in place to help the best ideas emerge, and having the resources to implement ideas. The project achieved what it did on limited resources and little involvement or support from governments. Greater political commitment and resources could have helped improve the project in a number of key respects: enabling them to reach out to a larger number of people, improving the interface and usability of the platform, and providing greater opportunities for the implementation of projects.

References

[1]   **Contest Winners**, 2018, Climate CoLab,
      https://www.climatecolab.org/wiki/2015+Contest+Winners

[2]   **Global Climate Action Plan**, 2015, Climate CoLab,
      https://www.climatecolab.org/resources/2015/global-climate-action-plan

[3]   **SunSaluter: a low-cost, passive solar tracker that produces clean water**, Schual-Berke, J.
      and Eden, F., (2015,) "SunSaluter: a low-cost, passive solar tracker that produces clean water"
      Climate CoLab,
      https://www.climatecolab.org/contests/2015/energy-water-nexus/c/proposal/1318104

[4]   **Making Solar Power Easy and Accessible for Everyone**, 2019, SunSaluter
      (2019) "Making Solar Power Easy and Accessible for Everyone" SunSaluter [ONLINE],
      https://www.sunsaluter.org

[5]   **Solar Dollars: The World Currency to Price and Finance Carbon Mitigation**, 2015,
      Global4c.org, https://www.climatecolab.org/contests/2015/global-climate-action-plan/c/
      proposal/1323902

[6]   **Community Facts and Figures**, 2018, Climate CoLab,
      https://www.climatecolab.org/wiki/Community+Facts+and+Figures

[7]   **UN and MIT announce contests seeking climate resilience solutions from around the
      globe**, Fisher, L., 2015, Climate CoLab,
      https://news.climatecolab.org/2015/12/un-mit-announce-contests-seeking-climate-resilience-
      solutions-from-around-the-globe/

[8]   **Resources and FAQs**, 2018, Climate CoLab, https://www.climatecolab.org/page/faqs

[9]   Putting the pieces back together again: Contest webs for large-scale problem solving, Malone,
      T., Nickerson, J., Laubacher, R., Fisher, L., de Boer, P., Han, Y. and Towne, W.B.,2017, """ in The
      20th ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW
      2017), 25 February to 1 March 2017, Portland, OR, USA

The Internet Governance Forum's Online Deliberative Poll on Internet Accessibility

Method: Primarily online

⟩ In brief

How can you "increase internet access for the next billion users"? This was a question that members of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) sought to answer through an online deliberative poll. The IGF is a UN-initiated policy forum, involving representatives from government, the private sector, and civil society. A deliberative poll is a unique form of political consultation, combining techniques of public opinion research and public deliberation, developed by and registered to the Centre of Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University. The IGF was interested in the use of democratic innovations to facilitate discussion on the topic of internet accessibility, and so hired academics at Stanford to deliver an online version of the deliberative poll to allow its members to deliberate on this particular question.

In preparation for the online deliberative poll, an advisory committee consulted with internationally recognised experts to develop a set of proposals that captured the range of approaches to the issue, and in all 13 proposals emerged. The opinions of participants on these proposals were taken before and after deliberative sessions. The proposals ranged from leaving it to the market to increase access to encouraging governments to provide the means for universal access. Comparing the opinions held before and after the deliberations, there were statistically significant changes in levels of support for 7 of the 13 proposals. The top policy priorities that emerged from the process included support for free access to public sector centres such as schools and libraries and at non-governmental institutions such as local businesses and user communities. By contrast, proposals that advocated leaving it to the market to provide access and zero rating for particular services were the least popular.

What distinguishes this initiative from many approaches to online deliberation is the richness of communication it supports and the use of a representative microcosm of the population. The process did not lead directly to policymaking, so it is explored here as a briefing.

The challenge

Internet governance is the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the internet.

The UN-sponsored Tunis Agenda World Summit on the Information Society in 2005 called for a multi-stakeholder approach to be adopted as far as possible at all levels of internet governance and for the creation of the IGF. The IGF is a forum for policy dialogue on issues of internet governance. It meets annually, bringing together stakeholders representing government, the private sector, and civil society.

When the UN extended the IGF for a further 10 years in 2015, it called specifically for "multilateral, transparent, democratic and multi-stakeholder processes". This led to an interest in applying democratic innovations to facilitating dialogue across representatives of very different organisations, in a way that was both coordinated and transparent. A pilot of a deliberative poll, styled DP@IGF (Deliberative Poll at the IGF), was held with the aim of exploring the opportunities for online deliberative polling to address these challenges.

Specifically the pilot sought to explore the following questions:

1. "Is it possible to recruit a random and representative sample from the IGF community to participate... (in both attitudes and demographics)?

2. "Would IGF participants be effectively motivated to take part?

3. "Will there be significant opinion change at the individual level? One potential impediment is that the participants may feel bound to offer the views of the entities that employ them (governments, corporations, NGOs)... Significant opinion change would be an important finding in that it would provide a response to this challenge...

4. "If there are significant opinion changes, can the reasoning supporting those changes be identified?...

5. "Will there be significant knowledge gain? One might argue that the IGF population is already so knowledgeable that we cannot expect it to learn much.

6. "Are the opinion changes distorted by inequalities in certain demographics, such as gender or region?"[1]

The initiative

DP@IGF 2015 was a joint initiative between the Centre for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law and the Centre for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University. The overall topic for debate was "increasing internet access for the next billion users". The briefing materials were developed with the supervision of an advisory committee supplemented by a range of international experts. The materials described 13 policy options for increasing access, combined with pros and cons for each option.

A stratified random sample of past and present IGF participants were invited to take an initial survey of the 13 policy options (see below) and then deliberate on them. Participants could take part in deliberations online or face to face. There were two online sessions held using Google Hangouts (over a four-hour period) and one face-to-face session. In both the online and face-to-face versions, there was one round of small group and plenary sessions. It should be noted that typical deliberative polls involve the general public rather than experts, 2 groups sessions and 3 to 5 times the number of participants (61 participated out of a population of 241).[2] This was therefore treated as a pilot, and the expectation was that there would be little opinion change from pre- to post-deliberation. Nevertheless, they found a number of statistically significant changes of opinion following the sessions.
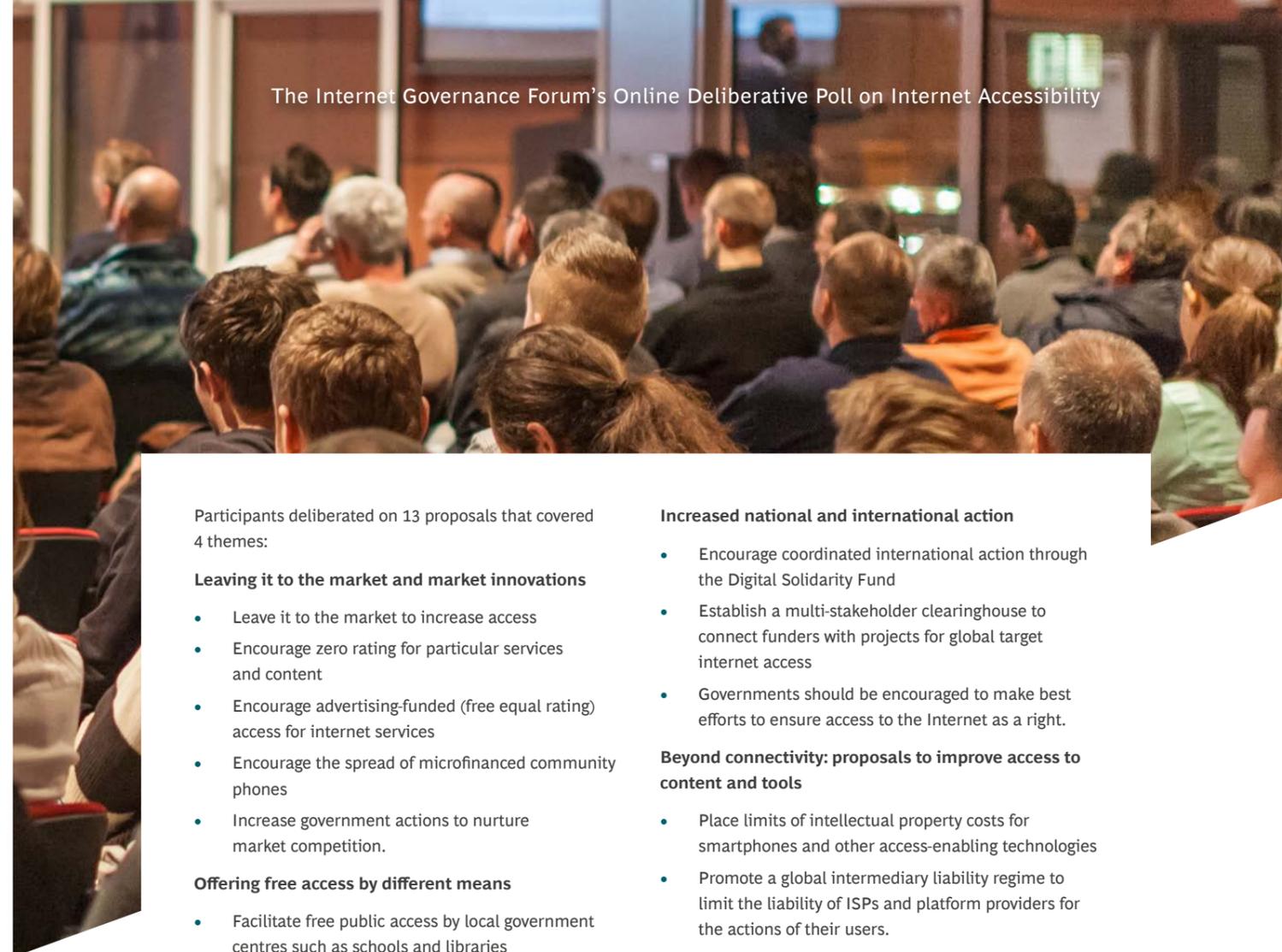
Participants deliberated on 13 proposals that covered 4 themes:

Leaving it to the market and market innovations

- Leave it to the market to increase access
- Encourage zero rating for particular services and content
- Encourage advertising-funded (free equal rating) access for internet services
- Encourage the spread of microfinanced community phones
- Increase government actions to nurture market competition.

Offering free access by different means

- Facilitate free public access by local government centres such as schools and libraries
- Facilitate free public access by non-government institutions such as local businesses or user communities
- Encourage nations to establish Universal Service Funds to provide Internet access to all citizens.

Increased national and international action

- Encourage coordinated international action through the Digital Solidarity Fund
- Establish a multi-stakeholder clearinghouse to connect funders with projects for global target internet access
- Governments should be encouraged to make best efforts to ensure access to the Internet as a right.

Beyond connectivity: proposals to improve access to content and tools

- Place limits of intellectual property costs for smartphones and other access-enabling technologies
- Promote a global intermediary liability regime to limit the liability of ISPs and platform providers for the actions of their users.

The table also provides details on how policies were ranked, the changes in policy attitudes pre- and post-deliberation, with statistically significant changes highlighted with asterisks.

	Pre	Post	Post–Pre	Sig.
(Q1) On a 0–10 scale, where 0 is lowest possible priority, 10 is highest possible priority, and 5 is exactly in the middle, what priority would you say each of the following should have for increasing access to the Internet?				
(f) Facilitate free public access by local government centers such as schools and libraries	8.53	8.78	0.255	0.339
(g) Facilitate free public access by non-government institutions, such as local businesses or user communities	7.39	8.41	1.018	0.009***
(e) Increase government actions to nurture market competition	7.48	7.84	0.357	0.201
(h) Encourage nations to establish Universal Service Funds to provide Internet access to all citizens	7.83	7.11	−0.722	0.061*
(k) Governments should be encouraged to make best efforts to ensure access to the Internet as a right	8.14	6.94	−1.204	0.008***
(d) Encourage the spread of micro-financed community phones	6.21	6.68	0.464	0.249
(j) Establish a multistakeholder clearinghouse to connect funders with projects for global Internet access	7.62	6.50	−1.115	0.004***
(m) Place limits of Intellectual Property costs for smartphones and other access-enabling technology	5.40	6.23	0.830	0.032*
(l) Promote a global intermediary liability regime to limit the liability of ISPs and platform providers for actions of their users	6.71	6.16	−0.556	0.360
(i) Encourage coordinated international action through the Digital Solidarity Fund	6.85	5.48	−1.370	0.001***
(c) Encourage advertising-funded (free equal rating) access for Internet services	5.26	4.32	−0.943	0.023**
(a) Leave it to the market to increase access	3.88	3.92	0.033	0.922
(b) Encourage zero rating for particular services and content	3.87	3.4	−0.472	0.292

Screenshot- DP@IGF: Policy priorities ranked highest to lowest post-deliberation [1], https://cdd.stanford.edu/mm/2017/06/fishkin-ics-multistakeholder-ig.pdf

Of the 13 proposals, 7 showed statistically significant differences between the initial survey responses and those offered post-deliberation. The top two ideas were proposals to facilitate free public access in government centres such as schools and libraries, and at non-government institutions such as local businesses and user communities. The latter proposal received the most significant increase in support. There was also a significant increase in support for the proposal to place limits on intellectual property costs for smartphones and other access-enabling technologies, although it was still only the eighth most popular proposal. On the one hand, this measure would reduce the cost of internet technology; on the other hand, intellectual property was also seen as playing a crucial role in incentivising research and development by assuring returns.

Other statistically significant changes involved proposals losing support. The proposal advocating that countries treat internet access as a right received the most significant decrease in support, although it was still the fifth most popular proposal. The participants acknowledged that the internet was increasingly seen as necessary for participation in many aspects of modern life. Nevertheless, with many people living without clean water, medical attention or food, some participants were convinced that this proposal would distract from other, more urgent needs.[1] There was a significant decrease in support for the proposal, "encourage coordinated international action through the Digital Solidarity fund", a policy that was considered to produce too much red tape. Similarly, the proposal to "establish a multi-stakeholder clearing house to connect investors with projects for global internet access" was considered to have no clear funding source and risked disrupting other practices.

Turning to those proposals that received the least support, "encourage zero rating for particular services and content" raised intense debate around the neutrality of the net and the control of information. It was argued that we were approaching a plateau for internet penetration, and that "leaving it to the market to increase access" would be insufficient as the returns were not there for the private sector for reaching more people.[1]

Evaluation and lessons learned

Things that worked well

An interviewee involved in the delivery of the initiative felt that the process was most successful in achieving the following:

- Introducing the concepts of deliberative democracy to the IGF community. People were generally unsure of what it was, the majority of those involved rated their experience of the event highly, and many have expressed an interest or taken part in further work.

- Showing that even experts with deep-rooted, informed opinions can change their opinion in discussion.

- The use of media-rich communication, such as video, allowed online deliberation to capture a similar quality of deliberation as face-to-face communication.

Things that worked less well or could have been improved

The same interviewee observed:

- While the tech (Google Hangouts) was familiar to everyone, free, and easy to use, it could not be modified and lacked some functionality that the team have since been working on. This includes using features of the software to perform or support the work of moderators – e.g. facilitating and structuring discussion, ensuring people do not all speak at once, and helping users address tech issues.

- The team would also have liked further resources to support recruitment.

There was an extensive evaluation of the initiative, finding evidence of reason-based discussion, high levels of respect and civility among participants – even on highly contentious issues such as zero rating – relatively equal participation regardless of a person's country or gender, and high levels of satisfaction among participants with the initiative, others involved in the process, and the moderators.

With regard to civility and mutual respect, the initiative produced positive results. Participants took part in a pre- and post-deliberation survey of their attitudes towards those they disagree with. On the one hand, there was a significant decrease in support for the view that people they disagreed with "believe things that just aren't true",

"just don't know enough", "are not thinking clearly", or are "just looking out for their own interests." On the other hand, there was an increase in agreement with the view that people they disagree with "have good reasons, there are just more persuasive reasons on the other side".

Participants rated the deliberative events highly in evaluations: 75 percent rated the deliberative event as valuable or very valuable, 83 percent rated the small group discussions as valuable, and 85 percent felt that the moderators provided an opportunity for everyone to participate.

Further observations

Summarised below are the findings of the pilot as officially documented in relation to the central questions of the initiative:

1. Is it possible to recruit a random and representative sample from the IGF community to participate (in both attitudes and demographics)?

Demographically, the participants did not differ significantly from the non-participants. Attitudinally the participants and non-participants had a few statistically significant differences on some attitudes. Of 30 questions, only 7 revealed statistically significant differences between participants and non-participants, these including statements concerning leaving issues of accessibility to the markets or the discretion of individual countries (for full details see [2]).

2. Would IGF participants be effectively motivated to take part?

Of the 241 potential participants, 61 took part, representing roughly a quarter of the population. The report does not specify a target, but only notes that in a full deliberative poll they would aim for around three to five times the number of people. An interviewee involved in delivering the project expressed the wish that they could have had more resources for advertising and reaching out to people. This suggests the turnout was disappointing.

3. Will there be significant opinion change at the individual level?

Of the 13 policy proposals, 7 showed significant differences between initial survey responses and those offered post-deliberation, providing some evidence suggesting that some individuals felt free to change some of their opinions.

4. If there are significant opinion changes, can the reasoning supporting those changes be identified?

Academics at the Centre for Deliberative Democracy analysed transcripts of the discussions. In an evaluation

of this information they concluded that the process supported "a picture of reason based discussion, weighing of arguments for and against" and in instances of significant changes in opinion they were able to identify arguments contributing to these opinions.

5. Will there be significant knowledge gain?

To test this, participants were asked six questions prior to the deliberation event. The questions asked specifically about facts related to the proposals and the issue of internet access overall. On this evaluation, participants increased their knowledge on all six questions. The evaluation notes that 55 percent of participants work professionally in the area of "access", and concludes that even though half of the participants spend significant time on this issue they still learned a lot during these pilots. Eighty percent of participants agreed with the statement that they "learned insights they would like to share with their professional colleagues".

6. Are opinion changes distorted by inequalities in certain demographics, such as gender or region?

An evaluation of deliberative inequalities measured this issue by considering the extent to which the deliberative process was dominated by males or those from the global north. This was operationalised by measuring the extent to which group opinion pre- and post-deliberation showed a shift towards the views of males or those from the global north. They used a measure in which 1 indicates groups moved towards males and those from the global north, results closer to 0.5 indicated no significant move, and results closer to 0 indicated a move away. The results showed that movement towards males was 0.46 and movement towards the global north was 0.51. The results were evaluated as showing no significant move towards or away from males or those from the global north, suggesting participants were not persuaded one way or the other by either of the two groups.[1]

Conclusion

The pilot experiment conducted with the IGF did not result in any direct policy impact, an interviewee from CDD observing that the IGF is a dispersed organisation with no entity driving institutional change, and it would be expected to have limited potential impact. Nevertheless, she observed that participants have separately followed up on the process and expressed an interest in doing more work with deliberative polling.

The deliberative poll has been used to discuss a wide range of issues in many different countries, and it has been used to inform decision-making. For example, in Japan it has been used to discuss pensions, food safety, energy and environmental policy, while in Korea, it has been used to discuss energy and unification. In the US, it has been used to discuss energy, governance reform, poverty, education and unemployment. In Mongolia, constitutional amendments require deliberative polling,[3] while in Texas a deliberative poll led to the state's largest ever investment in renewable energy.[4]

This evidence suggests that the process may be easily replicable to other issues, but it is helpful to qualify this with a number of considerations. Firstly, running a deliberative poll can be a relatively costly form of public engagement, involving recruiting large numbers of people to give up their time to deliberate. The use of online technology can be helpful in reducing these costs. Secondly, the influence a deliberative poll can or should have on policymaking decisions is ambiguous. The participants in a deliberative poll are a microcosm of the population, and the extent to which they can be said to be representative varies from case to case, depending in part on the methodological approach to recruitment. Regardless of how representative they may or may not be, the participants cannot be said to "represent" the population in a formal sense (as the developers of the approach make clear[1]), nor can we make the counterfactual assumption that their conclusions after deliberation will correlate to the conclusions of the whole population after deliberation. This is an important consideration when reflecting on how the results of a poll should be considered in relation to any policy decision.

References

[1] **Deliberative polling for multistakeholder internet governance: considered judgements on access for the next billion**, Fishkin, J. et al, 2017, Information, Communication and Society, https://cdd.stanford.edu/mm/2017/06/fishkin-ics-multistakeholder-ig.pdf

[2] **Online Appendix**, Fishkin, J. et al, 2017, figshare https://figshare.com/articles/Deliberative_polling_for_multistakeholder_internet_governance_considered_judgments_on_access_for_the_next_billion/5154958

[3] **Centre for Deliberative Democracy Timeline**, CDD https://cdd.stanford.edu/deliberative-polling-timeline/

[4] **Deliberative Polling and public consultation**, Fishkin, J. et al., 2000, Parliamentary Affairs 53(4) Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/245859780_Deliberative_Polling_and_Public_Consultation

Centre for
Public Impact
A BCG FOUNDATION

Join the conversation

enquiries@centreforpublicimpact.org
Follow us @CPI_foundation: #FindingLegitimacy
#FutureGovernment