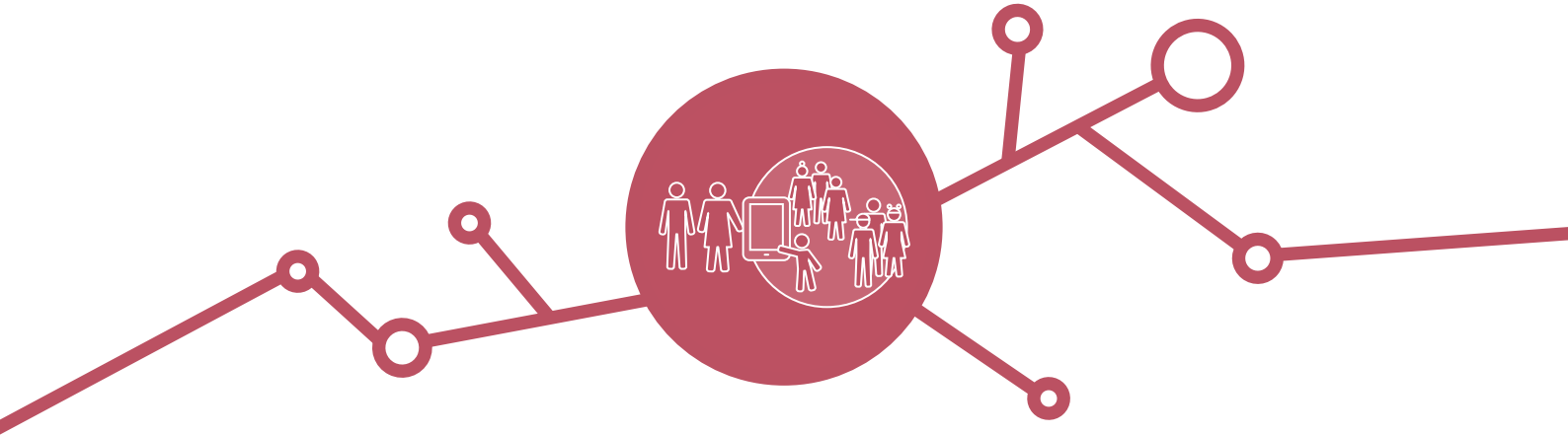


MAKING ONLINE PARTICIPATION LOCAL

CITY OF ANTWERP – YOUTH DEPARTMENT, ANTWERP
BELGIUM



CATEGORIES

- P** Inclusive youth participation
- A** Connecting activities & community events

PRESENTER

Roel Camps, Expert for Participation Youth Policy

DESCRIPTION

How can a local government give young people a voice? The key is the combination of digital participation and location-oriented work.

MOTIVATION

To ensure the participation and inclusion of children, teenagers, and young people within policy structures.

MORE DETAILS

In 2011 Antwerp was the European City of Children and young people. Young people were present and involved in Antwerp like never before; the slogan was 'for and by youngsters'. This brought about change in Antwerp youth policy and participation and taking into account the advice of young was high on the agenda. The youth service hired an expert to research different possibilities of giving young people a voice in city policy.

A digital tool 'OOR' (EAR) was developed in co-creation with young people and several organisations. An online survey was believed to be key in involving young people in a low-threshold way. However, we found that an online survey didn't give young people a voice at all. The tool 'on its own' didn't work, it needed to be supplemented by location-oriented work.

We are designing a tailored plan for each public participation project. We aim to reach at least one hundred young people with each project. First, we locate the various target groups within a broad range of the project. We map out all schools, youth clubs, public buildings, and public locations. Based on this, we carefully pick the locations where we offer the online tool. We aim for efficiency and to target larger groups.

The survey is an online form which can be completed on a tablet. The questionnaire isn't too extensive, so it doesn't take a lot of time to reply. Results are imported into a participation report. In this report all voices are included, because every voice counts. Some opinions are clustered to give an overview. All respondents and policy makers receive a copy and the report can be read online.

OUTCOMES

Between 2012 and 2018 the voice of 20.000 children and youngsters in Antwerp were heard in 120 projects.

Participation is more than a 'one-shot'.

We formulated ten conditions for effective public participation:

- 1 Check in advance to what extent change is possible.
- 2 Determine the goal
- 3 Find out where the target groups are located
- 4 Provide clear, understandable content and instructions for the user
- 5 Work low threshold
- 6 Choose a suitable approach (methodology, timing, processing of results).
- 7 Adjust the methodology to various target groups and vary between locations
- 8 Provide the framework, the context and the timing
- 9 Explain what will happen with the results
- 10 Explain how feedback will be given