### Citizen participation and digital tools

# for upgrading democracy in Iceland and beyond

### Reykjavík - April 2019

**Robert Bjarnason - citizens.is** 



### Þingvellir (Parliament field), Iceland World's oldest running parliament founded 930

# Typical methods of transport to voting polls 100 years ago in Iceland

### The car becomes popular in the 1930's

### First computers arrive in the1960's

diam

# Access to the web is opened in Iceland 1993



### But the democratic system has not evolved much

Pots & Pans Revolution in 2008. Citizens Foundation begins its work

## **Citizens Foundation Vision**

### For there to be trust

### citizens must have a strong voice

### in policymaking with

formal and persistent participation

in the political process



# **Open digital democracy solutions**

- Idea generation, policy crowdsourcing and debate with Your Priorities
- Budget voting and civic education with Open Active Voting
- Empower citizens with Artificial Intelligence with Active Citizen









### Mosfellsbær



### Reykjavíkurborg

























Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations COUNCIL OF EUROPE







European Commission







# Idea generation, policy crowdsourcing and debate With Your Priorities



# **Why Your Priorities?**

- To build trust between citizens and government authorities
- Facilitate better decisions by crowdsourcing policy with the cooperation of citizens and government
- Easy to use and combines play and civic work in a meaningful context



# **Your Priorities highlights**

- Over 1.5 million unique visitors since 2008
- Scales well to big and small projects
- Iceland, Estonia, Norway, France, Australia, Scotland, USA, UK, Romania, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia and more



# **Debate and prioritization**

### • Citizens add ideas and points

 Inform others with structured debate points and become better informed in the process

### • Ideas and points are voted on by citizens

 The best ideas and points for and against them are visible to everyone







#### **Trees for Streets**

Planting trees along urban roads. Increasing tree-lined streets. Benefits ar...



#### Evidence Based Interventions For Children with Autism

The new government should look into subsidising evidence based interventions whi...



#### Don't Accept any ODZ applications

Malta is one of the smallest countries in the world, and the land which we haven...



#### Better transport infrastructure

I think traffic is getting worse everyday and it is time for Malta to upgrade it...



#### voters living abroad

Introduce the facility to allow voters who live abroad to vote from their stayin...





#### Manoel Island - National Park

The maltese people deserve a national park similar to central park in new york t...

📫 231 🏳 7 👎 0 <



#### Green Lung in Every Locality

Kull Kunsill Lokali jiģi mitlub jidentifika post fillokalità fejn jistgħu jitħa...





#### Nirrinģeneraw u nużaw il-bini abbandunat

Fiċ-ċentri tal-irħula hemm ħafna bini abbandunat b'tali mod li jkerrah iż-żoni u...





Demolition ALL illegal boat houses

An utter abuse of public land and injustice to fellow citizens who are denied us...





0% Tax on Fruit, Vegetables & Water

This could be coupled with a sugar tax or higher tax on junk food. This is the I...

🖢 170 🔲 3 👎 0 ≺



ll-bini fi triq ghandu jkun kollu fuq l-istess livell

Qeghdin jinghataw permessi biex djar jitwaqqghu u minflokhom jitilghu flats ta i...





#### 24/7 University Library

University can be a difficult time, and I cannot understate the stress that mult...



## Interface inspires debate

- Points for and against are in different columns which makes it hard to argue
- This encourages rational debate and positive points instead of negativity and personal attacks
- Minority and majority views have equal weight which helps facilitate consensus



#### New Testament in Schools



The current majority has prevented the New Testament from being delivered during school hours. allow it to be distributed during school hours



DEBATE 160	NEWS		PHOTOS
Points fo	r	Points against	
Write point for	0/500	Write point against	0/500
Inga Auðbjörg The only thing I see this idea is th Testament could lead to children could easily lead to their loss of accurately, as the book outdated modern society. However, I do no of the schools to cherish children ↑ 35 ↓ 19 <	reading it and that faith quickly and as a manual for ot think it is the role	Arni Steingrímur Sigurðsson Piratar The Reykjavik Human Rights Policy is http://reykjavik.is/mannrettindastev The policy aims at ensuring that all ci equal rights regardless of their origin, language, language, color, religion, sex orientation, sexual orientation, sexual age, disability, classmates, physical ac organs or other status. "This proposa against it.	available at which states: tizens enjoy nationality, kual, sexual orientation, ctivity, health,

1 58 🗸 3 < A Árni Stefán Árnason 15 Anna Þorsteinsdóttir The New Testament deals with the lifetime of the most remarkable one. He was sent here because of the question of man about the existence of God. It is a compulsory reading to read about him, no It's not up to the schools to teach about one matter what conclusion you finally get. There has been no loss of following him. His name is Jesus Christ, and his story is young in a humanistic to teach children religion and thus take care of context. He was up, really just around the corner.  $\uparrow 4 \downarrow 2 < \blacktriangle$ 1 49 🤟 3 < X A Fríður Birna Stefánsdóttir Eiríkur Fannar Jónsson The countries of the world with the highest level of equality (the Nordic countries) have been based on beliefs. Much more natural is that in the Christian values, and I therefore think it is important that everyone learns. A great book that encourages love, equality, tolerance, self-esteem and church. independence. It makes everyone good to read it. 1 57 🗸 14 < A Reading the New Testament does not make you Christian. The decision of the individual to have fellowship with Jesus and follow him does. The more knowledge we give the children the better Sigurður Hólm Gunnarsson they are prepared to stand up for themselves. ↑ 2 ↓ 1 < New Testament to churches? Guðión Gíslason 1 40 ↓ 1 < A Current community is based on the message of Alexandra Briem this book, whether or not people have or against them. And children have the right to learn about it and decide whether they want to follow this book or not. Therefore, it's an imprint to give them this and allow them to sort. The second is a violation of their right to study. X ↑ 3 ↓ 2 < A



Alda Björg Lárusdóttir

religion more than the other. The children who learn the most about Christianity. But an innovative idea everything possible and from all over the world.

It is not the schools to instill children religious appropriate religious institutions. Those who want the New Testament could then approach it in their

I have a revolutionary idea. What about giving the



X

X

 $\times$ 

×

The school system is working on behalf of the government, as our representative of all and the power we have in common. Therefore, it should not be applied to give young people the idea that it's the power that society regards one religion more or better than others. Such an attitude is a majority attempt to use its facilities to provide increased body weight gain through the power of the joint institutions. It's not alway. Not because the 'New



The book is given to those who wish to receive. It can be used in religious studies such as other study material and other religious texts. The book has been published for decades. Nevertheless, people have made their own decision with their lives and faith, the book does not have magic in this regard. Therefore, I can not stand it spread. This is just a book for the one who does not believe, religious literature for the other.

↑ 3 ↓ 2 < ▲



Our culture is based on Christian values. The New Testament expresses tolerance of faith and love and revelation. I have my book since 1956 from the Gideon Society. In fact, there is a need for children and adolescents today to get to know what the book suggests as Anxiety and depression seem to be increasingly affected. But it is timeless and never expires. Jesus is the best friend of the children.

 $\uparrow 2 \downarrow 1 < A$ 



We are Kristinland and I take this book good. She was good for me, she did not hurt. Beautiful gift and those who do not want a choice and can say; no thanks

↑ 2 ↓ 1 < ▲

#### Eygló Karlsdóttir

I recommend the new testament to high school, 1 1 10 111 1

better than others. Such an attitude is a majority attempt to use its facilities to provide increased body weight gain through the power of the joint institutions. It's not okay. Not because the 'New Testament is harmful' but because it is a misuse of facilities.





In my opinion, this is a money-loss. Not many guys who will read the book. Rather distribute books that interest the kids and encourage them to read books.



×

X

X



×

X

×

Sigurlaug Lilja Jónasdóttir

Parents must be able to access religious literature for their children elsewhere than in educational institutions that should be neutral to religious beliefs.



Guðmundur Jónsson

One particular religion should not be part of a committed education.





Primary education must be a neutral basis. The statement of many that Iceland is a Christian nation is arrogant and depressing. It is not all Christians in Iceland and can not be stated in this way. To propose that the book of Christian faith be

## **Focused output**

- Best ideas and solutions of participants
  - Also other useful, crowd-sorted and debated ideas
- Increased civic knowledge of participants
- Higher public acceptance and satisfaction levels with use of citizens ideas and work



# **Example Projects**



## Better Reykjavík

- Opened a week before the 2010 elections in Reykjavik, independent of political parties
- Over 40% of voters participated, 8% added content and over 1000 ideas were created
- The Best Party needed real policies and said: 'Come to Better Reykjavik help us make policy'



# From jokes to mayor

- The Best party (Jón Gnarr) was topping in polls when they saw Better Reykjavik
- Saw a solution for their lack of policy and used supporters to help create platform
- Many ideas became part of the coalition agreement







ideas will be sent to the relevant council of the city of Reykjavík.

Q 2,865 👪 4 💮 12,283





Neighborhood in October 2018. The ideas

Q 821 :10 • 4,246

voted on in my district poll My

should: Improve th ...



Q 28 📫 1 💿 205





Reykjavík School of Education and Leisure.

Q 16 🔐 1 💿 43

One of th...



Q 1,081 :10 5,472

construction projects and maintenance

projects in Reykjavik until March 24, the

projects were select ...

= 🛪 S



(?) **IDENTIFICATION** 





#### Votre voix dans les conseils municipaux

Dans vos conseils de conseil, les meilleures idées seront envoyées au conseil compétent de la ville de Reykjavík.

Q 2,865 🚜 4 💽 12,283







#### Notre université

Le conseil des étudiants souhaite entendre les idées des élèves de l'école et donner aux étudiants la possibilité de déterminer le...

Q 28 🚜 1 💿 205





Q 16 🔐 1 💿 43

Le centre de loisirs Gufunesbær a été

l'école d'éducation et de loisirs de

fondé en automne 1998 et est géré par

Gufunesbær

Reykjavík. Ľu...



Il y avait des idées ouvertes pour de nouveaux projets de construction et de maintenance à Reykjavik jusqu'au 24 mars, les projets...

Q 1,081 👫 10 🔿 5,472



= 🛪 🛇



(?)

登入

😑 Betri Reykjavik 🛧 🔀 🛇



GROUPS (10)

NEWS

MAP



#### Downtown 2017

The city center is the commonwealth of all the inhabitants, but it is also the neighborhood of those living there and raising children. We encourage all residents to provide ideas on how to make the n...

#### Q 111 🛛 378 💿 1,267



Grafarvogur 2017

In Grafarvogur there is a lot of neighborhood awareness, and many people in Grafarvog look like a kind of town within the city limits. We encourage all residents to provide ideas on how to make the ne...

Q 180 🟳 511 💿 991



The neighborhood draws its name from a large sports and recreation area, which is in the center of the neighborhood. We encourage all residents to provide ideas on how to make the neighborhood even be...

Q 124 🖾 410 💿 956



#### Háaleiti og Bústaðir 2017

Ambitious schooling, sports clubs and a beautiful outdoor area in Fossvogsdal characterize the neighborhood. We encourage all residents to provide ideas on how to make the neighborhood even better.

Q 143 🔲 421 💿 780









#### 😑 Betri Reykjavik 🛧 🕺 🛇





😑 Hverfið mitt 2017 🛧 🕺

	Laugardalur 2017 ÷	
	The neighborhood draws its name from a large sports and recreation area, which is in the center of the neighborhood. We encourage all residents to provide ideas on how to make the neighborhood even better. Q 124 410 5956	
POPULAR 127	NEWS MAP	

Search for...



#### Pump track in Laugardalur

2 years ago I submitted an idea of a "Pumptrack" trail in Laugardalinn. She was thrown out of elec...

♡ 180 🟳 44 🛇 1 <



Vaðlaug in Laugardalslaug

Create a swimming pool in Laugardalslaug, suitable for children under 6 years old. Basic pool with p...

🛇 173 🏳 3 🚫 1 \prec



Q

#### Playground in Laugardalinn

It would be great to have a fun playground in the valley - castle, slide, swings, sandbox and all th...



#### **Basketball Court in Laugardalur**

A real basketball court with good baskets (4-6 pcs.) And a sports court for children and adults. Wou...

💟 159 🔲 19 🚫 2 <









🖤 168 🏳 7 🚫 3 <





# **Reykjavik City collaboration**

- Formal collaboration with the city of Reykjavík since 2011, hundreds of approved and realized ideas
- Over 70.000 people have participated with new ideas being processed every month
- Currently working with Reykjavik City on the future of our citizens participation



# **Education policy until 2030**

- Reykjavík is currently shaping a new education policy
- Purpose is to get citizens' views on what should be the most important skills and qualifications for an 18-year-old
- Citizens in Reykjavik have opportunity to participate directly in formulating city policy


≡ Betri Reykjavik ↑



**GROUPS** (5)





#### Self-esteem: Strong self-esteem and self-esteem

Incorporating self-esteem, knowing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals, following up and evaluating results. Self-esteem relates to autonomy, perseverance and self-esteem. Children mature in an en...

Q 23 243 780



Literacy: Understand and be loyal to society and the environment

We have the ability to read, understand, interpret and work effectively with written issues; words, numbers, pictures and symbols. In broad terms, the term also refers to different types of literacy. ...

Q 34 🗌 70 👩 200



Social Responsibility: Social **Responsibility and Functionality** 

Ability to communicate effectively with others, for example, sharing and working with others, helping, boasting and showing kindness and respect to others. Social skills are related, inter alia, ernoti...

Q 16 🛛 21 💿 139



This includes life and consumption habits, physical skills, sexual health and mental and social well-being. Ideas for health have changed with new knowledge of the interaction between minds and bodies...

Q 15 🗆 29 👩 139



## **Our University**

- University of Iceland Student Council first direct democracy experiment on Better Reykjavik
- What is the biggest student interest?
- Two phases
  - Idea generation
  - Final voting









The arrival of a supermarket on the Student Gardens

Increased access to food at a lower price, yes please!



Add a selection of vegan food in Hámu

The selection in Hámur has grown in recent years, but despite many requests to improve the range



Recordings of lectures

The duty of teachers to take up lectures



#### New UI sports and fitness center

The HÍ Sports Hall was built 70 years ago for 1,500 students. Today there are over 13,000

#### **Estonian law reforms**

- After political scandals in Estonia in 2012 grassroots NGOs and President of Estonia lead a law reform project
- 50.000+ people took part and sent in over 2000 proposals with Your Priorities
- 7 of the 15 top ideas are now part of Estonian law





Minu hääl peab jõudma minu poolt valitud kandidaadile (8)

D 227

## Examples of law changes

- Reduced the number of members required for the establishment of a political party and candidate deposit
- Stricter sanctions for accepting prohibited donations
- More authority to the Political Party Supervision Board
- 1000 citizens can now send issues to parliament which must process them



## Malta / Forza Nazzjonali

- Launched 4 weeks before a snap election in Malta. FN then won close to 44% of the vote.
- Over 30.000 visited the website, over 10% of Malta's voting population
- Over 2.700 ideas added and 4.000 registered users





#### GROUPS (18)

Your Ideas

voice to be heard. This is how we truly ...

Q 2,118 2,399 3,707

NEWS



Electronic Democracy is all about Empowerment, about Joseph Muscat's Government has highlighted the serious flaws and deficiencies in our country's giving you a voice. All citizens can propose their own ideas and open them up for discussion. We want your constitutional and legal framework which have led to abuse, corruption and lack of transparency. Forza Na...

Q 41 🔲 53 🔿 338



#### **Politics for the People**

Forza Nazzjonali is committed to better the lives of the Maltese people through policies developed and aimed at addressing key issues such as the gender pay gap and gender disparity, a healthy work-I ...





#### Forbrukerradet

- "Mine idéer" is a project by Forbrukerrådet in Norway
- Norwegian Consumer Council is testing different participation methods using Your Priorities
- 5 different subjects of participation







#### GROUPS (6)

#### 'My ideas'

'My Ideas' from the Consumer Council gives you the opportunity to input and comment on the Consumer Council's work and priorities. The inputs are used to ensure a good basis for our assessments, initiate studies, debates, activities and develop services.

Q 224 🚜 7 💿 1,677

NEWS



#### Hvordan bør privatleasing reguleres?

Privatleasing is a market that grows rapidly, reaching already 13 billion dollars a year. But it is largely the companies that define the terms. Should the authorities intervene with appropriate rules...

Q 35 🗍 459 👩 890



#### How to improve the real estate service?

We can swap a regular doctor up to twice a year. Not everyone is satisfied with their predecessor, but there are only a few who change. Should a new doctor be found, there is little information about ...

Q 55 🗖 825 😁 649



Hvordan få til et grønt forbrukerskifte?

The Consumer Council wishes your input to solutions and suggestions that can contribute to increased reuse of products and offer more durable and sustainable products. Help us contribute to a green co...

Q 38 🔲 198 ⊙ 92









#### **French Parliament**

- Two French senators in the majority are using Your Priorities
  - The senators select the two most discussed questions to ask government each month
  - And follow up on answers to make sure they are adequate and informative



C'est aussi marguer une non adhésion aux

programmes projets idées des candidate en



Vous voulez une administration plus efficiente grâce à la transition numérique ? Alors, ne laissez

l'adminis

dans l'administration ?

Ne laissez pas, Madame la Ministre Agnès Buzyn, « une sémantique » monopolistique qualifiée par

Bonjour - les citoyens ébahis constatent que la plupart du temps, lors des votes à l'assemblée

## **Girraween Public School**

- A class of 11 year olds has free time every week
- They used Your Priorities to collect ideas from class who also vote on the ideas
- Top idea is done in next free school time
- 'It allows people to be heard'



"This site is democratic as it gives us the chance to embrace our opinions. It allows people to be heard. I think it is a great way to vote on things we think are beneficial for our classroom." Casey Lieu, 11 years old student, Australia.

Your Priorities e-democracy applied to class priorities in Australian school

# Budget voting and civic education

with Open Active Voting



## **Open Active Voting**

- Give citizens direct influence on part of a local government budget
- Educate citizens on how much things cost and what it means to have a budget
- Build up trust and make better decisions







million have been allocated proportionately. Islenska Polska







Laugardalur

#### Maps



Light-controlled crossing on Reykjavegur

13 millions



Improvements to basketball court by Laugalækjarskóli





Front view of Laugardalslaug

10 millions



Information boards in Laugarnes

2 millions





5 millions

Parkour area in Laugardalur

13 millions



Improved lighting at Holtavegur-Langholtsvegur junction 4 millions



Labelling paths in Laugardalur

2 millions





Laugardalur

Maps



Light-controlled crossing on Reykjavegur

13 millions



Improvements to basketball court by Laugalækjarskóli





Better access to the shore on Laugarnestangi







Front view of Laugardalslaug

10 millions



Smarten the drinking fountain areas in Laugardalur

3 millions



Information boards in Laugarnes

2 millions



Battery charging at Laugardalslaug

5 millions

Parkour area in Laugardalur

13 millions



Holtavegur-Langholtsvegur junction

4 millions



Labelling paths in Laugardalur

2 millions

## **Our PB projects in Iceland**

- Better Neighbourhoods in Reykjavik from 2011 - 2019
- Our Kópavogur 2016 2018
  - Record 18% participation rate
- Our Mosó 2017
  - Over 14% participation rate



#### **Better Neighbourhoods**

- Participatory budgeting (PB) in Reykjavik from 2011 to 2019
- 3.5 million Euro budget in 2019
- Ideas from citizens on projects to improve the neighbourhoods of Reykjavik



#### **Better Neighbourhoods process**

- 1. Citizens submit their ideas
- 2. City of Reykjavik evaluates their cost
- 3. Citizens vote on the ideas
- 4. City of Reykjavik executes them
- 5. Citizens use the results



## In general

- 696 ideas have been approved by citizens in Better neighborhoods from 2012 - 2018
- The vote is electronic, binding and secure
- All neighborhoods of Reykjavik have been improved visibly through Better Neighborhoods



#### Reykjavík PB vote participation %



2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018







## **Other PB projects in Europe**

- Fife, Dundee, Argyll & Bute, Drammen and more
- Maribor, Slovenia
- Decide Madrid, Spain Consulting
- Miskolc, Hungary
- Pula, Croatia



## Empower citizens with Artificial Intelligence

#### With Active Citizen



## Why Active Citizen

- Empower citizens democratically with Artificial Intelligence
- Fight filter bubbles and bias to help citizens deal with their life based on their real needs
- Empower citizens with relevant knowledge



#### **Active Citizen Al Notifications**

- Reduce participation friction by sending citizens notifications on relevant issues
- Helps citizens to serve their democratic interests online, notify them about opportunities to participate
- Informative, useful but not intrusive



#### **Active Citizen Recommendations**

- Gives users recommendations based on what they have liked or disliked before
  In a similar way that Facebook creates your feed
- Recommendations are not the main way users are delivered ideas in order to minimize filter bubbles



Útbúa steyptan fót- og körfuboltavöll við Stelluróló. Þar væri einnig hægt að fara í skotbolta og aðra boltaleiki. Þarna er í dag mjög lúinn malar fótboltavöllur með illgresi og stórum steinum og allt of stórum mörkum. Ég er búinn að búa í nágreninu í 3 ár og hef aldrei séð krakka leika sér á vellinum vegna bess hvað hann er í lélegu ástandi og fyrir löngu kominn

Takmörkun á lágflug þyrlna og smárellna yfir Digranessvæðinu



Torg á Kópavogshálsi.



Laga aðkomu að Þingahverfi



Bálhús -grillhús Kópavogsdal

## **Active Citizen - Deep Linking Youth**

- The DEEP-Linking Youth project brings the voices of young people to policymakers
- On the subjects of youth mobility and Erasmus project
- Uses Deep Learning Neural Networks to filter relevant discussions on social media







2. 3. 4. Registering is free Grade 5. Erasmus charging pasta #totsiguals

RT @ElisaTarabella: @SantinaBiondo @ EmanuelaBiondo1 @ Lola\_new8 Mario Biondo, Martina Rossi, the student of the Erammus ... even he has self-stabbed. Strano vero ??

## **Final words**



#### Participation must be fun

- Fun, easy, informative and educational
- If it's not 'fun' people will rather go on Facebook, play computer games or watch a movie
- We live in a world with endless possibilities for fun activities, civic work competes with that



#### **Reward your citizens**

- Use the best citizens ideas on a regular basis, not only talk about it but do it
- Use examples of successful projects to show value, build trust and increase participation
- If citizens don't know the results it will be hard to get more participation from them



## **Communication is key**

- Good communication is the key to success
- We must use good, modern tools for this but tools alone are not enough
- Realistic marketing budgets are critical



## Public and not for profit

- There is a danger of privatization in the evolution of democracy online
- Trust is a major problem in democracy today and for-profit democracy in the cloud is not the solution
- Open source software, decentralization and publicly operated servers are key for trust



# Thank you

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