Digequal

e-government activities

e-participation

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1.   Introductory activity

1.1. Discussion

- Are you aware of the term e-participation?
- Have you ever heard about it?
- In what ways can it be practiced?
- Why do you think it is important for a functioning democratic society?

1. Introductory presentation

1.2. Citizen participation

Citizen participation is a crucial component of a healthy and functioning democracy. It allows citizens to have a voice in decision-making processes and helps to ensure that government policies and actions reflect the needs and values of the community.

Traditionally, citizen participation has taken the form of town hall meetings, public hearings, and other in-person events. However, with the advent of digital technologies, e-participation has become an increasingly important and popular form of citizen participation.

1.   Introductory presentation

1.3. e-participation

e-participation involves the use of digital platforms and tools, such as the internet, social media, and mobile devices, to engage citizens in political and democratic processes. It enables citizens to participate in decision-making from the comfort of their own homes, share their views with a wider audience, and collaborate with others on issues that affect their communities.

e-participation can take many forms, including online consultations, surveys, forums, and feedback mechanisms.

1.   Introductory presentation

1.4. e-participation & e-government

e-participation is a form of e-government service that specifically focuses on citizen participation in decision-making processes. Unlike other e-government services, such as online payment systems, e-participation aims to engage citizens in collaborative dialogue and decision-making, rather than simply providing them with information or enabling them to carry out transactions.

While e-participation is just one form of e-government service, it is an important one, as it can help to foster greater transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in government decision-making. By giving citizens a voice in policy-making processes, e-participation can help to build trust between citizens and government and ensure that policies and initiatives are responsive to the needs and values of the community.

1. Introductory presentation

1.5. Do you know any of the following platforms?

1. ***CitizenLab*** - A platform that allows citizens to submit ideas, vote on proposals, and provide feedback on policies and initiatives.
2. **Change.org**: A platform that enables citizens to create and sign petitions on a wide range of issues.
3. **Your Priorities**: A platform that allows citizens to submit ideas, vote on proposals, and collaborate with others on policy solutions.
4. ***Decidim*** – A platform that enables citizens to participate in public consultations, engage with their local governments, and contribute to policy-making processes.

2.   e-participation

2.1. Brainstorming

❖   When and why, do you think, participating got digital?

❖   Why is it important?

3.   Case study

The current activity will allow learners to develop a concrete perception of e-participation and familiarize with its practices and importance.

4.   Exercise

4.1. The guidelines of the activity

❑ The objective of this exercise is to help us understand and experience the importance of actively participating in decision-making processes. It aims to develop our critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills, and empower us to become effective contributors to decision-making within a group or organization.

❑ You will have to form two teams.

❑ Each team will receive several props.

❑ Each prop has a word related to e-government services.

4. Exercise

4.2. e-government services

1. Online consultation platform

2. e-procurement platform for government contracts

3. Digital public records archive

4. Electronic voting system

5. Crowdsourcing tool for policy ideas

4.   Exercise

4.2. e-government services

6. Online petition platform

7. Online payment system for taxes and fees

8. Collaborative decision-making software

9. Digital citizen survey tool

10. Online platform for citizen complaints and feedback

4.   Exercise

4.3. Discussion topic

Which of the given e-government services are related
to e-participation?
Please justify your answer.

4. Exercise

4.4. Become a part of decision-making processes!

As learners-citizens we'll take time to read and understand the given topic and eventually we'll provide a justified response.

Thus, we become engaged with the concept of e-participation and build a solid understanding around its ecosystem.

4. Exercise

4.5. Evaluation and Reflection

▪ Was the digital platform user-friendly and easy for you to use?

▪ Are you planning to use e-participation platforms in the future?

▪ What is your opinion on the use of e-participation platforms? Have you found them to be effective in increasing citizen engagement and participation in the policymaking process?

▪ Do you believe they have the potential to improve transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in government decision-making?

Thank you!
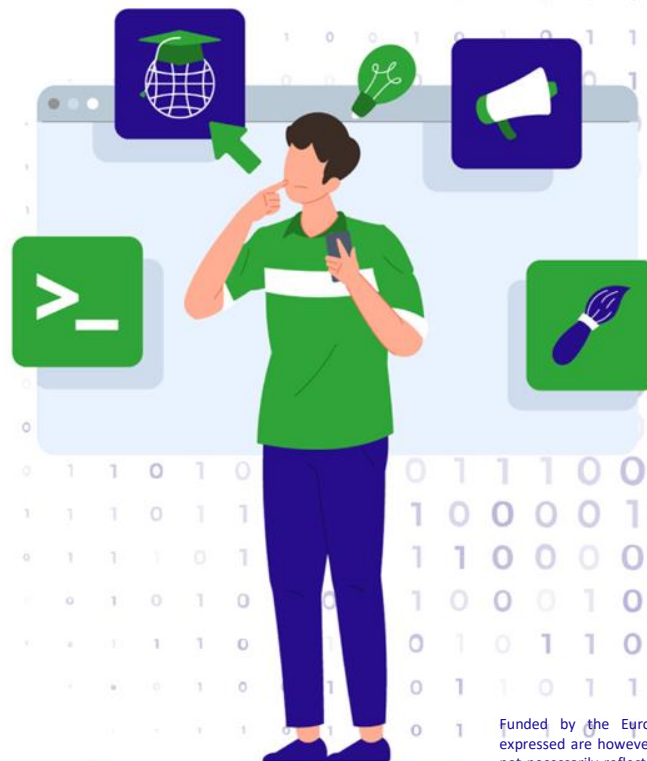
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e-government activities

e-policy Making (Activity 2)

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1. Introductory activity

1.1. Discussion

The concept of policy making may be familiar to you, but have you considered its significance?

- Why is policy making important?
- Have you ever practiced it?
- In what ways can it be practiced digitally?

1. Introductory presentation

1.2. Policy making

Policy making refers to the process of creating and implementing policies to address specific issues or achieve particular goals. This process involves a series of steps, including problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation.

Effective policy making requires collaboration, consultation, and engagement with stakeholders, as well as the use of evidence-based approaches to inform decision-making. Good policies are those that are feasible, effective, and efficient, and that reflect the values and aspirations of society as a whole.

1. Introductory presentation

1.3. e-policy making

e-policy making provides citizens with a platform to express their opinions, concerns, and feedback on policy issues. Through digital tools, citizens can share their views and ideas with policymakers and other members of the community. This engagement helps to increase transparency, accountability and public trust in the policymaking process.

e-policy making also enables citizens to become part of an online community where they can interact with like-minded individuals, share their experiences, and collaborate on policy initiatives.

1. Introductory presentation

1.4. Do you know any of the following platforms?

1. ***eDemocracy platform of the European Commission*** - a platform that allows citizens to submit feedback and ideas on EU policies, initiatives and legislative proposals.
2. ***CONSUL*** - a platform developed by the city of Madrid, Spain, that allows citizens to participate in decision-making processes and collaborate with public institutions.
3. ***CitizenLab*** - a platform used by several EU cities to engage citizens in policymaking and crowdsource ideas.
4. ***OurSpace*** - a platform developed by the European Youth Forum that allows young people to participate in EU policy-making and share their opinions on youth-related issues.
5. ***Decidim*** – a participatory democracy platform for cities and organizations.
6. MyBB – a forum software powering thousands of engaging, vibrant, and unique communities across the internet.

2. e-policy making platform

2.1. Brainstorming

❖ What would you think of the idea of a platform allowing you to participate in a subject of public interest?

❖ Did you ever have an idea for a policy that you think would benefit the community but didn't know where and how to address it?

3.   Case study

3.1. Step by step:

➢ A city government has recently launched an **e-policy platform** to engage citizens in the policymaking process. One day, a citizen named **Jane** logs onto the platform to submit a proposal. She notices that there is a section on the platform where citizens can introduce their own ideas for policies that they think would benefit the community.

➢ Jane decides to submit an idea she has been thinking about for a while: she **suggests** that the city government should invest in a new park in her neighborhood. She believes that the area lacks green space and that a new park would provide residents with a place to relax, exercise, and socialize.

3. Case study

3.1. Step by step:

➢ Jane **fills out the submission form** on the e-policy platform, describing her proposal and why she thinks it's important. She also includes some pictures of the neighborhood to illustrate her point.

➢ The platform automatically sends Jane's proposal to the relevant government officials and posts it publicly on the platform for other citizens to view and comment on. Within a few days, **several other residents** in Jane's neighborhood have commented on her proposal, expressing their support and adding their own suggestions for features they would like to see in the new park.

3. Case study

3.1. Step by step:

➢ The city government officials responsible for parks and recreation also see Jane's proposal and decide to **hold a public meeting** to discuss the idea further. They invite Jane and other interested citizens to attend the meeting and share their thoughts on the proposal.

➢ Thanks to the e-policy platform, Jane's idea has gained traction and **sparked a conversation** about the need for more green space in the neighborhood. The city government officials take the proposal seriously and ultimately decide to allocate funding for a new park in Jane's neighborhood, incorporating some of the suggestions made by other residents.

4.   Exercise

4.1. Digital policy making platform

1. Go to **https://www.kialo-edu.com**

2. **Click** the blue button to **sign up,** or the **"log in"** button, if you already have an account.

Note: You can use a smartphone, a tablet or a desktop/laptop computer.
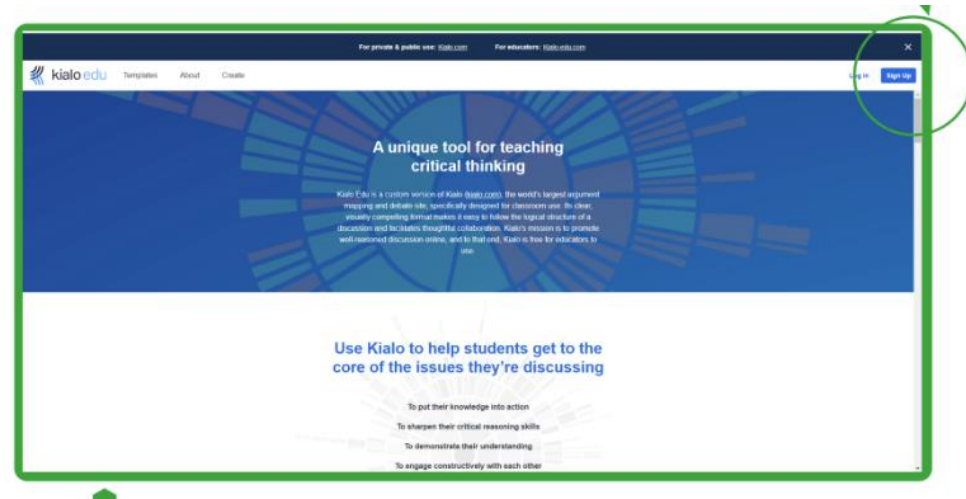
4. Exercise

4.2. Register as a new user

Follow the steps to **sign up**.

You will need to fill in the following:

❑ Name

❑ Email (optional)

❑ Password
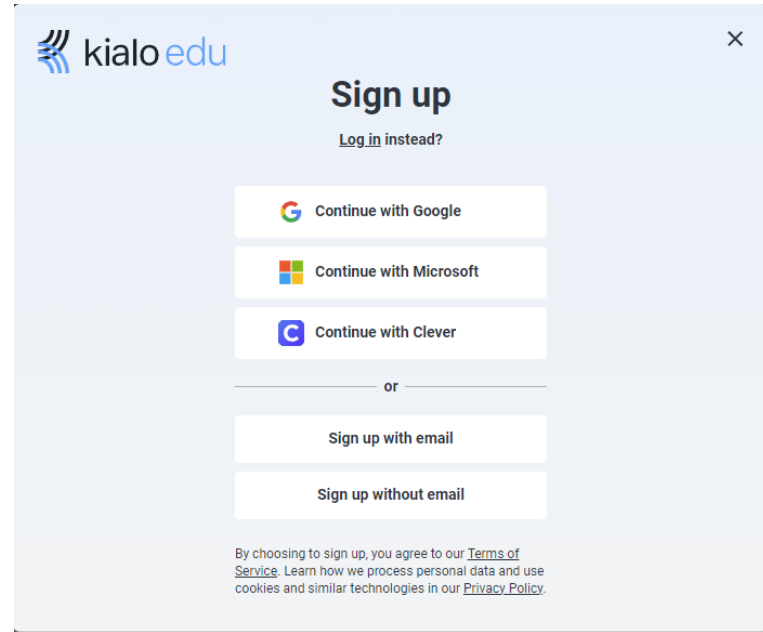
4. Exercise

4.3. Start a discussion

Click the link to initiate a discussion.
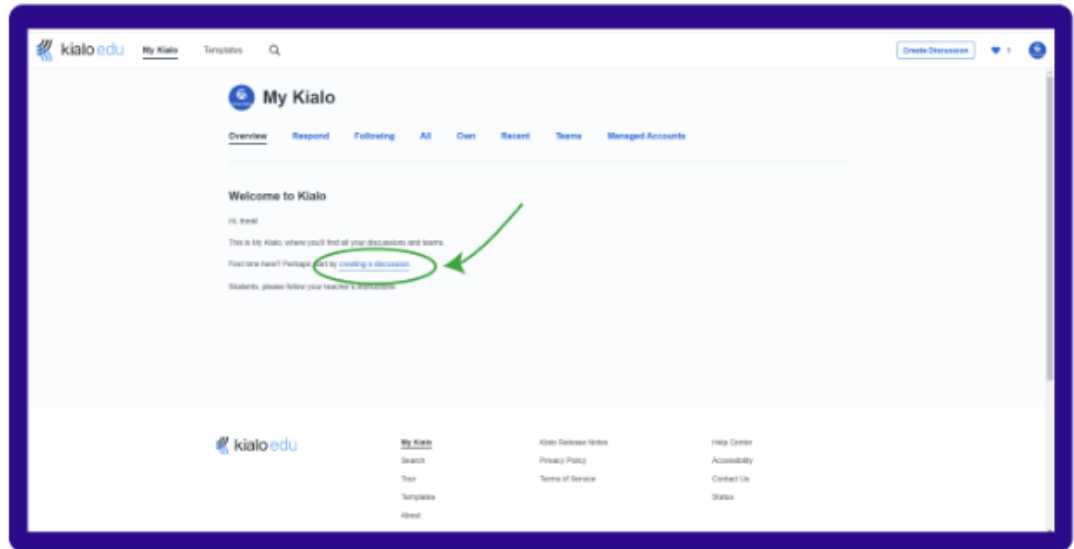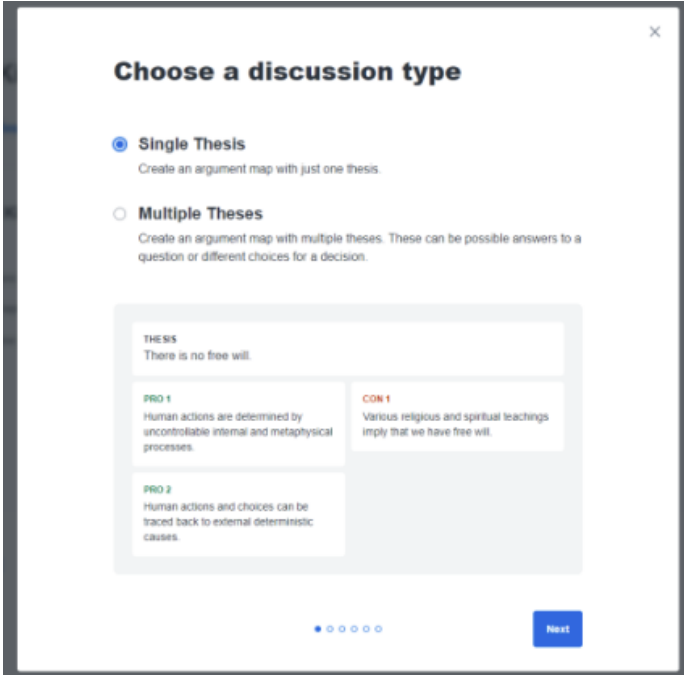
4.   Exercise

4.4.   Discussion topic

Choose the specifics of the discussion:

A. Discussion Type
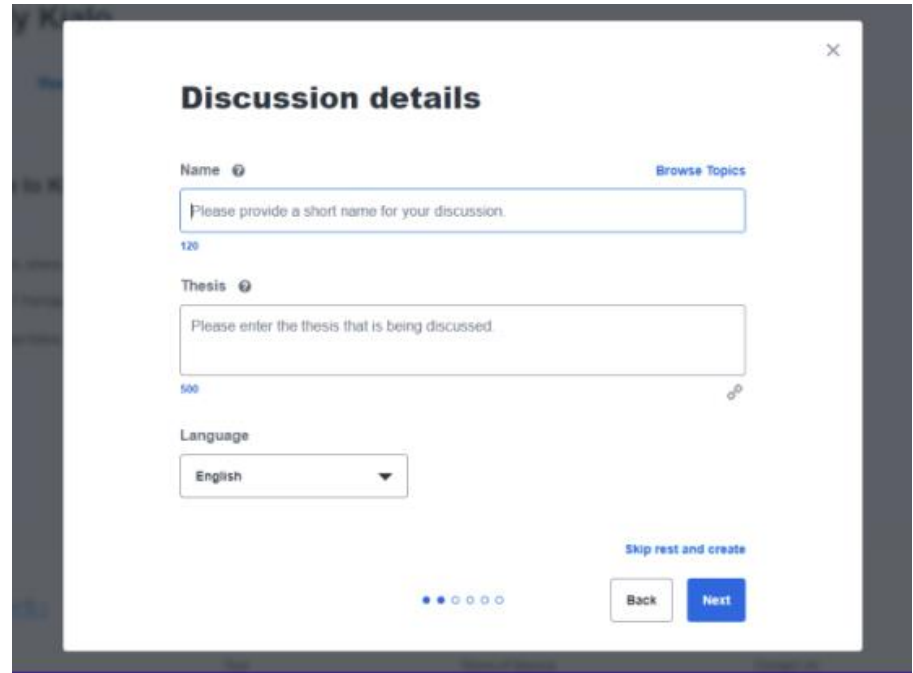
4.   Exercise

4.4.   Discussion topic

Choose the specifics of the discussion:

B. Discussion details

4.   Exercise

4.4. Discussion topic

Choose the specifics of the discussion:

C. Participation type
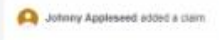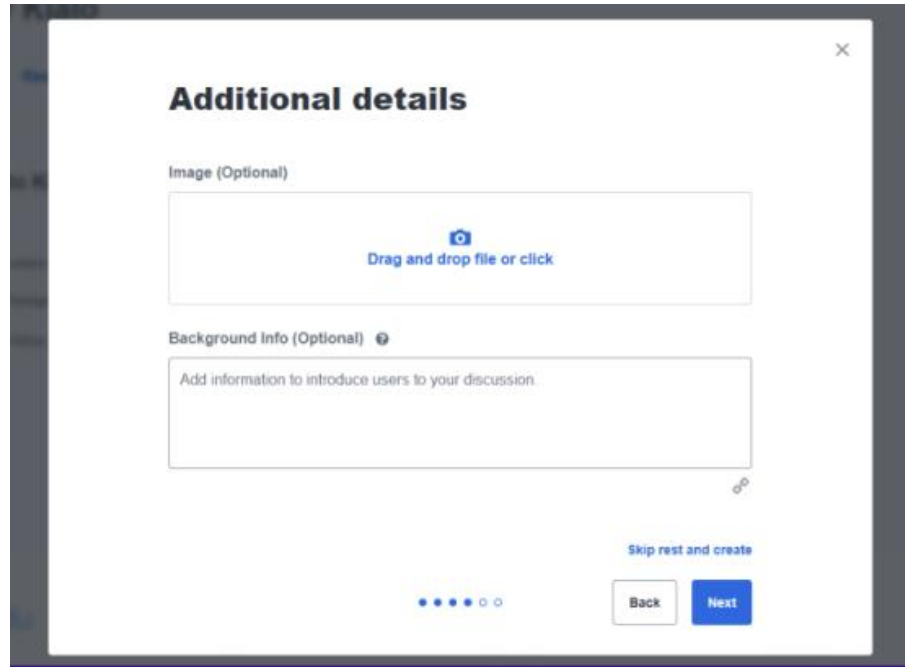
4. Exercise

4.4. Discussion topic

Choose the specifics of the discussion:

D. Add any additional details (optional)
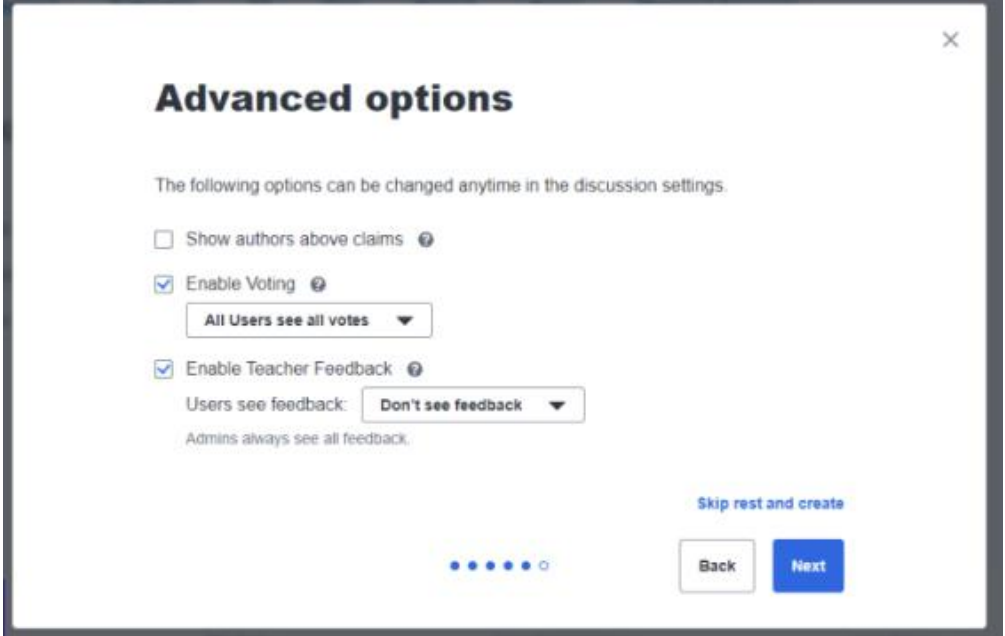
4. Exercise

4.4. Discussion topic

Choose the specifics of the discussion:

E. Advanced options

You can select whether the voting results will be visible to all users and/or whether the users will be able to see the educator's feedback.
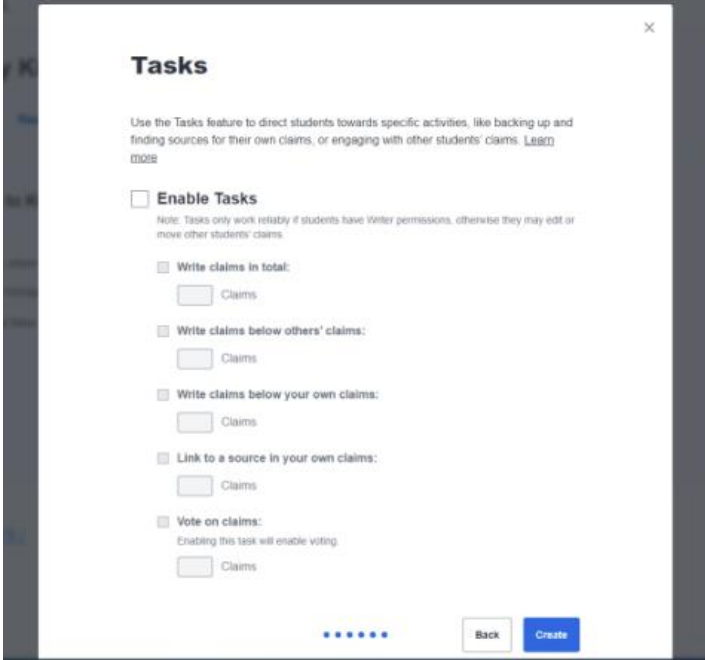
4. Exercise

4.5. Become a part of policy-making!

The users-citizens take time to read and understand the given topic and are eventually asked to provide a positive/negative response and elaborate on an alternative/why they think it is a good proposal.

4. Exercise

4.6. Evaluation and Reflection

▪ Was the digital platform user-friendly and easy for you to use?

▪ Are you planning to use digital policy making platforms in the future?

▪ What is your opinion on the use of e-policy making platforms? Have you found them to be effective in increasing citizen engagement and participation in the policymaking process?

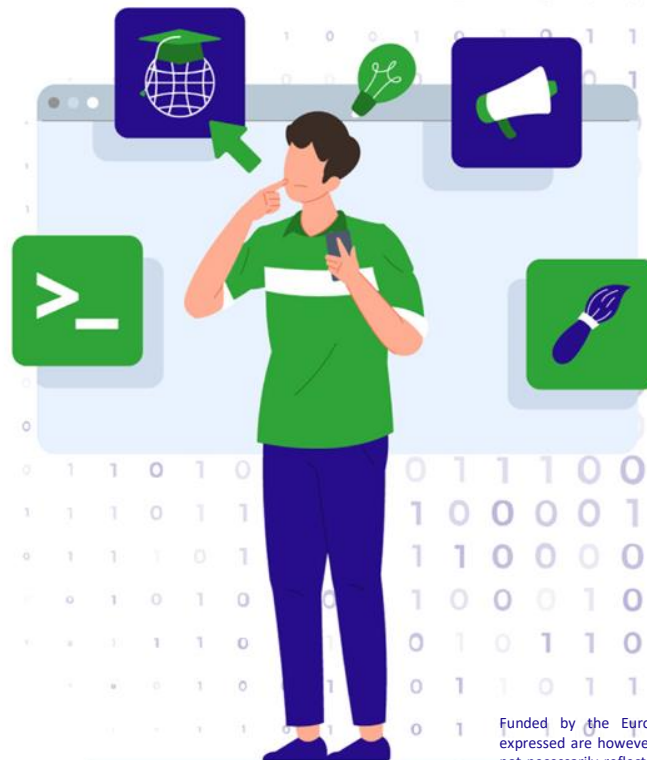▪ Do you believe they have the potential to improve transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in decision-making?

Thank you!

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e-government activities

e-voting (Activity 1)

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1.   Introductory activity

1.1.   Discussion

- Is distance a deterrent factor when it comes to voting?

- How long do you usually wait in queues?

- Are there any trust issues?

2. Comparative exercise

2.1. Traditional voting (physical presence)

Traditional voting requires the physical presence of citizens. It is performed in designated polling places where the voters cast their ballots, typically made of paper.

The voting process is conducted by trained election officials who ensure that the process is fair and transparent.

2. Comparative exercise

2.2. e-voting

Through e-voting, citizens are able to participate in a voting procedure digitally, from the comfort of their own space.
Political elections, Universities, or work, it can be applied everywhere and save time and budget!
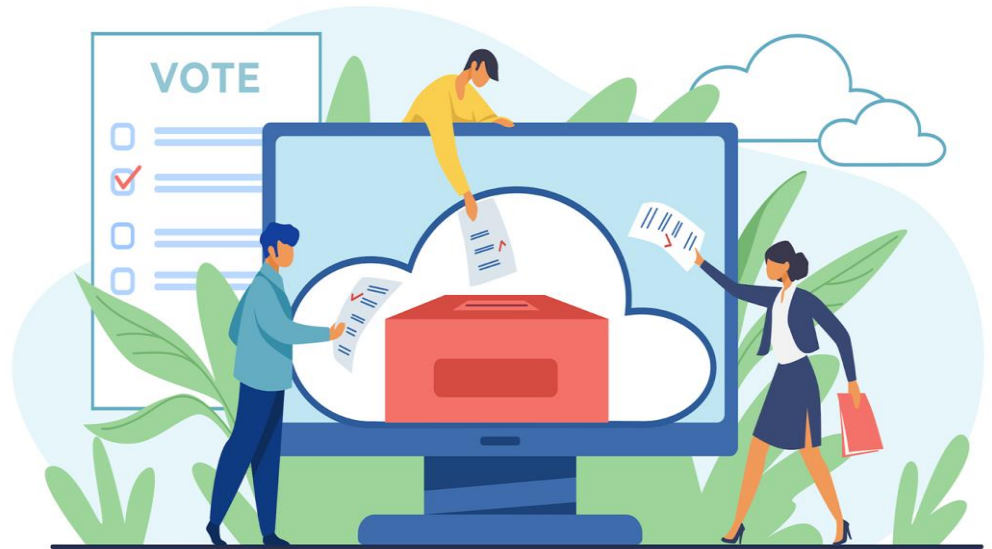
2. Comparative exercise

2.3. Why is the traditional voting method still applied nowadays?

Despite the wide use and advancement of technology, traditional voting remains the first option in a voting process.

Many countries have **legal requirements** that mandate the use of traditional voting methods. Changing the voting process would require significant legislative and administrative efforts.

Moreover, traditional voting has a **social and cultural significance**, providing a physical manifestation of democracy that is shared by many citizens. Traditional voting has been used for centuries, and many people trust it as a reliable and familiar method for casting their vote.

2.   Comparative exercise

2.4.   Which are the disadvantages of traditional voting?

While traditional voting has its advantages, it also has weaknesses that can result in a significant rate of abstention or non-participation by eligible voters. Some of these weaknesses include **limited accessibility**, potential for **long wait** times, and **limited flexibility** in terms of voting hours and locations.

These factors can discourage some voters from participating in the democratic process, resulting in **lower voter turnout**.

2. Comparative exercise

2.5. How does the e-voting work? Why should I choose this, instead of traditional voting?

e-voting, or electronic voting, is a voting system that allows voters to cast their ballots electronically instead of using traditional paper-based voting methods. There are various types of e-voting systems, including online voting, touch-screen voting machines, and optical scan voting systems.

During e-voting, voters use electronic devices, such as computers or touch screens, to cast their votes. These votes are then recorded and counted electronically, using specialized software and hardware.

2.   Comparative exercise

2.5.   How does the e-voting work? Why should I choose this, instead of traditional voting?

Online voting is:
- ✓ *Convenient*: it allows people to vote from the comfort of their own homes/spaces
- ✓ *Accessible*: easier to use for people with disabilities or limited literacy
- ✓ *Accurate*: the electronic systems can automatically check for errors and ensure that all votes are counted correctly.
- ✓ *Time shaving*: no need to stand in long queues

3. Case study

3.1. Step by step:

➢ The local community council is facing a difficult decision about how to allocate funds for a new park development project. There are two main proposals on the table: one for a playground and sports fields, and another for a community garden and walking trail.

➢ The participants in the voting exercise are the members of the community council, as well as a group of stakeholders who have an interest in the park development project. The stakeholders include local residents, business owners, park users, and other relevant groups.

3.   Case study

3.1. Step by step:

➢ M.P. is a member of the community who is eligible to participate in the decision-making process, but he can't be present in the voting, due to a professional trip that will keep him away from home for over a month. Same case applies to a few other members of his community.

➢ The decision is crucial for the neighborhood, and they want to participate in the voting process.

3. Case study

3.2. Brainstorming

- How can the voting process take place without further delay?

- Is it possible for the absent members of the community to vote?

- If so, how can the accuracy of the voting results be ensured?

3.   Case study

Note: **The right of voting for eligible members of a community is a fundamental democratic principle.**

3. Case study

3.3. Brainstorming

What can the council of the community do to allow to as many members as possible to participate in such an important decision-making process?

❖ Wait for the absent voters to return: Nevertheless, the council cannot guarantee the availability of all the members of a community at a specific date.

❖ Conduct the voting with the present voters: This, however, will deprive the other members from exercising the right to vote in a decision that involves them directly.

4. Surmount traditional voting challenges
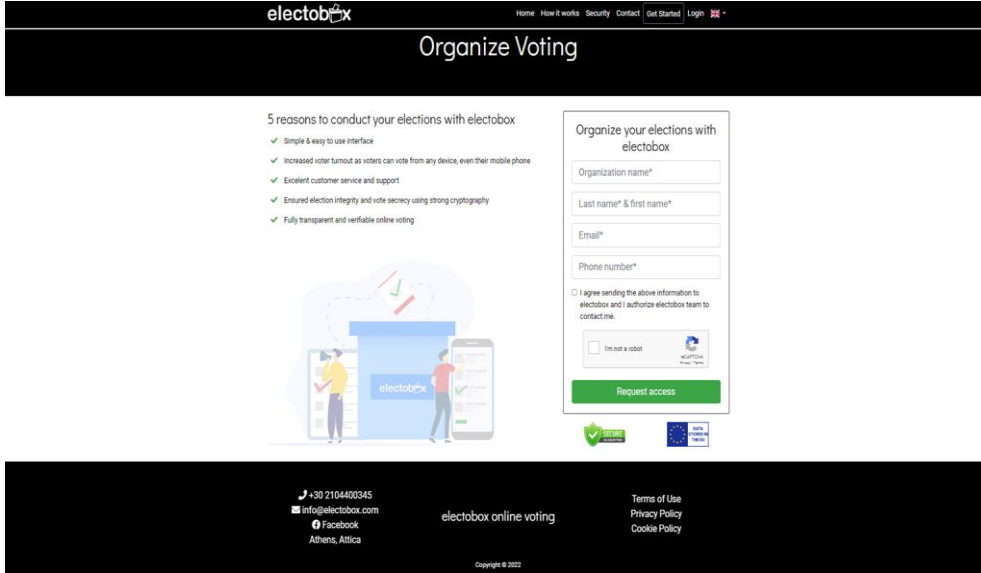
4.1. Adopt e-voting

- Since M.P. and other absent members are eligible voters of the community, the voting process can be carried out online.
- The local community council could use an e-voting platform, such as electobox or electionrunner, to conduct the voting process.

5.   Exercise

5.1   Create a voting process profile

1. Go to **www.electobox.com**

2. **Fill in** the required fields:

❑   Organization name

❑   Last name and first name

❑   Email

❑   Phone number

3. Click the **consent checkbox.**

4. Press the **Request access** button**.**
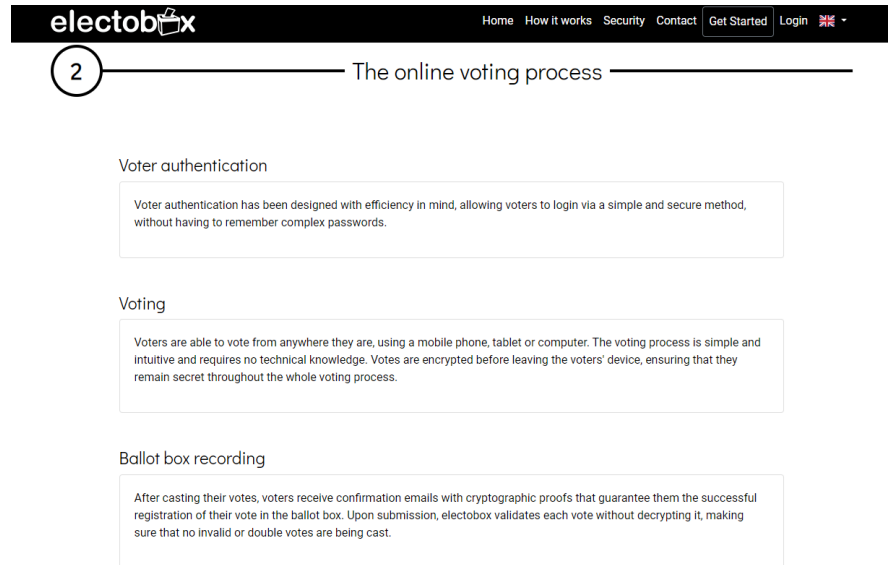
5.   Exercise

5.2.   Voter authentication

Follow the steps to **register** as a voter.

You can use a smartphone, a tablet or a desktop/laptop computer.
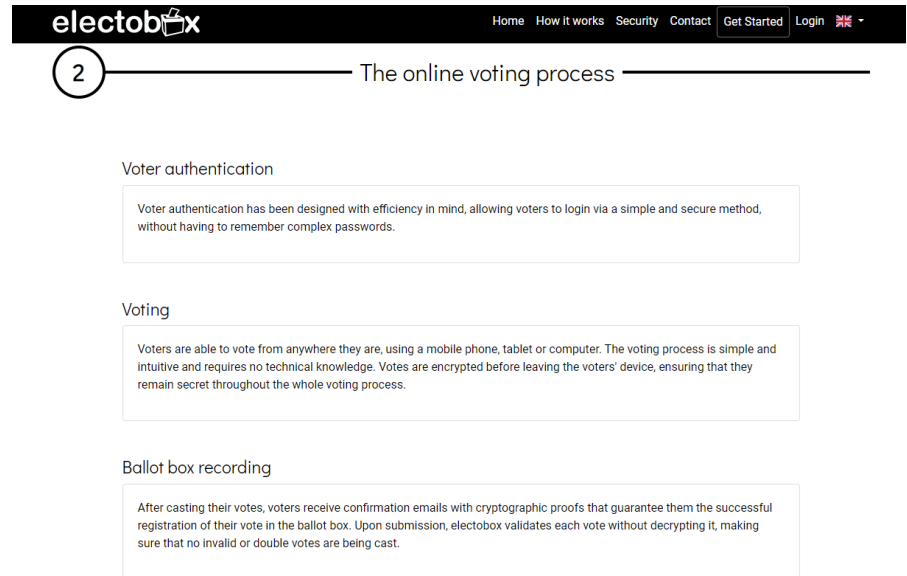
5.   Exercise

5.3. Voting process

Follow the instructions to vote.
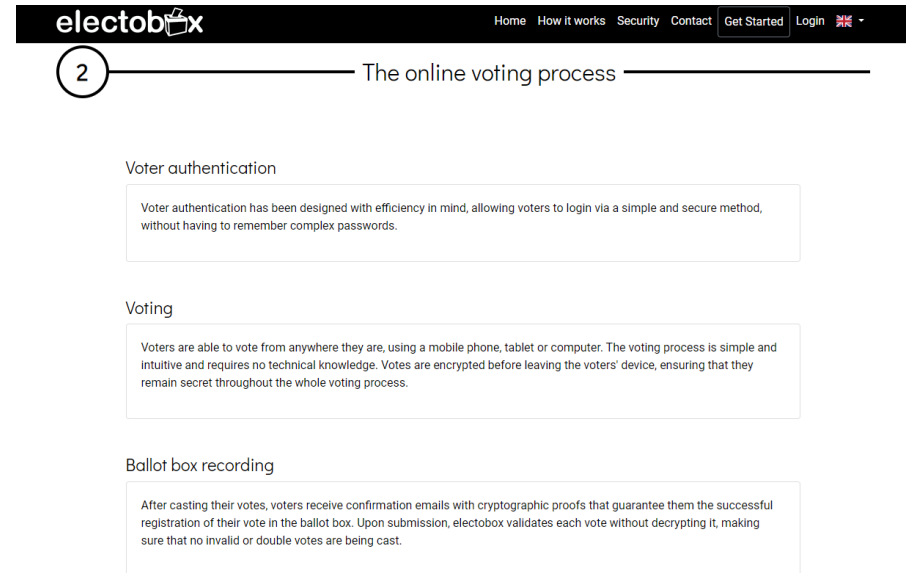
electobox

Home How it works Security Contact Get Started Login

The online voting process

Voter authentication

Voter authentication has been designed with efficiency in mind, allowing voters to login via a simple and secure method, without having to remember complex passwords.

Voting

Voters are able to vote from anywhere they are, using a mobile phone, tablet or computer. The voting process is simple and intuitive and requires no technical knowledge. Votes are encrypted before leaving the voters' device, ensuring that they remain secret throughout the whole voting process.

Ballot box recording

After casting their votes, voters receive confirmation emails with cryptographic proofs that guarantee them the successful registration of their vote in the ballot box. Upon submission, electobox validates each vote without decrypting it, making sure that no invalid or double votes are being cast.

5. Exercise

5.4. Confirmation of the successful submission of your vote

After casting your vote, you will receive a confirmation email with cryptographic proof guaranteeing that your vote has been received and counted in the election.
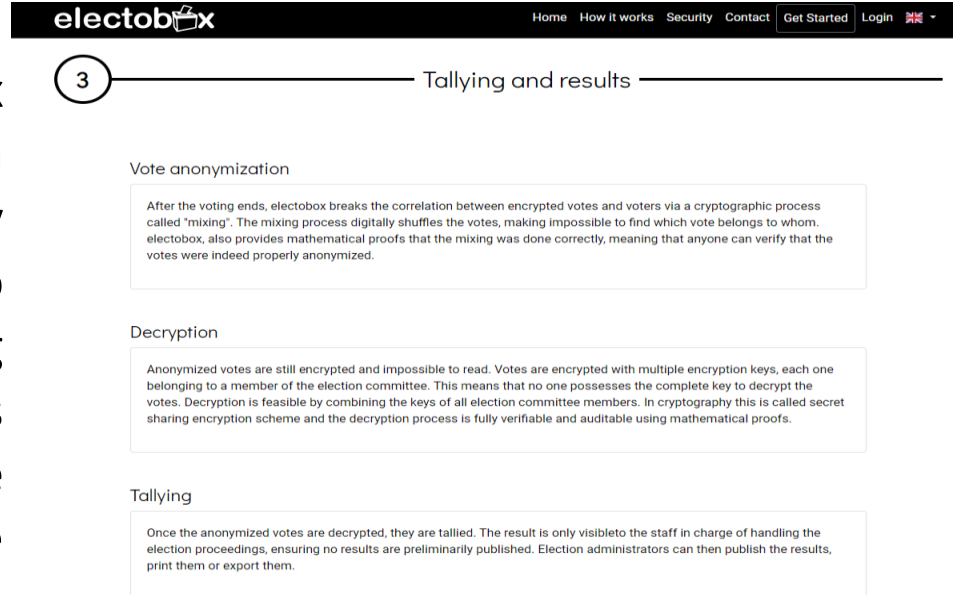
5.   Exercise

5.5. End of the e-voting process

After the voting ends, the electobox platform digitally shuffles the votes in a way that makes it impossible to identify which vote belongs to which voter. To ensure the accuracy of the mixing process, electobox provides mathematical proofs that can be verified by anyone to confirm that the votes were properly anonymized.

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3 — Tallying and results

Vote anonymization

After the voting ends, electobox breaks the correlation between encrypted votes and voters via a cryptographic process called "mixing". The mixing process digitally shuffles the votes, making impossible to find which vote belongs to whom. electobox, also provides mathematical proofs that the mixing was done correctly, meaning that anyone can verify that the votes were indeed properly anonymized.

Decryption

Anonymized votes are still encrypted and impossible to read. Votes are encrypted with multiple encryption keys, each one belonging to a member of the election committee. This means that no one possesses the complete key to decrypt the votes. Decryption is feasible by combining the keys of all election committee members. In cryptography this is called secret sharing encryption scheme and the decryption process is fully verifiable and auditable using mathematical proofs.

Tallying

Once the anonymized votes are decrypted, they are tallied. The result is only visible to the staff in charge of handling the election proceedings, ensuring no results are preliminarily published. Election administrators can then publish the results, print them or export them.

Thank you!

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