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**Citizen Participation and ICT for Urban
Development in Oslo, Norway**

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OSLOMET

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Abstract

The Green Capital of Europe (Oslo in 2017) is a demonstration of effective waste management and energy efficiency capabilities of Oslo. This sustainability had been possible because of local government and municipalities involving citizens of Oslo in the decisions pertaining to local environment. Planning and Building Act (2008) clearly emphasized that all the planning and administrative decisions shall ensure transparency and public participation.

Theoretically Citizen participation is the key to urban development in every country and Norway (Oslo being the capital) have showcased it practically. In this paper, the same is demonstrated where people have shared their opinion through digital means and those have been considered by the planning and building department.

The qualitative research presented in this paper is based on the questionnaire which covers different aspects of Citizen Participation including use of social media and digital platforms by local municipality, Citizen's competence, and experience of using such tools and positivity of being a Democratic Participants. Data is collected based on citizen's use of digital platforms which the government or local municipalities use for getting inputs from citizens.

Thematic analysis of the interviews considers the impact of Citizen's involvements, their participation, and a sense of satisfaction after their thoughts are valued and suggestions are taken positively. Analysis led to the following themes as Technology (ICT) and Social Media Usage for Citizen Participation, Design/Comfortability of Participation Platforms, Problems/Barriers for using Digital Platforms, Improvements required for better Participation and Citizen's Satisfaction after Participation.

The in-depth qualitative study reveals that the current Digital Platform for citizen participation in Oslo is very concise and effective for every age group to participate and share their view.

The results of Thematic Analysis for Oslo are then also compared with those of Ukraine. Since both the countries have different perspectives to Citizen Participation, it was interesting to study how ICT platform is designed and helps in efficient citizen participation.

Keywords: Citizen Participation; Democracy; Planning; Urban Development; Oslo; E-governance

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Citizens are the key stakeholders for Urban development. In many disciplinary fields including Public Administration, Urban Planning and Development, Public Services etc., collaboration between citizens and government have received high levels of attention and appreciation in the developed world (Enyedi, 2004, p. 7). Citizen Participation is the pillar for any local democracy (Arnstein, 1969). The main stakeholders for any ongoing projects are the future citizens who provide their valuable insights for a successful development (Antomart, 2019). Public participation inhibits involvement of citizens in participating and contributing towards better Urban development projects and finding solutions based on individual perspective (Norwegian Ministry, 2014).

The main objective of Citizen Participation is to help the local authorities in decision making. If this objective is or met or if the local authorities neglect the suggestions, this may lead to conflicts and protests (Enyedi, 2004). Chai (2016) states various benefits of Citizen Participation in Urban planning. The first being enhancement in democracy and better accomplishment of planning projects. Secondly, it minimizes conflicts arising during or after the development projects. Thirdly, Citizen Participation helps in fulfilling the needs of community and effective utilization of natural resources.

Achieving efficient Citizen Participation is not at all an easy task (Fung, 2015).

Sustainable development can be accomplished only when Citizens participate actively and effectively. This requires a lot of changes in the processes and policies for Urban Development (Enyedi, 2004). McMillan (2002) enlightens that there can be three levels of engagements between local authorities and the citizens pertaining to Urban development. First is Information Sharing which is one-way communication from government to citizens informing them about the plan and inviting suggestions and ideas. Second is two-way communication where local authorities and citizens interact is termed as Interaction. The Last level of engagement is Collaboration where communication happens continuously until a decision is made for a particular project. This level can also be referred as Co-production, where citizens and public sector cooperate to achieve better results with enhanced efficiency (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012)

Thus, it is equally important to have an efficient and well-functioning planning process where citizens can easily express their opinions thereby helping in better planning and overall quality of their surroundings and that of city or country. Good Urbanism involves as many active stakeholders as possible who with their innovative ideas co-create development plans (Ellin, 2012). Involving Public is hard and crucial at the same time and is not easy to achieve. It requires a lot of effort from the local authorities that includes making it easy for citizens to participate and reaching out to all the peripheral

groups possible (Antomart, 2019).

Several Techniques are available for involving Citizens in Planning. Some of these include Group-discussions, Open Forums for citizens to participate, Public Awareness Campaigns, Workshops, Surveys, Interviews and Small group meetings (Socrates, 2012). However, Public hearings and workshops have been criticized due to their fixed timings as time and money consuming activities and hence don't get expected attention from citizens (Kolsaker and Lee-Kelley, 2006). Our daily lives have affected considerably with the onset of internet, web, and social media. Since both plans, maps and data can be shared quickly and easily, collaboration between citizens and local government gets strengthened (Hopkins, 2011). Digital media has always been a quick facilitator for surveys, research, and other communications.

The use of ICT and its integration into Urban Development is essential (Castells, 2011). Information Technology offers many new possibilities for Citizen Participation in Urban Development. Different platforms for online participation can be adopted in correspondence to Arnstein's ladder of Citizen Participation (Hanzl, 2007). Due to ICT and its reach to public, even the meaning of Citizen Participation is being reshaped (Gurumurthy, Bharthur & Chami, 2017). Technological advancements are changing the overall society model, thereby more informed and updated citizens and inclined to participate for planning and development in their surroundings (Castells, 2011). Relationship between government and its citizens is getting transformed with the advancements in ICT. ICT has changed the way the local authorities and citizens interact (Kumar & Vragov, 2009).

This paper presents how Citizen Participation and Urban Development are inter-related and are perceived in one of the developed countries like Norway and developing countries Ukraine. Although local authorities of these countries are adopting social media and other digital means for engaging more citizens into the participatory process, it needs more detailed examination of how the citizens in such countries use ICT for interacting with the government and sharing their opinions for any Urban Development Project. The study also reflects upon citizens perspective of usage of such digital platforms for communication and what barriers they feel are related to such platforms.

1.2. Problem Statement

Within a democratic system, challenges pertaining to Urban Development are quite prominent. Since the Urban Development affects the day-to-day life of citizens, they tend to be involved automatically. Citizen Participation is one of the important aspects for Urban Development. Enyedi (2004) states that pre-requisite for Urban Development is the dialogue between decision makers and local inhabitants. Citizens provide valuable information regarding the well-being of their city and hence contribute towards formulating proposals even as per their specific needs (OECD, 2009).

Thus, investigation is required on how the use of ICT/social media affects Citizen Participation and further contributing to decision making for Urban Development. The project studies the influence of citizen participation on the overall growth of the city and how the local government encourages citizen participation. The motive of those who participate and how they perceive mostly impacts the decision making by the local authorities (Susskind & Elliott, 1981).

This paper presents how the two channels Internet and Citizen Participation are connected and how Citizens participate in Urban Planning through ICT and how the local governments assure that the responses received through the DPPs (Digital Participatory Platforms) are taken into consideration. Data material includes in-depth interviews with the participants and a questionnaire which the participants responded very intensely and enthusiastically. This paper also shed light on how the local municipalities of Oslo facilitate and manage the participatory process, how citizens can influence policy making and how ICT and social media play a vital role in Urban Development.

1.3. Research Objectives and Questions

While local authorities of both the cities are adopting ICT for Citizen participation, more analysis is needed based on what citizens perceive after active participation and are their decisions considered by local authorities. Previous studies also mention about how Public participation is important for local developments but the answer to the question that does Public participation is effectively implements still stands un-answered.

Hence the research questions are:

1. Does everyone have access of basic ICT in Oslo for effective participation?
2. How comfortable are the citizens when they use ICT/websites designed for Public Participation?
3. If there are any barriers pertaining to ICT or the design/usage of DPP's for effective participation?

2. Literature Review

Citizen Participation in Urban Development empowers the citizens too rather than just acting as an input to the development projects (Reddy, 2020). Citizen participation in government's activities and mostly in Urban Development has been increasing in the previous years. Public has been actively participating in all levels of Urban Development projects and citizens feel motivated to participate based on social media and use of Digital Platforms for interaction with the government. Fiskaa (2005) explains the stages of development of Public Participation in Norway. Also, discusses that the planning process in Norway is quite open and the stakeholders (Initiators, Controlling Agencies and Affected people) can openly share their view about the project and the plan.

To understand the terminologies discussed in the paper, some of the definitions are presented in section 2.1.

2.1. Definitions

2.1.1. Citizen Participation

Ploštajner & Mendeš (n.d) defined Citizen participation defined as the involvement of public in any organizational activities or participating in governmental projects. The general idea behind public participation is that the people who are affected by any decision /project should be part of the same ("Public Participation," 2020). They should be aware of the upcoming project in their neighborhood and should have say in the decision-making process. Jones (2007) also defines Citizen Participation as involving individuals in decision making process formally by the government and the local authorities. In many countries including Norway, UK and Canada, Public participation has been part of the policy for Urban Development, there by none of the Urban Development projects are implemented without Public acceptance or participation (Minister of Local Government and Modernization, 2014).

Arnstein (1969) proposed Ladder of Citizen Participation describes how much power the citizens have and explains the different levers of public participation exist and at what all levels local authorities can engage the citizens.

The ladder consists of 8 stages or rungs, the lower rungs showing no/less power and the top rungs depict high power or rather full control of citizens. Thus, this ladder serves as a guide to measure the level of influence the citizens can have in decision making.

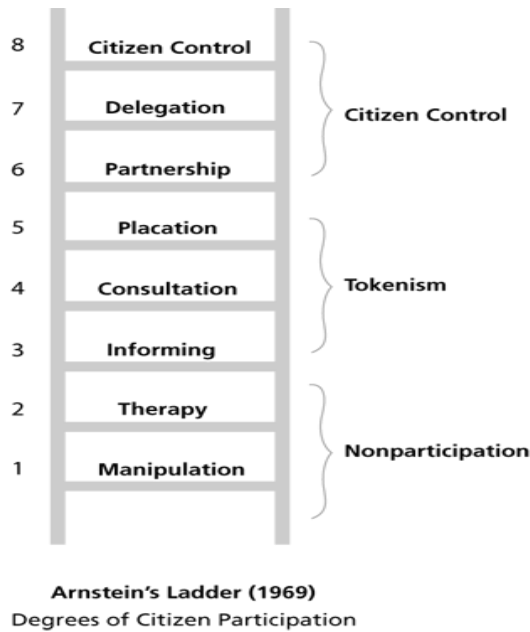


Figure 1: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation Source: <https://www.citizenshandbook.org/arnsteinsladder.html>

The lower 2 levels are Manipulation and Therapy. Both these rungs have no public participation rather public gets information from local authorities about the upcoming projects in their neighborhood. Public is educated about the projected plan and is taken into confidence that the plan is the best one (Arnstein, 1969).

Tokenism constitutes Informing, Consultation and Placation rungs. Arnstein (1969) states that Informing is the most important step towards citizen participation. Although authorities try to have one-way communication and don't provide with feedback options. In this phase the citizens are informed about their rights and options they have for feedback. There are scenarios where this information is provided at the later stage when feedback is not possible, then there is no meaning of communication between local authorities and the citizens (Farnham, 2014). Consultation is the rung where public is given option to express their opinion. To many, it looks like they have participated, and they somehow feel that their opinion does not matter (Arnstein, 1969). Surveys and meeting are major tools implemented for this phase. If the effects from these surveys are not seen by the public, it creates distrust between the government and its citizens (Farnham, 2014). Arnstein (1969) explain that in Placation, public is advised to give feedback and suggestions but the power to accept them lies with the authorities. Citizens are made to believe that they have participated, and their voice is heard, however it's not always true. Pötsönen & Mendeš (2013) also encourages youth to also be included in participation via surveys and their suggestions must also be heard.

According to Arnstein (1969), the top 3 phases Partnership, Delegation and Citizen control constitute Citizen Participation. Partnership phase depicts local officials and citizen share equal power for joint decisions. This phase suffices joint meetings and committees to resolve conflicts between citizens and the government (Farnham, 2014). Delegation is where some degree of control is handed to the Citizens and they are aware

that they do have the power to change the decisions made by the local government of authorities (Arnstein, 1969). Citizen Control rung is the top lever of the ladder and represents full control with the citizens. Citizens are involved in almost all the phases of any Urban development project in their neighborhood. Public is aware that they share the responsibility of their neighborhood and are actively participating for the betterment of the same. Farnham (2014) also mentions that this level allows complete control to citizens and hence permit communities to fittingly use the funds and resources.

2.1.2. E-governance

E-governance can be referred to as usage of ICT or electronic media for interaction among government and the public. All the major activities including delivery of government services, Government to Public interaction, Government to Business interaction, and interactions within the governmental departments happens through Digital media. E-governance brought a big revolt in delivering quality services to the public (Paramashivaiah & Suresh, 2016). ICT plays a vital role in achieving E-governance. Borthakur & Bhuyan (2019) explain e-governance as an arrangement for communication between public sector governments and the private sector. E-governance is needed for better engagement with the people and improved policy making.

The main objective of E-governance is to organize political and social powers in a better way, and this is achieved with the help of planning, correct resourcing, leadership, and strategies (Riley, 2003). If the leadership promotes citizen participation, this helps in reaching the general goal of e-governance. Milakovich (2012) also hold the opinion that E-governance holds huge potential in improved citizen participation and thereby improved governmental planning process. Planning process must be such that it includes citizens at an early stage of development. E-governance, as per Maswood (2009) can also be termed as a network of governmental organizations, private sector authorities and citizens with no specific boundaries. Digital means are quite popular for any government for achieving e-governance. Vattoli (2020) also explains e-governance in quite simple words as online functioning of government to provide online services to citizens at their doorstep.

Paramashivaiah & Suresh (2016) explain 4 pillars of e-governance:

1. **Connectivity:** There should be strong connectivity between people and governmental services. This connectivity is attainable if the public services reach every citizen and most of the citizens are benefitted from it (Sheel & Sheel, 2017). ICT is best suited for this purpose since ICT has reached most of the population at this time.
2. **Knowledge:** Government must have an IT department or a set of IT engineers having good knowledge so that they can handle any issues that come up during e-

governance functioning. Sheel & Sheel (2017) also second the thoughts that technical competence is must during planning and implementation lever if e-governance must be achieved.

3. **Data Content:** A proper database should be available which can relate to data required for e-governance. Advanced Data analytics should be in place for better data storage and analysis to improve citizen services and efficient overall processes (Coleman and Foreman, 2016). Proper data must be made available to citizens to achieve transparent and efficient citizen participation.
4. **Capital:** Capital can refer to as the money/cost involved in setting up processes for functioning of e-governance. E-governance turns out to be a costly affair for the governments as they bear most of the cost pertaining to processes and services implement used the platform (Sheel & Sheel, 2017). Since internet has reached every household in most of the countries, e-governance can be accomplished with very less investment.

The various components of e-governance include the following:

1. **Government to Citizen (G2C):** An interface is created between government and citizens for effective delivery of services offered to citizens by the government (Nisd, n.d). These are the services which provide one-sided information from government to the citizens and with such applications, government can answer to the questions being asked by the citizens (Palvia & Sharma, n.d). Transparency in such information help in better bonding and confidence among the citizens for their local authorities. Borthakur & Bhuyan (2019) also have the opinion that G2C assists communication between citizens and the government and provides services such as access to public information and some basic services such as transactions and payments.

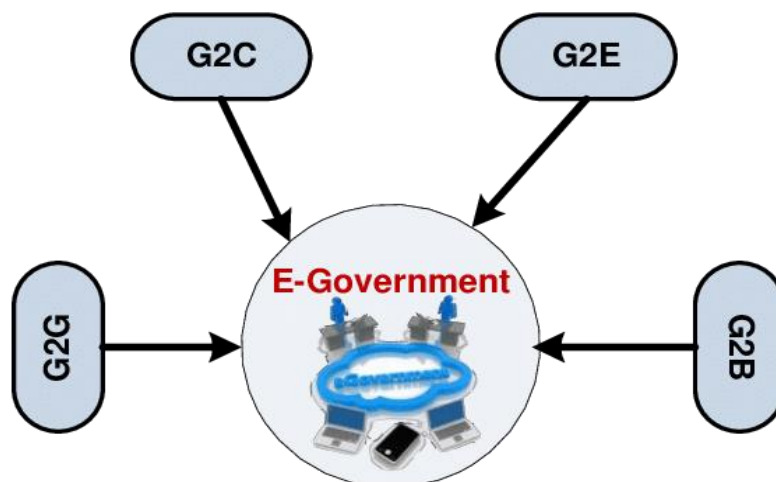


Figure 2: Types of e-governance, Source: <https://www.researchgate.net/>

2. **Government to Government (G2G):** Borthakur & Bhuyan (2019) define this component for intra-government interactions and sharing information. Such interaction between central and municipal government showcases the strength of the e-governance principle. Various activities include emails, knowledge management, database intergations etc (Palvia & Sharma, n.d). Such interactions speed up the process for any communication within the states/counties of any country. Nisd (n.d) also quotes that in this case, ICT restructures the flow of information within various entities of government. In case where local authorities need some information or approval from the central government, quick and easy process helps in better functioning of the governments.
3. **Government to Business (G2B):** This model helps government and the private sector to interact and share information (Borthakur & Bhuyan, 2019). Many times, businesses must communicate and receive information from the governments for their functioning. Palvia & Sharma (n.d) quote this phase as two-way communication and transactions between government and the businesses. Digital tools can be helpful in fast and efficient communication between the two. Here, e-governance tools aid seamless interaction between business community and the government (Nisd, n.d).
4. **Government to Employees (G2E):** Governments are the biggest employers for any country and hence need proper tool to interact with their employees (Nisd, n.d). Generally, it's the employees who interact with the citizens and provide feedback and suggestions. Thus, government to employee interaction is quite important and must be effective. This model acts as a link between government and its employees and helps in information flow between them (Borthakur & Bhuyan, 2019)

Norway is proudly ranked as one of the top-rated countries for e-governance. The e-governance policy of Norway was first published in 2005(Flak, Olsen, and Wolcott, 2005).

Stoltenberg & Aasrud (2012) stated some of the basic principles as part of Norwegian Government's strategy towards e-governance. Public sector will be providing user friendly digital services and login to public web services will be made quick and easy. They also mentioned that necessary assistance will be provided to the citizens for finding digital services and development of ICT services should be universal so that every citizen can understand and use them easily.

Difi and E-government in Norway published a report in February 2016 where they revealed about ICT/Information Society Policy and informed that their focus is to provide digital services with great quality and reliability to all citizens. They also mentioned that the main aim of this policy is to ensure universal design of ICT and digital literacy in public to achieve better Citizen participation. Smart ICT solutions would benefit Public Sector and Private sector /Businesses too. Thus, digitalization of services with the proper

implementation of ICT would be beneficial for all including local authorities, citizens, businesses etc.

2.1.3. Urban Development

Urban development is a technical process where political parties, local governments and citizens collaborate to decide proper land-usage of their surroundings. The primary concern of Urban Development is welfare of the Public and be termed a tool to provide well-organized surrounding for well-being of the citizens ("Urban Planning," 2021).

Urban Planning/development provides answers to generic questions as to where people will live, what their surroundings should be, how they work and what kind of infrastructure is required in urban and sub-urb areas.

(Erfjord, n.d.) discussed different stages of developing an area plan with regards to any Urban Development Project. These stages involve Project Initiation-Kick off, Notification on Plan startup, collecting data, Proposal for developing a plan, 1st Political Treatment, Public Scrutiny, 2nd Political Treatment and Decision. All these steps are explained as below:

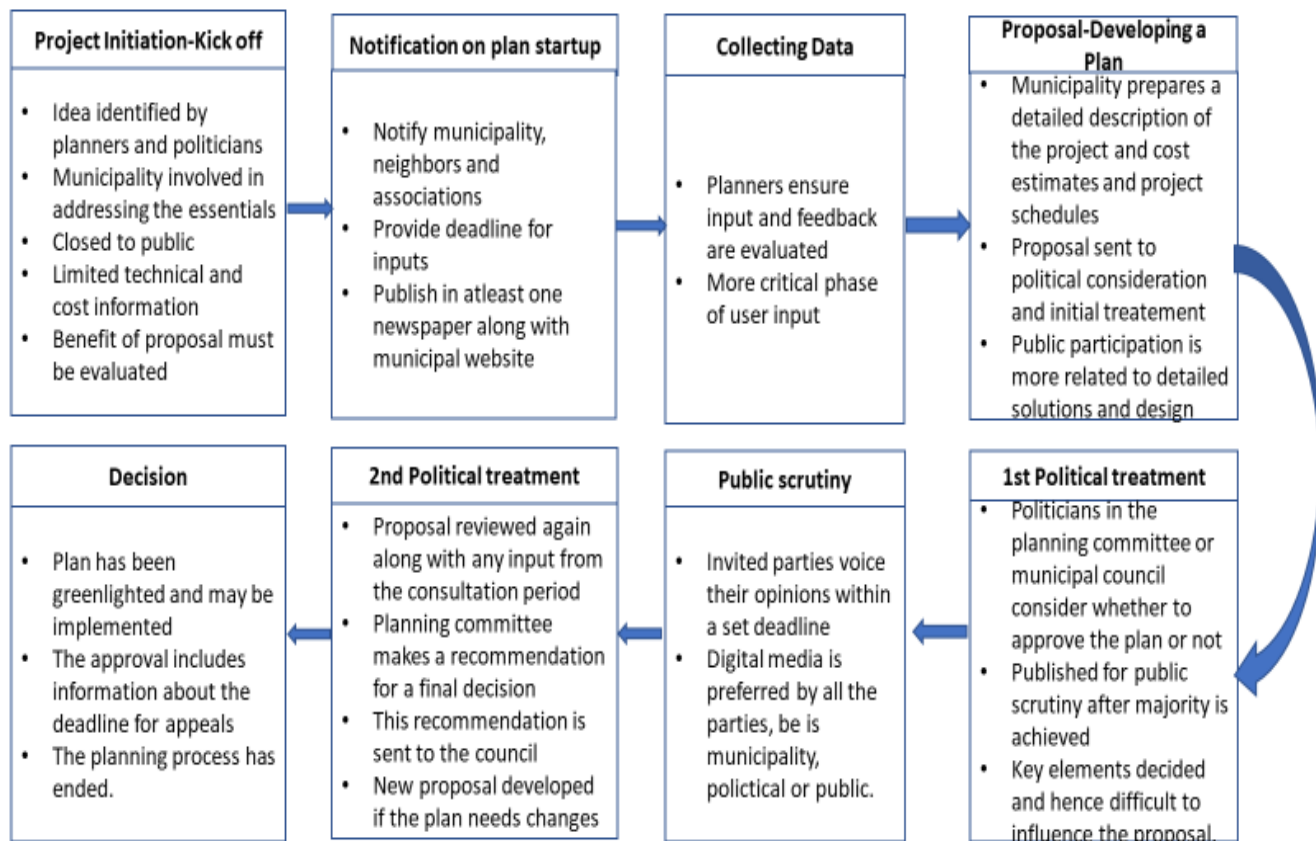


Figure 3: Different Stages of any Urban Development Project, Source: <https://www.ntnu.edu/documents/139799/1273574286/TPD4505.%C3%98ystein.F%C3%B8rre.Erfjord.pdf/4c51fdb2-8784-4a9e-8bfd-3d0a782f8f61>

(Lea, 2016) explained the four principles to meaningful participation according to the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

1. Principle of Openness: Information should be readily available and provided to anyone who needs access to it to follow the process properly. This will build trust among all the parties and towards the system and the resulting plans.
2. Effective Management: Process should be as effective as possible, and every task must have a decided timeframe.
3. Design for universal accessibility: This should be the guiding principle. Planning and inputs from all groups gives better solutions and challenges for all the cases.
4. Equality: If you represent yourself, or municipality or any other organization, participation of everyone should be on equal terms.

2.2. Development of Citizen Participation in Norway

During 1970s, Citizens could participate in the planning process but due to limited information from the authorities, their participation was not that accurate (Fiskaa, 2005).

NIBR (1988) states that Public participation had become popular during 1970s and various experiments were carried out for Urban Renewal and Rehabilitation in towns. Many of the citizens were skeptical about the intentions of authorities, still a better approach of public participation was emerging. Although during 1970s, there were major developments in towns, the Ministry of environment focused on development in villages during this time. In some cities, local authorities set up offices where people could discuss the plan for development and could see more information about the development projects (Fiskaa, 2005).

Minister of Local Government and Modernization (2014) states that new Planning and Building Act came into existence making Public Participation as general procedure/rule for all development projects in 1985. Also, an obligation was set to the authorities to announce the project well in advance during the early stages of the project inviting public to share their thoughts. Thus, promoted co-operation among the authorities and the citizens to solve conflicts arising due to any neighborhood development. The principle of direct Participation was included in the Act. Fiskaa (2005) contemplated three different aspects of planning process. First, even if the plan is small, planning process should be executed like large plans as sometimes even the smaller projects turn out to be controversial. Secondly, all the stakeholders should be involved during the initial stages of the project as it's easy to rectify at that time. Thirdly, all the planning process must be initiated by the authorities, even when it's the private developers who have initiated the project. This helps in transparent planning and proper citizen participation phase.

All the parties directly or indirectly involved in a planning process should be involved for any development project (Fiskaa, 2005). All the stake holders must be identified both from public and private sectors including landowners, developers, local authorities, politicians, and citizens. Forester (1985) also stated that the capability of all the stakeholders to contribute and collaborate is a pre-requisite to a meaningful participation.

Public authorities are supposed to publish an announcement about the upcoming development, thereby informing public and all the stakeholders (Hanssen & Falleth, 2014). In Norway, it's the responsibility of the planning department to make sure that all the stakeholder is involved properly. It's the Political Planning committee that plans the project and the municipal council decides. All the counties in Norway have their individual planning department and they are advised time and again by the Ministry. If there is more participation and the interests of all is taken, then the most debating issue of public-private co-operation can be resolved (Fiskaa, 2005).

During the 1990s, the concept of Public Participation changes to co-operation among the municipalities and developers. Development agreements, partnerships and negotiations were the keyword during this era. Even public became more aware of urban design and started showing more interest into urban development and the developments in their neighborhood (Fiskaa, 2005). In this era also, there were protests but privately. People who are not happy with a particular development project individually or collectively take it with the authorities either through emails, or other means. Fiskaa (2005) also specified that Debates in media had also been popular where citizens express their concerns and discuss the consequences and solutions to development projects. Hanssen & Falleth stated that in 2008, Planning and Building Act (PBA) was revised solidifying the accountability of the initiator who submits the plan. The responsibility of starting the discussions and planning for effective Citizen Participation lies with anybody who submits plans (Hanssen & Falleth, 2014).

2.3. Methods/Tools for Citizen Participation in Norway

Although there are numerous methodologies available for each phase of Citizen participation ladder, some of them are instigated in Norway too. Public Meetings, Walks, mayor's bench, Workshops, Community houses, Collaboration Boards and Home Gathering are some of the tools for meeting people and interacting with them, getting to know their ideas and thoughts. Such methods promote more participation. There are people who like to walk around and chat, hence they feel satisfied with such meetings.

Moreover, there is a feeling of satisfaction when you have a platform where you can go directly and can interact with the officials concerned. Besides, even local authorities are benefited with such meetings and workshops since it gets easier to express their

thoughts too. Face to face meetings sometimes bridge the gap between public and the authorities and hence encourage more participation.

Guribye & Iversen (2020) investigated various tools and methods used for Citizen Participation in Norway. The following table shows the some of the tools/methods realized for Citizen Participation in Norway over the years. All the methods are segregated based on Arnstein's ladder of participation and described below

NonParticipation	Tokenism	Citizen Control
Drop-by office and Home Gatherings CityLab Mayor’s Bench Public Meetings and Walks Charette Digital Planning Tool	Collaboration Board e-democracy Your priorities My Cause Website Splot	Desire for rural living Dream bank Friskus Time Credits

Figure 4: Tools/Methods realized for Citizen Participation in Norway, Source: NORCE, Arendal Kommune

2.3.1. Non-Participation Methods

According to Arnstein (1969), Non-participation includes Manipulation and Therapy. Norway included various methods for the flow of information from the government to its citizens. Some of such tools are explained below.

Drop-by office and Home Gatherings

Drop-by-office was established in 2018 for a project with the focus on democracy and participation. This was informal meeting place for local authorities and the citizens. The project managers involved in development projects used this as an opportunity to interact with the public and promoted involvement of public in urban development. Home gatherings aware also introduced for communication between citizens. Citizens representing different parts of community planned meetings at their place and invited friends and family to discuss municipal plans and share their thoughts. This method was well suited for people who did not attend public meetings and were unaware of the developments and did not know that they have the option to share their thoughts regarding the same.

CityLab/ByLab

This was established in Moss, Norway as part of trial project for citizen participation. An information center was setup for people to visit and see the maps, models for development projects. Citizens could get more information about the projects and they

could give their suggestions too. This project was a huge success that it continues still.



Figure 5: Byilab Moss, Source: <https://www.facebook.com/ByilabMoss/>

Mayor's Bench

Mayor's bench happens twice a month, where citizens can come up any questions or discussions directly to the mayor. The main aim of this method is that Mayor becomes much more accessible to the public and such discussions with citizens can affect local functioning of the government to a large extent. This is just like one-to-one meetings where people can discuss their issues and ideas with the local authorities.

Public Meetings and Walks

This method is more suited for informing public about the upcoming developments. Walks has been best methodology to understand how different groups of people think about their city. Children walks, Adults walks, and Senior walks had been quite beneficial. DOGA is an association which initiates such walks around the city. There is an app where people can enter pictures to the places they walk through and if they find any repairs or anything that needs attention. Municipalities can monitor the same simultaneously and provide feedback or make projects for the same.

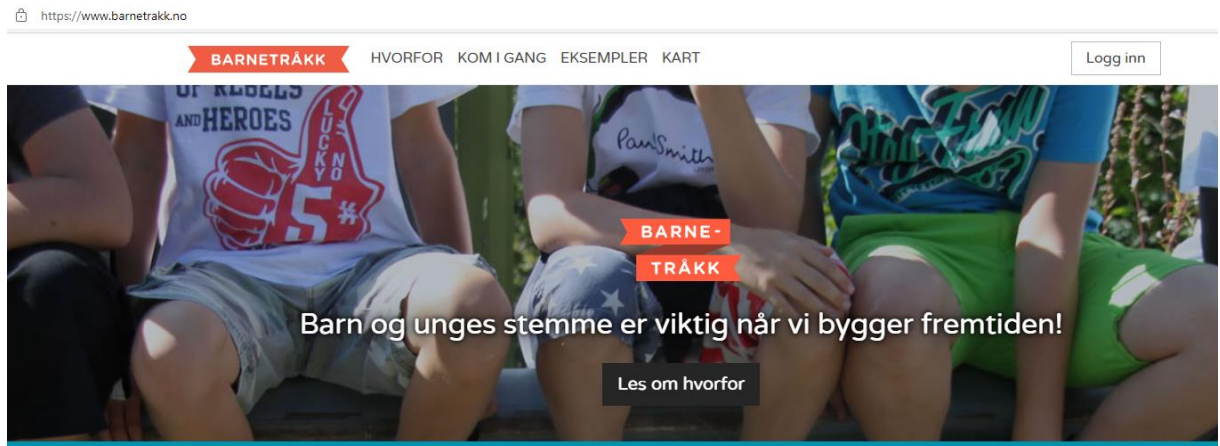


Figure 6: Kids Meeting Website, Source: <https://www.barnetrakk.no/>

Charette

This can be described a weeklong participation schedule where participants get to know about the major developments and upcoming projects, and they discuss the benefits and the drawbacks if any all those can have to the citizens. Although no major decision is taken in these workshops, the suggestions and opinions of citizens are noted and put forward with the management.

Digital Planning Tool

Digital planning tools had been implemented in Fitjar municipality for planning issues and questions. Such tools were available for PC's and mobiles to ease the citizens to participate and raise concerns. Public had access to all the developments planned in their neighborhood. Digitally a map is provided to the citizens which shows the major developments around the area and more information about the same. This helps citizens to easily understand the projects and local authorities to get a fair review and feedback by the citizens. For better connection with the citizens, City planner in another tool implemented. Digital planning tools eased the authorities too or get better and more citizen participation and could hence plan the developments accordingly.

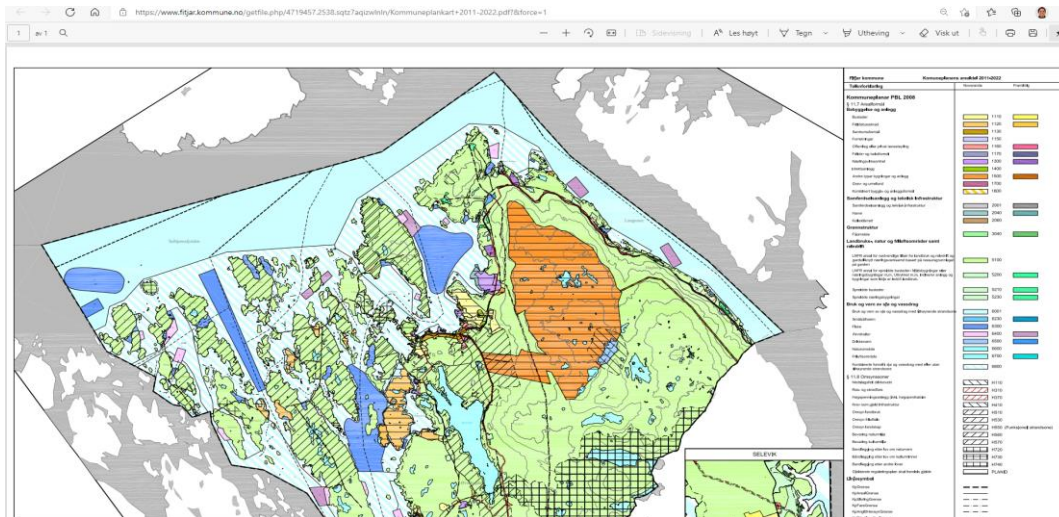


Figure 7: Fitjar Municipality Map for ongoing and future developments, Source: <https://www.fitjar.kommune.no/plan-og-utvikling.425374.nn.html>

Although, all these Nonparticipation methods were adopted at specific times during a particular development was being planned, they still exist because of their success and better participation. Such methods act as information tools, for informing citizens regarding the upcoming developments in the city. Such tools need to be implemented more efficiently to keep citizens more aware and enthusiastic for participation. Despite of Digital tools being encouraged, Public walks, walks and Drop-ins should continue so as digital technology does not act as a barrier for Public Participation.

2.3.2. Tokenism Methods

As per Arnstein (1969), Tokenism includes three rungs which are Informing, Consultation and Placation. Some of the methods adopted by Norwegian government for the same are described below:

Collaboration Board

Collaboration boards are created with the help of local authorities, politicians and Voluntary organizations which are suitable for Tokenism and Citizen Control. Digital tools are also used for information exchange and communication. Initially, when people start visiting such meetings, they are not very confident if their opinions will be heard and hence takes time to build up the confidence in the authorities attending the citizens. A neutral facilitator is a must for such boards who has no influence either from the government or from the citizens.

E-democracy

The perfect examples of e-democracy have been demonstrated by Norway. One of such examples being of a website, My Street (Gata Mi). Here the residents can report issues pertaining to roads, parks, sewerage, etc). Everyone can login on the municipal page and share their thoughts. If any repair is required, those also can be informed. Digital means provide easy access to information and documents. Social media is promoted by local authorities too for quick information flow and easy accessibility.

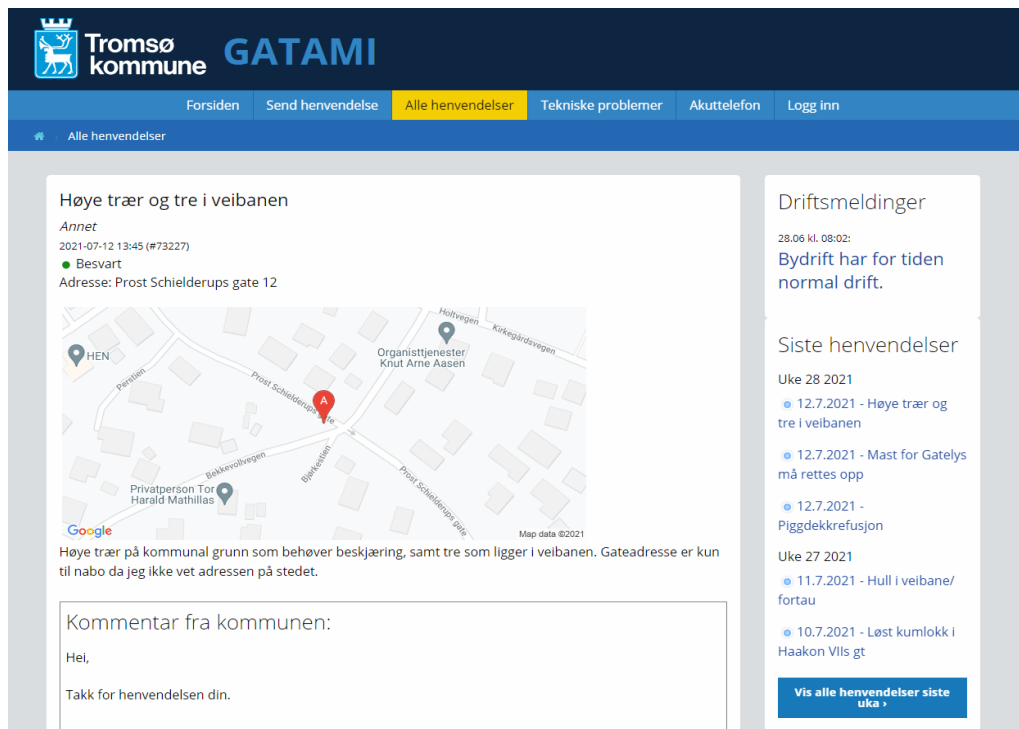


Figure 8: E-democracy (Gatami, Trømsø Kommune), Source: <https://www.gatami.no/hoeye-traer-og-tre-i-veibanen.229435.7322702ff3fb13b.gtm.html>

Your Priorities app

In 2008, Icelandic Citizen Foundation developed a social networking platform for facilitating citizen participation. The app is easy to use and is based upon Open-source software. A website yrpri.org is used by local municipalities to start debates, receiving comments from Public and voting on the performed tasks and future projects. Here, people can directly give inputs and rate the projects easily. If local authorities are thinking about any upcoming projects, its best method to have a test run and get inputs from public before going ahead with the projects at all.

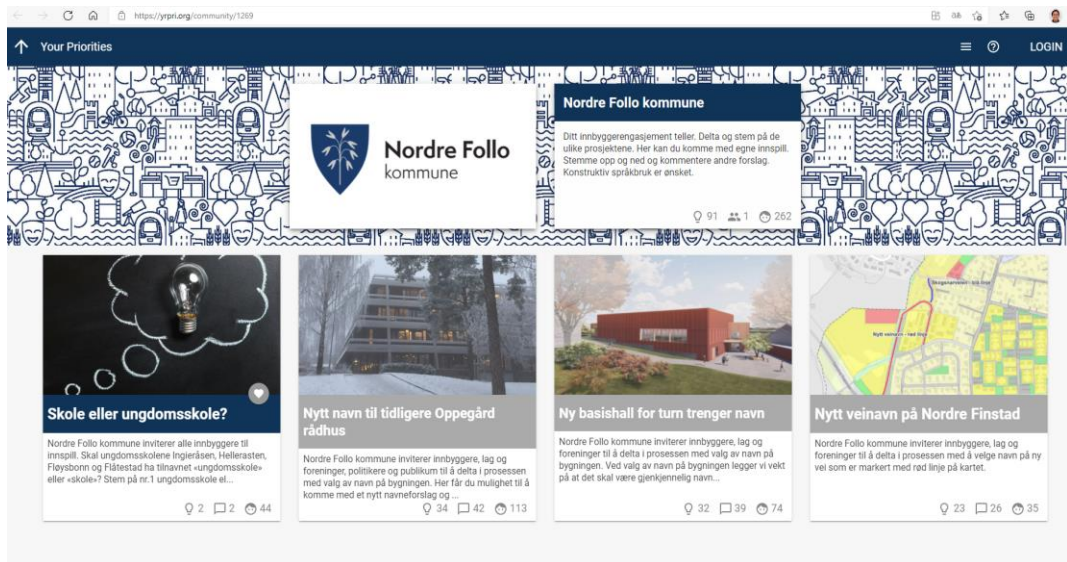


Figure 9: Your Priorities website Source: Nordre Follo kommune (yrpri.org)

My Cause website /Minsak.no

This website is created by the local authorities for citizen participation. It's a separate tool where public can easily register any case and thoughts through emails and social media. If 2 % of the people sign the case, then it gets presented before the municipality. This website is extensively used by different types of organizations be is Sports Committee, Welfare organizations etc.

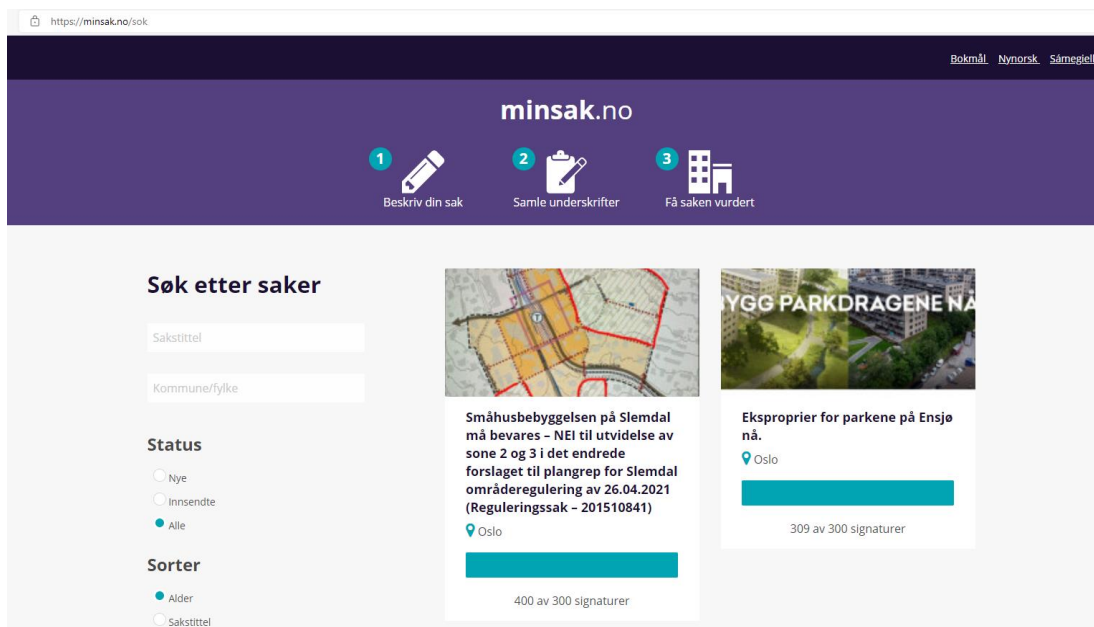


Figure 10: Minsak website Source: Minsak.no

BaneNOR has a Trainrevolution project where more trains will be started thereby increasing capacity of travellers by 5000 passengers. Brynsbakken project a part of the same project for increasing train tracks from 4 to 6 towards the city center. 22 residential properties stand on the way for the planned extension. These building are one of the oldest from 1980s and are directly connected with the history in Kværnerdalen. (Juven, 2021) had published an article in int newspaper regarding the same.

Even though Banenor has promised that there will be demolition of 4 houses, and they will be provided house somewhere else in the area, people still feel that this demolition is dramatic and should not happen. The project manager states that these houses if not demolished, it could be threat to the overall Trainrevolution and the entire project would be delayed by four years. There is an official website for citizen participation. Oslo Kommune has a website names 'Si din mening' where Citizens can check the status of the development projects and can share their opinions.

The screenshot shows the 'Si din mening' platform interface. At the top, it features the Oslo logo and the text 'PLAN- OG BYGNINGSETATEN Si din mening - om arealplaner i Oslo'. Below this, there is a navigation link '< Til oversikt alle saker' and the title 'Brynsbakken'. A map of the Brynsbakken area is displayed on the left. To the right of the map, the following information is listed: Saksnr: 201714401, Vedtatt plan: Detaljregulering med konsekvensutredning, Bydel: Gamle Oslo, Annonisert: 03.05.2021, and Klagefrist: 24.05.2021 (highlighted in yellow). Below the map and details, there is a paragraph of text starting with 'Bystyret vedtok 24. mars 2021 å omregulere Brynsbakken fra jernbane, veigrunn, byggeområde for industri og spesialområde bevaring (bolig) til bl.a. trasé for jernbane, friområde og sykkelvei med fortau. Hensikten er å øke kapasiteten på jernbanenettet i og rundt Oslo. Det skal bygges to nye spor, og eksisterende spor skal omarbeides. All bebyggelse må derfor fjernes, men 4-5 av de verneverdige husene skal reetableres langs sykkelveien. I de nye friområdene skal det etableres aktivitetssoner for idrett, kultur- og fritidsaktiviteter.' Below this text, there are two sections: 'Vedtaksdokumenter:' with links to 'Oversendelse av vedtatt detaljregulering med konsekvensutredning for Brynsbakken - (98 KB)', 'Protokoll fra bystyrets behandling - (2,91 MB)', and 'Byrådssak 2321 av 11022021 - (3,48 MB)'; and 'Ønsker du å klage?' with the text 'Du kan klage på vedtaket dersom du er part eller har rettslig klageinteresse.' and a 'Send inn klage' button.

Figure 11: Si din mening Platform Source: Oslo Kommune Website

In this website, there is entire information available for citizens, they can read documents pertaining to the project and can share their thoughts.

Brynsbakken - Detaljregulering - Kapasitetsøkende jernbanetiltak - S-5114

Saksnummer 201714401 - Regulerings sak
Mottatt sak 25.09.2017

Gnr/Bnr 135/8, 232/127, 232/246, 236/42, 999/76
Adresse BRYNSBAKKEN - OSLO GATE, ETTERSTAD, ALNA
Bydel 1 - GAMLE OSLO
Område Kværner nord

Søker ASPLAN VIAK AS
Tiltakshaver BANE NOR SF

Saksbehandler Synne Sørli, Tlf: 91384450
 utviklings- og infrastrukturavdelingen

Dokumenter (314) | **Saksgang (21)**

☑ Vis/skjul alle filer

329	02.05.2021	☑ Klage på vedtatt plan	[Redacted]
328	02.05.2021	☑ Klage på vedtatt plan	[Redacted]
327	02.05.2021	☑ Klage på vedtatt plan	[Redacted]
326	26.04.2021	☑ Mulighetsstudie av lokk i Brynsbakken	[Redacted]
325	30.04.2021	☑ Klage på vedtatt plan	[Redacted]
324	23.04.2021	☑ Spørsmål om status	[Redacted]

Figure 12: Brynsbakken Project Example Source: Oslo Kommune Website


Splot

This methodology was adopted for inviting children and youth to participation in citizen participation for Urban Development. Games like methodology is adopted to involve children. Patterns are identified and local authorities get an idea of what kind of developments and areas they can focus upon. A permanent solution mysplot.com is created and is executed periodically for various projects.

→ ↻ 🏠 ⚠ Ikke sikret | www.mysplot.com


mysplot
PLACES WE CARRY

MENY




Schous plass 2018

[Read more.](#)



Go Grønland! Utstilling 2016

[Read more.](#)



Schous plass 2017

Våren 2017 har studentene ved NMBU laget nye forslag til hvordan Schous plass kan se ut.

[Read more.](#)

Figure 13: Splot Website, Source: <http://www.mysplot.com/>

Most of the tools implemented for Tokenism in Norway are digital tools. These websites provide insight about the future developments and hence citizens participate digitally and share their suggestions. Citizens get information about such tools and development projects either through social media or through Non-participation methods and then through Collaboration boards or through digital tools, citizens participate and give feedback about what their thoughts are regarding a particular project. Citizens participate digitally without knowing that their suggestions will be considered or not. This, the requirement of Citizen Control methods arises.

2.3.3. Citizen Control Methods

Partnership, Delegation and Citizen Control are the major rungs included in Citizen Control (Anrstein, 1969). Citizens get involved in all the phases of urban development projects and hereby helping the government plan the city in a much efficient and citizen friendly way. The tools implemented by Norwegian government for achieving this same as explained below:

Desire for rural living/Bolyst-team

Bolyst team consists of members from local municipality who meet citizens and collect their opinions and ideas. Together along with the authorities, governmental agencies, politicians and citizens, plans are made for development in the city. People are encouraged to participate and take initiatives and ownerships for better decisions in urban development. When authorities and citizens meet, there is a set of positive and new ideas with the help of which better developments can take place.

Dream Box/drømmebank.no

The Dream Bank was established as part of a private project for Arendal, Ås and Ski municipalities of Norway. An online portal was offered to municipalities for engaging citizen participation and connected with the public. Users can enter their thoughts as a Dream on the website and then discussions happen with the local authorities. A local enthusiasm council is set up which facilitates the discussions. They meet regularly and discuss incoming proposals and dreams and the approved dreams are registered in the Dream Factory. Thus, local authorities work for completing those projects. Such methodology brings together all the authorities involved and the public.

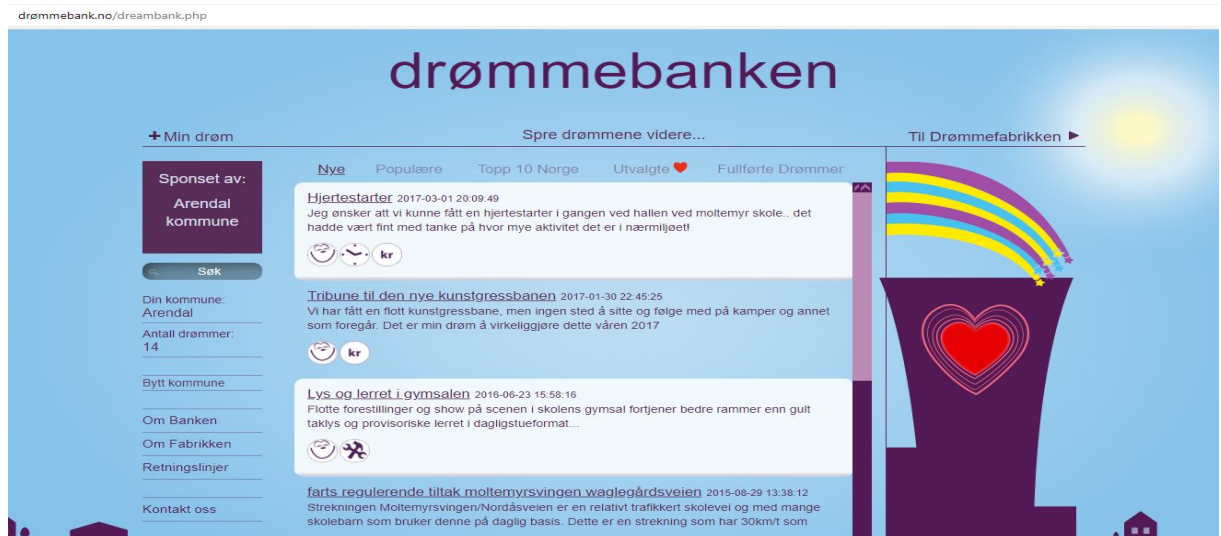


Figure 14: The Dream Bank, Arendal Norway Source: Drømmebanken (xn--drmmebank-m8a.no)

Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration has been implemented since decades in Norway and internationally. Local authorities and citizens are majorly engaged in improving social measures. The main focus is improved citizen participation and better local resources at disposal of the citizens. The initiative targets that majority of citizens come forward and participate in urban development. Area upliftment is not possible without all the groups coming together and discussing the problems and solutions. Certain arenas are established where local authorities and citizens and come together and discuss the plans for the future.

Friskus

Friskus is a country wide platform where more innovative ways are conducted for citizen participation. A list of upcoming activities is available for citizens so that they can participate in the development that interests them. Both volunteers and citizens can be benefitted from such ICT tool. Local organizations use it mostly to contact the citizens and stay connected with them. This tool is majorly implemented for providing information to citizens and getting their feedback too.

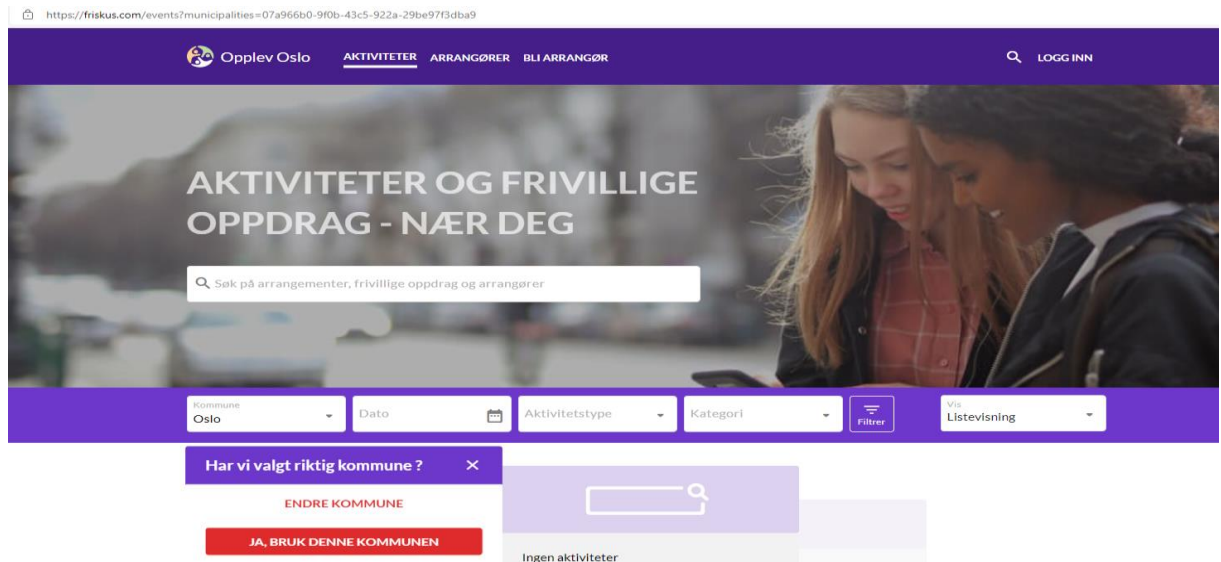


Figure 15: Friskus Website, Source: <https://friskus.com/>

Time Credits

This method involved volunteers to get financial benefits for participation. Hence, more citizens who never participated in planning and other activities are encouraged to participate with this methodology.



Figure 16: Time Credits website, Source: <https://www.timekred.no/>

All these tools implemented in Norway help is better Citizen's involvement in Urban Development. Citizens facilitate discussions and are largely part of Urban Development projects at an early stage, thereby keeping them engaged at all levels of project. In such ways, Citizens feel more satisfied and connected with the government and local authorities. Citizens actively participate and indirectly improve development plans across the city together with the local authorities and project planners.

2.4. Importance of Youth involvement for effective Urban Development

Berntzen & Johannessen (2016) have cited certain examples of Citizen Participation through digital media. Also, mentioned how citizens participation affected decisions for development. Both offline and online participation is encouraged for better results. Hybrid approach can have better interaction between citizens and government.

Falleth & Hansen (2011) concluded that a decent number of Norwegian citizens are active in local and national organizations. In all phases of planning, local organizations and local politicians are in constant contact. They also found that there is no regulation as to how direct participation can be emphasized and hence it's not made mandatory for private developers to include participatory measures. According to the research conducted by Rubenson, Blais & Fournier (2004), there has been visible decline in voting by younger generations. They are more likely to show interest if voting happens via internet. The same was concluded in the research by Mossberger & Tolbert (2008). Thus, as it's mentioned that youth is the future of any country, similarly e-participation can be termed as future of democracy.

As per UN convention on the Rights of the Child in 2011, the ability of children and youth to participate in decisions gained utmost importance and then in 2009, Norwegian law was passed which included children and youth to participate in Urban development decisions related to their neighborhood (Hanssen, 2018). Youth is being considered an important stakeholder group and since youth think very much differently than adults, Youth Participation needs to be considered effectually (Frank, 2006).

Reiersølmoen, Gianni & Divitini (2018) have created an app named DELTA which targets teenagers primarily who can completely read and write. The design of the app is based on game, where they get points. Youth can get an overview of the ongoing projects, can share thoughts, start discussions etc. Gurstein, Lovato & Ross (2003) suggested that it should be the major responsibility of the local authorities to ensuring active youth participation. Young people engage themselves more in the community work, their efforts much be cherished in larger society.

2.5. Online Public Engagement Platforms and Participation in Ukraine

As part of DEMUDIG project, Kwiek (2021) investigated citizen participation digital tools (EDEM) and to what extent actually Ukrainian citizens are satisfied with participation and what are the barriers they experience while accessing digital tools. Many citizens were interviewed and their data was analysed based on Heuristic Analysis. In Ukraine, there are around 20% population with disabilities. Hence the digital platform is studied in detailed describing whether its implemented as Universal tools so as to make it available and feasible for everyone to participate and share their opinion.

Interviews were conducted on specific groups. One of the group was the developers, who have developed the EDEM platform. One of the other group was the implementors, the ones who implemented EDEM platform and made it available for the public. Also, the government and citizens were interviewed with the set of semi-structured questions. Heuristic analysis is used as a basis of getting background information about the EDEM platform. Questionnaire consisted of various options and their functioning in the EDEM tool. Some of the options in the tool/website were language specific and required login. Such menus were also explored with the help of video interview with a EDEM platform expert. This analysis provided insight about the EDEM platform and barriers which citizens feel while accessing or operating the platform. Thematic analysis also led to various themes such as citizen participation is promoted a lot in Ukraine, Users need an appropriate platform where they can share their opinions, EDEM is not a Universal platform and elders can have problem accessing the same and Citizens have negative feedback about the EDEM and such platforms.

Although Ukrainian government has been implementing various solutions to encourage citizen participation, the citizens distrust the government, thus creates a barrier in using ICT for participation. Since the government tries to keep the budget low for such platforms, people do get accessibility issues. Some of the disabled people find it difficult to use such platforms, thereby creating a barrier for them. Although users having experience of using such platforms find it easy to use and feel positive about such platforms. Many Ukrainian websites for public participation does not allow the users to be anonymous, thereby leading to less online participation. There had been scenarios where user suggestions or opinions backfired them after a couple of years. Despite the Ukrainian government is encouraging children and youth to participate, disabled people are getting ignored and thus not able to participate in Urban Development projects.

Digital Platforms in Ukraine are majorly based upon Non-Participation and Tokenism Methods of Citizen Participation's ladder of Arnstein. There are not major platforms/tools being adopted for Citizen Control methods. Non-Participation methods are majorly meetings and information workshops, still very few people attend those workshops. EDEM platform is one of the example of Tokenism tools where citizens get information about development projects and they can share their thoughts digitally. Although the Ukrainian government is trying to implement Citizen Control methods, but due to absence of Digital Public Participation and lack of confidence in the local authorities, citizens are very skeptical about such platforms.

3. Methodology

The research originated from the requirement of local authorities in Oslo to know if all the citizens have access to internet and if they are comfortable when they use ICT for Citizen participation. In the present study, Thematic analysis has provided various themes which answer all the research questions. Semi structured interviews form the basis of the research. The questionnaire is open-ended and thus helps the participants to explain their thoughts and emotions in an elaborated way.

Many citizens who had participated in Urban Development surveys and discussions were contacted via emails and not all of them remembered that they had participated. The interested participants were then contacted again and questionnaire was shared with them via email and an online interview was scheduled with them. There were 7 interviews in total. The interviews were in Norwegian, they were then transcribed to English and open coded to classify codes and identify themes from categorized patterns. Each of the themes are then analyzed in detail to interpret participants view and opinions.

Although other Qualitative research methods like Grounded theory or Content analysis theory could also be implemented, Thematic Analysis is a useful method where perspectives to various participants can be examined thoroughly and summarizing key codes and thereby themes in a better way.

3.1. Data Collection

Most of the organizations and businesses are connected to their clients, suppliers, customers, employees etc. and Data can explain any of such relationships, thereby helping in overall improvement of any of their operations (Ainsworth, 2021). Bhandari (2020) defines Data Collection as a process of collecting information, measurements, and observations. Data Collection as a systematic process of gathering information that enables to answer research questions and evaluating the outcomes (Kabir, 2016).

One of the most important stages of research is Data Collection and is essential for supporting the integrity of the research. The two broad categories in which data can be organized are Quantitative and Qualitative (Kabir, 2016). Kuckartz (2019) defines Quantitative data as numerical data or information which can be expressed in the form of numbers or figures. Hence, the data which is obtained from Quantitative data collection methods can be useful for learning about general trends, knowing your customers, conducting market research, and predicting future trends or sales etc. (Jovancic, 2021). On the other hand, Qualitative data is non-numeric and descriptive in nature. Such data exists in the form of words and sentences (Kabir, 2016). Jovancic explains Qualitative data as an excellent method which helps in getting clear insight about the perceptions of people, what are factors driving their behavior and thoughts.

Data for this project is collected based on responses from citizens for any Urban Development project. Data is extracted from Local municipalities website. Those people are contacted individually through emails and personal interviews arranged for the interested people. 7 (3 female and 4 males) interested citizens were contacted and interviewed. All the participants are aged between 35-55 years. A prepared set of open-ended questions were asked which includes questions related to their participation and feedback regarding the usage of the website used for communication and their satisfaction after they put forward their voice.

3.1.1. Open-ended Questionnaire

A questionnaire can be defined as a research instrument that is prepared from a series of open-ended or closed-ended questions (Ndukwu, 2020). Questionnaires can be carried out face to face, via telephone, computer, or email (McLeod, 2018). Debois (2019) explains various advantages of Questionnaires like they are one of the practical ways to collect data, quick way to get results, allow easy analysis and cover most of the aspects of a topic.

In this research, a list of open-ended questionnaires is created. This list of 12 questions includes all the aspects and questions, the replies to which will help in getting responses to the research questions. Many of the questions are open-ended, where the participants can just share their thoughts about their experience regarding participation in Urban Development.

3.1.2. Semi-structured Interviews

One of the qualitative methods for data collection is Interviews, conducted to receive in-depth responses from participants (Mbachu, 2018). Bhandari (2021) also seconds the thoughts that the open-ended questions when asked verbally or through email to the participants and their replies helps in knowing their opinions about a particular topic. Interviews are appropriate when detailed insights are needed from the participants to achieve the goal of research. Open-ended questions build up confidence among the interviewer and the participants and hence helps in generating rich data (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008).

In this research, all the interviews happened in local language, Norwegian. All the interested participants were contacted via email and once they showed their interest for further interview regarding Citizen Participation, online meetings were scheduled accordingly. After getting the consent from the participants, questions were presented one by one, and their responses were noted. Since the questions were open-ended, it initiated much more input from them. In many cases, the questions were rephrased by the interviewer. Also, the participants were asked to expand the relevant responses. All the interviews were recorded so that they can be referred to later. All the responses

were then transcribed to English and analyzed accordingly.

3.2. Data Analysis

Data Analysis is defined as the process of analyzing and interpreting data to extract the insights or the information required for decision making (Calzon, 2021). Roldós (2021) also opines that Data analysis is converting raw data into meaningful information and statistics. Data analysis is a continuous process and data integrity is essential for any data analysis (Arora, 2021). Analysis of data empowers to make well-informed decisions and helps in overall growth of any business (Coursera, 2021).

Qualitative data analysis is required in this research. There are many approaches to achieve the same. Thematic analysis has been applied to investigate how participants experienced the usage of website for opinion sharing and their satisfaction afterwards.

3.2.1. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is one of the most popular and powerful technique for Qualitative analysis which focuses on the study of patterns of opinions of participants. (Crosley & Rautenbach, 2021). Braun & Clarke (2006) explain Thematic analysis as a flexible approach and the most highly approachable analysis technique. Thematic analysis can be defined as an efficient technique of organizing data by labeling quotations as codes and discovering themes from the same (Rosala, 2019). According to King (2004), Thematic analysis is a well-structured approach for analyzing data and summarizing key components of a large dataset.

3.2.1.1. Familiarity with Data

This is the first step in Thematic Analysis. In this part, one can transcript the data from audio to text and try to get the impression of what exactly the data is (Crosley & Rautenbach, 2021). Repeated reading of data is must in this phase to get general feel of data and what kind of themes can pop up (Dey, 1993). Crosley & Rautenbach (2021) also recommend that researchers can take notes about the initial codes and make as list and then at a later stage, during much deeper analysis of data, the same can be edited/append to get better view.

In this research, the data was in the form of video recordings. Since this analysis is based in Oslo, the participants were Norwegian speaker. Firstly, during this stage, the main challenge was to transcribe all the videos to Norwegian text and then convert them to English using Google translate. Sometimes during google translation, the literal meaning of the sentences is lost, that has also been take care of during data familiarity. The actual data i.e., the videos were heard multiple times so that the actual context /content of the participants and their opinions are mentioned correctly in English text, thereby increasing the probability of the data being truly transcribed. Then, overall

reading was done of all the 7 interview texts to understand how this data answers to the research questions and a basic form of codes were generated.

3.2.1.2. Generating Codes and Searching Themes

This phase begins after the researchers are familiar with the data and have a general idea of what the data is about. King (2004) suggests that in this phase, mostly researchers go through the data multiple number of times and identify the important text and label them so that they can be referred to at a later stage. Braun & Clarke (2006) second the thought and refer to this phase as a coding phase where researchers give full attention to the text and systematically identify the text that interests the researchers. Thus, researchers move from a semi-structured or rather unstructured data to a more specific data and development of ideas (Morse & Richards, 2002). If the researchers work continuously with the data, codes lead to a certain patterns or themes which are relevant to the research question (Crosley & Rautenbach, 2021). Once such themes or sub-themes are identified, gradually researchers feel the relation between different parts of the data. (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000).

During this phase, the interview text is analyzed several times and different codes and sub-themes were generated which led to 5 themes which could directly relate to the research questions. Initially, all the transcripts were studied and highlighted the important points from every interview. After that, cut the marked excerpts and set the excerpts together which meant similar. During the third or fourth round of reading, came across some new facts which were also added to the final draft of codes. Segregation of all the codes which meant the same helped in generating themes at the end.

3.2.1.3. Reviewing and Finalizing Themes

In this phase, researchers review the codes from each extract and try to discover a pattern. The validity of the themes is determined to understand if the themes relate to data and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Attride-Stirling (2001) recommends that selected themes should be refined into concrete themes which reflect the ideas and opinions from the text. Finalizing themes does not mean that one cannot go back to generating codes and themes. In case any theme does not have proper data to support, researchers can go back to previous stages and find out more about the theme (Crosley & Rautenbach, 2021). Towards the end of this phase, researchers have better idea about the themes and how are they answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In this research, there were total of 60 quotes from the interview text which was reduced to 30. During initial analysis of all the quotes, related quotes were kept together and thus generated 5 themes based on how relevant the themes seemed to be

in accordance with the research questions. Many a times had to go back to the initial transcripts to understand the meaning of a specific quote and if it fits with the relevant theme. Overall, this process of generating and finalizing themes from codes was repeated a couple of times. After the themes were finalized, each of the theme was studied separately and estimated how it fits with the data and the research question.

3.3. Ethical Protocol

Confidentiality and informed consent are the two most important ethical issues which must be taken care by the researchers. The participants must be informed prior to the interview regarding the aim of research and where their opinion will be referred to. The participant's consent should be obtained and recorded (Kelley, Clark, Brown & Sitzia, 2003).

All the participants provided their written/verbal consent for the interview. The interviewer informed all the participants that this interview is based on their participation for Urban Development and the recording of the interview will be kept only for research purposes pertaining to the DEMUDIG Project. Their approval to the same was noted. Moreover, participants gave their consent for being contacted again if required.

4. Results

All the themes and their specific codes are explained in the table below:

Theme	Codes/Quotes from Interviews
Technology (ICT) and Social Media Usage for Citizen Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 user • Official and Personal Use • Sit at home and participate • Easy access to information • Everyone has access to information • A lot of information including fake news • Digital technology provides various opportunities
Design/Comfortability of Participation Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy and Quick Platform • Standard Structure of Platform • No requirement of many words
Problems/Barriers for using Digital Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to login with NetBank for participation • Accessibility is the biggest problem • Negative Perception about such platforms • Many people don't get feedback after participation • People don't have the ability to answer • Linguistic and Technical Issues • Un-awareness for the existence of such portals • People are skeptical of such platforms • Not comfortable with digital platforms • Young people's perspective can be different that old people • Hard to get confidence in the platform • People are afraid to do mistakes
Improvements required for better Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More participation should be encouraged • Information about organizations and local strategies • Measures to invoke interest in citizens • Fear of being cross-questioned if participated
Citizen's Satisfaction after Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-way communication • Satisfaction after participation • Enthusiastic for future participation • Significant opinions of other citizens

Figure 17: Results of Thematic Analysis

4.1. Technology (ICT) and Social Media Usage for Citizen Participation

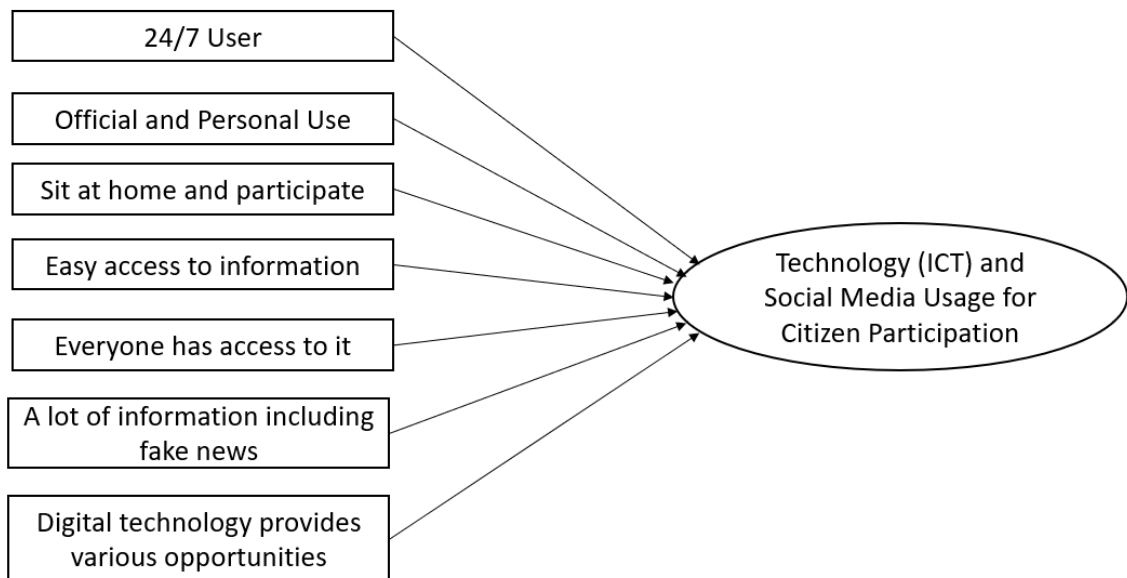


Figure 18: Technology (ICT) and Social Media Usage for Citizen Participation

This theme captures social media usage of Citizens with regards to knowledge about Urban Development projects or in general. Participants were asked questions about their daily usage of internet and digital media. Although many of them responded that they are quite active users of internet including social media. Remaining one mentioned that he is not very fond of internet and hence is not very active on social media and only uses internet for official purposes or listening to music. Participant 7 responded that

"I use the internet but when I do not sleep".

Participant 2 built on top of that stating that his/her internet usage is several hours in a day

"360 degree internet user and probably think that I use the internet more than several hours a day"

Although, all the 6 participants were quite active on internet and use internet every day for official and personal purposes, one of the participants is not very fond of Internet.

Participant 3 made a statement that

"I try to have a conscious relationship with what I try not to use it too much because it makes me unconcentrated and makes me little lost then so I try to use common sense and use internet for what I benefit from it sometimes I like to use it for that on what I think is important and useful exception"

All participants had been using Internet in daily life for communication at work, checking emails-both official and personal, listening to music, reading news, entertainment through social media. Participant 5 expressed that

"Private or at work. More private. Check epost, information, contact people. At work. Music. But most abruptly to search for information. to keep in touch with other people"

Participant 6 just highlighted the same in less words and replied that the participant uses internet for a lot more.

"Use more"

Participant 1 also confirmed and commented that

"I use it for a lot of different things. It's everything from a work software to communicating . I am a teacher so communicate with colleagues and parents. OneDrive , OneNote . Also for entertainment everything from online newspapers to social media also communication also outside of work and with friends and others "

All the respondents agreed to the fact that it's easy to participate through digital media as one does not need to be physically available for meetings and debates/discussions. They can sit at home and express their concerns regarding their neighborhood. Users believe that because of technology, it's easy for them to participate from home.

Participant 1 quoted that

"You can sit at home and participate on cases."

Participants had a common view that there had been quick accessible information available on internet. Participant 4 shared his/her experience stating that they get to know about local welfare association and their work through internet.

"What types of organizations exist and go through the project and get to know about strategy local welfare association that does local work and become aware of the rest of the Neighborhood all the time."

Participant 1 highlighted the same in their own way commenting that with the help of ICT, it's easy-to-get access to information of all sorts.

"I think can be important because then you get the combination of getting a little easy access to information but also get your feedback as digital later"

Participant 7 shared the fact that he/she keeps informative about politics and planning issues with the help of internet.

"I myself have discovered both how incredible and easy it is to find information about issues both political issues in the city council and in politics in the center of my district"

Majority of respondents were positive about information accessible to everyone. Social media termed to be helpful in reminding people of any such digital surveys for Urban Development being happening and when they can participate. Participant 1 stated that

"Information can be important that you can easy access and give feedback can be important."

Participant 2 also second the thought stating that information regarding developments in their neighborhood are available on internet and everyone has access to it.

"Everyone has access to it"

3 participants stated that they consider social media to be very much informative and many times consists of a lot of fake news. So, one need to learn how to filter out which of the statements are true and which are not. Participant 3 quoted that

"It does help but at the same time as we think that technology makes it more confusing it is difficult to know what is important to many when there are fake news."

Participant 4 also commented that there are scenarios where is excess information and sometimes leads to disagreements.

"Problematic. Not all agree with each other. Very much informative. "

Majority of respondents were of the view that there are many possibilities and options available if one is active and shows interest in such digital platforms for Urban Development. Participants also believe that if one is interested, there are many opportunities available digitally where they can participate and share their opinion pertaining to Development in their city and neighborhood. Participant 7 stated that

"Through Digital technology there are really very big opportunities that do not like unfortunately what you call to improve your opportunities to participate more actively in the community."

This theme hereby encapsulates that citizens who are active on social media do get information about upcoming development projects. Social media provides various types of information regarding public meetings for specific Planning programs which suffices the Arnstein's ladder and expresses that Norwegian government is working hard in getting the citizens informed and aware of the developments in the country/city. Many times, citizens get information about the upcoming projects through Society meetings and after that they go to social media for mor information and detailed plans. Thus, demonstrates the Norwegian government's willingness to involve citizens from early stage of planning.

4.2. Design/Comfortability of Participation Platforms

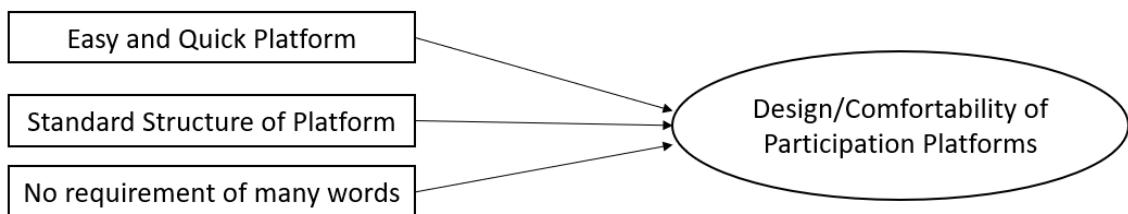


Figure 19: Design/Comfortability of Participation Platforms

This theme was generated with the answers to questions regarding the usage of a particular website/tool adopted by Norwegian government for citizen participation and Urban Development projects. The platform we talked about is named 'Si din mening' which all the participants had used once or twice for participating in planning of their neighborhood All the 7 participants found it very easy to use digital platforms for participation. At the time of interview, it was only one respondent who had used the platform recently, rest all had used it during the last couple of years. One participant had used it 3-4 times. Participant 3 stated that it was very easy to use the tool.

"Very easy to use."

Participant 4 confirmed the same stating that he/she found the website easy and quick.

"Easy to use"

Participant 6 specified the same that the tool was not at all difficult to access and operate.

"Very easy. "

Participant 1, when asked about their experience of using Digital platform confirmed the same stating that it was quite quick and simple to use.

"It was very simple"

Participant 7 gave a detailed experience about digital platform and explained that since the tool does not have many features, its quick to give your suggestions and easy to work to that tool.

"Very easy to use. did not has many functions to use"

Every respondent agreed that the platform was very easy to be accessed and used by their parents and grandparents. This species that the administration while creating such platforms have taken care of its standardization and ease of use by all age groups and all citizens. Thus, it can be presumed that government or planning authorities encourage citizens to participate. Participate 2 stated that grandparent or parents could easily use the tool.

"Grandparents could use very easily."

Participant 7 confirmed the same that grandparents will not have any problem accessing the tool.

"They can work without any problem"

Participant 1 developed on top of that stating that his/her grandparents were not digitally active, but parents could use the tool without any problem.

"My grandmother is 92 years old. She is not digital but my parents in the middle of the mid 60's They had done it. "

Participant 3 took some time to think and expressed his/her view that since the tool was easy to use, Parents could use the tool easily.

"Parents can use it easily."

Participant 4 also expressed the thought that parents won't be having any difficulty in accessing the tool.

"Parents can use it easily."

One of the participants stated that there is no place for many words hence it adds to the same point that the website or the platform is designed to be more user friendly and not much of typing required. Also, they said it did not take much time for participation. Participant 7 stated that there was no place for many words and hence was quick to give feedback using the tool.

"Not place for many words"

Participant 5 confirmed that since there were not many functions to use, hence the

platform was labelled to be an easy solution.

"Easy to use. Just write text and send so did not has many functions to use"

Participant 2 voiced the same that it did not take much time to express your opinion and did not require many words too.

"Low text and does not take much time to express your opinion."

This theme helps in establishing the fact that the website "Si din mening" is universal and can be used by participants of all ages. It also confirms that the Norwegian Government is focusing more on participation of citizens in development projects and encourages the same. The website is very easy to use, access and hence makes it quicker for citizens to participate, thereby increasing citizen participation. Citizen Control methods of Arnstein's ladder promotes partnership between citizens and the local authorities and development of such easy and quick platforms ensures the same.

4.3. Problems/Barriers for using Digital Platforms

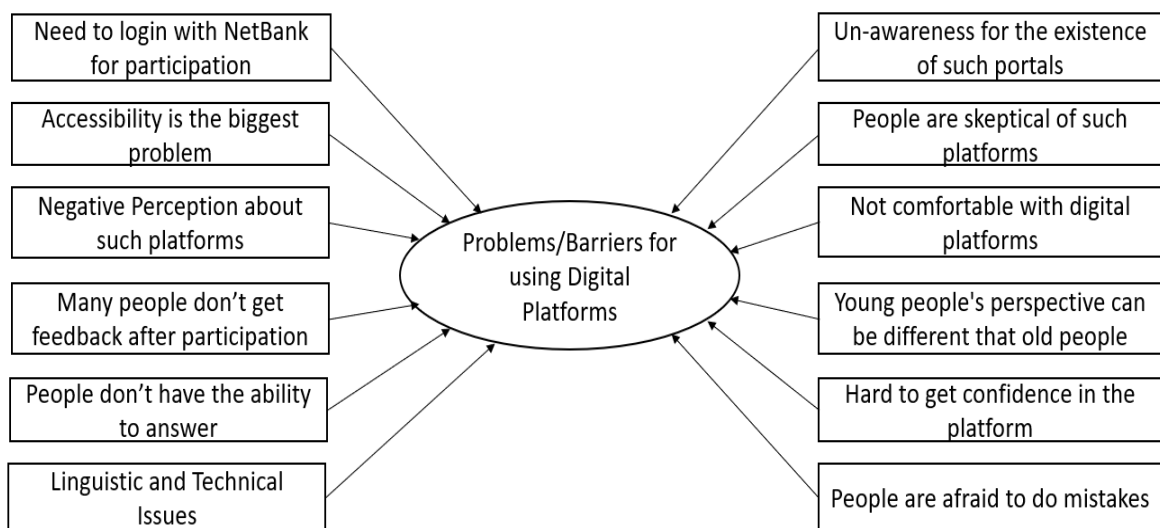


Figure 20: Problems/Barriers for using Digital Platforms

This theme encapsulates barriers citizens experience for using Digital platforms. Although none of the participant interviewed faced any barriers, they shared their thoughts, thinking what kind of barriers they think can exist for citizens. Participant 2 recollected that maybe it required to login using net-banking and hence many people can consider that too as barrier of not using such platforms.

"Not very quick, you need to login and authenticate, use netbank for login. And those people could not use it very quick"

For some of the respondents, it can be accessibility as one of the barriers or stopping factors of not using such platforms. Some people don't find the platform readily accessible and are not interested in finding them. Those citizens are unable to respond even for their surroundings. Participant 4 pointed out the accessibility issue and stated that

"I think I accessibility is perhaps the biggest problem that Unless I go in to check it again"

3-4 participants stated that people might think such platforms are difficult to operate. Even without trying, people sometimes feel that it won't be that easy to use such platforms, hence simply don't use them. One participant also mentioned that many people are skeptical about such platforms, regarding the authenticity of such platforms and hence it gets harder to attain confidence. Participant 3 stated that many citizens can be opinated that such digital platforms are difficult to use.

"Not sure. May be people think that it can be difficult to use such platforms."

Participant 6 second the thought and made the remark that it's hard for many people to have confidence in such tools.

"Its hard to get confidence in the platform"

Three of the participants had a view that many people expect a kind of feedback after the opinion is submitted. An email that your valuable suggestion is important and will be taken forward or something like that. Participant 1 suggested that he/she will be happier if they received a kind of feedback that their suggestion after participation is valuable.

"I think can be important because then you get the combination of getting a little easy access to information but also get your feedback as digital later"

Participant 5 also pointed out that if citizens don't get feedback, it also leads to less satisfaction among the citizens with regards to such tools and they contemplate that their suggestion or idea is not required and hence don't participate.

"If there is more information and you don't get feedback."

Participant 6 also suggested about feedback option which can encourage increase citizen satisfaction and more participation.

"at the other end to not just give feedback that we take Note Thank you for the input but that there is a real dialogue on the matter"

One respondent commented that one of the barriers to participation can be that people feel they don't have the right to participate or the power to express for Urban Development. Participant 6 pointed out that some people might not have the power to answer.

"People who don't have power to answer. They really have hardly the ability to answer what you ask."

Two of the participants had the opinion that there can be language barriers affecting citizen participation. Moreover, technical issues can also be one of the barriers that disables citizens to share their views. Participant 7 commented that if the tools are language specific, people can be reluctant to participate.

"the most important only I away from the most obvious are so linguistic and technical but that is it is quite easy to use but the language you used was that itself"

Participant 2 had the opinion that there can be many citizens who feel that such digital tools are more technical, and they won't be able to access and use them.

"People might feel that this is an important technical solution."

Participant 6 also second the opinion that language barrier can be one of the reasons for not participating digitally.

"may be due to language or that one has the same fear of violating the regime as a leader one must formulate on if others."

Many participants responded that there are many people unaware that such portals exist. Such awareness is a must. Special measures should be taken to make people aware of such tools otherwise it won't be helpful if less people participate. Participant 1 suggested that there can be less awareness among citizens for such digital tools.

"Many don't know that such platforms exist so they should be made aware of such platforms and be politically Active. Many things happen, then people don't know about such platforms."

Participant 2 second the thought that there are citizens who are unaware of the existence of such platforms.

"Existence of such software and participation"

Participant 4 further confirmed that sometimes people feel that such tools are fraud when such tools are advertised on social media.

"sometimes the platform is a real it would really come as advertisement on Facebook"

Two respondents had the estimation that young people can have different perspective, hence it gets more important for all the segments to respond to the surveys pertaining to urban development and take part in discussions. Participant 7 suggested that young people and children can have different perspectives with regards to Urban Development.

"children and young people's perspectives the neighborhood a perspective that is that is the driving force and try to do something that matters"

Participant 6 also shared the same opinion that younger people can have a totally different approach to urban development.

"It's not the case for quite a few younger people in fact one is who is a little older has a slightly different approach then."

One of the participants also mentioned that there can be chances that people are afraid that if they do participate or use such platform, they can do some mistakes and hence they avoid using such tools and platforms. Participant 6 stated that there are many citizens/older people who think that if they use such digital tools, they can end up doing mistakes and are afraid of the same.

"They are often very afraid of making mistakes"

This theme captured barriers which citizens might face when they use, or they plan to use digital platforms. Such barriers need to be worked upon and tried to be removed to have more citizen participation. Some of the barriers are just thoughts of citizens and may/may not be the actual barriers. Thus, a lot of effort is required from the local authorities/government to ensure the citizens that such barriers are not for real and they must try to access digital platforms. Government can set up workshops to give citizens more exposure to digital tools to achieve efficient citizen participation.

4.4. Improvements required for better Participation

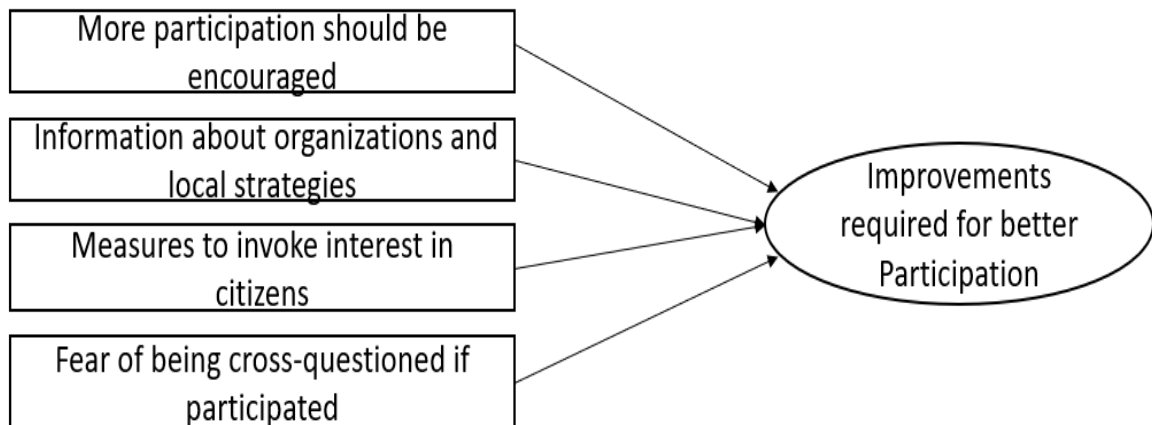


Figure 21: Improvements required for better Participation

This theme provides suggestions by the participants for improvements essential for better participation. All the participants shared their views and showed their faith and confidence towards the government. They marked that government, or the local authorities still lack more participation and should devise measures for the same.

Two of the participants were competent enough and had good experience of the planning process and were aware that it's only a small group of people who participate. More people must be encouraged to participate, and this can happen easily with the help of digital media. Advertisements, Facebook, and other social means can be adopted for awareness. Participant 4 pointed out that there are only a few people who come forward to participate and thus more enthusiasm is required by the citizens.

"there is a very small group of people who come to say your opinion "

Participant 6 suggested that government needs to improve the measures for creating awareness among citizens regarding digital tools.

"you need to improve your opportunities and to participate more actively in the local community."

One of the participants suggested that there are many people who feel that it's long paperwork they need to study to know the basic details of the project. Participant 1 stated that it's better to give them pointers so that they can quickly read them and give feedback.

"better at giving a little such small and only pointers also opinions instead of these long paperwork"

Participant 4 expressed the concern that there are many local organizations existing at present for surveys which most of the citizens are unaware of.

"What types of organizations exist and go through the project and get to know about strategy local welfare association that does local work and become aware of "the rest of the Neighborhood all the time."

Measures need to be taken to invoke interest among citizens for participation in urban development. Participant 2 mentioned that since internet is readily accessible to most of the citizens, interest should be invoked using internet and social media.

"because of internet, many people can see it in no time what is happening".

Participant 3 also second the thought and stated that if people have interest, they will surely give the suggestions or ideas for development plans, thus measures must be taken for developing the interest among the citizens.

" Time and interest. Interest comes when you first begin to do. "

One of the participants also was skeptical as to if these surveys are not anonymous and if the participant is later pointed at, then it's wrong. Participant 7 pointed out that if they fill the surveys and their information is saved, it can be dangerous for them in future. Hence this must be informed by the government or local authorities, that the surveys are anonymous, and platforms must be designed keep in mind such problems.

"If information is saved and you pointed that you said this and that, then it's wrong"

This theme apprehended the improvements required from the government for better citizen participation. Although Norwegian Government tries to engage citizens from the early stages of planning keeping in mind the Citizen Control methods of Arnstein's ladder, all the efforts will be in vain if citizens are not motivated to participate. Hence, improvement and recommendations with regards to existing tools must be taken positively and must be acted upon for efficient participation.

4.5. Citizen's Satisfaction after Participation

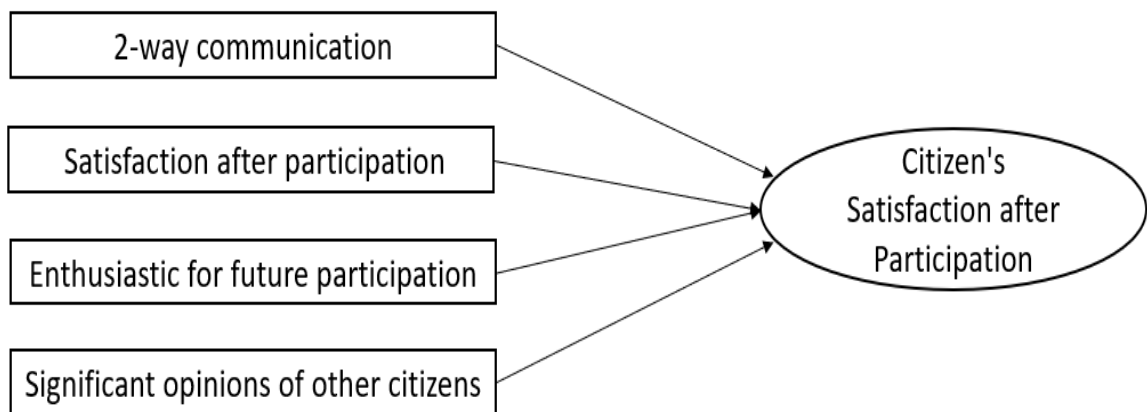


Figure 22: Citizen's Satisfaction after Participation

This theme captures satisfaction among citizens after participation using digital platforms. All the participants interviewed shared the common view that after participation, they were more enthusiastic to follow up other development plans and participate more actively. Such platforms collect all different ideas and opinions of citizens participating which helps the government to plan accordingly, keeping the citizens interest in mind.

Participant 6 mentioned that such type of platforms encourages 2-way communication. It gets easier for citizens to connect with political parties and planning department.

"2-way communication."

All the participants were highly satisfied after sharing their thoughts for a particular development in their neighborhood. 4 of them mentioned that their voice was heard by the local municipality that had positive effect on their surroundings. Participant 5 stated that he/she was satisfied after their opinion was heard.

"My opinion is taken into account. Oslo Municipality receives the information they need to make decisions and the decision is made based on what population thinks."

Participant 3 was very contented after participation and was glad that they could be part of such surveys.

"It's good to say what you feel. I could say my opinion about the development."

Participant 2 was quite motivated and expressed that if their close neighborhood is concerned, he/she prefers to give their suggestion and opinion.

"Feeling of sharing your thoughts is very important for me particularly when it comes to your neighborhood. In addition, thinking about nature and open-air areas is very important"

Participant 1 also second the thought as far as their immediate neighborhood is concerned, they are also motivated to keep informed, participate and suggest.

"I like to say my opinion and then this is an issue that concerns me and my immediate environment. So then it was a good thing to be able to give a steady voice in that matter."

Participant 7 also he/she also experienced positive effects after participation. They were more enthusiastic and motivate for future participation.

" it has also had quite a few positive effects for me has been more engaged politically"

Four respondents were very excited and eager to participate more. One of the participants also said that it's important to think about the nature and fresh air surrounding you, hence everyone should participate. Participant 4 wanted to be motivated for participating in the development of their own city/country.

"It is important that it is a little about also say local democracy that we as inhabitants have the opportunity to participate and to be able to participate in to shape the city , that's why I can continue to use just as think that I somehow do believe that it could lead Norway "

Participant 5 also believed that such digital tools must be used more often thereby more efficient participation must be encouraged.

"I believe we should use this tool more often."

Participant 2 also shared the opinion that citizens must more often access such platforms and participate.

"I will go more into the platform and participate more often."

Participant 7 suggested that he/she will be using such tool not only for development plans but also for other cases as well, like politics etc.

"One could have been more active. Engage in plan og bygging saker/political saker. I think to use this more often. Engage myself in other cases as well"

Two of the participants were of the view that since its local democracy, everyone should share what they feel about a particular development or should raise questions if they feel. Participant 7 claimed that participation led to knowing the neighborhood and the neighbors.

"I became better acquainted with my Neighborhood has become acquainted with very many people my neighborhood"

Participant 2 was also positive about such digital tools since they inform about what's happening across the city.

"That is next stage what can help in knowing what is happening. "

Participant 4 felt quite positive after reading the suggestions from citizens and was quite positive that such suggestions can help in overall better development in the city.

"We have urban developers groups on Facebook Yes it is written others somehow just right in front and one can get fun and positive experience to read other people's thoughts"

Participant 4 also shared the same thought that communication with the public is very important, thereby encouraging citizens to participate in development programs.

"Communication with the public among others important"

This theme encapsulated the satisfaction level among citizens. Citizens stay motivated after participating in digital tools and inspired to participate more often in future. Since most of the information is easily available or is made available by the government, citizens feel motivated to participate in various development projects. Motivated and enthusiastic citizens can participate more actively thereby encouraging 2-way communication between builders, local authorities and the citizens and thus contribute towards better development projects.

5. Discussion

5.1. Technology (ICT) and Social Media Usage for Citizen Participation

The interviews revealed that all the participants had been using ICT for their official and personal usage. The results showed that citizens of Oslo feel that with the use of ICT, it has become easy for them to easily access information pertaining to Urban Development and thereby participating effectively. Most of the citizens share the opinion that with the usage of Social media and ICT, they could get knowledge about developments in their neighborhood and thereby they could participate and share their thoughts regarding the development projects as suggested by Hanssen & Falleth (2014).

While the Norwegian government tries to have open forums and discussion regarding the development projects, citizens are also satisfied and have confidence in the solution provided by the government. The related studies show the same that there had been scenarios where citizen participation had affected the Urban development projects in the country and certain projects had been modified based on the suggestions from the public. Sitting at home and participating via Internet had been the key motive of the government and both the interviews and previous studies by Fiskaa (2005) recon to that. According to Planning and Building Act in Norway, Government and the local authorities are supposed to make the information available to the citizens about the upcoming development projects and they are given deadline to ensure participation. The results showed that participants were aware of Urban Development projects in their neighborhood and have participated in the same.

The research could provide answer to one of the research questions that citizens get aware of the developments around from social media and infromatory meetings. All the participants also were satisfied with the availability of ICT services and because of which they could easily and effectively participate in urban development. As per Arnstein's ladder, this theme confirms that the non-participation methods, although implemented in Oslo, requires more effort to inform the citizens and create awareness among them. Manipulation and Therapy rungs require to be implemented digitally with better reach to the citizens to achieve effective participation.

5.2. Design/Comfortability of Participation Platforms

The research reveals that the participatory platforms being used in Norway are quite user friendly and easy to use. Many participants remembered that while using such platforms, there was no requirement of many words. In few words, they could express if they were interested in the development project or if they had any suggestions. Also, it was discovered in the interviews that the digital platform was very quick and easy to locate/find where to give suggestion or how to operate, the same was stated by Stoltenberg & Aasrud (2012) as part of Norwegian Government's Strategic plan towards Citizen Participation and e-governance.

Norwegian government is trying hard to implement universally designed platforms which are easy for anyone to access and locate. The results from the interviews second the thoughts put forward by Lea (2016). All the participants confirmed that the platform was easy to use and quickly accessible thereby increased confidence of the citizens in the government activities. This also established that e-governance activities of Norwegian government are in conjunction with the citizen needs and there is transparency in the flow of information from government to the citizens. Results also reveal that participatory platform is universal, meaning old and young people can equally and easily participate. Platforms are easily accessible and not very difficult to understand the functionality of such tools, thereby confirming the studies of Vattoli (2020) regarding online services provided to citizens by the government.

This theme generated from Thematic analysis supported the fact that the Norwegian government or the local authorities are working properly in accordance with the planning and building act of the country and openly share information about upcoming projects and take the suggestions by the citizens positively. Public scrutiny has been one of the major steps in Urban Development and it's confirmed from the research that public voice is taken seriously and is welcomed by the local authorities. If the digital platforms will be universal, then only the Citizen Control methods of Arnstein's ladder would be achievable. Better citizen participation requires quick and easy platforms.

5.3. Problems/Barriers for using Digital Platforms

Results of the research reveal that despite of the fact that the government is trying hard to enable citizens to participate effectively in Urban development, still certain barriers exist. Many people still are unaware that such tools exist where they can share their opinions about any upcoming project. Interviews also showed that citizens have negative thoughts about such participatory platforms and they since they don't get any confirmation after participation, they think there their voice is unheard and it's hard for them to get confidence in such platforms.

Although previous studies from Rubenson, Blais & Fournier (2004) reveal that the youth is not actively involved in participation and government is trying to involve youth in the participation, they might be interested in participating digitally. On the contrary, research depicts that there are citizens who are skeptical about such digital platforms and still prefer going for meeting and sharing their opinion there and not comfortable participating digitally. As per data from Statistical bureau, Norway, more than 91 % population uses internet, still the information about Urban development does not reach one and all and thus public participation is not satisfactory.

Interviews show that there are many citizens who don't have the ability to answer or rather are afraid to answer. The reasons that came up after thorough discussions were that certain people only use internet for official purpose and don't use social media for information about such projects. Moreover, there are scenarios where people might feel linguistic and technical issues for using such platforms and hence, they never bother to

participate. Government must overcome such barriers for better implementation of Tokenism methods of Arnstein's ladder. This would help in more aware citizens and hence better communication and bonding between the citizens and the government or the local authorities.

5.4. Improvements required for better Participation

Research shows that there is requirement for improvement to attain more participation and better decision making. Interviews suggest that more participation must be encouraged. There should be more awareness about local strategies and organizations and certain measures must be taken to invoke interest in citizens. If the citizens will be aware, they can provide better suggestions for urban development in their neighborhood and the city/country during the initial phases of development as suggested by Borthakur & Bhuyan (2019) that government to citizen participation is the key component of e-governance.

Previous research suggested that the government has many programs and regulations where in citizens participation is given utmost importance, still people are not very eager to participate and many of them are not even aware of such regulations. More awareness is required which can be either through social media for internet users or in newspapers or other public gatherings/workshops/walk-in meetings can be setup where people can be informed what the upcoming plans as stated by (Erfjord, n.d.). For example, when there is any upcoming project in the neighborhood and it is going to affect the citizens living nearby, then they are specifically informed about the same. Still more awareness is required for development across the city so that more participation can be encouraged and hence leading to more suggestions and improvement ideas.

According to the previous studies regarding pillars of e-governance, data content must be easily available for citizens to understand the development projects. Sometimes, people try to understand and find it difficult to comprehend the map or other details of the project. Hence such information must be made quick and easy so that it's understandable by one and all. Partnership and Delegation rungs of the Arnstein's ladder of Citizen participation are realizable if the government implements improved methods for better participation.

5.5. Citizen's Satisfaction after Participation

The results show that the citizens are satisfied after their participation and when their suggestions were implemented but still, they wish to get a feedback of any sort which shows that their participation is valuable and encouraging them to keep participating. Interviewees also suggested that since not all the citizens contributing to Citizen participation think the same, if they can receive a confirmation email after their participating, that would be motivating for many.

Although Norwegian government has been continuously trying to put citizens interests first, still many citizens are not very satisfied by the mechanism being followed for communication by the government. They still feel that 2-way communication which is the main goal of Norwegian government, as per previous studies by Palvia & Sharma (n.d), is not met. It was displayed during the interviews that citizens after participating if receive an email that mentions 'Thanks for your response', even that would be motivating. The results showed that although after many efforts from the government for building up the confidence and enthusiasm in the public for participation, much work is still needed if the local authorities wish to attain more participation.

Public awareness is the key for Citizen participation and that still lacks, as per the participants. Certain measures much be taken by the government which could promote alertness and responsiveness in the citizens and encouraging them to participate in Urban Development projects. ICT project however are quite helpful and quick to engage citizens and fasten the flow of information as suggested by Nisd (n.d). More satisfied citizens are eager to participate further and get involved during the initial stages of development projects, thereby enabling the government to effectively implement citizen control methods of Arnstein's ladder.

6. Comparison of Oslo and Ukraine

With the emergence of ICT services in all the fields worldwide and internet reaching every household and despite of more awareness in public related to Urban development across their country, some countries still must implement means to encourage citizens to participate in Urban Development projects. While Ukrainian citizens have been participating in discussions and meetings regarding Urban Development, Citizen participation using Digital Platforms has been quite encouraged lately in Ukraine. Oslo on the other hand has better communication means between government and its citizens, not everyone is Oslo participates and city needs to implement means to encourage more participation.

Ukraine has nearly 57% population using internet while Oslo has around 97% citizens using internet in their daily lives. Thus, there is more ease and accessible internet in Oslo which surely helps in more informative and aware citizens. People in Ukraine use Internet in daily lives but majorly for official purposes. Since half of the population is without internet, they lack knowledge about the various developments happening across the country.

Not all the citizens in Ukraine are aware of digital platforms. They are still following the old-fashioned approach of attending public meetings and workshops and don't have any confidence in digital tools. There had been cases where people who participated digitally

had all their contact details on the portal and they were backfired after some years. Moreover, there is a necessity for anonymous surveys in Ukraine because of the same. However, in Oslo, citizens actively participate in Urban Development using digital platforms and since such surveys are anonymous, they have more confidence in their government. Although, citizens are made aware of upcoming projects with the help of social media and Facebook, still citizens feel that government must adopt certain measures for more awareness and effective participation.

The digital platforms being implemented in Ukraine are not universal. Research showed that there are citizens who feel that people with disabilities won't be able to use such tools for citizen participation. Moreover, there is a lot more information to be provided before one can participate and give their opinion. Slowness in accessibility of such platforms is one of the problems with digital platforms in Ukraine apart from lack of efficient network, linguistic and technical issues. However, in Oslo, people find the digital participatory tools to be very user friendly and have a standard structure thereby allowing every group of citizens to participate easily. Participants stated that even their grandparents would be able to use such tools today, showing more efficient governmental policies for encouraging citizens to participate.

Citizens in Oslo are satisfied with after their participation in development projects. There had been scenarios where citizens suggestions led the government and local authorities to change their decisions and re-design the development project based on citizens ideas and opinions. However, in Ukraine, very less people participate using digital tools and even if they participate too, they don't have confidence that their suggestions are even considered. Although Ukrainian government has measures to check digital tools and citizens participation, people are skeptic about the government which leads to less participation from the citizens.

Citizens in Ukraine stated that there are certain barriers while using digital platforms, first and foremost being their lack in confidence with the digital tools and the government. They distrust their government because of corruption and dishonest intentions of government and other authorities to encourage public participation. In Oslo, on the other hand, people have full trust in the government and its policies. People are aware of their rights to participate and are encouraged to do so. Still there are citizens who are skeptical about digital platforms and lack confidence or possess negative thoughts about digital tools. Equal participation by all groups is one of the concerns for both the countries. Youth has different perspective than the adults and both the countries are trying to encourage youth participation in Urban development.

7. Conclusion

This paper investigated the impact of social media and ICT on Urban Development of Oslo. As expected, all the participants were optimistic after raising their voice for their neighborhood and showed enthusiasm to participate more often. Results reveal that the Digital Platform for citizen participation is very concise and effective for every age group to participate. Local democracy is being actively practiced in Oslo and importance of partnership between local municipalities and citizens is understood by majority of citizens. Citizens of Oslo are equally responsible in Urban Development and consider themselves fully involved in the system too. However, there are a couple of suggestions by the participants for better participation which include encouragement towards more participation, feedback after participation and more information flow from the government or local authorities.

7.1. Limitations

The present research identified various important viewpoints of the participants related to their participation in Urban Development, it would have been best to have more participants for the research. Most of the participants had participated using digital platforms only once or twice and that too 1 year ago, hence were not able to recollect their experience. Also, people only participate when the development is of their immediate locality, hence limited scope for them to participate.

Many are not even aware of what all kinds of development projects are being executed in their city and hence fail to participate. Youth thinks differently as compared to elderly people, but they are not part of this analysis, due to their unavailability for interview.

7.2. Recommendations

Acknowledging all the limitations of the research, further work can include more interviews and analysis from large sample. Interview criteria may include participants from various age groups, thereby knowing youth perspectives too regarding Urban Development platforms. In-depth quantitative analysis would also be beneficial to generate some sort of statistics regarding Digital Platforms implementation and accessibility. As per suggestions provided by some of the participants, it can be recommended that the local municipality must make use social media for reminding citizens for their participation and how important it is for the development of their city. Open discussions can be held in various localities for the developments in their neighborhood. Since one of the participants quoted accessibility issue of internet and social media, hence posters can also be circulated for developments in the neighborhood.

8. References

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