LIKE!

WORK PACKAGE 3

Read all about the LIKE! Project

Interreg
North Sea Region
European Regional Development Fund   EUROPEAN UNION

CONTENTS

DEVELOPING INNOVATION AND SKILLS

NEW FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

INCLUSIVE SERVICES

Partners in the LIKE! Project

Netherlands	Groningen Municipality (lead beneficiary)
	University of Groningen
	Province of Drenthe
	Rotterdam Municipality
Belgium	Roeselare Municipality
Denmark	Aalborg Kommune
England, UK	Suffolk County Council
Germany	Vechta University
	Vechta Municipality
Scotland, UK	Angus Council

About the LIKE! Project

The LIKE! Project is funded by the Interreg North Sea Region (NSR) under programme Priority 1 Thinking Growth: supporting growth in North Sea Region economies. The project began on 01/10/2016 and is due to end on 01/03/2020.

Project Objectives

LIKE! will significantly enhance the capacity of the public sector to facilitate and deliver innovation. This will result in the development of a wide range of innovative services for improved public service delivery. Local government, citizens, universities and SMEs will come together to co-create smarter, more efficient and more innovative services.

In order to manage the project more efficiently, it has been broken down into themes, or **Work Packages** as we call them here. The LIKE! project has five work packages; a work package covering project management, a communications work package, and work packages covering the three main themes of the LIKE! project.

Because the three main themes are also quite large, we have broken each of these down into three sub-work packages. We sometimes refer to these as **Pilots** in this magazine.

Work Package 3
Creating a local digital innovation culture across the North Sea Region

WP 3.1   DEVELOPING INNOVATION AND SKILLS
WP 3.2   NEW FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT
WP 3.3   INCLUSIVE SERVICES

Work Package 4
Smarter Services

WP 4.1   SMARTER SERVICES
WP 4.2   LOCAL SERVICES
WP 4.3   CONTENT AND CHANNEL STRATEGIES

Work Package 5
Create a Digital DNA for Cities and Neighbourhoods

WP 5.1   DIGITAL DASHBOARDS
WP 5.2   LOCAL DATA FOR LOCAL SERVICES
WP 5.3   IoT - INTERNET OF THINGS

PREFACE
Building a digital innovation culture

The rise of digital technologies in the delivery of public services has brought with it some practical barriers and skills gaps that can hamper the delivery and take-up of innovative offerings from local governments. By concentrating on organisational change, the digital innovation approach will develop capacity to lead and implement change activities.

Digital innovation and culture change will also develop solutions that learn from the needs of citizens and will use a multi-helix approach (local government, universities, SMEs and citizens) to identify, develop and share the organisational skills necessary to deliver exciting, efficient, useful and innovative projects.

WHAT can you find in this MAGAZINE?

This magazine focuses on three core themes:

Developing Innovation and Skills looks at how organisations are working together to prepare their staff and citizens for new digital services. We look at the idea of Digicoaches to improve digital skills and Summerclasses.

New Forms of Engagement looks at ways in which digital innovation can help reach out to different parts of the community. A great example here is how Angus Council have used a range of techniques to enable the community to choose where public money is spent (Participatory Budgeting).

Inclusive Services looks at ways we can ensure that different parts of the community are not left behind by new advances in digital technology. For example, we show how we've worked together to provide services for older people and people with learning disabilities.

The key theme running throughout all the work in this magazine is that by working together, we have achieved much more than if we had just ploughed on working on our own projects – we've learned so much from each other!

Digital innovations and technology are everywhere now; we shop online, we play our music through an app on our phones, and of course some people choose to share everything about themselves via social media!

Public services have been relatively slow in recognising that the public are consuming information and services digitally and are trying desperately to catch up by moving their service offerings online. By doing this, it's important not to forget two key groups of people:

1. **The public**, who will be the users of the new digital services.
2. **Public service staff**, who will be championing and administering these new services.

If we ignore either of these groups, we're potentially destined to fail: if staff aren't ready to administer the services but the public are keen, we risk raising people's expectations and not delivering. If the public aren't ready for new digital services, they will not succeed.

So, we have to do both of these things at the same time: make sure our staff and customers are aware of and can use the new digital services we're starting to produce. The work we've done in *WP 3.1 – Developing Innovation and Skills* is all about educating staff and citizens.

The WP 3.1 pilot has been all about education, both internally with staff, and externally with citizens. Angus Council has created the *Digital Genius brand* to help embed digital skills across the organisation. This is closely linked with the council's Digi-Ken project, which aims to upskill volunteers in local communities with digital skills.

The municipality of Groningen ran a series of Summerclasses to introduce people to brand new technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain technology and participatory budgeting.

Ignore the public and staff at your peril, otherwise you'll fail. You need to educate both, at the same time - which is not easy.

DEVELOPING INNOVATION AND SKILLS

Speakers from across the partnership spoke at the workshops about their own areas of expertise, sharing their knowledge with the LIKE! project. The municipality of Aalborg has also looked at a training platform and members of the team described their different experiences using the platform.

Both Roeselare and Angus have implemented the idea of Digicoaches (Digital Coaches) to help people across their organisations get used to new technologies such as digital office productivity tools. Suffolk has a similar approach called *Digital Stars*, which aims to assist staff across the council.

Lessons Learned from developing innovation skills:

- Digital technologies won't catch on unless people are used to them – you can't just "throw" technology at people and expect them to make it work.
- Standard change management techniques can work in a digital environment; there will be early adopters, but a critical mass of people is needed for something to really catch on.
- Working together transnationally is key: just focussing on what works for one country/culture might miss a valuable approach that's being used by other partners in different countries.

Hello
from the Work Package Leads!

This magazine looks at how the LIKE! partners have worked together to build a digital innovation culture in the North Sea Region. The lead organisation for this work package is Angus Council from Scotland and the lead officers from the Council, **Mark Armstrong** and **Julie Short,** provide an overview of what it's all about.

Like: Hi Mark and Julie, can you tell our readers a bit about yourselves and how you got involved with the LIKE! Project?

Mark: Hello, I'm the Deputy Chief Executive at Angus Council and one of my responsibilities is to lead the council's work on all things 'digital' whether that be ensuring that all our citizens, services and businesses have access to superfast broadband or up skilling our workforce to be 'digitally savvy' or redesigning services to maximise the use of digital technologies. I worked across the council and with the other LIKE! partners to develop the original North Sea Region application and have worked with colleagues and partners on implementing the LIKE! project over the past 3 years.

Julie: Hi everyone! I'm an IT Project Manager and initially got involved in the LIKE! project to gain project management experience. Whilst Mark is the strategist around the project and digital innovation, I'm responsible for the operational parts of Angus Council's contribution to LIKE!

Like: What made Angus Council want to get involved in the LIKE! Project?

Mark: We want to be a digital council by 2020 and the opportunities provided through LIKE! were very well connected to this agenda. I believe strongly in the benefits of collaboration and sharing practice/learning, so the transnational aspect of LIKE! was also a major attraction. As a council we were also very keen to extend our networks with EU partners and also to build our capabilities as a transnational partner in EU work.

Julie: The timing of the LIKE! project was great. We're aiming to be a digital council, but we realised we couldn't do it all by ourselves. Participating in the LIKE! project has enabled us to learn so much from other partners. In addition, I'd like to think they've learned a bit from the digital projects that we're doing.

> *The experience I've gained in LIKE! has enabled me to progress and helped me get the job I'm now in.*
>
> Julie Short

Like: Angus Council are the work package leads for WP3. Can you tell us what the work package is and what does it hope to achieve?

Mark: WP3 is all about building a digital innovation culture in public bodies. One definition of organisational culture is 'the way we do things around here' so for me this is about creating the conditions and developing the mindset that enables us to use digital technologies in a way that improves outcomes for our citizens. This could be about the skills and capabilities of our workforce or how we engage with and involve the public in our work or how services and processes are developed and improved.

Julie: Changing an organisation's culture is a tough nut to crack. Many people sometimes say, "we've always done it like this, why would we
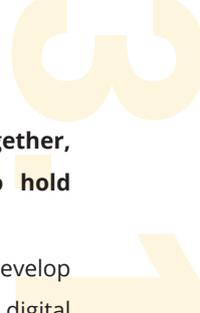
change?". The challenge is to convince them that the new digital world can work for them and produce better outcomes for the public.

Like: I understand there are three pilots as part of each work package; can you tell us what the pilots are, which partners are involved, and how the partners are working together.

Mark: The three priorities within WP3 are: **innovation skills development, new forms of engagement and inclusive services**.

Collaborative and transnational approaches provide new insights and accelerates learning and the implementation of change.

Mark Armstrong

A number of projects have been developed and implemented across these three priorities and the following gives a flavour of the work that has been undertaken. We have run a serie of workshops, events and training to help our workforce develop digital skills. Partners who work closely on the Innovation Skills Development include Angus Council, Suffolk Council, Municipality of Groningen and Municipality of Roeselare. Together we have developed a transnational project called Digital Coaches and shared our knowledge and ideas with other LIKE! partners. Knowledge hubs were also developed by Roeselare and Groningen partners.

Julie: As providing new forms of citizen's engagement was also one of our priorities Angus Council and Groningen Municipality worked closely to develop new ideas which resulted in creation of two online platforms: Social Pinpoint and Consul.

Like: What benefits have you seen from working transnationally with other partners?

Mark: Obvious benefits are that we are all learning from each other. The various partners are at different stages on our digital journey and this enables us to share; our experiences, what worked, what problems were encountered and how these were overcome. We are also co-designing and co-producing new innovations in public services. We are testing models and ideas in our different national contexts and them evaluating the impact and identifying the lessons learned. This collaborative and transnational approach provides new insights and accelerates learning and the implementation of change.

Like: How have the partners in WP3 worked together, given they are located so far apart? How do hold meetings and do you get together?

Mark: As you would expect in a programme to develop and test innovation in digital public services we use digital technologies to enable all the partners to work together despite our dispersed geographical situation. Tools such as webinars, teleconferences, Skype meetings etc. are regularly used for cross-partner meetings. A document sharing and collaboration platform called Basecamp has also formed the mainstay of our joint working and one of our learnings has been the agreement of protocols and practices to ensure we use the platform in a consistent manner. We also get together face to face every 6 months or so to manage and develop the LIKE! programme. Good relationships, built on trust and mutual respect and understanding, are key to effective collaboration and partnership working so these personal gatherings have proved essential in making the programme as effective as possible.

Julie: The partners have really come together and gelled as a group during the time we've all been working together. I think we were all a bit shy and wary of each other at the beginning, but now we get on famously!

Like: What has been your favourite part of the project so far, and why?

Mark: For me, learning from other partners and building an understanding of how digital is changing public services in other European countries has been of significant benefit to Angus Council. It has widened our digital ambition and also accelerated some of our work.

Julie: The learning opportunities and building relationships with other European countries has been a great thing to be involved in. The work that everyone has contributed to this project has been fantastic and we have been fantastic. Seeing and hearing what other countries that have similar geographical areas, deal with issues like broadband for rural areas has been of great benefit.

Like: Thank you Mark and Julie for introducing us to this work package.

Mark: No problem at all!

Julie: I'm pleased to have helped. I hope the readers enjoy the rest of the magazine!

We haven't just been training our staff in council office, we worked with people who hardly ever use a computer in their daily work.

THE DIGITAL GENIUS

Angus Council have developed the Digital Genius brand to help assess technological skills within their workforce, identify gaps and supply relevant training. JULIE SHORT explains how they did it.

Assessing Skills

Our aim was to assess digital skill levels within Angus Council, so we decided to survey all the staff to gauge any gaps in digital skills. Our plan was then to see if any themes emerged.

Bespoke Training

Once we'd done that, we organised face to face training and developed e-learning packages to fit the different learning styles of the staff.

We ran cyber security training using email phishing campaigns. This helped us to highlight the importance of reading and scrutinising e-mail content and encouraged people to be vigilant before opening, replying to or acting upon links in emails.

Digital Genius

As part of Angus Council's Digital Strategy, we set up a Digital Skills Working Group to scope out a project called 'Digital Geniuses' in which digitally skilled members of staff would help others bring up their skill level with practical help on day to day work issues using digital applications. The working group is made up of officers from different departments across the council, this was done to not only use the specific skill sets of individuals to help progress the project but also obtain a wide range of views on key issues. One of the main advantages of this project is that it will allow our organisation to capitalise on the experience and skills we already have and facilitate the transfer of these skills.

Developing Digital Skills for Citzens

Externally, we have been engaging with citizens to help improve their levels of digital skills, both generally and for using digital council services like e-billing. Under the umbrella of the project, **DigiKen**, our officers have been holding drop in sessions for citizens providing one on one help with digital procedures. It is important that as a council, we move to more digital services to improve efficiency and costs, but it is also equally important that we prepare our citizens effectively for these digital services, otherwise the positive effects they can have, become null and void.

What Did We Learn?

- **Inclusive staff training** – to engage with staff who don't use a computer as part of their job.
- **One size doesn't fit all** – different people learn in different ways. Use blended approaches to learning.
- **Don't forget citizens** – otherwise your brand-new digital services won't be used!

Groningen's Summerclasses

An easy way to involve your own experts in digital innovation

We started Summerclasses in 2017 as we were in the middle of a search to revamp organisation's approach to digital innovation. The Summerclasses turned out to be an excellent way to involve co-workers in the digital innovation programme.

This programme eventually led to a new vision for digital transformation named "Virtual Groningen" – it involves a 2022 vision and some major 'flagship' projects on digital infrastructure and customer service.

Since 'digital' is now really part of everyone's job, as well everyone's responsibility, the Summerclasses were one of the steps Groningen took accelerate change across the organisation.

2019 is the third year we've run Summerclasses in Groningen. Here's a flavour of what we've achieved so far:

2017
- Future trends in government
- Reputation management
- Blockchain
- Lefl up
- Online monitoring and client interaction
- Customer survey Participation
- Geo and GIS applications

185 participants
The first year - the management team went on learning course for digital innovation – the Summerclasses were a follow up of these classes – to disseminate learning on a wider scale in the organisation.

2018
- Internet of things – Drenthe Province
- Digital Democracy and Participatory budgeting- Angus Council
- Data driven working - Rotterdam
- Geo and Place Value mapping - University Groningen

250 participants
The second year - over 10 classes were held! Here we connected with LIKE! partners on various themes. We had twin presenters, 1 from Groningen and 1 from the partner organisation in which approaches were highlighted and discussions were held.
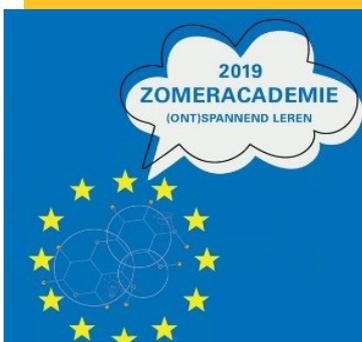
2019
- Poetry opening `Stem van Groningen´
- Serious gaming
- What the hack?!
- Pub quiz about Europe
- Various `Digital Tuesdays` on digital skills
- Data pub quiz by the Urban Data Lab and OIS (Statistics department)

156 visitors and counting...
The third year - we had 6 classes. Here we connected with the HRM department. Summerclasses were renamed as `Zomeracademie´ - Summer Academy. The Summerclasses are now imbedded in Groningen's learning programme.

FOCUS on DIGI-coaches

Angélique

Digital Coaches (or Digicoaches, as they are becoming known) are key roles in establishing, rolling out and maintaining, a digital innovating culture. Digicoaches can be used internally within organisations to improve the digital skills of staff, but also outside of organisations with citizens to give them the skills they need to access digital public services. In this article we focus on Digicoaches *Angélique* **from Roeselare, and** *Holly* **from Angus, to see what their roles entail.**

About Angélique

Angélique is an administrative worker in the civil affairs department at the Municipality of Roeselare. She's a young and vibrant person, which is an asset in her role as a Digicoach.

I'm a Digicoach in one of the smaller teams. The people that I help with their digital skills are my team leader and my close colleagues. The advantage of being a Digicoach in a smaller team is that I can help them instantly when they have a problem.

Also, the fact that they know me well and can talk to me easily has the positive effect that they can approach me for assistance, rather than wasting time themselves trying to find a solution.

I really like being a Digicoach because it gives me more purpose in my job. Not only I am helping civilians with their administrative questions, I can also help my colleagues by helping them to improve their own digital skills.

About Holly

Hi everyone, my name is Holly and I work for Angus Council and my job role is Communities Assistant for the *Digi-Ken* **project. My role is to recruit volunteers and ensure that they have the relevant training that will enable them to deliver either one to one session or group sessions.**

Holly

About Digi-Ken:

Following a successful pilot which was delivered in the Arbroath area, Angus Council secured funding through LIKE! to help train volunteers throughout the Angus area. These volunteers will deliver one-to-one and group sessions to people who have little to no digital knowledge.

As more and more organisations become more digitalised there is a need for help and support within the community. We need to engage and ensure that social exclusion does not occur due to lack of computer knowledge.

What I have done so far?

Close partnerships have been formed, which has enabled us to be offer all volunteers Digital Champion Training through *Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations* free of charge.

This will enable the volunteers to access information to help them whilst out helping their local communities. The Digi-Ken project will be involved in National Volunteer week, attending local pop up events to promote the volunteering opportunities. On the 7th of June 2019 the Forfar / Kirriemuir Communities Team held an open event, advertising all the different learning programmes in Forfar.

Marketing material has been created and is now readily available. The marketing material is aimed at recruiting volunteers, once I have an adequate number of volunteers who have undergone the Digital Champions training I will advertise our services to the wider community. It was also identified that in sheltered accommodation there was a digital need, Angus council have installed free Wi-Fi access for all residents, Digi-Ken volunteers will be attending the residential homes and helping their residents with digital matters. A website is also currently under construction.

New Digital Innovation Will Offer 24/7 Support to Groningers

How can the municipality of Groningen improve their customer service while staying flexible? To achieve that Gemeente Groningen follows Estonia's lead to establish a digital information and support system that connects various public and private sectors to meet the needs of a customer-oriented 21st century society. By 2022 Gemeente Groningen hopes to offer 24/7 digital customer support to its citizens and businesses.

Virtueel Groningen is a digital program within the municipality that aims to improve customer service as well as the organisation's IT landscape and flexibility. "Society is changing more rapidly than our municipality. Due to the excellent customer support system of other companies, our citizens and businesses expect 24/7 support from the municipality, which we currently cannot provide", says Jaap van der Laan, senior advisor public services. With the aid of *Virtueel Groningen,* the municipality hopes to bridge the gap between customer expectations and their current performance.

The municipality uses *Common Ground*, a set of principles to enable the modernization of the current IT infrastructure. Implementing these principles enables better customer services, data integrity, flexibility, and regulatory compliance. Allard Swart, program manager of *Virtueel Groningen*, Jaap van der Laan, senior advisor public services, and Jan Galema, business analyst, all stress the importance of collaboration with other departments, municipalities, and cities in order to develop a more efficient and quicker customer support system.

Virtueel Groningen was partly inspired by Estonia's digital software X-Road. Estonia digitized their whole public support system in order to meet the needs of a 21st century citizen-oriented society and has thus become an inspiration for many other European countries. "The challenge that we are facing is that we do not start from scratch like, Estonia. We have to make sure that our current IT infrastructure and systems keep functioning, while we gradually transition to a new IT infrastructure that combines all digital services", says Galema. The aim is to create a public platform that improves interaction and customer support in a digital manner. "We need technology to improve ourselves and the well-being of the general public", concludes Allard Swart.

According to Swart, the paradigm shift has to be from the outside to the inside, which means that citizens' opinions should be taken into account when reshaping the municipality's digital information systems. Over recent years, Gemeente Groningen has experienced an increasing customer dissatisfaction when it comes to customer services. An increasing number of residents are unsatisfied with the current customer support due to the long waiting times and outdated communication styles.

The purpose of *Virtueel Groningen* is to establish better digital services that provide rapid support options. However, this does not mean that all contact will be digital in the future. "If we create a more digital support system, we also create more time for face-to-face interaction where needed", says Allard Swart.

Common Ground
What is it and why is it important?

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE PRINCIPLES

Component based | Open | Trusted | Single data source | Data governance | Standardized

IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

Community | Agile | Coexistence | Moderne IT | Open source | Data transfer

NLX

FIVE LAYER MODEL

The IT architecture consists of five layers. By using this specific architecture we create more flexibility, support interoperability and make sure each component does exactly what it is supposed to do.

1. INTERACTION Websites & apps
2. PROCESSES Workflows
3. INTEGRATION Exchange of data
4. SERVICES Access to data (APIs)
5. DATA Storage and archiving

BENEFITS OF COMMON GROUND

Common Ground enables local government to become more flexible and efficient by redesigning its IT architecture. By doing so, governments become better prepared for future developments in the ever evolving IT landscape.

1. **BETTER SERVICES** It enables local government to deploy new services faster and make them better fit to the continuously changing needs of their citizens.

2. **ACCESS TO DATA** Data is better applicable and thus easier applicable for other purposes, for instance societal challenges.

3. **DEPENDENCY REDUCTION** Through Common Ground governments become less dependent on third parties through co-creation and simplification of their IT landscape.

4. **Focus** Through agile working resources are being used efficiently. By iterative and incremental processes risk levels are mitigated.

The digital transformation is not only a huge challenge for the Gemeente Groningen, but also for other municipalities. Firstly, because *Virtueel Groningen* has to live up to increasing customer expectations of digital services. Secondly, the old systems and architecture have to function alongside the new, modernized systems and architecture. Ultimately new will replace the old, but in the meantime, we will have a transitional phase. To keep control and reduce risks, it is essential to start small and incrementally work our way to our final goal, explains Jan Galema.

Residents of Groningen will soon see the first results of *Virtueel Groningen* in various ways. For example to almost instanly receive a decision on their parking permit applications. Steps in this process are automated based on the data that the resident provided which is checked automatically. According to Jaap van der Laan, it is a *one-stop-shop.*

Virtueel Groningen will make it easier and faster for customers to receive help with filling in numerous forms will be a thing of the past. Groningen will use the *Common Ground* principles to more effectively store and use essential information about their citizens and make it available to different divisions within the municipality. Customer requests will be dealt with more rapidly and efficiently.

As part of the digitization process, Gemeente Groningen plans to make their internal processes more transparent to the public. With the aid of IRMA, a privacy-friendly identity app for both authentication and signing, citizens will be able to see what data the municipality possesses. Apart from their data being stored safely, app users also – to some extent – get to decide which data is made available and used by the municipality. Citizens will consequently be in control of their own data. "Of course, customers are able to decline data usage at any time, but this will have consequences, such as certain services and requests not being granted", says Jan Galema.

Groningen is currently implementing various pilot projects such as *De Stem van Groningen* and *i4sociaal* as part of their digitization program. "The challenge that *Virtueel Groningen* faces is that we have a lot of initiatives and projects that run alongside each other. We have to develop these projects more consistently and in collaboration with each other. It is necessary to focus on the bigger goal of creating a consistent digital landscape", says Allard Swart. *Virtueel Groningen*, therefore, provides an opportunity to manage and monitor innovations in the municipality.

If things go according to plan, Groningers will eventually be able to benefit from *Virtueel Groningen*. Not only will they receive 24/7 support, but the support options offered by Gemeente Groningen will also be more efficient and less time-consuming. Data is stored and used more effectively, which helps departments within the municipality to put the customers' needs first.

NICE TO KNOW

LUNCHTIME WORKSHOPS

The Municipality of Roeselare combined eating and technology to produce an innovative way of disseminating information to staff. **Kimberley van Luchem** explains the Broodje LIKE!

Here in Roeselare in Belgium, we organized some 'Broodje Like' sessions. These info sessions were set up to make people more aware about new technologies/innovative solutions that are now arising in public entities. These sessions were either to inform people ('listen') or to demonstrate something ('do'). All topics of the sessions are digital, innovative solutions to problems/cases Roeselare is dealing with on a local level and/or within Like.

We named the information sessions 'Broodje Like' (in English: Sandwich Like) because of the fact that the sessions were from 12.15 until till 13.15. Everyone could join and eat their lunch, while listening to the (external) speaker.

We started off with the first session in June 2018 and the sessions continued until December of that year.

There were five sessions:

- What is Like?
- Chatbots
- City of Things
- 'Blockchain'
- Smart Food71

71

Number of participants at the Broodje LIKE! lunchtime sessions

Working Alongside People with Disabilities: Using Hackathons to Develop New Initiatives

Hackathons have long been used as way of using intense time-limited collaborations to produce products (usually computer programmes or technology services).

Hackathons are now being used in other areas as a useful tool for bringing together everyone needed in a design process and developing a service, product or process iteratively over a short time period.

The cities of Aalborg and Rotterdam had the same idea of using hackathons to co-create accessible services for people with disabilities. Here are the stories of both hackathons and how the municipalities collaborated to produce value-added results.

Preparations

Planning a hackathon was the starting point for a coproduction project involving citizens with learning disabilities and employees from the Department of Elderly and Disabled in Aalborg Municipality. The goal of the project was to involve citizens in creating solutions to everyday challenges through digital solutions.

Discussions with citizens led to a creation of a user panel who became engaged in planning and design of the hackathon. The user panel who helped with the planning and design of the hackaton. The user panel also tested different ways of working in groups as preparation for the hacketon.

The Rotterdam Hackathon

The Rotterdam Hackathon took in October 2018. It was attended by a diverse company of people with disabilities of all kinds: physical disabilities, mental health problems, learning disabilities but also people without disabilities, municipal and external professionals, scientists, etc.

To emphasis our ambition, the hackathon was opened by the deputy mayor of Rotterdam, Mr. de Langen, responsible for public healthcare, elderly and sports.

Each challenge was addressed by multiple teams of people with diverse backgrounds. Every team was supported by a designer, who ensured that all members, regardless of their ability, could participate in the different brainstorming phases. The outcomes were visualized in drawings, and the different outcomes formed the inspiration for the designer-teams to develop concepts which were presented at the final session.

In the final presentation, the groups were represented by their supporting designer, presenting concepts to address the challenges. Some of the ideas led to actual activities.

Results and Initiatives – Rotterdam
- A survey started into improving the referring to accessible sports facilities in the cities.
- Mr. Onno De Zwart kicked off a "relay race" in which municipal board members and executives, experience the challenges of people with a disability for a day. He joined board meetings with visual impairment simulating goggles and used a wheelchair.
- It is expected that other board members and directors will follow his example in due course.
- His insights will be offered to the facility management

services in case improvements can be made to the accessibility of work environment, or to the autonomy of co-workers with a disability.
- A video was made of Mr De Zwart's experiences https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQFsemxpxAg#action=share.

The Aalborg Hackathon

Aalborg hackathon took place on 26th September 2018 and was very successful with very positive feedback from the 40 participants and ideas for solutions to the three challenges defined by the user panel.

During the hackathon there were short breaks with physical exercises every 15 minutes to help the participants concentrate. An illustrator captured the discussions and ideas and converted them into drawings, immediately making the results from the hackathon visible and accessible to everybody.

Results and Initiatives - Aalborg
- Participants gained self-confidence and felt independent after taking an active role in the hackathon.
- The hackathon gave the professionals valuable insights as the citizens showed that they could cope much better with new situations than was believed.
- The hackathon gave insight into citizens' use of technology. One size does not fit all, and competences are not determined by diagnoses.
- The hackathon resulted in several initiatives:
  1. IT-support via IT café, individual support, IT eduction and help to find relevant apps for everyday challenges.
  2. A design sprint for citizens and professionals using VR Technologies to overcome social and cognitive challenges that provoke anxiety.

Digi-coaches & it-cafés – peer to peer help with IT

In the Digi-coaches and it-cafés project citizens with all types of disabilities are educated to help other citizens with disabilities to be familiar with all kinds of hardware, software,

Social Media etc. The citizens with disabilities can also attend the IT-cafés to receive help with technical issues, have a chat and a coffee and meet other citizens challenged by IT and new technology.

Virtual reality – overcoming everyday challenges

In the Virtual Reality project, we have experimented with Virtual Reality as a tool to work with everyday challenges such as transport, exams and anxiety in a safe environment. We used the Design Sprint method which is a concentrated process to generate ideas and prototypes.

We invited three different groups of citizens with various degrees of learning disabilities to take part in the Design Sprint and develop Virtual Reality tools to overcome everyday challenges. One group of the participants in assisted living, another group live independently but take part in activities during the day, and the third group participants consist of young people going to a special high school.

Aalborg Municipality sees Virtual Reality as a tool to make these citizens more self-reliant and enhance their ability to master their everyday life. If the citizens can go by bus themselves then resources to help them can be used on other tasks. Virtual reality can be used as a tool for employees to take their help and support to citizens a step further.

Transnational Co-operation

Rotterdam encouraged Aalborg to present the results from Aalborg at the *Gebruiker Centraal Festival* on 5th November 2018 in Zoetermeer, The Netherlands. The workshop had (like the hackathon) shorts breaks every 15 minutes where the participants played with Lego and balloons to illustrate the methods used at the Aalborg Hackathon.

HOW CREATIVE THINKING CAN HELP IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES

The Municipality of Aalborg, in collaboration with Aalborg University are using a methodology called The *Creative Platform* **to generate individual and group creativity. This creative approach is then applied in public service delivery to produce improved approaches and services. Here, Jonna, Lajla and Michael from Aalborg describe their experiences using this creative paradigm.**

Jonna Langeland Christensen

Hi, I'm Jonna from Aalborg University's *Research Group for Unlimited Knowledge Application*. I was responsible for the training of 26 employees from Aalborg Municipality in The Creative Platform – a method to improve creativeness and innovation – in June 2018.

Lajla Holtebo Gregersen

Hi, I'm Lajla from the Department for People with Disabilities. I had heard about The Creative Platform and thought it would be great to have some training in the method and improve innovative skills among colleagues.

Michael Hald Christensen

Hi, I'm Michael from the Department of Environment and Energy. I signed up for the two-day course in The Creative Platform because I wanted to improve creativeness and innovation in my daily job.

Lajla: I loved The Creative Platform raining. We worked hard but it was good fun, and I liked that judgements were no go. You were only allowed to say: "Yes, and…" instead of: "No, you cannot…"

Jonna: The Creative Platform is a controlled process setting a frame for cooperation and creative methods that enhances the number and range of the ideas.

You need to be very focused on a task and nothing else to be creative. It is always a challenge to get people to switch off their phones and leave them in their bag.

Michael: My colleague and I used the methods we had learned in a co-creation workshop for top managers just after we finished the course. We were very successful in

Lajla, Michael and Jonna

getting these very busy managers to leave their phones and computers and take part in exercises that build up in creativity. They worked a whole day and it was hard to stop them again because they were so engaged in the process. The workshop resulted in some very creative and interesting ideas that went on to further development.

Jonna: Was this a one-off experience?
Michael: No, but it's our best example and has made it easier for us to deploy the method in several other processes.
Lajla: It's also possible to just use some of the methods from The Creative Platform. We did that in an inclusive process where care persons were generating ideas for a new care home. I think it is very important that people know that there is no restriction in the creative process and it's vital that they feel safe and able to be innovative, social and open minded.

Jonna: You planned to maintain the expertise throughout an internal innovation network. Did you succeed?
Lajla and Michael: Yes, the majority still meet and share experiences and do some training together to maintain our skills. We pick the methods that suit the purpose of our activities whether it is a meeting or a workshop.

You can find out more about The Creative Platform and the methodologies used by visiting **www.uka.aau.dk**

WHAT IS THE CREATIVE PLATFORM?

It's a process for creatively creating and applying knowledge and ideas. The Creative Platform process helps people develop their own abilities, which are then brought together in a focussed group to produce tangible out-comes, whether this be a new product, a new service or technical understanding of a course of action – basically any task where group creativity is needed.

6-PHASE MODEL
Work using the Creative Platform always follows the same 6 step model:

- **Preparation** for facilitating the process, group composition, physical environment, composing a minute by minute program of the process.
- **The Red-Carpet Ritual** – participants "climb" onto the Creative Platform and have motivation, concentration and confidence to engage in the process.
- **Problem/task** – this is presented briefly and simply without any expert/academic input of any kind.
- **Idea development** – knowledge is applied to the problem in an unlimited, unbounded way to develop solutions. No solutions are considered to be out of bounds, however crazy they may seem at first!
- **Expert Input** – professional and academic input is brought into the process once a direction has been found that needs developing further.
- **The Blue-Carpet ritual** – participants are taken down from The Creative Platform and will be prepared for everyday life again.

Co-creation strategies Working with Virtual Reality, Digi-coaches and IT-cafés

Why did we do it?

Aalborg Municipality arranged a Hackathon for citizens with disabilities in September 2018 (as described elsewhere in this magazine) The purpose of the Hackathon was to get citizens with disabilities involved in the discussions on how digitalization can contribute to future welfare.

The citizens choose to work with three challenges during the Hackathon:

*   **Health issues**
*   **Transport**
*   **Networks**

Aalborg Municipality has chosen to develop some of the ideas and digital solutions from the Hackathon.

Digi-coaches & IT-cafés – peer to peer help with IT

In the Digi-coaches and IT-cafés project the citizens are working peer to peer - citizens with all types of disabilities are educated to help other citizens with disabilities to be familiar with all kind of hardware, software, Social Media etc.

The citizens with disabilities can also attend the IT-cafés to receive help with technical issues, have a chat and a coffee and meet other citizens challenged by it and new technology regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

Virtual reality – overcoming everyday challenges

In the Virtual Reality (VR) project, we experimented with VR as a tool to work with everyday challenges such as transport, exams and anxiety in a safe environment. We used the Design Sprint method which is a concentrated process to generate ideas and prototypes.

We invited three different groups of citizens with various degrees of learning disabilities to take part in the Design Sprint and develop Virtual Reality tools to overcome everyday challenges. One group of the participants

live in assisted living, another group of participants live independently but take part in activities during the day and the third group participants consist of young people going to a special high school.

Aalborg Municipality sees Virtual Reality as a tool to make the citizens more self-reliant and enhance their ability to master their everyday life. If the citizens can go by bus themselves then resources that would have previously been used to assist them can be used on other tasks. Moreover, Virtual reality can be used as a tool for employees to take their help and support to citizens a step further.

NEW FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

The rise of digital technology and service delivery brings with it new opportunities for engaging citizens. The projects described in this section explore new ways in which local governments can both gauge the opinion of people but also to give citizens more autonomy and local control of resources and services.

The projects also try to address something which arguably has been missing from new advances in digital technology recently – inclusion. It's often the case that new technology is introduced without thinking of the widest possible audience and people of all abilities. The work we've done here shows that the project has been actively engaging with groups previously marginalised in terms of access to new technologies and digital services.

Angus Council introduces us to the concept of Participatory Budgeting (PB) and how this helps local communities put forward ideas and unlock funding for their communities. Angus has worked on several pilot projects that will put them in a good position when Participatory Budgeting is mainstreamed into council business in Scotland. For Angus, this will mean around £2 million of funds will be distributed in this way.

Aalborg and Rotterdam collaborated on a Smart Seniors project, aiming to gauge the views of older people on the services they needed. Hackathons were undertaken as new way for people to participate and share their views.

Vechta City Council looked at the idea of neighbourhood supporters who help older people remain independent in their own homes. As well as training the supporters in areas such as housing and community-based information, a key part of their training is around digital skills.

KEY MESSAGES

All parts of the community already use digital services to some degree or other; it is just that in the projects we describe here, organisations are being proactive in realising that digtal tools can be used to tap into local communities, get their feedback on issues, and effectively communicate with local people.

Another key thing about this particular area of the LIKE! Project is that organisations are communicating with people in ways they want to be communicated with, instead of ways in which the council THINKS the public wants them to provide feedback. It is also providing new ways for citizens and groups to provide feedback.

So, read on to explore these novel forms of engaging with citizens, groups and local communities!

Social Pinpoint – Places to Engage our Community

Angus Council wanted to explore options for innovative community engagement. As well as the traditional hard to reach groups, we specifically wanted to target both the young generation and those in emploment who don't necessarily have the time or inclination to attend traditional public meetings. **Jill Patterson** explains how Angus Council went about addressing these issues using Social Pinpoint, a platform to engage local communities.

The Social Pinpoint Platform

We wanted to explore map-based engagement platforms that are attractive and easy to use for interaction in the planning system after researching different platforms, we decided that Social Pinpoint provides a central point for consultations and is user friendly. Social Pinpoint provides the ability for Council Officers to interact with comments; clarifying or seeking further information. The platform provides a further option for people to interact with the planning process in a quick and easy way. It also offers an ideas wall function to seek views on particular issues. A number of pilot projects have been tested, and these will help Angus Council shape future engagement.

Engaging with Communities – why face-to-face engagement is not enough

Community engagement was usually done through face to face engagement. It continues to be an important method but for us it missed out the hard to reach groups – working people, young people etc. Face to face engagement is also time-consuming – Social pinpoints provides an opportunity to interact with the community to gain the communities views and ideas of their community.

Social Pinpoint shows how an interactive tool engages the community to start conversations helping shape the future engagement within Angus.

Where can I find out more about Social Pinpoint and Angus Council's work in this area?

- Visit our social pinpoint website at **https://angus council.mysocialpinpoint.co.uk/**
- For more details contact Jill Patterson at Angus Council – **PattersonJF@angus.gov.uk**
- Watch our YouTube video on social pinpoint at **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFxTp cHhMkc&feature=youtu.be**

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETTING

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is all about local people deciding on how public money is spent. Angus Council have been working on PB for a while and their Communities Officer Graeme Hodge explains some of the ideas behind it.

Participatory Budgeting comes in all shapes and sizes, but generally looks like this:

- ideas are generated about how a budget should be spent
- people vote for their priorities
- the projects with the most votes get funded

We used a mixture of approaches; sometimes we would bring together people at local events but sometimes we'd use online digital tools which can increase the number of people getting involved.

What actually is Participatory Budgeting?

PB is the giving out of relatively small amounts of public money within a community (small grants). However, it's becoming more the norm in the Angus area of Scotland in the UK for communities to have a say where larger amounts of public money are invested.

The Power of Youth

As part of its commitment to Participatory Budgeting and in celebration of 2018 being the Year of Young people in the Angus area, the Council set aside £40,000 for youth-focussed-work. **Anna Hondzio**, project manager, explains how building on a youth engagement strategy, this project provided a great opportunity to jointly design the process with young people.

We started off with a residential weekend with the young people. This involved them getting to know each other as a group and understanding the basics of Participatory Budgeting.

"Participatory Budgeting can support active citizenship, help build more creative and stronger communities. As a result, communities are better able to take decisions about where public funds are spent, more likely to take part in communities, and are better informed about public budgets and how decisions are made."

Julie Short
Project Manager, Angus Council

"As a way of finding out what Participatory Budgeting was all about, the staff proposed their choices of snacks and made their pitch for why we should choose it. We voted on it but only the top 3 snacks were chosen for the weekend!"

3 CASE STUDIES

MONTROSE

- The North East Angus Locality Improvement Partnership provided £8000 for a PB event in the town - "addressing health & wellbeing priorities for adults in the Montrose area".
- Promotion was through social media and face to face engagement.
- 11 projects received funding.

EDZELL

- Edzell was our first Participatory Budgeting event in a rural area, we weren't sure how it would turn out – or if anyone would attend.
- The North East Angus Locality Improvement Partnership provided £5000 for a PB event in the village and surrounding area.
- The funding was linked to **"addressing health & wellbeing priorities for adults in the Edzell area"** and 9 projects received funding.

BRECHIN (2015-2017)

- Brechin had set priorities which applicants were required to address in their proposals.
- There were 3 events (one 2015, one in 2016 and one in 2017).
- £20,000 was allocated for each event.
- Over the 3 events, thirty-one projects received funding.

>> Over the course of the weekend, we worked with the young people to design a process or allocating the funding the £40,000 that the Council had provided. The young people had to present their ideas about what age groups it should focus on, locations, and how funding proposals should be submitted. It was decided that voting for finding proposals should take place online.

Next steps in Angus for Participatory Budgeting

- 2019/20 – Each of the 4 Locality Partnerships will have £50,000 for PB (£200,000 in total).
- 2020/21 – Each Locality Partnership will have £65,000 for PB (£260,000 in total).
- Each locality partnership will use the information within each locality plan to carry out a PB process.
- By 2020/21 Angus Council will look at Mainstream PB as all local authorities have to spend 1% of their budget through Participatory Budgeting by 2021. In Angus this equates to £2million.
- The Power of Youth continues in 2019/20 with £70,000 available , thanks to a joint partnership between Angus Council and Angus Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

More details!

Scotland has a whole website dedicated to Participatory Budgeting across the country. For more details, head to **pbscotland.scot**

BIDS v FUNDING

Bids invited of between **£1,000** and **£5,000**

35 – number of youth organisations submitting proposals

£91,082 – total amount requested by the organisations

£40,000 – total budget available to be distributed

Young people vote online for who gets the funding
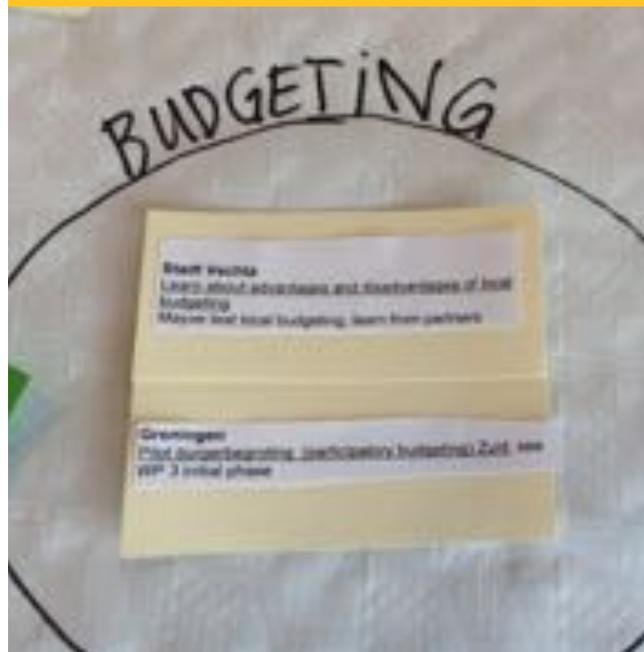
THIS IS PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN ACTION

1,127 – number of young people voting online

15 – projects receiving funding

Neighbourhood Supporters for Older People

The idea behind the "Neighbourhood support volunteers" project is to provide organized local assistance to prevent elderly people feeling lonely and being dependent on others. The "selbgestALTER" project group will train the volunteers in co-operation with Vechta City Council. Christina Rasche from Vechta City Council explains.

Neighbourhood support volunteers are being trained to offer assistance and advice for local senior citizens. To be able to do so effectively, they are to receive training in six different areas. The first course dealt with elderly housing issues. The second course will look at mobility, recreational activities and voluntary work; the third will be about welfare services and communication.

When they've completed their training, the volunteers will support elderly citizens in their neighbourhood facing questions such as "How can I stay living at home for as long as possible?", "What alternative options make sense?", "Where can I find information about recreational activities?", "How can I get from A to B in the city without a car?" and "When does it make sense to do road safety training?"

Since senior citizens can find a lot of the information and help they require online themselves, using any device, one of the topics covered during the training is digitisation. Vechta City Council's aim is to raise these citizen's awareness of digital information sources in order to boost their independence.

The idea for the training evolved during a co-creation project with elderly people who live in and around the Lattweg neighbourhood in Vechta. One of the points that came out of the meetings was that they would like access in their immediate neighbourhood to people they can turn to for help and low-level support services so that they can continue to live in their accustomed environment for as long as possible.

Co-creation – finding out what people really want

The idea for the training evolved during a co-creation project with elderly people who live in and around the Lattweg neighbourhood in Vechta.

One of the points that came out of the meetings was that they would like access in their immediate neighbourhood to people they can turn to for help and low-level support services so that they can continue to live in their accustomed environment for as long as possible.

SMART Senior - Hello Rotterdam!

Smart Seniors – Digitally Empowering Older People

Aalborg Municipality (DEN) and Rotterdam City (NL) worked together to organise workshops for older people to look at their needs and wants and how digital technologies can assist in this. In this interview **Grethe Fallesen** from Aalborg and **Esmeralde Marsman** from Rotterdam discuss the transnational collaboration.

Grethe Fallesen (Aalborg): Many seniors are quite good at using digital solutions, shopping on the Internet and skyping their grandchildren. They can handle smart phones and tablets and therefore they demand good digital solutions that can help and support them in their daily life.

Esmeralde Marsman (Rotterdam): Rotterdam and Aalborg municipalities therefore decided to ask the senior citizens about their needs and ideas and arranged two workshops for seniors in the two cities on the same date, 26th of September 2017.

Grethe: How did you prepare for SMART Senior in Rotterdam?

Esmeralde: The leading question for us was: "How can we make the social care support desk easier to find for people in search for help?".

The senior citizens were part of our Service Design team. They interviewed people in search for help and gained valuable insights, which they used at the actual design session at the SMART Senior day.

Esmeralde: What did you discuss in Aalborg?

Grethe: The program alternated between short presentations and work in smaller groups where the 40 participants (a mixture of staff and senior citizens) discussed challenges, barriers and possibilities:
- How do we make more senior citizens more digital?
- How do senior citizens find out about activities in their neighbourhood and prevent loneliness?
- How do citizens and Aalborg Municipality communicate SMART in the future?

Grethe: What did you learn from SMART Senior?

Esmeralde: Our main insights were:
- Senior citizens add interesting perspectives, views, and values to design processes, because they grew up in a time with different values regarding com munication, interaction, and the role technology played.
- Service design trajectories are more successful, if a case owner is personally involved AND committed.
- After a service design trajectory, it is critical to find committed ownership in the development and business organization. If not, there is a risk that critical properties of the designed service, gets lost in organizational IT policy requirements.

Grethe: Yes, we found that as council staff we had a lot of preconceptions about what we thought the skills and thoughts of older people were, but in many cases we were wrong. This taught us that if it had just been the municipality that designed the services, and not discussed with older people, our services might not be successful.

Esmeralde: How did you disseminate your results?

Grethe: Shortly after the SMART Senior day we send a made a report to the participants listing all the ideas from the

workshops. All ideas were then evaluated by Aalborg Municipality and several prjects were designed and presented in a report. The SMART Senior event inspired the Danish TV station DK4 to make two programs about the event and the senior citizens approach and use of technology. The programs have been seen by more than 200,000 viewers.

- IT for the sake of citizens (in Danish – Part 1 of 2) - **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkeWJZZIj 9U&feature=youtu.be**
- IT for the sake of citizens (in Danish – Part 2 of 2) - **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYB-spuSe QY&feature=youtu.be**

Esmeralde and Grethe: The transnational collaboration provided us with the opportunity to look at the different roles senior citizens can play in development of (public) services. In both cases senior citizens were part of a design process both as (potential) users, as well as very relevant designers of the service. We find it very valuable to share the acquired insights from both municipalities and to analyze them together.

Local governments are providing services to all their citizens. In order to get in touch with their inhabitants, these municipalities are communicating in various ways, in many cases by letter. However, these letters or the information on municipal websites is often unclear, written in complicated language, or consists of sentences which are too long. As a result, citizens do not understand what the government is asking from them or providing them. This also excludes some target groups. To improve understandability, the municipalities of Groningen (NL), Vechta (GER) and Rotterdam (NL) conducted pilots to understand the obstacles for citizens in understanding government communication. This knowledge has been used to improve public service delivery by adapting their communications to the needs of the citizens.

The "Why"

Groningen

The service norm in the municipality gives the right to the citizens to have to up-to-date information in understandable language. "The citizens can therefore hold the municipality accountable if they don't understand its information" says Carine Plantiga of the team for Better Letters. In the public service delivery department of the municipality they are aiming for a high level of service delivery, but when citizens don't understand the municipal letters, the quality of service reduces. The council called for action to counter social exclusion due to difficult language. They implemented letter audits (colleague of the civil servant who sends a letter checks the comprehensibility of the letter) but noticed room for improvements. Member of team for Better Letters Anja Pouw explains that "citizens don't understand the complicated words civil servants consider as standard. The inhabitants of Groningen don't know the law by heart, they don't understand all the abbreviations civil servants find logical." Therefore, an outside-in approach was needed.

Vechta

The idea to incorporate simplified language came up when the municipality of Vechta relaunched the homepage and the news website of the City of Vechta. "Since the new homepage includes more and more online services, it is of even more importance that all citizens understand how to navigate to these services" says Christina Rasche of the municipality. This increases the public service delivery to the people.

Rotterdam

In Rotterdam the ambition is that their services fit every citizen. Therefore, the municipality of Rotterdam pays extra attention to the citizens who have more difficulty in reading or using their digital services. Their slogan is: "Well done for all Rotterdammers!" There are several projects to approve letters in all domains of the municipality. Sharing knowledge and ways of working is something the municipality is always trying to do.

The "How"

Groningen

The team for Better Letters developed three approaches. First of all, knowledge has to be gathered. This has been done by taking municipal letters to a focus group of people with low literacy. The focus group shows that jargon can easily been misinterpreted, and that long sentences make a

Improving Communication with Citizens

letter unreadable. The focus group helps civil servants to see how their choice of language can be misleading. Second, awareness has been created for a new way of working which changes the culture of public service delivery. Instead of sending out large amounts of letters and receiving large amounts of questions from the public, the author of the letter first sends the letter to the customer contact centre of the municipality. In that way, the employees from the contact centre can help in improving the letters based on their expertise from expected questions from the public. And last, a "Letter Doctor" has been appointed who helps to write understandable letters and who gives writing tips.

Vechta

To realize this new approach, the municipality formulated a text, which was translated into simplified language by the 'SprachWerk - Simplified Language Agency' from the Andreaswerk Vechta (a provider of support services for people with a disability). People from the Andreaswerk did not only translate the text; but residents with learning and reading difficulties also checked the comprehensibility before publication. The municipality of Vechta included the content in simplified language on their website, which applies the set of rules formulated by the German 'Netzwerk Leichte Spra-che e.V'. The objective is to help people

who have learning or reading difficulties, impaired memory or a low level of literacy to understand how to navigate in and to certain sections of the website. In addition, content in simplified language contributes to barrier-free websites.

Rotterdam

In "Understand the letter" 170 letters about care and welfare were screened and 107 letters were approved together with and with the target group. There was a close cooperation with the LIKE! Project which was developing letters with pictures at the same time (another use case). The municipality shared the contacts of several NGO's who were helping to find citizens with low literacy, learning difficulties and with financial debts. Colleagues who are responsible for making the letters were part of the test team and they facilitated the test days to be fun for both citizens and employees.

The results and what we learned

Groningen

"We notice that due to our team of Better Letters and the campaigns we held, colleagues are more easily able to ask for help." says Anja. The awareness campaign shows results, according to Carine "because colleagues develop awareness of the importance of language." Still, the project will further develop by aiming to reach even more civil servants, focus on awareness and the inclusion of external focus groups to help improving the municipal letters.

If you look at this video, made by Groningen municipality, one understands exactly why writing better

letters is so very important for people who have trouble reading….. **https://player.vimeo.com/video/277068176?-title=0&byline=0&portrait=0**

Vechta

The pilot on simplified language is complete. Christina concludes: "we think that guidance in simplified language on how to navigate in and to certain sections of the website is an important first step to make a municipal website more un-derstandable for people with certain restrictions." However, the users might have problems understanding other texts on the website or within online services from external providers, which are not translated into simplified language.

Rotterdam

As well as 107 letters being approved, Rotterdam shared the learning points within the municipality. These projects which make letters comprehensible for citizens are highly underestimated. It takes a lot of time and patience to update the letters within IT systems and meet the requirements from all stakeholders within the organization (e.g. the legal department). It has helped a lot that target groups were helping the municipality to understand how a good letter is written. And it is extremely important to have colleagues on board who are responsible for the letters.

Because letters are never finished; it is a continuous process. "Understand the letter" was originally meant as title for the citizen, but after these types of projects we know that it is especially applicable for us, civil servants.
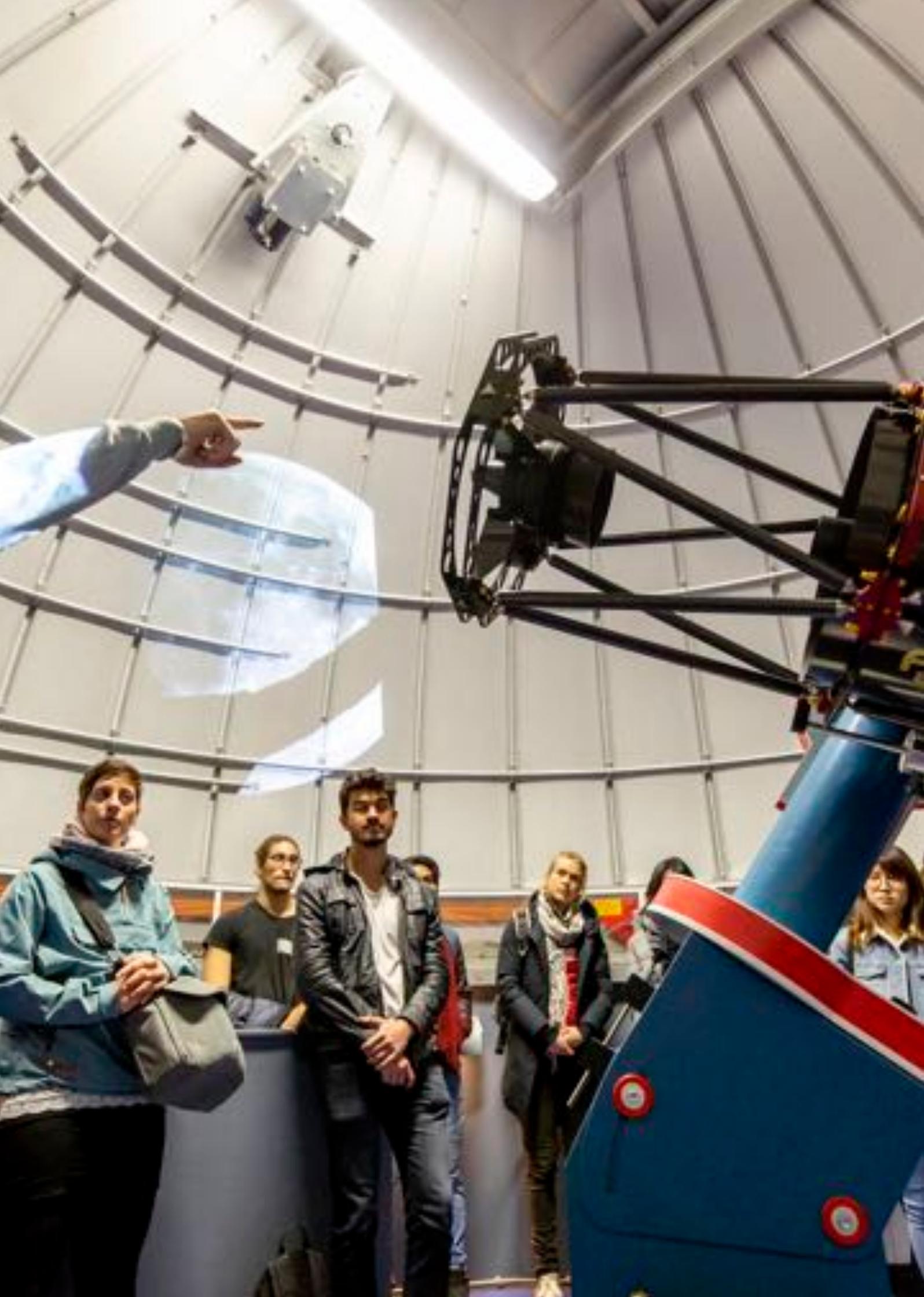
Kimberley van Luchem, project lead at Roeselare Municipality, explains the need to spread information about their work, not only within their own organisation but to local SMEs and to the wider LIKE! Partnership.

The LIKE! project wants to transcend the borders of the partnership with all the knowledge and experience it has. A good example of this is the transnational pilot on Visuals in letters. Together with the Dutch SME Publiquest, Rotterdam and Roeselare developed a practical workshop in which employees can learn why comprehensible letters are crucial in public communication and how to make illustrated letters.

Where it all began

It all started with the city of Rotterdam. During the LIKE! project they set up the project "Visuals in Letters", with the goal to make their letters more accessible and readable to all people of Rotterdam. They gathered a lot of experience and knowledge during the process. Because a lot of partners were interested in this, a transnational workshop was set up by Rotterdam and Roeselare.

To test the approach, we presented this to our Communications team in Roeselare. We lowercase participation and invited some third parties:

NICE TO KNOW

DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE: VISUALS IN LETTERS

- **Wablieft** (an SME that work with cities on the topic of understandable language).
- **Kortom** (an organisation for governmental and social profit communication).
- **VVSG** (a member organisation of all cities in Flanders).

By introducing this topic to these external parties, the knowledge on the 'illustrated letters' moves beyond the municipalities of Roeselare and Rotterdam. The workshop was a success! Afterwards, all parties involved evaluated the workshop. With the input of the SMEs and the input of the communication department of Roeselare, they strengthened the co-creation of Rotterdam and Roeselare, to realize more awareness for the topic in Flemish cities.

What's next?
The communication department already set up the project in Roeselare. The aim is to deliver the first illustrated letters by November 2019.

But it doesn't stop in Roeselare. Roeselare will benefit from the knowledge of Rotterdam, as well, the rest of the partnership and other organisations will also see the results.

Find out more
The city of Rotterdam has built a website around this approach: **https://www.gebruikercentraal.nl/instrumen-ten/kennisbank-beeldtaal/ (in Dutch)**

THE VOICE OF GRONINGEN
DIFFERENT METHODS
OF DIGITAL DEMOCRACY

In January 2019, eight students from the Hanze University of Applied Science in Groningen presented their designs, features and ideas for **CONSUL**, the digital platform. This digital engagement tool, developed in the city of Madrid, has been implemented by 100 institutions in 33 different countries and used by 90 million citizens. CONSUL can be used by a (local) government to digitally engage with its citizens and aim for a more transparent digital democracy. But is this tool also appealing to younger citizens in the city of Groningen? 8 students conducted research on this topic and developed CONSUL for this specific target group. **Nephtis Brandsma** from Groningen describes what happened.

The municipality of Groningen has great experience with (online) citizen engagement. However, connecting with younger people has been a difficult task for local government. The students from the Hanze University of Applied Science therefore generated a strategy how to develop, design and promote CONSUL to target younger people and students in the city of Groningen. This includes an appealing design with many pictures and videos, but also interesting policy topics and suitable features. And above all, a quick loading and responding platform which is compatible for mobile use.

The strategy which the students developed will be incorporated in the municipality's approach to implement CONSUL. The strategy involves communication plans and design requirements to attract the younger citizens of Groningen to the digital platform. CONSUL is expected to be online from Summer 2019.

CONSUL is an open source platform to help (local) governments engage more easily with their citizens. The platform offers various features for various stages of the policy making process. Examples are debating, voting, participatory budgeting, collaborative legislation, and proposals. Citizens, civil servants and politicians can engage with each other and the democratic process can become more transparent and easier to follow.

UPDATE!

Groningen has recently been awarded €150,000 euro to develop a Netherlands-wide implementation based on the CONSUL platform.

Groningen strives for more dialogue between Citizens and Gemeente

The Gemeente Groningen is working on an initiative that establishes a democratic and digital way of working together between municipality and residents. *De Stem van Groningen* **tranlates as** *The Voice of Groningen* **and takes citizens' opinions into account. Instead of being presented with fully developed propositions, citizens will be able to propose ideas in communication with other citizens to create a better living space in Groningen.**

De Stem van Groningen is a digital participation platform that is used to engage with citizens. On the one hand, it enables the municipality to share ideas with citizens; on the other hand, it provides citizens with the opportunity to share their ideas with the municipality of Groningen.

According to Nephtis Brandsma, project coordinator, it is a two-way street from which both parties benefit. The purpose of this digital initiative is to connect residents and municipality and to give citizens a voice in improving their environment and city. "Groningen has quite a long tradition of what is called *gebiedsgericht werken*, which is an area-specific approach to solving problems and inproving the living conditions in specific districts", *De Stem van Groningen* is the digital equivalent of area-specific working.

De Stem van Groningen is modelled on *Consul*, a free software platform for citizen participaton developed in Madrid, that aims to support an open, transparent, and democratic government. *Consul* is freely accessible to every city that wants to participate and provides one single platform for the whole municipality, instead of many platforms. It stands out due to its flexibility, functionality, and excellent support system because *Consul* helps cities to implement the digital participation programme by giving them advice and support along the way.

As part of the process, the *Gemeente Groningen* is going to start three pilot projects. The first one begins at the end of September at the Oosterpark neighbourhood. It is a collaboration between the municipality and the area manager of the *gebieds team* that encourages citizens to become part of the process of developing ideas and the participatory budgeting process. "It is a means to find out what people want", says Albert van Holthoon, project coordinator.

According to van Holthoon and Brandsma, ideas have to come from citizens who live in the area with the aim to improve the overall well-being of the district. Suggestions can range from a call for more playgrounds, a nordic walking environment, to environmentally-friendly gardening, and should have the public's best interest at heart. "The ideas will be reviewed in collaboration with the area manager first to check their feasibility before they are open for a vote and participatory budgeting", says Albert van Holthoon. The concept is relatively straightforward since proposals that get the most attention and likes will receive funding. The budget can, however, be spread across more than just one project.

The second pilot programme will run alongside the first one and deals with the energy transition in Vinkhuizen. Citizens will get the opportunity to participate in the transition to

sustainable energy provision. Nepthis Brandsma recognises the necessity of cooperation between citizens and municipality in order to reach the aim of becoming CO2 neutral in 2035: "This is something that we really need to do together. We should try to be connected as equals." As part of the project, residents will get the opportunity to share their ideas on how to switch to sustainable energy and what this can look like for individual households.

The third pilot programme is an internal one that introduces the employers and employees of Gemeente Groningen to the new democratic and digital way of working together. This is important because it is a new way of operating that no longer functions from the inside to the outside, but which incorporates the public's opinion at an early stage. Therefore, the digital participation platform operates from the outside to the inside. "This approach emphasises equality and establishes a new way of working together that is based on interaction with residents in developing new ideas, instead of presenting the public with finished ideas", says Albert van Holthoon.

Accordingly, employees within the municipality of Groningen have to be trained in working together with citizens. They often have to mediate between citizens and their different ideas but also among each other. On a practical level, citizens get to vote for a project instead of being presented with a final decision. The municipality has to establish successful communication strategies that encourage residents to bring forward their ideas and get involved.

In order to establish a successful communication between citizens and employees, the municipality is dependent on a digital participation software such as Consul. "We are still working on the concept and possibilities of *digital identity*", says Albert van Holthoon. Citizens' data will be protected, and the digital platform will be made as user-friendly as possible to ensure that everyone can participate, from computer geek to less experienced computer users. Registration for both proposing and commenting on ideas is required to prevent bullshit discussions on the platform. "The civil service will have to mediate between ideas and calculate how much time that requires", says Albert van Holthoon. This is something that Albert van Holthoon and Nephtis Brandsma hope to explore during their first pilot programme.

De Stem van Groningen establishes a new and democratic way of operating that gives Groningers a voice to express their ideas on how to shape their environment. Ultimately, citizens are given more control and power in communicating with the Gemeente and other public sectors to change things for the better.

Leads WP 3

INCLUSIVE SERVICES

Technology is often criticised for creating "digital divides"; services are introduced which might be effective for one sector of the community, but has the effect of making that particular community sector more advanced whilst disadvantaging other sectors.

For example, developing an app in English that is only available on a particular brand of mobile phone might be advantageous for younger English speakers who own that particular brand of phone, but may alienate people who consume services via a tablet, people whose first language isn't English, or people whose only access to services is via a PC in their local library. The app may be revolutionary, but large chunks of the community won't be able to use it.

This section looks at the idea of both providing accessible digital public services AND using digital tools and techniques to make existing services more accessible.

In this section you can read about how Customer Contact Centres are being improved both using digital technology and the addition of voice assistants. We look at how citizen participation can improve the relatively new area of digital democracy, and we see how digital service design techniques can be used to make services more effective for caregivers.
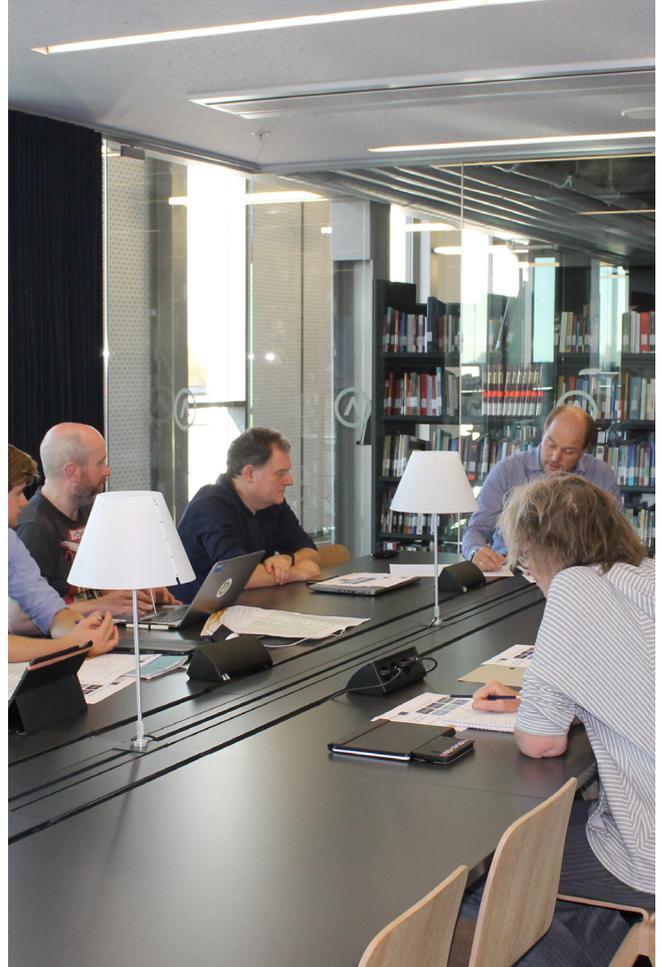
KEY MESSAGES

The crucial concept that cuts across all the projects in this chapter is that partners realised that they would never achieve good results unless the projects were created **alongside** citizens and citizen groups (the posh phrase for this is "co-creation"). The parners ralised the ancient truism that **you'll design the best product by involving the people who are going to be using it, day in, day out in the design.**

REPORT:
CUSTOMER CONTACT AND INTERACTION

The development of an Innovation Culture enables us to capture the benefits of collaborating on customer contact and interaction. Given the right participants, vision and approach, it is possible to turn the input of ten experts, nearly 50 municipalities and 100 civil servants into an end product with real impact.

Customer Contact and Interaction is a new development in the Netherlands. This is strengthened by the publication of '*Klantcontact & Interactie met je gemeente*' *('Customer Contact & Interaction with your Municipality')* and the creative process that preceded it.

Many Dutch municipalities are taking major strides in service provision, communication and participation, including increased awareness of their customer contacts and improved presence on various social media channels. The next step in customer contact and interaction is to structure your organization to meet the expectations of the outside world.

Six key principles

- **Personal** co-operation is our starting point, trust is our basis. We keep our promises; our contacts are personal and tailored. We work as one. We work swiftly and get it right first time.
- **Online** - we serve our customers online as much as possible; phone contact and physical contact will of course remain options (click, call, visit).
- **Always near** - where the customer needs us, we are around the corner and online, i.e. location-independent; we are close when it is convenient, i.e. independent of time.
- **Listening** - we listen to the community and are in touch with our customers.
- **Working with communities** - together with neighbourhood, we help initiators if necessary, we let go if no help is needed, and we take the initiative if the situation demands it.
- **Data-driven** - we use big and small data to make predictions and improve our services and business.

Three Learning Points

- The importance of customer contact and interaction is clear; development of this area is key and will be come more and more important.
- The development and objective of new approaches need to be clear to citizens as well, otherwise they'll struggle to use these new channels. The key is making services more personal.
- Any guidance needs to be impactful – the best way of doing this is to write it in collaboration with citizens and citizen groups themselves. Don't assume that if the council writes the guidance, that everyone will understand it!

Four important groups

- **Citizens & Companies**: the current scope of service provision and customer contact with the Customer Contact Centre, the website, e-services; the one-on-one contacts; customer contact and service provision.
- **Neighbourhoods**: the processes, services, interactions and collaborations in neighbourhoods and dstricts near a location, such as co-creation, city funding and communities. In short, the existing forms of participation in the neighbourhoods, including their modern alternatives.
- **Stakeholders**: communication with, listening to,

sending messages to and reaching groups of citizens with an interest in a certain issue.

- **Administrations and Organizations**: addressing the previous three steps will place heavy demands on the administration and on the organization, its processes and systems, its culture and its employees.

Results and finding out more

One of the main outputs of the work was a publication that details 34 key building blocks for government organisations that work from the "outside-in" (that's to say starting with citizens and not organizations).

More detailed report on this work can be found on the LIKE! website at **https://northsearegion.eu/media/4867/case-study-papers-klantcontact.pdf**

FOCUS:
SUFFOLK'S DIGITAL APPROACH

Finding innovative ways of delivering public services is essential; not just to meet financial challenges but also to deliver more effective services which meet the needs of users and communities. In April 2019, Suffolk hosted an Innovation Showcase Event (known as the DIG-IT Festival) to identify these digital and innovative solutions. Lesley Hood and Kevin Wegg from Suffolk explain.

Participants engaged with innovators and businesses to explore ideas and solutions to enable better service delivery, manage demand and facilitate transformation. The event coincided with a LIKE! Partner meeting in Suffolk and the project presented transnational pilots from the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and Denmark during the Innovation Showcase Event which hosted approximately 30 businesses from Suffolk and across the UK.

The event showed how products, services and 'tech' could potentially solve challenges and in that way supporting the day-to-day work of staff. There were lots of opportunities to start an innovative conversation with stakeholders and get interested to further develop innovative ideas.

The Innovation Showcase Event also shows the importance of understanding 'all things digital' and how to engage your staff in this transformation. And lastly, get to inspired and pick up ideas which can be implemented in your organization.

More details about Suffolk's approach to digital Highlights of the DIG-IT festival - **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEl-Bjs8e5A**

Suffolk's EU Like digital event:
Part 1 - **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=et7zvcsNKq0**
Part 2 - **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AogWHh-vy10**
Part 3 - **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-Rn3WEeoYs**
Part 4 - **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gn4STPpvtUE**

HOW TO RUN A GOOD TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP

This magazine mostly brings together content about WHAT projects partners produced. Another good thing to know is HOW to make these things happen. The cities of Roeselare and Rotterdam worked together on setting up a transnational workshop on images in letters. Here are some basic tips:

Communicate well with each other

For example, what worked well for the two partners was to organize several bilateral meetings in Roeselare. In addition, the frequent calls and mails not only strengthened communication, but also strengthened the bond between Roeselare and Rotterdam.

Set up reasonable expectations for each other

Rotterdam and Roeselare were very open to each other on what they expected. By noting down the expectations in the beginning, the content for the workshop could be set up by both of them. This led to a workshop that was a success, because both partners knew what to expect and got what they expected.

Familiarise yourselves with the way each organisation works

A good partnership is built on trust. For example, Roeselare

and Rotterdam worked well together on some other topics in the project which led to a good understanding, nice informal relationships and a good trust in each other.

Dare to criticize each other!

A good partnership is based on honesty. If something could be better or run more smoothly, it's better to say it immediately. Rotterdam and Roeselare dared to criticize each other's process, by giving positive and constructive feedback. When parties ask for feedback from each other, both knew that that wasn't going difficulties, but would produce a better end product.

SERVICE DESIGN IMPROVEMENT: CARING FOR CARERS

What is human-centred design?

Human-centred design is an approach that: "makes systems usable and useful by focusing on user needs and requirements and by applying human factors/ergonomics usability knowledge and techniques"

The approach was initially used as a way of designing, producing and implementing software systems by involving potential users at all stages of development. This has the advantage that there is agreement along the way that the system satisfies the requirements of those people that are to be using a system.

It was soon realised that human-centred design didn't just have to be used to design software systems and digital technologies, it could also be used to design other activities such as social care-related services. This approach takes into account human dignity, differing abilities and access requirements.

There are several ISO standards relating to human-centred systems design and more information can be found on this approach at: **https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00146-016-0675-2**

Roeselare Municipality (BE) identified that services for carers needs to improve, especially services for working people who have caring responsibilities. A service design workshop was held, using human-centred design - principles originally used in digital service improvements. This technique was chosen as it helps to stimulate people's ideas in an effective way. Kimberley van Luchem explains.

The municipality of Roeselare (BE) has organized eight conversation tables about improving services for the specific target group of working care givers. These people care for someone (e.g. person with cancer, person with a disability, elderly people who need a lot of help) and next to that they also have a job (part time or full time). They feel unheard, don't get the right information at the right time and have to go from organisation to organisation to get the right support for being a (volunteering) care giver.

These voluntary workers often have jobs themselves, so a lot of the voluntary activities are being done next to their own jobs. It can involve administration as well as physical helping people.

In order to improve the services, it is necessary to talk to them to understand how we can improve our services. By using the human centred design method, we map their needs. Together with the care givers, we are searching for good solutions.
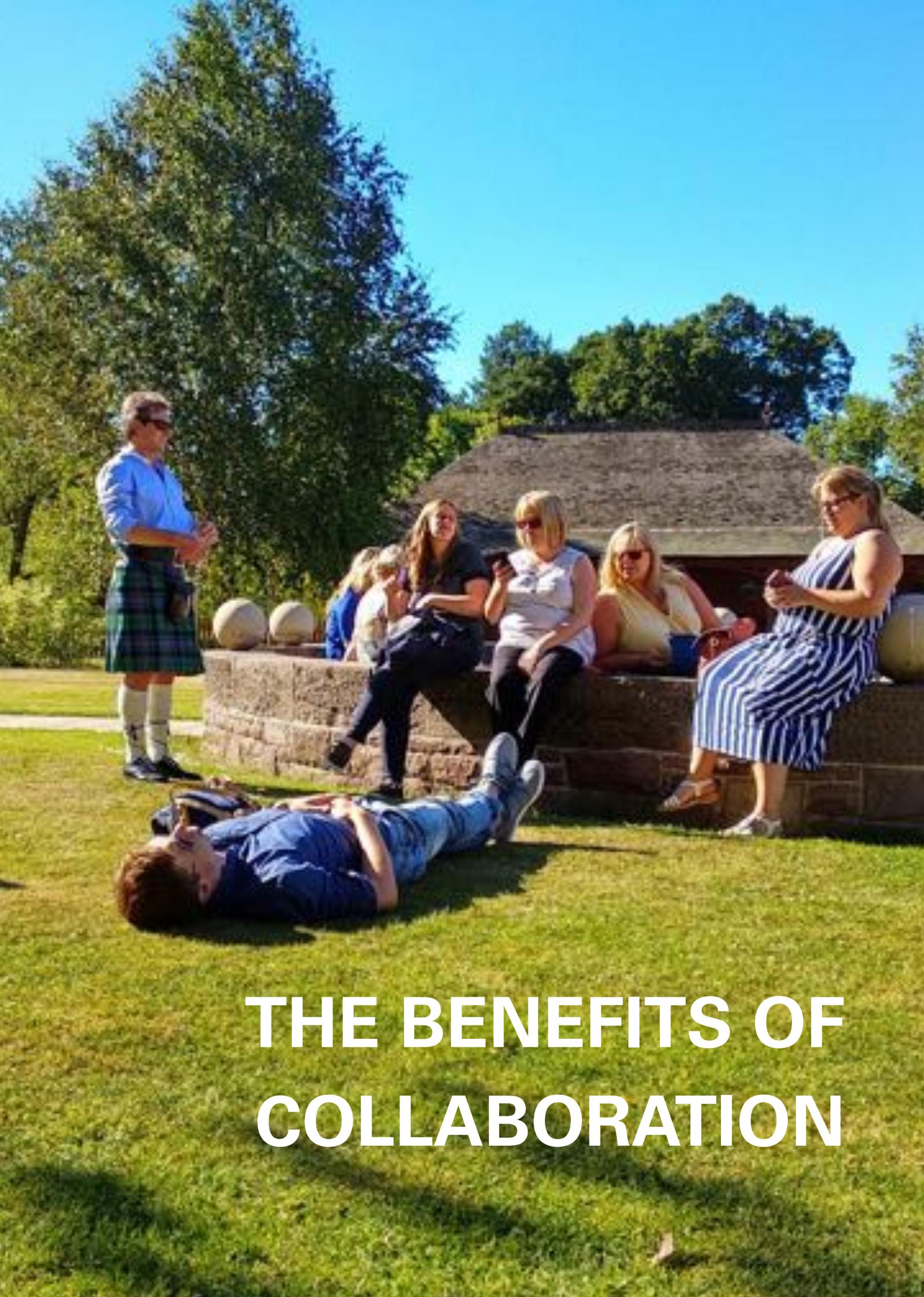
THE BENEFITS OF
COLLABORATION

Work Package 3 - *Developing a Digital Innovation Culture* has produced some excellent outputs. The partners have worked together, and with citizens and SMEs, to develop new skills and change strategies, use digital tools to engage with the public in new ways and to really think about how new services can be as inclusive as possible.

The key of all of this work was the *transnational collaboration* between the partners. As soon as it was known what all partners were working on in terms of their own digital journeys, international virtual project groups were formed, communicating on a regular basis across borders using digital conferencing tools. As well as meeting up for the regular project meetings, partners would undertake field visits to one another's organisations, exchange information and experience and work together to organise international events.

So, we have had examples of an expert from Scotland talking at a summer school in Groningen about Participatory Budgeting, Danish and Dutch partners experimenting with

hackathons as a way of engaging with older people and Belgian and Scottish digital coaches helping staff and citizens with new skills.

There has been a recognition in the LIKE! project that transnational working has provided huge benefits for all concerned in collaborative projects. Different international partners have brought a different culture of thinking to help solve problems that weren't necessarily apparent to a partner working on their own.

We've found that there has been some extremely fertile common ground between the partners, and that several principles are key to developing digital services for the future.

COLLABORATION PRINCIPLES

- Collaborate with other government organizations – they may have some experience that you don't.

- Involve citizens and citizen groups from the start – if you don't, you might end up with services that are not widely used.

- Involve SMEs – small and medium sized enterprises have the commercial experience in developing technological services, and also assessing whether a product is viable.

- Collaborate! – by working together in all aspects of service design, we achieved more than the sum of our individual parts.

ROESELARE
IS 'R VOOR JOU

Aalborg
Kommune

Gemeente
Groningen

Universität Vechta
University of Vechta

Suffolk
County Council

City of Rotterdam

provincie
Drenthe

Angus
Council

rijksuniversiteit
groningen

VECHTA

Interreg
North Sea Region
European Regional Development Fund

EUROPEAN UNION