

## REPORT

# Beyond a Minimal Democracy

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#### Table 4

#### Digital Citizenship: New Generation And Participation Platform

**Chair**

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#### Overview

The theme of Working Group 4 (WG4) was "Digital Citizenship: New Generation and Participation Platform." The entire session was organized into a three-part discussion covering Process, People, and Technology. However, the primary focus was on Process and People. The group explored various aspects such as digital citizen engagement, digital democracy, participation challenges, and opportunities. The leading questions guiding the discussion were: How can we mainstream digital citizen participation? How can processes be designed and integrated into our political governance? In conclusion, aiming to inspire future actions, the group provided a set of factors to measure the impact of 'digital participation' and strengthen the role of people in responsibly shaping the digital process.

#### Current Situation and Challenges

In assessing the current state of platform participation, WG4 identified several trends and challenges. Firstly, there was growing concern about the quality of participation and associated financial aspects. Building a supportive infrastructure to encourage citizen participation was recognized as a necessity. The group acknowledged limitations in existing practices, including adherence to set standards, outcome-based approaches, and limited representativeness of people.

Secondly, the group highlighted a gap in digital education, peer-to-peer learning, and civic skills. Public consultations and discussions were noted to be limited to citizens, with the role of citizens not always being clear. The youth within the group expressed dissatisfaction with

government platforms, perceiving them as unfriendly and lacking engagement tools. This identified a need for new skills, particularly among the youth, to facilitate meaningful engagement.

Another concern related to the tangible results and outcomes of engagement processes, with the assertion that it should not be isolated from people. The group recognized a discrepancy between current engagement practices and the effectiveness and satisfaction of the process. Notably, there was no consensus on this aspect within the group, with the youth viewing platforms like social media as potential tools for making public authorities work, while others perceived them as pressure measures rather than motivators.

### Recommended Steps

The discussion centered on understanding various forms of engagement, motivations, and opportunities. Recommendations took the form of a set of factors, combining aspirational and normative suggestions to enhance meaningful digital engagement with tangible results. The proposed steps are intended to offer practical and achievable measures for digital engagement processes.

1. **Expansion of Participation is Needed:** The group recommended that expansion and scaling up of participation should also prioritize quality. Digital platforms have the potential to amplify collective power for system change;
2. **Inclusiveness of Participation Should be Encouraged and Cultivated:** To legitimize the 'digital engagement' process, a pluralist and representative approach from a broader set of social groups is crucial;
3. **Digital Education Combined with Communication and Civic Skills are Crucial:** New skills, particularly for administrators, experts, and technicians, are recommended to engage effectively with the public;
4. **To Motivate Citizens, a More Personalized Approach is Needed:** A supportive digital infrastructure should allow citizens to select specific points and topics for participation, encouraging new ideas and perspectives;
5. **Allocation of Necessary Resources Should be in Place with a Systematic Approach:** Combining a digital platform with a structural framework is crucial for the success of the process;
6. **The Digital Engagement Process Needs to be Constitutionalized and Institutionalized:** Creating processes with a new perspective is crucial and has the potential to amplify citizen voices and scale participation.