

Case Study: e-Youth City Council Project an Alternative e-Government for Young People

Gemma Gibert i Font

Town Hall of Sant Andreu de Llavaneres, Catalonia, Spain

[ggibert73@hotmail.com](mailto:gibert73@hotmail.com)

Abstract: This article presents an explanatory analysis of an e- Youth City Council project held in the town of Sant Andreu de Llavaneres, Catalonia, during the year 2008. The main objectives of this programme were to increase citizen participation, improve good governance and through it, the possibility of consolidating and strengthening democracy by ICT use. This case study was based on a survey of 628 young people aged between 14 and 18. The aim was to motivate and enable them to play an active role in politics and to take up positions of genuine authority and responsibility, within local decision making, as pre-voting citizens. In this way, the young people engaged to develop all stages of the electoral process, participated in an e-voting system and were empowered in local government for 15 days. In this case polity was translated into practice and created a successful partnership between young citizens and the local political parties. The focus of this ICT research was, basically, which tools the youngsters used and the influence it had on electorate participation. In this way, the ICT acquired a new perspective relating to this study group who are considered a generation raised in a computerised era and who are leaders in the fields of innovation and communication, used as a common tool in their social life and work. The analysis is described and evaluated by explanatory variables such as; population, age, ICT use and access, number of voters and abstentions, the *ajuntamentjove.cat* website, political party blogs, electoral campaign spots and meetings, the electronic voting system and finally the video " Youth Government Constitution" broadcast by internet into the school classroom. Electronic voting has been incorporated as a pilot test, consisting of a voting system of closed lists with a choice of up to two preferential candidates.

Keywords: e-government, young citizens, participation, ICT, democracy and policy, e-voting

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Sant Andreu de Llavaneres is a small town located 40km from Barcelona, Catalonia. It has a population of about 10,120 residents. The study group was made up of teenagers ranging from 14 to 18 years, representing an electoral roll of 628 people (value of 6,28% of the population). The study group can be divided into two groups with different characteristics; 14 to 16 year olds in compulsory secondary education and the 16 to 18 year olds, sub-divided into those who continued in higher education and those who went into the working world. The school group was made up of 57% (358 pupils), personal data and information about this group was taken from the school and teachers while personal information pertaining to the working group came from the council register.

1.2 Objectives and goals

The young were given a voice to make decisions on the city council.

The main objective of the project "e-Youth City Council" was focused on developing a mechanism by which the youngsters could learn about the electoral process, public administration, local government and the responsibility of being a citizen. Through this work, the youngsters were provided with the tools and resources to design their own policies and demands and also to empower the governing body to carry them out.

Creation of a Youth Commission

To create the Council of Youth as a new body:

- To inform, consult and make proposals to design a policy on youth.
- To plan activities which encourage young people to participate in community life.
- To be the interlocutor between the young and the city councillors.
- To cohere the young collective of the town.

- To carry out the negotiations and management of the Llavaneres Youth town-ship.

Educational Framework

Educational law has currently introduced two subjects into secondary schools for the academic year 2008/9, *Citizenship* and *philosophy and Education for personal development and citizenship*. The content of these subjects treats themes on concepts of the democratic system, cultural participation, interaction and relations between citizens and the government, its operation and governance. While studying these subjects the students are viewed as real citizens.

Our aim has been to give an opportunity to administration, pupils, teachers and schools, to put what they have learnt into practice and evaluate this experience of local democracy. This programme was planned with the collaboration of the school director, pedagogic coordinator and teachers who believe that the project created activities to give young people a learning experience in democracy.

Direct Political youth participation.

“Our political system is based on a representative concept of democracy ... we should not forget that the representative system is also exposed to a series of dangers...an excessive prominence on behalf of political representatives can easily undermine the central role that citizens should play in all good democratic systems..., it is thought more convenient to encourage mechanisms for participative democracy, that is, an instrument by which citizens can express their opinions and become involved in the complex world of political decisions. In effect, its objective is that citizens not only express themselves in very distant periods of time but rather that they play a leading role in the daily adoption of decisions on behalf of the corresponding administration.”¹

In the last decades, some of the main roles and institutions of representative democracy have suffered a constant loss of confidence from their citizens. It is known as disaffection and some studies say that the indicators of this situation are “loss of interest in policy, fall of electoral participation from the eighties (OECD countries, distrust towards institutions, authorities and representatives and the decrease of partisan and union affiliation. (Dalton and Walberg, 2000; Putnam 2003; Huse, 2003)²

Studies on disaffection, propose various measures to try to change these attitudes through explicitness, transparency and support, participation, responsibility and accountability.³

For these reasons the project was an attempt to build up a culture of participation. This line of participation is based on direct involvement by the citizen which, from our point of view, means that they can identify with policy when taking part in decision making. However, the mechanism that enables citizens to participate politically requires a culture of political commitment that those implicated can only obtain when participation is put into practice. From our perspective, participation is best taught by active involvement and being given the channels and resources to apply it.

Finally, the small population of the town of Llavaneres permits a comfortable relationship between the governing body and its citizens and it is best if we refer to the study group. It should be remembered that small towns have administrations that are close to their citizens.

Promoting ICT among Llavaneres youth.

The eruption of the use of ICT is influenced, as some studies report, by the rapport between the citizens and their representatives, promoting civil participation and making changes in public administration. It is necessary to be aware that the local area favours participation due to the proximity of the local government which promotes dialogue with those involved. (Schneider). In this manner, the participants and the citizens are integrated into the processes of decision making and

¹Electronic Democracy and Citizen Participation, a sociological and legal report on Citizen Consultation, Dr. Jordi Barrat, and Reniu, Josep M^a, OVE, University of Leon, September 2004. <http://www.epractice.eu/files/upload/gpc/document/1612-1181135609.pdf> Madrid (page 38/77)

² www.uoc.edu/idp/6/dt/esp/borge_colombo_welp.pdf

³ Blanco Ismael i Mas Pau, *La Desafecció Política a Catalunya*, Fundació Jaume Bofill, novembre 2007.

public management; a mechanism to increase efficiency and to favour the implementation of policies. (Riley, 2003; Goss, 2001; Kooiman, 2005; Brugué y Gomà 1998)⁴ Moreover, the youth collective is considered to be a group with more access to and awareness of these new forms of communication because they were born into the IT generation.

The project used ICT in:

- Electronic voting.
- Official Youth Website; www.ajuntamentjove.cat
- Entry to the political Blog.

We consider these tools are not purely political participation channels but also media facilitators as an alternative mechanism to participate.

1.3 Planning the project

This plan was divided into several parts:

First part "Acquiring basic democratic concepts"

Activities and workshops.

The purpose of this section was to provide enough knowledge for policy and the system to be understood, thereby bringing the voice of the younger generation to the government.

These activities were:

- **Video Youth Council.** (<http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=9NJjP7Uzoqc>)
- The video e-youth city council was made by the group of members of the 1st edition of the project. These members explained the steps of the electoral procedure and invited young people into the experience.
- **Two conferences** were given by the present councillors and the youngest councillors (aged up to 30 years)
- **Informative sessions.** An informative session was planned with twelve classrooms where technicians from the city council (about 20 people) explained what their work consisted of and how they developed their policies. The second session was given by municipal technicians and described the function of the Youth Council, their services and the project.
- **City Council workshops.** The specialists prepared five workshops on culture, the environment, urbanism, psychology and education, where pupils could participate and put into practice the concepts acquired during the informative sessions. The workshops were not compulsory and the overall attendance was 60 youngsters.

Second Part "Focusing the Knowledge"

Making proposals.

Pupils from the twelve classrooms made their claims and demands to improve activities and issues in the municipal government. They made 97 proposals of which 21 were approved by the municipal plenary and were included in the current budget. Most of these proposals were listed on the electoral program. The Youth department would work, together with members from the list of candidates, in a committee to develop these policies.

Third Part. "Electoral Process"

Electoral Campaign

The period of the electoral campaign was seven days from the 3rd to the 10th November '08. There were five lists of candidates: one list composed of people of 14 years old, another mixed list of young people between 14 and 15 years old, a list of 16 year olds and two others of 17 to 18 year olds. Each

⁴ Revista d'Internet, dret i Política, Borge, Rosa, Colombo, Clelia, Welp Yanina " Explanatory analysis of electronic and presentational citizen participation in the municipal areas of Catalonia" Open University of Catalonia.. IDP Number 6 (2008) I ISSN 1699-8154 http://www.uoc.edu/idp/6/dt/esp/borge_colombo_welp.pdf

list was composed of a minimum of seven members and the rest were substitutes. The political parties held meetings during school breaks, in the town, in the Town hall and through the media of local and county digital television. They also published leaflets and programs to try to convince voters. They created specific blogs with

- Statements and achievements.
- Electoral programme
- Publicity spots (www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FX3i5EZPu8)
- Surveys of their electoral programme proposals.

There were 5 lists of candidate and the blog site was housed on the official website linked by frame: <http://ajuntamentjove2008e.blogspot.com/>

The address of the parties blog sites are:

- <http://jovesambidees.blogspot.com/> (*Youth with Ideas*)
- <http://futures-promeses.blogspot.com/> (*Futures promises*)
- <http://3viles.blogspot.com/> (*3 Viles Group*)
- <http://alternativaperllavaneres.blogspot.com/> (*Llavaneres Group*)
- <http://podemmillorarllavaneres.blogspot.com/> (*We can Improve Llavaneres*)

The Content of the Youth website (www.ajuntamentjove.cat) consists of:

- e-youth City Council News: Containing news, event calendar, activities they can do and summaries of their achievements with photos.
- e-youth City Council blog site with the candidates blogs.
- e-youth City Council elections. This site contains a guide to the e-voting process pilot test with demonstrations, the results and news of the electoral process.

The official website has had 7,225 visitors.

2. Electronic voting

2.1 Why electronic voting?

During the last elections held by the Youth City Council, the number of voters was about 62% we showed that this percentage of voters was similar to that of the local municipal elections.

This new addition put to the test whether technology provided a useful mechanism to engage young people democratically and increase the electorate and therefore the number of voters.

The e-youth city Council is the first pioneering project in electronic voting in the whole of Catalonia and includes a pilot test designed by the political commission of the Public Administration Department of Catalonia. The project was financed by the Catalan government, *La Generalitat de Catalunya*.

Therefore, the overall objectives of electronic voting are:

- To increase the number of voters in the Youth City Council elections.
- To evaluate the impact of the ICT on this group.
- To evaluate the disaffection of the pre-voters.
- To guarantee the rights of voters; secrecy and a transparent process of voting.

2.2 Requirements and features to make use of electronic voting

- The Youth electoral role was about 628.
- Election of a list of candidates among several. Closed lists.
- The election supports both types of election (ballot and remote)

- Pilot test: closed lists with preferential voting system with a choice of 2 candidates , If there were 5% of voters who voted for the same preference of candidate, that candidate took up the first position on the list.
- The requirements for voter identification were an authorization and a National Identification Card . The authorization was a code of 16 alpha-numeric characters which the voters received by post or from school.
- The voting application was housed on the youth official website.
- Remote voting allowed numerous votes, the final vote being valid.
- The ballot was allowed once and automatically invalidated the electronic vote.
- The voting application introduced the concept of the invalid vote. It was designed on small windows on the screen above the candidates' names. When the voters wrote something in the space, it invalidated the previous vote.
- The electronic voting election period ran from 5.00pm on Wednesday 12th November to 1.00pm on Saturday 15th November 2008 and the traditional voting from the 14th to the 15th November until 1.00 pm.
- There were two electoral stations, one in the school and the other in the Town Hall which remained open from 9.00pm on Friday the 14th to the 15th November 2008.
- The results of the online vote and paper ballots were posted, the day after voting ended , on the website.
- After using the e-vote, the voter was asked to fill in a questionnaire on their preferences pertaining to the type and security of the voting system.
- After making an e-vote, the application allowed a print out of a coded voting receipt as confirmation of the vote. The code did not include any personal data about the voter nor their electoral option but was a key that enabled the voter to verify the list of voters published by the website.
- Three bodies were created by the elections: The administrative electoral body who controlled the electoral process, The electoral ballot board and the electoral electronic board which were composed of well-known people such as politicians and artists.

The software applications were developed by Scytl which is a company that specialises in the development of secure electronic voting solutions. The internet voting platform provided for this election is known as *Pnyx government*.

2.3 Electoral outcome

As the results show the level of participation in this election declined if compared with the 58% of the first edition project held in 2002. There were 112 valid votes, 36 of which were on line, the remaining 76 votes were by ballot which means that 67.8% preferred this option.

The successful candidates were "Youth with Ideas" which had 51.78% followed by "3 Viles Group", Future Promises, We can Improve and lastly "Llavaneres Group". The Hond't Law was applied to calculate the score. As a result 5 points went to "Youth Ideas" 1 point to "3 Viles Group" and 1 point to Future Promises. This political system gives advantages to the majority parties above the minority ones.

Table 1: Votes and the pilot test: preferential e-vote system. source: Gibert Gemma

CANDIDATURE	VOTES	REMOTE	BALLOT	5%
YOUTH WITH IDEAS	58	17	41	2,9
FUTURE PROMISES	14	6	8	0,7
3 VILES GROUP	20	9	11	1
LLAVANERES GROUP	6	1	5	0,3
WE CAN IMPROVE	11	3	8	0,55

Table 2: The impact of the preferential voting system

YOUTH WITH IDEAS	PREF. VOTES	YOUTH WITH IDEAS	PREF.Votes
LEANDRO DIAZ	27	<u>LEANDRO DÍAZ</u>	27
ADRIÀ RINCÓN	10	<u>MARIA RUBAL</u>	14
MARIA RUBAL	14	ADRIÀ RINCÓN	10
DÍDAC CABELLO	2	<u>POL RIVERA</u>	6
POL RIVERA	6	<u>GORKA ARANGUREN</u>	3
GORKA ARANGUREN	3	JOAN MARC BARULLS	3
JOAN MARC BARULLS	3	DÍDAC CABELLO	2
RAQUEL RODRIGUEZ (SUPLENT)	1	RAQUEL RODRÍGUEZ (SUPLENT)	1
XAVI LEONARD (SUPLENT)	0	XAVI LEONARD (SUPLENT)	0
JOAN MORA (SUPLENT)	0	JOAN MORA (SUPLENT)	0
REAL VOTES	58	5% OF VOTS	2,9
FUTURE PROMISES	PREF. VOTES	FUTURS PROMISES	PREF.Votes
ANDREA CASTILLA	0	<u>MIQUEL BERROCAL</u>	3
CLARA SÁNCHEZ	1	ELOI CASAS	2
CLAUDIA BARREIRO	0	CLARA SÁNCHEZ	1
BEATRIZ DOBON	0	ANDREA CASTILLA	0
ARIADNA SUBIRATS	0	CLAUDIA BARREIRO	0
MIQUEL BERROCAL	3	BEATRIZ DOBÓN	0
ELOI CASAS	2	ARIADNA SUBIRATS	0
REAL VOTES	14	5% OF VOTS	0,7
3 VILES GROUP	PRE. VOTES	AGRUPATION 3 VILES	Pref.Votes
ALEXANDER CLASEN	3	<u>SERGI ARANYÓ</u>	10
SERGI ARANYO	10	CARLES CARMONA	7
ANDREA NOGUÉS	1	MARIONA BERROCAL	4
ALBA SOLER	0	ALEXANDER CLASEN	3
ANNA RODRIGUEZ	0	ANDREA NOGUÉS	1
MARIONA BERROCAL	4	ALBA SOLER	0
CARLES CARMONA	7	ANNA RODRÍGUEZ	0
REAL VOTES	20	5% OF VOTS	1

The changes to the candidate order produced by the preferential system indicates that all of the candidates, with a number of votes up to 5% of the total, will move up the list.

The three most voted lists and those that had been assigned scores, were modified by the preferential voting system. It ensured that the candidates situated in the first position changed. The second and third list saw a change in candidate. While the first list maintained its candidate, the second chair sought a new candidate.

Youth Ideas

The candidate on this list continued to be in the lead, nevertheless the candidates in the 3rd place through to 5th moved up in position to become councillors on the young government. This group received 5 seats.

With reference to the candidate ,Maria Rubal, who arrived to 3rd place and with preferential votes, went up to 2nd position, we found that the majority of her supporters (80%,) only marked this preference, therefore the preference for this candidate was very apparent.

Future promises and 3 Viles group

These two nominations saw a variation in the order of the lists. The preferential vote moved candidates in the sixth and seventh position to the top places. We consider that having a very low number of votes gives the preferential vote a very strong influence.

3. Empower the government

Those elected were given power within the Youth government from the 21st November to the 19th December. In the beginning they had to establish the government following the articles of electoral law, they had to vote to elect the Mayor and the councillors. There were seven councillors on the government and one of them had to be elected Mayor. By consensus the Mayor was the first candidate on the list "Youth and Ideas" They assigned the departments and they started to work together with the real politicians on a daily basis. Firstly they had to get to know the specialists working in each department and the issues they were working on. One of the most important things to understand was the structure of the public budget in order to include Youth issues. Of the 91 proposals 21 were submitted, prioritised by economy and necessity. As a result these proposals were approved at a plenary meeting and the young politicians were invited to the Catalan Parliament.

4. Results and conclusion

4.1 Methodology

The methodology used to elaborate this report on electronic voting was based on a two channelled survey. On one hand, the citizens who participated in voting through the internet could choose the option to answer a questionnaire that automatically appeared on the computer once they had voted. The questions they were asked were based on the type of voting they had chosen and the electronic voting system. On the other hand another questionnaire was formulated on the development of the project, the reasons to decide to vote or not, the ICT and electronic voting. This questionnaire was completed by 199 school pupils that made up 31.2% of the participants in the electoral census, an important number, when considering the tendencies reflected were representative of the collective of young people.

What happened in the first part" The acquisition of basic democratic concepts" and in the second part "Focusing the Knowledge: making proposals".

In this first part the participants in the learning process were teachers, civil servants and the students. They all evaluated the perceptions and the benefits that they believed the project had contributed. In conclusion the teachers rated the experience as positive, in as much as the students had become involved in the project and had taken responsibility for decisions taken on behalf of the young collective that they represented. The aim of this first part was to ensure that the youngsters established which civic problems were particular to the young and tried to solve them through the use of the legal democratic mechanisms that they had learnt.

From the results taken from the student's evaluation it stands out that their initial knowledge of government, municipal politics, and the structure and workings of the administration was flimsy. However contact with the civil servants changed their vision of politics. They had previously seen politics only as a way of making money with a certain level of corruption. This attitude could be influenced by the widespread idea that politics has become discredited. Nevertheless the second evaluation marked a new tendency as the youngsters were surprised at their lack of knowledge of the services provided for the citizens by the local government and the little perception they had of the difficulties the civil servants had implementing municipal politics.

In designing this learning programme the same standard was used for all the groups and perhaps, it would be better to revise and adapt it, according to school year and age.

In the second part the pupils learnt to make municipal proposals. A total of 91 proposals were made and those that stood out were those relating to sport, mobilization, city planning and culture. Once

again it is proved that these demands have age related motives that form a part of their own reality, such as a Youth centre, more transport, different types of sport. They made no reference to the housing situation or to employment as they considered these questions to be far from their present reality.

Finally the civil servants emphasised that their impression of the students was that there existed a general lack of knowledge of the municipal reality and that it was necessary to inform citizens of the functions of administration and to establish ways to communicate with them, so as to give a better understanding of how politicians make choices and what it means to develop those choices.

4.2 ICTs and the internet

As was indicated by the data that was taken from the study group, 94.74% of this cross section had access to a computer; ownership by 1/3 of this sample with the rest sharing one with other members of their household. Internet connection was good and fast and they had ADSL (71.60%) with access available at any time of the day (78.40%). It could be considered that this study group indicated that ICT access and availability was excellent.

4.3 Blogs

The blogs were designed by the applicants and the candidates. They included information on the electoral programme, different election events and the candidates; they also inserted publicity spots for the young voters. The object was to establish a link between the young citizens and the young, future politicians. Even though the intention was to create this interaction, the length of the electoral campaign was quite short, only 7 days. They used all the traditional ways such as school meetings where they interacted directly with the students from the whole secondary school, explaining their proposals and debating them, they also used the television and through the town hall, the candidates tried to activate all the possible means of communication to convince the voting citizens.

4.4 Electronic vote

According to data, motivation to vote a concrete listing is based ,mainly, on the proposals made manifest in the electoral programme and the possibility that their chosen candidates would be able to carry out the said proposals during their mandate(27.79%). This election was also influenced by the appeal of the main candidates (13.20%) These criteria of selection, apparent in the young voters, are also prevalent in the municipal election voters.

4.5 Identification needed in order to apply as an elector

The elector was identified by a National Identity Card or NIE (if a foreigner) and with a password (PIN) that in this case was a code of 16 characters. Thus the elector had to introduce these two forms of identification into the programme and once authorised, the programme allowed them access into the voting system. This was the solution the company gave to ensure secure voting.

With reference to these two forms of identification we should point out different aspects that should be taken into account.

- The municipal registers where the voters DNI or NIE were obtained, should have been checked more frequently and the way the personal data was introduced into the programme should be standardized. Some of the youngsters DNI and NIE were taken from both the electoral roll and the school. These details were coded in different ways when entered and this caused the NIE(Foreign identity number) to be missing zeros or the letter. Human error was also found in the details entered.
- According to municipal law a resident is one that has registered in the community where they have spent the majority of time over the span of a year. The electoral rolls have not been revised since 1996 and when a citizen moves it only comes to light when a notification is received from the new community, if the citizen has registered in the new area. This makes it difficult to comprehend the exact population movement. Because of this more than 80 authorizations were returned with a notification that the citizen no longer lived at the shown address (12.78% of the population did not receive their authorization) However authorizations could be obtained from the city council.

- Continuing with these classifications it is important to establish the format of entering the electorate identification into the programme (e.g. Capital or small letters, the whole number with or without spaces, etc.) and indicate the aforementioned format on the programme window or in the instructions. In these instances the system indicated 13 errors and did not permit the elector to enter into the programme.
- This pilot test incorporated the null and void vote. Its introduction opened a new window on the computer screen under that of the electoral roll. A vote became null and void if the electorate introduced a note or an express comment. The real concept of the null and void vote in normal elections, comes about when various ballot papers are introduced in the same envelope, the ballot paper is marked or crossed out or when it is torn. In an attempt to introduce this new form of voting it was deemed appropriate to introduce the check box in the same window as each candidate, as it could become null and void if introduced on the candidate ballot paper.

4.6 What happened to the system established by the pilot test: closed lists and the preferential voting system

In our opinion this combination of a closed list and the preferential vote has raised some confusion. The pilot test established two voting options; voting for a list without making any preference, which meant that there was agreement with the order of the candidates, or to mark a preference, in this case it was possible to vary the order of the list by a maximum of two candidates. The modification of the candidate order became effective when 5% of the electorate manifested the same preference.

It was made obvious by the results, that the electorate who decided to mark a preference, established the 5% necessary to create the minimum parameter to vary the order of the candidates and to determine the number of seats necessary to govern. The non-preferential votes had no effect on the first two candidates on the list but they were indirectly weakened because the votes were added to the general list.

The preferential voting system did not include the order of preference of the chosen candidates (option, 1st candidate or 2nd candidate) however this order was established following the true order of the candidates on the list. This did not allow all the candidates to have the same opportunity to be favoured.

4.7 What was the participation

As was mentioned before, participation was very low and as the survey showed, the pupils commented that it was difficult to enter into the programme and that it was very slow(about 32% out of 197 students questioned). This information was compared with the company responsible for the electronic vote who, finding no technical error, argued that during voting, internet connection collapsed on various occasions.

The main reasons that the young people did not take part in the electronic vote were the following:

- Decided not to vote (33.70%)
- Lost their authorization (13.04%)
- System did not work (14.13%)
- Form of identification not accepted. (2.17%)
- Not having Java programme.(4.35%)
- The system was very slow. (1.09%)
- Considered the request exploitation. (3.26%)
- Were unable to pass from the first page of the system (6.52%)
- Lack of time (21.74%)

4.8 According to the youngsters, what advantages did the electronic vote have?

The advantages, according to the study, of the e-vote, is that the system is fast and easy (44.58%), it can be accessed from anywhere (16.27%) it is possible to increase participation. The young people assert that, why improve e-voting when there is already a good e-voting

programme (38.42%), that there should be more public computers available (31.64%) and that access to the internet should be more efficient.

4.9 Mandate

The mandate started on the 21st November with the Youth government constitution, that by consensus, voted that the head of the most voted list "Youngsters with Ideas" would be the mayor. The remaining six members became youth councillors and the municipal council briefs were handed out. Each of the young members elected, worked together with the town councillors and they saw exactly how municipal decisions were made and how different projects, underway at that moment, were developed.

The youth proposals were treated taking into account:

- The viability and technical possibilities of each proposal.
- The economic cost of every proposal
- The immediate, real necessity of the proposals
- The departments that would have to participate to develop the proposal.
- A criteria of priority relating to the cost and the need.

Of the 91 proposals collected from the young population 21 were approved in the Youth plenary session where the town councillors agreed to follow the proposals through and gave them an estimated budget. These 21 proposals were selected by the Youth government as the most important and necessary for the young population.

Another task that the young councillors worked on was a general town budget, which, at the time they entered into the government, had been finalised. The young members of the council were also present and involved, together with the town council, in the Sant Andreu de Llanerres "Major" festival activities.

This co-operative governing has created a new link between the youth of Llanerres and local government, in fact, the youngsters have taken the initiative to create a youth council with the aim to follow through the rest of the municipal proposals during the year 2009. Furthermore, the presence of the youngsters in the town council has modified the local politicians view in that the young people have made real and valid proposals and that now they have a more concise idea of their demands. As was commented, being young politicians has enabled them to comprehend that politics is a difficult job and to decide what is best for the town and its population is, at times, very complex, as there are many factors to take into account.

5. Final considerations

Although the present government is making a great effort to adapt to an innovative and technological society there is still a long way to go to arrive to an era of technological communications. For that reason it should be noted that the electronic vote, according to results, ought to be accompanied by the traditional voting system. The majority of the candidates on the lists, manifested that they would have liked to be physically present to vote, as they believe that the electorate have a right to see the evidence of their candidates' vote.

Nevertheless, this pilot test might be more suitable for primary elections where the candidate to head the party is chosen. The test has shown that the preferential system had a strong influence and that the two primary candidates were easily toppled. On the other hand, not giving priority to the candidates, did not determine the real preference of the electorate.

With reference to electorate identification we consider that it is necessary to establish more valid methods of authenticity to avoid human error and maybe, in the long term the electronic identification document could correct this. It should also be noted that to implement a good technological system, such as e-voting, it is necessary for the programme to adapt to the technological resources available and also that it is simple to use.

At the same time, we should take into account that the youngsters should previously be involved in an indispensable process of participation and education so that the groups of youngsters can learn how

democracy works and become involved in municipal responsibilities and arrangements .The participation process has helped the young people to decide for themselves if they wanted to be a part of this project and have , therefore, been material in the creation of the five candidates, in their electoral programmes and in the belief that they can improve their town.

Finally, in conclusion, to involve and awaken youngster's interest in politics, electronic tools are not enough. However channels of communication need to be established or a new figure which we have called "Participation and Mediation Agent", to ensure that coming generations approach public institutions.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express their gratitude for the support provided by Joan Mora i Buch, Citizen Participation Councilor, the technicians and the Town Hall of Sant Andreu de Llavaneres.

References

- Barrat, Jordi and Josep M^a Reniu (2004) "Electronic Democracy and Citizen Participation,a sociological and legalreport about the Citizen Consultation " OVE, University of Leon. Madrid, 38-77.
<http://www.epractice.eu/files/upload/gpc/document/1612-1181135609.pdf> [Accessed 7.12.2002]
- Batista, Carlos (2003). "ICTs and Good Governance: The Contribution of Information and Communication Technologies to Local Governance in Latin America" NP³ - Núcleo de Pesquisa e Políticas Públicas. Brasilia University, Brazil . [Accessed: 08.11.2008]
- Blanco, Ismael and Pau Mas (2008) " The political Disafeccion of Catalonia ". Fundació Jaume Bofill . Informes Breus.Núm. 11.Barcelona.
- Borge, Rosa,Clelia Colombo and Yanina Welp (2008), " Explanatory analysis of electronic and presential citizen participation in municipal areas in Catalonia" Open University of Catalonia ", IDP.Revista d'Internet, Law and Policy [article online].Num. 6. Open University of Catalonia UOC. Accessed: 08.11.2008].
http://www.uoc.edu/idp/6/dt/esp/borge_colombo_welp.pdf
- Borge, Rosa (2005). «La participació electrònica: estat de la qüestió i aproximació a la seva classificació». IDP.Revista d'Internet, Law and Policy [article online]. Num. 1. UOC. [Accessed: 08.11.2008].<http://www.uoc.edu/idp/1/dt/cat/borge.pdf> ISSN 1699-8154
- Castells, M. (1998). La era de la información. Vol II: El poder de la identidad. Madrid: Alianza. Fundació Jaume Bofill (2000). Debate about E-voting with Jordi Capo and Andreu Riera. Debate Collection review.Núm.33.
- Fundació Jaume Bofill (2004). «La participació ciutadana a través de les noves tecnologies. Estratègies per a la utilització de Consensus».. Finestra Oberta. Núm. 42.Barcelona.
- Oostveen, A., & Van den Besselaar, P. (2004). Internet voting technologies and civic participation, the users perspective. Javnost/The Public, XI(1), 61-78.
- Oostveen, A., & Van den Besselaar, P (2007). Security as belief User's perceptions on the security of electronic voting systems In: Electronic Voting in Europe: Technology, Law, Politics and Society. Edited by A. Prosser and R. Krimmer. Lecture Notes in Informatics. Volume P-47, p73-82. Bonn: Gesellschaft für Informatik. ISBN 388579-376-
- The Highland Youth Voice[Accessed 5.12.2008] <http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/e-governance>[Accessed 5.12.2008]
- Valls, Núria and Andrea Borison (2007). "Youth and politycy" . Fundació Jaume Bofill.Informes Breus. Núm.7 Barcelona.

